

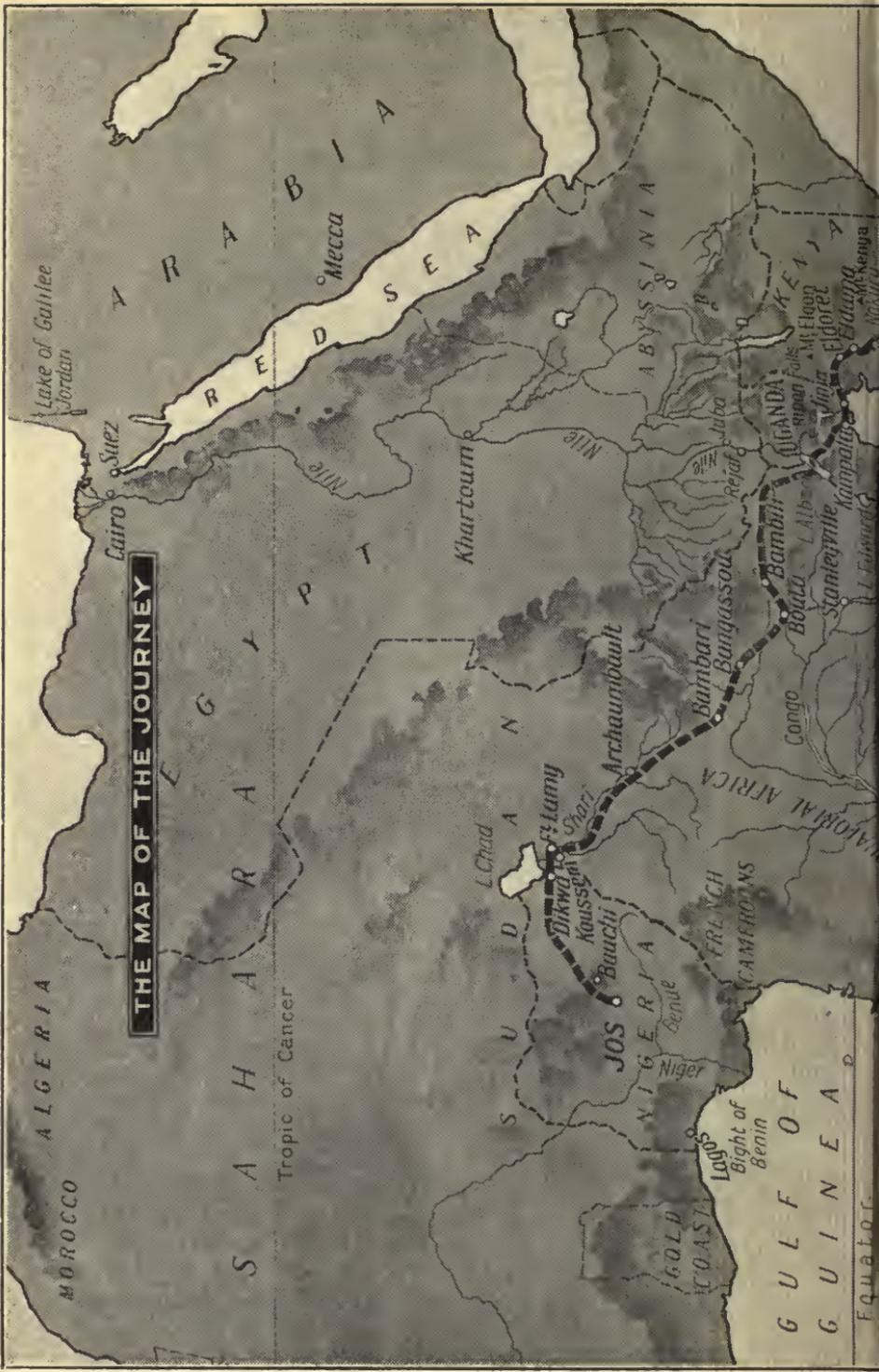
THE  
STOUT EFFORT

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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FAITH COPE MORGAN



**THE MAP OF THE JOURNEY**

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

S A H A R A

Tropic of Cancer

E G Y P T

S U D A N

NIGERIA

FRENCH CAMEROONS

BIGHT OF BENUE

GULF OF GUINEA

EQUATOR

Lake of Galilee

Jordan

Suez

Cairo

Mecca

Khartoum

Archambault

Bambari

Bangassou

Bouba

Laila

Bambari

Khartoum

Nile

Abessinia

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

S A H A R A

Tropic of Cancer

E G Y P T

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BIGHT OF BENUE

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Jordan

Suez

Cairo

Mecca

Khartoum

Archambault

Bambari

Bangassou

Bouba

Laila

Bambari

Khartoum

Nile

Abessinia



ATLANTIC OCEAN

To England from Cape Town. 5950 miles

INDIAN OCEAN

Tropic of Capricorn



British Isles drawn on the same scale as the map of Africa



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Dear

with much love & wishing  
for many happy returns

Yours  
Irene

29 Nov. 1933

THE STOUT EFFORT



MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO  
HILARY'S FATHER  
THE POWER BEHIND THE STOUT EFFORT

and

TO  
MY FATHER  
WHO WOULD HAVE ENTERED  
INTO EVERY DETAIL OF THE  
ADVENTURE, AND WHO DOUBTLESS  
STOOD BY



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# THE STOUT EFFORT

## CHAPTER I

### NIGERIA—THE PLAN—PREPARATIONS

*Letter 1.*

MONGU,  
NEAR JOS,  
NORTHERN NIGERIA.

*January 18.*

HILARY, there's such excitement here ! If you tried for a week you would never guess what it is about !

It all started at breakfast this morning. Master (you do amuse Daddy when you insist on calling him that, like the black boys !) gets up about 5.30, and does a lot of work before breakfast and comes in hungry and chatty at 8. (Very different from the way he behaves when he is on holiday in England !)

To-day, he suddenly said : ' How would you like to see East Africa before you go back to England ? '

Master often has Ideas, but this was rather a Big one to take in all at once, especially at breakfast. I waited for more. Did he mean by boat, aeroplane or train ?

I'm sure you do realise by now what a gigantic place Africa is—I believe I told you once before

that the corner we are in, the Colony of Nigeria, alone is three times the size of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, put together. In England, one hundred miles seems quite a long distance, but in Africa one thinks in thousands. As for the journey Master is suggesting, how can I make you see what an enormous one it would be? Well, if you were in the West of England, somewhere in Cornwall, and you wanted to go to the East Coast, somewhere in Suffolk, it would be a good long way even by train, but you could get there in a few hours. The journey Master has suddenly thought of is about ten times as far and will take us about a month; there certainly are no trains, and he hates aeroplanes; his plan is to go right across this great Continent by CAR.

I don't know anything about the roads in Central Africa, but I expect part of the time there won't be any. The 'road' will be SAND, MUD, JUNGLE, A BUSH TRACK, OR A MOUNTAIN PATH. Whatever car shall we take?

All the time I was thinking, Master was talking. He had got his plan all ready—and it was only 8 o'clock in the morning! Then I heard some more. We are not going to join an expedition, we are to go alone, with two black boys, and we are to go in a LORRY. Are you thinking why ever a lorry? The answer is that we must have something large enough to take everything we shall need for a month's journey. In this part of Africa you must travel absolutely self-contained; you can't expect to find shops, telephones and garages, if you run short of supplies, nor will there be a doctor if you get ill. The lorry may be needed as a roof,

too, because there won't be any hotels and we shall put up our beds in shelters (rather like stables), called Rest Houses, or else sleep by the roadside far away from any other white people.

It did not take me long to realise all this as I sat and listened to Master, full of his Idea. Do you wonder why he wants to do it? Well, you see, it would be an adventure big enough even to satisfy him.

He went on to tell me that there is an Englishman in Jos called Christopher Barlow, who a year or two ago, went from Kano to Nairobi in a two-seater and a trailer, the first car to go across Africa from Nigeria to Kenya Colony.

So, still more of the Big Idea was that we should go into Jos directly after breakfast to see Mr. Barlow and ask if he thought we could do this journey too.

When Master paused for breath, I went to fetch a map, but before I could find out the mileage, he went on :

'It is about three and a half thousand miles, and we ought to be able to do it in four weeks; lots of people have motored from South to North, but I believe you would be the first woman to go from West to East by car. Besides, think how long we have been in Africa and yet we have only seen this one country. I haven't had a holiday for two years, don't you think this would be fun?' Happily he did not expect an answer. After looking at the Atlas I had a bad spasm of what we used to call 'tummy melting.' The thought of going right into Central Africa where only such a short time ago the natives made each other into stews and had

other unpleasant habits, sounded rather like a bad dream and I wondered if I had forgotten to wake up this morning.

After seeing Mr. Barlow in his Office in Jos, fifty miles away, I began to get thrilled. He told us all about his journey and said that if we started soon we should be able to get across before the Rains begin. You know that where we are, high up on the Bauchi Plateau, we have two definite weather seasons, the Dry and the Wet. The Dry Season lasts from September to March, and there is no rain during all those months. Then thunderstorms start, and during April, May, June, July and August there is usually rain every day. We heard that the seasons in Central Africa are very much the same as ours in Nigeria, so it means that all along our route the break in the weather will be due any time after the middle of March.

We asked Mr. Barlow if he thought it would be possible to do the journey in a LORRY, large enough to carry all our belongings in the back. Most people doing a long journey in Africa have two, or even a series of cars, but as our plan is to go by ourselves we must have everything we want under our own roof.

Mr. Barlow said a heavy car ought to get through *if* the rains were not early. He promised to lend us his maps and notes so that we can study the route and see what we are in for. His last words were : ' BUT, YOU *must* GO SOON.'

But that is the chief difficulty, we can't go soon. Master cannot leave his work before the middle of March, and then the Rains may have started.

‘With just the odd spot of luck we can do it,’ he keeps on saying.

I wonder.

*Letter 2.*

*January 31.*

Master has hardly been to sleep since he thought of the Great Idea. He is very busy all day and then directly he stops work he rushes back to Mr. Barlow’s notes and has started making a list of what we ought to know about the route and all the things we shall have to take. I think we shall end by taking several furniture vans by the look of things!

There are no hotels in Northern Nigeria so we are quite used to this business of travelling ‘self-contained.’ When I first came out here, we went about on horseback, and all our belongings were carried on the heads of black men. One has to be very careful to see that the servants pack everything, and it is no use writing out lists because very few cooks in this part of the world can read. A favourite trick of the cook is to leave the tin-opener behind, to pack the lamp oil in with our cooking-pots, or when we are terribly thirsty and want some tea more than anything in the world, he will come and say very cheerfully :

‘Please Ma, I no catch any.’

They always seem to begin any unpleasant sentence with ‘Please, Ma.’ Do you remember why I let them call me MA?

It certainly did seem rather odd at first but there

are names that I think are worse still. I heard one story of a lady in Nigeria who objected to being called Ma and told her servants to call her LADY. That would have been rather nice, but, unfortunately, there is a Hausa word ALADE which means a *pig*. The Mahommedan thinks that a pig is an unclean animal, and their Bible forbids them even to touch one. So, I prefer not to be called Lady, I would rather be MA !

When a native goes a journey he takes all his favourite possessions with him, whether they are likely to be useful or not. I suppose it is partly to show off, and partly so that they shall not be stolen while he is away ! The first time I went on trek was ten years ago, but I have never forgotten the luggage our cook brought with him for a fortnight's stay away from the Camp : an empty canvas bag, a zither (which he could not play, happily for us), a stick, a pair of shoes (carried) and a cloth cap.

This was the boy to whom I gave cooking lessons for more than a year ; he seemed to pick up ideas very quickly and I hoped that when I went back to England he would be able to look after Master properly, so I asked him what he could remember of all he had learned. He stood first on one foot and then on the other, rolled his eyes, gazed round and then said cheerfully : ' Please, Ma, I tink I can cook for Massa coostard and stoo.'

As ' coostard and stoo ' are the two things a native cook finds out for himself, I felt rather depressed ; certainly, after living in West Africa

I never want to see baked custard or stew any more !

When we were out to-day we saw Koffi, the black carpenter and handy-man ; he was lying on his back under some big machinery that needed repairing, with his head tied up in a grubby handkerchief which, when I bought it in London for him years ago, was bright red with brilliant yellow spots. He had grease and oil all over his face which he carefully wiped off with the handkerchief before speaking to us, and then put it on his head again. Koffi is a real gentleman and every one likes him ; he has worked for this Company all the time Master has been in Africa, so he is quite a friend of the family and, of course, we want to take him with us on our Great Adventure. We wondered what he would think and how many questions he would ask.

Black men love Movement but they have a great affection for their own village and their dirty smoky little huts, and never can understand why we want to leave our nice bungalow and go to England. What would Koffi think of a plan to drive a car right across Africa ? All he said was : ‘ Yes, Sah. We start to-morrow, Sah ? ’

The bell had gone to stop work and we watched him put away his tools and then go off at the double down the village. Master began to laugh and then said : ‘ I know what the old rascal is after ; he has gone to get his money so that his wife will not steal it while he is away.’

Koffi is said to be quite rich ; I hope I shall be able to borrow from him if I see anything very exciting in Central Africa that I would like to buy

for you, some radium or a rhinoceros, for instance. Perhaps he will ask me to keep his cash for him, though he usually buries it. Koffi is a Christian, but he is rather like a Pagan (or Heathen) in some of his ways. The Pagans keep their small treasures and their ought-to-be-pocket-money in their hair (which is just like frizzy wire), their mouths, or, in a hole in the ground ; you see, they do not have any *pockets* because they do not wear any *clothes*.

Talking about clothes, ours are going to be rather difficult. We hear that we must expect it to be terribly hot directly we leave our Plateau, and especially, of course, as we get near to the Desert, and during the time we are in the French Country. I mean really H.O.T. not just WARM as it is in England in August—sometimes !

Of course the idea is to wear the coolest possible clothes, and I have been to all the Stores in Jos to see if they can fit me out in boy's kit. As well as shorts and khaki shirts, I managed to find a peach-coloured pyjama suit and have turned the coat into a jumper to wear with a tie and belt ; when we get to the towns I shall have to try and be myself again in a frock.

As you know, Master never bothers about his clothes and usually wears his grey flannels until they are threadbare and then suddenly cables for six more pairs ; he does realise that those particular garments would be a trifle hot in a climate that will easily reach 110°, and he told the local tailor (a black man, of course) to make him some cotton shorts. They are simply *awful*, but Master does not seem to mind ; the answer is that he cannot see himself, but I can ! He has also brought some

truly marvellous stockings which look as if he is just off to play in a football match at Twickenham.

With all these preparations going on, I do feel that the plan is more than a dream which might happen to some one else, but it seems funny to realise that I am the one to have this Big Adventure. When I was small, I used to think people who wanted to travel were terribly brave ; I was much too frightened of dogs and the dark, not to mention enormous moths, snakes and black men, to imagine for one moment that the chance of a journey across the DARK CONTINENT would ever be offered to me.

*Letter 3.*

*February 1.*

I have already spoken to Aba, our cook, about coming with us ; we have decided we must take a servant because there will be no hotels until we get to Uganda, and we cannot very well live on biscuits and chocolate and do without baths for more than a fortnight ! We hope it will be the end of the Dry Season when we are in French and Belgian countries, and if so water will be as scarce as it is here. At Mongu, of course, we have no pipes, and no taps to turn on, every drop of water is brought from the river in large cans on the head of the boy called 'Cook's Mate.' As the river gets lower and lower, it also gets thicker and thicker until at last in my bath it looks more like mud than water. Every drop of water that we drink must always be boiled and filtered.

So you see even the question of water, which to you is so simple, is difficult when one is planning a journey in Africa.

If the French Rest Houses are anything like the Nigerian ones we shall just use them as shelters and put up our beds outside. Every night it will be like camping, so we must have a servant to look after us, as well as someone to look after the lorry.

Aba thought it over for several days, and apparently Master is not the only one with IDEAS. This boy is a Mahommedan and thinks he would like to be a 'Very Big Man' and go to Mecca where Mahomet is buried; some of the Prophet's followers go there as a pilgrimage and then they may wear a special turban bound with green cord. Aba loves new hats, and perhaps that is one of the reasons which makes him keen to go! Anyhow, he thinks anywhere over the other side of Africa must be 'near Mecca,' so he says he would like to come with us if we will help him. From the map it looks a difficult journey; Mecca, as you know, is in Arabia on the other side of the Red Sea, but Mr. Barlow tells us that one of his servants went there from Mombasa, so perhaps we shall be able to find a way, too.

Master does not want to take Aba (although he is such a good cook), because he has been in dreadful disgrace. When we were away in Jos last week, he thought he would like to hunt a 'Small Beef' (he calls a 'Beef' anything from a hare to a deer), so he actually had the cheek to take Master's favourite shot-gun; and while he was running away from something he fell over and broke the gun. What Aba minds is that he knocked out his four front teeth and looks so hideous with his face swollen that even his own shiny black baby yells with fear when she sees him, and I don't blame her. Of course, Master was furious, the gun is spoilt



MORNING TOILET IN NIGERIA



and Aba really ought to be sent to prison, because natives are not allowed to have guns and he knew quite well that he was being disobedient. He told us the accident happened when he was bravely trying to prevent our chickens being attacked by a HYÆNA, and when no one believed him he asked one of the clerks to write a letter to me. It was solemnly brought in by Daniel, the black parlour-maid-butler, and this was what the letter said :

DEAR MA,

I beg you to entreat Master for I fear his heart done spoil for me,

Your true and only son,

ABA, Cook.

Master wishes it was only his heart that 'done spoil' and not his gun.

*Letter 4.*

*February 4.*

Master has just told me that Koffi can't come with us, he says he has MUMPS. I do not know if mumps is another way of spelling 'I fear for come,' but, of course, it is no use trying to persuade him. Master has asked Lawanson, a native mechanic who has worked at Mongu for about four years. This boy said at once he would like to come and apparently he does not mind the idea of going so far away from his home and his large family of children. Perhaps he finds them rather a trial, or perhaps he is tired of mending machinery and old lorries and thinks it would be rather fun to look after one new lorry instead.

To-day we have been into Jos to fetch the lorry. Don't tell anyone, but it is not a British-made one, it's a Ford. People say: 'A Ford goes everywhere but into Society,' and that is just why Master has chosen a Ford for our journey, we do not quite know where we shall have to ask it to go.

She is a great big thing, a one-and-a-half ton truck, one of the very newest models, painted green, with a solid roof and blinds that will let down. Lots of improvements will have to be done to it, and boxes fitted at every available space round the sides to take food, spares, tools and oddments.

After spending hours admiring the new car, we went to the Resident's Office to ask if he would write a note to say that we are 'clean, respectable and honest.' He laughed and asked: 'Whatever are you two up to?'

So then we told him about the Great Idea and explained that part of our route across Africa will be through countries governed by the French and the Belgians, and that they will want to know what sort of people we are before giving permission to two strangers to travel through their Colonies. That is why we had to ask the Head of our Province to give us a good character, and this is what he wrote. Do you think it will do the trick?

'I certify that the bearer, Mr. H. R. Cope Morgan, and his wife, who accompanies him, have been well known to me for the past five years, and that I can recommend them as people of responsible position and of good character.'

But that was not nearly enough to satisfy the

Belgian Officials ; we had to fill in a tremendous lot of details on a long sheet of paper all about our past lives and then—SWEAR what is called an affidavit that WE HAD NOT BEEN IN PRISON ! I found it extremely difficult to keep my face straight, especially as the Magistrate and Master were so solemn.

Aba will have to come in one day and do his swear. What a good thing no one knows about the GUN !

We called on several people in Jos, and every one says the same, that we are *mad*. They are all quite convinced that to take a heavily loaded lorry across Central Africa is one of the things that is NOT DONE. They say that the rains will *not* conveniently wait until we get to Nairobi, but most certainly will descend in torrents while we are in the middle of the French country, where there would be no hope of getting any help. Then someone added : ‘ Of course the rivers will be flooded, and you can’t expect your wife to swim across *all* of them. She will be eaten by crocodiles.’

The general feeling is that we shall be back in Jos in about three months’ time, having left the lorry by the side of the road, hopelessly bogged—so why not go home the usual way, now ?

Master pretends not to be depressed by all these warnings, but I am rather ashamed to admit that I am getting more and more scared. The Doctor has sent me a long list of medicines he means to give me and at the end it says : Also, remedies for SNAKE-bites, MAD DOGS and POISONED ARROWS.

I feel I ought to be a Girl Guide—anyhow I shall ‘ Be Prepared ’ !

*Letter 5.*

*February 11.*

The word has gone round Mongu that we are really leaving, and from now onwards every one will be presenting us with chickens, eggs and sundry useless articles in the way of presents which they call 'Dashes,' in the hope that we shall bring them back something they want from England; anything ranging from a brightly coloured handkerchief to a bicycle or even 'DEM-GOLE-CLOCK-all-the-same-you-wear-for-hand.'

One of the Clerks brought up this morning two green love-birds in a tiny cage. I wondered what he expected in return—a hat, perhaps!

The house-boys seem rather depressed about our going (all but the cook who is giving himself airs and talking a lot about the Mecca pilgrimage). This morning I happened to go into the bath-room and found the 'Small-boy' (like a house-maid) using my tooth-brush to wash round the hand-basin; when I scolded him, his excuse was, 'My heart no live for this work. You be my Fader and my Mudder and I like for go to Inglan with you to catch plenty sense.'

I am glad your 'Fader' has got 'plenty sense'; we have heard of another difficulty. Do you see what a tremendous lot of West Africa is under French rule? The most lonely part of our journey will be one thousand miles across French Equatoria, the part between Nigeria and the Belgian Congo. We shall be there more than a week and Mr. Barlow has warned us that in all that time WE SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO BUY ANY PETROL AT ALL.

I expect you have noticed that when people are motoring in England they usually buy five or six gallons of petrol at a time—for this part of our journey through French country we shall have to take ONE HUNDRED GALLONS! Master is having huge tanks fitted inside the lorry to take some of this, and the rest will have to be in cases. I am beginning to pity the two servants who will have to sit in the back with all the luggage. I had a look at the LIST OF NECESSARIES to-day. Do listen. Two beds (complete with blankets, pillows, mosquito-nets, etc.), chairs and table, canvas bath and basin, the picnic basket and at least four Thermos flasks, our cooking-pots, a collapsible tent for the servants, two large canvas ground-sheets, two big jars of filtered water, fishing rods, shot-gun and revolver, suitcases, mackintoshes, helmet-case, camera; fire-extinguishers, drums of oil, pick and shovel, an axe, planks of wood, long coils of rope, two jacks (*not* the dreadful game you play, but the very important tool for lifting), a set of chains for the wheels, and every tool and spare that you can think of and every one that you cannot.

I murmured, 'I suppose you will want some clothes for the voyage home?' Master groaned and added, 'Several trunks and odd junk.'

Then there is our food for three weeks. I am sure you will be interested to hear what we have chosen so far: Fruit, soup squares, Ryvita bread, tea, biscuits, brussels-sprouts, peas, ham, sausages, brawn, haricot mutton (a kind of Irish stew), meat pastes, turbot, halibut, salmon, chocolate, cheese.

Do you think that seems a lot? I expect you will notice we have not said anything about milk

or sugar ; we have to study space and everything must be tinned, so we are leaving out anything we can possibly do without.

Talking about eating, I turned out a lot of old tennis balls the other day and went down through the native village to find some children. They all dash out into the road when they see the little car and wave their fists in the air to show they are pleased to see me or else they crouch down on the ground and shriek 'Sanu, Zaki,' which means, 'Hullo, Lion.' Master says they only call *him* 'Lion,' but how does he know what happens when he isn't there? Anyhow, when I arrived with the tennis balls they were very pleased and showed all their very white teeth and then dashed back to where their Mothers were pounding corn outside the huts ; I wondered what they did with the balls when they found they weren't good to eat. I've never seen any of the children playing with a ball. Of course none of the grown-up natives can understand why we dash about in the heat playing tennis instead of sitting quietly in the shade. I'm quite sure they think we are paid to play games !

I've had a game played on me this afternoon, but at the time I didn't think it was any fun. I had been down the garden trying to persuade the gardeners to do some work instead of going to sleep (it certainly was very hot, the mango-tree was lovely and shady, and old Della thought I couldn't see him). As I went on towards the Office I suddenly felt something like a red-hot needle run through my foot and then found I had interrupted a procession of black driver-ants who had apparently decided to cross Africa before we did ; I had

walked in their path so they just walked over *me* and nipped my foot to tell me not to be so clumsy. It hurt horribly, so I did not stop to apologise for interrupting the procession, but moved quickly to the side and watched. It was about two yards long, the ants marching about 6 or 8 in a row, with a few of them, just like policemen, dashing up and down keeping the lines straight and encouraging the stragglers. It was just like a well-drilled silent army who had been ordered to go straight forward in spite of all obstacles and take up a new position. I was one obstacle who was very soon put out of action, the next was a ditch by the side of the path and they headed straight for it. Most of them fell over, were nipped by the policemen, quickly righted themselves and hurried on, each pretending he had done it on purpose. I watched until they all scrambled out of the ditch and, still in a more or less orderly line, made a bee-line for the native village. I wondered what would happen next. If many bare black feet were nipped as hard as mine had been by the infuriated ants, I think not many of the army would be allowed to get much further. But, sometimes, in Africa, driver-ants on trek number *millions*, and then even the elephants get out of their way !

*Letter 6.*

*February 13.*

To-day we had a taste of the kind of thing we are likely to meet on our journey. We played hide-and-seek with a very wild animal—we think it was a Leopard.

After tea there was nothing special to do so we

decided to go for a walk, and we climbed a tall, rocky hill behind our bungalow. Master had his small B.S.A. rifle in case we met any guinea-fowl, but we were really only out for exercise. Unexpectedly we got it. There was only one path to the top and we saw how difficult it would be to find another way down—the hill seemed to be just sheer rock. Presently I began to feel as if we were being watched all the time, and Master said, ‘Oh, probably just some hyænas, waiting for the sun to go down before they start prowling around.’

This may sound decidedly horrid to you, but I have got more or less used to the idea of hyænas; they so often come at night on to the verandah just outside the bedroom window, to finish the dog’s supper, and to scratch their coarse, faded-coloured coats against the table-legs, but I have never actually met one in the day-time. They are nasty creatures who hate the light.

Well, we reached the top of the hill, left the path and walked over to the other side to admire the view; at last we turned to come back, for it was getting dark in the sudden way it does in Africa. And—then I saw, on the skyline, what looked like two ears appearing over the top of a rock. Master rather fancies himself as a marksman and so, just for fun, he loosed off at this Something-Behind-A-Rock. To our horror, we heard a terrific bellow of rage, saw a mighty cloud of dust, and The-Something bounced down into the very middle of that one and only PATH TO SAFETY !

There was no time to make up our minds what to do. We just ran. The gun was not nearly powerful enough to deal with a big creature, and

so we could not wait to apologise for making his nose bleed. How we got down the rocky face of that hill I just do not know, I expected to see an infuriated animal waiting at each corner, and Master was scared because he thought I would take a header over the side. *I just sat and sat, and tobogganed and tobogganed.* We reached the ground, and after a few minutes realised the beast had left us. The CAUSE-OF-ALL-THE-TROUBLE propped himself up against a tree and laughed until he cried, because he said *I had looked so funny!* So, I told him the next time he decided to go out shooting Big Game with a toy-gun, I should wear a suit of armour and a pair of skis.

Walking back was rather a painful business, but as we hobbled along we argued as to whether IT WAS A HYÆNA OR A LEOPARD.

Of course, now it is all over, I wish I had seen it close to, but I certainly did not at the time, the animal did not seem quite in the mood to be stared at!

*Letter 7.*

*February 14.*

To-day is your birthday—it certainly does not seem as long as three weeks that I sent off the letter wishing you Many Happy Returns. I remember telling the Messenger with the absurd name, ‘Good Morning,’ to be sure not to lose the Mail-Bag because there was one very special letter inside for you, and that soon you ‘go catch twelve year.’ I asked him how old he was, but natives never seem to know their exact ages; he grinned broadly and said, ‘Oh, I be plenty ole man, past 30.’ He is ‘a plenty’ *tall* man too, 6 feet 4 and very strong.



bird, green with an orange beak, just like the other two, fluttered down from one of the trees in the garden and started talking hard to the captive ones. At first I thought I must be dreaming, but just then Daniel came in with my tea and I told him 'Softly, softly' and pointed to the cage; he exclaimed 'Allah!' so I knew he was surprised too. Presently the visitor flew back to the big tree, and the two others fluffed themselves out and cuddled close up to each other and I wondered what was going to happen next. Daniel suggested, 'Please, Ma, I think it be good we open dem small door for box, and dem other burd fit to go inside.'

But I thought a better idea was to see if the new 'burd' had come to show them the way home, so I opened the door and waited.

Nothing happened for some time and I was just going to begin your letter again when Daniel crept in to tell me.

'I like for you to look for dem "burds," they be all-the-same JU-JU' (magic).

Then I saw, perched on the top of the box, not two or even three little birds, but FOUR. I do not know how many more we might have collected in time, it would have been lovely to keep a whole family for you, but of course I had to let them go, and it really was rather nice to see those dear little green birds fly off together to the large mango-tree. I do hope they found their way home, and I certainly hope they did not stand any cheek from the starlings.

I am really beginning to feel we are going; all our belongings have to be packed up either for sending home or selling and I seem to spend my time

making lists which will probably all get lost, but anyhow it looks as if I am working hard.

Since tea this afternoon, I have been driving the lorry about to try and get used to the handling of such an enormous car. I was given full instructions to go and practise where there was plenty of sand, but I have privately decided that when we get near the desert it will *not* be my turn to drive ! The car is beginning to look very business like ; the back has been fitted up as a tool-bench so that when repairs are necessary all Master will have to do is to let down the back and get on with it ; boxes to hold food and oddments have been fixed on the running-boards and I think we shall be accused of keeping rabbits !

I have given Aba our old ' Sausage ' (the correct name I believe is kit-bag), the one you and I use for rubber-boots and things-that-turn-up-at-the last-minute when we go to the seaside ; Lawanson has bought a small attaché case which does not seem much for a month's luggage. But what the boys have saved on clothes, they have made up in food, and their contribution is going to take up a vast space—bulky sacks containing roots of a starchy plant which they scrape and boil with water, and dozens and dozens of tins of salmon. I showed Aba in what small boxes our food would be packed and so he said, ' Oh yes, Ma, but White Man be plenty lucky, him catch inside-full so quick.'

*Letter 8.*

*February 15.*

Master has just come in to tell me that my letters to you, which were to have gone off to-morrow,

had better not be posted until we have left Nigeria. The reason is this. In one of our newspapers from England we have just found a paragraph about a small native rebellion in the French Congo, and that already, 'Several Europeans have lost their lives.'

Even before there was this news, we rather wondered if you would picture us being minced up to provide a meal for a cannibal king, or being gored by infuriated buffaloes or eaten by hungry tsetse-flies ! The country sounds so much more wild than it really is, partly because so many people think of it still as the Dark Continent.

But of course we do not want you to be worried about what is happening to your two and only parents, so we are going to keep the letters back until we are in the French country ; they will probably be a long time in the post, so, long before they arrive and you read about the PLAN, you will receive—we hope—a cable from East Africa to say the ADVENTURE is OVER. I know this sounds a topsy-turvy way of telling you about the journey, but I think you will see the point.

All the years we have been going backwards and forwards to Africa, we have found that so few people know the difference between NIGERIA and NAIROBI. Well, if you get a telegram marked Nairobi, before you have a letter to say that we have left Nigeria, it will look as if those places really are the same, but our speedometer will prove that there is three and a half thousand miles between.

*Letter 9.*

*February 16.*

I have been looking at our route, and I feel a bit breathless. Everything in Africa is so large. I hope your map has a drawing of the British Isles on the same scale? Ours has, and I cannot help feeling that when we reach French Equatoria we shall feel a bit lonely.

Try and trace out a line on your map :

1. Starting from Jos in Northern Nigeria work up towards Lake Chad on the border of the Sahara Desert. (We shall not go right up to the Lake, which is perhaps a good thing—the very largest brand of mosquitoes live there by the million.)
2. ACROSS FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA in a diagonal line.
3. Along the top of the BELGIAN CONGO.
4. Over Lake ALBERT into UGANDA.
5. Then into KENYA.
6. Then—home by boat from MOMBASA.

It is that number 2, the thousand miles in French Equatoria, which is the least known and where we are most likely to need help. I have been trying to borrow a phrase-book to take as well as a dictionary. Master says he never did know much French and has forgotten all of that ; he wonders if a Malay language will help at all. I should think it will be quite as useful as Aba's Swaheli, which he says he understands.

We have already sent a telegram to the Governor of Chad Territory asking if we may come through, but, as there is no direct communication between there and Nigeria, even a telegram must be taken by hand when across the boundary so we shall not get a reply for a long time. We hear very encouraging reports about Son Excellence, and are looking forward to meeting him. If he asks us to dine, do you think I shall have to talk French all the time?

Our papers and passports are all in order and the pile is beginning to look like business. I have been given a large Diary and a lot of new pencils and now every one asks if I am going to write a book. All the writing I shall do will be my Diary-letters to you, I am quite sure I could not write enough to fill a book, even though someone has already suggested a title: 'Lizzie hops the Dark Continent.' Do you think she will?

*Letter 10.*

*February 19.*

Our pretty house is beginning to look most undressed and unhappy and the verandah is full of crates and boxes. It would have been terribly hard to leave the garden later on in the year; it looks so beautiful when the rains are on. I think people at home often feel I am not enthusiastic enough about the average English garden, but here there is so much SPACE, the COLOURS are so vivid, and the size of the plants so different that I cannot help comparing them in my mind when I am at home.

After the first shower of rain, the grass seems to turn at once from burnt-up brown to green, and you can almost watch everything grow ; during June and July, the garden is at its very best, and there are masses of red, orange, yellow and green, but very little blue, indigo and violet.

*Later.* I do wish I could suddenly have transported you and all your friends here this afternoon. I suddenly had a message to come down to the Office and bring the camera ; of course I went at once, it sounded exciting. There was a lot of noise and I saw a tremendous crowd gathered round the glorious Flame-of-the-Forest tree, and was told that the head of the native village, Siriki-n-Mongu, had arranged an entertainment for us, a really and truly PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW, under a tropical sky.

Very few white people see these entertainments, the men usually perform to their black friends in the villages rather than in the larger towns ; and as this is a popular place the shows are sometimes given at Mongu. I felt I was very lucky to be here, and chose a nice shady spot where I could see all there was to be seen and presently the fun started.

The ' walk-up, walk-up ' part was done by a girl, screaming so loudly that she had to cover up her ears to protect her poor ear-drums ; the showman got ready his funny little stand, covered with a blue cloth and then prowled about making ' magic,' and from the obvious excitement of the crowd, they believed him. Presently he disappeared, the dolls began to pop up and a lot of talk went on which I did not understand ; but when the crowd began to giggle, I gathered that Punch and his friends were making fun of Siriki-n-Mongu and some of



A NIGERIAN PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW



the other well-known natives. The girl's screeching had mercifully stopped for the moment. Then the dolls began to talk about the White People, calling Master 'Siriki-n-Duniya' (King of the World), and 'The Richest Man past all,' which really meant, 'Here's hoping, when we pass round the bag after the show is ended.'

Then the lady began shouting again, the dolls danced and talked and quarrelled, and the play worked up to a terrific excitement for the punishing of poor Punch. (In the old days at the seaside, you used to cry bitterly when the policeman appeared and you had to be led away at this point, and then you would return to put your penny in the hat and watch the whole thing over again.) I had been taking photographs as hard as I could up till now, but the end was such a surprise that I did not get a picture; there seemed to be a cat-fight going on, there were snarlings and growlings and scuffles, the girl's noise died down to a blood-curdling moan, as suddenly up sprang—what do you think, a Policeman? No, nothing so ordinary. Do you remember the *Magic* the showman made? The *Magic* was the worst thing he could think of to frighten everybody, a stuffed HYÆNA!

*Letter* 11.

*March* 4.

The Diary-letters have been neglected for a long time—such a lot to do and so many people to see and thank for good wishes. Then, I have had fever for a whole week, which was rather a waste of time. I did try to pretend I had not got shivers, but when

the thermometer said 102°, it was not much good. I had letters from England to cheer me up and I wrote one to you to send by the out-going mail, but though it was very difficult, I did not say anything about the Great Secret.

I have been living on orange-juice lately. Do you remember how Small Cousin said he should like to go to America because there seemed to be such nice drinks? I should think he would like Africa too. Most people out here have oranges growing in their gardens; we have mangoes, limes, custard-apples, guavas, and pomegranates. I believe there is something called a loquat, but as it has never loquated, I cannot tell you what it is like. As we have no oranges at Mongu, Master sends a native to buy them from the French Catholic Mission, thirty-five miles away, where there seems to be everything useful, from wine to pigs. The oranges are green and have not much flavour, but they are juicy and sweet; we have packed a bagful for our journey, I think we shall want anything that is cool and wet.

The car is still having things done to it; one of the latest 'improvements' is a net to stretch above our heads to take maps, the camera, a telescope and last-minute oddments. Can't you picture what will happen? They will spend all their time falling on to me! So will the precious attaché cases with passports, money and papers, which are to share the front floor space with my feet, propped up against my ankles!

I shall have time to write one more letter to be posted at once, and it will tell you not to expect any news for three or four weeks as we are going

to be away from the camp. I expect you will think that Master has gone fishing ; he has just been away for a few days and has had some wonderful sport ; I am afraid it will not seem much fun fishing in England after catching tiger-fish and what they call ' Giwa-n-rua ' (Water Elephant), nearly as large as himself. Of course the boys could not understand why he wanted to go three hundred miles by train to get to a special river when ' Plenty fish live for Store inside tins.'

I am dreading the next few days ; saying good-bye is so horrid. Every morning someone comes up, the washerman, the boys' wives, the Fulani people who sell us milk, the gardeners, all the cook's mates (pronounced ' Cookoo-matey ') we have ever had, and, very shyly, the village children dressed in their holiday clothes hoping it was ' Kreemuss ' (Christmas) again. One year I brought out a box-full of brightly coloured beads and necklaces, and sixpenny watch-bracelets from Woolworths, and we watched those stolid fat little black things scrambling for their special fancy ; the bracelets were the chief delight, and not only to the children—every grown-up native for miles around wanted one too !

Daniel has had his photograph taken and has presented me with one ; at first I didn't know who it was. He is dressed in a tight drill suit and a European felt hat so that he should look as much like a white man as possible and then as a final touch he added—what do you think ?—SPECTACLES. I asked him why and so he explained that whenever I went ' in dem car for Jos ' (to him, the big world) I always wore ' dem glass for eye,' so apparently as

I did it he thought dark spectacles were the hall-mark of fashion !

*Letter 12.*

*March 10.*

EVERYTHING IS READY AND WE ARE DUE TO START TO-MORROW.

When I saw all our luggage on board the lorry I wondered if the two servants would have to perch on the roof—and there are still seven cases of petrol to be taken on when we reach the French country. A party of men going up to the border have taken a lot of our cases and have dumped them all ready for us.

Photographs will be taken before we leave Mongu so I shall be able to show you what the car looks like ; she will be one of the Wonders of the World if she survives the journey. You've seen vans loaded up with furniture outside houses when people are moving ? Well, she looks rather like that but more so, because we have great cans of water bolted to the back and enormous carriers containing oil-drums clanking about underneath, but, anyhow, we haven't a fern or a canary !

People are very interested in our adventure and we have had telegrams from all over the Colony, including the Acting Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, and permission has come through for us to visit the French country.

We are due to stay to-morrow night in Jos and then start off very early the next morning. Lots of people say they are coming to say good-bye, and

tell us still more horrible things that are bound to happen ; I have to pretend I don't believe any of the stories, but I feel that I really do understand the meaning of the proverb, ' Many would be cowards if they had courage enough.'

I daren't let anyone know I am frightened.

*Later.* The Staff have given us a lovely farewell party ; after we had all made speeches, we trooped out into the moonlight to have another look at the car and wonder if there was anything we had forgotten. Someone said, ' What are you going to call her ? ' and as if in answer someone else remarked, ' Well, anyhow, I think it is a jolly stout effort.'

That was good enough. A bottle of champagne was fetched, and, amid loud cheers, our large Ford lorry was solemnly christened

THE STOUT EFFORT.

## CHAPTER II

### THE START

*Letter 13.*

A VILLAGE IN BAUCHI PROVINCE,  
NORTHERN NIGERIA.

*March 12th.*

WE HAVE REALLY STARTED.

We left Jos this morning before most people were awake and had breakfast with friends about ten miles out ; I was told to be sure and eat a lot because it was probably the last good meal we should have for weeks, and, anyhow it would save having to stop for lunch ! I wondered whatever you would have said to that idea, and hoped Master would not have such a brain-wave often.

We soon had to say good-bye to the Plateau, the only part of Nigeria I really know well, and then we dropped down by a very steep hill on to the road to Bauchi, the capital of the Province, an airless, sun-baked place, surrounded by crumbling walls of red earth. Everything is very dried-up and thirsty-looking, but this afternoon I saw some lovely trees in full bloom like pink wistaria, showing us a piece of Fairyland which seemed to have lost its way and turned up there.

I saw baobab trees to-day for the first time, trees that are said to be able to live for five thousand years and are one of the largest kinds in the world.



THE START



You would have said they were like Christopher Robin's house in the forest, and would have looked for the green door and the notice saying :

GON OUT

BACKSON

BISY

BACKSON

Master has not read *The House at Pooh Corner* and he said the trees reminded *him* of skinny old women with long thin arms and pleated skirts. Then he said :

“ I think you would probably like the taste of baobab fruit.” Of course I asked “ Why ? ”

“ Oh, they are called MONKEY BREAD.”

I must learn not to ask questions !

On some of the other leafless trees we saw nests of weaver-birds still hanging ; there have been numbers of squirrels, and also families of red monkeys with white sit-upons, who chattered angrily at us as we hurtled past.

This is only a very short letter, but I am writing it while we wait for Aba to produce some dinner. We have done 163 miles to-day and it has been absolutely RED HOT ; I believe it is nothing to what we must expect presently. I hope by then I shall have got used to the heat. Even our oranges were tepid when I made an onslaught on the sack this afternoon and I am afraid that in a day or two they will be like bullets with no juice at all. I would have given pounds for a ‘ Stop-me-and-buy-one.’

But, troubles are over for the day. I have had my bath, there is a lovely breeze, and I am just beginning to feel cool. We have had our beds

put outside the Rest House and I hope the nets will keep out the sand-flies as well as the mosquitoes. I will tell you all about a Rest House another day. I am the tireddest thing in the world to-night and I cannot help remembering that I shall not have any news of you for weeks and weeks, perhaps not until we get home. I am pretending hard to like ADVENTURE, but I am not quite sure if I do.

*Letter 14.*

NEAR MAIDUGARI,  
BORNU PROVINCE.

*March 13th.*

Although it is the 13<sup>th</sup> to-day, we had a great stroke of luck, and ran right into the middle of a big Salla show. I don't remember if I have told you about the month of fasting called Ramadan which the Mahommedans observe; during the whole of the month they are not supposed to eat or drink (not even water) between sunrise and sunset, and they do a tremendous lot of praying and chanting their creed, 'There is no god but GOD, and Mahomet is His Prophet.'

Mahommedans get up at the first sign of dawn to pray, because they believe that when a cock crows it has seen an angel, so they must needs be up and praising Allah.

To celebrate the end of the month of fasting they have their great holiday, and a native described Salla to me as :

'All-the-same your "Kreemuss."'

It used to be a very expensive time for us because

every one came up to the bungalow for 'dashes,' from the smallest garden boy who sings all day and never does a stroke of work, to the blacksmith's wife who never loses a chance of coming to make 'small complain' about her husband. Our house-boys always made great preparations, saving up their money to buy new white robes to wear for the Holiday.

The word SALLA means PRAYER, and the first year I was in Nigeria (when you were only a year and a half) I asked the tall messenger, 'Good Morning,' why they were so excited about the holiday and how they all celebrated it. This is how he described it :

'First, we pray to Allah.

'Then, WOMEN dance. (This in a very disgusted voice.)

'Then . . . WE HAVE PLENTY GOOD FOR EAT.'

This last item was a kind of hint to Master not to forget ; every year the black people who worked at Mongu were given a bullock (Nigerian cattle are very fierce-looking creatures with enormous horns and a hump), and BEEF to these people at Salla time was as important as turkey and Christmas pudding are to us.

The Salla show we interrupted to-day was finer than any I had seen and reminded me of the Durbar at Kano when the Prince of Wales came to Nigeria a few years ago. As we drove up the wide street of a large native village, a confused babel of sound came from a dense mass of people moving slowly towards us. Of course we drew to the side of the road and stopped the car. I grabbed the camera and wished for the umpteenth time that it could take

coloured photographs. You have never seen what I call a HARD blue sky, and I don't think I could mix it for you in your paint-box ; so vivid, so dense and absolutely cloudless, and yet somehow suggesting that soon, much too soon for us, it will turn almost black with the heavy storm-clouds of the rainy season. Try to imagine the picture I saw—the brilliant sky, a dusty street lined with huts of red mud and filled with a hurrying crowd of natives in their brightest blues, orange, magenta, and dazzlingly clean white robes and turbans ; there were Fuanil girls with marvellously plaited hair, and women from another tribe with filed teeth stained red as a mark of beauty ; and horsemen wearing old chain-armour which is said to have been captured during the Crusades, nearly eight hundred years ago ! Their horses, too, were a remarkable sight with their elaborate saddle-cloths reaching to the ground and with their front legs dressed in bright pyjama-like coverings. Master told me afterwards that I kept on wailing : ' Oh, why don't they keep still,' and then he says I just pushed into the middle of the road and held up the traffic while I took my photographs. The girls pretended to be shy and ran off, so I only got their backs, but the majority of the crowd loved being noticed and I was able to take as many pictures as I wanted.

Then came drummers and musicians, making a most deafening but terribly attractive din ; the drumming seemed to be an accompaniment for the long silver horns blown by men who rocked and jumped about as if they were wound up and would presently run down, their shiny black cheeks blown out like monstrous tight balloons.

Then, suddenly, a space cleared and a very dignified figure came into the picture, the Chief of the district, riding under a large silk umbrella, slowly fanning himself with a fly-whisk.

The horsemen and the musicians closed round, and the whole group came to a standstill just opposite our absurd-looking lorry—it was like a meeting of the Old World and the New, the twelfth century and the twentieth. It was only as the procession moved slowly on that I realised I had not used my camera.

As we were preparing to start up the car, I suddenly saw a grinning black face which seemed familiar and then I was hailed delightedly : ‘ Sanu, sanu da Salla, Warri-Gida,’ which if you saw it on a Christmas card might be translated : ‘ Compliments of the season, Oh Lady of the House.’ This was a boy called Shoo-Shoo, from a camp near ours in Jos. He wanted three things from me ; some quinine, a Salla ‘ dash,’ and to know how his Warri-Gida was. I had to take lots of messages for her, quite regardless of the fact that she was in New Zealand and I was bound for East Africa. I am quite sure the African thinks of ‘ White Man Country ’ as One Small Village, where we all meet to chat and have ‘ elevenses,’ or else that we are so entirely wonderful that we are able to conquer time and space. I heard of a Native Chief who visited England and when he returned to Africa the one thing he decided he could not tell his people was the three weeks’ journey by SEA. He knew they would never believe him and so would think he was lying about everything else. So, I certainly did not tell Shoo-Shoo that his Missis had gone a six weeks’

journey by sea, and that I was going a three weeks' journey by road. He evidently expected me to take his photograph to send with his messages, but Master was getting impatient, and I had finished my roll of films, so I just clicked the empty camera several times, gave him some tablets of quinine, and we departed on our way.

*Letter 15.*

RABEH'S PALACE,

DIKWA, BORNU PROVINCE.

*March 14.*

Doesn't that address sound grand? It is the first time I have stayed in a Palace, and unless I had been told I certainly should not have recognised it! It is built of mud, with a flat roof, and it is cool, which we rather appreciate; it has been grilling all day and the road can only be spelt with the four letters s.a.n.d. I think sand is going to be Sarah's worst enemy (I am going to call the lorry Sarah until I see if she deserves the grand one).

This place Dikwa is now the British frontier station. Before the war it was a German town, and before that it was the capital of a small kingdom ruled over by an Arab called Rabeh, who came here about forty years ago and conquered the local Chief. He was a tyrant and detested by everybody, white, or black, and was always at war with his neighbours. Finally, there was a real battle near Dikwa and both leaders were killed, Rabeh and a Commandant Lamy, whose name was given to the town we are making for in Chad Territory.

But to go back to this morning. Long before you were awake in England we were crawling, or rather ploughing our way, through dusty ruts to a place called Maidougari where we hoped to call on somebody and be asked to breakfast. I wanted to stop and look at an odd-looking cloud, which was near the ground and moved. Master and Sarah were both rather cross, so I had to watch alone, and soon found the 'cloud' was made up of myriads of tiny birds, closely packed, dipping and wheeling together in one movement.

Soon after this, I saw an absurd chameleon, stealthily crossing the almost white road disguised as a blade of emerald-green grass. Everything in sight seemed scorched and dusty, and in the brilliant sunshine the effect was of snow; where the chameleon had found this not-very-well-chosen-shade to imitate, I could not think. Master snapped 'You cannot take it with you, the car is full enough and there is no room for PETS.' This I am afraid is true, and there will be no swivel-eyed reptiles for you this time. The servants will be glad anyhow. Black men seem to be scared of them and say they are 'debbils.'

Master had a treat next. We saw half a dozen Harnessed Antelopes. If you tell Small Cousin about the animals we see, explain quickly that this one gets its name from the patterned markings across the flank which look just like a harness—he might ask if they had *bridles* too, and that would make him feel a 'thilly ath.'

We did arrive at Maidougari in time for breakfast and were invited to have sausages and bacon, toast *and* butter, coffee *and* lots of milk; it seems much

more than two days since I had all those luxuries. Perhaps I shall get hardened soon !

Before we left, our host showed us his vegetable garden of which he is very proud, living as he does in such dry and dusty country so near the desert ; he gave me four lovely crisp lettuces which, with the temperature at about  $104^{\circ}$ , will be as good as ice-cream with our midday lunch of milkless tea, hard-boiled eggs and cheese. I seem to talk a lot about food, but I know it is a subject that interests you !

Don't we do odd things when we are away from England ? If I rolled up in a lorry at 9 o'clock in the morning at the house of someone I'd never met before, dressed in boy's clothes, I should expect a police whistle to be blown and to be handed over as of 'unsound mind.' In Africa, you call on complete strangers at any hour of the day or night (whenever you want anything) and every one's house is like a hotel except that you don't pay ! A cook is never surprised by a last-minute message 'Three or four more for lunch' and the house-boys get a bed ready in the spare-room at any hour without even grumbling.

We certainly enjoyed the lettuces ; the oranges are getting more bullety every day. The dryness of the air is very trying and my lips are so cracked that it hurts to laugh. Poor Sarah does not cool down until the evening breeze springs up, and it isn't possible to touch the metal work without burning one's hand. I should think she will melt altogether in the French Country and go up in a cloud of smoke—but I've just remembered a framed sentence in The Doctor's

consulting-room : 'Don't worry, it may never happen.'

I must now go to bed in the courtyard of Rabeh's palace ; I hope none of the warlike braves will come and scalp me through the mosquito-net !

*Letter 16.*

FORT FOUREAU, OR KUSSERI,  
FRENCH MANDATED CAMEROONS.

*March 15.*

Do look at this, Oh big Daughter. We are over the borders of the French country and to-morrow will begin the real adventure. We shall be absolutely cut-off from anyone in Nigeria, no one knows we are coming and we shall be on the way to the Great Unknown. That sounds very grand ; I hope it doesn't come under the heading of *swank* !

But I must tell everything in order or I shall get in a muddle and leave things out.

We started from our Palace lodgings early and soon reached the N'Gala River, the boundary between English and French territories ; we had heard such fierce stories about this river that we spent some time in Dikwa asking for news of its depth, and if it was possible to cross. No one knew, but everybody promised to come with us to see ! We hoped for the best, but remembered what had happened to three men we knew, bound for Khartoum, just about a month before. They had two cars and a lorry, and, as the river was full, they had to use the so-called ferry made of a few planks balanced on empty oil drums. When the lorry was about half-way across, a sudden swirl of water and an attempt

to turn the 'ferry' up-stream, resulted in the crazy concern heeling over on one side, and the car, with every one's luggage on board, slid gently off and disappeared completely from view. I haven't seen any of them since to hear all the details, but the story is that one of them swam about (fully dressed, of course) until he could get a rope underneath the lorry, and then they gradually got it into the shore. Rumour has it that in a very short time the swimmer had found a clean, dry suit, and a smart new tie and was quite ready to start again, with the lorry loaded up and unhurt !

Of course we quite expected that Sarah would have at least to be dragged through the river with ropes, while porters carried all our hundred-and-one packages over on their heads and we swam across ; anyhow, I vowed I would *not* go over in a bath pushed by natives, to make sport for Master with a camera on the other side !

Having made all these plans as to how we should cross this Jordan without using the nightmare-ferry, when we did see the river we just burst out laughing, it was like a narrow silver thread, less than a foot deep. Our audience certainly did not have the fun they expected. Master easily splashed the lorry through while I took off shoes and stockings and walked across.

We were now on French Territory and I felt as if I had swum the Channel.

On the other side of the river, we stopped to watch the birds, a truly wonderful sight. Stork, duck, crane, heron, geese, cormorants, water birds of every variety were there, including PELICAN. Do you remember how we used to hurry to get to

the Zoo in time and see the pelicans fed, and how angry you always were with the greedy one who always held in his pouch more fish than he could hope to swallow, and how comic his efforts were to wash them down his throat without giving any away? There seemed to be hundreds on the banks of this river to-day, and, as we walked slowly towards them, with a great fluttering of wings, up rose the whole lot, only to settle again a few yards further on like handfuls of torn paper in a breeze. I did wish you could have seen them. Of course I tried to get near enough to use my camera, but the pelican is a terribly shy bird and he absolutely refused to be photographed.

You wouldn't have liked the next adventure. I was driving, and I am afraid I must have been watching the monkeys playing touch-last by the side of the track instead of looking where I was going. The next thing I knew was that we were right through a ramshackle brushwood bridge: I did feel a worm and apologised humbly to Sarah, and to Master, who was most sporting. As you know, if anything big happens, he doesn't say a word, but if he breaks a shoe-lace or can't find a wireless gadget he tells himself all about it in several different languages.

I wrote up my Diary while Lawanson did some hard work with the jacks, and Master went off with a gun to try and get some guinea-fowl for our supper. It was a good thing the accident was not worse, it would have been difficult to find anyone to lend a hand in pushing. The only human being we saw all the morning was one native who carried a stick which was split at the top to hold a

letter. He came and offered the note to us, because a messenger always hopes a car means that he has found the right white man and that he need not walk any further ; I am afraid this one had no luck.

It took a long time to raise the lorry out of the hole, and we had to unload her completely before it was possible. Poor Sarah, I am afraid she does not appreciate my driving very much, especially when exciting things happen while I am at the wheel. Sometimes, a Willy-Willy comes to torment you, and the only thing is to stop and shut your eyes. A Willy-Willy begins with a little spiral of dust playing about in the road, then it grows into a wider circle, collecting more and more dust as it flies around. From a small rusty sigh it grows to quite an angry roar, whirling about in a taller and taller cloud, throwing up the loose leaves, sticks and small stones in its way, just like an angry fairy filling your eyes and mouth with dust and sand and making you feel as if scorching fingers have pricked you. Where the Willies go to finish off their tempers I do not know, but the last you see is a furious cloud of dust tearing away into the bush like a mad thing.

In the middle of the afternoon we had a small peep through emerald-green foliage of a deep blue river, sparkling like diamonds and sapphires in the blazing sunshine. I have never seen quite such a sudden splash of colour, and if someone had shown it to me in a picture I should have said it was too bright to be true.

This was our first sight of the Shari, the river which flows into Lake Chad, and which in some parts is broad as the Thames at London Bridge.

This river is the boundary between the French Cameroons and the Chad Territory (I suppose now we are in French country we ought to call it Territoire du Tchad).

When we arrived at Fort Foureau or Kusséri, the headquarters of this district, the young Commandant told us it was too late to get the ferry for us to-day, but he would be able to offer us some sleeping quarters and we could cross over to Fort Lamy first thing in the morning. He seemed very proud of his English, learnt in a month from an elephant hunter ; asked us to dine with him and then very charmingly demanded three hundred and fifty francs for bringing the lorry into the Cameroons. Master felt it was rather a case of 'When you call me that, SMILE,' but Sarah is here and we cannot very well go on without her. Master smiled and paid up.

For the moment, the STOUT EFFORT seems worth her weight in French money. Long may we continue to think so !

CHAPTER III  
FRENCH EQUATORIA

*Letter 17.*

JUST OUTSIDE FORT LAMY,  
TERRITOIRE DU TCHAD.

*March 16.*

I'm beginning to be glad I've brought such a lot of writing-paper with me ; I'm sure I shall never finish all to-day's news.

We are in a small Rest House (the French word is *campement*) near the River Shari and Master has departed to fish while I write to you. The natives who are here to look after the hut and provide wood and water for visitors have been demanding *cadeaux* ever since we arrived an hour ago, and for the moment I have made them blissfully happy by handing over a broken looking-glass ; they will soon start quarrelling over it, but, for the moment peace reigns. Lawanson seems to dislike the look of the people so much that he has pulled down Sarah's blinds *and* covered her over with a large ground sheet.

We started the day by settling well down into the sand while on our way to the Ferry from Fort Foureau ; the ferry was there but it had to wait while we solemnly unloaded the lorry and put down a pathway of grass mats to make it easier for Sarah to move. That took nearly an hour, but even then

we were on the Boat and chugging across the river long before you were down to breakfast, I'm sure.

We certainly hadn't expected such a smart affair—a wooden platform bolted on to three steel canoes, worked by an outboard motor and guided by the natives in the canoes. We took up nearly every inch of room on the raft, but there was one other passenger, a black gentleman with a beard and a jaunty red cap, and a large badge with AP on it, pinned on to his coat with large safety-pins. He had an exercise book, too, which, of course I wanted to see, but he didn't seem to like the look of me so I couldn't even ask how his children were and if his badge was really meant to say PA. In this backwards sort of country where even the cuckoo says coo-cuck, the children *may* call their fathers AP; you never know.

Master crashed off the Ferry and charged the almost perpendicular bank leading to the town and arrived in front of the Government buildings just like a Jack-in-the-box.

We were met by an apparition in spotless white from helmet to shoes, uniform buttoned high up to the chin, who introduced us to the Governor. I drew a long breath and started on the elaborate French sentence I had been rehearsing, and then with a charming bow the Governor said: 'Madame, will you speak English?'

He was a delightful person, and seemed to be a man of many parts. I soon discovered he knew nearly all Shakespeare by heart, he translates Arnold Bennett's books into French, his hobby is buffaloes, and his craze is flying. We heard from his Staff that he is a great success as a Governor,

and one man told me with much dramatic gesturing of hands : ' If twenty men die here, if thunder comes there, it does not trouble him.' He had been for five years in this hottest part of Central Africa, we learned afterwards, and was due to start for France that very evening. If we had accepted his courteous invitation to stay in Fort Lamy, I suppose he would have put off his leave for just one more twenty-four hours.

Going on leave for people in Nigeria is a very simple affair of train and boat, but for the French people it is a very different matter. If you look at the map of French Equatoria, you'll see that their chief river runs north into Lake Chad and that they have no seaport on the Gulf of Guinea ; that part used to be German country and the French have not yet been able to build an all-weather road to the coast. Anyone wishing to go to France from Fort Lamy must go by road and river for more than two thousand miles in the opposite direction in order to get a boat to Europe. An official on the frontier of the Sudan would take about three months to get home.

Son Excellence invited us to luncheon at 11. It was then about 9, so with much handshaking and bowing we said au revoir. Master went off to collect the petrol and post my big packet of letters to you and the films of the Salla show, and I was put in charge of a Lady Clerk who let me sit in her Office out of the glaring sun. I don't think she understood any English and I struggled manfully for a time in French and explained that we were *not* Missionaries and that we were travelling for *fun*. From her puzzled expression, she seemed to find it

a difficult thing to believe. Perhaps she thought the sun had gone to my head or perhaps she agreed that 'Allah created the English *mad*—the maddest of all mankind.' It was much too hot to talk and, mercifully, after a while she appeared to be busy, so I was able to write out some telegrams to send to Nigerian friends saying, 'So far, all right.' I don't expect they will have the message for about ten days, and I was just wishing for a wireless or a telephone when Master came in and told me that letters take *two and a half months* to get to Europe! We may be home before you get the ones I have just posted.

The French Officials did not seem to mind what trouble they took to see that things were made as easy as possible for us; they have sent a message to the Governor of the next province, Ubangui-Shari, to ask him to help us too, and we have been given a complete list of Campements in this Chad country, the distances between them being in kilometres. To be any use to us and our speedometer we shall have to turn these distances into miles, I suppose I looked a bit doubtful and your other Parent asked me rather sadly if I learnt anything useful at school! (To turn kilometres into miles, I believe one multiplies by five and divides by eight—I am sure we shall never agree about the answers.)

Before luncheon, His Excellency drove us round the town in his smart Citroen, which had a specially planned radiator system because of the fearful dryness of this country and the impossibility of carrying quantities of water in the car when touring the Province.

Fort Lamy is built of red brick with shady streets and large native quarters crowded with horses ; we heard that because of tsetse-fly these horses cannot remain in the town between May and September. To the north is a great horse-breeding centre and we were told that the Frenchmen stationed up there find it very lonely and that one of their only amusements is guinea-fowl-polo, the things required being a horse, a stick with a board on the end, some guinea-fowl, and lots of room. These are the rules, you can try it when you next stay at a Farm ! The players ride into the birds which get up and settle a few hundred yards away ; this is done several times until the birds are too tired to fly, and then the horsemen try to jerk the guinea-fowl off their feet into the saddle, by no means an easy job, considering the way these birds can dodge and run. Perhaps it would be easier with chickens !

There are millions of cattle in Chad province, but practically none in the south. We were introduced to Sophie, a baby buffalo, who did her best to give me a violent kick. I don't think she liked the Governor to have any lady-friends except herself. She had the figure of an outsize Shetland pony, and her colouring was reddish brown, but when she is full-grown, her height will be about 5 feet and her colour nearly black. The Governor hopes Sophie will be the beginning of a large herd of buffalo, for use instead of cattle in the tsetse area ; they are apparently not attacked by that fly (the terrible carrier of sleeping-sickness).

I do not know how long lunch lasted, but we had at least seven courses and different wines with each ; I took care not to empty my glass and the attentive

black servant was rather worried when I would not let him give me a row of goblets, all waiting to be tasted.

At last, with many thank-yous and still more handshakes we said good-bye to the Governor and went off to collect Sarah and the servants. The boys looked rather grumpy, especially Aba, and I imagined it was because he had not been able to make himself understood ; he looked very surprised when he found that the natives in this part of the world understood my French and not his Hausa !

We had to cross the river higher up to reach the main road through French Territory, and the ferry had been ordered to be ready for us. It was the middle of the afternoon, and anyone with any sense would have been sound asleep in that terrific heat. Certainly the crocodiles were. I counted three having a sun-bath on the sandbanks, the golden colour of the sand throwing up the azure blue of the Shari. There were swarms of fish too, most of them having an eye without a pupil like a large brown marble.

The exit from the river was rather a nightmare. I hope to goodness it won't be always as difficult. First, we broke the landing-stage amid groans from the natives in charge of the crazy affair, and then Sarah absolutely refused to climb the bank ; it was rather like a wall that had suffered in an earthquake. Sarah was terribly overloaded with the seven cases of petrol and Master tried to help her up the hill by using a near-by tree and a ' block-and-tackle.' (Ask someone to explain that to you ; years ago I got into dreadful disgrace because Master found out I did not know what a block-and-

tackle was, and, what was far worse, I did not mind not knowing !)

After about an hour's struggle, we unloaded the car and then she agreed to climb the hill.

*Later.* Master did catch a fish, a large one, so he is feeling rather happy. While we were waiting for Aba to cook it for our evening meal, an enormous spider about the size of a saucer crawled over the table, and your Parent suddenly produced this :

' Who would change places with the Spider in the morning,  
When the Sun is in his parlour, and he's Rich! Rich! Rich!  
As he peeps beneath the curtain, and exclaims, amid his yawning,  
" It's either *Dew* or *Diamonds*, I don't care which ! " '

In French Equatoria, I'd rather have DEW !

*Letter 18.*

A VILLAGE LIKE AN OVEN IN

FRENCH EQUATORIA.

*March 17.*

This has been the hottest day I have yet lived through. Can you even imagine 120° ? I don't expect you have ever known more than 80°. The heat did not shimmer in waves like it does in England, it jumped and banged in a solid mass, and my sun-helmet felt as if it weighed a ton. The poor car has been behaving just like a volcano and whenever Lawanson had to fill up the radiator, the remains of the water shot out in all directions and he had to be very careful not to get scalded. The water space does not seem enough for such a heavy car in this dry heat, and she needs to be filled about every five miles. I don't expect you

have ever even noticed water being put in a car at home ; it is usually done *once* in a long day's motoring. We have been following the bed of the Shari river, so we found it fairly easy to get enough water for Sarah in the villages through which we passed.

We saw at least a dozen roan antelope this morning, also some reed-buck, and a family of wild-pig, who had apparently just been having a most exciting bath in red mud ; they showed their disgust at being disturbed in their morning walk by turning their backs and tearing along with tails straight up in the air.

At first the road was very sandy and then it improved, the chief snag being the sudden, unexpected holes. These are the remains of ants' nests where the Ant-Bear has been digging for his favourite meal. He appears to be very thorough and gets out all the eggs, which means that he leaves large yawning chasms in the most uncomfortable places. These are not visible until the last moment, so it makes the driving decidedly tricky.

If I live to be a hundred and forget all the French I ever knew, I am sure I shall never forget the word B A C. If you look in the dictionary you will see that it means FERRY. A ferry will suggest to you a large contraption worked by chains, which takes at least half a dozen cars and lots of passengers across that narrow neck of Poole Harbour. But in Central Africa a ferry is a rickety contrivance made of some planks bolted to several canoes. These canoes are just hollowed-out tree-trunks which leak and have to be baled out to prevent the whole ferry sinking ! There will be at least a dozen rivers to

cross in the French and Belgian countries, in the watersheds of the Shari, the Congo and the Nile, and instead of a bridge there will be in each case, I am afraid, a BAC. I suppose, really, I am rather ungrateful to be so rude about these ferries, but we really have had rather an uncomfortable day. I ought to be thankful we did not have to swim. The description I have given you is not a bit exaggerated about the 'bac' across the Ba-Illi this afternoon (BA is the local word for river, not only disgusted comment). I was very relieved when Master decided to unload the lorry and make two journeys. I told him I was certain the raft would not take all Sarah's weight *and* his! His retort was that anyhow I could not be trusted to do anything but look after the luggage; this was very crushing because I felt it was so true, so I meekly stayed behind and waited for the return journey.

There was quite a nice-looking *campement* near the river and we were glad not to have to go any further. By 5 o'clock we had done 187 miles and with a temperature that kept soaring higher and higher until it seemed as if the mercury intended to boil—I certainly was ready to stop. Aba went into the house to investigate and then came and told me: 'It no be good you go inside, PLENTY SMALL BEASTS live.' So, to-night, I have had my bath in a sort of garage with sides and roof of torn grass mats. I could not help wondering how Granny would like this trip!

I believe I promised to tell you about a REST HOUSE. So far, French ones are very much like those in the Plateau Province in Nigeria, but perhaps kept in better repair. They are rather



CROSSING A RIVER IN FRENCH EQUATORIA



like a stable, generally round, with a low grass roof, no doors or windows, a sandy floor and no furniture. We drive the lorry right up to the house, the chairs and table are put outside, and we use the headlights as our illumination ; we have purposely not brought oil-lamps because, with such a lot of petrol on board, we have to be so careful about fire.

When we get to one of these stopping-places, the car is looked after first. Master won't settle down even for a smoke until he is quite sure that everything has been tested, greased and oiled, with plugs cleaned and ready for the next day's run.

Meanwhile, Aba unpacks the lorry, gets out the beds, rounds up the natives who are supposed to be in charge of the *campement*, and makes them fetch wood and water and then proceeds to get some tea ready. (One night he brought it to me so quickly that I wondered if the water was really boiling. 'Oh yes, Ma,' was the reply, 'he *very* boil, he go "picky, picky, picky" inside kettle.') Next, he puts large cans of water on the fire for baths. Perhaps you may wonder why we don't have cold tubs after the fearful heat of the day, but it is far more refreshing to have a warm one, and there is not so much risk of getting fever.

While we are changing into clean clothes, Aba cooks our very welcome dinner of four courses :

Soup (made out of a soup-square or Bovril).

Tinned fish.

Tinned meat and tinned vegetables.

Tinned fruit.

Then a smoke, and then to bed under the stars.

That is where I am going now. I seem to be a very long way from home and you.

*Letter 19.*

A VILLAGE CALLED MANDA,  
1000 MILES FROM MONGU.

*March 18.*

I told you yesterday that we seemed to be a long way from you. We seem to be rather a long way from anywhere. The speedometer to-night says *1000 miles since we started.*

Everything has been different to-day, more trees and palms, coarse elephant grass six feet high, the thermometer only reached  $100^{\circ}$ , and—we had some RAIN. Master has got the wind-up badly and is afraid the Rain Bogey is hard on our heels. He made me eat chocolate in the car instead of stopping for lunch, and then, after all, we had to stop because the radiator leaked and boiled dry and the pipes had to be bound up to prevent real trouble.

Now we are in French country I have to be careful to remember the French rule and drive on the right-hand side of the road ; it does not seem to me that it matters much, we have not seen one car since we left Fort Lamy, nor any white men for two days. If we had an accident or anything serious happened to the car in this part of the world, I am afraid our chances of getting any real help would be very small. Master seems to have thought of everything possible in the way of tools and spares, but if we broke an axle or something we could not replace, well—you might perhaps hear about us in three months' time. The servants were very

unpopular to-day when we discovered one of the precious drums of oil had disappeared from underneath the car. It was difficult to understand how it could have fallen off unnoticed, unless the boys were asleep. We shall not be able to buy more oil until we get nearly to the Congo, so we are hoping what we have will last out. I expect you know as well as I do how important it is for a car to be 'lubricated' just like any other machinery.

We have seen no sign of a railway in this country, nor any hint of things being done to make it more civilised; the natives seem to do nothing but soldiering and road-repairing. But, if we are anywhere about, their chief occupation is staring at us. When we stopped to-day for the repair to Sarah's radiator, every black creature for miles seemed to scent fun. The procession was headed by an incredibly old lady, looking just like a wrinkled chimpanzee, who yodelled lustily as she ran, scarcely pausing to take breath. Perhaps you can imagine what Master thought of this serenade! When he could bear it no longer, I collected the remains of a large packet of chocolate, some cigarettes and an empty glass jar that had contained potted meat, walked a few yards down the road, put these treasures down and returned to the car. There was a rush just like a swarm of gulls or a Rugby scrum and Master called out: 'Six to one on the old lady.' He was right. She soon emerged, clutching several mangled cigarettes and, with the empty bottle perched on her head, she proceeded to walk off down the road, still yodelling hard. I think all her friends must have been stone deaf as well as partially blind. We had passed through their

village and noticed with horror that the children seemed to be covered with sores, and their eyes looked only half open ; the place had such an incongruous name—Djolie. I wish someone could go there and doctor the poor little things.

I was glad to forget these people in watching the wild animals. We saw more roan antelope, the size of polo ponies, with back-curving horns. They like to try and race Sarah as if to say : ‘ Booh to you, muscle is better than petrol.’ Then suddenly they cross the road in a few jerky strides and disappear into the bush as if by magic. Monkeys hid behind bushes and then, of course, peeped out at us again as we went past, and I saw hartebeest for the first time. Master has often told me about their long sheep-like faces and their stubby horns, and, as they raised their heads to stare at the lorry—this strange new animal in such a hurry—I was glad no one was around with a gun. Aba was not so pleased ; he likes meat and when presently we saw some gazelle with long, waggly tails like lambs, he talked regretfully of ‘ small beef.’

Of course, the day would not have been complete without a Bac. The river was shallow and the boatmen waded across, pushing the raft. There was a bathing party of black ladies near the shore, but they refused to come out until we had departed up the bank to the Rest House. I wanted very much to have a photograph of them as I noticed several different types of hair-dressing. These people are Pagans, like the ones in Nigeria, the unconquered more uncivilised inhabitants of the Western Colonies in Africa ; they like to live in the hills and in

villages surrounded by cactus and are straightforward, independent people. Although they do not wear clothes like we do, they delight in fashions quite as much. For the ladies, a bead through the nostril, a stick through the lip, criss-cross marks cut on their cheeks, a raised pattern like the Prince of Wales' feathers on chest and forehead, are some of the fashions I have seen. But the worst of all are the Plate Women. In the lower lip they put a disc which sticks their mouth out like a duck-bill platypus. Sometimes this disc has been known to be eight inches across. I hope you won't try it, even with a ginger biscuit! This is not a Modern Fashion, but a relic of the past, when the Arab Slave Traders used to swoop down on these parts and carry off the people as slaves. Of course they did not want to go, so the women deliberately made themselves as hideous as possible so that they should not be chosen.

The Pagan men love *Hats* which are generally made of plaited grass, and made into most absurd shapes from helmets to tiny straw boaters. On very smart occasions they are trimmed with a feather!

The natives looking after this Rest House to-night are a very cheery crowd and when one of them found I had some soap, he collected a bundle and went off down to the river to tackle our laundry. I am afraid the result will not be up to much as I have no iron, but anyhow we shall be CLEAN. (I've never liked that word ever since I was small. I was dressed for a party, and, anxious to be admired, asked if I looked pretty. That apparently was not allowed and I was told 'No, only *clean*.')

*Letter 20.*

KABO,

PROVINCE OF UBANGUI SHARI.

*March 19.*

We have actually seen several white people to-day, a man and a woman in a car and also a French Official at Fort Archaumbault, at the end of the Chad country, so now we feel very civilised. I almost expected to be able to buy an evening paper or to see Master putting on a dinner jacket.

But we did not feel at all civilised this morning ; we had to cross a bridge that looked as if it might be the end of all things. The upright posts supporting it seemed to be fairly sound but the across ones were absolutely rotten. There was quite a deep drop from the bridge into the stream beneath and it made me feel rather sick as Master, after unloading the lorry, decided to rush her across. He said afterwards it felt like going on tip-toe. We piled all the junk back and then, a hundred yards further on, found another bridge just like the first, so we stopped again. On looking ahead there seemed to be three more bridges close together, so we screwed up our courage and charged the lot, six of them, and then we got out of the car and solemnly shook hands.

As we drew nearer to the town of Fort Archaumbault we overtook a long string of about 100 Pagans, shuffling along the road in single file. At one end of the line was an armed Arab in a light blue uniform and, at the other, a most surprising looking coal-black gentleman dressed in a bowler hat, and a coat like Uncles wear at Weddings and Speech-

days ! Almost as soon as we arrived in the great tree-lined square, the procession appeared and came to a standstill and then, under the direction of more Arabs in uniforms, settled down in three semi-circles under some lovely mango trees. I was so glad the poor tired creatures had that shade. The heat was awful, the town was dry and sandy, and there was not even enough breeze to flap the Tricolour which drooped sadly from a flagstaff above the Government Offices.

Presently, a rather fussy little Adjutant, with sun-helmet well over on one side, came out to speak to us and examine our papers. This was soon over and then we asked him about the Pagans. He told us in very rapid French, as if he really hadn't any time to spare, that the Governor of the Ubangui-Shari Province was on his way here to try the case ; apparently, one of the men had killed a French soldier and all his friends and relations had been brought in to be judged and made to share the punishment. This may seem to you rather unjust, but it is very difficult to teach these black people that there are certain things that cannot be allowed ; when White People go to a country like this they have to act rather like stern but kind and patient policemen and gradually show that because you don't like someone you cannot be allowed to stick a knife into him. (The Pagans make very little fuss about pain and injuries and so they don't seem to notice when other people are hurt. This makes them very unkind to animals ; possibly they do not mean to be cruel but it does not occur to them that their horses, or dogs or donkeys feel at all.) We asked the French Official what would happen to

these Pagans and he said he thought their village would be burned and that the people would be housed in another one and be made to help in the road-repairing.

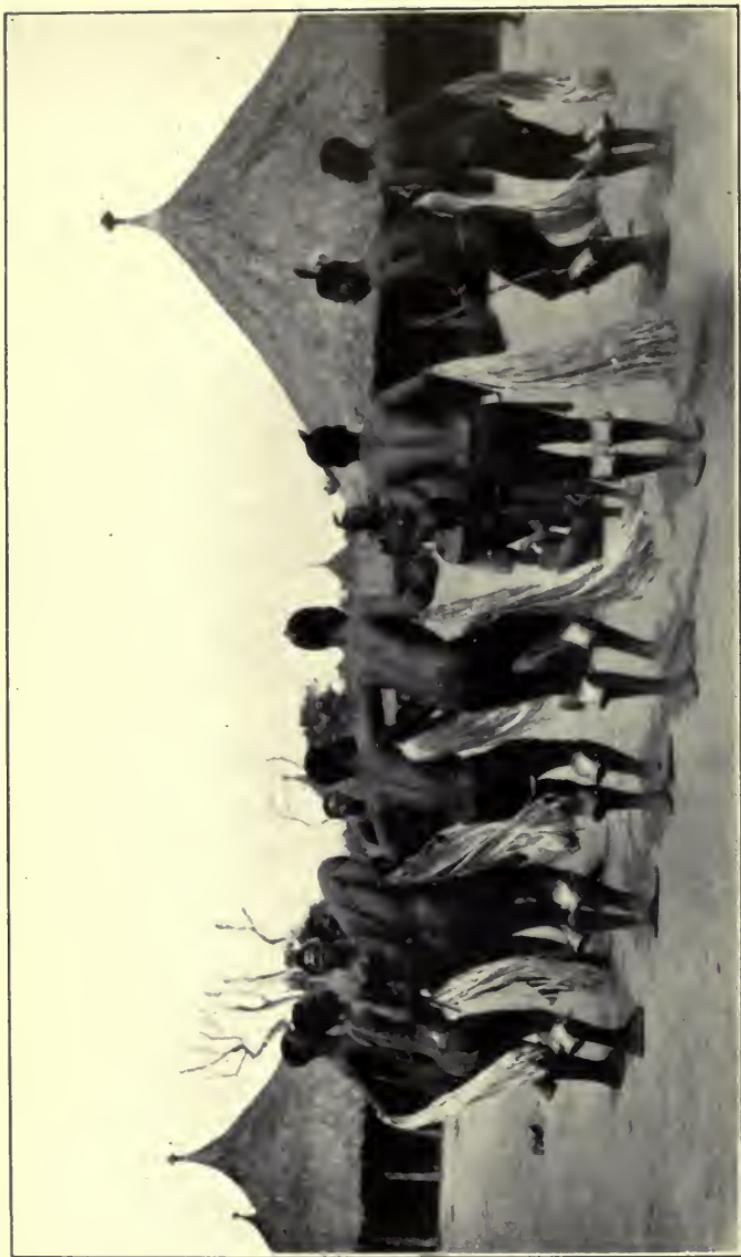
After saying good-bye to the hot and perspiring Adjutant, we went off to the Post Office to get a set of stamps of the Colony for you. We suddenly had an idea that it would be fun to do that in every country we go through. Just outside was a boy with a basket of fresh vegetables and—think of it in heat of 110°—some lettuces. I don't believe you have ever been really THIRSTY ; not just I-would-like-a-drink-of-water but I *must*-drink-something-even-if-it-is-tepid.

I think the sight of those hot, dusty Pagans and the draggled flag which would not even flap, had made me thirstier than usual, and I asked slowly and in my very best French if I could buy some lettuces. The boy shook his head, not because he did not understand, but because the vegetables were only for the Government officials, just a few precious guarded pieces of greenstuff in this dried-up, scorched country.

So I turned away from the basket and went to look at the stamps. They are fine ones, ranging from one centime to five francs, in lovely colours and overprinted AFRIQUE EQUATORIALE FRANÇAISE and underneath OUBANGUI-CHARI.

Madame, the Postmistress, was very nice and friendly, and, as we were leaving, she whispered to her husband and then went into another room and brought back—no, not some more stamps, but—TWO LETTUCES. She had evidently heard my conversation with the boy outside and she was giving





A PAGAN DANCE IN FRENCH EQUATORIA

me their own share for the day. I nearly hugged her. We have had no fresh food for several days so you can understand how grateful we were. Yesterday, I tried to eat a raw onion for lunch with cheese and Ryvita, but it did make my eyes water, and I was told I smelt so horrid that if I did it again I must go and change places with Lawanson at the back of the car !

A few miles out of the town we saw a very different picture of Pagans ; it was the middle of the morning, and so hot that we were nearly frizzled and, suddenly, round one corner we came upon a dancing-class. There were about a dozen, all men, and so keen on doing all the new steps that even when I walked right up to them to get a picture not one of them even bothered to turn his head. One man provided the orchestra, shaking a sort of bottle made of skin in which were sand and stones, with an accompaniment from the dancers who had bells tied to their knees. They kept wonderful time, shuffling their feet in the sand and moving their arms to which were tied long sashes of grass. I am sure Jazz comes from Africa, the natives certainly understand rhythm and movement.

It has been a sort of no-day. No game (animals, I mean), no 'bac,' no accidents, and happily no RAIN. But—rain is about. In the 120 miles from Fort Archaumbault, there have been green patches of country, and enough water in wayside pools to satisfy Sarah's unending thirst. The wet roads have rather cramped our style in the way of speed ; Master usually crashes along, with the lorry swaying from side to side until we hear long blasts on the whistle which Aba carries, and that means that the

helmet-case or an odd cushion has gone over the side. Then Sarah has to stop while Lawanson trudges back for the missing bundle, and to pay Master out he never hurries !

We are now at a very superior-looking Rest House with a front garden ; there is nothing growing there at present but I planted some dry orange pips, my lettuce roots and some tea-leaves, so there is no knowing what may happen one day.

A native has just come up to know if I will buy—what do you think ? A baby leopard. It was rather nice, but decidedly part-worn and too much like a full-grown cat to be terribly tempting to me. So I said I did *not* want to buy a leopard but I *would* like to buy some eggs. He wanted to get rid of the leopard, so to pay me out for not buying him, he sold me some eggs—ALL BAD !

*Letter 21.*

A VILLAGE UNDER A HILL.

*March 20.*

We made a mistake this morning and took the wrong road ; they all look the same (you would probably call them ' Paths '), and, of course, there are no sign-posts and there is never anyone to ask. Even if there did happen to be anyone passing, he probably would not understand what we wanted to know. This part of the country is very deserted ; there are signs of vague rubber planting and cotton growing, but I do not think there is any real interest in anything but Road Repairing. In this French Country where, as I told you, there are no railways

and where every one goes and comes by car, ROADS are very important. But times are bad, road building is expensive and so are Engineers, so the French Officials use native labour to patch up the present tracks and keep them passable. The natives who do this road-work do not have to pay taxes, and they are housed in villages near the road ; the huts look to be well-made and roofed with the leaves of a palm that spread out like a fan.

There always seem to be plenty of people about when we stop for the night, and we appear to provide an entertainment which is better 'past all.' In a very short time we are surrounded by every one from the village, man, woman and child ; and there is usually a soldier in uniform carrying a rifle as well ! We find that it is no use expecting our uninvited visitors to leave us in peace for at least half an hour, so we let them have a good look and then we part, the best of friends.

The women, with their babies slung across their backs in a goatskin bag, stand in giggling groups, wondering who and what I am. Small boys with enormous tummies balance first on one foot and then on the other, running back to hide behind their mothers if Master sounds the horn ; the men smoke and discuss the servants and the great big lorry, and then look and look again. Of course we cannot really tell what they are talking about because it is some sort of Pagan language that they speak, and nothing we try is any good. When their half-hour is up and we want them to go, I solemnly start to make signs to show that I want to buy some things, and that I really mean it, otherwise they think it is just part of the free entertainment. Wood and

water are quite simple because, quite regardless of manners, I point to them and then to the village, then I draw a deep breath and crow loudly like a chicken to suggest that we should like something for supper. Never was there such an appreciative audience but they usually pretend not to understand so that I have to do it again ; then they go back to the village and soon return but it seems to need at least a dozen people to carry a scraggy fowl and a few eggs, some water and firewood ! The chief amusement for us is to see Aba's disgust when I ' play wid dem Pagans.' He does not like it when my French is understood or when it is not, so it is very difficult to please him: he likes to be the one polyglot of the party, and I'm looking forward to the time when he starts talking Swaheli.

I'm sure you will be glad to know that it has not been so hot : we crashed along forty miles of fine-looking country like the New Forest—trees do look nice after the desert country we have been in for the last few days. Then came a still more thickly wooded part carpeted by green grass ; you may think how silly it is to trouble to say *green* grass, it is always green to you. The last grass I saw was in my garden in Nigeria, and that was the colour of weak tea ; it will not turn green until the first rain, and then it changes almost as quickly as a chameleon.

Well, out of this green grass there were growing what appeared to be enormous red mushrooms. Scores of elves would have had room to sit round for a supper party, but not for long. These ' Mushrooms ' were *white ants' nests*.

People say that ants never stop working, and I am sure it must be true, the amount of destruction

they do is almost unbelievable. Once I was away from Mongu for a few days and when I came back I found that the whole of a wooden photo-frame had been eaten away ; another time, in a deserted house I saw what I thought was a wicker basket. It had been, once, but when I touched it, it just crumbled into dusty pieces ; the basket-work had been eaten by the ants, and what I had touched was the tunnel through which they ran, and made by them as they worked. A smallish ant-hill contains hundreds of thousands of ants and I should think even the most miserable gardener in England would agree that they are worse than SLUGS, they always make for something that is feeling a bit unhappy but which might cheer up if left to itself. We once had a lime tree in the garden at Mongu whose roots had grown too near to a lump of rock. Before the tree had a chance to move its roots out of the way, up hurried an army of white ants to torment and eat away at its roots until it just faded away and died.

I suppose that is what a schoolboy really means by 'hitting below the belt.'

### *Letter 22.*

AT THE END OF THE FRENCH COUNTRY.

*March 22.*

About half of our journey is done. That sounds as if I am glad. I am because it is half-way home, but I am enjoying it tremendously, especially since it got cooler.

I am afraid Master could not have enjoyed himself yesterday. Sarah was most disagreeable, making

groaning noises as if she had a terrible pain, so he drove all day ; he certainly knows how to get the best out of a car, and tries to find out why she is making a noise and does not just just drive her hard to punish her for doing it.

In one village, a Frenchman with a long, curly black beard and a smart white uniform, dashed out of his house, nearly falling over in his excitement to see if we were the Governor of Ubangui-Shari. You see, cars and white people are so scarce in this country that if a car appears it seems as if it must be the one that is expected. I do not know what this Frenchman thought when he saw, instead of the Governor, a large dusty lorry and two strangers in un-ironed clothes—he was full of apologies and did *not* stop to shake hands !

You haven't forgotten 'bacs,' have you? We have had three in the last two days and Master has always broken the wooden platform as he plunged on to the raft. It is the end of the Dry Season and the water in the rivers is low, so, of course, are the ferries. The landing stages are high to allow for a full river, so you can picture how they have to be built up with extra planks before Master will trust our precious Sarah on to them. Every one of these rivers is an adventure, and at each Ferry we find that we provide the greatest amusement to the natives who paddle the canoes and guide the 'bac' across the stream. They wear the most absurd hats and crack endless jokes about me (I don't expect they have ever seen a woman in boy's clothes before). I am very glad that I am their best joke because there is one that would surely be much funnier—the sinking of the lorry. But thanks to the way

Master manages to steer Sarah on to these crazy boats—so far, touching wood, that has not happened.

But I saw to-day how easily it could happen.

We were admiring the lovely broad river with its background of thick wooded country, and saying what a change it was after the scorched and dried-up country we have been through this week. I was just thinking how like it was to the Cliveden Reach near Cookham, and then what do you think we saw? An enormous black shape bobbing up to see the reason of all this disturbance in HIS river—  
A HIPPOPOTAMUS!

If he had been angry instead of just interested, he could easily have turned over the Ferry, Sarah, ourselves and the canoe-boys.

I wonder if that would have been a joke, too?

I'm sure Master would have been popular if he had shot that hippo. The black men hate them alive and like them dead. When a hippo is on land he does a terrible amount of damage; in one night he could eat or trample down enough corn to keep a family for six months. But when he is killed there is great rejoicing, such a lot of meat is there for the taking. The only part a white man would touch is the foot, which has to be boiled for twelve hours and then made into a jelly. Somehow, I don't think I shall trouble, it sounds decidedly nasty to me!

Yesterday, we reached a place called Bambari about midday; it should be marked on your map, about 150 miles from the borders of the Belgian Congo. We called on the Commandant and found a very polite West Indian, his wife and a family of children of all ages and sizes. We were invited to lunch and had almost as many courses as at Fort

Lamy. The French are most kind and hospitable and I felt rather like the small boy at a party who sighed 'I wish I was bigger, so I could eat more.' We have got so used to our quick-lunch counter of cold, milkless tea, hard-boiled eggs and chocolate, that it is difficult to grapple with a good, square meal at 12 o'clock in the morning. If we had refused any course I was afraid our kind hostess might be offended ; I noticed your Father slackening off somewhat but I did not dare to catch his eye because I was sure he was saying to himself, 'I'm not hungry, but I *will* be greedy.' However, even a French luncheon comes to an end and then we found that there were actually some stores in Bambari ; our petrol had lasted out all this distance but Master bought some more, and replaced the lost oil-drum, and paid with English money.

Master hopes he has found out what was wrong with Sarah, she certainly sounds less full of grumbles to-day. It was a good thing. The hills have been terrific, rather like the switchbacks on that awful railway at Olympia, and the two servants had a very bumpy time. I'm sure they like it when I drive !

The country is much more jungly and like Southern Nigeria, with dense green foliage looking as if there might be snakes and all sorts of creepies hiding there. There were certainly tsetse-fly with their curious overlapping wings, but I did not stop to look for snakes, for I saw something I liked better, a very lovely wild ground orchid which has delighted us every year at Mongu. It has two Latin names with nine syllables, but we called it Diana. The first time I saw this orchid I thought the exquisite mauve and violet flowers were butter-

flies ; they looked as if they were fluttering, not growing, on the long purple stem. If people saw sprays of this at a flower-show in London I am sure they would rave about its colour, grace and daintiness, but because it grows wild, the African treats it with contempt. As I got out of the lorry to pick some, I heard Aba murmur disgustedly to the Mechanic : ' Missis stop for pick dem GRASS.'

Later on your Father told me that my Botany was not much better than the cook's, and that was because I did not know what SISAL was. I wonder if you know ? It is a plant imported from America with long pointed leaves which are used for making a coarse sort of rope and string. I saw it in the making to-day. As we plunged up the bank from one of the ferries, there were about half a dozen black men sitting by the side of the road pounding away at these spikey leaves to get the pulp away from the fibre : then, the fibre is hung up to dry and after that it is spun into lengths of yarn. The natives were very cheery and seemed interested in us and quite thrilled to have their photographs taken. It was not until I got right up to them with the camera that I noticed they were all chained together ; they must have been prisoners.

We were loaded up again and ready to start when suddenly, down the hill came an old box-car piled high with luggage and containing two passengers, of course our eyes nearly popped out of our heads. Cars and White People are a tremendous excitement in Centra Africa. Then, four voices shouted almost as one : ' Surely you are ENGLISH ? ' We all turned out into the road and told each other all about it. They told us they had come from Rejaf

on the Nile and were bound for Algeria. We told them we had come from Nigeria and were bound for Kenya. We asked them all about Roads and 'bacs' in Belgian country and they asked us all about Roads and 'bacs' in French country. We asked how they thought they were going to carry enough petrol in such a small car, and they asked how ever we thought we could get such a great big lumbering 'bus' over some of the places they had passed! We made great plans to meet again in London to discuss our adventures, wished each other good-luck and departed on our way. We shall certainly have to start a TRANS-AFRICAN club, with Mr. Barlow, these two Englishmen and ourselves as the first Members. I know who the President ought to be : THE STOUT EFFORT !

CHAPTER IV  
THE BELGIAN CONGO

*Letter 23.*

A VILLAGE IN THE BELGIAN CONGO.

*March 23.*

It is rather exciting to wake up in the morning and think that by the time you go to bed again, you will have begun to explore a new country.

When we started at six o'clock this morning, we were still in French country, and we went through a place called Bangassou, on the border, just as the Administrator was going to breakfast. He must have been very hungry and in a hurry to get to his coffee-and-rolls, because he very quickly signed a paper to say that as far as he could see we had not done any damage to French Equatoria and could be trusted to behave properly in the Belgian country.

We heard that this place Bangassou will soon be joined up by telegraph to the rest of the Colony; the posts for the wires have been ready in position for a long time, so long, in fact, that some of them are apparently giving up all hope of being useful and are doing their best to be ornamental; they have rooted and begun to grow, and are in full flower!

We had 'only one more river to cross' before we left the French country, the 'bac' was a very smart

one and we tried to leave a good impression behind by *not* smashing the stage—I think it was the one and only time in the Colony. After this ‘bac’ we did not quite know what to expect. Mr. Barlow had warned us that when he did this journey there was no ferry at all across the boundary river between French and Belgian countries, and he spent a whole day building one. I should think it would have taken us at least a month to build something strong enough to hold our Stout Effort, and so we were very relieved to find that since Mr. Barlow was here, a ‘bac,’ of sorts, had been provided. It was a case of being grateful for very small mercies, because it looked most perilous with just two planks to connect the ferry with the shore. I noticed that Master carefully measured the width of Sarah’s wheels and compared it with the width of the planks before he persuaded the lorry to try it ; I should have been terribly afraid to drive her on. The ferry had three canoes and each contained two natives ; all of them sang lustily as they paddled us across, telling the people on the other side all about us, the size of the car, the numbers of packages we had and how much money we were likely to pay them. Then they began to grin broadly and I imagined they were making up a song about me and telling their pals to, ‘Go look at one-Missis-who-no-be-boy-and-no-be-man.’

I wanted to tell the people on shore how well I thought these river boys manage their canoes, and if I had known the tune it would have been fun to join in the singing because I was feeling rather excited about having reached the Belgian Congo. The jungle ahead looked dark and mysterious, it

was all absolutely new and unknown country to us, we have done more than half of our journey, and—so far—we have had wonderful luck.

As we grounded on the shore, we were greeted by a Belgian Government Official, wearing, rather ominously, a *mackintosh* over his trim white uniform. In his sun-helmet he wore an enormous badge, and afterwards I thought I understood why it was so specially large. He seemed to be such a lot of people all rolled into one. He was Passports and Customs Officer, Director of Agriculture, and Head of the Public Works Department.

Usually, in each district of a Colony, there is a Director for every Department, and especially Public Works—it includes Road Making, which should be a whole-time job in itself. Here, this remarkable person was the Road Department; if we would drive on for forty miles he promised to follow us and be the Passport Officer. We had no corn or sheep or pigs with us, but I expect if we had, he would soon have been ready to turn into the Farm Department. I wonder what he does in his spare time!

He was certainly a Very Important Person to us. Without his permission we could not go through the Colony, so we just did what we were told and started off again to drive to a place called Monga where we were told to expect the V.I.P. (see above) any time during the day.

We noticed the reason for the mackintosh at once. IT HAD BEEN RAINING. Mr. Barlow had told us about this part of the road almost with bated breath, that it would be dreadful in the rainy season,

and that there were FEARFUL HILLS and RAMSHACKLE BRIDGES. As I told you in another letter, it was a case of 'Don't worry, it may never happen.' Although the surface was soft and heavy, Sarah gallantly mounted the hills, and Master steered her with great care over the very flimsy brushwood bridges. I will admit that over most of them I shut my eyes and hoped for the best : they did look rather like booby-traps. There will soon be a very fine broad road here. Gangs of natives were hard at work widening, repairing and improving, and it rather reminded me of the work that went on for years at Piccadilly Circus, except that there were no ear-splitting noises of pneumatic drills, and we were the only white people on the road.

When we arrived at Monga about 11, the V.I.P. was nowhere to be seen, so we decided to call on the Administrator (the principal White Man of the district). The house looked so nice and cool ; it was surrounded by trees laden with green tangerines, and it overlooked the bank of a broad river. Immediately opposite, a beautiful waterfall descended in terraces and splashed with a lovely musical sound into the pool below. Before I went to Central Africa I don't think I ever knew how delicious a COOL SOUND can be.

As we drew up at the gate, out of the house dashed a very beaming lady. She tried to curtsy and then grasped my hands and murmured with much feeling, 'OH, MADAME LA PRINCESSE.' Master says I looked surprised, but very pleased ! I hope I didn't giggle while I apologised for not being a Princess and then explained

who we were. She then told us that a Belgian Royal Lady was expected any moment, and, though obviously disappointed, she insisted on our going into her house, talking all the while in very rapid French. We sat down on the verandah and she went on peeling a large bowl-full of extremely suspicious-looking mushrooms, which she told us grew in great quantities in her garden. We have always given mushrooms a miss in Africa ever since a friend of ours nearly died from eating some in Jos. Madame invited us to lunch—would we have mushrooms? We did. They looked most tempting, and of course we risked it. I noticed that Master kept one eye on me to see if I looked blue about the gills, or whatever the signs of toadstool poisoning are. Master looked—well, do you remember the story of the small boy being refused a third helping at dinner, and being told not to look so cross? And his answer? ‘Not looking cross, I’m looking as if I want more MEAT.’ Your Parent looked as if he wanted more mushrooms!

To tell the truth, Master was enjoying himself. He found he could understand Madame’s Flemish French much more easily than he had understood all the talking during the last week, and he was very conceited when he was complimented on his good French! He told me I was to be sure to tell you.

We thought it was most sporting of Madame to bother about us, two stray English people, in the midst of all her preparations to receive the Belgian Princess, especially as the Administrator was away on tour, and not expected back in time to help his

wife receive Son Altesse (I mean the Princess, not ME !).

Master had a very busy afternoon, watching someone else work. The V.I.P. thought it necessary, not only to examine all our passports and enormous collection of papers but also to make out almost as many more again. All of these new ones had to have two copies each, and the V.I.P. wrote out every one himself. Details had to be given about each of us, dating almost to prehistoric times, and, of course, if Master did not know the answers he made them up. After this was finished he had to pay £25 to allow us to carry a gun and a camera through the Colony, and a most complicated business of French, Belgian and English money went on. The V.I.P. promised that we should get this money back as we leave the Congo—we certainly hope we shall. Isn't this a lot of fuss? I am quite sure we should not spend such a lot of time and trouble over two Belgian people who wanted to travel across Nigeria, but I suppose the answer is that we have so many colonies to look after and the Belgians have only one; I do not wonder they guard it so carefully, especially since that slice of German East was added, the district called Ruanda Urundi, which is most certainly the choicest spot in Central Africa. If you can find a map of Europe on the same scale as Africa, do look at the sizes of Belgium and its child, the Belgian Congo; 'child' is no less than seventy-eight times as large as 'parent'! As well as being so big, it is so RICH, probably the richest part of the richest continent in the world. I am afraid the British have rather a reputation for being grasping about Africa. I do hope

the V.I.P. did not think Master and I were SPIES !

I had a most amusing afternoon. First I watched Madame feed her animals : that suggests to you one dog and perhaps a kitten, but this was more like a Zoo. I have never seen so many pigs, goats and chickens crowded into such a small space together, and whatever do you think their meal was ? BANANAS, bananas, and yet again bananas. I can almost hear your Godmother's shriek of dismay, 'Feed *pigs* on my favourite fruit, *bananas*?' I found out the reason later on : bananas seemed to be the chief thing for sale in the market.

In every native village in Northern Nigeria there is a market of sorts, where anything for his house and larder can be bought by the black man : mats of grass, water-coolers, beads, corn, peppers, rice, ginger, garlic, onions, nuts, oil and meat, are some of the things I used to notice. I was not in this market for more than a few minutes, but I saw nothing else but bananas, of every shape and size, and most of them green. Long ones, short ones, fat ones, thin ones, everywhere bananas (or plaintains as I suppose they should be called). Aba seemed to be spending vast quantities of money judging by the number of bunches he had collected, but it gave me quite a pain just to look at them, and I hoped he would not give some to us for our evening meal.

After all the animals had been fed, Madame and I mounted the lorry and I drove the two boys to the Mission close by, where the Fathers examined them for any signs of sleeping sickness. This had all been done once already, before we left Nigeria,

but we had come through a tsetse-fly area, and the Belgians meant to be quite sure we had not brought this dreadful disease into their Colony. The Father did not suspect me at all, I was glad to notice, I should have hated to have my neck and head pommelled for swollen glands. Aren't they wonderful people, these Mission Fathers? One was a Doctor, one was cleaning brasses, one was paying out pocket money to the Mission children, and, they were all *builders*. The centre of everything, and their chief topic of conversation, was the CHURCH they were building, and I was invited to visit them again when it was finished.

At last all the business was over and the attaché cases were several pounds heavier with the extra papers. (This is literally a *sore* point with me because the cases travel in front and spend most of the time falling against my ankles.) Madame, who had looked after me from 11 o'clock until 5, was kind to the last, pressing on us fruit for our journey and telling us of many places of interest in the Colony she hoped we'd visit, and especially—No, I'll wait till we get there to tell you about it, it sounds so exciting and you would be so annoyed if we did not go there after all.

I was tired out when we left Monga ; Madame did not speak any English, but she spoke a lot of French, for six solid hours, and it was rather nice to sit quiet in the lorry and be driven along an amazingly good road. The surface was excellent, with no signs of rain ; there were Distance Posts (in kilometres) and bridges flush with the road so that we did not have to 'Mind the step, please' as we came to each one. There were Road Signs too,

and I almost looked for an A.A. man at the corners. Do you remember the small friend of yours refusing to drive his toy motor-car on the path, because the A.A. man would not notice him and 'berloot' and I think wherever we drive we shall be noticed, the car is so very LARGE, but I am afraid we shall not have any 'berlooting' even though Sarah is wearing our English A.A. sign. I should think it is the first one to decorate a trans-African expedition.

This evening we met a river and our first Belgian BAC, but here it is not called a bac but a PONTON. (Master pronounces the word PONGTONG—this one was quite BONG.) The canoes were more substantial than usual and the ferry had a landing-stage attached to it, which could be raised or lowered at either end. Sarah went across complete with luggage, and then we drove on through neat villages and very green-looking country, the colour standing out so vividly in contrast to the bright red road.

I believe everything is going to be BRIGHT here, in fact almost BRISK (the word you dislike so much when you hear people talking about a 'brisk walk'). There seems so much going on everywhere, and a white man in this village who has lent us a house to sleep in, tells us that the Belgians really have wakened up about this Colony. He gave us one example: COTTON. In a negro country, cotton is one of the chief things that is needed. The black man wears little else but cotton materials. For years, the Belgian Government bought tremendous quantities of raw cotton from America which had to be spun and made into prints and muslins and then shipped to the Belgian Congo for the natives to buy.

They decided to try an experiment. The Belgian Officials thought cotton should grow well in this warm moist climate and that it would be an easy way of giving the natives a means of earning a little money without the really hard work that they dislike so much, just to make it easy for them to buy clothes and tools and pay the small yearly tax. Very soon the villages became quite prosperous ; the women clothed themselves with European materials and the men bought European tools and bicycles and even guns. Then the next step was to build factories and motor roads, and hundreds of the black men learnt skilled trades and also how to care properly for the cotton plants, the harvesting and packing. Now they want to grow a great deal more cotton so that they may supply all the needs of the white people in Belgium as well as the black people in the Congo and not buy any from America. At present they only produce about one-fifth of what Belgium needs.

They are not going to stop there. As well as growing the cotton they intend to spin and weave here in the Colony, turn their home-grown crops into prints and materials and sell the goods straight to the natives, so that cotton from seed to garment will never go out of the Congo.

*Later.* I have been listening to a long Cotton-talk, and I suddenly realised that cotton to you means just a reel of cotton or a summer frock. Do you know it caused a war? It certainly looks harmless enough, with its white flowers on a low-growing bush : when the flower fades, a blob is left which gradually swells and becomes about the size of an

egg. This bursts open and shows a mass of curly whiteness—that's cotton. There are also the seeds inside, rather like thistledown, which are light enough to be blown away. The seed used to be wasted, but now even that is used, people have found that every part of the flower is needed for something. Here are some of the things that come from cotton, and if you think I'm showing off that I know so much—I have only just heard it, and that is why I'm telling it all to you. I wonder if you will say that you know it already ?

Cotton-wool, lint and bandages.

Sheets and pillow cases.

Coloured prints, blouses and shirts.

Lamp oil.

Artificial butter.

Cattle-food.

Celluloid.

Liquid court plaster.

A kind of gunpowder.

The last sounds rather suitable considering cotton caused a war. I believe it is true that if cotton had not grown in such vast quantities in America, they would not have wanted so many slaves ; the question of slaves caused the trouble between the Northern and Southern States, and the slaves were brought from Central Africa. Probably many of their descendants own big cotton plantations now, and distant cousins in the Belgian Congo in years to come will say, ' No, thank you, we are not going to buy your cotton any more, our own white people are growing quite enough for us here. Good-bye-ee.'

I have just been told that I ought to have known all about this COTTON PALAVER, as so much is being done in Nigeria, but the Plateau Province where we lived was too dry and sandy for cotton growing, and I have never actually seen a cotton plantation there. The Nigerian Government buys American cotton seed for planting, as it is so much better than the kind which grows naturally in the Colony. This American seed is grown at special farms and then the new crop of seed is given out to the native farmers for them to plant. Some people think that Nigeria will never produce enough cotton to count as one of the world's producers, and that she will not be as successful as Uganda, but others hope that one day she will reach the same mark towards which the Congo is working, about 70,000 tons a year.

Our host was so interesting in his talk that we are very late going to bed. I wrote most of this long letter before dinner, and have just added the 'Cotton-tail.' The Belgian told us he was looking forward to going on leave in two months time, he has been out here three years and has a young wife, and a baby whom he has not seen. His wife was out here for a time but she found it very lonely and dull; it certainly does not seem a very festive place. We are the only three white people for miles, and I think our host enjoyed his talk with Master. He told us to be sure and have our beds put inside the house not outside (where we generally sleep), because a thick blanket of white mist comes down in the very early morning and we shall wake up to find a wet and dripping world.

I think I had better stop now, I'm sure you have had enough. Certainly your-Parent-in-the-middle-of-Africa has. We were up at 5 and now it is past midnight : instead of 'Good night' I ought to say 'Good morning.'

*Letter 24.*

A WAYSIDE REST HOUSE NEAR BOUTA,  
BELGIAN CONGO.

*March 24.*

I believe I shall be able to post my packet of letters to you to-morrow. It will need a mail-bag to itself if I go on writing such tremendous epistles, but I do not feel like a long one this evening. I have not been at all 'A happy English child' to-day, and Master had the cheek to suggest I was greedy about those mushrooms yesterday, and he had three helpings!

We are near to a place called BOUTA, which I am sure will be marked on your map. I don't like the look of this rest house at all and suspect that sundry black men have been using it ; the ones in charge are very disagreeable and do not want to let us have the hut, or give us wood and water. But, we have travelled 168 miles since early morn, and have crossed three rivers in three 'nong-bong-pong-tongs,' and we think that is quite enough for one day, especially as it has been very hot and sticky, so here we stay.

We saw five new things to-day.

- (1) A small railway.
- (2) A Princess. (She was not labelled but I do hope it was the one our kind friend of yesterday was expecting !)
- (3) Very tall bamboos.
- (4) Women carrying loads on their backs, instead of on their heads, with a strap across their foreheads.
- (5) Native houses looking like untidy brown-paper parcels and roofed with dry banana leaves.

You notice bananas have cropped up again : not only does the fruit provide a complete menu for the natives and all their animals, but they use the dried leaves for clothing, in the way of absurd baggy drawers, and also for roofing purposes. In the French country the roofs of the huts were shaped like an umbrella, and covered either with thatched or plaited elephant grass, the very tall coarse wild grass which grows also in Northern Nigeria. In our own village, I have often watched the natives making roofs for their huts, first a frame of bamboo and then a cover of this plaited grass, and then the whole thing was lifted bodily up and on to the top of the round mud hut, and you cannot imagine how much shouting and jabbering it needed to help them to do it !

This is a very short letter, but I am very tired and very cross. Aba is sulky too, I expect he has been eating too many bananas ; I do hope he picked up the skins like the 'Elephant's Child' after his trunk grew. Someone told me that is really true—elephants *are* 'Tidy Pachyderms.' As they go along a path, they pick up and throw away anything that

should not be there—what a pity we cannot let a lot of them loose in England to clear up all the paper-bags and litter left about on Bank Holidays. We should have to make it a rule that the elephants were allowed to ‘spank’ the offenders; in time it might cure them.

*Letter 25.*

BAMBILI,

BELGIAN CONGO.

*March 25.*

We are staying at a kind of hotel and the owners of the hotel have a small girl of about 8 years; she has lived in the Belgian Congo for more than two years. I was rather sorry for her, because she has not one friend to play with, I have not seen any white children. If you were here to-night, you would not mind that because there is another *most lovely plaything*. I want it for you more than anything I have ever seen.

The first I heard of IT was a long, bored call of ‘Wow . . . ow . . . ow.’ It sounded as if someone was saying: ‘There’s no one taking the slightest notice of me, I’m all alone, and I take a *very* gloomy view of life.’

Of course we followed the voice, and, there, tied up to a large wooden box, was a BABY LION. He was just about two feet long and almost too adorable to be true. He lay on the ground to be tickled, played all sorts of games of pounce like a kitten, stopped wow-owing and was quite friendly—until his supper came along. Then I was

of no further interest. He practically said, 'You can go now. You've amused me quite nicely for a bit and helped to pass the time away. That was fun, but *this* is business.' He proceeded to swallow that supper pretty quickly, turning a very baleful red eye on me and waving his ridiculous bit of tail to tell me it was bad manners to watch him eating.

I tried to find out if I could beg, steal, or buy him. Of course I could not. No one having found such a treasure would ever sell him. Of course, Master laughed at me, and of course the boys looked sulky. They certainly had not much room at the back of the lorry as it was, and I am sure they could picture the trouble a quickly growing lion in a large wooden box would be, added to all the mass of luggage we already had. Master stopped laughing when he saw how disappointed I was, and then he made me laugh. We tried to imagine what would have happened if we had arrived at Southampton complete with Wow-ow on the end of a chain.

You (*excitedly*): 'What *do* you think Mummy has brought home for me? A LION!'

Granny: 'I'm not at all surprised, you have already had a parrot, some marmosets and at least a dozen chameleons—why ever not one LION?'

I was just going to settle down to write to you when 'Wow-ow' called us. His supper appears to have sent him to sleep; and before mine does the same to me I will go on telling you to-day's news.

First of all, at middle-day, I was told to look at the speedometer, and I saw our total had reached 2000 MILES. We have been on the road fifteen days, so I think that makes an average of 130 miles

a day. When I look at that last sentence, it certainly does seem rather a stout effort, but it seems quite natural now to get up before dawn, have a very quick breakfast, pack up once more, load the lorry, and be on the road before 7 o'clock, pounding along through absolutely new and unknown country for mile after mile after mile. We usually stop for half an hour at midday to have our lunch, and then go on again until we reach a likely-looking rest house any time between 4 and 6.

Since we came into this colony, we have been seeing how well the lorry can climb. Sarah is magnificent. I believe I told you that the hills at the end of the French country were steep, but I had not seen these. From the top, it looks as if everything below is a solid wedge of brilliant green, with the road sloping away like a red carpet. This 'Red Carpet' is part of the Route Royale and well deserves that name because it is a real ROAD, as good as a motor-road in Europe, and what makes it so remarkable is that it has been cut through solid, steaming jungle. The tall trees and tropical creepers make it very airless and the heat is the sticky kind, like in a greenhouse; Sarah seems to prefer it to the Chad country where she never stopped boiling, but she still has a fairly considerable thirst.

Later to-day we saw several large plantations of cotton and coffee, with the ground absolutely cleared except for the crops. By the side of the road, there were the nurseries for the coffee estates; the beans have to be planted in baskets first and be kept in the shade until they are quite big plants.

Coffee looks most attractive growing ; the bushes are a lovely green and such a neat shape, and the rows look so *orderly*. So are the villages we have passed to-day, and the natives are more civilised too. It does really seem as if we are getting near to East Africa.

This has been a very civilised day. Our only 'pontoon' boasted seven canoes ; it was so smart that I suggested to Master he should let me drive Sarah on to the ferry while he took a photograph, just for a change. Did he ? He did not.

I seem to be telling you everything backwards, but it is Wow-ow's fault.

This morning we were not at all sorry to leave our un-Rest House, and we were at Bouta by 8 o'clock.

We came upon a most comic sight as we drove into the town. If you ask people what they would expect to find in Africa, and give them three guesses, most of them would say, Deserts, Jungles, Lions or Snakes, but I don't think anyone would guess an enormous signpost advising travellers to Turn Right in two different languages !

I do want you to find this place on your map—we have not a whole map of Africa with us, only sections, but I believe that Bouta is the centre point of Central Africa ; it really is rather a good idea to have a Roundabout-Traffic in the middle of the Continent !

There are names of places printed on the signpost with very long distances, and as there was a vacant space I suggested that we should put in the name of our camp, 2000 miles away ; but the trouble was that the other figures were in kilo-

metres, and it was far too hot to grapple with higher mathematics, so I am afraid we left it alone.

The two servants have been worried about sums too. The town was the largest we had visited so far ; there was a Bank and a Ford Agent, as well as a Post Office and some Stores, and Aba and Lawanson wanted to go shopping. They are used to Nigerian brass shillings and paper money, and these Belgian coins seemed ' plenty fine ' because they looked like silver. I wanted Aba to buy a new jumper. He is so dirty and we are tired of looking at him, so I poured what seemed to him a vast quantity of money into his hand and then tried to explain that it was really not so much as it looked, but he could not wait to hear all about the difference in value of the Belgian franc compared to Nigerian money. The servants were away for a long time and when they returned they both looked very sulky. Lawanson was cross because he could not buy English cigarettes, and Aba, having spent most of the cash on food, had not enough left for clothes and said to me : ' This money no fit to buy ANYTHING.' Both agreed : ' It be a VERY BAD PLACE.'

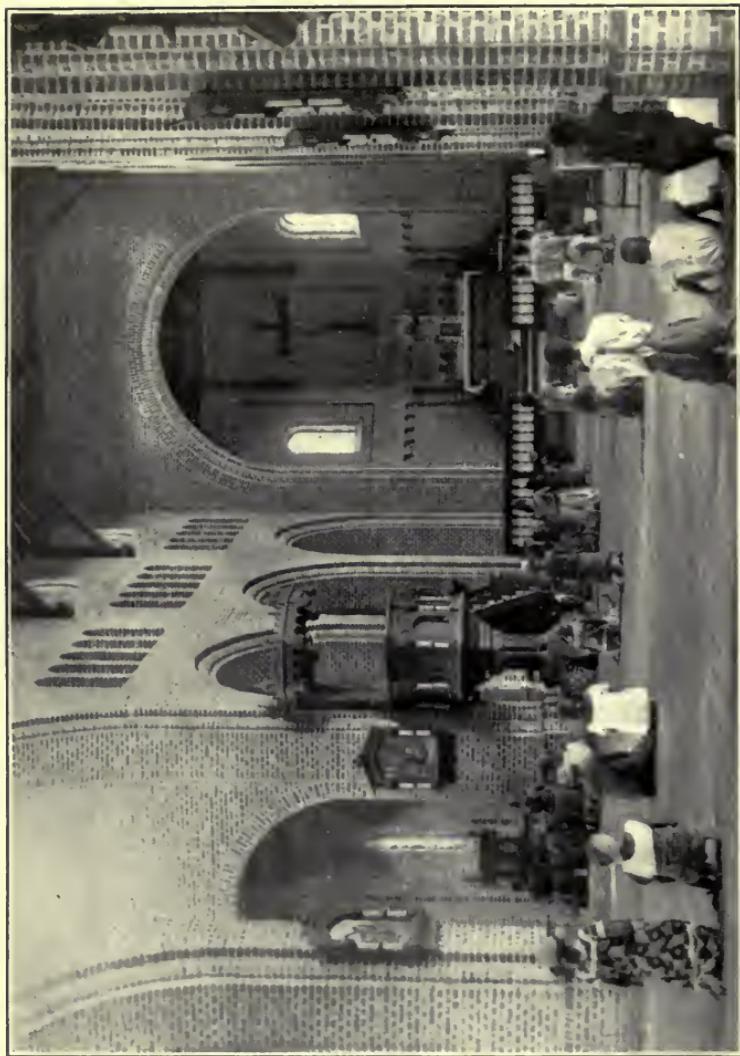
We thought it a very good one. There were buildings of red brick, well-kept gardens, and plenty of fine trees : we noticed pink frangipani and also the glorious Flame-of-the-Forest, with their scarlet flowers and lacey leaves.

After spending much money on petrol, we went to the Post Office and did the same on stamps, your collection is very expensive but rather nice. We think that stamps must be a new toy to the Belgians ; there seem to be so many new ones, and they are being printed now in Belgium instead of

in America. The Belgian girl in the Post Office saw that we were interested, and presently suggested that we might like a set of air-mail stamps. 'Air-Mail'? we asked. 'Is there an aeroplane service?' She told us No, that was not ready yet, but the STAMPS were! Don't you think it shows that this Colony is alive? And, there were more thrills to follow.

It was this part of Africa, more than any other, which made the rest of the world call it The Dark Continent. Less than one hundred years ago, the black men here were cannibals; they had their witch doctors and savage heathen customs, and yet to-day, just outside Bouta, we have seen a most wonderful Church. This Church is built of native made red bricks, by native labourers taught by the White Fathers. It really was a most remarkable sight here in the tropics, where we have got so used to the cool, simple buildings of mud and thatch; wherever we had come across this Church we should have thought it a very magnificent one, but in the heart of Central Africa it looked still more elaborate, with its tiled roof and altar rails of ebony and ivory. Of course we wanted to see all we could, and the Father suggested that Aba and Lawanson should come with us; we all went inside and then the boys had a bit of a problem. Our host and your parent took off their hats, but I kept mine on, what was a Mahommedan to do? Finally, they decided to keep *on* their *hats* and take *off* their *shoes*.

Then we were taken to see the School which belonged to the Mission. This, also, was an unusual thing to find right in the middle of Africa. Of



MISSION CHURCH OF THE WHITE FATHERS, ROUTA, BELGIAN CONGO



course there are schools for the natives in Nigeria, but I had not seen anything so up-to-date as this school at Bouta. In the class-rooms were rows and rows of serious little blackamoors who stood and chanted ' Bonjour, Monsieur et Madame ' like little clockwork dolls ; further on there were rooms where boys were learning carpentering and blacksmith's work, and where drawing, singing, and a catechism class were going on. I shut my eyes and tried to imagine I was visiting your school, but it was too hot to be England, and your French would not have been so good !

When we turned to go back, I was rather surprised to see a large crowd collected round the lorry where we had left Aba and Lawanson, and we wondered what was the excitement. It was a sort of dress parade. To improve the very shining hour, the cook had got from the laundry bag our very wet and freshly washed shirts and handkies, and had spread them out to dry, all over the grass of the Church garden ! I wondered if Aba had ever heard anyone say ' Cleanliness is next to Godliness.'

M. le Curé told us we ought to have come to the Mission a few months before when there had been an Okapi on view. He showed me a picture of the one they gave to the Queen of the Belgians and I could not help thinking of the man who, when he first saw a kangaroo, said, ' Oh, no, I don't believe it, there can't be such an animal.' The Okapi belongs to the giraffe family, but looks like nothing on earth. Its colour is a sort of maroon and white, it has pointed ears, a long face, and striped legs like a zebra. So far it has only been found in the Forests of the Belgian Congo and I do not think

a live specimen has ever been seen in England. Master told the Father it was a very good thing there was no live specimen at the Mission because I tried to steal every interesting animal I saw ! To change the subject, I said I was nearly getting sunstroke in the blazing heat of midday, and please could I have a drink of water ? But the kind Father asked if I would not rather have WINE ! I nearly wept, my mouth felt like sand, and what I longed for was WATER, iced, and a bucketful.

I have written such a lot the last two days that it seems more like a week since I told you that The-Lady-of-the-Mushrooms had given me a list of several exciting things we must be sure and see in this Colony. The Okapi was one of these things, and that 'no live.' The other excitement is about 300 miles away—if that 'no live' either, I shall have to make one up !

Wow-ow is quiet and is probably still asleep, so is every one else except myself. It is rather nice to be able to write this Diary to you when it is COOL and QUIET. Good night and bless you.

*Letter 26.*

A PLACE CALLED DUNGU,  
BELGIAN CONGO.

*March 26.*

A very 'bong' day. Not much to write about, but nearly everything Bong. First, I will tell you what I did not like, but even that was interesting. We saw quite a number of people with most curiously shaped heads, long and sticking out at the back like a pulled-out query. Away

to the south of where we are, there is a race of people called the Mangbetu who are the sort-of-Dukes of the Congo natives. One of their customs is to bind their babies' heads tightly round and round with cords to squeeze them into a point. As they are the aristocrats, their customs are very often copied and the people we have been seeing to-day must be those whose mothers bound up their heads when they were little to try and pretend they were Mangbetus.

I hope the custom will die out soon like the duck-bill fashion for the women in French Equatoria. You so seldom see or hear a black baby cry that I hate to think of these fat little creatures with heads tied up to make them bulge out in the wrong place ; it must be so terrible sore while the child is being made to be fashionable. At the Mission yesterday we heard that these Mangbetu people are the most clever of all the Central African black men, so I suppose this tying up does not do their brains any harm. Perhaps if you are made to have a head like an extraordinary query, it makes you ask extraordinary questions.

To-day we have grappled with three ferries, one with six canoes, one where the river was so narrow that we could nearly span it with Sarah, and the third we reached just at sunset ; the sky was brilliant orange and red, with black palm-trees up against the glow. It made me feel as if it was beckoning to us to come on and explore still more of this wonderful country.

The ' pontons ' are not nearly so adventurous in this Colony ; they seem to have been built to carry the large Belgian lorries which dash along the roads

and round corners at a terrific pace. It certainly is a good thing to remember the continental rule of driving on the right side and not the left. We saw the wrecks of two of these lorries. I suppose the excellent roads tempt them to drive fast ; they seem to be doing everything quickly in this country—I think it has been waking up ever since King Albert came to the Belgian throne about twenty years ago.

I do hope African history will interest you, I expect I shall collect quite a lot before this trip is finished, but it is rather like the soldier writing to say he was sending home some money, ‘ but not this week ’—I can’t tell you much of the history of Central Africa because I know so little ; until quite recently it was so literally DARK to me.

Before Central Africa could be opened up and properly explored, the course of all the rivers had to be found and followed up ; the Congo was the last of these important rivers to be traced, and it took thirty years to do it. Livingstone found the source, he and Stanley kept on finding out more and more, and finally Stanley came out at the mouth of the river in 1877, four years after Livingstone died.

When this happened only four European nations had a foothold in Africa : Spain, Portugal, France and England, the two old rivals France and England holding the largest share. Then Germany and Italy joined in the scramble for Africa, and finally Belgium. The Belgian King Leopold began to be interested ; he invited explorers and people of all countries to a meeting, and there he suggested that a Society be formed for exploring the centre of the Continent and for stopping the slave-trading. Apparently the King supplied most of

the money for the work of this Society so he was made President. The next thing was that all the nations began quarrelling about this big tract of country we now know as the Congo, while King Leopold was quietly working to get more power into his own hands. Finally, in 1885, a treaty was signed and the future of this part of Central Africa was settled. It was to be called the Congo *Free State* and be *Independent*, but—everything was to belong, personally, to King Leopold. Before he died he made a Will leaving this FREE STATE to the Belgian people, and since then it has been a much happier place ; slavery was stopped, the new King visited the colony, and his subjects in Europe began to realise that a prize had been given them. You can understand how keen they are to find the gold, radium, coal and copper that they have been told are here, and to farm, build and teach the natives, all at the same time.

The Belgians hope that in a very short time their town of Elizabethville will be nearly as large and important as Johannesburg, and rank as the third largest city in Africa.

Elizabethville is just on the borders of the Congo and Northern Rhodesia and is the centre of the very rich district of Katanga. There is so much promise of trade here that it altered the route of the Cape to Cairo Railway, instead of going direct north through Rhodesia, it branches west through the Congo. I remember my Father saying that when this Colony was being opened up, wise Cecil Rhodes guessed what possibilities there were here and wanted the southern piece to add to the neighbouring country, that big colony afterwards called

by his name. Do you think that sounds greedy? Listen to what a Native Chief once called Rhodes: 'The - Big - Brother - Who - Eats - Up - Countries - For-His-Breakfast.' You notice he does not say 'Big *Master*,' but 'Big *Brother*.' Rhodes had just One Big Idea all through his life, to build up and extend the Empire in Africa because he had such faith in the British power to colonise. I am rather afraid you will get tired of Rhodes, but he wrote his name in such wonderful letters over Africa that one never forgets him. All this sounds as if I am trying to work up a political speech, I think I had better stop!

We have done 235 miles to-day, our longest run so far. That proves it must have been a Bong-Day. I hope it will be a Bong-Night.

*Letter 27.*

ANOTHER VILLAGE, 210 MILES FURTHER ON.

*March 27.*

I could hardly wait till we stopped this evening to write about THE EXCITEMENT. You remember how a few days ago we visited that Mission at Bouta and saw the wonderful School that has been built for the heathen black children, and how the White Fathers are trying to teach them, not only to know their Catechism, but also to grow up to be USEFUL WORKERS? Well, to-day we saw some very different people who are being taught how to work . . . ELEPHANTS! Just fancy a SCHOOL FOR WILD ELEPHANTS, African ones, too, which we have always heard are untrainable.

We had to turn away from our road to find the

Belgian Government Farm, with the School for Elephants, and, for the first time, Master did not mind going out of our way, he was as keen to see it as I was. The Belgian Officer in charge of the Farm told us the pupils were out for a walk, would we like to follow them? What do you think we said? As we walked behind him through the tall grass, he told us all about the School. I was afraid of not hearing all that he said so I had to keep running up beside him and saying, 'Pardon, Monsieur'; getting hot and caught up in the thorn bushes did not seem to matter very much. These are some of the things that we heard.

A hunt for a new batch of wild elephants takes place between January and April every year (before the heavy rains start).

The Officer, with native hunters and some of the tamed elephants have to travel perhaps two hundred miles before they reach a new herd; when they find it they do not try and catch old elephants, or even the middle-aged ones; it would not be possible to make them learn, so they try and catch the young ones, not the really baby ones whose ears and tip of trunk are pink like a human baby, but the next size. When they have captured as many as they can, they lead them back all that long way, guided by the older, tamed elephants, who help them not to be frightened.

Everything in the training is done by kindness and every time an elephant obeys an order he is rewarded by a slice of pineapple or a lump of sweet potato. Each new 'boy' learns words of command by being tied to a trained animal, who makes him kneel, get up, walk or stop, by his own weight.

It takes about three months for even the naughtiest boys to learn their names ; after that, they are taught to do small jobs like pulling logs of wood, and after being at school for perhaps TEN YEARS, they are able to do what they were brought here for—DRAW A PLOUGH. Here in the Congo, horses and cattle would die from the effects of the tsetse-fly bite, so these Belgian people have copied the idea from India and are training these African elephants to do those jobs that are called ‘ domestic.’ When they are older, two will pull a load of four tons, that is a whole ton heavier than Sarah plus the luggage.

I wanted to know if the schoolboy-elephants were allowed any time to play. Of course they were. Their favourite sport is the same as yours—bathing. Can’t you picture them squirting water down their trunks, and making slushy mud-caps? I wonder if they turn their nose-hoses on to the natives when they are told to come out of the water.

I was introduced to the baby of the school, and was allowed to feed him with vast quantities of potatoes. Another one waggled his ears and did not seem to like the look of me very much, and the Lieutenant told me to take care because this was the Bad Boy of the school. Poor bad boy. Perhaps he was homesick, or afraid he was not looking his best when we took his photograph ; perhaps they had given him a name that he thought was babyish, or perhaps he had been disappointed about his dinner. Do you remember Milne’s

‘ What is the matter with Mary Jane ?

She’s perfectly well and she hasn’t a pain,

*And it’s lovely rice pudding for dinner again !—*

What is the matter with Mary Jane ? ’



THE AUTHOR FEEDING THE BABY AT THE SCHOOL FOR ELEPHANTS IN THE BELGIAN CONGO



Perhaps it was even worse—lumpy tapioca ; I did wish I knew elephant language and could have asked him.

I wished, too, that my French was more fluent and that I could have explained better to the Belgian Officer how grateful we were to him for letting us interrupt his work and spoil most of his morning ; I think he did realise how much we had enjoyed ourselves. Of course, I need not tell you that as we came away from the School Master said he was surprised I had not tried to get the Baby for you. It was far too hot to think of a suitable answer, I had to be content with a sardonic ' Ha, Ha.'

The rest of the day was not exciting, but I suppose even in Central Africa I ought not to expect Elephants and Lions all the time.

Do you remember I told you how heavy the case of papers was after the Very Important Person had finished with us ? Well, even all that mass of papers was not enough. In the middle of this afternoon we were suddenly stopped by a black man who asked us to go to an Office to be examined. (I did hope it would not be Geometry or Latin !) This is a piece of country where there are minerals and I suppose they think people might want to come through in order to spy out the land and try and grab some. One of the papers from the V.I.P. gave the impression that Master might be some kind of MISSIONARY ! What this Belgian Official would have said if he had known that the Missionary was really a MINING ENGINEER, and just exactly the kind of person they want to keep out—well, I kept quiet and held my breath. I certainly did not want to stay in the Belgian Congo until Master had

stopped being a Mining Engineer, nor did I want to go back to Nigeria again. I smiled fixedly at the Belgian and hoped I looked like some sort of Missionary too, and presently we were given another paper to say All was Well. I expect he was as glad to see the last of us as we were to go.

Ever since we left Nigeria Master has been saying he is tired of Mining and never wants to do any more, but I have noticed that he always seems to have an eye open for any likely-looking mineral country or any interesting (or uninteresting) rocks. To-day he wanted, of course, to see all there was to be seen, but he thought someone might pounce on him and take him off to prison if he as much as looked at a stone on the road. We got up speed and raced perilously along hairpin bends round a mountain range, and when we reached a Camp where notices said 'Slow up,' we slowed up. But we never saw another car.

The only other adventure to-day was another thermos broken, and instead of a nice cool drink of tea when we stopped at midday, a thick muddy-looking liquid was poured out. The morning had been very hot and we were tired after walking miles in the bush after the elephants, and I am afraid I was rather cross. Chocolate is very nice as a food, but it is rather sticky if there is not tea to help it down; we had to drink tepid water instead.

This evening we met a river with a BRIDGE. A few years ago, before people used cars in Africa, if we had travelled in this country, we should either have swum these rivers and been eaten by crocodiles, or have balanced on a tree-trunk used as a raft. I am rather glad I am doing it now with Sarah and

ferries and even a well-built bridge. A real one, I mean, built by Engineers, not something that may or may not stay up while you walk across. You will say we are getting very civilised. Just think what we have seen in the last few days : A BRICK CHURCH, A SCHOOL FOR ELEPHANTS, A BRIDGE ACROSS A RIVER. But to-night we are simple again. There is only an unfurnished Rest House, just like a stable, and it is so stuffy and airless we have asked Aba to put our beds outside. I hope it will not rain. I do not think it will, the stars are lovely and I can see the Southern Cross overhead. I used to look at it from the Mongu garden and wonder why it was called a cross, it is more like the Ace of Diamonds. Perhaps it would *not* be a good idea to start changing the names of the stars, we might find ourselves talking about the WHEELBARROW instead of the GREAT BEAR !

*Letter 28.*

CUCKFIELD FARM,

BUNIA,

BELGIAN CONGO.

*March 29.*

Very little happened yesterday, so my paper and pencils had a day off. There was one thing different—we met a disagreeable foreigner. He had petrol for sale; we saw it, and we needed some badly, but when he heard our very Englishy French, he said he had none. Every one has been so kind and helpful up till now, we felt as if he had slapped our faces. We were careful to be very polite and asked after all his relations in turn. This seemed to make him still more grumpy, so then I told him I was

certain we should be able to buy petrol much more cheaply further on and should I order him some. I am sorry to say he slammed the door !

We have only done 61 miles to-day, and it is Sarah's fault. Soon after we started, she was grumbling and groaning as if she had a very bad pain somewhere and Master told me it was some trouble with the SHAFT.

I was duly sympathetic but did not understand until I saw it. Before we left Nigeria, Master suspected that all was not as it should be in Sarah's inside and a second transmission shaft had been included in the list of hundred-and-one-spares. It is the part that connects the engine with the driving-wheels, so it is somewhat important ; without the shaft there would be no meaning in the car, rather like a man's brain working and his feet moving with no body between. If the trouble had to happen at all I felt rather relieved that it had happened on the level rather than on a hill such as we have had lately. You know how hot the brakes get on a steep hill, with holding a car back, and how the best thing to do is to change down into the lowest gear so that the engine acts as a brake ? Well, if the shaft slipped out of its socket at a time like that it would be rather horrid.

This was quite horrid enough. A ground-sheet was dug out of the lorry and spread in the road and poor Master lay on his back underneath the car for at least an hour, while he put back the shaft in its right position. Lawanson is quite a good mechanic but your Parent is a better, and if there is anything difficult to be done he prefers to do it himself. It was very thundery and the heat was awful,

so doctoring Sarah was a very uncomfortable job. As well as being hot and dirty he was worried that it might happen again. I do wish I was good at cars and machinery and could take my turn underneath.

I was thankful there were no tsetse-fly about to torture the workers, in this district cattle are ploughing so we must be out of the 'Fly' area. It is fine rolling country with rich red soil and very steep hills.

Master has been driving all day as Sarah is still decidedly delicate ; it is rather like living on the edge of a volcano—at any minute something else may happen.

We reached Bunia early this afternoon, and at once started making enquiries about the boat which we are hoping will take us across Lake Albert and land us in Uganda. We are still in luck, it is only thirty miles to the Lake, and the boat sails to-morrow afternoon. With such loads of time to do such a short distance, Master decided to stay in the Rest House here and put in some more work on Sarah, but news of strangers soon gets round, and in less than an hour after our arrival in Bunia, a car rolled up and out got an Englishman who asked us to pack up at once, and come and stay at his Farm. He told me his wife had not spoken to an Englishwoman for ages, and that if I needed any persuading, they had a real bath in their house ! So now you know why we have an address in the Belgian Congo with an English name.

As well as a very charming hostess, we found a tiny girl of about three, with fair hair and blue eyes ; I think she must have been the first fair child our natives had ever seen, they could not stop staring. I noticed the poor little soul had both feet bandaged, and her Mother told me the reason was JIGGERS.

Jiggers are tiny insects smaller than a flea, which are about in the ground. They lay their eggs under the toe-nails, and when the eggs are hatching, the irritation is simply terrible, and if the toe is not very carefully looked after, blood-poisoning follows. A sharp splinter of wood or a safety-pin is the best thing for poking these jiggers out of your toes, but I am so glad it is *not your* toes, I should hate to have to do it to you !

Our host is coffee-farming and tells us that he came out to the Congo twenty years ago and has watched everything grow from seed to tree. He must feel as if he has thousands of children. I was rather sorry for his wife ; she has no English friends and she does not like the climate here. If ever she is ill the nearest hospital with a good doctor is 150 miles away in the Ituri Forest, where the pygmies live, and where native villages have existed for no one knows how many hundreds of years ; I have been hoping I should meet some of these pygmies but they do not come away from their own villages and would not like roads and motors. These are some of the things I have heard about them.

Many people are certain that the pygmy race was the first of all the races in Africa ; when other more warlike black men followed, the pygmies went further and further into the heart of Africa, and as they were so small I expect they were afraid of everyone. When the white men came to this part of the world and tried to make friends with these shy people, it took a long time and I believe what finally did the trick was SALT ! They like to eat salt as you do sugar.

The pygmies are a redder colour than most of the

Central African natives, and they are, of course, not deformed men but just very short ; their average height is about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet ; do think of it, a full-grown man with a beard, much shorter than you ! If you ask why they are so short, I am afraid I cannot tell you ; I do not know why you are so much taller than most of your friends, do I ? Perhaps it is something to do with the airlessness of the forests.

The Forest is their home and they can move along without making a sound, not even a crackle of a twig or the rustling of a leaf. I wonder if they ever sneeze. They nip through the thick jungle as easily as we cross a road, and I should think more easily ; they do not have to look out for traffic. (But I expect they have instead to look out for *snakes* !) They are always on the watch for birds, monkeys or 'small beef,' which they shoot very cleverly with arrows made of sharpened cane. I wonder if they poison these arrows, I expect a cinema film story would say so.

I should think the tiny girl hears lots of stories about these pygmy children. The pygmies are so far from all the towns and are quite content to stay in the forest away from every one but their own tribes ; perhaps during all their lives they do not move away from their world of trees, and perhaps they do not even know that there is any other world outside it.

Although the pygmy children do not go to school, there is quite a lot for them to learn. A boy has to learn how to sing the song of his own special clan, how to dance, how to send messages on the tom-tom, how to hunt in the forest without making

a sound, how to make his own bows and arrows and how to shoot with them. A girl must learn to dance and to cook, but I don't think she ever does any sums, for these people do not use money ; she only wears bunches of leaves for a frock so I suppose she does not need to learn how to sew. Are you beginning to wish you were a small black pygmy ?

This small English girl was born out here in the Belgian Congo and has never been to England, and there are no other children for her to play with, so I found her rather pathetic. She had to go to bed very soon after we came so I could not tell her any stories. I wonder which she would have liked ? The one about the bird and the Pine-tree would not have been any good because she has never seen a pine-tree, but she might have understood the 'sticky beetle' that turned into a dragon-fly. Then how about two true ones ? About your sending out some toys to the small black children at Mongu, and my seeing a tiny girl very solemnly pounding corn for her father's supper, with your golliwog-doll tucked in the back of her little skirt just like a Hausa mother carries her baby. Then there is the story of Andy. Have you forgotten about him ? I'll tell you again quickly before I finish this letter.

Once upon a time, there was a little black boy. He lived in a village with cactus all round it, and his house was a small round mud hut with a grass roof. He had a Mother and Father and lots of brothers and sisters, and there were so many of them that he very often did not have enough to eat ; he was the smallest so he could not fight his brothers, and one day he decided to run away.

This little boy, only FIVE years old, left all his relations and friends and started off to find some place where he could get plenty of food. He had heard of a place called Jos, where lots of black men were wanted to do digging and all sorts of jobs at the tin-mines ; and he had a great idea that if he could walk as far as that he might earn some money as a LABOURER. Do think of anyone of *five* being able to carry heavy pans of earth about on his head ! Anyhow, he started off very early one morning, without any breakfast, and he walked and he walked and he walked. Then he began to wonder where he was going to find anything to eat ; he felt hungrier and hungrier, but still he was not sorry that he had run away, he was so tired of his brothers and he thought his sisters were silly and ugly. Presently he heard a noise and coming along the road he saw a white man on horseback, with a number of black men carrying luggage on their heads. He was not at all afraid, he somehow felt the white man would help him.

‘Hullo, Andy,’ said the man. ‘Where are you off to?’ Andy did not know his name was Andy but he liked the man’s voice, so he smiled at him and showed his lovely white teeth and shook his head to show he did not understand. One of the Englishman’s servants could talk Pagan language and presently Andy told his story. No one loved him, he was going to work on the Mines, and he was HUNGRY. So the white man stopped and told his boys to get some lunch ready, Andy squatted on his heels and watched. Then he ate and ate, and it seemed very good to him, he thought he would like some more of that ‘chop.’ For the rest

of the day he walked beside the Englishman's horse ; he refused to ride, because he wanted to show what a big boy he was. When they stopped for the night, there was more food, and the next day Andy said instead of being a labourer he would like to go to the white man's camp and be his servant. So he did.

Some time afterwards, his master went home to England for a holiday, and Andy was lent to me. He was a sort of housemaid, but I can't say he did much work. Do you remember he was only 5 ? I paid him 5s. a week and I think he spent it all on food. A big black man only spends about 2s. 6d. a week on ' chop,' but Andy ate nearly all day long.

He seemed to think it was his business to boss all the other natives round the Camp, even the 6-foot high messenger ' Good Morning ' ; you can imagine what they looked like together, a giraffe and an ant.

Andy loved our meal-times. Dressed in a white jumper and trousers, with a red sash round his very big middle, he would very solemnly go round pouring out drinks and working the soda-water syphon, his head just appearing over the top of the table. Of course, he was another person I wanted to take home to England. Wouldn't you have loved it ? At parties he could have helped pass round tea and lemonade, but I don't expect you would have any cakes left, or anything sweet—he was just like a monkey and he could never keep his fingers out of the sugar basin, so perhaps it was as well that Master would not let me bring Andy home ! I wonder where he is now.

*Letter 29.*

ON THE DECK OF THE 'SAMUEL BAKER,'  
LAKE ALBERT NYANZA.

*March 30.*

This morning I thought that my address to-night would be the same as last night. It is wonderful luck that we are here on the Boat, chugging across Lake Albert, away from the Congo Belge and towards Uganda. That sounds rather horrid and as if I have not enjoyed my days in this Colony. I have. I would not have missed them for anything, but when you are on a journey like this, you want to get on and keep moving. And—one week in heat like a greenhouse with all the taps turned on is quite enough. And—still more important, there is the Bogy of RAINS still with us; if we had been delayed for a fortnight it might have stopped us getting to the end of our journey. So you can see why we are rather glad we are here. Now I must start from the beginning and tell you why I call it wonderful luck.

We packed up and said good-bye to our kind host and hostess about 10 o'clock. We only had thirty miles to go but we started in good time because, between Bunia and the Lake, there is a tremendous hill; the road drops between 2000 and 3000 feet in seven miles. The road is not very broad, and on such a steep hill it might be dangerous for cars to pass each other, so they have put a telephone-box at the top of the hill and another at the bottom. If you want to go down to the Lake, you ask the native in charge of the top tele-

phone if the road is clear. He gets a message from the native at the bottom which may say that someone is coming up and that you must 'wait small.' Presently, you are told you may go down, and then the telephone boy at the top tells his friend not to let anyone come up until he sees you arrive. Well, we got to the little hut, the boy said we could start, and Master said, 'Very well then, off we go.' And that is where we very nearly did go, off the other side. Something was terribly wrong. As he gently let in the clutch to get into low gear, there was a horrible crunchy sound, and he suddenly looked rather white as he said quietly, 'The shaft has really gone.' Of course I understood now all that it meant, but I also knew that if anyone could save an accident Master could. On the left side was the rocky face of the cliff round which the road had been cut, and on our side a sheer drop of more than 2000 feet. Somehow or other we drew across the road on to our wrong, but safe side—and—the brakes held. For the moment we were all right, but what about the Boat?

The ground-sheet was pulled out of the back of the car, all the tools got out of the box on the running-board, and the same grisly business of yesterday was repeated, hours of heat and discomfort putting back the shaft. Would it hold when it was put back? Could we get as far as the Lake? It did seem cruel when we were so near that we might miss the Boat by perhaps an hour.

After a while, a car came down the hill, some Belgians popped their heads out and asked if they could help; no one ever passes a stranded car in Africa without offering to do something. I told

them they could help a lot, could they please ask the Boat to wait, we were coming, but—not quite yet. The men said they would do what they could, but they thought she was due to sail very soon. (I did not tell Master that, but said I was sure it would be all right.) After what seemed ages, but was not really very long, Sarah was ready, we packed up the tools, the lunch-basket and the ground-sheet, and started to creep slowly down that awful hill. I was so sorry for Master—he had had all the worry and the work, and even now it was finished he did not know if at any moment the shaft would go again.

We reached the level of the Lake, but still could not see if the boat had gone. We crept on and at last realised how lucky we were after all, the boat was still waiting at the Wharf and we were in time.

There was one thing that Master wanted at that moment more than anything in the world, and he got it. A really, cold, glass of beer, his first cool drink for more than 2000 miles.

Then we tore across to the Customs House, smiled at all the Officials and told them how ‘amiable’ they were, had permission to leave the Colony and were given back the lots of monies that we had paid for Sarah. Poor Sarah is in dreadful disgrace, but I can’t help feeling she was ‘made wrong’ and that it is not her fault.

Next, we went to look at the boat and wondered where the lorry was to go. I thought boats were supposed to be SHES not HES; this one has a man’s name, the *Samuel Baker*, and Master was so afraid I should ask why, that he told me quickly in a whisper, ‘After-Sir-Samuel-Baker,-the-explorer,-who-discovered-Lake-Albert.’

There is room for about six passengers but not for one the size of a tank like our Sarah, and we went to find the Captain. He told us she would have to travel on a sort of barge-affair towed behind the boat. (It looks as if we are back to the 'bacs' again!) I quite expected Master to say he should stay with Sarah in case the shaft dropped out again for the third time, but the two servants are going to hold her hand instead.

The Captain is very cheery and full of interesting stories about people who have done trips on the Lake in this boat. He and Master made friends at once, both are Engineers, and soon I heard them discussing how Sarah could be put right, all about *splines* and *set-pins* and I felt grateful and happy that we were not discussing *splints* and *spines* and that we had escaped safely down that awful hill.

*Later. Very late!* We have had a very large dinner, the boys are asleep on top of all the luggage in the lorry, and we feel at peace with the world. It is so terribly hot in the cabins that we are allowed to stay the night on deck and the black stewards have arranged all the beds. The Captain has given me the best place, where the Duchess of York slept when she stayed a night on the *Samuel Baker*, but if there is a Best Place, I felt Sarah ought to have it. The two Engineers (the Captain and Master) have had a consultation and have decided that they can do something to the shaft to make it safe until we can find someone to fit a longer one. It means that Sarah has really been splendid, rather like someone doing a hard day's work with appendicitis coming on;

A STOUT EFFORT, indeed.

## CHAPTER V

### UGANDA

*Letter 30.*

THE DECK OF THE 'SAMUEL BAKER.'

10 a.m. Sunday, March 31.

I have suddenly realised it is Easter Sunday. I am afraid we shan't get to church. And, if to-morrow is Easter Monday, it means we shall not be able to get the money we want from the Bank at Kampala, or anything done to the car, so we shall have to take a day off; it will be our first rest for three weeks! We shall have a chance to go and pay our respects to the Governor of Uganda whom we met when he was in Northern Nigeria a few years ago.

Do you notice I am writing this in the morning? I am sitting on deck under an awning, the heat is terrific and I have already had two iced lemon-squashes since breakfast.

We arrived at the Uganda side of the Lake at 7.30 a.m. The place is called Butiaba and is apparently a busy port. All I can see is the wharf and a stretch of sand, and as I packed away my French Dictionary I thought the best thing about this shore is the Union Jack. But, there is one person here who does not think so. I'll tell you about it; it really was a very funny sight. I am

afraid it shows it is true that often the best joke is someone else's misfortune, but I did not feel mean about laughing because it really was the lady's own fault.

We all had to pass through the Customs to say if we had anything to declare, and especially if we had any ivory ; no one is allowed to take it out of the Belgian Congo into another Colony without paying duty. We got through quite easily and then came the turn of a Belgian lady. I do not know why, but the Indian who was in charge of the Customs did not seem to believe that her ' Rien ' really meant RIEN. Again he asked if she had any ivory, and again she said *No* ; she was not a hunter, where was her gun, did she look as if she could shoot elephants ? She became more and more excited until at last the Official said he would like to have her keys. Then in that scorching heat and amid a very grim silence, her trunks were solemnly unlocked and the contents turned out on to the wharf. What followed reminded me of stirring the Christmas puddings—no threepennies were put in but some treasures came out, and the Official triumphantly produced at least six large chunks of ivory !

The lady promptly burst into tears and said someone had packed for her, and how was she to know they were there ? She cried still more when her ivories were taken away and I was sure she must be wishing herself safely back in the Belgian Congo. I did not think anything British would be popular at the moment, so I did not offer either to help her re-pack her boxes or to bring her a cool drink. I did hope our natives had not seen all this

palaver, because, although I had found it rather comic, it is a good thing for Aba to keep his idea that 'White man no fit to tell a lie.'

When we had finished breakfast this morning, we began at once to think about getting Sarah off the boat, but, what do you think we found? The lighter with the lorry on board had turned round so that Sarah was pointing towards the Belgian country again and it would have meant driving backwards into a British Colony—as bad as putting a stamp on a letter upside down! When we pointed this out to the Captain he was very sporting and at once shouted directions to the black people in charge of the landing operations, and a torrent of angry words came back; of course they did not want the extra trouble of turning the lighter round. The Captain insisted, and presently with a tremendous amount of waving of arms, talking and expostulations, the lighter was moved to enable the Stout Effort to make a triumphal entry into Uganda. It very nearly was a catastrophe, not a triumph; she very nearly went into the Lake instead—wouldn't the Belgian lady have been pleased if she had! The stage leading from the lighter to the wharf slipped, and she was within a hair's breadth of disaster. I had not expected anything exciting; this landing looked so easy compared to all the crazy 'bacs' and Pontons, so I had no camera handy and you will never see how near Sarah has been to a watery grave.

Master and Lawanson are now spending a hot and grubby hour putting in the shaft again, and a piece of hard wood is being rammed in to plug it into its socket. We have no time to spare so

we cannot stay here and fish as Master wants very much to do, he has heard that Lake Albert offers excellent sport and has been listening to all the stories the Captain had to tell. You know how fishermen exaggerate? From all accounts the Prince of Wales' catch must have been ' bigger past an elephant ! '

Every one is ready, so I must go.

*Later. Evening.*

IMPERIAL HOTEL,

KAMPALA.

We are very grand to-night, and are housed in a comfortable hotel with an ex-King of the Balkans, his daughter and their suite, as fellow-guests. The King did not come down to dinner but the Princess did. I was most intrigued to notice that she wore thick climbing boots of leather right up to her knees. I should think someone must have been telling her lurid stories of mosquitoes, tics and jiggers.

We have our beds in a sort of verandah overlooking the road, and, at the moment we are feeling quite weak with laughing ; I was just getting out my writing things when Master whispered : ' Do come and look at Aba.'

He was just underneath our verandah and he was holding a sort of court, talking very fast and excitedly and I thought at first he was telling everybody in Swaheli what a fine fellow he was, you remember that he said he could both speak and understand Swaheli? I do not know of whom he was talking but this was what I heard : ' He be my brudder. Same mudder, same fader. I look 'um, I see 'um,

I no find 'um.' Of course none of his admiring audience understood one word. I laughed out loud and then he saw us, so I called to him, 'Why you no speak Swaheli, Aba, for these black men?'

'Please, Ma,' was the reply, 'they no savvy my Swaheli, my teeth no live for my mouth, so I NO SPEAK PROPER.'

When we arrived at Kampala this evening, the car caused a great deal of excitement. This new Ford model has not been seen here and no tourists from Nigeria have come to East Africa by this route (Mr. Barlow went further north), so we are rather rare specimens. We have already had two requests for interviews so I suggested both reporters should come at once and then the same tales will do!

We have not had time to see the place yet, but it looks very civilised. I will tell you all about it to-morrow when I have had time to ask lots of questions and get the answers.

To go back to this morning. When we left the lake side we had a very steep and difficult climb up to the main road for Kampala, but the view from the top was worth it; two thousand feet below was Lake Albert, a lovely sheet of blue water, and across the other side, the hills of the Belgian Congo seemed to rise right out of the water like a wall.

Then we went on through beautiful green country and cool forests where we expected to see elephant moving along. Native plantations followed, banana groves and paw-paw trees, cotton fields and a most excellent road. We are certainly getting spoilt about roads, but we hear we shall come down to

earth again in Kenya. The natives in Uganda seem to have been naturally good builders and then the Government took over the roads, metalled them and covered the surface with red soil which binds it together. The village folk keep them in repair but we saw no soldiers in uniform with them as in the French countries.

The Uganda natives look more intelligent than the types we have been seeing lately, and the country seems to be a mixture of old and new. I have been told that in some parts they still go in for rain-making as they do in Nigeria—I do hope they are not busy at it now! Every Chief is supposed to be able to do it for his own people, but women are said to be the best rain-makers (I expect because they cry more!)

In a continent of sunshine, rain-making is a very important job; drought spoils the corn crops, a spoilt crop means no larder and no money. I imagine in the old days there used to be a sacrifice, but now I cannot help thinking they are more like our weather experts at home, who often have to admit they really do not know, and they do not start rain-making until the signs suggest that the clouds are ready to break. Sometimes at Mongu I used to try and make my old gardener tell me about the weather, just before the break of the rains, when I wanted to know whether to plant out the seedlings. But he would never be drawn, he was not a rain-maker; he just shook his head and wisely said: 'Allah knows.'

White men are not allowed to watch the ceremony, so I cannot tell you what happens; all you see is a column of smoke that rises slowly

and twists its way towards the sky. Picture the rain-maker, sitting over his fire, making passes and signs and then very slowly and grandly rising to his feet and talking to the people, breathlessly waiting for his report, which must sound rather like what we hear every night at home :

‘ Good evening, everybody. A depression is advancing, thunderstorms may be expected within the next few weeks ; rain may or may not come.

This will cost you several goats and oxen. Good night, everybody, goo-ood night.’

I should think rain-making as a profession will disappear altogether in Uganda, the natives are getting interested in wireless—I heard of a black man being fined for not having a licence ! That does not sound very much like the Dark Continent, does it ? But they are not all as up to date as that. In Northern Nigeria our wireless set was looked upon as one of Master’s Magics—nothing to do with them, just ‘ White Man Ju-Ju,’ like electric light, cars, telephones, etc.

I certainly do not see why they should bother their heads about wireless ; they have such a good way of their own of sending long-distance messages, on a kind of drum called a tom-tom. When I first went out to Africa, I thought this noise was too eerie and wished it would stop ; but after a while it seemed so much a part of the country that I rather liked it and I used to wonder what this ‘ Bush Telegraph ’ was saying. The noise of the

drum is picked up by another and passed on from village to village so quickly that news is sometimes known a hundred miles away long before the arrival of a fast-travelling motor-car.

Some of the Government Officials think there should be regular broadcasting in Africa, as one way of teaching the natives. See how easy it would be to tell them of the coming of storms, of approaching locusts, and of some of the happenings of which at present they are afraid because of ignorance and superstition. I heard of a tribe in Rhodesia who said that whenever a comet was seen, their Chief died. In 1910 Halley's comet was due, and the very wise White Man in charge of the district warned the people what they might see. The Chief slowly but very definitely became ill; he was certain he would die—the black man is quite capable of persuading himself into dying. But—our King Edward died, and—the native promptly recovered. Allah had called the '*Big White Chief*' instead!

The Uganda natives we have been seeing to-day are very dressy! I thought at first it was because it was Easter Sunday that they were wearing a long white robe like a nightgown, but I hear it is their usual garb, and it was introduced years ago by the Arabs. They certainly look more civilised than the ones we have been meeting lately in the Belgian Congo, and they all seem to have a *bicycle*!

I believe the advertisement of a black man on a Raleigh cycle, outstripping a fast-galloping lion, made a small fortune for that Company out here. You can imagine how every native wanted to buy

a machine so that he might say he was the one who beat the lion ! These men can ride and guide their bicycles properly too (in spite of their long gowns), not like the Nigerian natives who wobble scaredly down a hill towards you and then suddenly fall over in the road just short of your car-wheels

In each wayside village we noticed a rope stretching right across the road and held by a native at each side. I thought at first there were some local Sports, and should have insisted on Sarah entering for skipping and jumping, but when we bowled along through the villages they just let the rope rest on the ground and did not even speak to us. I asked the Manager of the Hotel what these ropes were for, and he told me the orders were to stop all lorries to see if they were carrying diseased meat, so it would have been rather rude if they had wanted to look at us ; Aba would have been furious !

Master has telephoned to Government House, and we have been invited to lunch to-morrow. The Hotel people are going to lend us a small car and we shall have to make an excuse to Sarah that she has earned a rest after all the shaft trouble. I think she would be very offended if she knew our plans, but as the Governor keeps rather Royal State, I should think this is THE SOCIETY into which Sarah Ford does not go ! I certainly do think she would feel rather out of place at the lunch party.

I have written you a very long letter and I feel a very long way off. I cannot believe it is Easter Sunday for you too. It is summer here, and I

suppose it feels like winter in England—I suppose the rain-maker is hard at work as usual !

*Letter 31.*

IMPERIAL HOTEL,

KAMPALA.

*Easter Monday.*

“BY ROAD ACROSS AFRICA,

3000 MILES IN THREE WEEKS.”

That is the heading in one of the newspaper columns to-day, and it is about us. Actually, we shall not reach the 3000-mile mark until about middle-day to-morrow, but it is near enough for a reporter. It is a tremendous thrill to see a newspaper, and rather a thrill to be in it as part of the news.

We have had a very ladylike sort of day. First of all, we tried to see as much as we could of Kampala, the most important town of the Colony. It is set in the midst of valleys and flower gardens and, like Rome, on the slopes of seven hills. On each of these hills is a building, a Church, schools, a hospital, and two Cathedrals. One of these Cathedrals is the Headquarters of the Catholic Missions and I was told that as the hill was so steep, no cart or motor could possibly come to bring materials for building, so each native church-goer carried a brick or a load from the foot to the top until the builders had all they needed. On the seventh hill there is a King's Palace, and outside

the entrance there is a fire which is always kept alight day and night, and never allowed to go out except on the death of the King or Kabaka. For, although Uganda is a British Protectorate, part of it is a native kingdom, with a Christian King. There is a Native Parliament and the Kabaka rules with a kind of Cabinet made up of Chiefs and Headmen. Except that there is no King of Nigeria, the same kind of rule goes on there, what is called Indirect Rule. The British Officials, under the Governor, *advise* the native chiefs and help them to carry out laws, develop the country, build roads, schools and hospitals, but let them feel they have power. The best example I can think of is a Policeman in a busy thoroughfare—he does not drive any of the cars nor push the perambulators nor mend the tram-lines, but he is there to look after everybody, to keep the traffic in order and if anything happens to put it right again.

The coming of the British people to Uganda dates back to 1850 when Lake Victoria Nyanza was found to be the source of the Nile.

Do you remember when I was telling you about the Congo, I pointed out that colonising followed the finding of Lakes and Rivers? It was the same here; once the Nile's route was finally settled, explorers came again and then Stanley advised the missionaries to start work in Uganda—'The Pearl of Africa.' Next came the British East Africa Company, to trade and to develop the country, then the colony became a Protectorate under the British Government, and in 1895 the railway was started from here to Mombasa and the Coast.

So, what happened in Uganda is what usually

happens when the British start colonising ; the people come in this order :

1. Explorers.
2. Missionaries.
3. Traders.
4. Governors.
5. Engineers.

The story of the building of the first East African Railway would fill a book of romance by itself. A railway in the heart of the Dark Continent, built by British Engineers, with bridges, materials and tools brought from Britain in British ships and sent by caravan, oxen and black men along the same track where years before the black men carried treasures of ivory to the coast for the Slave Traders.

The chief reason for starting this Railway was that it would stop the Slave Trade, which flourished in the regions beyond the reach of the British Navy at the Coast. As there was no river which could be used as a highway to open up the interior, the Powers That Be built a metal one. The camps of the builders were attacked by lions—cages had to be built to protect them as they worked—tracks needed to be cut through dense, tropical forests ; illness wore down their strength ; elephants destroyed whatever came in their way ; white ants attacked the wooden sleepers : the natives were ignorant and unfriendly ; yet, in six years, Central Africa at Kampala was linked up by nearly six hundred miles of railway with the coast at Mombasa, and so began the opening up of Kenya.

Mombasa, Kenya's seaport, can trace its history right back to very early times, and has been quar-

relled and fought over for hundreds of years while different nations have tried to hold the coast-line. She was certainly a wealthy and prosperous place in the Stuart days and Milton mentions MOMBASA in one of his poems ; then she had rather an unhappy time, but now is rapidly recovering, thanks partly to the railway.

With its branches the Uganda-Kenya line now boasts fifteen hundred miles of railway, and by the side of it wild animals roam about just as they like, protected by the same white men of whose coming years ago they were afraid.

This developing and railway building does explain why the British are here, doesn't it ? ' The colonising of Africa by those who can best colonise it,' was Cecil Rhodes's idea, and it is not an easy job to do successfully in a country like Uganda where there are so many races. I am afraid I used to think of the African as so many people in England do, just as 'BLACKS' or 'NIGGERS.' But, of course, there are really more differences between these tribes than there are between English, Germans, French and Russians. In Uganda alone there are at least four distinct RACES to be seen, ranging from the uncivilised pygmy to the Baganda people, the most civilised of all the East African black men. The word Uganda means the country of the Baganda people.

The chief interest of the Colony is COTTON, and I have been told that Uganda grows more cotton than all the rest of the British Empire put together. I wonder if it all gets used ? I feel we shall all have to wear more cotton frocks ; Uganda's prosperity seems to depend on it!

What a long history talk ! I do hope you are interested in the scraps I try to give you. Years ago my Father wrote a book about the way the British Empire happened; and I am sure he did not think then that one of his daughters would visit part of that Empire in Africa, and he certainly would not have guessed it would be me !

Now to return to our day's programme. So that Sarah should not feel hurt when we started out for Government House in a hired car, Master told Lawanson to cover the lorry all over with a ground-sheet, and I hope that she neither saw nor heard us go !

When we got to Entebbe, I could not believe we were still in tropical Africa, it is like a quiet and peaceful Garden City, with no City and only a Garden. It is practically on the Equator, but here was a delicious breeze, green lawns and shady trees, soft-coloured flowers and a feeling of peace and beauty, with a background of the lovely, sparkling-blue inland sea, Lake Victoria. The Governor has a private swimming-pool, out of the reach of hippo and crocodile, and for all the many brightly coloured birds, there is a bird-bath ; I actually heard one saying his grace, the first time I have ever heard a bird in Africa SING. The birds are so wonderful to look at that one grows used to the fact that they talk and shriek but never praise, like the glorious Te Deum of a skylark.

The Governor told me about some of the kinds who come to the tea-parties at the bird-bath ; the blue and grey waxbill and the one with crimson wings, the orange-breasted skrike, the green-backed bulbul, the glossy starling and even the lovely

kingfisher is there in his garden. Do you wonder that I told him I would like to be Governor of Uganda? I did not like the house so much as the garden; it is rather like a large suburban Mansion. There is a large G.R. and a crown on all the chairs in the dining-room and a bugle blows whenever His Excellency enters the drive in his car. Natives love ceremony and I think they like to feel that their Governor is such an important person and a representative of the Big Chief, King George; it makes them feel 'Plenty big men' too.

The Governor had not met any Nigerians for a long time and he was very much interested in our journey. He said that we ought to have come a month or so earlier and then we need not have stopped at Nairobi but have gone right on to South Africa! As it was, he thought it would be impossible, the rains would soon be turning everything below Kenya into mud and ponds, and when Master described Sarah and her size and weight, the general opinion was that we should be wise to keep to our plan and finish the journey in Kenya and go home by boat from Mombasa.

On the way back to Kampala, we turned off the main road to go down to the Lakeside to see if we could see 'Lutembe,' the Colony's pet crocodile. The story is that on payment of a few shillings a natives goes to fetch the crocodile and then persuades him to come right out of the water by the offer of some fish. We found the native in his hollowed-out tree-trunk canoe, we found the three shillings he asked for, we found the camera and—we hoped *he* would find the crocodile.

We waited and we waited, and while we waited

we watched the birds, mostly the yellow and black weavers, in the trees overhanging the water ; their nests always seem to need so much repairing, and with grass or a twig in their mouths there is constant going and coming, hanging upside down while they walk through the front-door which is underneath. Away in among the trees, Master recognised a hornbill shrieking, that absurd bird with a beak as large as its body. Until the eggs are hatched, the wives are walled up in the nests, and the father-birds feed them as they sit patiently there ; I did wish I could see one, bird's nesting would have been a lovely way to pass the time while we waited for ' Lutembe.' But there was so much else to look at. I have always been told that a LAKE is a piece of water surrounded by land. Victoria Nyanza is more like an Ocean. I saw in a Guide-book that it covers nearly 27,000 square miles, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times the size of Wales ! When the explorers came here I should think they must have imagined they had reached the Coast. It takes ten days to go round it in a boat.

At last we saw the canoe in the distance. I undid the camera and looked forward to getting an exciting picture for you. Master made his usual joke ' I presume you are going to try and buy him,' and then we saw by the way the native was hurrying along that he had not earned his 3s. We could not speak Swaheli, he could not talk English, so we had a sort of dumb charade, which being translated into pidgin-English would be something like this :

' I work plenty, plenty hard for find dem animal for Big White Master, I find 'um, I tell

'um for come quick and I give 'um plenty fish. He say it be too plenty cold and he no agree for come. I entreat 'um but he no agree. It be good for you to give me nother-five-shillin and come early when sun-up to-morrow day and then, if Allah tell 'um, dem Lutembe agree for come.'

Master, I fear, was rather rude. He told the boy plainly that he could keep his crocodile, that we would *not* give him 'nother-five-shillin' nor would we come to-morrow, and we NO AGREE.

I am afraid I still do not believe there was a crocodile there at all. If there is, I expect one day he will eat that native; black men say that people who 'no tell a lie' are safe, the crocodiles only take the bad ones!

*Letter 32.*

A REST HOUSE AT A PLACE CALLED BUGIRI.

*April 2.*

It was April Fool yesterday, and I forgot to tell you that I started the day by pretending Sarah had been stolen—you would have enjoyed seeing your Parent rush to the edge of the verandah to look; it was a most easy 'have on' and I was nearly beaten when I explained what the date was!

After breakfast this morning, I actually went out shopping. Films for me, a book for Master, chocolates and hair ribbons for the tiny fair-haired girl at Bunia, letters to post and stamps for you. I certainly expected that Uganda would have her

own, but this Colony and Kenya share postage stamps as well as a railway. In the Belgian Congo I was able to get three distinct sets for you :

- (1) Stanley's head, 5 cents up to 20 francs.
- (2) Native occupations in varied colours.
- (3) The air-mail issue.

Here, in Britain's first East African Colony, I could only get one set, the King's head with a background of palms and bananas. Don't you think the King should be used for the British Isles and the Colonies have typical scenes? Uganda's sign is a crested crane, or, as we used to call it in Nigeria, the crown-bird. Why not have that? I do not think Uganda has ever had an interesting set except once, that was a series with the cost typed across by the missionaries, and the amount was in cowrie shells! I read somewhere that cowries come only from the Indian Ocean and that they reached Europe through trade over the Nubian Desert to the Nile Valley and across to the Mediterranean, the coin of exchange being the shells. When gold was found in North Africa the people found it was easily made into different shapes so they made some in the form of cowries. These became valuable, not because of the *gold* but because of the *shells*. I would certainly like to get hold of that set of cowrie stamps for you.

We left Kampala at 11.30 and about 50 miles out we passed the 3000-mile total. So far, so very good. There should be only about 400 more miles to do and it means our trip is very nearly ended. Master says he feels he has hardly begun. I wonder if he is going to suggest the southern trip?

If I cannot be Governor, I don't think I want to live in Uganda, any more than I do in French Equatoria or the Belgian Congo. The French country is too dry and hot, the Belgian Congo too tropical and heavy, and Uganda is too small and too civilised. I think it is bad taste on my part as most people seem to rave about it, perhaps that's why. We have seen some beautiful and very varied country, miles of deep cool forests reminding us again of the country away to the West where the Pygmies live, and the rarely seen gorilla. Then we drove along a road that wound like a broad white ribbon past the thick green of banana groves, prosperous-looking cotton and coffee-plantations, sweet-potato fields, maize and small patches of tobacco. The parts of the Colony I have seen are like a very attractive garden, but none of it gave me a thrill. I think I am keeping my excitement for the Promised Land of Kenya. I had heard such a lot about the animal-life in Uganda, but none have come out to show themselves. I know those adorable 'bush-babies,' the galagos, are to be found here, (the small lemur that we used to call 'Button' because of its sultana-brown eyes), and the potto comes from Uganda, also the brush-tailed porcupine and the scaly anteater. To-day I caught sight of two Colobus monkeys, looking exactly like ugly, matted rugs. They seemed very angry when I grinned at them; animals do hate being laughed at. A few years ago their skins used to be very much sought after, Colobus monkey was 'Modish,' but I told them not to worry, they could keep their long black and white fur, but would they mind being photographed? Apparently the answer was Yes.



There was a scurry and a jump and the ugly matted rugs were there no more.

In case we needed a reminder that we are still in Central Africa, we had one to-day. At a place called Jinja (pronounced like biscuits) we crossed the NILE. Near by are the Ripon Falls, where the river finds its source ; it flows into and out of Lake Albert and then goes due north as one of the longest, if not *the* longest, rivers in the world. It certainly must be the most wonderful. Don't you wish the Nile could write its history—the river of Egypt and the Pharaohs?

We watched cattle-boats being loaded up. Everywhere was brilliant colour, except away in the distance where a mighty thunderstorm was brewing. I did hope it was not waiting for us. It was a depressing thought, because we have heard very bad reports of the Kenya roads when they are at their best—if it rains I do not know what will happen.

A very civilised railway-and-road bridge is nearly ready for passengers to drive across the Nile, but as we could not wait for the bridge, we waited for the ferry. It was well worth waiting for, it was a REAL FERRY. Sarah is used to having just enough room on a 'bac,' with perhaps a few inches to spare at either end, but, to-day, alone in her glory on a deck large enough to take seven cars

THE STOUT EFFORT CROSSED THE NILE.

## CHAPTER VI

### KENYA

*Letter 33.*

ELDAMA RAVINE HOTEL,  
KENYA COLONY.

*April 3.*

To-day we have done our longest run—I hope it is a good omen for our journey through Kenya. We have done 242 miles and have been hard at it since 7 o'clock this morning ; we only arrived here at 9 p.m., ' here ' being a comfortable shack which is called an Hotel. That word hotel made a lovely joke about an hour ago when we were lost on the road and expecting to reach this place ; I told the cook to go and ask in his very best Swaheli the way to THE HOTEL, without realising that it was probably the first time he had heard that word. I followed with a torch, and presently heard him wailing to himself in the darkness, ' Oh, where be dem *oxtail?* '

Instead of an Oxtail or an Hotel we found a Railway Station called EQUATOR, so I feel very grand to think I have crossed ' The Line ' ; until this evening I had always thought of the equator as a belt of HEAT round the earth, but when I got there I wanted a thick leather coat. Africa is certainly full of surprises. We SHIVERED on the EQUATOR !

I seem to have started the wrong end of the day, perhaps I have got what Master calls a

'ten-minutes-mind,' or perhaps it is the effect of a fourteen-hours' day !

When we left out Rest House this morning we were still in Uganda ; it looked a splendid piece of country for game, so I looked out for wild animals, but only saw tame natives. At a place called Tororo, an enormous rock rises from the plain exactly like a wall and I could imagine a giant's castle on top. The boundary between Uganda and Kenya is here so we stopped to tell the District Commissioner we would like to travel through the Colony ; he seemed surprised that we had troubled to be polite, and was amused at all the papers we have been carrying about to pass us into the other countries. The pictures on the walls of his Office made one think he must be a 'Mighty Hunter,' but except for his sun-helmet he looked as if he was ready for a stroll down Bond Street. We tried to learn all we could about WEATHER and ROADS—our two obsessions, and he was rather a 'Miserable Starkey' about both ; he told us that Mount Elgon in the distance was the chief Weather Prophet and as that was covered with clouds he was afraid rain was near. It seems a queer thing for an extinct volcano to turn into a barometer.

But, mercifully it has not rained yet. Directly we were over the border into Kenya the roads altered. They are DREADFUL. A ROAD is just an untidy, bumpy TRACK. My head hit the roof of the car three times in as many miles, and I was just wondering if I had cracked my skull and if there was any blood when Master said : 'I am afraid I must drive slowly, or I shall break *Sarah's springs*.'

And he wondered why I laughed !

On the hills there were large lumps of rock left in the middle of the track which, of course, told a tale ; motorists had stuck half-way, put a brick under the wheels to stop their cars slipping backwards and then had driven on, quite forgetting the golfers' first rule to replace the turf ; it does rather make your teeth rattle to drive over a large-sized boulder. We could not understand why metal had not been used in the building of the roads instead of letting it decorate the tops and line the sides, and we decided that these roads had never been *built*, but like Topsy they just *grewed*. That does not sound much like a Promised Land, does it ? British Engineers are the best in the world, and yet the best roads we have seen so far have been in a Belgian Colony.

We have been climbing and climbing all day, and by the middle of the afternoon reached Eldoret, a dusty and wind-swept place that we hated on sight. It is not really fair to judge of any new place when you see it just before the break of the rains, but I did wonder why Boers from the Transvaal troubled to trek right up from the South years ago to settle here. It is part of a plateau which is said to be full of possibilities for growing crops. When we saw Eldoret, we at once decided we did not want to stay even one night there, and, in spite of having already travelled 170 miles and there being at least four separate and gigantic thunderstorms lying in wait for us, we bought some petrol and started off again to do another 70 miles. The boys were furious, they had had quite enough and they do hate getting wet. We hoped to dodge the storms, but it did not look very hopeful.

Until dark we drove past very dried-up country, hardly any villages and very few natives along the road. We saw a few antelope but it was a dull journey until sunset when the thunder-clouds retired and the sky turned to a lovely clear yellow flecked with crimson over the forest-covered hills of this Eldama Ravine country. It is not a bit what we expected Kenya to be like, it reminds us of Switzerland in summer. But, the temperature reminds us of Switzerland in winter, I am glad of thick blankets to-night and wish I had brought my hot-water bottle !

I remember once reading about a map of Africa dated 1529, when, as no one knew much about rivers and details, they had to make them up. The Nile rested on a hyæna; a lion, several miles long, perched on a mountain nearby, and, on the equator sat two elephants. I think polar-bears would be more suitable, icicles must be so cold to sit on, even for an elephant !

Good night, my Daughter, I wonder if I shall be in Nairobi to-morrow ?

*Letter 34.*

STANLEY HOTEL,

NAIROBI, KENYA COLONY.

*April 4. After tea.*

ARRIVED HERE TO-DAY, 3500 MILES.

That is what I have put in the telegram I have just sent off to you. I do wonder what you will all say. To our Nigerian friends I have just said 'HERE WE ARE.'

We are at a very civilised hotel but we do not know a soul here. I expected to feel excited and I don't at all. We have done it and that's that. I would like to have a telephone call to you, but although Nairobi seems a very up-to-date place I do not think it could quite rise to that. I will tell you more about the place to-morrow ; so far we think it is the dustiest we have ever seen. The servants have been given a holiday and some money to buy food and clothes ; but I have not given Aba too much money, he is quite capable of giving it all away to show what a big man he is.

I had a lovely sleep last night after that record drive of nearly 250 miles and this morning I thought I was at Mongu when I woke up to the sound of the cooing of doves. Sentimental people would say, ' Oh, how *sweet*,' but just ask them to wait until they have heard that sound for hour after hour as I used to in Nigeria. I would much rather hear rooks ; they do seem to work while they talk and quarrel, but doves just go on in that silly throaty voice as if they would like to call in the doctor but have not enough energy to go to the telephone, and are spending the rest of the day wishing they had.

I was glad to see the Eldama Ravine district in the daytime, a fine piece of country with rolling hills and forests of glorious autumn-tinted trees. Monkeys were very active, they chattered from the bushes and sometimes raced in single file across the bright red apology for a road. We saw no larger animals, but quite a number of birds and among them the crown-bird which I told you is the shield sign for Uganda. In Nigeria, these birds are carefully ' protected ' now, and are not allowed to be

shot ; their black and white heads with the sandy-coloured tuft are so very attractive and one is glad to know they can no longer be used as an ornament in someone's hat ! These birds are often kept as pets, and are as good as a watch-dog for sounding a warning if a stranger appears.

From the Ravine we started climbing again and the poor driver had to watch every inch of the track. It was worse than anything we have seen so far, deep, dusty, ruts and pot-holes, which will, during the rains, become just slime. *And, you must remember, this was the main road to Nairobi, not a short cut or a path we had taken by mistake.*

I imagine, that having built such a splendid railway, there was no money left to build roads. The British have always been the first to build railways in Africa and no difficulties seem too much for them. In this Eldama district the line is more like a mountain railway. We risked sunstroke and took off our hats to the men who planned and built it ; one point near here, Timboroa, is 9150 feet above sea-level, the highest point on any railway in the Empire ! All the guide-book says is :

‘ Considerable engineering difficulties had to be overcome in constructing this section of the line.’

I should think that could not be called exaggeration !

There were no thunder-clouds about to-day, and the air was so clear that we could see a tremendous distance from one of the hills ; Master guessed for at least 100 miles. And—it was well worth seeing, it really was an extraordinary piece of country. Away on the right, three times during the day we

saw Lakes, brilliant blue, and two of them fringed with a wide border of PINK. What this pink was we could not decide at first, some sort of weed or water-lily we supposed. The second time we stopped the car and got out the hunting-glass to get a nearer view. Then we saw movement, and we knew that the pink border was a solid block of FLAMINGOES. From a distance it looked amazingly attractive, the contrast of geranium-pink against sapphire blue, but—what a sight it must be close to! Thousands of pale pink birds combing the lake for food, with their beaks pushed along in the water upside down, and then with a wonderful flash of black, white and scarlet they unfold their wings to fly back to their nests on the edge of the Lake. I hear that these flamingoes come down from the north at different times during the year, but few people have seen their actual flight from point to point.

The third Lake, Naivasha, is 17 miles long and is almost surrounded by mountains. People think there may be a mysterious underground passage, because two rivers pour much more water into the Lake than the sun dries up, and there is no obvious outlet ; yet it never overflows. It suggests ' King Solomon's Mines,' don't you think ?

Next we saw a huge extinct volcano called Menengai, and others whose names we did not know. Do you wonder I thought it was an extraordinary piece of country ? There were flat, wooded ranges of hills on one side of us and a plain containing Lakes and Volcanoes on the other ; it seemed to be a small world on its own. What was the reason of it all ? Master apparently thought

I ought to know all about it and said we were in THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY. Then, before I had time to protest that I thought THE RIFF was in Morocco, he hastily added, 'Not RIFF, you know, RIFT.'

This Valley is what the word rift suggests, a crack or a fault in the surface of the earth, which stretches for thousands of miles, and about which all the geologists and people who usually know everything, still know practically nothing. Master was much too busy keeping Sarah on the road to tell me what he knew about the Rift, but, when he has had dinner and feels more like a Talkie, I am going to ask him so that I can write it down for you.

Meanwhile, to continue about to-day: We have seen very few natives, just an occasional group of stolid-looking Pagans, draped in long untidy blankets. They did not appear to like the look of us and we returned the compliment—I had never come across black men who did not make some sort of greeting on meeting a white man; usually they are very polite and interested. I managed to get a photograph of one small Pagan trudging along the road carrying an empty Vacuum Oil Can! He certainly contradicted Kipling's phrase about

' East is East and West is West  
And never the twain shall meet.'

In this case the savage had met civilisation, but he was not running any risks about meeting me, for, when I tried to make him stop for a coin, he just hurried on without a word! I would like to have found out where he was off to. The African loves travelling, even though he likes to return in the

end to his own village, where live the spirits of his grandfathers and great-grandfathers. All over the continent, the people seem to like Movement, partly for trading and partly for the sheer joy of wandering. They have so little luggage and so few real possessions that they do not need to collect a furniture-van when they suddenly feel they want to go on trek ; a spear, a kettle and a blanket are usually what they count as necessary possessions.

As well as the flamingo-lakes and the volcanoes, I saw another excitement to-day. It was exciting for me because I had never seen such a thing before, but for Kenya it is a tragedy.

Curling up from the ground in the distance, a spiral of black smoke moved quickly towards us and then I saw it was not smoke and it was not black ; up against the sun the Something looked like thick snowflakes, but, again, the colour was PINK. This time the pink was certainly not flamingoes, but LOCUSTS. They were like huge grasshoppers disguised as prawns, three inches long ; there must have been hundreds of thousands of them, and, as the cloud tore past us the noise was like aeroplanes overhead.

I used to think the locust story in the time of Moses was a kind of fable to show how much Pharaoh was tried, but now I have seen them for myself ; those finely sounding verses of prose-poetry will tell you, far better than I can, what locusts, one of man's real, natural foes, are like.

‘ And they covered the whole face of the earth, wasting all things. And the grass of the earth was devoured, and what fruits soever were on

the trees, which the hail had left. And there remained not any thing that was green on the trees, or in the herbs of the earth in all Egypt.'

It looks as if it is going to be in all Kenya too.

In this Hotel, all the casual talk we have overheard is of WEATHER and LOCUSTS. It must be a hopeless feeling when your crops, your farming and your income depend absolutely on weather and freedom from pests, and then, in spite of all you can do, drought and locusts descend on you.

Locusts are apparently fairly new to this Colony. People are quickly learning as much as they can about them, but it must be a terribly difficult problem to tackle. I am told that when the insects are first hatched, the swarm covers THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES of ground equal about to the size of ENGLAND ! When they are in flight, the cloud is sometimes 100 MILES in length, and the numbers run into trillions.

For the first few weeks, they have no wings, and it is while they are crawling about that every effort is made to kill them off by spraying their feeding grounds with poison, but, of course, that is not nearly so simple as it sounds. Locusts' 'feeding-grounds' are any green thing they can find, so poison might also kill the sheep and cattle as well as the birds, and that would be another calamity. I was told that the birds help to kill off the locusts, but—do think what armies of them it would need to eat a swarm !

The story is that storks come from Europe to

Africa, thousands of miles away, on purpose to feed on locusts ; guinea-fowl, plover and starling help a bit and so do the natives. Black men fry them and eat them with great gusto, but Aba was disgusted when I suggested he should try ! I thought they smelt horrid, like a strong green vegetable, but do you remember that St. John the Baptist in the wilderness ate locusts and wild honey ? And, during a siege of the South African war, people followed his example when they were short of food, but they did not have the honey.

Honey reminds me. I forgot to tell you that I have seen over this side of Africa the same sort of bee-hives as the Nigerian black men so often use, just a hollow log hung from a tree and left for the bees to use and fill with honey if they will. In about a year the owner comes back to visit his home-made hive; then if it is worth while, he just lights a fire under the log, smokes out the poor bees, and goes away with his honey.

This honey talk has made me feel like Pooh-Bear, that it is ' Time for a little something.'

I am glad it is dinner-time and that I am at Nairobi.

*Letter 35.*

STANLEY HOTEL,

NAIROBI.

*April 5.*

I do not know where to begin. There is such a lot to write about, and, because I have nothing to do, no time to do it !

We have really had a most amusing day and

people are rather impressed about our trip. I had better begin at the beginning or it will be muddly.

First, we went to the Ford Motor Agent and told him we had called in from Nigeria ; he thought we were joking until we showed him a map of our route, and when he heard about the transmission shaft he thought it was ' better past all,' as Aba would say. Then he said he could easily fit a longer shaft and renew Sarah's youth if we wanted to drive to the coast and finish at Mombasa. Master then asked what the road was like and what chance we would have of selling the lorry.

The Agent was not at all encouraging about selling the lorry anywhere in Kenya ; every one had far more motors than they needed already. In Nairobi, there are said to be more cars compared to the number of people, than anywhere else in the world, and when drought and locusts visit a Colony, people are not likely to want to *buy* but rather to *sell*. This was rather a blow. We thought people would have stood in queues to bid for the Stout Effort, but, anyhow, she would have to be put right before there could be any question of parting with her, so she was left in charge of the garage folk to be thoroughly overhauled and we went on to the Nairobi Club where we had been invited to lunch.

It might have been a County Club in England, except for the black waiters and the dishes of salted ground-nuts and wafer potatoes on the tables. When the rain comes, the gardens all round the Club will more than ' blossom-like-the-rose,' because here in Nairobi, as well as roses, they produce

freesias, lilies, iris, delphiniums, anemones, pansies and all the joyous spring and early summer flowers. We are 5500 feet above sea-level at Nairobi ; at Mongu we were about 3500, and the only time I tried to grow spring flowers the hyacinths produced no stems at all and bloomed with the spike of blossoms level with the top of the pot !

With all the dust I have seen to-day in our perambulations about the town, I wonder anything grows at all, it is still like a bit of the desert. My shoes were brown when I left the Hotel, and by the time I reached the Post Office they were white. Master suggested I should ride in a rickshaw drawn by a native. I said I would if he would pull it. I went on walking.

I have learnt that only thirty years ago the flat plain which is now Nairobi was the happy hunting-ground of herds of big game; gazelle, wildebeest, zebra, etc., who became so fond of the district that when civilisation came they did not move right away ; a few miles out of the town, wild animals have sometimes to be driven away from the Aerodrome before it is safe for the planes to land !

Considering Nairobi is so new, it really is rather remarkable ; it reminds one of a mushroom that has grown suddenly up in the sand. There are Banks, Hotels, Clubs, Business Offices, and even a Circulating Library; fine new buildings of stone, and—next door to them, little tin shacks to remind one of Africa's contrasts.

The people are such a funny mixture too ; this morning I have seen white men in smart suitings like Londoners off for their morning train, and

others wearing a kind of fancy-dress of brilliant blue shirts, revolvers and cartridge belts, and huge cowboy hats with bright scarfs ; Indians in their untidy quarters looking much more dirty even than the African ; black women dressed in skins with bunches of beads over each ear and showing on their foreheads the marks of the straps which hold up their heavy loads ; and then the Englishwomen, in sun-helmet and dainty frock, motoring in from up-country for the latest news of the great world of Kenya. It was all part of a moving picture which did not seem to be true.

After lunch we went on to the Headquarters of the Royal East African Automobile Association—doesn't that sound grand ! The Honorary Secretary wanted all the details about our motor journey and there was a reporter ready at the Office to take down the story.

'What do you think of the Kenya Roads ?' was one of the first questions. It would take too long to tell you all of the answers, but I wish Master had told them it was better not to express any opinion as we had not seen any *roads* since we came into this Colony ! The Ford people have asked if they can use the details of the journey as an advertisement for the car, so I am afraid there will be rather a lot about us in to-morrow's paper. I still cannot believe that word *us* includes me, and that it is not all a dream.

I left Master (still talking about *ROADS*) and went off to a very important engagement—A SHAMPOO. I expect that sounds a very silly adventure to you, but usually in Africa I have had to wash *and* cut my own hair, the only barber in our part of the world was

a BLACK MAN who sent round a notice saying that he would be proud 'To "barb" our honourable hairs.' He added that the charge was no more 'If gramophone play!'

In Nairobi there was no gramophone, but I was waited on by an English girl, and thoroughly enjoyed myself until I had the bill—12s. 6d.! Meanwhile, I wondered if your other Parent had been getting into mischief. He certainly had. When I returned to the A.A. Office I found that every one had decided that *we were now going to do just a little extra motoring of 5000 miles and go down to the South, finishing at the Cape.*

The Secretary said persuasively: 'You have done West to East, it would be a pity not to do the South, too.'

I felt somewhat dazed, and murmured something about rains and Tanganyika, but apparently that had all been settled. They all began to talk at once, but I gathered we could motor some of the way, then go by train, and then by boat. I consulted the map and was shown this route:

NAIROBI to DODOMA by car.

DODOMA to KIGOMA by train (500 miles on the Tanganyika Railway).

LAKE TANGANYIKA by boat (a five days' journey).

Through NORTHERN RHODESIA, SOUTHERN RHODESIA, the TRANSVAAL, NATAL and CAPE PROVINCE by car.

I asked what happened then; I presumed we should turn round again and drive up to Cairo, but Master was much too keen to notice my attempt

to be funning. He pointed out two very big attractions in the Southern route :

The Victoria Falls in Rhodesia ;

Our relations in Natal.

As you know, Master has not seen his sister for years, and it has seemed so stupid to be in the same continent and yet so far away ; even our letters from Nigeria could not go direct to South Africa, they had to go north to the Canary Islands and then come down again to Natal. The only real reason against the extra journey is that we shall not get home so soon, but it is the chance of a lifetime and of course I said I would agree to go on. Sarah will have her new shaft and want to show what she can really do so I am sure she 'will agree,' but I wondered what the two servants would say ; I think they have been very trusting to come even as far as this. The further we go, the more difficult it will be for us to send them back to Nigeria, and how about Aba's plan to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca ? We shall be going in exactly the opposite direction.

The RAIN bogey will still be with us. Kenya is supposed to have two rainy seasons a year, the short rains during October and November, and the long rains from March to May, so the main wet season is therefore well overdue and we shall have to go at once if we want to get through Kenya. Directly it does start, the so-called *roads* become *bogs*, so it does not sound very cheerful. Except for a visit to a coffee estate, we must spend all to-morrow refitting with food, petrol, etc., and collecting maps and reports about the southern route, and be ready to start on Sunday. I am afraid we shall have no time for sight-seeing—I had already made

a list of several things I wanted to see before we left the neighbourhood :

- (1) Mount Kenya, the mountain which gives its name to the Colony, and which, although only a few miles south of the Equator, boasts its cap of snow all the year round. 'Kenya' means the 'Mountain of Whiteness.'
- (2) The native markets with the produce of the Colony for sale ; coco-nuts, sisal, fruit, maize, cotton, sugar, coffee, tea, bananas, sweet-potatoes, as well as every known vegetable.
- (3) A laboratory for hatching out hundreds of thousands of lady-birds to feed on and clear away the dreadful pest that attacks the coffee, called the mealy-bug.
- (4) A local HUNT. We hear that in the North of the Colony they keep a pack of hounds and hunt—not foxes but jackals.

I am afraid we shall have no time to go to Government House and sign our names in the Visitors' Book, which I feel should be done by all five of us. Even though Sarah was made abroad, she is British by adoption !

*Later. After dinner.* I stopped writing, partly because my arm ached and partly because Master wanted to sound the boys about the new plan. We found Aba in the most awful temper.

You know the expression 'white with rage?' A black man cannot very well go white, so he seems to get blacker. Aba is quite the blackest of all black men, a real West African negro, but

this evening he was just like the kitchen stove with the chimney on fire. Oh, he was cross. He could not speak at first, so Lawanson began to explain. It appears that some of these very superior-looking Swahelis had been teasing Aba about his missing teeth and saying that they knew the men in the West were cannibals and they supposed Aba must be the Cannibal King. Then Aba spoke :

‘ Please Ma, this be a VERY BAD PLACE ; these black men say I fit to eat them and now my “ heart no live ” for Mecca, and I like for you to help me to buy some “ gole ” teeth for my mouth.’

He was far too excited to listen to my protests that TEETH, especially ‘ gole ’ ones, could not be bought like a kettle or a blanket but that they would cost a lot of money, be very uncomfortable and take at least a week for him to have a set fitted. (It reminded me of the time when your first teeth started to come out and you thought you would have to have ‘ Clumpers ’ and wondered how they would stay in !)

Aba would not believe there were any difficulties at all ; he wanted some teeth, Nairobi was a Bad Place, where could he buy some ? When he heard the new plan to drive South, he got still more excited ; there was a place called ‘ Derba ’ (Durban) where there were ‘ big boxes that moved on wheels ’—a place which had TRAMS would surely also have TEETH ? Aba and Lawanson ‘ agree for come.’

After this was settled, I was allowed to return to my letter, and here is what I have found out about the Rift Valley. I do hope you will not find it dull and skip it, one day you may ‘ do ’ Africa in your

Geography class and then you will be glad you know so much about it !

Someone has described the Rift Valley as ' That strange gash across the face of the earth.' It is a pretty big ' GASH,' the part we saw yesterday is FORTY MILES wide. I will try and describe what happened, or, rather, what some people *think* happened.

It dates from millions of years ago when there was probably land between East Africa and India. The movements of the earth's crusts caused so much pressure here that a kind of arch was pushed up, which rested on two supports, one of them being the connecting land between Africa and India ; when this land, in time, disappeared under the sea, the arch sagged because one of its supports had given way, and so it cracked and then slipped down, forming a floor ; the crack widened and widened and in time became a Valley, running north and south, steep-sided and with a flat bottom ; in this valley are the lakes and volcanoes.

Please remember that all this moving and cracking was spread over *hundreds of thousands of years* ; that there are several other theories as to why the country ' rifted ' ; that I am not a Geologist (which must be fairly obvious ! ) ; and that it is difficult to explain without a diagram.

The Rift or Crack can be traced from south of the river Zambesi up through Africa, taking in Lake Nyasa and branching into two, with Lake Victoria in the middle. Lakes Tanganyika and Albert come into the left branch and the Lakes we saw yesterday with the flamingoes, into the right branch ; then on goes the Rift through Abyssinia,

probably the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are enlarged 'Cracks,' and it continues on to the Dead Sea, the River Jordan and the Lake of Galilee. When you look at the map and think of sizes—Lake Tanganyika 500 miles long, Lake Victoria nearly as large as Ireland—you will see what an absurd word CRACK is, but the meaning is right.

Of course the learned folk are always trying to find out more of the Rift's history, and, in one place, they have dug up knives and beads made out of a metal called obsidian, which is known to have been used by a race of people 20,000 years ago. We generally speak about *one century* as if it was a fairly long time and yet, here am I, trying to tell you about things that happened two hundred centuries ago, and even then the Rift Valley must have been pretty old.

I am very thrilled to think I have travelled through part of this famous Rift Valley. It is believed that all the cracking is not over yet ; there are some volcanoes that show a red glow at night which may mean that the earth is still troubled. I do hope another Rift will not happen just as we pass by !

I have been one large query to-day and have been asking a lot about Kenya. What sort of rule is there in this Colony ? Why are there so many Indians here ? In Africa, everything is *contrast* : civilisation and paganism ; deserts and rivers ; heat and cold ; rain and drought. It is therefore natural to have, also, Black and White—but why BROWN too ?

I hear that the British invited the Indians to come across to Africa when they began to build

the Uganda-Kenya Railway ; the Indians came and provided the cheap labour when the East African did not understand work of any kind. Now that the African has learned, no one wants the Indian ; he does not fit in anywhere and makes the whole problem between Black and White in this country more difficult.

Do you feel inclined to ask why there should be a problem at all ? Some people (usually the ones who have never been out of England and who do not know what the native is like when left to himself) still ask why the White Man should be allowed to 'push out the Black Man from Black Man's country'. One answer is that probably that particular Black Man is there because he 'pushed out' some other Black Man before him ; as time goes on there must be MOVEMENT. Another answer, or rather another question, is—whether it is right to try and get the best out of a country in order to send it wherever it is wanted or to leave it where it is and where it does no good. Radium, gold, diamonds, tin, cocoa, tea, coffee, are some of the things this continent has produced because the White Man came to Africa.

You remember I told you there are no real SETTLERS in Uganda and Nigeria ? The British go out to those Colonies as Government Officials, Engineers or Traders, but no one is encouraged to *buy* land. It must be more difficult to govern Kenya, where White Men have been invited to buy estates and make their homes here ; having invited them, it is only fair to look after their interests, and yet there are really so few white people compared to the number of black. East

Africa is made up of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar ; all that country together is eight times the size of the British Isles, and yet there are fewer white people in the whole of East Africa than there are in ONE LONDON SUBURB !

This letter seems to be growing into an article for an English newspaper about BLACK AND WHITE PROBLEMS ! Here is a small problem for you, it is rather like the question 'Which came first, the chicken or the egg ?' 'AFRICA' is derived from the words 'Afri' meaning Black Man, and 'Ac' meaning Country. So, is the Black Man an African because he is *black* or because he lives in *Africa* ?

*Letter 36.*

NAIROBI.

*April 6.*

I think you will like to see a newspaper I have here. We take up most of the front page, and this is the heading :

“BY MOTOR LORRY FROM THE WEST COAST TO NAIROBI  
REALISING A DREAM AFTER TEN YEARS  
FIRST WHITE WOMAN TO USE A LITTLE-KNOWN  
ROUTE ACROSS AFRICA”

In another part of the paper there is a large advertisement :

PROVED ONCE MORE  
THE NEW  
FORD  
TRUCK

I have posted you a copy, and also more letters and ten rolls of films.

We had a very hot and dusty morning, shopping and making plans for an early start to-morrow. Sarah is all ready and she caused quite a sensation when we asked for 40 gallons of petrol. No one in Nairobi had come across a car which had a thirst equal to that, and the most surprised person of all was Lawanson ; we have nothing so up to date as a petrol pump in Nigeria, and this was the first time he had seen one. As he watched the petrol coming out, his mouth opened so wide I was afraid his jaw would crack.

I reminded the two boys that they would need more food for the new journey, and then they told me their troubles—they *could* not find anything they liked to eat in 'This very bad place.' So I went with them to every large store in Nairobi and we looked at every brand of biscuit which the largest town in Kenya Province had to offer—big ones, small ones, square ones, round ones, sweet ones, dry ones, thick ones, thin ones, currant ones, plain ones—nothing would do, and I began to be afraid that they would want to be shipped back at once to Nigeria where they could buy and eat their very dull-looking starchy roots. But, at last we unearthed something between a dog biscuit and a bath-mat and I heaved a sigh of relief—they said it would do.

Our own food buying did not take nearly so long. We are due at Dodoma in four days but we bought enough stores for a week ; in Africa it is best to leave nothing to chance.

We have been told that we must do at least 200

miles the first day. On the route we are taking there is no hotel between Nairobi and a place called Moshi in Tanganyika. We cannot very well sleep by the roadside because it is a good country for LIONS, and we must not rely on Rest Houses. We hear rumours of a special kind of tick which lurk in these Rest Houses and whose bite can give you fever, blindness and paralysis. What a very horrid thought! The ordinary tick is like a tiny brown crab with sticky legs which brushes on to your feet or ankles from the grass as you pass and then digs itself in and sucks your blood. In Nigeria we were quite used to this small pest, but we do not want to risk being bitten by this new kind they call spirillum. I would rather sleep by the roadside and risk a LION, I suppose I could try to shoot *him!*

I certainly hope that Sarah will feel energetic to-morrow, and ready to do at least 200 miles. We have been given all the reports about the roads, and if there is no rain we ought to be all right. It has been scorching hot all day, and people are saying that the Long Rains are really going to begin; we cannot do anything but hope for the best.

The Secretary of the A.A. invited us to lunch, and we met two jolly children aged about seven and eight and saw a very attractive house; round the walls of the dining-room there were numbers of animal photographs, one showing the back view of a lion making off at the double because the photographer SNEEZED!

Then, there was a coffee estate to see. East African coffee is being so much talked about just

now that it was most interesting to see it close to and hear more about it. Coffee grows well at anything between 4000 and 7000 feet above sea-level and wherever the soil is a rich coppery red. The bushes grow from four to five feet high and have small white waxy blossoms which are faintly scented and grow close to the stem. Green fruit follows and then turns to a deep crimson ; this fruit contains two seeds which are the coffee berries. A coffee plantation is a most pleasant sight, the green is such a lovely fresh colour against the dark red soil and the rows of trees are so orderly. I wonder who found out that as well as a pleasant sight, coffee was a pleasant drink ? He certainly should be one of the Presidents of the Society of GOOD FELLOWS.

We have all been honoured to-day. Master and I have been made Honorary Members of the East African Automobile Association, and Sarah has been decorated with their badge ; it shows a lion walking across a rail, with a background of mountains. The crest of Kenya Colony is a lion rampant. And—talking of lions, I have heard a lovely story I think you will like to hear.

Once upon a time, long years ago, there were two lion cubs. They were twins and their names were Snib and Snub. One day they were out in the grass, playing hide-and-seek, when some black warriors passed by, waving their shields and spears and looking very fierce, with their bodies painted all over in red and white.

Snib said to Snub :

‘Wouldn’t it be a lovely surprise if we could dress up like that and go home and frighten Mummy?’

Snub said to Snib :

‘I know, there is a pot of black paint left over from Spring-cleaning, let’s go home and paint each other before dinner. Black will show up well on our yellow coats.’

So, back they crept to find the paint. Snib found a brush and started to draw large black spots all over his brother. Presently he said :

‘I say, you don’t look a bit like a lion any more, do you think Mummy will mind? As we are twins, I think I had better have spots too, take the brush and hurry up and do me.’

Snub was so pleased with himself and took such a long time counting all his spots, that Snib thought he had better start doing himself. Just as he got hold of the pot, Mrs. Lion called out to the boys to come into dinner, and Snib was so startled that he spilt all the rest of the black paint over his back, and it ran over him in dingy black lines. Mrs. Lion was calling loudly again, so he could not wait to do anything : the twins, not looking like twins any longer, crept back to their home ; but, a dreadful thing happened—their Mummy did not recognise them, and she called out to Mr. Lion to drive away two horrid new animals called SPOTS and STREAKS.

The black paint never wore off, and ever since then there have been in the world the LEOPARD and the HYÆNA.

This is a short letter because we have to be up and away very early in the morning. There is a

dance at the Hotel, so I fear we shall not get much sleep.

*One o'clock in the morning.* The music has stopped, but another sound keeps us awake . . . RAIN ! It is coming down in torrents, just as it does in Nigeria, when the clouds break and the dry season ends. Do you remember what people said ?

' You will get through if the rain does NOT come.' The rain HAS come, what will happen now ? Master says ' We SHALL get through.'

*Letter 37.*

56 MILES OUT OF NAIROBI.

*Sunday, April 7.*

Do you remember I told you we must either do two hundred miles to-day, or stop where we were ? We have done neither. We have taken exactly thirteen hours to do fifty-six miles, and we are still in Kenya Colony.

As usual I have started at the wrong end. Master and I were ready to leave Nairobi at six o'clock, but the boys were a bit cross after their two days' holiday, and there was a long delay before we were packed up and away. It was not our late start that mattered so much but the ROAD ; it was just like a bad dream, a winding track of soft BLACK MUD, and after a few miles we stopped for chains to be put on the wheels. I do not know much about cars, but I could not help thinking (to myself !) that the only thing those chains did was to collect the mud and bind it firmly to the wheels, and so prevent them gripping. Poor Sarah, it certainly

was not her fault ; she was magnificent, and so were the boys. We would move a few yards and then stick ; out we had to get, unload the car, dig out the wheels, put a plank either front or back, whichever needed it most, start her up again and then heave and push. A cinema picture would have been marvellous and it would have only needed to be a slow-motion one ! I cannot think how it was I did not leave my shoes behind ; I was ankle-deep in mud most of the time, and this was on one of the main roads out of Kenya Colony.

Loading and unloading a car sounds quite simple. You at once think of suit-cases and a lunch-basket, but, our luggage weighed about a ton, you must remember, and in order to get it all into the back of the lorry it has, each time, to be packed in a certain way. I should think that during those fifty odd miles we packed and unpacked that lorry about twenty times.

There was a terrible risk of harm to the car, too ; with the strain of starting and trying to heave out of the morass, the clutch might have burnt itself out. Master really had a dreadful day, but I did not ; my day was the best of the whole trip so far, and I will tell you why.

After a while, the road improved and the country looked like brown, open, park land, dotted with acacias, and these seemed to have most amazing branches which crossed one another well above the tops of the trees. Suddenly, I realised what they were. THE 'BRANCHES' had HEADS, and they MOVED.

GIRAFFE, exactly the colour of the countryside, families of them, the tallest animal in the world,



THE STOUT EFFORT, THE AUTHOR, AND A ROAD IN KENYA COLONY



stood there to be admired, and—you were in London. We stopped. The boys got out, they thought it was another push-palaver, and then they saw too. Aba murmured 'Bush Camels.'

Fathers and mothers of dappled brown like autumn in a beech-wood, and young ones, the light fawn colour of coffee-and-milk, made a picture which alone was worth coming three and a half thousand miles to see ; and, once again I longed for a camera which would show COLOUR.

While we stayed in the lorry, the giraffes were not afraid. They do not seem to connect cars with men and guns, but, when we tried to get nearer by walking softly towards them, that was a very different matter—they were off ! With those long legs they travel fast, their heads not seeming to move at all ; balance and deportment I feel must be a strong point at the School for Giraffes.

I had scarcely recovered from the thrill of seeing my first wild giraffes, when we ran into an absolute zoo. There was another tall creature stalking around, the OSTRICH, the bird that cannot fly, so conceited of his tail feathers and of being able to run as fast as an express-train.

Next we saw ZEBRA, by the dozen, smart and newly shingled, wearing their very best striped Sunday suiting ; some people say that from a distance a zebra looks all dark brown and blends in with the countryside, but I thought he showed up most startlingly. With a background of trees his stripes would look like dark streaky shadows and I wondered if his natural haunt was the FOREST, like the Okapi. I also wondered if there is anything in this idea of PROTECTIVE COLOURING, or

whether it is not just chance ; four-legged animals hunt by *scent* not *sight*, and all the colour-schemes must have been thought out long before the two-legged animals who depend on *sight*, decided to come and hunt with guns. What do you think ?

After the zebra we had a shock, there were six HYÆNAS squatting in the grass in the broad daylight ! I expect they hoped we were hunters and that there might be something left for them ; Aba was so angry when I said they were probably waiting for him. He does hate being teased.

Next we saw the GNU or WILDEBEEST. Do you remember those absurd verses we found about the ' Hairy Gernew ? ' I don't agree with his opinion of himself :—

' Things are so few that a gnu can do '

He seems to me a gentleman of many parts ; he has the head of an ox, the body of a horse, the limbs of an antelope, and the beard of an old man ; he runs extraordinarily fast (in spite of his clumsy build), and he makes a roaring noise rather like a lion.

So does the ostrich, and I hear that families of zebra, ostrich and gnu sometimes go about together in one herd—perhaps they have Community Singing ! The ostrich can see well and has a very hard hoof, the zebra is supposed to have scent and the gnu, sense. (Master said the last must be true, because Mrs. Wildebeest was so careful to keep her ludicrous-looking baby out of my way ! I was very disappointed not to get a good photograph for you.)

Next we saw a crowd of Thomson's Gazelle, or 'Tommies,' who reach about as far as a giraffe's knees ; the camera failed again, they move at such a rate. Directly the Tommies saw us, their tails began to swing, and they were off through the trees like a flash, and I could hardly believe I had seen them at all.

Then more giraffe, who stopped in the middle of their meal off the tops of the trees to watch us as we wallowed through the mud. Although they are very timid creatures, they are also very curious, and I believe they are a terrible nuisance anywhere near the railway because they interfere with the telegraph wires ! Sometimes, specially high poles have to be put up to keep the lines out of the giraffes' way.

All the afternoon we saw processions of animals moving about in the distance, dozens of big sheep-faced KONGONI or HARTEBEEST ; KUDU, another of the antelope family, four and a half feet high with long spiral horns and white vertical markings on a greyish brown coat ; the ridiculous SECRETARY-BIRD striding along in a great hurry, and GREATERBUSTARD, like enormous turkeys, added to the variety. I did not expect to see buffalo here because they prefer marshy ground, but I am sure lions have been about, lying there in the grass. I badly want a picture of a whole family for you and also of a RHINOCEROS. Master said, ' Thank you for nothing, and do you happen to know the habits of a rhino ? ' (Apparently he does—when he was a small boy he used to think the name was Running-Oseros.) In spite of the rhino's enormous bulk, he moves swiftly and silently, and just APPEARS ; this, I imagine might be

a bit alarming, especially as he hates anything NEW. Sarah is most definitely a New Model and he cannot have seen anything quite like her before, so he would probably charge right at us without waiting to be introduced! Rhinoceros have very bad sight and depend on sound and scent to guide them, but we should have only one thing to depend on—SPEED. Between our numerous stops for churning and making mud-pies in the road, our speed during the day was about 5 MILES AN HOUR, a pretty poor effort against the gentleman with a horn and badly fitting armour. He certainly lost the chance of an easy win to-day. I am quite sure I could never have climbed those trees—they had THORNS!

It was certainly impossible to hurry, and as the time went on, we began to wonder what we were going to do for the night. About four o'clock we saw, away in the distance, signs of a *railway* and a village; and then everything was decided for us; the car was hopelessly bogged and Master could not move her, so, if the car could not get to the village, the village would have to come to the car, and I went off to fetch it, escorted by at least a dozen 'Tommies,' who stopped, looked and listened to me, squelching through Kenya's mud.

I am afraid I forgot all about it being Sunday, and when I reached the place, which was called Kajiado, I interrupted afternoon naps, a tennis party and several meals, before I met a kindly lady who invited me to tea. She was rather surprised when I said I would rather have some natives. Then I explained that I had left a husband, and a lorry, in a ditch a few miles away and could I borrow a few dozen black men to help us out. In Africa, people

are used to curious requests, and this lady not only produced the pushers, diggers and carriers, but asked us where we were bound for and solved all our immediate problems by offering us an evening meal and a shelter for the night. Wasn't she a Good Samaritan ?

Master was even more grateful than I was. He forgot all about his tiredness, the rain and mud, and what a difficult day it had been ; he was so relieved to think that we should have a roof for the night and that we should not be forced to camp by the side of the road in lion and rhino country.

Our hostess tells us that if we had done this fifty miles from Nairobi before the rain came, we should have been here in THREE hours instead of THIRTEEN, and that we should have arrived with our faces grey with dust instead of our shoes black with mud.

One of her sons is working on the railway, and another is at school in Nairobi ; a few weeks ago this schoolboy drove out here with some friends in a small Ford, and on the way they saw some zebra. Of course they gave chase and apparently Sarah's relative entered into the fun and rattled and crashed over the ground until at one of the very worst bumps the boy broke his arm.

'So silly,' was his mother's comment, but I'm afraid I laughed—I could not help thinking that you and your friends would all count a broken arm a smallish price to pay for a day's giraffe and zebra visiting in a car. What do you say ?

Letter 38.

MOSHI,

TANGANYIKA TERRITORY.

April 8.

Three weeks ago we were wrestling with a temperature of  $120^{\circ}$  ; to-day it has not risen above  $70^{\circ}$  and yet we are nearer to the Equator than when we were in French Equatoria.

When we started this morning we were still in Kenya ; this evening we are in Tanganyika, our sixth African colony in a month.

We have been very lucky to-day and have dodged several storms ; otherwise our history would have been the same as yesterday, stick, unload, dig-out, push. The 'road' was more like a cart-track than a road, with everlasting bumps and crashes to show that we were still in Kenya. Master has to drive all the time and keep his eyes glued to the atrocity which serves as a highway ; I was again able to watch the zoo. Herds of cattle were followed by giraffe and gazelle and then, amongst the trees and thick bush, I watched a wonderful gymnastic class—the IMPALLA, who belong to the antelope tribe and have long curved horns and diagonal black markings on a bright brown coat. Only a movie camera could get pictures, I am sure, they are a most remarkable sight, sailing over the bushes like a bird and jumping up in the air from eight to fifteen feet, and when they are tired of showing off what they can do like that, they solemnly jump *backwards* !

Then, as usual in Africa, we saw the contrast. After the impalla, a minute TORTOISE, slowly

crossing the road in front of the car. I imagined he was making for the gymnastic class, but feared he would be a bit late. Although the joke about my collection is getting a bit stale, Master pointed out that the tortoise would not take up much space and would pack in anywhere if I really wanted him, and also I should not have to offer to pay anything, as he appeared to be alone in East Africa.

East Africa was certainly showing us all it could. The next thing we did was to run right into a RAIN of LOCUSTS, mustard yellow this time. The sky was quite dark and it was like driving through a dense hailstorm, with Sarah skidding and sliding along sideways like a crab on top of the squashed locusts, inches deep in the road. We drew in to the side and tried to get a photograph. After they had swept by, we dislodged as many as we could from our clothes and the seats of the lorry, and then we lit cigarettes and agreed we were glad we were not farming in Kenya. A few days ago I told you what the Bible says about this pest, now I have heard something else, and it comes from *The Arabian Nights*.

‘A beast that hath in him somewhat of the make of six strong and violent beasts. The locust, whose head is the head of a *bull*, its wings as the wings of a *vulture*, its feet as the feet of a *camel*, its tail as the tail of a *serpent*, its belly as the belly of a *scorpion*, its horns as the horns of a *gazelle*.’

So now you ought to know what a locust looks like ! I would like to add : and who changeth his colour as doth a chameleon. From what I heard

in Nairobi, there are at least three distinct varieties, but the two lots we have seen are Desert locusts, pink when they are young, and this brilliant yellow in a latter stage.

We were not the only motorists on the road this morning. We met a large touring car followed by a very smart lorry filled with boys and luggage. The white man stopped and called out: 'I see you are using chains, what is the road like?' Master laughed, and told him what distance we had done and how long we had taken. Then we were told we were lucky to have got through at all in our heavy car—another twenty-four hours of rain would probably make the track impassable. The stranger told us he lived in Kenya and was just returning from a week-end, shooting lion and elephant, but—not shooting with a GUN, but with a CAMERA. I believe it will soon be a relic of the past for people to think they must have stuffed heads of dead animals to prove what fine hunters they are; much more pluck and cleverness are needed to stalk big game with only a camera in your hand, and in the end there must be more delight in looking at a fine picture and remembering that the subject is still there for you to have another try. The Englishman asked about the animals in Nigeria and the French Country and told us he hoped to go across with his cameras one day. Kenya is so well known as a Sportsman's country, and the West side is hardly known at all. We wished each other the best of luck, but he told us we were in for rather a tough time.

At about midday, we were stopped by a sort of hurdle across the muddy Slough-of-despond that

served for a road, and a fussy-looking black man in a cap bustled out of a mud shack and demanded to see our papers.

The *hurdle* was the boundary between the two East Africas, Kenya on one side of it and Tanganyika on the other.

The *shack* was the Customs House.

The place was called Longido, a very important centre during the War ; very heavy fighting went on here. I should think that nothing much happens now, except the prowlings of lion, leopard and hyæna and I was glad that we were able to show the Black Official that all our papers were in order so that we were allowed to move aside the towel-horse affair and proceed on our way.

So now we are in Tanganyika. I wonder if you have looked it up? If it is a pre-war Atlas the territory may be called German East Africa, but if you want to know how to pronounce its real name, it is Tanganyika. The name is taken from two words, 'Tanga' meaning a Lake, 'Yika' meaning a Plain.

I was interested to get at that meaning because our first impression of the country was of mile after mile of sandy flats, with no sign of trees or greenery at all. We certainly do have variety. In one week we have seen the tropical greenery and hills of Uganda, the Highlands of Kenya, the amazing Rift Valley, and the stretches of flat thorn scrub of Tanganyika. This flat plain is shadeless and hideous, and yet rather attractive; there is sun, space and freedom. There was someone else who liked it too ; a lone zebra suddenly appeared and started to race the car. Of course Master was game

for some fun and let Sarah out all he could, but the zebra just played with us. Sometimes he stopped to let us get on ahead and think we had tired him out, then on he would pelt again and gallop level until we had to pull up. Finally at a safe distance he waited and watched while we gave the car a drink. We, of course, had spare water for the thirsty car in the cans at the back but wondered where the zebra got his drinks ; then I remembered something I had read about the far-roaming zebra, which may or may not be true (I always believe the animal stories I hear until I have them violently contradicted !) The book said that zebra have such a highly developed sense of smell that they can trace out water where other animals might die of thirst. In Africa a good many streams flow underground, and, where a water-diviner might be guided to it by the bending of a hazel-twigg, the zebra is guided by his nose and then he digs down with his hoofs until he finds it. If zebra have sense as well as speed, what wonderful polo ponies they would make—but, I would rather someone else did the riding !

We saw no more game until this afternoon, when the country changed again and we were in a green valley once more. Then appeared ELAND for the first time, Africa's largest antelope. It looks much more like the Ox family, and is a reddish brown colour, stands about 6 feet at the shoulder and has heavy spiral horns. I was so surprised to see that they run so gracefully ; one would expect such a heavily built animal to flounder along, but, what one expects in Africa never does happen. Are you tired of my telling you what an amazing place it is ?

Do just think of the animals to be found in the continent :

The largest (elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus); the tallest (giraffe); the newest (okapi); some of the rarest (gorilla and chimpanzee). And yet —Africa gave to Europe the homely donkey and goat, and probably the cow, too !

After seeing this huge antelope we saw another kind of giant. Vague mountain shapes appeared and, towering above them all in the distance, one whose top was shrouded in rain clouds, Kilimanjaro ('Mountain of the Spirit'), 19,700 feet high.

Aba had just had his lunch, and, while busily cleaning his teeth with a bit of stick, he turned to Lawanson and I heard him say quite casually, 'That's a big *stone*.' I do not know very much Hausa, but I should have thought there would be a more suitable word for a *mountain* than 'dutsi' which would be used for a pebble on the road. Aba could raise no enthusiasm for this wonderful cloud-wrapped giant, but he got terribly excited when we refused to stop the lorry for him to pick up a dead jackal he saw in the road, and which he called 'plenty good meat.'

All the afternoon we have watched the mountain without seeming to get any nearer ; but this evening we reached Moshi, which is under the shadow of this colossal 'stone,' the highest volcano in the Old World.

This town of Moshi is on the Railway, built by the Germans from the sea-coast at Dar-es-Salaam to Kigoma, the port we are bound for on the five-hundred-mile-long Lake Tanganyika. Master has telegraphed to ask if we may have a coach for Sarah

put on the train which leaves Dodoma in four days' time. Dodoma is only 270 miles away from here so we should have plenty of time, but we do not know what surprises there may be in store. It is Africa, and we have not yet seen what Tanganyika has to show us in the way of ROADS.

We found the subject of East African roads interested the people in this small hotel at Moshi and we were asked to compare them with those of all the other colonies we had visited. We praised Uganda, but had to give the prize to the Belgian Congo. About Kenya I am afraid we were rather too out-spoken because suddenly a Portuguese piped up, 'But—*of course* no one would ever expect to find good roads in a *British Colony*.'

Master told me afterwards he was afraid I was going to strike this man. I got very red in the face and just managed to stammer, 'But—*of course*, the British build RAILWAYS.'

From all our remarks about roads, you will have gathered a little of what motoring in Africa is really like, and above all you will have seen that Sarah can be, if she chooses, A VERY STOUT EFFORT INDEED.

CHAPTER VII  
TANGANYIKA

*Letter 39.*

CAMPING IN A MASAI RESERVE,  
TANGANYIKA TERRITORY,

*April 9.*

In my last letter, I told you that Sarah was not only a Stout Effort but a very Stout Effort indeed. After 36 hours in this country we feel that if she reaches the railway she will be the MOST STOUT EFFORT of all. To-day, she has played the part of a mountain climbing tank, a plough, an impalla, a crab and a waterproof caravan. I had better begin at the beginning.

Although I stayed up late last night writing to you, I had to wake up early this morning to look at the wonderful pink light over Africa's greatest mountain; it made me hold my breath and feel it was rather good to be alive. I have seen a photograph of Kilimanjaro, taken by moonlight from a distance of forty miles, and I am not surprised that one of the peaks is called by the natives 'The House of God.' The mountain commands the whole district like a quiet sentinel, looking down on some of the most marvellous scenery in the world. The top is a bare blunt range and over this is draped a white cloak of snow; next comes a forest belt and stretches of ground under cultivation, while

lower down there are lovely green valleys and streams like Devonshire. There is plenty of woodland on these mountain slopes, but no pasture for the cattle, so the poor wretched animals are kept in huts and the native women go down to the plains, cut grass and take it back to them. Doesn't that seem a backwards way of doing things? You will say, 'Why don't they all move down to the plains?' One reason is that the African is slow to move his home, much as he likes travel, and the other is that he went up the mountain to get out of the way of cattle stealers. I should think the poor wretched animals that are never allowed to roam about in search of food will soon lose the use of their feet or else grow a web like a duck.

I actually walked about 'small' this morning. We had some business to do in Moshi. It had turned hot and sticky, rather like Southern Nigerian heat, and felt like thunder; we were not at all surprised to hear bad weather reports at the Post Office. Telegraph wires are down! We did hope our message got through to the Railway Superintendent at Dar-es-Salaam. I feel that here we are going to miss a friend of ours on the Nigerian Railway, the kind of man who always gets THINGS DONE. Anything to do with Railways seems to me Magic (Master insists that I still do not understand why a train goes), so, of course, anyone who helps to manage and plan one must be 'Better past Kerosene.' (That, by the way, is the Nigerian native's highest praise!)

I bought Tanganyika stamps for you at the Post Office—two issues: 1922, The giraffe's head (sign of the Colony); 1927, The King's Head.

I want to find you an earlier set with the heading of Deutsch-Ost Afrika.

All round Moshi, there are more signs of farming than we have seen for days ; coffee and sisal are grown for trade and nearly all European vegetables for the larder. There are plantations of mealies looking like a green and carefully tended garden, brightly coloured flowers and almost every fruit you can imagine. At a place near here called Arusha, they grow oranges, lemons, limes, peaches, pears, plums, figs, apricots and APPLES.

It sounds a good place to live in and I suggested to Master that, instead of returning to Nigeria where apples do not grow, he should start tin-mining here. (Do you remember when you were very small asking what your Daddy did in Africa? When you were told that he was looking for tin, you said : ' If he finds one, does he put ginger biscuits inside ? ' I am afraid you must have been disappointed when you were shown a lump of black rock and told that was TIN !)

Soon after we left Moshi we had to grapple with a ferry. The river was beautiful, narrow and edged with very fine trees, but the ferry was not so good—a ramshackle affair worked by wires and looking most perilous. I would have liked a swim, but I am rather scared of crocodiles. They cause more deaths than any other African animal ; I think the natives get careless and forget that a crocodile is always hungry. One sweep of the tail sends a man into the water ; one blow would do for a donkey, a cow or even a camel.

The natives who worked the ferry had a new style of hairdressing ; it was done up into tight

strands looking just like wire, smeared with mud and arranged to fall over their foreheads in a kind of tassel. The people in this colony greet you in a different way, too ; they bend down low and clap their hands, which is rather pleasant after the stolid way the Kenya black men passed us by.

After the river, there was a steep climb ; we rose 2000 feet in two hours, round the side of a mountain, and the Stout Effort once more earned her name. So did her driver. I really am full of admiration for the way he copes with all the motoring difficulties, I have not driven since we left Nairobi. I do not think I could keep the great big lorry on these roads at all.

We thought we had only ninety miles to go to-day, but the figures given us are wrong by nearly one hundred miles ! (I told you that one always has to be ready for surprises in Africa ; those surprises are not always very nice, especially when you are looking for a roof, and it feels and looks like a raging thunderstorm.) A white man we met on the road told us we had better go on for thirty miles and then camp. He *hoped* it would not rain ; so did we. But it did, an hour afterwards. It came down in torrents, while the four of us sat in the car with all the blinds pulled down and hoped we would not drown.

Then, we literally ploughed along an almost unrecognisable track through the bush, sometimes leaping across a sudden ditch, or crawling sideways through mud and slime, but never having to stop altogether to unload and push. It was good honest mud rather than that horrible black cotton soil which we found so devastating in Kenya. We saw

freshly made tracks of game in front of us, and once we startled some tiny 'Beef' called Dik-Dik, not much larger than a hare, which were off like a flash almost before I had heard what they were. They are the pygmies of the antelope family and, like the pygmies in the Belgian Congo, they make no sound as they skim over the ground.

As darkness was falling, we saw a sudden gleam of light and were soon hailed by an Englishman camping here by himself in the lonely bush. We knew we need go no further.

Sarah was parked under the shelter of some trees and we were made welcome in the white man's tent, and asked to dinner. The afternoon in the Kenya zoo country was my best *day* so far, and this has been my best *evening*. Ever since we came I have had a pencil ready in case I might forget to tell you some of the things I have heard. I almost feel I could write a book on 'An evening in a Masai Reserve.'

The MASAI are the warlike people of East Africa and have such a bad reputation for being quarrelsome that certain tracts of country are put aside for them to live in; the part we are in now is one of their Reserves. These people think that there are really only two things in life worth while—fighting and cattle. When there is no fighting to be done, they are just cattle farmers (without doing any farming). They do not trouble to cultivate their ground and cannot see how much better it would be for them and their flocks if they really understood something about crops. In Kenya a school has been started for Masai boys to teach them dairy work, etc., but I expect when they leave school they go back to the same old ways. The

African does not like change. But, one thing he has learnt and that is the need for WELLS ; in a year of drought, the cattle cannot find enough water in the rivers and would just die of thirst if it were not for the wells which are being built at the request of the Masai by British Engineers—our host is one of them.

He tells us that the men are most interested in the work and want to know almost as much as the small girl in Kipling's verse, with her millions of questions:

'. . . What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who.'

The Engineer said that the Masai were very curious and that they would certainly come round to find out who we were.

'Directly they hear you are English, they will treat you as a guest and want to shake hands with you,' we were told.

They are a proud and independent people and years ago were the terror of every one. They stole cattle and bullied all the other tribes and absolutely refused to recognise any authority. Now, they have settled down, quite content to look after their cattle and goats and be employed by the Government Officials as game rangers and guides ; but they will not do any work with their hands or be domestic servants.

Many years ago, the Masai were a large Nation, and a dying Chief told them that while they lived in peace with the British so would they prosper. But, if they fought and killed any English, their cattle would die and they would soon cease to be a Race. All went well for a time and then there

was some trouble and a few Englishmen were killed. The story goes that cattle disease broke out and nearly all their animals died ; so did the people, thousands of them, from smallpox, until they were a NATION no longer, only a TRIBE. Do you wonder that they believe the old prophecy, and that they say WHITE MAN=BRITISH PEOPLE ?

Some time ago there was a small fight between these people and some others, and the young Masai warriors were brought to heel by ONE ENGLISH OFFICIAL !

When white people come to Africa, one of the first things they try and do is to stop the black men fighting their neighbours. Whatever must these black men have thought of the years 1914-1918 when *white* men fought *white* men in Africa—British against German, to see which should rule a slice of black man's country ? It is a very difficult question, but I can tell you one thing. The British are carrying out the same kind of Indirect Rule in Tanganyika as in Nigeria and Uganda; using Native Chiefs and encouraging them to learn how to govern their own people. In this Colony the black man's answer to this way of ruling is : ' You have given us back our country. We are men once more.'

Here are some more things I have learned about the Masai. They live in low, flat-roofed huts, rather like big mud-pies, plastered with dried cow manure, and the villages are surrounded by thorn bushes to keep lion and hyæna away from the hundreds of humped cattle which represent their wealth. They do not keep chickens because their noise would betray their hiding places. You see,

they do not have to be reminded of angels by the crowing of the cock like the Mohammedans ; they are Pagans, and what they do not understand they just call 'The Unknown.'

I tried to hear as much about the Masai as I could before they turned up, and the Engineer began to tell me all about their fashions which I feel ought to be published in a special edition of *Vogue*. They are different to any I have met in Africa before. The women wear closely cropped hair and round their necks numbers of wire and bead hoops which stand stiffly out like Elizabethan ruffs. Sometimes these are two feet across ! The size and number of these necklaces show how grand the lady is, so what do you think she does if the supplies of brass and copper run short ? *She cuts down some of the telegraph wires !*

On arms and legs the Masai women wear metal rings, reaching sometimes from wrist to shoulder and ankle to knee, and if these rings get too tight and make sore places, they will not have them taken off. They prefer to be beautiful rather than comfortable. You and I have often seen people in England in tight shoes or ugly hats, so we can't call the Masai the only silly ones !

Like other Pagan women, when they want to look their smartest they do not wash themselves but freshen up their skin with OIL. That is the height of beauty, to look shiny. Who can say which is more sensible, to powder your face so that it does *not* shine, or to oil your face so that it does ?

The men wear long hair ; they plaster it with mud and red grease and wind the end into a pigtail, wrapping it round with tree-bark. This is a very



MASTER TALKING TO MASAI WOMEN, TANGANYIKA



serious business and takes a long time, but happily only needs to be done *once a year* ; and as the Masai does not understand payment by money, he gives the barber ONE GOAT. Wouldn't my hairdresser be surprised if I paid for a permanent wave with a crate of ducks or a baby lion ? It is certainly a new idea.

But the next fashion I heard about does not appeal to me. The Masai splits the lobe of his ear and gradually stretches it until it hangs down in a long stringy loop, sometimes as far as his shoulder, and then he keeps his treasures there. Whatever kind of treasures could he keep in his EAR ? Answer: Cigarette tins and safety-pins ! I suppose the Masai is like Winnie-the-Pooh and likes a Useful Pot to Keep Things In, but why the safety-pins ? Answer : To poke jiggers out of his toes.

While I had been hearing all this, we were having dinner in the tent by the light of one hurricane lamp, and for some time I had noticed an ominous noise, the steady downpour of RAIN. As well as our night out of doors, and the journey to-morrow, I could not help thinking that this rain would stop us seeing the Masai ; they surely would not get soaked in order to see two strange white people ? But, our host said, ' Don't you worry, nothing would keep them away except an earthquake. They will come alright, but they may be a bit shy at first.' Then, he fetched and put on the table, a small gramophone, looked for a record and started a tune. I had not heard the song before. It had a ridiculous chorus which ended :

'I wonder, I wonder, I wonder,  
I wonder how I look when I'm asleep.'

A second before, they were not there ; and then suddenly the doorway was full of tall, blanketed figures, and numbers of deer-like eyes peered at us from the darkness. Their faces are almost brick-red, not black, and their noses are like our Nigerian Fulani, shapely and Jewish, not splayed like the real African negro. Our host told them who we were, and several came forward and gravely held out their hands. I expected a man's grasp, making one want to say 'Wow,' but, no, the Masai just touch your hand with theirs and murmur 'Jambo.' I ought to have learnt the correct reply. (All I could think of was 'Jam yesterday, jam to-morrow'—I feel I *am* having my jam to-day !) I murmured 'Sambo' and hoped it would be alright.

Then, a cheeky looking youngster called out 'I wanna,' and looked enquiringly at our host. It seems that the gramophone record we had just heard was their favourite, and when it was played again we were treated to the sight of one of the most famous fighting tribes of Africa singing lustily the chorus of an English song, only two words of which they could say, 'I wanna.'

When the laughter and singing had ended, several of the warriors were chosen to give us an exhibition of a fight.

Every Masai, when he is about twelve (the age when an English boy starts going to his Public School), proves his nearness to manhood by going out all by himself to kill a lion, armed with just a throwing knife, a shield and a spear. If there are not enough lions to go round in a district, the boys blood their weapons on neighbouring tribes and their cattle !

The sham fight was most exciting. One boy took the part of the hunter and another pretended to be the lion. The Masai crouches close to the ground behind his shield of thick buffalo hide, creeping nearer and nearer to the lion with short, jerky movements; then he throws the two-foot knife to irritate the animal and when he springs, the boy crouches behind his shield away from those dreadful claws, thrusting the butt-end of his spear into the ground behind him while he moves the bayonet-like top to pierce the lion as he jumps. Suddenly there was a laugh and the play had ended. I found I had been holding my breath. It all sounds very business-like, but what happens if the boy does not spear the lion? I, personally, would like to have someone near at hand with a second spear, but I was told that the Masai rules do not allow this!

The spears are at least six feet long, with blade and butt of solid steel, divided by about twelve inches of wood. No one knows where they are made or who makes them—probably a tribe of people who act as slaves to the Masai. They regard these spears as their most precious possession (I am glad they do not consider it necessary to keep *them* in their ears) and will not part with them for money. We had a look at the shields, too, each with its own crest; and the knife cases, dyed with a scarlet dye, unknown to white men.

I am afraid you will be tired of these people if I tell you any more so I had better stop. I am so glad our mileage was wrong and that we stopped just here, and I wish that I could give you a really good picture of to-night—a night of utter blackness, just three white people alone in this part of

Central Africa, miles from anywhere, and all around us the Fighting Masai, with their very definite ideas and customs and their great admiration for the British rule, a strange mixture of respect and fear. I went off to sleep in the lorry, not minding the rain or my tiredness, or even the lack of a bathroom, but just rather glad to be travelling in Africa and feeling proud to belong to a nation who tackles a difficult job like colonising and who does it so well.

I knew that whatever disturbed my slumbers during the night, it would not be our friends the Masai.

*Letter 40.*

CHEZ SARAH, IN A DITCH AND A THUNDER-STORM.

*April 10.*

I can assure you I am not going to write you as long a letter as I did yesterday. I am cold, wet, hungry and very uncomfortable and we have had quite the worst day of our journey so far. I feel I am wailing a bit about Tanganyika, but the answer, of course, is WEATHER.

Our kind host of the Masai Reserve gave us breakfast and we were away by 7.30. The Road was only a bush-path, but the surface was remarkably good in spite of being so wet after a night of rain. Several times we had to get down and play hide-and-seek to find which way the track led, our only real sign-posts were the scars on the trees. I have never motored along a BLAZED TRAIL before. We took on a passenger once, a gloomy-looking native, wrapped in a very grubby blanket and

clutching a spear *and* an umbrella. I don't think he can ever have been in a car before ; as we floundered along skidding wildly round the corners, our guest screamed loudly and when we stopped to put chains on the wheels and looked round for Gloomy to help push, he had vanished ; a little motoring was quite enough for him !

We actually saw marks of elephant which must have been that way only a short while before. Further on we sighted some huge kudu, a few zebra and—a great thrill—suddenly, round one corner, a very startled gentleman woke up from a nap and leapt across the road almost under our wheels, a LEOPARD. Master told me how lucky I was to see it, because a leopard rarely comes out in the open like that. Of course my camera was up in the rack and I had not a hope of getting a picture. I do not know what would have happened if the leopard had taken a sudden dislike to us, do you remember how they look at the Zoo ? We have always been rather glad of the bars between them and us, but here was Master Leopard in the middle of the road, and our guns were in the back of the lorry. On this occasion he certainly was the most startled, but I did wonder how I should have felt if I had been out for a walk by myself.

During the morning we stopped at a Masai village and all the people came out to stare and shake hands, and now I know where ' all the flies go in the winter time.' The answer is, any Masai camp. I have never seen so many, eyes, hair, everywhere there were flies, and no one seemed to mind at all, not even the shiny bald-headed babies on their mothers' backs. The women loved Sarah. Master

turned on the electric lights and honked the horn and they shrieked and pretended to be frightened and ran away, and then came back for more. Both the boys, of course, took no part in this 'Play,' Lawanson was very 'busy,' filling the car up with water, and the cook just looked sulky. (I heard from our Host last night that Aba had a very bad time being teased, apparently, the Masai insisted he was a Belgian cannibal! He was also very hurt that I took such a lot of notice of 'Dem Pagans' and no notice at all of someone he found who was a 'Plenty good Mohammedan.')

In the middle of the afternoon we passed the place where our Book of Words had told us to stay last night and we reckoned up that we had another seventy miles to go before we reached a roof for to-night. I do not mind telling you now that we did *not* reach it. The rest of the day is one tale of woe after another.

Just as it was getting on for sunset we were rather appalled to meet a river. As you know, a river always means a palaver and much waste of time, but this one looked quite shallow so Master began to crash his way through. He did not get far. There was SAND, Sarah's worst enemy, and we just stuck fast. There was nothing for it but to unload. I nipped out, took off shoes and stockings and paddled to the other side where I tried to collect as many black men as I could to come and lend a hand. They thought it was a most gorgeous joke and finally turned out a whole native village, grandpas, grandmas, men, women, children and babies, all trooped down to the river to help Sarah. It was nearly dark and I could not get a photo,

but it would have made a marvellous picture. Can you imagine an enormous crumb being carried along by an army of black ants? Oh, I did wish I could draw. It appeared to be the best joke of the season because while they struggled, the 'Ants' sang and laughed all the time. There was still more singing when we threw some money, and then shrieks and yells as they all fought and quarrelled for their share. We could not wait to see fair play but hurriedly reloaded the lorry and told Aba to try and find someone to guide us to the right road. If the one we tried was the *right* one I tremble to think what a *wrong* one would be like: it was not a road, but a procession of ditches and broken bridges, rather like a picture drawn with your eyes shut.

Someone should have warned us that this road was not fit for a large car; every so-called bridge was obviously unsafe, and at last, trying to cross one that looked moderately safe, the ground just gave way under Sarah's weight and she sank through the middle. I saw it happen from the other side and I am rather afraid I screamed. It looked horrible and as if it would take more than a village-full of people to lift her out this time. In the background, there was a rapidly advancing thunder-storm and nowhere in sight was there even a native house (with or without spirillum tick, about which you will remember I told you!) to shelter us and our loads,—a ton of stuff just dumped down all over the road.

The natives soon passed word back that there was more fun going on and very quickly a chattering excited crowd bustled up, just like people do in London whenever there is an accident. Master was

silent and looked very grim, and I told Aba to get rid of all the visitors at once : this was a digging job in real earnest.

I, honestly, thought it was quite hopeless and began to wonder how long it would take to walk the odd one hundred and fifty miles into the Railway, and for a little while I am afraid I wished I had never come. There was nothing I could do except keep quiet, and hold a torch : we had not even a lantern to help things a little. The storm was coming terribly near, so we covered most of our luggage over with the big ground-sheets and got out our mackintoshes and prepared for the worst. It seemed like a week, but it was really only about an hour and a half, before I began to see that there was some hope. Sarah was out unharmed and Master had won. It was only just in time. We had scarcely packed ourselves and the luggage back into the lorry before down came the rain, buckets of it, in a blinding torrent. The only thing to do was to go on and try to find some shelter, but the effort only lasted half a mile. Master had just told me that if we did happen to meet another bridge he could not take any more risks in the rain and darkness, when with a sideways lurch, Sarah slid very purposefully into a ditch, saying in no uncertain terms, I AM STAYING HERE, and Master agreed.

So, here we are. I am sitting at an angle of about  $45^{\circ}$  in my usual seat in the lorry : it is 9 o'clock and it sounds as if the rain will go on all night, so it is not much use longing for a blanket or a hot drink. Are we downhearted ? Well, just a bit, but Sarah *is* alright, and with any luck



NEARLY THE LAST STRAW! A BRIDGE IN TANGANYIKA



we shall be at the Railway to-morrow. I think your Father is the STOUT EFFORT to-night, don't you ?

3 a.m. The rain has stopped and we have just had large quantities of hot Bovril and a slab of motoring chocolate. Aba says he heard rumours that ' Plenty good road live for front.' ' I wanna !'

*Letter 41.*

HOTEL AT DODOMA.

*April 11.*

How do you think this sounds, my Daughter ?

WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE RAILWAY.

WE HAVE BEEN ONE MONTH ON THE ROAD.

WE HAVE TRAVELLED 4000 MILES.

Master is absolutely worn out this evening, but very happy, and he is very proud of Sarah. There is a delicious new moon and a lovely light in the sky. It feels very much as if the Rains are nearly over and I have carefully bowed to ' Missy Moon ' and wished ; and I wonder where we shall be the next time we see a new quarter.

After our bad night, we had a very bad morning. As we had no packing up to do, we were ready to start directly it was light, but we did not get along very fast. We soon found that our adventures might have been even worse if Sarah had not stopped short at that ditch ; a very few miles further on we came to a really dreadful mistake in the way of a

bridge ; if we had tried to cross in the darkness and rain, there is no doubt at all that we should have just hurtled over the side. We unloaded, of course, spread bunches of leaves across to make it less slippery, and then I turned my back as Sarah crawled over. These bridges and roads have made me feel really scared. Three more times during the next few hours we unpacked the lorry, either to help her emerge from a ditch or to prevent the extra weight being the last straw as we crept across crumbling timber. The track itself was simply FRIGHTFUL. Even the scenery was remarkable, muddly and volcanic, looking just as if giants had been playing games and shaking lumpy dice all over the countryside. We must be in the Rift Valley again, the Eastern branch of it, which includes Lake Nyasa and has one end at the coast beyond Beira, and the other beyond the river Jordan. At first, people thought that the western branch, including Lake Tanganyika, was the main Valley, but as they have not been able to trace the Rift beyond Lake Albert, the other is thought to be the more important.

We had only twelve miles to go before reaching Kondoa-Irangi, our goal of last night, an old Arab town with hills and fine baobab trees, a village green and a War Memorial. Years ago, Kondoa was on the slave trade route from the coast to Lake Tanganyika ; during 1916 it was the headquarters of the British East African Forces in the campaign against the Germans ; now, the place boasts only six Europeans.

After leaving Kondoa we were looking forward to an easier time, because from there to Dodoma

it was a main road, and our Book of Words told us : ' For one hundred miles the surface is perfect and one can cover the distance in about three hours.'

You may be interested to hear that the part we travelled along yesterday is described thus :

' A guide should be taken, as cattle destroy the track.' Do picture the disgust of an English chauffeur if he was asked to take a car over country like this !

The new road was a change for the better and several times we got up quite a good speed. We crossed five rivers ; not by means of ferries—we drove over. Their beds were of dry white stones, which seemed curious considering the rains are hardly over. They were most superior affairs ; but the paths down to the rivers and up again were terribly steep and they reminded me of that time in Nigeria when I was out riding and slid gracefully over my pony's head into about two feet of water. Happily, Master manages a car better than I do a horse ! In the hundred miles to Dodoma we only stuck once, although the last part was just like a sea of red mud. It was a good thing we did not need any help, because we hardly saw any natives all the afternoon. The country was very green and Englishy with recognisable wild flowers by the side of the road ; but there were no villages and no natives. At first we wondered why, and then decided they must have got so tired of pushing lorries and digging them out of the mud during the war years that they decided to move as far away from the main roads as possible ! I do not blame them, do you ? ' Push Palavers ' can't be much fun when they become a life-work !

Now we are at Dodoma, and at a Hotel. The Manager has ordered all the hot water that can be produced for our baths. We have been promised an enormous dinner and we have forgotten all our troubles. We hear that the roads from the north are to be closed for repairs in two days ; again we are just in time.

There is one person you would like to see here, a Baby KUDU, aged one month, a most serious person with lovely brown eyes and minute stubs of horns just showing. He wanders about the hotel just like a cat or a dog. I will try and get a picture for you to-morrow. Master has not yet made his usual joke and warned the Manager to keep the kudu away from me, so you can guess he is rather tired.

*Letter 42.*

DODOMA.

*April 13.*

I had a very lazy day yesterday, no letter-writing and no motoring.

By way of a change, after four thousand miles on the road, we spent a lot of time at the Railway. I hear that the Germans took nine years to build the seven hundred miles of line from the coast to the Lake and that it cost them nearly six million pounds. They certainly do not seem to have spared any expense if the Stations are anything to go by ; Dodoma Station is a very splendid affair, with fine stone buildings, very different to the strictly business-like and plain ones we are used to on the British-built Nigerian Railway ; even a small

wayside halt usually boasts a fine two-storied house. It seems to me a silly way of spending money in a Central African Colony when there are such millions of other things to be done (ROADS, for instance !).

We have had a telegram to say that a truck for Sarah can be put on to the train, and we shall be off in the small hours to-morrow morning. Lawanson was very impressed with all the arrangements that have to be made and he seems to think we are off on a tour of the world. After a good bit of thought he remarked 'Please Sah, if you go for AMERICA, I like for come too.'

We do not like the railway idea at all. It looks as if we are hinting that Sarah is beaten, so, before we made the final plans we took a lot of trouble to find out if the Rain reports have been exaggerated. One sentence describes the state of the country further south :

'Well, one man did come through lately, he did 300 *yards* in a day.'

There is at least 300 *miles* between where we are now and the Rhodesian border, so, as we are hoping to get to back to England before Christmas, we bought our railway tickets to Kigoma, where we must wait for a boat to go down the Lake. It is a long way round, but we are hoping to beat the mud.

The Provincial Commissioner (we should call him a Resident in Nigeria) was most interested to hear the route by which we have come across Africa and especially in this Colony, from Longido to Kondoa-Irangi. He said that there is not supposed to be any 'road' there, and that the Masai Reserve

part is closed to visitors—we must have been off the map! It really is not surprising that we did not find a speed track, and it also explains why the bridges behaved so badly and why the Masai were so interested.

Since we have been in Tanganyika we have realised it is a most interesting piece of country; but I did not, before to-day, know much of its history, especially about the War years.

Do you remember the Kondoa-Irangi, where the Stout Effort arrived after her night in the ditch? Well! it is famous for another very Stout Effort. Some of our troops arrived there after *walking 250 miles in two weeks* in the rain, with no boots and no proper rations, and racked with fever. When the order came for them to swoop down on the railway at Dodoma, they were not able to move because they were up to their knees in mud! The war in East Africa was rather forgotten while such great things happened in Europe; but, having seen so much of this Tanganyika country where fighting went on, I do realise what a terrible time the white soldiers must have had.

Once there was a race, between the Germans with their trains, roads and transport, and the British forces, marching sixteen hours at a time without water, through thick thorn bush with no tracks, pushing on at a speed that seemed impossible for human beings to travel—a race between machines and men, and—the prize? A narrow line of railway, overgrown with grass.

Helped by the Belgians from the west, most of this country was soon conquered; but the German Commander was never captured, even after that

military genius General Smuts came up from the South to catch him.

'If only we had known where they were,' was the cry, but they had not known, nor did they ever know. The men who write History must see something rather comic about this campaign ; here were South African generals trying to do to Britain's enemies exactly what British generals had tried to do to the South Africans only fifteen years before—catch them ! For in 1900 Smuts was one of the 'enemy,' but afterwards, one of our most loyal friends.

When the Great War broke out in August 1914, the Germans made a tremendous effort to persuade the black men in Africa to rise against the British and the French in Egypt, the Sudan, Central Africa, the South, the East and the West, saying that this was a Holy War against Mohammedans.

In Northern Nigeria, the Chiefs were wonderfully loyal to the British and even claimed, like the Indian Princes, to have a share in the quarrel. Even in their own part of East Africa, here in Tanganyika, the Germans did not have the answer they expected ; and the all-over-Africa rising of Mohammedans against the Allies just did not happen.

Stories about the War have followed us all day. When we went to lunch with the Resident, he pointed out round the walls of his lounge, a lot of metal numbers and told us the house had been a German Military Hospital with 2000 beds. We heard that in the British Forces the sickness was terrible ; the soldiers were stricken with malaria,

dysentery and typhoid fever, as well as wounds, and their nearest Hospital Headquarters were at Nairobi, more than 500 miles away.

The Resident told us what an interesting Colony this is to govern, there are so many different races here, each with its own special claims and interests. Just as an example, he told us to be sure and notice all the people employed on the railway. He said we should probably see British, Rhodesian, Portuguese Indian, Greek and Maltese ; on a railway of seven hundred miles, that seems quite a good variety ! And then, of course, there are the real settlers of the country, the Black Races ; Britain has what is called a MANDATE to govern this country, and that means that her duty is : 'To develop the natives along lines fitting them to take over more and more of the Government of their own country.' This is exactly what Britain means by Indirect Rule, so I think it is a very good thing that the Powers That Be at the Peace Conferences gave the job of governing Tanganyika to Britain to do.

This British rule is only about as old as you are, and so is fairly recent history. The real history of East Africa goes back a good long way. People say that the black men here traded with the folk who lived in Arabia and India countless centuries ago ; probably, Solomon's ships from the shores of the Red Sea sailed down this coast and took back cargoes of gold, silver and ivory. Up till about the fifteenth century the chief rulers in East Africa were Arabs ; they built large towns, tried to persuade the natives to become Moham-medans, and—they started the slave trade. Then

came Vasco da Gama and the Portuguese, and three hundred years of warfare began between them and the Arabs.

Next came more peaceful European explorers who went inland, and took back stories of a snow-capped mountain on the equator, and of a great lake in the heart of Africa, and of much wealth and fertile lands. Then followed David Livingstone and Stanley, and the 'Scramble for Africa' by Britain, France and Germany. This colony's fate was the last of the East African countries to be settled, and it was not until 1887 that a European flag was hoisted here and that it was known as German East Africa.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the great giant Kili-manjaro could tell you the story of all these hundreds of years? While he remains unchanged for century after century, everything else changes and moves on; history is always restless, and African history is no exception; he would tell us of waves of new people pouring down the continent from the north and pushing on again to the south, nation following and turning out nation in its search for wealth and power, and always 'wars and rumours of wars.' We cannot prophecy what the great mountain-sentinel will see next, but we hope that there will be many years of peace and content for the black man under the wise rule of the British.

That is quite enough history, I am sure you are thinking, so I will give you one bit of geography for a change. It was from DODOMA, where we are now, that the Prince of Wales started for his race back to England when the King was so ill. I do hope you look at the map when I tell you about these

places ; names are so very dull until you see them marked on an Atlas. It is still better to see the places themselves.

*Letter 43.*

KIGOMA, THE TERMINUS OF THE CENTRAL RAILWAY AND THE CHIEF PORT ON LAKE TANGANYIKA.

*April 15.*

After twenty-eight hours on the railway (a journey of five hundred miles), we were only five minutes late arriving at Kigoma. I think that is pretty good, don't you? Twenty years ago, the journey from coast to lake took at least sixty days, a journey full of hardship and danger : now it can be done with every kind of modern comfort. The train reminded me exactly of the Nigerian boat-train, with gauze across the windows to keep out mosquitoes, four berths in each compartment for sleeping ; meals, blankets and cushions provided, and, the only thing you find you must ask for is a tumbler for cleaning your teeth !

In spite of all the telegraphing and palaver about a truck for Sarah, the Officials at Dodoma decided that it could not come with our train, so she and Lawanson were left behind and are supposed to be arriving to-morrow ; happily, we have plenty of time before a boat is due to leave Kigoma for the Rhodesian end of the Lake. Master is rather thrilled at the reports he hears of excellent fishing, and he certainly deserves a holiday after more than a month of driving Sarah over African roads.

It seems a long time since we boarded the train at Dodoma yesterday morning. When we were called by the Proprietor of the hotel at the unearthly hour of 2 a.m., I rather envied Sarah quietly asleep in her truck. You would have been amused to see me clambering on to the train in a coat, pyjamas *and* a sun helmet. It was the easiest way to carry it.

When it grew light, we saw we were travelling through mile after mile of flat uncultivated park land. Up till now, nothing has been grown here ; but people think that in years to come this wilderness may turn into a fine wheat-growing country like Canada and Western Australia—I wonder if there is anything that would refuse to grow in this wonderful continent.

We stopped at a place called Tabora in mid-afternoon, one of the main points on the through route from Kenya and Uganda to the Congo and Northern Rhodesia. I shall remember it chiefly for the hundreds of mango trees, a thick green wall of welcome shade. (Master said it was a good thing the fruit was not ripe or I should have been left behind. He always says that my chief reason for coming out to Africa is my fondness for mangoes !) These trees, we heard, were planted by the Arab slave-traders, and it is good to know that they have left one pleasant living memory behind, in contrast to the rest of their work which was so cruel.

Tabora is an Arab city founded about 1820, a prosperous centre for rubber and ivory. In its best days about half a million porters used to pass through here every year, and the name TABORA or

TABOA means, 'We have come out,' and refers to the people and caravans camping on the flat places all round the town.

When the Germans came to East Africa, they meant to use Tabora as a base from which to develop Ruanda and Urundi, the two very rich districts to the west. But now, Ruanda and Urundi form a part of the Congo which is called in the Stamp Catalogue Belgian East Africa (*Est Africain Allemand, Occupation Belge*). At present they are using the Congo stamps overprinted, but I am sure the Belgians will not miss a chance of publishing a lovely new set soon.

Talking of the Belgians, do you remember I told you about a very fine native school I saw at the Bouta Mission? Well, there is one at Tabora, started by the British and run on English Public School lines, for the sons of Native Chiefs. The boys are divided into TRIBES (instead of HOUSES), and each tribe chooses small and great CHIEFS (junior and senior PREFECTS). These form a kind of council to keep order and deal with any wrong-doing, like a Native Court. Appeals are allowed from the Court to the Headmaster, but I was told that in the last three years only one was made, and that failed! Their lessons are not all from books: these children are also being taught how to farm and how to get the best out of this land of theirs, by ploughing, planting and looking after their cattle.

Don't you think that is a splendid way to educate black boys who in years to come will be the Chiefs of their own Native Tribes?

Since arriving at Kigoma we have found Some-

thing very—interesting a real, live, retired Admiral who is travelling in Africa for fun. He had no sword, cocked hat or medals with him, so perhaps you would not have found him as entertaining as we did. He has been seeing Zanzibar and Madagascar and is now going by railway, lake and river to Natal. Because he is so fond of travelling, he is thrilled at our journey and does hope that we shall manage to reach the Cape. He is most amused at my stories of Aba and says I really must write a book and call it *The Quest for the Golden Teeth*.

The Hotel is what you might call a bit comic, kept by a little fat Greek whom we call 'Uncle'; the place itself is very hot and I am not looking forward to being here a week. Ujiji, five miles to the south, used to be the only town on the Lake, and, once upon a time, was the greatest Arab slave-market in Africa; now it is just a large, dirty, dreamy, native village. When the Germans arrived in East Africa, they decided that as the level of the Lake at Ujiji seemed to be getting lower, they had better look about for another harbour. They found one at Kigoma, two large bays cut into the land, with bright-red sandstone and brilliant green vegetation. The wharf is a very busy place, for as well as Rhodesian and Tanganyikan trade, it handles copper and other freight from the Belgian Congo, their port of Albertville being only ninety miles across the Lake from here.

The Admiral tells us that at the beginning of the War, the Germans held command over the Lake and had everything their own way, until one of our Naval Commanders brought out two motor-boats

from England to the Cape and then *overland*, for three thousand miles, after which they proceeded to have a small Naval war on this inland sea, Lake Tanganyika ! The Germans sunk their last boat on the Lake on purpose, and after the war it was rescued from a watery grave and now flies the British flag ; it is, I believe, the largest boat to have been salvaged in fresh water. It is for this boat, the *Liemba*, that we are waiting now.

I have been out to the Post Office to send you a cable. For the first time in our journey we are staying long enough in one place to have a reply telegram. It is five weeks since I have had any news of you.

We have been for a walk on to the hills overlooking the town and the view is magnificent. Across the Lake, the hills of the Belgian Congo look as if they are only a few miles away, and with a lovely sunset light they make a wonderful contrast to the vivid colours of lake and sky.

When we returned to the Hotel, we found another visitor had arrived, an absurd small chimpanzee holding up a long chain, and mincing about the verandah like a fussy woman picking up her skirts to cross a muddy road. He appeared to think it was his business to finish up all the drinks and he went the round, emptying the glasses, all the while looking about suspiciously for anyone who might be trying to catch him. Suddenly he began to cry most pathetically and then to scream loudly—a black boy had come to ‘ fetch him away.’ Of course the ‘ chimp ’ had known all the time that he would have to go back to his owner in the end, but I expect he thought it was well worth while, and he certainly

provided us with a most excellent free entertainment in the way of screeching, chattering and upsetting of glasses and chairs, before the boy could lay hold of the chain and lead him away.

*Letter 44.*

KIGOMA.

*April 17.*

It is two days since I wrote to you, we are still here and the Stout Effort has *not* arrived. Master has spent a lot of time telegraphing down the line, and we hear that she is still at Tabora and may be expected to-morrow.

The Government people have been very kind and we are to be lent a bungalow at Ujiji, where we can stay until the boat goes on the 22nd.

Meanwhile, I saw in a guide-book that 'The proprietor of the Hotel provides a motor-car service to enable tourists to visit Ujiji,' so we asked 'Uncle' to make the necessary arrangements—I had visions of a drive in a lovely comfy car, and asked the Admiral to come with us. At the appointed time, up bumped a very aged Morris, which stopped at the door of the Hotel with a loud bang. The bang proved to be a puncture, so we waited while the wheel was changed, the driver assuring us that he had another spare and that the tyres would get 'better and better' as we went on. This was quite a new idea to us, but as time was no object we risked it and the three of us squeezed into the ancient car and drove off, swaying from side to side over a hilly, bumpy road until we reached Ujiji, when a loud crash announced another burst. We

left the driver to deal with it, and walked through this real African village with its streets lined with huts and walls of mud, until we reached a spot where a very famous meeting took place.

In these days, we all take wireless, cables, telephones, railways, motors and aeroplanes for granted—if anyone needs help or if anyone is missing even for a few hours, it is the usual thing for a message to be broadcast at once all over the world, and news of any importance can be sent from one continent to another in a few seconds. So, it is a bit difficult for us to realise that only sixty years ago, it was possible for a very well-known man to be completely lost in Africa for over two years without any news filtering through to England. Every one knew that Doctor Livingstone had been exploring SOMEWHERE in the centre of the Dark Continent. 'With that one idea'd obstinacy which Africa creates in every one' he had set out once more to try and find the source of the NILE. A very early Geographer cleverly guessed the truth when he drew the Nile flowing out of two lakes. Livingstone found a river flowing out of two lakes here—was this what he sought? We can now look at the map and see clearly that it could not be the Nile—the river he had seen flows south and west and is part of the Congo; but Livingstone had no map, he was making it. His one aim was to finish his thirty years' work in Africa by tracing the Nile to its beginning—the river of 4000 miles which flows from the Equator to the Mediterranean Sea.

One can imagine what he must have had to fight against—extremes of weather, ill-health, dense forests, unfriendly natives, loneliness, poverty,

hunger—one white man up against the cruelty of Nature. Then came the disappointment ; it was not the Nile. Determined to try still once more, he returned to Lake Tanganyika and months of delay followed because of illness, lack of money and stores. After years of hard work, just imagine how desperately hard it must have been to sit quietly down to WAIT.

In England and America they waited too, but at last they could wait no longer. People began to wonder if the splendid Doctor-Missionary-Explorer had died in Africa, and the Royal Geographical Society slowly raised a large sum of money to send out an expedition to see what had happened. But they were too late. A young American journalist was before them. He got into touch with a war-correspondent called Henry Stanley and gave him two things :

- (1) Whatever money he needed, and
- (2) Just four words of instructions ‘ Go and find  
LIVINGSTONE.’

Two hundred and sixty days after leaving Zanzibar, Stanley reached Ujiji, where, native rumour said, there lived ‘ An old, old man with white hairs on his face.’ He knew his search was ended ; there was only one man it could be. Livingstone was not old, but Africa sometimes makes people look old before their time.

How do you think they met, these two white men in Central Africa? Because there was so much to say, Stanley found it difficult to say it. In the presence of Arab Chiefs and surrounded

by Ujiji's entire population, he walked up, took off his hat, and said: 'Doctor Livingstone, I presume.'

Our visit to Ujiji this afternoon was to see the mango-tree under which this meeting took place. We found that a large stone has been put up to mark the spot and a bronze tablet, sent out by the Geographical Society, says: 'Under the mango-tree which then stood here H. M. Stanley met David Livingstone. 10th November, 1871.'

It sounds like a game of Consequences, doesn't it? You notice the wording on the tablet says, 'the tree which *then* stood here.' It certainly does not look as if it could stand much longer; it is very aged and unhappy and has borne no fruit for years. It is to be replaced by cuttings which will form a small grove round the stone; these have been taken from the old tree and have been carefully nursed for this purpose for several years. So, presently, when you bring your grandchildren by aeroplane to Central Africa, this place will look almost exactly the same as when Livingstone was here in the middle of last century.

On the way back to Kigoma, we did not get very far before the car came to a standstill with another burst. (When the driver told us the tyre would get 'better and better,' I wonder if he meant 'burster and burster'?) We thought it was rather tactless, especially as it looked like rain. The driver seemed sulky, as if it was our fault, and he would not even cheer up when I suggested 'Third time lucky'; I told him his car would be far happier buried with the Livingstone mango-tree, and I thought he was going to imitate his tyres and

burst ! Just as we were making up our minds to walk the four miles into Kigoma, round the corner came a LORRY. It was full of natives, but they obligingly turned out of the best seats by the driver and squashed into the back, and watched with goggle-eyes as the three of us mounted up in their places, and so we drove back to the Hotel.

Lorries certainly seem to be good friends to us. I hope the best one of all will turn up safely to-morrow.

*Letter 45.*

UJJI.

*April 21.*

I have not written to you for four days, but there has not been much to say. There have been two arrivals (1) a telegram from England giving me news of you, and (2) the Stout Effort from Dodoma. Poor Lawanson was thankful to see us again, and very plaintive about what had happened ; he says he was nearly ' put for prison because they no " bleeve " bout dem petrol.' The petrol was very carefully drained out of the lorry and put into tins, but apparently the Powers That Be on the railway objected to these tins travelling in Sarah's truck. It certainly was no fault of Lawanson's and he was very hurt that they ' no bleeve.'

We moved here two days ago. It is a roomy bungalow, empty of furniture, but full of flies, mosquitoes and ' bloobs.' I was glad we brought some Flit. We are using our own camp kit, and Master has even fixed up a bulb on a long length of wire from the lorry and Sarah is providing our

electric light ! We have a lovely view of the Lake about half a mile away ; in Livingstone's time there used to be a harbour at Ujiji, and the water came up much higher. Slave-trading parties used to travel up and down the Lake, finding easy prey in the poor black fishermen belonging to this native village.

Even if Lake Tanganyika *is* drying up a little, I think it will last till you come out to Africa—next to Lake Baikal it is the deepest fresh-water lake in the world, more than 4000 feet, quite safe for a high dive ! It is 450 miles long, the distance of London to Perth, so it is a bit larger than any lake you have ever visited to sail your boats ! Lake seems the wrong word to use ; it is, like Victoria Nyanza, an Inland Sea, and sometimes the water that we see sparkling brilliantly in the sun, rages grey and angry in the fury of a sudden storm.

There are said to be more than two hundred varieties of fish here, but so far Master has only caught one kind called the yellow fish, which is quite good to eat. We have been out to-day with some people who have a motor-boat at Kigoma, and I have quite decided that I cannot hope to take any photographs which will give you any idea of the beauty of the Lake. You have not seen the Mediterranean, so if I say 'Mediterranean Blue' it does not mean much to you, but it is the clearest, brightest, loveliest blue you can think of. Then add, beautifully wooded hills, sloping right into the water, trees of every shade of new fresh green, and little bays which I thought were exactly the right place for a picnic until I felt a sudden hot prick and realised that tsetse-fly had got there first. There

are small villages built under the shade of palms, bananas and mimosa ; and on the shores thousands of tiny silvery fish are spread out in the sun to dry. I also saw the native canoes, each with a brazier fixed at the bows. The men go out at night with fires lighted in these braziers to attract the small sprat-like fish, anchor at a likely spot, and then hold their nets underneath for a catch.

I was so glad I was not expected to hold a rod, there was so much to look at. I think Master wished I would not keep telling him about things I had seen, fishermen think the greatest virtue is SILENCE. I saw an otter, several black-faced monkeys, and, once, a big thrill, a large chimpanzee who very slowly climbed down from his tree, had a good look at me and then ambled away into the grass. I thought he was waving to me, but he was only having a scratch, and your rude father laughed and asked, 'Who's your friend?' I was so glad that at that moment a fish nibbled and he lost it, and still gladder I had seen the 'chimp'—they are not often on view in their wild state.

To-morrow the boat sails and it takes five days to go down to the southern end. That will be fifteen whole days since we stopped at Dodoma, fifteen days with no mileage. I shall soon get fat and lazy.

*Letter 46.*

s.s. 'LIEMBA.'

*April 23.*

We have been on the boat for twenty-four hours, but yesterday afternoon we thought we would not be able to go at all, and whose fault do you think

it was? Poor Sarah's. We unpacked her and made her as light as we possibly could, but even then, to hoist her on to the deck was a real problem to the Chief Officer of the *Liamba*. You see, she, like us, has been rather inactive the last fortnight and I think she must be like Pooh Bear who

' . . . envied those who walked about  
Reducing their unwanted stout.'

We do not want the Stout Effort to be any less *stout*, but we did wish she was a bit less *heavy*!

On the Gold Coast and in Nigeria when they move a car from a wharf to a boat, I have always seen them put a kind of platform underneath the car, which is then lifted by ropes and a crane, but at Kigoma there was no platform at all and it took literally hours before she was safely on the deck. I did not see the final triumph; I decided after looking at several attempts to raise her that it made me feel rather sick.

Several of the passengers felt like that too, early this morning, but for a different reason. The Lake was in a very bad temper and behaved more like the Bay of Biscay. The *Liamba* banged about from side to side and almost turned a somersault, and from all the crashings that went on it sounded as if there were several buffaloes in the pantry with the glass and crockery. We hear that sometimes it can be so rough that it is difficult to reach the harbour at Albertville, on the Congo side, where we have been all day. We have been for a walk and found a wind-blown, dried-up town, with at least a mile of shops and a new, dazzlingly white hotel. Our friend, the Admiral, is here, and expecting to

go off by train to-morrow ; he wants to link up with the Congo River, and so work down to the south. He says he will race us to the Victoria Falls, and if our leisurely pace continues that certainly will not be difficult.

I have found another friend, a small girl of about six, who lives at Dar-es-Salaam and is on a holiday with her parents. She was very interested to hear about my Big Daughter, and thought you had a nice name, so she said she would draw you a picture of an angel's tea-party, which I am sending with this letter. I have never been invited to tea with the angels, but I do think the clouds are most original, don't you ? To make them, I borrowed from the Captain a rubber stamp, which did the lovely circle with T.R. in the middle. T.R. really stands for Tanganyika Railway, but we pretended it meant Ta-Ra-Ra. This amused her for hours. She sang so lustily that it woke up every one from their afternoon naps, and she wanted so many clouds and 'dobbed' about on so many pages that I began to be afraid whether even my large supply of writing paper would stand the strain.

The small girl is going back on this boat to her home, and wonders why I am going to leave her. She asked me just now 'How can I Tra without you ?'

*Letter 47.*

s.s. 'LIEMBA.'

*April 26.*

Three more days have gone by ; to-morrow we expect to reach our port, and even now we can see a high plateau land in the distance and we have

passed the frontier between Tanganyika and Rhodesia.

Each evening we have anchored in a small bay to land passengers and freight ; each evening the keen fishermen have gone out in the ship's boat to fish ; and each evening they have told each other remarkable stories of the fish they *nearly* caught. I believe the record (*true*) catch here was a perch or 'sangala' weighing 110 pounds.

I have heard some wonderful stories too. One was told me without a smile and I believe it really happened.

A man was out hunting elephant, and presently found that a large elephant was hunting *him*. He was tossed up in the air, came down *between* the tusks, and was hurled off again into a bush where he remained trying to make up his mind if he was killed, while the elephant tore round and round trying to find him to finish him off !

I think Aba has been telling wonderful stories too. Each time I have caught a glimpse of him on the lower deck, he has been surrounded by an admiring crowd, so I suppose every one who cared to listen has been hearing the history of his life ; I noticed that Lawanson was *not* interested.

My next letter will be headed Northern Rhodesia, our seventh Colony in six weeks. I wonder what is in store for us there. There will certainly be much of interest and variety, and I only wish we were not in such a hurry and that we need not keep to the beaten track. A few miles away there is the highest waterfall in Africa (the second highest in the world), where the Kalambo River flows into the

southern end of the Rift Valley. As well as one of the highest, these Kalambo Falls must be one of the narrowest ; they are only 50 feet wide and in the dry season the water reaches the pool at the bottom in the form of RAIN ! People say the hillside just seems to come to an end altogether, and, with this terrific drop of 800 feet it looks as if the cliff and the waterfall just disappear. We are hoping the *roads* are not going to disappear—we have been hearing most grisly stories ; two men on the *Liemba* tell us that they set out last year to do the Cape to Cairo journey, and left their car by the roadside half-way through Rhodesia with a broken front axle ! Someone else reminds us that the rains will only just be over ; their wet season is exactly opposite to ours in Nigeria and lasts from about November to April. During some of those months motoring is almost impossible, and even now, at the end of April, no one seems to know if the mail lorries are getting through on the 500 miles from Broken Hill—the road we are supposed to take. I tell Master not to worry about mere MAIL lorries, ‘The FEMALE of the species is more deadly than the MALE.’ SARAH—THE STOUT EFFORT—WILL GET THROUGH.

CHAPTER VIII  
NORTHERN RHODESIA

*Letter 48.*

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE,  
ABERCORN, N. RHODESIA.

*April 27.*

We certainly do have luck in the people we meet. Here we are, two stray travellers and complete strangers, being entertained at the chief house in Abercorn by the man whom, in Nigeria, we should call the Resident, and what is more, we have been invited to stay as long as we like! And—it all happened because of a punctured tyre. But as usual, I had better begin at the beginning.

When I finished yesterday's letter, we had passed the boundary of Tanganyika Territory and were within sight of the Rhodesian plateau. This, above all others in Africa, is the country I have wanted to visit, chiefly because of a great admiration for Cecil Rhodes, the greatest Empire Builder Britain has ever had. If you ever have to give the names of some MEN who have MATTERED to us as a Nation, I can tell you five :

King Alfred, Pitt, Clive, Nelson and Rhodes.

We are now at the beginning of Rhodes' country.

The harbour of Mpulungu is a lovely sight, surrounded by wooded hills, and with little islands

tempting one to go off and explore. The Stout Effort again held up everything for hours while she was being hauled off the boat, and I think the Chief Officer, as well as ourselves, felt years younger when she was safely on shore.

Sarah had then to be repacked ; this took somewhat longer than usual because Aba dropped one of our chairs over the side of the boat right into the Lake. I think he must have been peevish because no one was taking any notice of him, but he certainly must have felt rewarded by all the laughter that followed. Sarah was peevish too, or else so surprised at being asked to take the road again that she had forgotten how to behave. We started off at 5 o'clock to do the thirty miles to Abercorn, a climb of 3000 feet. It seemed rather late in the day to start off, especially as we had no idea what we should find in the way of a roof for the night ; no one has mentioned Rhodesian Rest Houses, and we wondered if we might have to camp out ; you can imagine we looked anxiously at the sky for any signs of rain-clouds.

The road was narrow and *not* a speed-track, and just as we stopped to admire the magnificent view of the Lake down below us, we had OUR FIRST PUNCTURE. Not a tactful time to choose, but then a puncture, like measles, never is convenient. We could not draw in to the side because the car took up practically the whole width of the road ; we just hoped that, until the wheel was changed, no one would come up behind us. But they did.

Presently we heard a car climbing the hill and we thought the best thing to do was to try and clear a path in the bush so that it could get by. But

it was not necessary. Two men got out of the car and, in the usual friendly way in Africa asked if they could help. Lawanson seemed to be doing his best so we said we thought we were alright, and then, the older and taller of the two strangers began to ask where we had come from. He had never seen such an elephantine lorry before and knew we were not Rhodesians. We told him we had just come off the *Liemba*, that we hailed from the West and that we were bound for the Cape. That made him want to know still more, but first of all, 'Where are you staying to-night?'

Master remarked in a casual way, 'Well, I expect there is a Government man in Abercorn, I shall have to rout him out and see if he will lend us a Rest House.' The younger man smiled and said, 'You won't have to do much routing, here's your "Government man"' and the older one added, 'Why not come and stay with me?'

Don't you like the sound of Africa? If we had done this in England we should probably have been summoned for 'Obstructing the public highway,' or 'Parking without permission.' Here, we are smiled at, offered help and a free Hotel, after 'holding up' the District Commissioner.

So, once again our troubles are over, and we are very much at peace with the world. It is cold, and we have been sitting by a lovely wood fire all the evening, and, for the first time since I have been in Africa, I am going to sleep without a mosquito net.

Our Host made Master tell him all about our journey, and we made our Host tell us about Rhodesia and especially about—No, not my

favourite subject *Rhodes*, but Master's favourite subject *Roads* ! There is so much to hear that we are not moving on to-morrow.

*Letter 49.*

STILL AT ABERCORN.

*April 29.*

When we were on the *Liemba*, we learnt a new way to do ' Out goes She ' ; there are three things to choose from, Stone, Paper and Scissors and on the word Go, every one throws out a hand to look like one of these, clenched fist for stone, hand straight out for paper, first and second fingers apart for scissors. Then you see who goes out.

Stone breaks scissors, so stone wins,  
Scissors cut paper, so scissors win,  
Paper wraps up stone, so paper wins.

We have been playing this sort of game ever since we started this journey, and to the countries we have passed through we have been saying, ' it isn't you, it isn't you, it isn't you,' and we began to wonder if we would ever say, ' It's you.' We left French Equatoria, the Belgian Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika without choosing, but, now we are in Northern Rhodesia we both feel, ' Yes, it *is* you, it *is* you.'

Before breakfast yesterday morning I found VIOLETS in the garden, and after breakfast we were taken to see STRAWBERRY BEDS. Just imagine strawberries in Central Africa ! Your rude parent told our Host that I was very greedy about baby animals, mangoes and strawberries, and especially the last, and that it was a very good thing for him

these were not ripe. We heard that instead of two or three weeks as in England, you can eat strawberries in some parts of Rhodesia for NINE MONTHS out of twelve. Do you wonder we have said, 'it is YOU?'

Whether it was this news or whether it was the sight of someone else's coffee farm, I do not know, but, anyhow, Master got busy at once and started making enquiries about buying some land here. He always knows what he wants, makes up his mind quickly and then acts at once. We went for a picnic yesterday with some friends of our Host, and Master calmly persuaded the menfolk to walk all over the countryside with him, looking for suitable ground. Instead of being a Tin Miner in West Africa, he wants to be a Coffee Planter in Rhodesia. It would certainly be a change, to be able to put something in the ground and watch it grow and look beautiful, instead of digging up the ground to find something merely USEFUL. Mining may be *necessary* but it is also very *ugly*.

There is something else to attract Master, the thought of a Boat and Fishing; only thirty miles away there is the glorious blue sheet of water—Lake Tanganyika.

It is a lovely piece of country all around here, just the place for picnics. I met a small girl called Una, looking such a pet in her large sun helmet. She wanted to hear all about you and thought it so tiresome of me not to have brought you on this trip, she wanted to hear all about your school. There are no other English children for her to play with and she goes about the country with her parents, travelling in a hammock or walking along in the bush with her small Sealyham terrier. Her

Mother asked me to come to tea to-day, and when I wondered whether to turn up at 3.30, 4 or 4.30, I found she meant elevenses ! I knew that South Africans drink vast quantities of tea and apparently the habit has spread up here ; a tea-party is in the middle of the morning. When I said good-bye, Uná looked very imploringly at me ; I knew what she wanted and quickly told her, ' I promise I will not forget.' For, do you know, I found out that she has not read *Winnie the Pooh*, and my promise is to send her a copy. I wish I could be there to see her enjoy it. When I told her ' Hilary loves it, and so do all the children I know, grown-ups and otherwise,' she said she could not possibly wait until I got back to England, I must get it soon. So now we have two big shoppings to do, Aba's teeth and *Winnie the Pooh*. Oh, and there is another thing, Master does not know it yet, but he is going to buy a new HAT. We are nearly out of the Tropics and very soon we shall be able to forget about sunstroke and wear soft hats. Our Double Terais are terribly hot, two solid felts one inside the other, and, of course, helmets are tight and heavy. The helmet-case is usually the first thing that falls out of the lorry when we are crashing along, and Master always moans, ' Oh, give it to Lawanson.'

Natives adore helmets, just as they do shoes ; they do not need to wear either, but think they make a black man look more like a white man. If Master can be persuaded that he has just had a brilliant idea, to buy a respectable-looking hat, the servants will be very glad, and so shall I.

Abercorn looks a very important place on the map, but it is really quite small, it was one of the

first of the boundary places to be occupied when Britain took over this part of Central Africa.

I cannot hope to give you all the history of Rhodesia and the South, it would take far too long, but it does make a wonderful story.

You will learn the most by looking at an old map. I hope you can find one dated about forty years ago, and then you will see how things were.

Portugal and Germany held the coast on east and west.

Britain held Cape Colony and Natal on the south. The Dutch held the Transvaal.

All the centre was unclaimed.

Now watch what happens, it reminds me of a game of chess, with one man calling check.

Germany and the Transvaal cast longing eyes on Bechuanaland so that it might be joined on to Damaraland.

And—we might have lost South Africa.

But—Cecil Rhodes stepped in.

Bechuanaland became a British Protectorate.

Portugal wanted the land between her two Colonies—this would have meant an immense belt right across the Continent, north and south of the Zambesi, with German East Africa next door.

And—this would have stopped any British expansion from the south.

But—Cecil Rhodes stepped in.

The country between the Limpopo and Lake Tanganyika became a British Colony.

Rhodes dreamed of Africa under British rule from north to south, and a railway stretching for five and

half thousand miles. He believed that 'If you concentrate your mind on a thing, you will attain to it.' Many people may say that is impossible, but then so few know what it means to CONCENTRATE and be really single-minded. You notice Rhodes says IF.

To the north of the Zambesi, the country had been explored by Livingstone and it seemed natural that Rhodes should follow on, one to make the map and the other to colour it. Further south lay Matabeleland and Mashonaland, under a native King. Years before, Mashonaland used to be densely populated by peaceful tribes unused to war; the Matabeles made war on them and used them as slaves, and the Mashonas were having a very poor time of it. Someone had to take a hand and stop the constant warfare, and you know who Rhodes thought were the best Colonisers? He managed to persuade the British Government to take control.

I tried to explain before to you why white men should think it their duty to 'take control' of the black men's country. To Cecil Rhodes, EXPANSION did not mean just grabbing land to hold for ourselves only for money and trade (although when your country is small and your population huge, you have to expand); power and wealth meant nothing to him personally, but only what he could do with them. To him, power and wealth meant developing a country, carrying railways, telegraphs and communications, and all the civilisation of the Empire for the benefit of white man *and* black.

'Civilisation for the native' is a phrase that means different things to different people. To Rhodes it meant not just to wear European dress and imitate the white man, but that they should learn how to

work, 'to show concern for other people's welfare and to come into affairs.' He really troubled to understand the natives and their interests, and—he always kept his promises; one of these promises was that, by the coming of the white man to Rhodesia, the black man should not 'lose his country.' When Rhodesia definitely became a British Colony, millions of acres of land were set aside as Reserves, solely for the Native. Of course the result was that the black men in Central Africa honoured Rhodes as the greatest of all white men; (since he died no one has taken his place). When peace came to them at the end of much tribal warfare, they called him, 'The Separator of the Fighting Bulls.' Don't you think that is a lovely name?

Listen to some of the other remarks about him.

The British Colonial Office: 'A hustler who is wearing us all to shadows.'

President Kruger, the Dutch President of the Transvaal: 'This young man I like not; he goes too fast for me. He has robbed me of the north. I cannot understand how he manages it, he never sleeps and will not smoke.'

The German Kaiser: 'There goes a *man*.'

A British Statesman: 'He was the most strenuous lover of his country and the most single-minded and the greatest-hearted man I ever met.'

Rhodesia, the huge tract of country between the Transvaal and Tanganyika, is now divided into two separate Colonies, each with its own Governor, but at first it was vaguely known by one general name ZAMBESIA.

When the present obvious name was suggested, what do you think Rhodes said?

‘ Well, you know, to have a country named after you is one of the things a man might be proud of.’

Yes, I think he might !

(When I once found a new wild flower, in Nigeria, the Director of Kew called it Something-or-other *Morganæ*, the flower was rather dull, but I was accused of being terribly conceited about its name, and that was only a plant !)

When Rhodes was only twenty, he told someone, ‘ The wish came to me to be useful to my country.’

How did this USEFULNESS show ?

When he began his work in 1882, *only Cape Colony was coloured red*. When he died in 1902, the Empire in Africa had been enlarged, chiefly through his efforts, by nearly ONE MILLION SQUARE MILES ; the Boer War was over and the Transvaal and Orange River Colony no longer hostile, and *from Cape Town to the Belgian Congo was coloured red*.

About this time, Imperialists were jokingly described as the people who would

‘ Defy mankind from China to Peru  
And then annex from Afghan to Zulu.’

Of course Rhodes was not applauded by everybody, a man with BIG IDEAS never is. An English writer remarked that ‘ there is nothing large about painting the map red—it is an innocent game for children. It is just as easy to think in continents as to think in cobble-stones.’ That rather seems to sum up the attitude of the stay-at-home writer of smart sentences towards the men of action, the men who leave their mark on the world. And, whether they admire him or not, no one can deny

that Rhodes left his mark on the continent of Africa.

A famous American once said that when Rhodes stood at the Cape, his shadow fell on the Zambesi. One might alter that now and say his shadow stretches from the Cape to the Nile; for, with Tanganyika added to British East Africa, it is possible to go by train, motor-car or boat from South Africa to Egypt without leaving a country that flies our flag. So Cecil Rhodes' dream *has* come true: An All-British route from North to South. West to East is being linked up as well by many lines and routes, and there will soon be no mystery about Africa at all; roads and railways everywhere, certainly no longer a Dark Continent.

The old explorers linked up coast to coast with their sailing boats. Livingstone explored from West to East on foot. Then followed the train and the motor-car, and after that the aeroplane.

Sandstorms, electric storms, tropical rain, and sudden changes of temperature make flying a difficult business in Africa, but a regular Air-Mail service between England and Cape Town is now a FACT—do think of it, letters from London to South Africa in ten days! No wonder the black man gives up wondering, and just shrugs his shoulders to explain his attitude towards 'White Man Ju-Ju.'

This place, Abercorn, was on one of two routes marked out for the Air-Mail; there is an aerodrome and a good landing-ground and there is also Lake Tanganyika so close, a wonderful landmark for the pilot. But they chose the other route through Nairobi and Dodoma. If they

stopped at Abercorn it would make the journey longer because it is not in a straight enough line. I still do not understand how anyone keeps straight in the air !

*Letter 50.*

KASAMA.

*April 30.*

We had hardly been in this place a few minutes before we were lent a house by a complete stranger and asked to dine, and are again being thoroughly spoilt.

We tore ourselves away from Abercorn in the middle of the morning, and have done 110 miles since then. We met a very much overdue lorry bringing mails from Broken Hill, the Rhodesian terminus of the Cape to Cairo Railway. Of course we stopped to ask the driver of the lorry : ' What is the road like ? ' The answer, more or less, was ' Better not enquire. '

Wouldn't it be surprising if motorists in England stopped to ask the state of the roads whenever they met anyone ? Britishers just take it for granted that all will be well, and feel very aggrieved if all is *not* well. But, in Africa, it is the other way round, we are rather surprised if all *is* well, and are suspicious of finding a snag somewhere. After the time we had in Tanganyika I think wherever we motor during the rest of our lives, we shall look at any bridge with intense suspicion ! It is not just that the British Government build railways and forget the roads, but there is only a certain amount of money to spend in each Colony and such a lot to do for the natives in the way

of schools, hospitals, native courts, etc., so—good metalled roads (as we saw in the Belgian Congo) are rather looked upon as *luxuries* that must wait until last. We hear rumours of a very fine road that will soon go through Rhodesia to take the place of the present one ; it is rather a case of ‘ Wait and see,’ but the trouble is we can’t *wait* so we shan’t *see* !

This place Kasama I hear is famous for two things:

- (1) During the Great War the Commander of the German Forces in East Africa surrendered near here after his last raid into British Territory, and there was nowhere else for him to go : this was just as the war stopped. I believe that it was one of the only times this German General wore his rank marks and ribbons in the whole of these years of fighting—when he was going to surrender !
- (2) The record elephant for this country was shot here. Northern Rhodesia is one of the finest big game countries in the world, and we hear exciting and hair-raising stories of lion. Apparently, one evening, a lion pushed its head through a window and looked into a room at a peaceful bridge party.  
I should like to know if anyone screamed.

We have also been hearing about trade. Up till a few years ago all cottons, materials, beads and goods for the natives came from England. Now it is a different tale. In one white man’s store in Kasama there are :— beads from Czechoslovakia (what a word to spell) ; blankets from Italy and Belgium ; brightly coloured cottons from America

and Japan ; alarm clocks (with an especially-alarming-alarm to attract the native) from Germany ; and—the only things they cannot buy anywhere else, black and blue prints from Lancashire.

That made *me* feel rather black-and-blue, because I could not help wishing that Britain could keep her trade, especially in such a British Colony as Rhodesia. When we are coffee farmers, I hope every one will buy British-grown coffee, don't you ?

The country round Kasama is thickly wooded and in the place itself, a kind of cedar tree makes a wonderful contrast against the deep red of the road. I could not help comparing the few native villages I have seen to-day with the Swaheli villages in East Africa, where the air is thick with tiny grains of the dry cow and goat manure which littered the paths. In these Rhodesian villages the ground between the houses is kept clean and tidy, the huts themselves are round and large with neat thatched roofs and whitewashed walls, and most of them even boast a sort of verandah ; many of the outsides are even decorated with drawings and letterings. In Kenya the huts were beehive shape ; in the Belgian Congo, if you remember, I saw rectangular ones ; and now here in Northern Rhodesia it was interesting to notice the cone-shaped roofs again, reminding us of Nigeria.

*Letter 51.*

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD,  
NEARLY 500 MILES SOUTH OF ABERCORN.

*May 2.*

This country is one of the loneliest we have been through, for two days we have seen no white men

and very few natives, and a village is quite a rare sight. Since I last wrote to you, in nearly four hundred miles, we have passed through only one place with a name, Mpika ; it also had an aerodrome, and a garden with an avenue of lovely silver oak trees—A GARDEN that made us stop suddenly and say ' Oh.' When I was in Abercorn I realised that in this country of Northern Rhodesia one might quite easily turn ' Bush ' into Paradise, and here it was for me to see. Violets and roses, carnations and pansies, dahlias and sunflowers, lupins, cornflowers and even sweet-peas grew here, with the brilliant cannas and poinsettias to remind us it was still Africa.

I was told that Mpika is a fine centre for hunting. As well as rhino, hippo, elephant, buffalo, eland, roan, hartebeest, there are BLACK LECHWE to be seen. I had not even heard of them before ; they belong to the antelope family and have curved horns ; they are shy but keen fighters, and they are always to be found near water. There is another one, also new to me, the SITATUNGA, about the size of the lechwe (about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet), and it has very long hoofs and peculiar horns shaped like a lyre. It is not surprising that I have not seen one of these creatures ; they live in marshes and only come out at night, but I do like his name ; I would like to make up a poem for you about ' Seeing sitatunga on a Sunday ' ; it could be set to the tune of ' Riding on a camel in the desert.'

Not very many weeks ago I wrote and told you the heat was just like an oven. Well, here it is really COLD ; at 6 o'clock this morning the thermometer only showed  $48^{\circ}$ . We are still very high

up, on the edge of the wooded Muchinga Hills, and the road we have travelled on was originally an ELEPHANT PATH. The Arab raiders followed the same track and then the white man used it as a road. In time another road was built, but no one wanted to use it ; the elephants had found the easiest way up ! They *are* wise people. The owner of the Mpika garden told me that if elephants see a shallow stream, and they want something larger, they behave just like Engineers and very cleverly proceed to dam up the stream until they have a large enough pool for their needs !

These Muchinga Hills slope down to a Valley which is probably another part of our old friend the Rift. Lake Nyassa is away on the east and on the west there is Lake Bangweolo, the shallow Lake which Livingstone discovered and where he made his last effort to find the source of the Nile. It was near here that he died, and where, very suitably, his heart was buried.

When you next go to Westminster Abbey, be sure to ask to see Livingstone's grave ; and one day I will tell you the story of how his devoted black servants carried the body of the ' Great Master ' for hundreds of miles, week after week and month after month, to the Coast, so that he might be given back to his own people in ' The Land across the Great Water.'

Even with a map, it is not easy to disentangle all the rivers in Central Africa, especially that river with so many names, the Congo. I believe I told you before about the problem of a river which flowed out of two lakes. I have had a good look at the map and here is some more Geography for

you : The Congo rises in the high lands of Tanganyika Territory as the CHAMBESI, flows into Lake Bangweolo and comes out as the LUAPULA and forms the boundary between the Belgian and British country.

The LUAPULA runs into Lake Mweru and comes out as the LUALABA, finally becoming the CONGO and keeping that name until it reaches the ATLANTIC.

We came across this mighty river yesterday in its first stage, as the Chambesi, and that is why I have looked up its Geography. I did not understand why we should see the Congo in Rhodesia.

It was quite like old times to grapple with a Ferry, and as it was a British-built one we did not need to think of it as a BAC, nor did we have to unload. It was strongly built ; but very narrow, and it had to be very carefully measured before Sarah was allowed to venture on. We heard that because of CROCODILES it would not be wise to BATHE !

The very thought of BATHING makes me shiver. It is so COLD. For the first time, we really camped last night, by the side of the road, with no house in sight, and we slept under the stars. We are doing the same to-night. The night colour is a most glorious blue, not black ; the moon hangs like a huge, very white, diamond from a sky of deep blue velvet, and, as I was going to sleep I tried hard to think of that glorious sight instead of all the LION stories I have been told lately. We had collected a lot of wood and Aba had built a large fire which burned most of the night ; we needed it for warmth and also it helps to keep away any hungry quadrupeds who might like to take a stroll round a camp at night. You know, lion stories sound all right by



CROSSING THE CHAMBESI. TRIBUTARY OF THE CONGO. NORTHERN RHODESIA



day, but when you are out in the open at night it is difficult to convince yourself that a lion is probably a bit more frightened of you than you are of him, and that he does not kill just for the fun of it, but as we kill sheep and chickens, because we are hungry. Well, he might of course be *very* hungry to-night. The answer to that is : 'Aba, please go put some more wood for fire.'

In India, people have noticed that jackals start yapping if tigers come anywhere near them while they are feeding, and last night I wondered if, in Africa, they do the same for lions. Anyhow, this morning I was reminded that Big Cats are about—a BLACK LEOPARD came out from the tall grass and crossed the road in front of us and disappeared ; although it was broad daylight, I frankly admit that I shivered.

When we camp we try to stay somewhere near a native village and then Aba gets some help in fetching water, etc., and the people seem as thrilled as the ones in the lonely parts of the French country when we used to stop for the night. They are a friendly lot like the Tanganyika ones, and, like them, bend down low and clap their hands to show that they are pleased to see you. When they see we are going to camp, they are a bit too friendly and leave us with great reluctance. This morning I was up by six, but even then, most of the native village came tearing up the road only a few minutes too late to watch me dress, and, last night, because of the large audience, I had to wait until it was dark to have my bath !

*Letter 52.*

15 MILES SOUTH OF BROKEN HILL.

*May 3.*

I am sure you will be relieved to know that we were NOT eaten by lions last night, but I must tell you some of the noises we heard besides jackal:

- (1) the rasp of crickets ;
- (2) the harsh scrape of the cicadas' wings ;
- (3) the shrill squeaking of bats ;
- (4) the throaty croaking of bull-frogs ;
- (5) the mournful howl of distant hyænas.

And yet I SLEPT LIKE A TOP.

To-night we have chosen to camp in an old cattle enclosure which is surrounded by a wall of thorn branches. I have already torn my hands helping to get wood for a fire and now I have left it all to Aba—his skin seems to be tougher.

Soon after we started this morning, Master told me we were very short of petrol, and he was certain we should not get as far as Broken Hill which was 90 miles away ; he thought we might have to walk 15, perhaps 20, of those miles. I asked if I might choose whether I would push Sarah or carry the luggage, but I did not get an answer ! I do not want to make your Parent conceited, but it really is rather a triumph that in nearly five thousand miles, this is the first time we have been short of ANYTHING. People who are used to motoring where there is a garage or a petrol pump round almost every corner, will probably appreciate his good staff-work.

You can imagine, though, that to be short of petrol in Central Africa is rather serious—the places for buying it are hundreds of miles apart. At Abercorn, Master took on enough petrol for 500 miles and was told that was the distance to Broken Hill. But, it is 80 miles further than that, which make a good bit of difference, especially as it is such heavy motoring and we are not doing more than ten miles to the gallon instead of our average of fourteen. So, we started this morning from our roadside camp knowing we were short of petrol, with very little chance of being able to buy any more, and with the prospect of having to walk twenty miles if we did not. Just picture how goggle-eyed we got, when we saw *by the side of the road* a small grass shelter and, inside—TWO FULL TINS OF PETROL. At first, of course, we thought it was too good to be true and that the tins were full of water. It reminded me of the old Brer Rabbit books you used to like so much:—

‘Brer Rabbit, it’s *Lamb*.’ ‘No, Brer Fox, *surely not?*’ ‘Brer Rabbit, it IS LAMB.’

Then we honked the horn and played hide-and-seek to try and find someone from whom we could buy some of this precious ‘gas,’ as the Americans call it. No one came—no one was within miles of us, and then we realised that this was a dump for the mail lorries and that we might have to wait for days before meeting one.

Lawanson could not imagine why we waited. ‘Please, Sah, it be good I open can and take some for car?’ he asked. I knew what was in his mind, the petrol belonged to a white man, we were white people too, and so the petrol belonged to us as well.

'White man cannot steal,' I argued, to which he replied, 'This no be all-the-same *stealing*, you go put money for top, I go take some petrol, and they go savvy plenty.'

But, of course, we could not do it ; even if we had paid for it and paid too much, we should not have been certain that the money would reach the right people. So, almost with shut eyes, we reluctantly scrambled back into the lorry.

About twenty miles further on how do you think we were rewarded for our honesty ? We suddenly came upon a store which sold petrol and we had to pay 5s. 9d. a gallon for it. Our highest price yet !

We also bought some new bread, fresh butter and untinned cheese, and we had a splendid lunch under some trees by the side of the road. ROAD ? Oh, why are they so AWFUL in a Colony that says RHOD-ESIA ? I know that is a dreadful pun, but, honestly, only seeing is believing. There are numbers of wooden bridges with not one level inch on them, all ribs and ridges like bumpy teeth. A new one, only just finished, had a notice up to warn motorists :

'Speed must not exceed 10 miles an hour, or weight 5000 lbs.' (Sarah weighs about three times as much.)

I know now why a Guide Book says : ' Motorists would do well to carry a *spare spring* ' ; but I wish a garage could provide me with one too. Before I am through Rhodesia, I shall need a new Spine. Fortunately, this is the flattest piece of country we have been in so far ; if it was hilly the Stout Effort most certainly would not escape without a broken axle.





PART OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD, NORTHERN RHODESIA

I hope I took a good picture of one piece of the road, which looked like very dry and spiky brown macaroni, sticking up in all directions. This was a swampy place, where the mail-lorry people had thrown down branches and stumps of trees to make it possible to pass over at all, and we soon found out what would have happened without this timber ; one of these patches looked so frightful that Master decided he could not ask Sarah to crash and hobble over it, so we tried to pick our way through the bush at the side—we were over two hours digging the lorry out of **SOFT BLACK MUD**.

In a new Colony I suppose bad roads cannot be helped, but as we bumped and crawled over this caricature of a track we were rather surprised to find signposts and notices labelling **THIS**

#### THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

It was not like a road at all, it was more like an **ACCIDENT**. In one part, on an absolutely deserted track, there was an instruction to 'Keep to the left,' but wherever there are several paths from which to choose, we can find nothing to guide us. It would be very funny if Sarah did not weigh three tons, and if we were travelling to the south in something with solid tyres and no springs. I only hope we get through without any serious damage. I can imagine Rhodesian people saying : 'Well, no one asked you to come. If you will insist on driving all over Africa in a car like a tank, instead of by a perfectly good train, don't be offensive about our **ROADS** !'

Early this morning we drove past fields of waving grasses looking just like a mauve sea. Cattle do

well here and there is no tsetse-fly. The main crops are maize, tobacco, wheat and cotton, but we have seen no signs of white settlers since yesterday, when we passed a fine house with acres of orange trees, grape-fruit, tangerines, mangoes and sisal.

At middle-day we reached Broken Hill, a very civilised tidy place which seemed quite out of keeping with the peaceful deserted country all round and the happen-along roads. We have had the very worst piece of all between this town and where we are camping—perhaps they are very hospitable in Broken Hill and do not like their visitors to leave (but that would only work if their visitors came from the north, so I give it up !)

The place is called after a Mine in Australia, and has grown up round the discovery of lead and zinc. Something else of great interest was found here ; a human skull, dating from the very earliest times, was unearthed and is now in the British Museum ; tools and implements of flint have also been found, belonging to the far-off times when the mammoth and woolly-haired rhinoceros walked the earth. We found the place very much up to date ; there are Shops, Hotels, Banks, Golf-clubs, several Football and Cricket Teams, *and* a Cinema. But—no one in Broken Hill had seen a Sarah before.

We were very interested to see that no one, even in the blazing sun of midday, was bothering to wear a hat. That is probably what made Master go and buy one. If I had suggested it, he would have said ' Why ' ? Which, when you come to think of it, is a very good answer.

*Letter 53.*

HOTEL AT LUSAKA.

*May 4.*

We are rather grand to-night, we are not only staying at an hotel but we have been to a cinema show. I am feeling rather limp at the moment, not from tiredness, but with my efforts to keep serious when the pianist, to end the performance, tried to play 'God Save The King.' He did not know it by heart, he had no music, and so he made it up, in an entirely different key to the singing attempts of the audience. Tears just poured down my cheeks, and it was almost too much even for Master's self-control !

Before the cinema show, Sarah gave a free entertainment to all the local inhabitants. I think the Ford Company ought to have made us Agents all over Africa for their new 30-cwt. truck. Certainly no one has seen it south of Kenya, and the Stout Effort attracts as much attention as treacle does flies.

She has had her fair share of attention to-day, not only from strangers but from her anxious owner. It is remarkable the damage was not worse, considering what she has come through the last few days. This morning it was the same kind of bumpy surface like ribs in corduroy velvet, without the velvet, and with timber and ruts to vary it and make it more difficult. We passed acres of farms ; then it got more wooded, and where we stopped for repairs, in the middle of the morning, it was like a lovely Autumn glade. What a silly word 'glade'

is, but I cannot think of another. I mean a path through a wood with the sun peeping through. The *path*, in this case, was the Great North Road!

There had been a lot of grumblings going on—from Sarah, I mean—and so we stopped to look and listen; grease for the shaft was recommended. Then they found a very badly bent mudguard and a broken torque-rod bracket; the car is steered by the *torque-rod*, and—if only it could *talk*, we could tell you what Sarah thinks of the roads in these parts! She is most gallant to have come so far without any show of temper.

I believe Master thoroughly enjoyed himself tinkering away at what he calls his work-bench—the back of the car which lets down and which holds his vice and odd tools.

Aba was busy too. Do you know what a scorpion is? It is a kind of spider which lives in tropical countries and hides under stones and dark places; it looks rather like a prawn with legs, and it has a poisonous claw with which it can give anyone a very painful wound. Aba found a whole nest of these things somewhere, and instead of leaving them severely alone, as most people would, he brought one to me to see and admire. When I advised him to be careful, thinking he did not know their habits, he said: 'You see, Ma, Allah go love me, so no harm come to *good* boy.'

It must be a lovely feeling to have such a good conceit of yourself. Anyhow I had found something much better to watch: a carpet of small blue butterflies, almost too delicious to be true.

*Letter 54.*

CAMPING AGAIN.

*May 5.*

Three days ago we met the Congo as the Chambesi, to-day we met the Zambesi as the Kafue. The Chambesi we crossed by a ferry, but the Kafue is a quarter of a mile broad and there is a bridge. This may not be used for motors so the Stout Effort was hauled on to a railway truck, and hitched on to a goods train, and we crossed the river sitting in the lorry.

This piece of Rhodes' railway was built in 1906, and in 1927 they did a very clever thing, and, because of floods, raised the entire length of the bridge. Over in Portuguese country there is going to be another bridge over the Zambesi, which will be the longest in the world ; but until that one is finished, this bridge across the Kafue is the longest in Africa. When they first started building it, the British Engineers found it very difficult to persuade the native workmen to go down into the hollow piers which were to hold up the bridge, and which had to be sunk right down into the bed of the river. I can quite understand how frightened they felt when they were asked to work under the river (I think it must have been like that small child we saw in the Tube one day, who bawled and screamed when his Mother told him he was in a *Hole* !).

As in the building of the Uganda-Kenya Railway, the wild animals were a terrible nuisance ; once, an enormous rhinoceros charged an engine and tore most of it to bits with his horn, and another

time an elephant took a dislike to a railway-carriage and just knocked it off the line.

From the train, we had a very fine view of the river, which is sluggish and full of hippo and crocodiles ; near by is a lake with egrets, ibis, duck, geese, heron, etc. The country known as the Kafue Flats is one of the best game areas in the country ; but it is a Native Reserve and hunting is forbidden.

We had to go 30 miles in the train and were de-trucked where the road started again at a place called Mazabuka. Somewhere or somehow after that we lost the way—the road certainly was like a cart-track but that was nothing new so we did not feel suspicious until we reached a shallow river and drift which looked as if it had not been used for years. There was a lot of SAND, so, of course, Sarah stuck. We unloaded, and, with the help of some natives who were watching delightedly from a village on the bank, we pushed the lorry with great difficulty up an almost perpendicular hill. Then, there seemed nowhere to go ; it was just 'bush,' no sign of a road, or even a path. Of course we could not speak one word of their language to ask these black men the way, so you can just picture the pantomime that went on, until one boy took command of the whole affair ; he pointed to himself, then waved his hand vaguely to suggest distance and then seated himself on the running-board. This meant 'I know the way, I will show you.'

So there we were, but for a long time we did not think so. For mile after mile we wound in and out of bushes and trees, losing all sense of direction, and having just to trust to our guide who still waved

a very grimy black hand vaguely towards the horizon. I did hope he was not like a taxi, to be paid according to distance!

Finally, we landed up at a house where we were given tea by a kind Dutchman and his Scotch wife. Our guide then had to walk back to his village; he talked a lot and went on waving his arms and I think he would have liked to join our party, but we could hardly expect Sarah to go on indefinitely carrying someone on the running-board; she has about as much as she can handle just now. Although it was Sunday afternoon and I am sure we disturbed a nap, our hosts said they were glad we had lost our way as they had so few visitors; we had apparently taken a *short cut*! I would like to have gone back to Mazabuka to put up a notice to stop future travellers doing the same. They do not seem to cater for strangers. I should think if we called our route this afternoon The LESSER North Road, it would meet the case.

We did not like the look of a place called Monze where there was a hotel, so we drove on for another three miles and are camping. This is not at all popular with the boys—they love hotels (Aba does not even call them 'Oxtails' now), because it means they have nothing to do but look after the car. When we camp, of course, there is a lot to do. We choose a place very carefully, where the ground is dry but fairly near to some water. Then we collect plenty of wood for a large fire. The lorry has to be unpacked and made into a bed for Master, a ground-sheet spread for the luggage, the boys' tent put up, my camp-bed fixed (with mosquito net and plenty of blankets) and then the

camp-table is laid, tins of food opened and some Bovril made and we have our one real meal of the day. If we are anywhere within miles of a village, Aba, of course, gets some of the local inhabitants to bring water for baths and washing up ; but if not, with a very gloomy face, he retires to get it himself. I am very much afraid that when he gets home his report of this journey will consist of one sentence, ' I be all-the-same-cookoo-matey.'

*Letter 55.*

NORTH WESTERN HOTEL,  
LIVINGSTONE.

*May 6.*

We are at the end of Northern Rhodesia, and our speedometer says that our road total is five thousand miles !

To-morrow we shall cross from Northern to Southern Rhodesia by the bridge across the Zambesi. To-night we are at Livingstone, seven miles from the Falls. We have done two hundred miles to-day, and I am so tired with the rough passage in the lorry that I would like to unhook my head from my spine to rest it thoroughly.

We started at 7 this morning ; it was not quite so cold and the road was bumpy, but not quite so bad as usual. We passed three places with nice names, Pemba, Choma and Kalomo, and heard that Kalomo used to be the capital before it was moved to Livingstone. Round about here is the district where live the Baila people ; they, like the Masai, have no interest in life except cattle, the numbers work out at about three to every

person. When these herds are attacked by lion, the Baila men fight them with long spears, but have no shields with which to defend themselves. They have their own special ideas on fashions, one being for the men to grow their hair as long as they possibly can (adding someone else's if it does not reach the required length), and then it is dressed with mud and twisted into a POINTED UPSTANDING SPIKE. Another of their quaint ideas for beautifying themselves is to TAKE OUT the FOUR MIDDLE TEETH in both jaws ! (Perhaps Aba's ancestors used to be Baila people and he has 'reverted to type.' I must remember to ask him what he thinks.) This fashion reminded me of some of the Kenya tribes who file down their own teeth and screw in long and curved ones belonging to animals. Being 'modish' must be a painful business in East Africa.

We passed acres of farms, chiefly corn ; but our chief interest was GRASS, *long grass* in full seed, through which we had to drive. It was at least four feet high, and you must remember that this was the Main Road, not a short cut like we took yesterday. I do hope the photographs will be good of the Stout Effort and the Great North Road, but I shall have to be careful to label it well ; you might think it was a new kind of tractor in a harvesting field.

Master was afraid the grass seeds would stop up the radiator, so he rigged up a screen of fine gauze which certainly kept a lot of them out. But there were still more excitements to follow—HOLES, one of them about six feet across and at least three feet deep, right in the middle of the road. This journey of ours is developing into an obstacle

race, and I have quite decided that Sarah must be a kind of impalla ; she is a marvel.

But, troubles in the way of swamps, grass, crashes, bumps, holes, a winding path and an aching back, were all forgotten this afternoon.

We saw far away in the distance a faint white cloud which I vaguely thought might be a bush-fire. But it did not move, it kept just in that one place, and it was not dense enough for smoke. Then we suddenly realised what it was : The *spray of the Victoria Falls, nearly thirty miles away*. That did make us feel that any troubles about with mere roads really did not matter, and we did the rest of the journey into Livingstone as fast as we could.

By train, lake and road from West Africa we have travelled nearly six thousand miles, and to-morrow we shall see the eighth Wonder of the World. To have come through Northern Rhodesia unhurt, I think THE STOUT EFFORT must be the NINTH.

CHAPTER IX  
SOUTHERN RHODESIA

*Letter 56.*

VICTORIA FALLS HOTEL.

*May 8.*

There is such a lot to tell you and I have no words in which to say it. After seeing the Victoria Falls, all the adjectives I have ever used to describe anything seem empty and silly. Before I start trying to tell you what we have seen, I had better tell you what we have done.

We had to stay in Livingstone all yesterday, and we found it unpleasantly hot—we hear it is worse still between October and February.

Until about 25 years ago, Livingstone was just a strip of forest but now it is a well-planned town with 1600 white people, and the usual clubs, hospitals, hotels, shops and gardens. Africa moves quickly—sometimes! The place is unlike any other part of Northern Rhodesia and far more tropical, and the Powers That Be have decided to move the capital again to some higher ground near Lusaka.

First of all we had to arrange about a truck to take Sarah across the Zambesi Bridge into Southern Rhodesia; alterations are going on to turn this bridge into a road as well as a railway track, but it is not finished yet. The railway people said we

could go at 2, then they said 10 p.m. and then they said to-morrow morning. So we filled in the time yesterday doing some business. First we visited the Customs people, who told us we must have special permission to take the two servants into the Union. I hope you will not ask why—I just do not know. One did not expect 'red tape' and fuss between Rhodesia and the Transvaal like there was between the French country and the Belgian Congo. However, we are visitors and must do as we are told, so numerous telegrams have been sent off to ask if we may take two British Subjects, holding two British Passports, from one British Colony to another, and we must wait for two or three days before the answer is received. We have not told the boys ; they would either be very conceited or very indignant, that there is such a palaver about their goings and comings.

Our next job of work was to find a Road Department and we were not surprised that this was difficult ! In the end we found a Survey Office and went in to make enquiries about roads to the south.

The report was 'Between Livingstone and Bulawayo, the worst in the country,' and, after Sarah had been looked at, 'In that great lumbering lorry ? Quite impossible.' But, as you know, Master does not give up easily. He described our journey through Tanganyika at the end of the rains, and some parts of the Great North Road up to date, with a comic reference to the six-foot hole of yesterday, and in the end we were told, 'Well, you seem to be able to tackle anything. *Perhaps* you will do it.'

So that's that, we do not go by train to Bulawayo.

We came across the boundary river this morning. It seems quite right, doesn't it, that across the Zambesi which forms the greatest waterfall in the world, there should be the highest bridge in the world?

I have read a description of the building of this bridge, and Master, who is always interested in anything to do with engineering, agrees that it makes a good story.

Of course Rhodes was the moving spirit. He was so certain that this railway was needed; not just because it would be a wonderful thing, a line through Africa from south to north, nor that people 'may be able to get in at Cairo and get out at the Cape.' His idea was to open up the centre, to bring trade for the white man and improve the conditions of the black; slavery is impossible in a country of railways.

The line had grown up slowly from South Africa until it reached Bulawayo, following the districts rich in metals (diamonds, gold, etc.), and if you are interested enough to look at the map you will see what a zig-zag course they took; even for men who thought in millions, the cost must have been colossal. When the line reached the Zambesi, I feel that the engineers must have sat down and had a long think; they decided to bridge it at its narrowest point, which is within sight of the Falls. Rhodes was pleased about this, he said: 'I should like the spray from the Falls to dash against the carriages.' And so it does, against every train that passes over the bridge every day in the year. Here once more Livingstone and Rhodes seem to meet; Living-

stone discovered the Falls and Rhodes' railway brings travellers from all over the world to visit them.

This bridge was finished in nineteen weeks! First of all, a wire cable was stretched over the river, and across this cable loads of material were sent over, and, a train, one piece at a time; the workers going backwards and forwards in a basket—with the river 400 feet below! Black labourers and white engineers then started to build out the bridge, both sides at once, like long steel arms, to meet in the middle span of 500 feet. Can't you picture the excitement as this work went on? The smallest mistake would have been serious; the halves had to meet exactly. And—they did; there was not even a fraction of a fault. You can now understand why mathematics must be a strong point if you want to be a bridge builder.

We had our first sight of the Falls yesterday.

It is difficult to know where to begin. At first there is absolutely nothing to say, which is rather a good thing because the roar is so deafening that anything you did say would not be heard. Before David Livingstone came here, the local natives used to be afraid of what they called 'The SMOKE THAT THUNDERS.' The Arabs thought it was the end of the world.

Can you try and picture it? A placid river, more than a mile wide, flows along quite unsuspecting of anything ahead until suddenly it comes to a precipice. At once the peaceful scene changes to pandemonium and the river seems just to stand on end, and, like an avalanche, hurls itself over the edge of this precipice and becomes a powerful,

raging torrent, 400 feet below. This torrent must have an outlet, so, madly forcing its way through a gap in the rocks, it rushes along for miles in a zig-zag course through a series of gorges, and then, calmly, and as if nothing had happened, goes on with its twelve hundred miles run to the sea.

Do you feel as if you want to ask lots of questions? Why does the river do this? How long has it been doing it? How deep is the torrent? What happens to the other side of the precipice?

I will give you the last answer first, because, as I stood on the edge looking across at the river, I realised what an amazing thing it was—one side of the chasm is the same level as the other. From the ground which should have been the river-bed, we watched the Zambesi pour millions of gallons of water down a narrow crack, 400 feet deep, worn through solid rock, whose sides are at right angles to the course of the river.

Above the Falls, the river is not very deep nor does it seem to have nearly enough power to have made this deep precipice and the long winding gorge beyond; people think the crack was *not* made by volcanoes and that it *was* done by the wearing away of the rocks (EROSION); so, why did it happen? Years ago, one branch of the Zambesi flowed into a great lake in the Kalahari district in Bechuanaland; this lake began to be blocked up and some people think that the water escaped, with the Zambesi, by a new channel and became the present valley and the Falls, but no one seems to know for certain how long.

Then about the depth. The river is more than

a mile wide and the channel very narrow, so that when it comes to the outlet it means that a gigantic amount of water is being hurled into a very small space. At this outlet, which is near to the railway bridge, it is impossible to measure just how deep the water is; it is so deep that it is *black*.

I do not know how long we stood on the edge, not saying a word. The rains are only just over, so the river is at its fullest and the volume of spray splashing up is simply tremendous. Do you remember I told you we saw the cloud from a distance of nearly thirty miles? To-day, standing close to it, we saw the spray rise up in distinct columns, which people call the Five Fingers, and it is so dense that it is impossible to get a good view of the whole width of the Falls from one spot. The noise is simply incredible.

Presently, I saw Aba go near to the edge and when I called to him to take care he said: 'Please Ma, I like for find "gole" at the end of dem colours.' Even to Africa has come the legend of 'Where the rainbow ends.'

There were baby rainbows everywhere, and it was a sight that I have no power to describe—it was just wonderland. The sun shines through billions of drops of water forming exquisite colours, while there in the falling river are reflected back the rainbows themselves.

Until Master suggested it, it had not occurred to me, but I suppose it is true, that no two people see the same rainbow, because no two people can be in a position to see through exactly the same raindrop; so, if you want a really good mathe-



EVENING AT THE VICTORIA FALLS



matical problem, come to the Victoria Falls with a party of people and count the rainbows !

I rather liked Lawanson's remark. He kept quiet far longer than Aba, and then, after looking at the river, down at the chasm, round, down and up, and then again at the Falls, he said to Master : ' Please, Sah, I think dem water come from the sky ? ' I agreed with his problem. It was hard to understand that this was a river ; all this noise, this spray, and wild volume of water bounding over a precipice, on and on, year after year, for no apparent reason at all ; something going on for ever, and which changes every second.

Aba had returned to the lorry and interrupted my meditations with, ' Please, this be plenty good water, it be good you give me small-pieces-soap for wash Massa's shirts.'

That rather brought me down to earth, and then I found Master had a grievance, which was, that all the power and energy of the water was not doing anything.

' *What* a waste,' he kept saying. ' What an appalling *waste*.'

Engineers certainly are keen people ; they always seem to look at water as something they can use. A Fall means power, something that will drive a wheel or push some machinery ; they talk in terms of ' horse-power ' and speak of ' harnessing ' the water. We hear there is a Company in the south which claims the right to ' harness ' the power of these Falls, but I should think it is a difficult problem, one bank of the river is in Northern Rhodesia and the other in Southern, so the Falls belong to both countries,

I am glad about one thing. The British South Africa Company (which is really another name for RHODES) set aside a large amount of ground on both sides of the Falls for the use of the public for always, so that one hopes there will never be ugly buildings, advertisement hoardings, tea-huts, petrol-pumps, merry-go-rounds, or any of the usual hideosities to spoil this marvellous sight.

*Letter 57.*

VICTORIA FALLS HOTEL.

*May 9.*

The Hotel followed the railway and is a wonderful affair—150 bedrooms and a swimming bath. I am afraid poor Sarah must feel rather out of it; she is stowed away in a garage half a mile from the hotel. Very few of the visitors to the Falls come by car. Rhodesia is *not* a motorists' country as you will have gathered, but sight-seers from all over the world come here, a lot of them from America. As you know, America is justly very proud of her Falls, the only real rival to these, and although Niagara is only a quarter as wide as the Victoria Falls and not half as deep, about the same quantity of water pours over the edge of each chasm, so it is rather interesting to hear the comments of tourists who have seen both these marvels. I heard one lovely story of two Americans who came here. They watched in silence for a long time and then in a very depressed tone one said to the other: 'Say, Kid, compared to THIS, our Niagara is just PERSPIRATION.'

There was a letter waiting for me from the Admiral we met in Tanganyika, written on the 3rd,





so he has beaten us by nearly a week. He has now gone by train to Natal, and perhaps if the roads in the south are kind we shall catch him up there.

Besides having a letter, we were very civilised and had vast quantities of laundry done, our first real ironing for weeks. Aba presses, he doesn't iron. Do you remember I told you about a peach-coloured garment I bought in Nigeria and transformed into a jumper? I have been wearing this a lot, fondly hoping it did not look what it was—a pyjama-jacket. This 'jumper' was with the things given to the black washerman. Presently there was a tap on the door. 'Missis give me one pink "pinejamacoat," she no give me TROUSER!'

We have been Falls-gazing all day and I still feel just as hopeless about adjectives; I do know some of the names, though. The waterfall is not one definite line; the river is broken up by islands and rocks, and a different name is given to each section. There is the Devil's Cataract or Leaping Water, the Main Fall, the Rainbow Cataract and the Eastern Cataract—we have been busy taking photographs at every point where we could get a fresh view.

Then we went down into the Palm Grove and watched the outlet called the Boiling Pot, a seething mass of water pushing and plunging into the narrow gorge; then into the Rain Forest, passing from brilliant sunshine to heavy showers of spray like tropical rain. We should have been drenched to the skin without mackintoshes, but the heavy heat made us wish we had brought bathing dresses instead. This Rain Forest is the other side of the precipice, parallel to the Falls and is a marvellous

feast of green : huge ferns, creepers, palms, moss-grown tree-trunks, always brilliant green because of the never-ending spray from the river.

I am quite sure of one thing. If we stayed here for a week we could not take one photograph that could give anyone a REAL IDEA of the size and grandeur of the Falls. As you stand on the edge of the chasm, the outline of the Falls from end to end can barely be seen through the mist ; then, a small breeze or just a breath of air lifts the curtain for a few seconds and shows you the river plunging down in long streamers of foam. The mist of spray comes down again and shuts out the view of the depths, and except for the thunderous roar it is difficult to realise that the vision was there at all.

We would like to have been able to land on Livingstone Island right on the edge of the Main Fall, but this is not possible until later in the year. People can then go for trips up the river in canoes or launches and visit the different small islands, and there are hippo and crocodiles to add to the excitement. As we could not have a boat on the river, we walked along by the side and watched the broad and splendid Zambesi rolling along as if it expected to follow an uninterrupted course to the sea. And yet—in just a few seconds we knew it would become a swirling mass of black waters in a whirlpool 400 feet below. Africa and her contrasts crops up once more—listen to what I have heard about the source of the Zambesi. The amazing vision of beauty, the Victoria Falls, the finest waterfall in the whole world, as part of the River Zambesi, has its beginning 5000 feet above sea-level in a BOG OF BLACK MUD !

Letter 58.

BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD,  
70 MILES BEYOND THE FALLS.

May 10.

When we were in Livingstone we were given a paper showing names of possible stopping places on the road to Bulawayo, a distance of 360 miles, and I think it will show you how necessary it is to travel self-contained and not be dependent on anybody or anything.

After 113 miles there is a town and an hotel, 120 miles further on there is an hotel, and 80 miles after that a mine.

We have *not* done 113 miles, but only 70, so we are camping again. There are two reasons for this short mileage :

- (1) The letter we expected first thing this morning giving permission and instructions about the servants going into the Union, did not come until midday, so we did not start off from the Falls Hotel until late.
- (2) Of course the usual grumble, ROADS.

I expect you remember we were warned that the road from Livingstone to Bulawayo was BAD, but even our worst nightmare had not pictured that we should begin the journey to the south with *miles of loose sand*.

At first Master thought we were beaten. There was no chance to get a run at it ; there seemed to be sand and nothing but sand as far as we could

see ; there was no path at the side clear enough of bushes where we could have pushed a way, and even if we had emptied the lorry, she could not possibly have ploughed on through the sand. It was a most grisly prospect.

First we tried to push ; that was obviously a forlorn hope, we had seen Sarah grappling with sand before. Then out came the wire crawlers that were made at Mongu on the pattern of those which people use for conquering a sandy track in Egypt ; they were absolutely no use. What could we do next, except give it up and slink back to the railway station ?

I do not usually have the Bright Ideas, but to-day I was very popular because I suddenly suggested—I think it must have been the sight of the bright green canvas in contrast to that maddening sand—

‘ Why not use the two ground-sheets as carpets ? ’  
So this is what we did :

Spread both the sheets on the sand.

Started Sarah up.

Staggered to the edge of the first sheet.

Spread the back one in front.

So on, and so on, and so on for SEVERAL MILES.

Add, that it was exceedingly hot, and you will get some sort of idea of what went on. In the intervals of helping to SPREAD and TAKE-UP, I did manage to get a photograph, and when you see it and compare it with the sights we have been photographing the last few days, you will understand why I burst into song—I altered that hymn

about 'Greenland's icy mountains,' and sang :  
'Where every prospect pleases and only *roads* are  
vile.'

By a series of bumps, crashes and absolute miracles, we have done part of the way to Bulawayo, and have again got a free hotel by the roadside. It is so much warmer that we have not lit a fire—I hope I shall not be wakened by the roar of a hungry lion !

*Letter 59.*

BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD,

15 MILES FURTHER ON.

*May 11—afternoon.*

I think I have found out something about Sarah—she must be a Jewess. I have been counting up the breakdowns and big difficulties we have had so far, and they have all happened on a Saturday. I believe she tries to protest about being made to work on her Sabbath !

The shaft trouble in the Belgian Congo.

The rain at Nairobi and the black mud which followed.

The puncture at Abercorn.

The broken torque-rod.

And—to-day, we *thought*, a wrecked engine.

We started badly this morning, we were all cross, and Sarah was the worst ; she grumbled hard and we stopped several times to have the brakes adjusted and also to see why the engine was 'knocking.'

Finally, about 10 a.m., Lawanson found that water was dripping through the carburettor, a most ominous sight ; almost certainly it meant that there was a crack in the cylinder-casing, a leak between the radiator and the engine. As you know very well, one of the things that must NEVER happen is for water to get into the petrol ; if that *was* happening, were we finished ?

Under Master's directions, Lawanson got to work at once to see what was the damage, and they were some of the grimmest minutes of the trip. We were alone in the bush, forty miles from a railway station, with a (probably) useless car ; no one in the country knew us, no one was expecting our arrival in Bulawayo, and no one would worry if we did not turn up. I began to see how wise the folks are who do a journey like this as an advertised 'stunt.' Certainly the chances of anyone passing us was pretty small, we have not seen a sign of a white man since we left the Falls Hotel yesterday morning.

Whatever would we do ? Both of us leave the lorry and walk, or, one of us stay and one of us walk ? Obviously our only hope of finishing the journey by car would be to get up another engine from Johannesburg, and the more one thought of it, the more utterly complicated it became. It seemed hours as I watched Lawanson unscrew the head of the casing, but, of course, it was really only a few minutes before Master heaved a sigh of relief, exclaiming, 'A GASKET.'

Up till to-day I always thought a gasket was a *fish*, but now I know it is a thin copper plate that goes between the cylinder casing and its head, to

keep the two very tightly fixed together. It meant that the trouble was not a serious but a simple one, and one that could easily be put right.

Like the ground-sheets of yesterday we could have used another homely remedy, 'small pieces soap,' to make a join, but even gaskets had been remembered in our list of NECESSARIES, and once again we are safe.

After this repair, all kinds of overdue spring-cleaning went on, while Aba rigged up a sort of tent to provide a little shade. It was simply sweltering. When we woke up this morning we certainly should not have imagined that within four hours we should welcome a shelter from the sun ; at 6 a.m. it was almost icy with the thermometer down to 39°.

While the men worked, I studied the road report again. I found that there is no village or place where we could have summoned any help nearer than the colliery town of Wankie. What a silly name ! Apparently it is very far from being a silly place, it is a very important one. Years ago, Rhodes' railway was only growing up slowly from the south, the route chosen was not very popular and it did not seem worth the expense ; then COAL was found here, a new route was planned to make this the main line, and the railway was brought from Bulawayo to Wankie and so to the Falls and Broken Hill.

If things had turned out badly to-day, this place Wankie with its telegraph, telephone and line to Johannesburg, might have loomed very large for us. But, now that the anxiety is over I cannot help thinking what a good first line it would make

for a fox-trot. It is too hot to finish it, but it began itself with the words : ' I'll have to walk to Wankie, 'tis forty miles away.'

*Letter 60.*

HOTEL AT LUPANE,  
SOUTHERN RHODESIA,  
230 MILES FROM LIVINGSTONE.

*May 12.*

Yesterday we did 15 miles, to-day we have done 155. The surface of the road is better but I have counted no less than eighteen drifts on our journey to-day, with steep banks to push Sarah up and down. These make it quite out of the question for me to take a hand with the driving ; I could not make the car do what Master does—he seems to ask impossibilities and the Stout Effort obeys. I decided to-day that we should let her have a season of steeple-chasing or else enter her for the Olympic Games. Under the heading of TANKS she would be able to go in for most of the events : high jump, long jump (including water), cross-country, long-distance, obstacle, and of course, putting the weight (or rather, pulling it) she would win against all competition. After what she climbed to-day, I half believe she could tackle the Monument !

The road has been in turn brown, black and pink, but here the track was white and shining with silvery flakes of metal ; it is called Mica Hill. The view from the top was glorious, but from the bottom it looked impossible to climb, with a gradient of about 1 in 1.

We started. About a quarter of the way up, the

boys got out ; half-way up I got out ; Master is the heavy-weight of the party, but as he was driving, he could not very well get out too ; so then we unloaded.

When we reached the top we had time to draw breath and admire the colouring which was very fine—a very white road, a hard-blue sky and all around showed the varied tints of autumn. It looked like a good piece of parkland, but from the road one cannot see any farms or any signs of life at all ; and, considering it is the main route of the railway, there appear to be so few stations ; between Bulawayo and the Victoria Falls there are only three or four stops ; I hear there is another thing which is very different to the ROAD :—

A *straight* run of seventy-two miles—said to be the longest straight run in the world !

The boys have finished all their food and they are glad to be at an hotel to-night. I think they will like the Union—we hear rumours that no one camps in the south. Towns are much closer together, so it will not be actually necessary to camp, and I think there is a better reason for sleeping indoors—it will be very COLD.

There are eight other travellers at the Hotel, South Africans on the way to the Falls. They have two very smart new cars, and are full of woe about the roads further south. I can imagine that if you are in that state when your car is a new toy, and after every run you count the scratches on the paint, Rhodesia might seem a trifle heavy-handed ! We did not know quite what to do, to depress them with stories of more woe to come, or to let them go on thinking it would be a speed-track ; we gave them

some good advice about the sand, and hoped they would not mind the hundred-and-one drifts. They were very nice to us, and if good wishes will help at all we shall certainly get safely to the south.

There is one thing at the hotel here that would interest you—a baby Sable Antelope. It does seem absurd that in this splendid big-game country we have seen fewer animals than anywhere in our trip. I heard tales of possible OKAPI in Northern Rhodesia, and everything else from giraffe to buffalo. Near Abercorn, on a day when I was *not* there, elephant, zebra and roan antelope walked over an estate during the afternoon! But the only exciting things I have seen are the back view of a black leopard and a tame sable antelope. This creature's Latin name in full is *Hippotragus niger*, but the poor baby looked so miserable that I christened him LOOPY—it goes so well with the name of this place, LUPANE.

*Letter 61.*

CAMPING NEAR THE MATOPOS.

*May 13.*

To-day is Monday and by Thursday we ought to be in Johannesburg. That sounds exciting, but I am not at all excited. I take a very gloomy view about leaving Rhodesia without seeing all there is to be seen.

Master keeps reminding me that we are not *doing* Africa, but doing a journey *in* Africa; not seeing how much *we can see*, but seeing how much *Sarah can do*.

About fifty miles off the main road are the famous Great Zimbabwe Ruins, but I can only tell you what I have heard about them, and not describe what I have seen. They are ruins of temples ; thirty-foot walls of granite blocks, with towers and ornaments and remains of carved stone animals and birds, and no one knows for certain How and Why and When. Someone says 4000 B.C., another A.D. 1200, and another says fairly modern, so there is a good margin to work on. Some say the builders came from the East, some say they were built by the African. No burial ground or writings have been found, so all the learned people are able to go on arguing indefinitely about dates and things. Some people think the temples are definitely to do with sun-worship, but all seem to agree that the buildings were connected with GOLD ; tools have been found, and it is suggested that the forts were built for the protection of workers who had come to this country in search of the precious metal ; perhaps the ruins are part of a once-prosperous city.

There are other problems for the learned ones. Scattered over this country are the rock-paintings done by the bushmen, probably the first inhabitants of the south. One drawing has been found of a mammoth which makes some of the authorities think that here in Africa were the very beginnings of the human race. There are no bushmen left in Rhodesia now ; as a People they vanished long ago, but here are still their pictures, mostly of hunting-life, done in colours of which they alone had the secret, and which still remain even after so many hundreds of years. One

learned Professor puts the date at anything above 8000 B.C. !

Here is the eternal Contrast again. In Bulawayo this afternoon, I saw two signs of civilisation I had never before seen in Africa :

A man selling ice-cream-bricks from a barrow.

White children coming back from school.

Bulawayo is built round a big square near the place where Lobengula, the old King of the Matabele people, had his kraal or compound. The hut is still standing where Rhodes used to stay, in the early days when so many eyes were on this country, and when Lobengula had to be reminded that,

‘ Peace and friendship shall continue between Her Britannic Majesty, Queen Victoria and the Matabele people.’

In the centre of the market place is a bronze statue of Rhodes placed so that his eyes look always to the north.

We had already done 142 miles when we reached Bulawayo at 3.30, so you can imagine that the road had greatly improved ; for the last thirty miles we absolutely bowled along as we have not done since the Belgian Congo and Uganda. We only stayed an hour in the town to buy petrol, and food for an evening meal, and then, much to the cook's obvious disgust, drove on for another twenty miles. It is a wonderful piece of open country and this evening there is a magnificent grey and magenta sunset with very ominous rain-clouds all round. The colours suit the district. We are camping in sight

of the Matopos, the 'rough sea of hills' from which Rhodes first saw what he called the 'View of the World,' and where he said he would like to be buried. When he died, his body was brought from the Cape by railway, and then by a waggon drawn by oxen right up to the top of these hills, where thousands of Matabele warriors had come to pay their last respects, giving to Rhodes a tribute which no other white man has been given, their Royal Salute.

*Letter 62.*

ON THE BANKS OF THE LIMPOPO.

*Midday, May 15.*

Do you see I am writing this in the morning? At 7 last night I was just preparing to begin my usual budget to you when suddenly I was interrupted.

I must tell you shortly about yesterday's happenings :

We got up at 5, breakfasted and packed up ready to start at 6.30. Then we left our camp near the Matopos, and during the morning drove through three gold-mining places, 100 miles by lunch-time. It was hilly, wooded country, and the road moderately good with occasional very bad crashy places. We saw baobab trees again, some of them nearly 100 feet round the waist. I heard that somebody has an idea of turning these trees into paper. It sounds rather like Shakespeare's idea of 'Sermons in Stones !'

At 4.30 we had done 190 miles, and as there was no sign of the river, we thought we would camp

at the top of a hill, and then to-morrow start making enquiries about crossing the Crocodile River. This problem had been worrying Master for a long time. We hear that a railway-cum-road bridge is built, but not in use yet ; and we also hear that however shallow the river is, very few people can get their cars across under their own power because of the very sandy banks. To most people, S-A-N-D means just sand, sand castles, sandy cats, sand-cakes, but to us it means DELAYS and DIFFICULTIES. No wonder Master decided to wait until morning to attack this problem.

We carefully chose a cleared space for camping, quite near the road, and imagined that this would be our last night for sleeping out—we did not know how literally true that might have been. I had had my bath and Aba was in the middle of preparing dinner, when up the road within a few feet of us came a large lorry, and a voice called out, ‘Hullo, are you camping?’

As all our luggage was dumped by the side of the road, our chairs and table set out and there was a large fire going, it *was* rather obvious, but the next remark was not.

‘Well, you had better move on, there are LIONS about.’

We have been vaguely expecting lion all through Rhodesia, but this certainly was more definite. Then we saw that there was a man on the running-board of the lorry with a loaded rifle, and apparently there was no doubt about it—we had chosen as our last camping place what really might have been our last, the favourite playground of at least a dozen well-known local lions !

We tried to be duly grateful to the Voice for the warning, and he refused to go on up the hill until we had promised to move down to the banks of the river.

The position was explained to Aba and Lawanson—we must move. What? Drive on again? Pack and unpack? Find more firewood? Do everything a second time?

‘Zaki? Ba komi’ (‘Lion? Oh that doesn’t matter’), said Aba bravely.

But lion *did* matter. We had one revolver and a shot gun between the four of us, and against a dozen man-eaters that would not have been much. So very reluctantly we had to move on. And—another traveller saw lions on the road that night.

We exchanged LION for sandflies and mosquitoes and slept on the bank of ‘The great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River,’ under the shade of the ‘fever-trees,’ our old friends the acacias, who are thirsty and have come in search of water. Happily we had filled up our cans of drinking water quite recently, and were *not* thirsty; I certainly did not fancy the look of the river. I feel that the ‘Elephant’s Child’ must have come here during the rains, for Kipling’s picturesque adjectives do not describe what we are seeing now. Happily for Sarah, the vast Limpopo is shallow, shrunken, sluggish and sandy.

You may think I have suddenly become light-hearted about sand? I have, and the answer is DONKEYS.

When we were told quite seriously that our lorry, weighing three tons, was to be drawn through half a mile of river by DONKEYS, we said elephants

would be more suitable. But, apparently these are a very special line in donkeys, who will soon be on the list of unemployed when the bridge across the river takes all the traffic for the Great North Road. Most cars have a team of 12, but after a hasty glance at Sarah's outsize, it was decided we would need 18! We were tremendously glad that the bridge was not quite ready and that we should be one of the last cars to cross from Rhodesia to the Union in the old way. But—I did long for a good movie camera, to show you the whole of the comic business that went on.

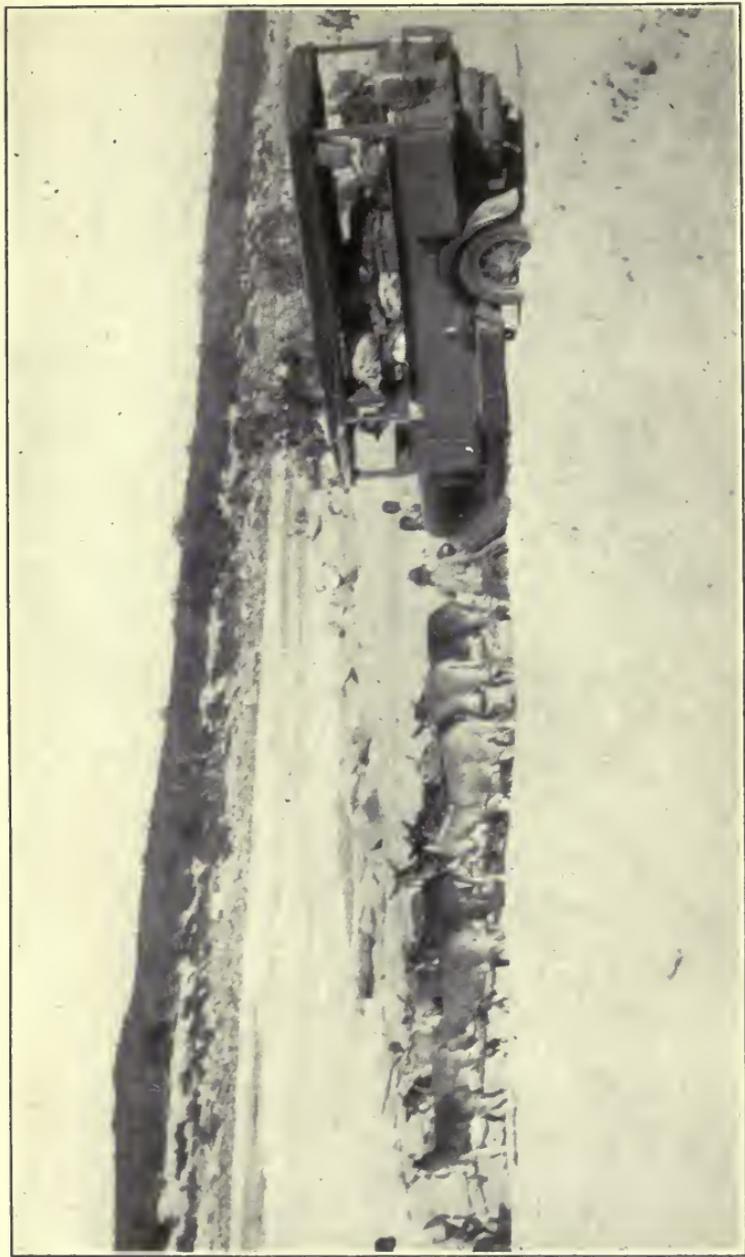
First, there was much talking and discussion, and much greasing of Sarah's inside, and taking out of parts which would not appreciate either water or sand.

Then, the procession of donkeys lazily crossed the river from the South African side, and were harnessed to the car, three abreast.

With whips cracking and encouraging yells from the owners of the team, we slowly churned through the sand and splashed into the river.

Master, with camera in hand, leapt from one sandbank to another and took photographs, while I, in the driving seat, watched the water creep up to the running-boards, and wondered if there would be any crocodiles if I had to wade to the shore!

But nothing exciting happened. Sarah was on her best behaviour, no one fell over, nothing dropped out of the lorry. As smoothly and easily



CROSSING THE LIMPOPO RIVER, BOUNDARY BETWEEN SOUTHERN RHODESIA AND THE TRANSVAAL



as if we had done the journey on the new bridge, we were drawn over to the Transvaal side; the donkeys were unhitched, the natives returned to their breakfasts, Master started the car, and, turning her back on the boundary river, the STOUT EFFORT said good-bye to RHODESIA.

CHAPTER X  
THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND  
THE END OF THE JOURNEY

*Letter 63.*

THE LANGHAM HOTEL,  
JOHANNESBURG,  
THE TRANSVAAL.

*May 16.*

Please note the address !

Two nights ago, we camped on the bank of a river, in the neighbourhood of lions—to-night we are at Johannesburg, largest city in Africa south of Cairo.

There are some mental pictures of this journey I shall never forget. Here are two of them :

Yesterday morning, the Stout Effort left Rhodesia in the charge of donkeys.

This evening, that same Stout Effort, heavily loaded, travel-stained and untidy, tore along a road like a racing track, proudly keeping pace with the stream of magnificent cars belonging to the prosperous people of the Transvaal.

It was the very first time that Master has been able to let our Sarah show what she can really do in the way of speed, and he enjoyed the race as much as you do when we try and race a train.

Sarah, of course, attracted as much attention as

Royalty ; I feel she ought to have a large poster on the roof saying :

NIGERIA TO THE CAPE VIA KENYA AND THE  
GREAT NORTH ROAD

I would love to have heard some of the comments from the owners of the spotless Daimlers and Rolls-Royces, the Vauxhalls and the Hillmans, when a thing like a furniture-van politely honked and tore past ! These people were out for an evening stroll, on pleasure bent, we had done two hundred miles since breakfast, and our one thought was dinner and a bath.

There are at least thirty hotels in this enormous city, and, although we had chosen one of them by name, we had not the slightest idea where to find it. Only after making many enquiries did I realise how very difficult it is to try and direct someone to somewhere if the someone does not know anything about anywhere !

One man said : ' You had better take a bus.'

Another said : ' Why not *telephone* ?'

Three people told me : ' You can't miss it.'

Of course we missed it. Finally, I found a cheery ' Robert,' who boarded the lorry and conducted us to the door and here we are. I cannot help feeling a bit homesick for Rhodesia—there are white waiters in the hotel and everything is absolutely up to date and civilised !

I think Sarah was sorry too. Yesterday she celebrated our arrival in the Union by having two punctures and one burst within a few hours, and yet, she came through the 1500 miles of ' accident' in the Rhodesias with no tyre trouble at all !

Can't you hear your Father murmuring something about the contrariness of women ?

The last time I wrote to you, I was near the Limpopo River, the southern boundary of Rhodesia ; now we are in the UNION.

Rhodes, as you know, dreamed of a SOUTH AFRICA stretching from the Cape to Tanganyika, each country remaining a separate entity with its own local rule. He wanted for it what is called Federation, with one President or Governor as they have in America and one other thing in common, their loyalty ; in other words :—

A United States of British Africa.

But, later on, the Powers That Be decided on something that sounded closer still :—

One Independent State, called the UNION of SOUTH AFRICA, A Dominion of the British Empire. This country is made up of the Transvaal, Natal, the Orange Free State and Cape Province and reaches as far north as the Limpopo ; the Rhodesias are separate Colonies and are not in the Union.

I did not mean to talk history to-night, but to tell you what we have seen and done since yesterday morning.

This South African country is like a plateau tipped up on its eastern side, with mountains guarding it all the way down to the Cape. First of all we climbed terrific hills, wooded, and with delicious babbling streams ; then we crossed the Zoutpansberg (or Salt-pan Mountain) by a gap called a 'poort,' between cliffs 1200 feet high. Over the other side was open country, or VELD, dotted with farms and quaint Dutch churches. As well as producing minerals, this part of the world is good

for cattle and sheep farming, and for growing cotton, tobacco, oranges, etc.

We spent the night at a town called Petersburg, and to-day we noticed such a difference to Rhodesia, there are so many places with names. These are some of them : Potgietersrust (this used to be Pietpotgietersrust !), Warmbaths, Ponkop, Witenek. Another was called Nylstroom, across a river which the first settlers thought was the Nile. The story goes that they made a boat and started out to find Egypt ; they reached the Limpopo, followed it to the sea and finished their journey at Delagoa Bay, about a hundred miles to the south !

I expect you notice the foreign sound of these names. This is, of course, the country to which the Boers or Dutch Farmers came in the Great Trek from the south, about one hundred years ago. They were a brave people, obstinate and independent, who hated change, and more than anything else they hated British rule and the abolition of slavery. So, they left Cape Colony and moved northward through unknown country across the Orange River and its tributary the Vaal, and founded the countries we know as the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. They wanted FREEDOM for themselves so much that they left their homes and went out to find it, but—it was the giving of freedom to other people that finally persuaded them to go !

We also passed through Pretoria, one of the capitals of the Union. There are magnificent buildings built of local rose-coloured sandstone, and the Governor's house is probably the finest in the Empire. We felt absolutely dazed, suddenly, here

was CIVILISATION. There were TRAMS, PEOPLE, CROSS-ROADS and POLICEMEN, but not one signpost to show us the way to Johannesburg and the Cape.

We escaped as soon as we could and in forty miles climbed 1200 feet to the famous Witwatersrand—'The ridge of sparkling waters.' It is famous, not for sparkling waters, but GOLD. Gold to the amount of (I must be careful to put in enough noughts, though even one or two less would seem fairly big) £1,000,000,000 has already been found here. There is a string of mines, one after the other, for sixty miles and in the centre is Johannesburg, built on one of the slopes of this range of hills.

To the south the Vaal joins the Orange River and runs across Africa to the Atlantic, and, to the north, the Limpopo runs eastwards into the Indian Ocean. It seems quite suitable that the richest town in Africa should have such an important position. To-morrow I will tell you about the city itself.

*Letter 64.*

JOHANNESBURG.

*May 18.*

It is Saturday and the usual day for accidents, but Sarah is in the hotel garage and I think there is only one thing that could happen to her, and that is FROST BITE !

I read somewhere that in a year, LONDON has 29 per cent of the possible hours of sunshine and Johannesburg has 73 per cent, and yet—yesterday morning we woke up to find, what do you think ? RAIN AND FOG ! To-day it feels like snow. I am longing for my leather coat which with great care

I sent home with all the other woolly clothes we did not think we should need. The servants are one long howl of unhappiness, they are so homesick that, whatever the weather had been, we should not have expected them to show any pleasure. When I told Aba we were going to be here two days, that they could have a holiday and a chance to see Johannesburg, what do you think he said? 'What I go see for this village?' (Aba is used to a Mining Camp and about 150 people; Johannesburg contains about half a million, but he calls it a 'village!')

The boys decided they would go shopping. To-day I have seen the purchases and heard what happened. Lawanson has bought a most frightful black, waisted overcoat, and, to wear with it, a muffler, a woollen helmet and some dirty white sand-shoes. Anyhow he will be warm. Aba bought a woolly helmet, too, but he did not spend much of his money on ordinary things, he was hoarding it for one purpose, I wonder if you remember what that was?

He had a dreadful tale of woe, and it was all my fault! I had told him that Johannesburg was 'A plenty fine place.' He continued, 'But I think it be BAD. No one be fit to sell me my "gole" teeth.'

Then he wondered why I laughed. I just could not help it, I had been expecting this sad tale; he *will* not believe what I tell him about false teeth and this is what Master and I saw yesterday afternoon:

The scene was the main street in Johannesburg. Down the road came a procession of local natives obviously admiring the one at the head. It was Aba. Aba, dressed in his best Nigerian

holiday clothes (a long orange cotton robe, a crimson fez, war medals and enormous *black boots*), obviously on business bent.

We watched from the other side of the road to see what was going to happen next ; he looked so different from the other black men and was attracting a lot of amused attention. He passed slowly down the street, peering into all the shops, and, suddenly, into one of them he made a triumphant dash. But—instead of a DENTIST Aba had found an OPTICIAN—the shop sold not TEETH, but SPECTACLES. So that is why Aba thinks Johannesburg is such a poor sort of ‘village’ !

I am sure descriptions of cities do not interest you much, but I must tell you a little about this one, because it is so remarkable.

Fifty years ago, Johannesburg was just a treeless, dust-plagued and sandy waste—now, it is the second largest city in the whole of the Continent of Africa.

The land used to be of so little value that farmers parted with acres of it for a team of oxen. Now, a small building-site can with great difficulty be bought for thousands of pounds. GOLD has made all this difference—the greatest find of gold in the world. I wondered what would happen to Johannesburg if gold ceased to be such a valuable thing, or when all the mines are shut down ; minerals do not grow again in the ground, will this rich city behave like a burst balloon ? I think farming will be the answer—the country all round is as promising and beautiful as the outskirts are depressing and hideous : the chief things you notice about the landscape are chimneys, disorderly mine buildings

and the dumps. They certainly give any spectator the 'Dumps,' but to the owners they mean WEALTH. Picture the size of them. TWO MILLION TONS of rock are dealt with in *one month*, powdered and treated with cyanide, and then, when the gold has been taken away, the remainder is rubbish to be thrown on these dumps, looking like mounds of grubby flour stretching for THIRTY MILES each side of Johannesburg. Surely, Johannesburg's 'Face is her fortune'—but it is a VERY UGLY FACE!

The city itself is a marvellous place. Americans say it is more like New York than London, but I think it must just be like itself. It has buildings, houses and gardens of which any city in the world might justly be proud.

This 'Bad Village' had, amongst other things: a University, a Cathedral, Churches, Schools; a City Hall with one of the largest organs in the world; the Second largest Hospital in the world; Electric Trams, a Broadcasting Station, Theatres, Law Courts, Hotels, Clubs and Swimming Baths, and all this has happened in less than fifty years.

Johannesburg also has fine Zoological Gardens. This reminded me of something I had forgotten—fences of barbed wire do *not* suggest anything WILD—but South Africa used to be famous for WILD ANIMALS of all kinds, as much a Sportsman's Paradise as East Africa and Rhodesia are now. The chief exports used to be IVORY and SKINS!

In the city we did two things that may interest you:—

We booked our passages on a boat leaving Cape Town for England in *a month's time*, this allows three weeks for motoring 1600 miles, and

one week to stay at Uncle Harry's farm in Natal.

If Sarah behaves properly, we ought to reach Cape Town in heaps of time. The problem of the servants' return journey is not nearly so simple, we cannot hear of a boat of any description that goes from Cape Town to Nigeria ; so we left the puzzle with the shipping agents and asked them to let us have the answer at Cape Town—no prize offered !

I told Aba they might have to go back home by aeroplane—I wish you could have seen his face ! ' Dem boat who live for sky ? I NO AGREE.'

The next thing was shopping. I was able to get *Winnie the Pooh* for Una, my small friend at Abercorn, and stamps for you (date 1926, different designs and different colours, ranging from a springbok, an orange tree, a native hut, and an ox-waggon to a picture of Table Bay). I do not think I told you about the Rhodesian ones. Northern Rhodesia has the King's head, and, underneath, giraffe, elephants and palm trees. Southern Rhodesia has only the King's head, and—for a Colony with no coast line and no port, His Majesty is shown wearing NAVAL UNIFORM !

*Letter 65.*

NATAL.

*Whit Monday, May 20.*

Our motoring total has now reached over 6000 miles ; since the last Bank Holiday (Easter Monday) we have been through six Colonies, and yesterday we did our record run of the whole trip—255 miles.

Roads, with the exception of sudden bad patches, are excellent. Of course we are finding everything very different to the Rhodesias ; do you remember how far apart all the towns were and how seldom we met an hotel ? Since we left Johannesburg, two days ago, we have passed through no less than twenty places with hotels, and if we did not want to stop at one of them we just went on to the next ! There is nothing to encourage us to camp. As well as barbed wire each side of the road, it is so *cold*.

When we left Johannesburg at six o'clock in the morning, it was absolutely icy ; the town is very high up, one of the highest and bleakest spots in the Transvaal, and in the twelve hours' run yesterday we dropped 2500 feet.

Everything changes so quickly in this journey of ours. I feel I want at least six pairs of eyes to notice all I should, and much more brain to remember all I see. I find it very difficult to keep in my mind a clear picture of the day. Master seems to take in more than I do even though he is driving. All these weeks, my Diary has lived in the attaché case at my feet, and at odd moments I get it out and put something down so that I shall be sure not to forget when I write up the day for you.

We have followed the Drakensberg (Mountain of the Dragons) for several days. If you look at the map, you will see that there is a continuous chain of mountains going on for over 1000 miles. There is an eastern wall for the Transvaal, a western wall for Natal and a southern rampart in the Cape Province, the watershed which divides the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Sometimes these mountains are flat-topped and like a

table-land; further south they are called the Quathlambas, a word meaning 'heaped up and jagged'; here, long ago, lived the bushmen, the children of the mountains and lovers of freedom, and here are to be found the only relic left of them—their rock paintings.

I like this mountainous country; there are high and lonely peaks, streams, meadows and valleys, and thick woods draping the sides of steep precipices of grey and red sandstone. This afternoon we saw another World's View. You know how ugly a city usually looks as you approach it either by road or rail? This one was very different. Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, lies in the centre of a valley, ringed with hills, and, from a tremendous height on the road which had brought us from the north, we looked down on this city, a square of silver in the middle of a bright green carpet.

To-night we are high up again, and, in the clear cool air, the colours have been as fine as any we have seen—brilliant foliage, indigo mountains, and the soft evening lights of yellow and lilac, pink and palest blue.

That colour description reminds me, poor Aba has been roused to furious wrath again. We have been noticing in this part of the world that the 'black men' are *brown* not black, sometimes almost brick-red, and at two hotels we have been asked, 'What kind of KAFFIRS are your two servants?'

Aba had not heard that word before and asked what it meant. I always thought Kaffir was a nationality or tribe-name like Basutos, or Zulus, or Matabeles, but I hear I am as ignorant as Aba. (Happily I do not mind as much as he does!)



*By courtesy of South African Railways*

**BUSHMEN PAINTINGS ON THE ROCKS, SOUTHERN RHODESIA**



KAFFIR is a general name meaning AN INFIDEL OR HEATHEN, and was given by the Arabs to anyone who was NOT A MOHAMMEDAN. I teased Aba and told him that *Kaffir* meant 'all-the-same-Pagan,' and that they were a fighting people. He rose at once.

'Pagan? I no be Pagan, I be good Mohammedan. I fit to fight anyone who call *me* "KOFFEE"!'

It is not only this fighting spirit of Aba's which reminds us of WAR; the country in Natal through which we have been travelling for two days has been the scene of much war and bloodshed. In 1497 a European ship anchored outside Durban; it was Christmas Day, and the explorers called the land NATAL—after Christ's natal or birth-day—a word that should suggest Peace, shouldn't it?

Names of places that people have never seen usually do not mean much, but there are places here whose names meant a great deal to people in England about thirty years ago. We have seen Majuba Hill, Elandsplaagte, the Tugela River, Spion Kop, Ladysmith (where there was a six months' siege) and Colenso (where the son of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, was killed while trying to save the guns). I do not expect you have ever even heard of this war in South Africa—it is another unpleasant page in history, a war between two white races in black man's country. The trouble started in the Transvaal because of broken promises, and unfair treatment of the British settlers and miners by the Dutch President Kruger. No one wanted to interfere with the independence of the Transvaal. Cecil Rhodes always preached, 'Equal rights and justice for British and

Dutch,' but that is just what did not happen. The British were paying very nearly all the taxes, and yet they were not given any say in the Government of the Colony ; undoubtedly, Kruger was trying to force the British people to leave the country. In the end, over 20,000 British subjects signed a petition and sent it to Queen Victoria, asking for her protection ; Kruger would not listen to reason, and the Queen's ' Protection ' had to be SHIPS and SOLDIERS. Natal, as the most British part of South Africa, was invaded by the Boers at once and fighting went on over this difficult hilly country for over two years. Then President Kruger left Africa, peace was arranged, and in 1910, when the Union of South Africa was announced, A BOER GENERAL WAS THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER !

*Letter 66.*

UNDERBERG,

NATAL.

*May 26.*

It is nearly a week since I wrote to you—I think that is a record. We have had a lovely few days. Master has been fishing for trout, I have been playing round with Aunt Gladys and your cousins, and the servants have been grumbling. At first Aba and Lawanson were interested ; Anthony, the ' small White Master ' with his very blue eyes and golden hair, was something absolutely new to them. Do you remember I told you how they stared at the little girl in the Belgian Congo ? Here in Natal, they saw an English *boy* for the first time, and it was most amusing to watch their efforts to attract Anthony's attention and make him speak

to them. The novelty has worn off and Lawanson has done nothing but sit over a fire all day long, still wearing his sand-shoes and black overcoat ; poor boys, I think they will be thankful to get back to West Africa and be warm again !

These two English children in Natal seem to have a wonderful time, but quite different to what the average English child is used to. They do not play games like you do, netball, cricket, lacrosse or tennis, but, they RIDE (bareback, all over the countryside), SWIM and FISH in the mountain pools and streams, WEAR no shoes and stockings, EAT tangerines instead of biscuits for elevenses, LIVE in a bungalow in the midst of glorious hills, HELP with the shearing of hundreds of sheep, and PLAY with and care for the baby lambs, who usually choose to appear in the same month as the snow.

Natal goes from one extreme to the other, real summer heat is followed by real winter snow, and I heard stories of newly born lambs being wrapped in sacks in front of the sitting-room fire, and of much bleating and baa-ing in the middle of the night, which rouses the Master of the house who at once gets up to feed them with milk from a feeding-bottle. This all sounds rather thrilling, doesn't it? But, I also heard of no companions of their own age, and schools too far away, of a shortage of books, and of terrific thunderstorms. In London the average number of bad thunderstorms in a year is about five or six, Natal averages ninety-seven !

Yesterday morning, we all started out very early in Uncle Harry's car to go to Durban, he told us we could not possibly go back to England without

seeing this place, the favourite beauty spot of South Africa. I did not dare to tell the boys where we were going, 'Derba' has taken the place of Mecca in Aba's heart, and he certainly would not have believed me if I had told him that this magical sounding place would *not* wish to provide him with a set of false teeth on a Saturday afternoon.

It was a lovely drive. There is so much variety in this Colony. You will not want endless descriptions of scenery, but one part describes itself: THE VALLEY OF A THOUSAND HILLS. I wish I had thought of that name myself, and I wished I could see it from an aeroplane.

The last city I tried to tell you about was Johannesburg. Durban is very different; one seemed to be a place to make money, the other a place for a seaside holiday.

Everything looks as if it had been built to give that idea; this really is rather clever considering that Durban is a busy port, and is quickly becoming one of the manufacturing centres of South Africa. (Sheep, cattle, sugar-cane, maize and coal are the chief interests of Natal.)

I must give you just a short list of some of the sights:

The fine harbour, which has made Durban the most important port on the East Coast of Africa.

Years ago it was the reverse side of the picture which settled the early history of this part of the world. The coast was so dangerous and accidents were so frequent that in 1685 the Dutch BOUGHT the Bay of Natal from the

natives, to give their shipwrecked sailors a landing-ground !

Ocean Beach which faces the full roll of the Indian Ocean, and which, a few years ago, was just a stretch of sandhills. Now, there are enclosed bathing-places, tennis-lawns, lakes, fountains, bandstands, hotels and everything the most particular holiday-maker could demand.

The Berea, a suburb of Durban, with lovely gardens of gorgeous colourings ; pink poinsettias, cherry bougainvillea, mimosa, azaleas and roses ; hot-house flowers as common as cabbages ; and oranges, pineapples, mangoes and tangerines as common as tomatoes.

A statue, telling another piece of Natal history of nearly one hundred years ago, during one of the numerous wars between the Dutch and English. It has been put up in memory of a man called Dick King who, I feel, must have been an ancestor of our Stout Effort. The British needed reinforcements, and this man set out on horseback to take the message, riding *600 miles in nine days*, with no roads, no bridges, and through country infested by every known wild animal ! (You may be glad to hear that help from the Cape arrived in time.)

The Zulus, with their gorgeous head-dresses, ready to be hired as rickshaw pullers ; the tinkle of their bells seems such an absurd accompaniment to the clang of trams and the honk of passing cars. I was interested to

notice that two people under ten equal one grown-up—Sarah is only three months old, wouldn't the rickshaw boys have been angry if they were asked to drive her for half-price

You can imagine that we found plenty to interest us. At the far end of the town, there is even a Whaling Station, but we had not enough time to do everything, and what do you think Elizabeth and Anthony and I chose? *We paddled.*

*Letter 67.*

BUTTERWORTH,  
TRANSKEI TERRITORY,  
CAPE PROVINCE.

*May 29.*

My last letter was dated three days ago—it looks as if I am growing lazy, and that it is very near the end of our journey. We are in the most Southern African Colony, and there are only two more mail-boats before we sail on June 14th, three months almost to the day since we left Nigeria.

Soon after we left Underberg, we were over the borders of Natal and into East Griqualand. When I am making a list of the countries we have visited, I am afraid I cannot count this separately, because with another strip called Pondoland, it forms part of the Cape Province, a group of small countries called the Transkei. There are no really important rivers in South Africa, and yet there are two parts of the Union we have been through lately with no more original names than that they are across a river, Trans-Vaal and Trans-Kei.

The Transkei is one of the Native Territories, and there are others in the south linked up to the Union and all adding to the difficulties of being 'United.' There is Bechuanaland, away to the west of the Transvaal (three times the size of the British Isles), Basutoland (an island in the Drakensberg), Zululand (a part of Natal), with Swaziland beyond. You may perhaps wonder what language these people speak, and there is a large answer to that small question: I hear that there are at least 200 Bantu languages alone.

I do not think I have explained that word Bantui before—it is another of those general race-names, meaning just the PEOPLE. They were a mixed race from the north who gradually worked their way south and drove out the Bushmen, Zulus, Basutos and Matabeles being three branches of Bantus. Hottentot language is different, and it sounds rather entertaining, it is mostly CLICKS!

We saw many native villages or kraals, some built on the hill-sides and some near to the road. The huts look like bee-hives, and each kraal appears to have its own thorn-enclosed place for cattle, and its own patch of mealies—the village larder for a year. The local Pagan dresses in a brightly coloured blanket and smears his body with oil and red clay—hence their familiar name of REDS. These natives do not pay much attention to all the change and civilisation that surrounds them; they are rather like children who never grow up; they still believe in witchcraft and are afraid of spirits, and never go away from their kraal after dark.

The Transkei country is what a Guide Book I suppose would call 'fertile' and good for pasture.

The wool from Transkei sheep fetches a good price, and, years ago, there were more cattle here than anywhere else in the Union. Someone described it as looking like 'A piece of crumpled green velvet.'

Trees are a very pleasant change after the mountains and the open veld we have seen so much of lately ; there are real timber forests here in the Transkei, but as it is a native territory, I suppose the natives will not think it necessary to look after it and replant trees. The African needs wood for burning and building, but he never seems to think of the time when the supply will be finished and how it will affect the rainfall. He never plans for the future, but thinks only of TO-DAY.

Our to-days have been rather full of woe—The ROAD, the WEATHER and the CAR.

I hear that some of the road through the Transkei was built by soldiers to give them something to do to work off too much energy ; it certainly took all of ours ! The surface was bad, it was hilly, and—a VERY HIGH DUSTY WIND blew hard, until in the end we pulled down all the blinds to give us some protection. It was like driving through a fog ; Master's teeth were chattering with fury, and mine with cold.

We always seem to arrive in a new Colony at the wrong time of year—Kenya in a drought, Tanganyika in the rains and Cape Province in winter.

Sarah has not been enjoying herself, either. This morning, while we were preparing for the day by having a good breakfast, the lorry was being filled up in the garage. When Master tried to start her up she 'No agree for go,' and after a long delay to try and find out the reason for her sulks,

we found she had been given KEROSENE instead of PETROL. Later on in the day the silencer broke, so, as well as the wind and the dust, we had the intense irritation of having to listen to a continual deafening protest from the Stout Effort ! In fact, not at all a happy day.

*Letter 68.*

BUTTERWORTH,  
TRANSKEI.

*Friday, June 14.*

I feel that this should be Friday the 13th, it certainly is not a lucky day for us.

We ought to be at sea, leaving Cape Town on the *Balmoral Castle*, our Motor Journey ended, and with only 6000 miles of ocean between us and you.

But, our passages are cancelled and the boat is sailing without us ; our journey is unfinished and there is still 800 miles between us and the Cape.

Do you remember how people prophesied that weather would stop us, the heavily loaded lorry would not travel across Africa, or that I would not last out ?

I do not think anyone thought of suggesting that Master would be the delicate one, and that almost within sight of the Cape he would be forced to give in. He has been ill for more than a fortnight. I left it as long as I could to cable to you that our date of sailing was postponed ; but as the days went on we saw that it would be impossible to get to Cape Town in time, even if Master had gone by train and I had driven the lorry on by myself. From what I hear I expect I should have

driven Sarah not *on* but *over*. There has been a lot of rain and motorists have been using chains on the wheels. Master pretended they made too much noise and said they ought to put straw down in front of the hotel !

In the garden here there is much noise of another kind. A big wire house has been built for birds and in the sunshine EIGHT canaries sing lustily, all at once and in different keys, all of them shrill. There is also a bright green parrot, who was rescued from a shipwreck off the coast near by ; he calls out rude remarks when I go near him and it is comforting to remember that parrots are not really intelligent !

Only two things of interest have happened since we have been here.

The Derby. We heard the result within a few minutes of the finish of the race, 6000 miles away. Of course the favourite did not win ! When I murmured something about his not having tried, a man asked me if it really said that in the paper !

South Africa's Union Day. The reason I knew about this date was that all the shops were shut, and I was interested to see the new National Flag which has taken the place of the Union Jack. The colours of the new one are orange, white and blue in horizontal stripes, with three small flags in the middle :—  
The Orange Free State Flag, the Union Jack and the old Transvaal one.

We have had one real piece of luck in the midst of this fortnight of gloom : a very cheery English Doctor.

I do not even like to think what would have happened if this had happened in the bush, miles away from anywhere.

Illness would *not* have been easy to deal with in a temperature of a red-hot oven, for instance, or in the midst of mud and thunderstorms, or in a lonely camp by the side of the Great North Road. I think the problem would have been so difficult I should have welcomed a LION !

The boys have had nothing at all to do so they have filled in time between the local cinema and the Doctor's surgery. (It does seem rather hard on Aba that when we are in a place for longer than two days, there is no dentist within miles. So as he cannot have teeth put in, he is having his remaining ones taken out ; Lawanson was jealous so he demanded electrical treatment for rheumatism !) I do not know which entertainment they liked the best, but I am sure there will be only two things about this journey they will describe when at last they reach West Africa : Their Doctor's bills and a Movie Picture of a Prize-fight.

*Letter 69.*

PORT ELIZABETH,  
CAPE PROVINCE,

*June 17.*

Two mornings ago we took the road again, and to-morrow our motoring total will reach 7000 miles.

Yesterday was a strenuous one for an ex-invalid ; we did 150 miles, and crawled into Grahamstown at 10 p.m. with a broken front spring tied up with

string. It was not Saturday, Sarah's usual trouble-day, but I think she was annoyed at Master having had all the attention for so long. Happily for us, she decided to attract attention when there was some chance of finding a garage. We should have been rather surprised if this place had not been civilised enough to produce a new front spring, for Grahams-town possesses TWO CATHEDRALS, and is one of the historic places in South Africa—the first English settlers in Cape Province made their headquarters here.

We are really in Cape Province now, and, although the trouble with the car rather spoilt things at first, we are very keen about this piece of country. There is only one blot on the landscape for me, the red-hot poker and scarlet aloe.

The colour that I most dislike is SCARLET, so I feel rather aggrieved that Master calls these hundreds of flaming bushes which pop up all over the countryside, 'Faith's Favourites.' He has suggested writing to Kew to ask them to call one of these flowers after me instead of the one I told you about, but as he cannot get any further than *fidei* for the Latin name, I think I am fairly safe! It seems to have taken the place of the baby animal joke for the moment; when we came across a particularly scarlet patch to-day, he stopped the car and said that if I liked to take a really good photograph, he would *colour it for me!*

In Nigeria, I used to notice so many red and orange flowers and so very few blues. I do wonder if the reason is that there are so few butterflies, who seem to prefer to visit blue flowers, and so many tiny birds who get most of their food from honey and

are perhaps attracted by the blatant reds and orange? I did not expect to see so much of those colours here in the South; we are certainly seeing the Union as Cecil Rhodes dreamed—RED!

We are at Port Elizabeth this evening, the port to which the Grahamstown settlers came in 1820; they rowed as near in to land as they could and then waded ashore with all their possessions and 'Started to explore the wilds of Savage Africa.' That sounds somewhat different to the way we reached Port Elizabeth, doesn't it?

I have just thought of a very bad pun which reminds me of some history. I think you will agree that Sarah is a 'goer'? The sea here is called *Algoa Bay*, and further up beyond Durban there is another Bay called *Delagoa*. Three hundred years ago, the Portuguese were the only people using the Cape Route to the East, and the voyages taken from the Tagus to GOA (the small Portuguese Colony in South-West India) were the longest taken for trading purposes. This, therefore, was the first great ocean route of modern history, and these two places on the South African Coast were the last ports of call on the outward and homeward voyages: Al Goa=*to* Goa, Dela Goa=*from* Goa.

This afternoon our 'goer' had all the attention she has been pining for lately. The Ford Works for South Africa are here, so we stopped and held a sort of reception. At Johannesburg we managed to buy a really good map of the continent, and Master has marked our route on it in Indian ink—it certainly does look rather fine. These motor people, of course, were very glad to think that their ton-and-a-half lorry had done all this mileage in Africa,

for even if you *may* think that your new model is 'Better past all,' it must be rather pleasing to have a proof that the Ford Conquers Again.

*Letter 70.*

CALEDON,

CAPE PROVINCE.

*June 20.*

Fourteen weeks since we left Mongu, and tomorrow we reach Cape Town.

I feel that the obvious next line should be :

'Yo-ho and a bottle of rum.'

This letter and one more to say we have arrived at the Cape, will probably be the last I shall write on this journey. We have come nearly 500 miles since I last wrote to you three days ago from Port Elizabeth, and I think I shall have to make a list of all the variety we have seen. If I described everything in detail, I should never finish writing and you certainly would not trouble to finish reading. In case you are tracing our route, these are the places we have seen since Port Elizabeth : Humansdorp, Plettenberg, Knysna, George and Mossel Bay.

Although there are no travel thrills, I think you will agree that this country is worth describing, a country which can show the motorist during one day :—

Range after range of dark blue Mountains, Forests, Waterfalls, Rivers, Meadows, Orchards and Farms, and—a Sea so deep and vivid in colour

that it looked as if it must leave its mark of blue on the long stretches of white sand.

So near at hand, just the other side of the mountains, is the Great Karroo Desert. In the dry season, the Karroo is one of the most desolate-looking spots to be imagined, and yet it is one of the few really good wool-growing districts in the world. There is a greenish grey plant called the Karroo Bush which grows here and gives its name to the Desert, and even in the driest season provides nourishment for *millions* of sheep and goats. A drought sometimes is not broken for ten months ; then the rains come, and within a week the valleys and plains of the desert bloom with mimosa, pomegranates and lovely waxy heaths. Probably two or three hundred years ago this desert looked like a flower garden, and fed vast herds of game.

We are travelling on the Garden Route to the Cape, and it certainly is neither a desert nor a plain. Master says it ought to be called the *Rock Garden*, for chasms and terrific hills have been the order of the day. Sarah always seems to be in low gear, either crawling down or climbing up again, so neither she nor the driver are able to appreciate the gloriousness of the scenery and flowers (except the aloes, which Master always has time to notice !)

Arum lilies are just coming into flower in the shady coolnesses at the foot of the hills ; there are maidenhair and other lovely ferns, and I have seen Protea for the first time—the tall bushes with the pink and white flowers like a Jerusalem artichoke, which is so much a feature of the Colony that they even appear on the coins. We have seen bracken, and literally acres of heather, or rather *heaths*, of

every colour and variety of pinks, reds and yellows. I believe there are NINETY different kinds in the Province. South Africa is a land of flowers, and those of the Cape Province are quite different from those of any other part of Africa. In one district, smaller than our Isle of Wight, there are 200 more kinds of wild-flowers than in the whole of England.

At this place Caledon, where we are staying to-night, every September there is held a Carnival and Exhibition simply of wild-flowers, and visitors come from all parts of South Africa for it. We have found that they are not only for show ; two afternoons ago we were offered at tea-time, bread-and-butter and HEATHER HONEY. I think that must have been the original 'nectar of the gods.'

Between Knysna and George, there was a magnificent stretch of scenery, forest, mountains and sea-coast, and we passed no less than four lakes and ten rivers (happily there were bridges). The South African bridges seem to us very superior affairs, and, over one river where there is already one railway-cum-road bridge, they are actually building another—we wished they would spend some of the money on *roads*. Roads as usual supply the cause for grumbles. At one place, where we were warned that we might come across 'a few wet patches'—within twenty miles we grappled with ruts, slime, slush, chasms and river beds, which rather reminded us of Tanganyika at its best (or worst).

We have had an added horror to-day, LEVEL-CROSSINGS. We had been warned of these and advised to buy a stock of sugar-sticks to give to the small black children who dash out to open the

dozens of gates. These gates are very necessary to help the motorists to remember the railway. You suddenly come down a hill and round a corner, and then suddenly there is a gate and a signpost with the comic warning in South African Dutch,

KYK ROND VOOR DE TREIN.

Last night we stayed at Mossel Bay, a place which boasts the first Christian place of worship built in South Africa (1500). The name Mossel was given to it because of the number of mussels found all round the coast. Quite close is Seal Island, where, for the price of 1s., you can go and watch numbers of sea-lions playing about. I think that would have been better value for money than our 3s. for *not* seeing the crocodile in Uganda!

The sea-lions must be enjoying the temperature—out of the sun it is really very cold. We have now, of course, left the Tropics far behind (23° north and south of the Equator are the boundaries, in case you do not happen to know), and therefore the sun at midday is no longer absolutely over our heads and in the top of the sky; the seasons change more, and the light is absolutely different. Do you remember I have told you how the time of sunset in Nigeria scarcely varies from about 7 o'clock all the year round? We are seeing South Africa in winter, and, like in England, it is dark at 4.30. I think that, more than anything else, is making me realise that we have come to the end of our journey and that in one week's time we shall have left Africa behind and be on our way to Home and Hilary.

*Letter 71.*

SEA POINT,

CAPE TOWN.

*June 25.*

I have seen the Cape, which Sir Francis Drake called, 'The fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth.' I have seen Table Mountain, the sentinel, and the white clouds which drape the Mountain like a cloth. I have seen 'The shining blue rim' of Table Bay.

I cannot keep on saying 'wonderful' and 'glorious,' but only the best adjectives will do. In other places like Rhodesia, I have loved the space and freedom—here in Cape Peninsular the great attraction is COLOUR. Even if you are not likely to get this letter before I see you, I want to write down what I have seen so that I shall not forget to tell you.

Anyone who loves colour must come to South Africa. Some of the mountains are snow-capped, and they change from the deep blues and purples of morning to the rose-red of sunset; the sea changes from sapphires and emeralds to pale blue and jade, and the reefs of mauve rocks are like giant opals. I have only been here three days, but I have seen the sea, this 'Most beautiful sea in the world,' turn to deep green, almost black, in the storms that sweep this Coast and gave to the Cape its first name of 'Cape of the Devil.'

There are the attractive old Dutch Houses, long and low with brownish, red-tiled roofs, white walls and massive teak doors.

There are the Gardens, as near perfection (even

in winter) as any gardens could be, not with the vividness of the Tropics, but with the lovely blending of colours which makes a GARDEN.

There is Adderley Street, where, years ago, English, French and Dutch settlers and ladies in gay frills and flounces gathered to bargain for slaves. It is now the most important centre of Cape Town, lined from end to end with flower-sellers with their baskets of blooms in all possible shades of colours.

There are the Orchards where peaches, apricots, melons, plums, figs, almonds, walnuts, and pears are grown by the trainload, and the Vineyards where grow the grapes for the Cape wines.

I have also seen the finest sea-road drive in the world. If you look at the map you will see that between Cape Town and the actual Cape of Good Hope there is a small peninsular; round this a road has been built about one hundred miles long, half of it following the actual coast line. There is a different view every few yards of mountains, forests of pine and oak, valleys and wild flowers, sunny bays and surf-bathing (even in winter), white sands and really blue seas. Even the sea is different, for at the Cape, nine hundred feet below the headland, I am told that THREE OCEANS MEET.

From all this, you will gather that I rather like the Cape! It is such luck to come such a long journey through Africa, and then find the most beauty at the end. Because I like it so much, I was interested to hear what this part of the world used to be called :

Just a place where the sailors might stop and rest and refresh themselves—just a useful place to grow vegetables for the vessels going on to the East.

But, I must not start talking history now ; I want to tell you about *us*.

When we arrived at our hotel in Cape Town four days ago, we were told, ' We have heard all about you.' When people do a long journey in Africa, they usually *start* from the south and I do not think anyone has just ARRIVED from the west via the east before, so we provided quite a good piece of news for the two daily papers. It is all great fun and, of course, the boys were very impressed to see their photographs in print ! I only hope that someone who can read has not told Aba all that has been written about the journey. It mentions THE COOK'S GOLD TEETH. I was so afraid he would start his shopping campaign again, and there was no time for any tooth-mongering before they were due to leave to-day. ' Before they leave,' sounds quite easy, doesn't it ? But, the most difficult part of all the settling up has been trying to find a way home for the servants. I think I told you that we left the problem to be solved in Johannesburg, and that there is no boat which goes direct from South Africa to Nigeria. At first no one could find the answer, and we began to wonder if we should have to take the boys with us as far as the Canary Islands, and then ship them back from there.

No English shipping company could help us in this knotty problem ; but we finally got help from a German one. This is to be the boys' programme :



THE END OF THE JOURNEY



Boat to Walfish Bay in South West Africa.

Wait there for about ten days.

Boat to Monrovia (Liberia, between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast).

Wait there. (Date entirely wrapped in mystery.)

Boat to Lagos.

Train back to the Plateau.

This is what we have had to do :

Persuade the South African Officials to let them out of the Union. (You remember what trouble we had to get them in ?)

Book their passages.

Telegraph for permission to land them at Walfish Bay ; someone to look after them until the West African Boat appears ; someone to pass on messages to Liberia so that they shall be looked after there, and the same thing at Lagos.

I am afraid we cannot stop them being seasick, but we have tried to do everything else. They left this morning, and their cup of joy was nearly full when we hired a brown-black porter to carry their luggage on to the boat ! You notice I say ' *nearly full* ' of joy—they want to get back home terribly badly, they are tired of being cold, but I think they wished we were all going together and I am quite sure the Cook wished he had something to show for the journey and that he had either been to Mecca *or* could flourish a gigantic set of false teeth. He takes back, as a souvenir, the newspaper with his photograph in, and a bag of golden sovereigns.

Don't you wonder what stories they will tell ?

In all our hunting for sea-routes, we have seen quite a lot of the land. I think I had better make another list of interesting things round Cape Town.

Coloured traffic signals in the main streets.

Whenever the signal tells you to go it says GO-RY. Master and I agreed it *would* probably be gory if we disobeyed the signal and 'go-ed' if it said STOP, but it was rather a puzzle until we realised that this is a two-language country, and RY is the South African Dutch for go. All notices and general news are printed side by side in what they call Afrikaans and English.

Cecil Rhodes' house and garden, built on the slopes of Table Mountain. He used to tell people that if they climbed the mountain they would never have a greater pleasure and he loved the sight so much that a specially large window was built in his home, so that it might seem he was always on one of the paths of the steep hill-side.

The University founded by Rhodes on his estate.  
The aerial railway up Table Mountain.

A museum containing South African tools belonging to the Stone Age.

Constantia, the home of the most famous Cape wines.

We saw the farm with more than 100,000 vines, and I learned that to keep the right amount of sugar in the grape for a sweet wine, the vines have to be short, so that they may ripen quickly with the heat off the ground. Some are grown along wire, but as close to the ground as possible.

We saw the vats where the grape juice is put before it is bottled, so large that someone described them as a ' Fairy-tale ogre's bath.'

One thing I do not want to tell you, so I have left it until the last. You may have guessed. I have not mentioned one very important member of our party.

We started out as FIVE, and now we are only TWO.

The servants went to-day, and we go in three days' time.

WHERE IS SARAH? You see, much as we admire her, we should not quite know what to do with her if we brought her to England with us, and I think even a Union Castle Liner might think it rather unreasonable if we included a ton-and-a-half lorry amongst our luggage.

Emptied and alone in her glory, in a show-room window in Cape Town, THE STOUT EFFORT IS LABELLED ' FOR SALE.'

*Letter 72.*

CAPE TOWN,

*June 27.*

It seems absurd to be writing another letter which will come to England by the same boat as we do, but if I do not put down some of the things I have been thinking about and reading, I am sure I shall forget to tell you.

Now that I have finished the journey and seen so much of Africa, I realise how little I knew when I started.

Africa was one of the first-known of the

Continents—Egypt has been known through all the centuries as the ‘cradle of civilisation,’ and yet Africa is still one of the least well-known.

Until the middle of last century, it was not thought of as a *Continent* at all, but as just a collection of *Coast Lines*.

Egypt had much more to do with ASIA than AFRICA.

The West Coast had much more to do with AMERICA than AFRICA.

The East Coast had much more to do with the ARABS and Asia than AFRICA.

The south was absolutely different to the rest, just a stopping-place on the way to India.

Europeans did not take any interest in Africa as a whole, until Livingstone showed them the way and the ‘Scramble’ began. I think these were the chief reasons :—

Because it is so difficult to reach.

Because there are so many barriers between the coast and the centre.

Because all its big rivers are so useless for boats.

Because it is the most tropical of the continents.

But now white men *have* found the way in, they find it is the RICHEST and VERY MUCH WORTH WHILE.

I do not know any of the real history of Africa, except that the bushmen were probably the first inhabitants. Most people’s interest begins with the arrival of the white men. I expect you know those dates, they are amongst the most important in history, because after the finding of the Cape, sea-travel, long voyages, and trade all over the world

began. New Worlds were found, *not* because the adventurers set out to find *new countries*, but because they tried to reach *old countries* by *new routes*.

All eyes were on India, and Portugal tried for seventy years to find a sea-route.

In 1487 Dias nearly succeeded—but found the Cape.

In 1492 Columbus set out for India—but found America.

In 1495 (400 years before the cutting of the Suez Canal) Vasco da Gama reached India and, on his way—he found Natal.

So it looks as if Portuguese sailors were the first to sail round the Cape, doesn't it? But—it was done 2000 YEARS BEFORE THAT !

The story is that the Phœnicians, the best boat-builders of the olden times, were sent down the Red Sea by a King of Egypt, and, after two years, returned home through the Straits of Gibraltar, having sailed all round the Continent.

After Portugal came the Dutch, and then the English, to South Africa, to compete for the Indian trade, and all of them looked on it as a place with rocky headlands which greatly added to the dangers of their voyages to the East. They little knew that here was a land richer in gold and diamonds than any of the distant countries to which they travelled so eagerly !

The Dutch were the first real settlers here and the rest of the story for the next two hundred and fifty years is a long rivalry between Holland and Britain, with much strife, jealousy and unpleasantness. But now, we hope, there is PEACE and UNION.

I have been trying to find out how long the old explorers used to take in travelling the six thousand miles from Europe to Table Bay : the answer is *six months* ! We hope to do it in *seventeen days*.

During this motor journey of ours we have travelled in ELEVEN COUNTRIES IN AS MANY WEEKS ; countries that used to mean nothing more to me than red, mauve and brown splashes of colour on the African map are now FRIENDS WHOM ONE DAY I HOPE TO MEET AGAIN.

Just to remind you, I could label them like this :

NIGERIA.	Three times the size of the British Isles.
FRENCH EQUATORIA.	The driest and most lonely of the countries.
BELGIAN CONGO.	The most tropical and with the best ROADS.
UGANDA.	Like a garden.
KENYA.	Showed us the most animals.
TANGANYIKA.	Perhaps the most varied, but gave us the worst weather.
NORTHERN RHODESIA.	The most unspoilt and attractive.
SOUTHERN RHODESIA.	Showed us the Victoria Falls.
TRANSVAAL.	Contained the richest city.
NATAL.	The most British Colony in the Union.
CAPE PROVINCE.	The most beautiful.

All these weeks in my letters I have been trying to give you an idea of Africa and of what I have seen. Yesterday was wet, and I amused myself in the afternoon by making an alphabetical list. (I started doing it in rhyme, but I was afraid you would be sarcastic about my efforts, so I will not waste them on you!) I think one could go on making lists without end, but even one gives you some idea of the infinite Variety and Contrast this wonderful country shows to its travellers.

- A AFRICA, the Dark Continent, with its modern Air-routes and its Animal Life.
- B Bushmen drawings (relics of thousands of years ago)—Blue Seas—the Baby Lion—the Birds—the 'BACS.'
- C Cape Town, historical city of the South—the CONGO, river of many names—the Mission CHURCH at Bouta—Coffee farms, cotton fields, corn, and other crops—Camels, cinemas, canoes and crocodiles—Camps by the roadside—and, the COLOURS.
- D Durban and its harbour—the Drakensberg—the Dutch houses—Donkeys, as transport across a river.
- E Elephant school in the Congo—the Equator where we shivered with cold.
- F Forests where live the pygmies and gorillas—the Flamingoes—and the FLOWERS.
- G The Great North Road (which made us say too much)—Giraffe (who are wiser and never say anything at all).
- H The Highest railway-bridge in the world—Huts roofed with banana leaves—the Hotels.
- I Impalla, champion athletes of the antelopes—the Insect life—the Indians.
- J The Jungles of the Belgian Congo—Johannesburg.
- K Kilimanjaro, the giant mountain which the cook called a STONE.
- L Locusts—Leopard—the Limpopo River—the LAKES : Lake Tanganyika, second deepest

- Lake in the world ; Lake Victoria Nyanza, nearly as large as Ireland.
- M The Millipedes with their 250 (not a thousand) legs—the Masai whose wealth is in cattle—the Mines, whose wealth is in gold.
- N A Nephew and Niece not seen for five years—the Nile, river of history—Nairobi, the mushroom town.
- O Okapi, freak of the forests—Ostrich, the bird who does not fly—the Orchards of the South—the Oceans and the meeting-place of three.
- P Pretoria, second capital of the Union—Pelicans—Parrots, who may live one hundred years—Petrol-pumps and Pagans.
- Q Queer fashions : the spit ear-lobes, wire necklaces, filed teeth, distorted heads and mouths, hair-dressing, scarred faces, hats.
- R The Rift Valley—the *Route Royale*—the Rest Houses—Rhodes' Railway.
- S The Snow-capped mountain on the Equator—the SAND—SPACE and SUNSHINE.
- T Table Mountain—the Tropics—Tom-Toms—Tsetse-fly—Tribes of every colour from red to black.
- U Ujiji Monument—the Union Flag.
- V The Veld—the Victoria Falls.
- W War memories — Wine-making — Wonderful sunsets.
- X The Extremes of heat and cold.
- Y For the Yesterdays we have enjoyed,
- Z For the ZEAL of the CAR we employed.

I must make one more list to remind you of that ZEAL.

Sarah has travelled along JUNGLE ROADS, and A BLAZED TRAIL, up PERPENDICULAR HILLS, over CRAZY BRIDGES, through CLOUDS OF LOCUSTS, DRY DESERT HEAT, THUNDERSTORMS, DRIFTS, SWAMPS, GRASS, BLACK MUD and SAND.

She has crossed Africa's largest RIVERS, by, on, or with anything ranging from very simple ferries, to a railway bridge 400 feet in the air, and an escort of donkeys.

A good record for a lorry in Africa, isn't it?  
7528 miles by road and  
1000 miles by boat and rail.

Even in this land of marvels, there has been room for one more, and we think that the Stout Effort has earned her name. This Continent is not kind to weaklings; Africa is worthy of the best and it is only the Fittest who survive.

To-morrow, we leave Africa behind, but, soon  
WE SHALL RETURN.









Morgan		G
AUTHOR		475
The stout effort		.M67
TITLE		
DATE		ISSUED TO

Morgan	G
	475
The stout effort	.M67

