

Foreign Stamps.

COLLECTORS please note that foreign stamps can be supplied, singly or in packets, on application to Rev. F. L. W. Sealy, Leigh Vicarage, near Tonbridge, Kent. The

proceeds go to the funds of the Mission.

Sailings.

REV. E. and MRS. KJÆER returned to their work at Shillem, Nigeria, last month, after furlough.

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Black Medicine.

GREAT excitement in Ka Ngwobo lately. A "Kaghla Kumbu" had been broken, and the medicine is at work. It worked swiftly for a woman and a young man,

my cassava and broke my Kaghla Kumbu?" The witch doctor cast a calculating eye over the present, adjusted the string of his "Boni" over his great



LEOPARD DANCE, BANBUR.

who died suddenly in convulsions. Six others, deathly sick, testify that it was powerful medicine.

One member of the family had stolen some cassava roots from a field guarded by the Kaghla Kumbu—a piece of broken calabash marked with red and black streaks and stuck on an upright stick in the middle of the field. The angry owner, discovering his loss, was loud in his threats of what the offended spirits of the Kaghla Kumbu would do to the thief. He went straight to the "Ba Sun Boni" (what we call the medicine man or witch doctor). He took an adequate gift and asked straight out, "Who stole

toe and set to work. Flop, flop, went the wart-hog bristle brush from side to side; the marks on the sand were read by the doctor in an unintelligible jargon, and he suddenly straightened up and answered the question with another. "Who bought your dogs?" "Ah," an understanding nod, "That fellow Badugu."

I do not know what further conversation he had with the Ba Sun Bori. I do not know what other presents he brought. But I do know that the next day the two dogs suddenly died, and Badugu, together with his family, not despising good dog-meat, ate them. His mother died that night, he died two

days later, and the other six are counting themselves lucky that the "Pugh-rum" did not kill them too.

For of course it was Pughrum, resulting from breaking the Kaghla Kumbu. It was as clear as day. Because of the offence to it the thief's dogs died and for the same reason his family were smitten. All of the people are sympathetic, but no one says a word of any connection between the suddenly dead dogs and the suddenly sick eaters of the dogs. Powerful medicine, a Kaghla Kumbu.

Last Sunday I was one of a group of mourners at the house of our good friend Ba Sali, on top of the Ba Ngai ridge. He had been sick and had gone to the Sarkin Fada for medicine. Two drinks and he had got a bad pain in his stomach. He started for home but could not climb the hill alone—two days later he died. Sitting there on a log in front of his house, you could have listened for two hours to a dozen old men in a sort of post mortem inquest. Not once did they mention the medicine as a probable cause of his death. The final conclusion was that it was because of a dream that he had; in his dream he had seen pots, many broken pots, but the dream said they were not enough. At a Wurkum man's death a half-dozen pots are broken and one placed over his grave. Here they were

in front of his door, smashed to bits. The dream had come true. Why blame the medicine?

But when I told this to the old Sarkin Dodo (the King of spirit worship) on a near-by ridge, he sniffed a loud sniff. "Dream nothing!" he said, "Wasn't there a Ba Mosok right there in that bunch of old men? And to-night after dark he will go and dig up the body and eat it."

Now a Ba Mosok is a sorcerer. I saw the remains of one from a neighbouring Pitiko village recently. In this case it was a woman. She had given a man some beer to drink and the man had died, and so she was judged a Ba Mosok. The medicine for a Ba Mosok, as every one knows, is fire. Her own people built a wall of stones—and they marked out a rough circle on the ground to show how it was done—then they put her inside, piled wood on top of her, and burned her alive. "Yes," they said; "She yelled a lot at first, but she soon quit. Ba Mosoks are bad, very bad!" And there in a calabash were the charred bones and blackened flesh.

What a world of need we are facing here. But any and all of these needs can be met by the personal acceptance of Him Who is the Light of the world, and by Him alone.

IRA E. MCBRIDE.

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## Nigerian Nights.

Being some Unexciting Adventures.

Number Three.

"FAIRLIE  $4\frac{3}{4}$ . Largs  $7\frac{1}{2}$ . Greenock  $21\frac{1}{2}$ ." So the sign-post said on an Ayrshire road, and I patted the dumb dissolver of doubts affectionately for his little accurate fractions.

One day in the Sudan we shall have such sign-posts everywhere; indeed they already exist in certain up-to-date parts of Nigeria. But I am not going to pat them, I am going to sniff at them as I pass, for they will be witnesses to the passing of the day when the determination of a distance needed not just the ability to read but

no mean skill in psychology. For it is hard to make an African give a distance accurately. His "far" and his "near" are variable measures dependent on what he thinks one's reason is for asking and what personal interest he may have in answering. The quest for information frequently leads to quite a tussle in which all present join, and one finishes more perplexed than when one started.

I had such a tussle at Batara. I had slept the night before at Basanidi, and Basanidi is a place of no importance

... In the latter case, we find Islam disintegrating. Where Islam and Christianity face each other the issue is always the same: spiritual conflict is inevitable, comity impossible.

Those who claim Mohammedanism as an ally in the civilisation of Africa, and anticipate harmonious co-operation between Islam and Christianity in the development of the native races, are

living in a land of dreams. The issue is clearly drawn. The result is certain. But the hardest part of the struggle for the full conquest of the African continent by the Gospel of life and liberty will be found in overthrowing Mohammedanism. The Christian Mission in Africa must face this fact and pay the price.

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## The Pioneer Missionary and the Unwritten Language.

*In this article Rev. C. W. Guinter describes some of the language difficulties in work amongst the Wurkum, at Bambur, Nigeria.*

THE first task of the pioneer missionary is to learn the spoken language of his people and to reduce it to writing. This is a most interesting task. It is beset with sufficient difficulties to call forth the best that anyone can give to it.

The native knows nothing about writing, when he counts, he names the numbers on his fingers and toes or he makes short marks on the ground. When asked to make a census of his people he takes a bundle of grass stems about nine inches long and for each person in a house he takes from that bundle and forms another. When he has completed his section he hands over the bundle to the elders who recount them for the total.

Many of our Wurkum people had never seen a book or any writing materials until we came to live among them. With a note book in hand and a pencil we sallied forth to gather our first vocabulary. The people soon gathered to see what we were doing. They said we were marking on a paper with a "gi nyonli gi" (thing marking thing), the only word they knew for a pencil. Then, pointing to different objects we listened as the native spoke their names, and we wrote down phonetically what we thought he said. We pointed to the sun and he replied, "missa." A tree he called "ngun." A stone was "tali." He began to count, 1 mogha, 2 bari, 3 tarum, 4 yini, 5 tununu, 6 tisa-mogha, 7 tisa-bari, 8 yinini, 9 musu-mogha-lum, 10

lum. By this time someone was bold enough to ask, "Mindi ni man?" We were puzzled. We did not know what it meant, but we wrote it down. After a bit another pointed to another object and used the same words. It then dawned on us that he was asking, "What is this?" And there was great rejoicing, for we had learned how to ask one very important question in the language, one that would open the doors into more of the secrets of this strange tongue.

When we returned to the house we asked one of the natives to go over the vocabulary with us. He repeated each word and we repeated it after him. We watched his mouth closely to see just how he said it and we sought to say it as he did. We then made an effort to commit the words learned each day. After a few days the ear began to recognise some of the new sounds. Short sentences were written and committed. Thus week after week we plodded on. Sometimes we felt that we never would be able to speak as the natives speak, but we kept on until the day arrived when we were able to give a short message in their own tongue. How they did appreciate it.

As soon as possible we began to prepare a literature in the colloquial. At first very simple lessons were arranged and the result was "Kuni Kulu I" (Wurkum First Reader). Following this a collection of stories from native life, nature stories, some Scripture selections, etc., gathered and

arranged by Rev. I. and Mrs. McBride, gave us our Second Reader. A book of Bible stories dealing with many of the Old Testament characters, short sketches of the principal events in the life of our Lord, short chapters on some of the leading New Testament characters, some Psalms, prayers, hymns, etc., is our third book.

The next task was the translation of the Gospel according to St. Luke. Here we encountered many new difficulties. In these unregenerate languages there are no terms for many of the ideas that are most familiar to us. We have found no words to express "forgiveness," "love," "peace," "pure," "holy," "righteous," "virgin," "justified," "sanctified," and "mercy." Think of trying to give the people the Gospel without these terms! We had to do what the early church did. We had to take some term with a meaning approaching the one desired and trust that use and association would raise its value. For the word "Lord" we have used "Bwamimuri," (The one over all.) For "Jesus Christ," "Yesu Kristu," we made this draft translation during the latter part of last year. We have gone over it and revised it this rainy season. We hope to have it printed next year.

We are grateful for what has been done, but all about us are still peoples



WITCH DOCTOR AT BAMBUR, NIGERIA.

whose language we do not know. There is a task awaiting someone to come to them and give them the Gospel in their own tongue.

C. W. GUNTER.

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He came to my desk with a quivering lip—

The lesson was done—

"Dear teacher, I want a new leaf," he said.

"I have spoiled this one."

In place of the leaf so stained and blotted

I gave him a new one all unspotted.

And into his sad eyes smiled—

"Do better now, my child."

I went to the Throne with a quivering soul

The old year was done—

"Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me.

I have spoiled this one!"

He took the old leaf, stained and blotted.

And gave me a new leaf all unspotted.

And into my sad heart smiled—

"Do better now, my child."

## The News-Letter of the S.U.M.

that seventeen new missionaries were sent out by the S.U.M. last year, and work was begun in four new tribes, previously without the Gospel. The work is steadily growing, and, with God's blessing, we trust that this year will see still further expansion.

We are sure that many of our readers will join us in this note of thanksgiving to God and in earnest prayer that 1927 may be a year of great blessing in the salvation of many souls and the building up in Christ of those who are won for Him.

### The Wurkum Zolla.

FROM Bambur Station Report, Nigeria:—

On the 5th we returned from Kirim. It was the Wurkum "Zolla" the feast of the first fruits. Following the evening of silence were three days of drinking and dancing. On the 21st Madoko enrolled as an enquirer.

The last week-end was spent in house-to-house evangelism on the Bambur Hill.

The ground nut harvest has been in full swing for a good part of the month. Two Sundays there were no children for the Sunday School. It has cut into the attendance at the day school and all the regular services. On the other hand, it has been a month of encouragement. We have seen two more young men here making a real effort, and two more young men from Kirim are earnestly enquiring the way to be saved.

### The Ganawari.

MR. SUFFILL writes from Forum, Nigeria:—

Toma, the native evangelist, and I visited the Ganawari and had a very happy time. The chief is still very friendly and is delighted to hear that someone is coming to teach them soon. Toma is looking forward to going there in January.

There is a distinct improvement in the work at Du, for which we praise God.

Several young women seem to be interested and are coming along for instruction.

### Itineration around Gandole.

FROM monthly report at Gandole, Nigeria:—

Last month we were itinerating amongst the villages nearest to Station in north-east, north and west. The footpaths are mere tracks through dense grass. The villages are small and far between. We had with us several of the school boys, whose homes are in the villages visited. These boys attracted the young folk who were around our quarters more or less all the time during our stay. We were well received and got a good hearing at all the villages. A late rain saved the crop and the harvest has begun. Food is now plentiful.

### The Work at Kona.

MR. OLSEN writes from Kona, Nigeria:—

Ntai, who we are thankful to say is again doing well, although not as well as we should like, was able to visit the chief of the Black Mountain during the month. He had a very fine reception, and the chief certainly believes in prayer. He also took the courage to stand up before his people, telling them that their ways were the ways of darkness and they ought to thank God for having sent "teachers" to them. Pray that the way may soon open that we can go down ourselves for a few days. The distance is not far, but the road is bad and there are two heavy rivers to cross. At this time of the year they are high and no canoes.

Several people have been to Sunday services from the villages, and one Sunday ten Mumuye village-heads who all understand Kona, came to the morning worship. As yet the way has not been opened to reach the tribe proper, the people are not quite settled, and they now and then indulge in a small war between the villages, and just now the political officer is away investigating the last "casus belli." The people, even from those fighting villages, are very friendly towards us when they come in here.

Three Sundays ago a strange Mohammedan heard the Word, and he was so impressed that instead of stopping one night he stayed two whole days seeking

did not recur and one was left lying in eerie silence.

That voice, broken with long crying, has seemed to me ever since the voice of Africa—Africa in its sorrow, Africa in its fear, Africa in its ignorance, yet Africa pleading in pity for its sick,

longing for relief from its burden of witches.

It was but little I did for Bagara that night, but I have not forgotten, and I think God, too, heard that cry, and that Bagara will soon hear the Gospel.

H. G. F.

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## Times of Testing.

THE testing of converts on the Mission Field generally comes soon and severely. Two of our first converts have been passing through severe trial. Only a short time after they had broken with the pagan worship the largest Wurkum festival of the year was held at Bambur. The elders and young men went to the spirit houses in the morning and offered sacrifices to the departed spirits and to their chief deity, the "Basali." Janga and Madoko did not go. The elders were very angry with them and went to their house to take them by force. They escaped by a back way and spent the rest of the day in the "bush." When they returned they were cursed and reviled. They did not answer back, but entered their houses, quietly thanking God for deliverance from their enemies.

Just before we left the Field Janga's wife committed what, in the eyes of the people, was a great wrong, which could be atoned for only by two years

of sacrifices. To us it would seem a very small thing. In her effort to catch a child that was about to fall from another woman's back she accidentally struck the back of the woman with her hand. This is regarded as a very ill omen. As soon as it was reported, the elders came to Janga demanding that he offer sacrifice. He refused to do so. They held consultation and then threatened him if he refused to obey them. He still stood out against them, saying that he had left off all these things, to follow Jesus. After a while they came again asking him to give just a little seed to make oil for the sacrifice. He refused. He came to us saying that if he had given the little they asked he might just as well have done all they asked. He said further that if he had yielded, the light the Lord had given him would have become darkness. He had won his second victory. Pray for these converts.

C. W. G.

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## Carol Singing.

WE have often sung with deep heart response—

"Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King."

Could every group put this into action and offer their voices to Him to go Carol-Singing this coming Christmastime? If so, the help thus given would be very substantial. Now is the time to start practising. Any desiring to do this service for Him Who died for them, might apply to "Carol Secretary, S.U.M., Falcon Court, 32, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4," when a list of the best carols will be sent for selection.

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