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WANGA YOANE

WANGA YOANE

of the Village of Yuli

Written by Wanga
Translated by Herbert Smith
Illustrated by Rose Wright

THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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FOREWORD

WANGA YOANE IS A REAL PERSON. In the following pages he unfolds the way of African village life. He is one who lives in the village and looks out at the world. When I visited a native village, I was the one from outside looking in. Many things I did not see, many things I did not know. Wanga Yoane has helped me to see and understand much from the other view.

While Wanga Yoane is a real person, that is not his real name. He is Bongelemba Natanaele. This writing of his story was done for entry in a competition for essays on the customs and ways of the people speaking the Mongo and Lonkundo languages. The competition was held by the African Institute of London, an international society which gives itself to the study of things African. Three students of the Congo Christian Institute at Bolenge, Belgian Congo, entered the competition. Bongelemba Natanaele's story received honorable mention. He had written about himself in the third person and called himself Wanga Yoane. In this translation the first person has been used.

In his story is a description of a missionary conference held at Bolenge in the fall of 1921 where Wanga Yoane worked as chief waiter. It was there that I first met him. Then the years slipped by. In the early summer of 1928 we met again. Our family had recently moved from Lotumbe to Bolenge to begin work at the Congo Christian Institute. Our

second daughter, Mariah, had a birthday. Birthday presents are hard to find for a child in Central Africa, and as the day drew near we asked Mariah what she wanted for her birthday gift. To our surprise she replied, "A taxicab ride."

Lotumbe had been far away from taxicabs, but they were to be had at Coquilhatville, just ten kilometers from Bolelge. We ordered the taxicab and when it came who should be the driver but Wanga Yoane! He had changed a great deal and I hardly knew him. The pleasure of that birthday drive, which included the whole family, was due in large part to Wanga Yoane's courtesy and his interest in the Smith family's enjoyment.

Wanga Yoane was in the freshman class of the Congo Christian Institute when school opened on November 11, 1932. I soon appreciated him as an earnest student. He was somewhat older than most of the class and had had a much wider experience in many things, but he was there as a student and he did not push himself forward. His class work was well done and his interest was in the whole life of the school. On his graduation in 1935 he was asked to become a teacher in the Institute. He is still serving there.

I wish that Wanga Yoane had included in his story a chapter about his wife, Bombundo Louisa, and their home life. They had no children of their own, but they took several orphans into their home and cared for them as they would have cared for their very own. I know four or five such orphans for whom they were father and mother. They had an open house and constantly friends were coming to live with them. Bombundo Louisa was also a teacher in the Institute.

These two workers would allow their salaries to accumulate for several months. Then one day I would receive a letter from Wanga, written beautifully and couched in the most polite Lonkundo. The letter would read something like this:

To Is'otomba

Directeur of the C. C. I.

Greetings to you and to Nyang'otomba and Nseka. Are you quite well today? I and my wife are fairly so.

May I come this afternoon with my wife, Bombundo Louisa, to get our salaries? If it is suitable to you we would like to come at three o'clock. If that time is not convenient, would you suggest some other time when we could see you?

I think there is due me since the last payment these sums:

Salary for April	200.00 frs.
Salary for May	200.00 frs.
Salary for June	200.00 frs.

Several deductions are to be made: 15.00 frs. which were advanced to me on the 16th of June; 2.50 frs. which I owe for a book from the bookstore; and my tithe. It will be 60.00 frs. Will you please give my tithe for me?

Please give 20.00 frs. to the treasurer of the building fund for the new church at Wendji. Do not tell him who gave you this money.

Send 20.00 frs. to Yuli, the village where I was born. Send 10.00 frs. to the Mondombe church, and 10.00 frs. to the Wema church.

We will arrange about my wife's offerings when we come.

Many greetings,

WANGA YOANE

The story of Wanga Yoane is set against the background of animism, the religion of the great majority of the people

of Africa. It is a natural setting for stories of ghosts and for fears, and also for the longing for better things. To people who have lived in such an environment, the gospel is indeed "Good News." Such it was to Wanga Yoane.

I am very much indebted to Miss Genevieve Brown of the missionary education department of The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, for her interest in Wanga's story and her efforts in getting this book published. Miss Rose Wright, too, has made a much appreciated contribution through her skillful drawings and preparation of the book for printing. I would like to join with those who read these pages in thanking these friends for their splendid help.

HERBERT SMITH

Midway, Kentucky
December 27, 1947

My childhood was dark
with the taboos of my
people....



MY FATHER AND MOTHER were not Christians. They worshipped ghosts, evil spirits, and charms of every kind. The reason why they were not Christians was that during their whole lifetime no teacher of Jesus Christ ever came to live in their village. They did the best they could, however. They were kind to people, they showed hospitality to strangers who came to their village, and they helped their neighbors in every way they could.

My father had many wives. Many wives, however, did not bear many children. In fact, the only one of my father's wives who had children was my mother. Three were boys and two were girls. Two of these children died when they were young. Two boys and one girl are alive today. I am a boy and I was the second child born of my parents in this generation.

The date of my birth is not known. I have to guess the real date of my birthday, as do the vast majority of the people in the villages of the great Congo forest. The reason for this is that when I was born no one knew "books." Neither my father nor my mother knew anything about keeping records by writing them down in a book. Up to that time many of my people had never had a book in their hands. Because of this, the day and the month and the year of my birth were never recorded and will now never be known.

We feel very great sorrow because we lacked such knowledge. There was no one to teach us. There was no one who

could make a sure record. Because we had no books, none could read or write. No child of those days can have a birthday because no one knows when he was born. This is very sad.

My father and mother had good memories. They remembered time by the flood season, the dry season, and when certain stars had reached a particular place in the sky. One occasion was associated with another one. Perhaps some personal event took place at a time of great sickness, or when there were raids between the villages, or when the leopard came and wiped out the flock of goats, or the time when the elephants destroyed the whole of the manioc field or the banana and plantain patch.

All such events provided a kind of time record. No year was known among us as we know it today. One event which happened at the time of my birth is talked about until this day. That event was the very unusual dry season. My father and mother would say to me when they would talk about it: "Wanga, you were born during the time of that long dry season," or "You were born at the time the river had no water."

That unusual dry season began very early. That is, it was nearly a moon earlier than was the custom. The river began to drop very rapidly and the swamps went dry very soon, and so did the brooks and creeks. My father's wives killed many fish in the shallow creeks, but my mother could not fish because she was expecting her second baby soon. The Ikelemba River kept falling until they said it looked as if the river would go quite dry. There was no rain for weeks and weeks, although the sky was very cloudy the whole time.

The gardens dried up and they furnished no food at all. Fishing, however, remained good. My people called that long dry season *Ilongya* ("the winner" or "the exceptional"). From the stories still held fresh in the memories of the people and from records made by the white men, we think that very long dry season was in 1901. The time would be anywhere from late in May until the middle of September.

My mother had a brother who was a witch-doctor. A short time after my birth my mother sent to her brother, who was my uncle, asking him because of his knowledge in charms to come to our village and tie some medicine-charms around my waist. He did this, saying: "These medicine-charms will prevent all sickness from coming to this child." Then he went away. When fourteen days were passed I was circumcised and the name Wanga was put on me. The name Wanga belonged to one of the men of our family who had died. We shall remember him by this name although he died long ago. From that time I was known as Wanga. When I became a Christian several years later I myself chose the name of Yoane, and since I was baptized I have been called Wanga Yoane.

(*Translator's note:* Yoane is for John. When a native becomes a Christian he usually chooses a first given name. It may be European, but it is more likely to be a name from the Old or the New Testament. The native has no surname as we understand it. The custom of placing the given name after the original may have come about with the use of the registration book which is given by the State to each boy when he is about fifteen years old. In that book are found first the original name, then the given name. Other infor-

mation required includes name of original village, name of father and mother, name of tribe, and later on the name of his wife or wives and the names of his children, the tax he has paid each year, his medical examination, his permit to travel on steamers.)

At the time of my birth my mother stayed in her special compound, or secluded place. Perhaps it was a little hut attached to her main house. She was there for a month and a half as was our custom, and she kept me with her. When the time was up, she came out late one afternoon just as the day was beginning to cool and she carried me up and down the village, showing me to everybody.

The people of the village of Yuli were made very happy on that afternoon when my father and mother carried me up and down the village. They felt proud and rejoiced very much, and the people called one to another, "Come and see the newborn child, which is a boy." They laughed and this made my mother happy. They gathered many small presents and gave them to my parents because of the joy they felt at my birth. My parents were made very happy by the welcome given me.

After the march through the village and the gifts, my mother did not return to her special compound but went to her own house in the village. She and my father took very great care of me. (*Translator's note:* Each wife in a harem has her own house. It would never do to have all the wives living in the same house. The village would be a bedlam. The husband, too, has his own house. He is wise.)

Some time afterwards I was very ill. The medicine-charms were still tied about my waist and had never once been taken

off. My mother took me to the witch-doctor who had tied the charms on me and said to him something like this: "My brother (you remember he was her brother), you tied on this child these medicine-charms to prevent all kinds of sickness. The child is ill today and he is ill quite often. The charms do not work at all. Why is that so?"

The witch-doctor asked some questions. He wanted to know if my mother had other charms in the house or in the garden, or if the charms had been removed from my waist. When he was answered no, he said he thought there was another reason for my sickness.

"What is the reason?" my mother asked.

"Perhaps it is that his ancestor is angry," the witch-doctor said.

"You mean Wanga, who owns his name and is his ancestor?" asked my mother.

"Yes," said my uncle. "You slighted him, didn't you, the day you left your special compound and marched the baby up and down the village? You carried Wanga in your arms and let everybody admire him, and nothing was said about the original Wanga from whom the child took his name. And you presented no present to the spirit of the ancestor at all." My mother confessed she had not thought once about Wanga, my ancestor, during the afternoon parade.

Then the witch-doctor continued: "The spirit of Wanga is angry because you have neglected him. That is why the child is ill now and why he is ill all the time. The charms I tied on his waist are against ordinary illness, but he is ill now because of other reasons."

"What am I to do?" cried my mother. "What can we do

on behalf of the spirit of Wanga, the ancestor of my baby? How are we to satisfy his anger?"

The witch-doctor said: "Go home and catch a male chicken. Kill the chicken on behalf of the spirit of the one who owns the name of Wanga. Then maybe he will stop the sickness that the child Wanga has every day."

My mother took me home. She caught a male chicken, made a little ceremony, and killed it on behalf of the spirit of my ancestor. The witch-doctor did something else. He came to our house and tied some additional medicine on me—one lot on my leg and another lot on my arm.

I was well after awhile, but like many Congo children I was ill quite frequently from one cause or another. I now know that the male chicken offered to the ghost of my ancestor named Wanga had nothing to do with health or sickness. When I was ill, I was ill from natural causes and those causes had nothing to do with the spirit of Wanga, my ancestor. My father and mother never did know that, however. They died believing in the ways of our people. Some of those ways are very dark indeed.

HOW I DID LIKE TO PLAY WHEN I WAS A CHILD! As soon as I could walk and even when I could only crawl I liked to be out in our village street. The sound of the children's voices made me want to be among them as they clapped their hands and in sing-song voices sang and danced their games. When I could hardly stand I loved to keep time with my feet and make rhythmic movements with my body. My mother would hold her hand over her mouth to hide the

expressions of delight she felt. Some of the children thought it was so funny that I who was so small should try to join in the games that they had to stop and roll on the ground with laughter. As I grew older I joined in the game of foot-matching, which is also accompanied by singing and hand-clapping.

My father made me a tiny bow and arrows from palm fronds. That little plaything was a source of great delight. The arrows were not sharpened so could do no damage. In fact, for a very long time I could not shoot the arrows the distance of a meter. Almost every boy in the village had similar playthings. We learned to sharpen the arrows and to shoot at banana stalks a few feet away. Then someone would throw along the ground a piece of plantain stalk, shaped like a ball, and we would shoot our arrows from the bows into the ball as it went by.

One game we liked when there were many playmates was that of the small antelope and the leopard, *Bongete la Nkoi*. One of our number would be the antelope (*bongete*) and another would be the leopard (*nkoi*). The leopard would stalk the antelope and the rest of the party would come up with an old net and try to trap the animals. There was plenty of fun and sometimes some got angry and there would be a fight, but those fights were soon over.

After a great thunder and rain storm it would get cloudy and chilly and we would build ourselves little fires and sit on our heels and tell stories we had heard our elders tell. We played out in the sunshine the livelong day and when the sun set at six o'clock, as it did the year around, we still wanted to play. The time passed all too rapidly. When the

full moon came most of the villagers played far into the night. We were too small to be there, though we longed to join in the games. We went to sleep, most of those moonlight nights, to the singing, clapping, drum-beating, and the musical voices of the women as they joined in the games.

I think most Congo children have good memories. I remember that when I was about six or seven this thing happened to me and my playmates. It was a hot afternoon and we had been playing for a long time. I said to my friends: "Let us go to my mother's house and get a drink of water." My mother took water from a spring in the forest, brought it home in a gourd, and kept it in a corner of her room where it was cool. We all drank from the gourd, but we held the gourd up over our mouths and none of us touched it with our lips. We opened our mouths and caught the water as it fell from the gourd. Just as we were about to finish we heard my mother say to someone outside, "*Mpaka, onjusa losako* (Elder, tell me a proverb)." We all came tumbling out of the house and there was a stranger, an old man, standing in the doorway. Without hesitating, the elder answered my mother with this proverb: "*Bon'owa wanya lilako limoko* (A child of wisdom needs one teaching)."

After looking at the stranger long and hard, we returned to our play in the village street. We had always been taught to respect an elder and one of the signs of respect is to ask him a *losako*. (Translator's note: *Losako* means a proverb, a motto, or a salutation of respect, and is asked of someone who is a senior. A woman asks a man but a man seldom asks a woman that kind of a greeting. The plural of *losako* is *nsako*. Some old men know these *nsako* by the hundreds.

They are short idiomatic sayings which hide many a pithy bit of wisdom. They form a basis of the unwritten literature of the Bantu people. It is part of good manners not to quote a *losako* in greeting unless you are requested to do so.)

We children soon saw some more playmates and we told them of the elder who was a stranger, and of his new proverb. "What does it mean?" one of the boys asked. We were so much concerned with looking at the stranger that we had forgotten to ask the meaning of the proverb.

I said, "Let us go back to my mother's house and see if she will allow us to ask the elder for an explanation of his proverb."

Back we went, skipping and hopping. The stranger was sitting on a low stool on the porch. As it was my mother's house, I was the one to ask him. I tried as politely as possible in this way: "*Fafa* (Father), would you like to answer for us your *losako*?"

"What *losako* do you want?" asked the elder with a smile.

"We want to hear any *losako* you wish to give," answered one of my friends who was older than I and who thought quicker than I did.

"You know how to ask for a proverb," said the elder. "You must say, 'Throw me a proverb' or 'Quote me a proverb.' "

One of the boys on the edge of our gathering said right out loud, "*Mpaka, losako-o* (Elder, quote a proverb)!" He drew out the last "o" as long as he could just to make people think he was grown up.

The elder answered, "*Bon'owa wanya lilako limoko.*" Then all was still.

Then I piped up, "Father, will you not tell us the meaning of your *losako*?"

He said, "If a boy has wisdom he will put away in his memory the wise things he hears. He will do this with the first teaching. There is no need to teach a wise child a second time. He remembers all that is necessary with one teaching. He gives attention to what is said and he will remember what is told him. But the boy who does not have wisdom and does not have much sense—you can teach him over and over and he never learns. I give my *losako* as praise to children who hear only once and then act regarding the teaching they hear. Listen carefully to any instruction given you; then you can become wise children."

By this time a number of grown people had gathered around, but none of them asked questions because it was a children's gathering. Another of my friends called out, "*Mpaka, losako-o.*" He, too, drew the last "o" as long as he had breath.

The stranger answered at once with: "*Bona ntaonga nsoi ea nyango* (A child does not make his mother ashamed)."

"Tell us what it means," we all cried together.

"The reason for this *losako* is like this," said the elder. "Should a father and a mother not teach their child the right way to act in his home and in the village, that child may grow up and not know the customs of his people and then he may become a bad man and even a fool. If this does happen, who is the most ashamed? Why, his father and his mother. They are ashamed because they did not teach their child the proper way to act before his friends, and especially before the grown-up people in the village."

The grown-ups began to whisper among themselves that they were going to teach their children more in the future and one of them said, "Lest our children become bad men or fools."

I thought the stranger was about to leave when one of the boys who was not very active in our games and whose hair was all matted and his feet dirty and full of jiggers suddenly called out as we had done before: "*Mpaka, losako-o.*" The elder did not answer at once this time but looked at the boy with his tangled hair and his feet full of jiggers. Then he said: "*Bon'owa mponya afokuseya okamba bolemo* (A lazy child does not want to do any work)."

No one asked for an explanation that time. We all laughed heartily because the proverb fitted the boy just right. By looking at the boy the elder could see he was lazy and did not keep himself clean. We ran off to play and we slapped one another on the back at the joke on the lazy boy, and that boy got out of the crowd as soon as he could and hobbled off on his sore feet that were full of jiggers.

I remember my mother looked at my feet every day when I was small to see if jiggers were in them. During the dry season those little jiggers get to be very plentiful and if they are not taken out at once they will increase and lay eggs under the skin and soon there will be sores. The lazy boy had neglected to notice his feet and because of the pain of getting the jiggers out he had allowed them to increase until his feet were sore. Unless they are taken out children may lose their toes.

We were glad the elder who was a stranger had come to

our village because he had given us some new things to talk about.

* * *

I ALWAYS LIKED TO GO FISHING. I wanted to do the same things I saw my older brothers do. If they went to trap birds I wanted to go too. If it was a hunt in the forest for animals I always asked to go. But fishing trips pleased me most of all. I had only one real older brother. I called him *botomolo* (older brother) and he called me *bokuni* (younger brother). The custom was to call the boys of all my uncles and all my aunts brothers too. If they were girls I called them *nkana* and the girls called me their *nkana*. The word *nkana* means a brother or sister of the opposite sex.

My father had several brothers and I called them fathers. My mother had several sisters and I called them mothers. Their children were either older or younger brothers, if they were boys, and *nkana* if they were girls. It so happened I had a number of older brothers by this arrangement. I liked to go on trips to the forests or on the river with these boys and we would be gone from early morning until almost sunset. These were long happy days. However, the division of the things we caught was not always wise or just and I was often left with almost nothing to take home. One day five boys went fishing in the river. Their names were Lofefe, Ncikafaka, Esona, Ibola, and Wanga, myself. All were older than I, but Lofefe and Ncikafaka were much older than Esona and Ibola. I was considered just a small boy.

We killed many fish in the river and we were happy. We

had worked hard, with great perseverance, and we were pleased all day because the trip was a success. The fish were both large and small, but when we got to the bank of the river to divide the catch, trouble began. "We'll not divide the fish here by the river," said Lofefe and Ncikafaka. "The best thing is to wait until we get to the village and divide them properly."

Ibola, Esona, and I did not like the idea of dividing the fish when we got home. We wanted to do it on the river bank. Ibola said, "How about the wisdom our father taught in the *losako* which goes like this: '*Likafo nda ngonda ko nd'ola nk'etumba* (Division in the forest and at home no fights)'"? Why don't we divide the fish here and now?"

The meaning of this *losako* is that if fish have been caught or an animal has been killed it is wisest to divide the spoils at once among those who went on the trip. Then each member carries his portion down the forest path and to his home and he feels happy. As soon as he gets home there is nothing to do but to prepare his fish or meat for cooking. If, however, the division is made when you get home there is sure to be discontent and perhaps some quarreling.

Ibola, Esona, and I wanted the division made on the beach and then each of us could carry his portion home with him. But the other two were not willing, and since they were older, they did as they pleased. We murmured all the way home, and Lofefe turned to us and said, "You are only boys and you don't have any courage at all. When we get to the village we'll divide the fish properly."

It was nearly dark when we arrived at the village. Lofefe and Ncikafaka took four leaves from the basket and started

to divide the catch of fish into four piles. I was surprised, since there were five of us. Lofefe said, "Let Ncikafaka divide the fish."

Ncikafaka was known to be very poor at dividing evenly and when he saw our faces he said, "No, I am not going to divide the fish. Let someone else do it."

That was what Lofefe wanted. He said at once: "Just boys do not know how to divide fish properly. I am going to do it myself." With that he began to divide the fish. He did not pour the fish out so we could see them. Instead he chose a big fish and put it on his leaf and he chose another large one and put it on a leaf in front of Ncikafaka. Then he took some small fish and placed them on the leaves of Esona and Ibola and said, "Wanga and Ibola will have one share between them."

When we three younger boys saw how little of the fish we were to get, we made quite an outcry and murmured much, saying that the division was not fair in any way. We had all fished together and each of us had done the same amount of work and now there were only four shares and the two smallest shares were to go between three boys. Then Lofefe cut us short with these words: "You are talking just like little boys. Hold your stomach down! Next time we go fishing you'll have a larger share if we kill a lot." With that he gathered up his fish and walked off.

When I arrived home with my fish an elder was there visiting with my father. When they saw the small amount of fish I had I noticed that they just looked but said nothing. The name of the elder was Ingenda. Just then two men passing our house called out: "*Mpaka Ingenda, losako-o*"

(Elder Ingenda, give us a proverb)." He replied: "*Cuta lobi o likafo liongi*." I understood that proverb. It meant: "Return tomorrow if the division is good." That is, if any number of people work together hunting, fishing, or palm-nut gathering in the forest and they start together from the village and work together and return together at night they should all receive the same portion of the spoils for their work. Then all will be happy and will want to go again on another trip. If the division is unfair no one will go again.

The proverb for the second man was: "Those who wish to be lonely, let them divide in secret." If four or five people have hunted or fished all day together, in the evening the one chosen to divide the catch may say to himself: "I'll not put everything in the open but divide from the basket as I reach in my hand." Soon he finds he has all the smallest fish left, or he has all the largest left, and when he has gone around once he does not have the right kind of fish left to make the division even. He should, if he wants to be fair, empty the basket of fish out upon a large leaf where all can see. If he should seem to be hiding some of the fish by refusing to show all he had, he will soon be shunned by all his friends.

A few days afterwards Lofefe called Ibola and Esona and me and said: "Let us go on another fishing trip. Let us all go this morning." We refused. We said, "We do not want to go fishing unless it is share and share alike. We went once and when the time came to divide the catch, what happened? You only thought of yourself."

THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF MY FATHER WAS A GREAT hunter. I called him "Father" and he always spoke of me as if I were his very own child. One day he went into the deep forest to make his hunting place. My father, mother, and several of my uncle's family accompanied him. We built ourselves tiny houses and we cleared enough of the forest to let the sunshine in so we could be warm part of the day. It was a new experience for me, as I had never been on such a trip. It was intended to last as long as the hunting was good.

The men dug thirty pits and connected each of them by a leaf and vine fence. At the bottom of each pit they placed very sharp sticks, pointing upward. I had watched my uncle make these sticks before we left our village. He chose straight hard wood which he sharpened to a point like a pencil. The sticks stood for weeks in the sunshine and they became very hard. He charred them in a fire so that insects would not destroy them and they would not rot.

My uncle also made and set some traps in the small openings in the fence. He bent strong sticks which had plenty of spring in them so that when an animal sprung the trap the vine usually caught the animal by the throat and strangled it. That kind of trap was for small animals.

Other families were in the forest for hunting, too. They branched out in different directions without overlapping. There were several of my playmates, so in the evening we played many nice games. During the day I helped make the hunting pits and gathered twigs and leaves for the connecting fence. I was not much good at digging, but I could help fill the baskets in which the men put the yellow earth and it

was surprising how soon we dug the thirty pits. They were not close together, but extended about five miles from end to end. The pits were about ten feet long, three feet wide, and seven or eight feet deep. Each pit was carefully covered with thin sticks, leaves, and dirt so as not to be noticed by the animals. These pits were as dangerous to people as to animals if they stepped on the cover. But our people were used to them and it was seldom we ever heard of anyone falling in.

The thirty pits were covered about the same time and one day my uncle set out, with a few of our family, to see if any animals were caught. He looked at many of his pits and there was nothing in them. But there were signs of animals in the forest path and soon he came to one pit where the covering had been broken through and there was an *mbuli* (a fair sized antelope or water buck). The antelope had been pierced by the sharp sticks at the bottom of the pit and was dead.

As my uncle continued his trip along the pits he saw that another covering had been broken through and a wild pig was inside. He was alive and full of fight. Pigs are tough, and in his fall into the pit this one was not seriously wounded. Wild pigs often kill the hunter but my uncle had, besides his hunting knife, a bow and arrow. He watched the animal as he tried to get out of the pit and at the right moment he shot him through the heart with his arrow.

My uncle was happy. He called out: "The traps are working. This is *Botomo* and only my family can eat these animals. Those who are not of my family cannot eat lest the traps be bewitched."

• Now *Botomo* referred to ancient customs governing the hunt. These were the rules:

1. *Botomo*—First fruit of the hunt. Meat to be eaten by certain people.
2. *Tomoola*—Second fruit of the hunt. Meat to be eaten by men of the family.
3. *Ifenyaka-mpao*—Third killing. Meat to be eaten by members of the family.
4. *Losanganya*—Fourth killing. Meat to be eaten by anybody.

My people believed if *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, and *Ifenyaka-mpao* were not observed the hunting place would be bewitched and no more animals would be caught. My uncle was very strict about these rules and we all had to observe them. Said he: "When the first three drawings of the pits are over, any of your friends who are not of our family may eat, but until the first three drawings are made no one who is not a member of our family may eat. It is a family affair and we must follow the rules."

Some days afterward my uncle went again to see his hunting traps and he found a brown antelope and two pigs. The antelope and one pig were dead, but one pig was alive and willing to fight. The hunters soon killed him, however, before he could climb out of the pit.

My uncle shouted: "This is *Tomoola* and only people of my family can eat this meat." They ate the two pigs and the antelope while the friends who sat near them watched in hunger, but made no complaint. (*Translator's note:* Some families allow only the men to eat the second killing, but Wanga's people allowed the women to eat if they were

members of the family or were married into the family. Again, some families have only two killings which are forbidden to others, but Wanga's people observed three. The fourth was for all.)

At the time of *Tomoola* I was very sad. I felt great sorrow because my father and mother were not able to give even a little piece of meat to my playmates and friends. They refused me every time I asked them, because we had to follow the laws and customs of our great-grandfathers.

I went to my father and said something like this: "Father, our friends and my playmates are dying with hunger and they are living close to us. We are more than filled with the meat which your younger brother has killed in his hunting pits. Why can't we give to those living here in the forest with us a little of this meat? Just a little piece?"

My father was always kind and he would explain many of the customs I asked about. He replied: "We are not able to give these people who are near to us even a small piece of this meat. That is the law. Our great-grandfathers made this law in regard to any hunting of animals and also fishing. If you go hunting as we are, or fishing, or bird-hunting, and you do not observe the laws of our ancestors the hunt will be useless."

I still felt it was wrong to withhold this meat from my friends when there was meat to spare and they were hungry, and I asked again: "Can't you try to give just a little piece of meat to these people who are near to us? We shall soon see whether the hunting pits are bewitched or not."

It was no good talking to my father because he answered

again: "It is impossible to try to undo the laws of our great-grandfathers lest we ourselves be without meat."

The third time my uncle went to see his thirty pits and his many traps he found one large antelope and four wild pigs. Two of the pigs were fully grown and two half grown. My uncle cried, "This is *Ifenyaka-mpao*. This third killing is for my own birth family to eat. Keep your courage up, everybody. The next drawing of the pits is *Losanganya*. Then everybody will eat."

We ate and ate and were full of meat, but our friends and playmates sat down next to us and they were hungry.

Shortly afterwards my uncle went again to see his pits and this time he found a small antelope and a turtle. When he reached the end of his thirty pits he called: "This day is the day of *Losanganya*. Everybody can eat of this meat."

The small antelope and the turtle were prepared and cooked together. Then my uncle called: "The meat is cooked. Let everybody who is here in the forest come and eat of this killing. It is *Losanganya*."

Everybody came and they ate, but it was a very poor feast. There is not much meat on a small antelope and a turtle. They ate, but they were not satisfied.

My uncle now began going daily to his traps and his pits, but not once more did he find any animals. None of the traps was sprung and none of the coverings of the pits had been touched. He came back each day with a very long face and at last he said: "Someone has been playing with sorcery around here. My traps never kill anything any more. I am going to find out why I do not catch animals now."

He left us there in the forest and went to see a witch-doctor. He was gone several days and when he returned he told us what he had done. He said to the witch-doctor: "I made my hunting place and I observed all the rules of our ancestors. We followed strictly the custom of *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, *Ifenyaka-mpao*, and *Losanganya*. At first I killed many animals, but after *Losanganya* I have not killed an animal, not even a little one. Now why is that?"

The witch-doctor asked many questions and then he said, "Did you make an offering to your father's ghost before you started or during the time you were finding meat in your traps?" My uncle had to say he had not. Then the witch-doctor said, "That is the trouble. The reason why no more animals go near your hunting pits is because you never think about your father's ghost. He is angry and he will not give you another animal until you make him an offering. Kill a dog and make an offering to the ghost of your father, who is very angry."

My uncle bought the dog in the village and killed it as a peace offering to the ghost of his father. Then each day he made the long trip to all of his pits, but there was no sign whatsoever that any animal had been near them and we had no meat to eat. My father tired of the forest, as we all had by now, and he said, "Let us return to the village. The hunt is a great failure."

When we came to our village I was still thinking about the failure of the hunt. One night I found my father sitting alone and I had a nice visit with him. I said to him, "Father, you carefully observed the customs of our great-grandfathers while we were on the hunting trip. We went all the way

from *Botomo* to *Losanganya*, when people were invited to eat with us. After that there was no more meat. Why did my uncle not kill more meat?"

My father said, "I have been thinking about that. I think there is a man who does not like us and he may have picked up the bones of the meat which my younger brother killed and put them in the horn of an antelope in which he has his medicine-charms. His charms are to stop animals going into a trap, especially into a trap of your uncle. And that is why we failed to kill animals in them as we did at first."

I then said, "Father, we observed all the customs required and we did not have a successful hunt. If we had gone on the trip and observed none of the customs of our great-grandfathers, we could not have been worse off. In fact, we might have killed a great many animals."

But my father was not pleased and he told me to go to bed. He said, "Son, don't you forget to observe the customs of our ancestors or you will be in very grave trouble."

(Translator's note: The time that Wanga has described was a native communal period. The social system was simple. The family and the village shared much in common. What the forest, the river, or the wild growing fruits produced was considered as belonging to all, and all shared together. There were no buyers and no sellers for the simple reason that there was no general market. That kind of society is now past or is passing very quickly. These stories of Wanga will soon be ancient history to his own people.)

OF THE VILLAGE OF YULI

THERE WAS A MAN IN OUR VILLAGE OF YULI who was named Ekafela. He went into the forest to make a hunting fence at the time of hunting animals, which is usually the wet season. That is when the water backs up from the rivers and reduces the plots of land in the forest. He built a long fence and he dug twenty pits. This man Ekafela was a good man. He divided what he had with anybody. He could not stand to see people in want. He wanted to help those who were in trouble.

When Ekafela had dug his pits and made his fences between the pits, he said he had no intention of following the custom of his great-grandfather which was *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, *Ifenyaka-mpao*, and *Losanganya*. He said to the people words like this: "These hunting pits and hunting fences of mine will break the customs of the great-grandfathers in regard to the eating of animals killed in the traps. All people who want to eat the animals killed may do so, from the first killing on. I do not see any reason for keeping or observing *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, *Ifenyaka-mpao*, and *Losanganya*."

In his determination not to follow the hunting custom he used a word which many people dreaded. That word was *losenje*, and it is a thing that does not have a taboo. He did this openly and we all wondered if his traps would be bewitched from the start. But this is what happened. Early in the morning while the trees were dripping with the dew and when the great forest was as silent as a desert, Ekafela went on the lonely march to the end of his hunting traps. He found two water bucks and one large brown antelope. He had one boy with him and Ekafela and the boy could not carry that much meat to the village. He sent the boy to get

help. It did not take long to find men to help carry the meat back to the village. They believed Ekafela when he said there would be no taboo on the first killing and they were willing to carry the meat home. Ekafela divided with his neighbors and there was much happiness in the village.

Soon Ekafela went out to see his traps the second time, which would have been *Tomoola*. He found three good-sized antelopes. He gave the first antelope to his family, the second to the old and needy, and some men offered to buy the third. They did not ask for a gift or share but brought some brass rods and offered to buy the third antelope at a fair price and Ekafela was content.

In our village there were some widows, some cripples, and some old men who could not go to the forest to hunt. Their families could not help them much and they were in need. This meat was a blessing to them and they not only called Ekafela "*eoto* (friend)," but they called down a blessing upon him with these words, "*Bokako wa swa.*"

Ekafela did not observe any of the taboos of hunting. He not only killed meat on the first, second, third, and fourth trips, but he continued to find animals of many kinds in his traps for a long time. He was always generous with what he found. There was always some for his family and for the old and needy, and some to sell. As soon as he would appear from the forest, you could hear the cry, "Ekafela has come out of the forest with meat." Because of his generosity and good reputation he was well liked by the people of Yuli.

This story I am telling happened at the next hunting season after my uncle had been unsuccessful in the hunt, and I was interested in what happened. I wanted to ask Ekafela

some questions, but being a boy I had to find the right time and place. I chose one afternoon after the wife of Ekafela had taken his little pot of bath water into the screened part of the house and he had taken his bath and rubbed his body with palm kernel oil and combed his hair with his wooden comb.

We found a log and we sat down on it and I asked him the question I had been thinking about. "Ekafela," I said, "my family went hunting and they observed all the hunting laws of our great-grandfathers but we did not have much success. You have broken customs and do not observe *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, *Ifenyaka-mpao*, and *Losanganya*. Yet you keep killing animals in your hunting traps. Can you tell me the reasons for these ancient customs?"

He explained: "The name of the man of long ago who started these customs was Umba (selfishness). He was a real hunter and killed many animals and he invented many methods of hunting that we use today; but he was stingy, selfish, and a very austere man. He would not give anybody anything for nothing. He wanted for himself all the meat he killed. At every hunting season he would announce, 'The taboos of hunting must be observed.' "

Perhaps Ekafela made up that story about the origin of hunting customs, but I wanted to know more so I asked, "Ekafela, you do not follow the four rules of hunting and fishing, and yet you have killed many animals and you continue to have good luck. Why is it so many people believe and follow these customs?"

"That is just talking senselessly and in vain and to no purpose," answered Ekafela. "Who is the real owner of

every wild thing in the forest and the river but *Mbombiyanda*? He is the creator of all things. If you go to hunt in the forest and do that with great perseverance, he will have mercy on you and he will give you the thing you are looking for. The custom-laws of *Botomo*, *Tomoola*, *Ifenyaka-mpao*, and *Losanganya* have no reason. They are nothing."

I thought I had better go then, since the sun was very red and was setting over the tree tops, but Ekafela continued. "The dividing of meat killed in the forest on the first, second, or third trip is like that proverb of our fathers, 'The gift in storage.' That is, if you give something away you will see it again at some other time. That gift was not lost. It was put away in a storage place—that is, among people."

I went to my father's house and I began to think about the customs of our fathers which we were all supposed to follow. I wondered whether they were good or not. I did not know much about *Mbombiyanda* but later when some teachers used the name *Nzakomba* (God) in place of *Mbombiyanda*, I thought a lot about the things Ekafela had taught me.

My life had deep roots
in the fables of my
fathers....



MY FATHER WAS A GREAT SINGER of stories and fables of our people. I liked to hear his stories, and I tried to remember all those which he sang. Our family would sit in the house on wet days or during long evenings and each would tell a different story. The time passed very quickly. There were never too many stories and they were never too long. All of us liked to listen as long as we could keep awake.

In many of our stories the narrator breaks into a little song. The audience takes up the refrain and we clap our hands and get the rhythm of the story. Sometimes we have drums and during these singing spells the drums beat and the narrator gets a few moments' rest. Some of our stories take several hours, or even days, to complete. In such cases the narrator, or singer, is glad for the drums because he can refresh himself. All of us love the roll of the drums.

On most occasions my father would suit the story to the mood of the village or the audience. Perhaps he noticed that some were given to quarrelling and even fighting over some small misunderstanding, and at the first opportunity he would sing a song to help smooth things out. It might be that a wife of one man in the village said another man had annoyed her as she came from the garden, or a child said that a boy had teased her while she was at play. Sometimes men would take up the quarrel and a fight would follow, and a man would get into trouble before he inquired whether

the wife or the child were lying or perhaps just making game of someone. After such an affair my father would sing a story to teach people better ways. The story I want to tell now grew out of such an occasion.

I noticed that one afternoon many people gathered in the front yard of my father's house. When my father saw so many people, he knew that they had come to hear a story. Each was carrying a little stool or a piece of firewood on which to sit in the cool of the afternoon.

"Why have you all gathered here?" asked my father.

"We come to hear you sing your fables," they said.

"Fables?" said my father. "What fables? Do I know any fables?"

"Sing us one of your fables," they replied. "You know a great many, and you choose the one you like. We'll listen."

Then my father began. "Friends, listen to me, and I will sing the story and fable of the *imbumbuli* which stirred up a lot of trouble between the villages of Bomponge and Bosanga."

(Translator's note: The word *imbumbuli* comes from *mbuli* [water buck or hart] and the *imbu* before *mbuli* means "young" or "small." In Africa are many kinds of antelopes. Some are only a foot or so high, and they make nice pets, but they are very delicate. Some kinds of antelopes are the villains in African folk-lore.)

Then my father cleared his throat and said, "Long time ago . . ." Everybody said, "*Kwa* (Quiet)," and my father had to begin again. "Long time ago those two villages of Bomponge and Bosanga were deep in the forest and not very far from each other. There was a nice strip of forest between

the villages. Just about half way between the two villages, where the hunting right of each village had its border, there was a very nice little brooklet with the clearest sparkling water you ever saw. The brooklet came from a spring of pure water, and the women of each village went every day to get water from the spring and to gossip.

"The elders of each village said that they and all the people should gather at that spring and make some laws about it. The idea was accepted, and one sunny morning at the appointed time all the people gathered at the little spring in the depth of the forest. All the women and the children came, too. The men came and cleared the bush and banked the spring so that it would continue to give forth its pure water. When the muddy waters made by cleaning around the spring had flowed away and the spring was again giving out sparkling water, the elder made a little speech.

" 'This spring is on the border line of the two villages of Bomponge and Bosanga and, as you know, is off the main path between the two villages. Our fathers have drunk from this spring for a long time, and our women come every day to draw water. This is the law we elders have made: No person shall spoil this spring with dirt or poison.' He said these words over in different ways, as that is the way we always talk about any matter. Then he said, 'Do you hear this law?'

"Everybody replied, 'O-o-o (Yes).'

"Then he said, 'Do you agree to it and will you keep this law?' Everybody again said, 'O-o-o.' From that time on, the spring's clear water was the common property of the two villages.

"This arrangement went on for quite a long time, and the spring gave pure water to the people. The women came from the two villages and drew water and visited about their affairs as women do—about their husbands and fellow wives, their quarrels, their gardens, and their cooking.

"Then one day something happened to the spring. Some very young antelopes came up the brooklet and muddied the water of the spring. This was very early in the morning before the sun came over the trees of the forest.

"Two women came from the village of Bomponge just as the sun was casting its morning shadows in the forest. They found the spring running muddy water, like the muddy water in the village after the children have played in it. There had been no rain during the night, but the water was not fit to drink. The women were angry because they had made a useless journey.

"They returned to the village of Bomponge as fast as they could, and they said to the first man they met: 'We have returned for the first time from the little spring in the forest without water.'

" 'Why is that?' asked the man.

" 'The spring that we all agreed should never be defiled is as dirty as a puddle of water in our village. It is quite spoiled.'

" 'Who did that?' asked the man. 'Have we no laws about such things?'

"The women said, 'The people from the village of Bosanga have spoiled the spring. They got there before we did this morning, filled their own water pots, and then spoiled

the whole spring. We could not get a drop of water, and we have come to tell you.'

"The people of Bomponge heard what the women said and they believed their story. They did not themselves investigate the matter, and they did not ask their neighbors of Bosanga if they knew anything about it. Instead they went with a great noise to the village of Bosanga and began fighting at once. Four of their number were killed, and they killed three men from Bosanga. Then they quit fighting, but they were very bad neighbors for a very long time afterwards.

"After a while three women from Bosanga went very early to draw water at the spring in the forest. It was a cloudy morning and barely light. When the women stooped down to get water they saw that the water was yellow like the village puddles. They ran back to their husbands and they cried, 'See, those people of Bomponge have spoiled the water of the spring, and there is no water for you to drink. You will have to remain thirsty forever.'

"It was the little water buck, *imbumbuli*, that had come again during the night and made the spring undrinkable. The women had not stopped to investigate but had run home blaming the people of the other village of Bomponge.

"The men of Bosanga followed the same method as their neighbors had followed. They believed the tale of the women and they did not look into the matter. They went to fight the very same day. Three of their men were killed and they killed two of the people of Bomponge. That made the number of people killed from each village the same, but the fighting did not stop.

"Between fights one side would capture a woman, and

then the other side would capture two. They did not keep even long. The women were not treated very badly except that they were added to some man's harem. But there were other mean acts between the villages and there was very unpleasant feeling among the people.

"One day one of the elders of Bosanga, Liyengo, suddenly met in the forest three younger men of the village of Bomponge. Liyengo greeted the three youths with the first greeting of the day, '*Loecwa-o-o* (Are you awake)?'

"Those three answered together, 'Yes, we are awake. Give us a proverb.'

"Liyengo said, '*Bona ow'etumba wete bolole* (The offspring of a fight is a mean thing).'

"Now how could these four men meet in the forest and not fight? The fact was that old Liyengo belonged to both villages. His mother's people came from Bomponge and his father's from Bosanga. He therefore had the right to go to either village and could live in either and not be molested.

"The three said, 'The offspring of a fight is indeed a mean thing.' They said they were having no end of trouble. One of them added that the elders were pretty slow getting together to settle the matter, and one said that since the fighting began they had not been able to play during the moonlight nights because they might have to fight at any moment.

"Then the old man said, 'The people of Bosanga say they never spoiled the spring, and the people of Bomponge say the very same thing about themselves. If neither of them spoiled the spring, who did do it?'

" 'That is the work of the elders to find out,' agreed the youths.

"They then decided to part, and as they left Liyengo called: 'I shall come to my mother's village the day after tomorrow, and you see that I am well received.'

" 'Father,' they answered, 'you are one of us and you are perfectly safe to come when you wish.'

"That night Liyengo gathered the elders of his father's village and told them that the fight had gone on far too long and that it was the work of the elders to find a way to stop it.

" 'Very well,' said one of the old men. 'You, Liyengo, belong to both villages. Go to your mother's village and make an arrangement for a gathering. Remember that we meet without knives.'

"It was duly arranged when and where they were to gather 'without knives.' What the women carried in their baskets under bunches of leaves was another matter. If the meeting broke up without a settlement, knives would have seemed to arrive from the air.

"If a stranger had been there, he would have been sure the palaver would end in a fight. Every elder had to have his say, and he said it as loudly as he could. Such words as 'liar' and 'mean thing' did not seem to be barred from the gathering. They were used freely. The people argued the whole day. But both sides wanted to end before dark as neither wanted to pass through that strip of forest after dark. Liyengo got up for about the tenth time. He was so tired he could hardly stand. He had almost lost his voice.

"He called: 'You elders, listen. You all speak about the spring being spoiled just twice. I know it has been spoiled many, many times. Who does it? Let us find out. Let those of Bosanga send three young men to watch, and let those of

Bomponge also send three young men with them. Let them hide themselves for several nights as near to the spring as possible. If they do that, we'll soon find who spoils the spring.'

"That was the agreement. Next night the six young men took up their vigil. Nothing happened the livelong night. In the morning the spring was flowing fresh and cold and clean, in spite of the bank's having been broken down and not repaired. Six other young men watched the second night. Again nothing happened. The third night was about over, and the watchers heard the crowing of the village cocks. Then they heard some splashing of the water in the brook. They remained quite still and in the half light they could see four or five *imbumbuli* enter the spring, stir up the water, and make it like a yellow puddle of water after a rain storm.

"Those six men came silently and caught two of the young water buck. Then they shouted: 'Come, everybody, and see the *imbumbuli* that have spoiled the spring and caused the trouble in the villages. Let's kill them.'

"The people came running, and when they heard the whole story they scolded themselves because of the fights they had had. They knew now that the reports of the women were untrue."

When the story was over, all the people breathed heavily and together they sighed, "O-o-o-o." Before they could leave, my father added to his story these words: "Don't any of you become like those young water buck and make trouble between innocent people, causing great fights and killing and hurting people without any real reason. Don't become like those women who started false rumors and led people

to trouble. Last of all, don't believe all you hear until you go and look for yourselves. Remember, the little spring still flows into the brooklet out there in the deep forest."

I TRIED HARD, WHILE STILL A BOY, TO LEARN OUR FOLK-lore. My family seemed to know no end of fables, stories, riddles, conundrums, proverbs, and all kinds of idiomatic sayings. Every time I had a chance I sang some of these stories to my friends. I was too young to tell them to the grown-ups. I would go to as many different elders as possible and get them to tell me stories. When a story was finished, I would ask the elder for the "root" of the matter—that is, the real lesson behind the story itself. In that manner I stored in my mind many things that were to help me in after years.

In a little while I found myself a young man. I was invited to sing to the elders about our people. My father would sit and listen, and afterward he would say that I was getting quite a reputation in that village of Yuli. He was happy about it, and so was I.

About that time I met a boy who knew "book." That was quite a mystery to me. He could read from those pages without first memorizing what had been written there. I never had seen anything like it. I wanted to know how it was done. In a short time I went to the Protestant Mission that was not far from our village. I began going to that school in the year 1912.

When I went there, I found all ages in the school. Some

were much younger than I was, and some were beginning to be adults. Most of these were in the beginning classes and had not made much progress in reading. Others could read very well. This group had a lot of bumptiousness about them. They exalted themselves because of the wisdom they had received in the school. They did not respect their native teachers very much. They thought they were different from other people because they knew "book." I wondered if knowing "book" would make me act as they did. Their actions were quite the opposite of some of the teachings of our folklore.

I was a beginner, and I had to go into the lowest class with other boys much younger than I was. I do not remember any girls in the school. I tried hard with the letters and their sounds, and I often thought of the stories of perseverance my father taught in our village home. It was for me to press on until I could read and write, and so find out what there was in that kind of wisdom. As soon as I knew the symbols for figures, I found I could do the arithmetic. At home we learned certain games in adding and subtracting. Multiplication and division were new. We never had anything like that. I soon could do very well in sums, however.

Each day at a certain hour of the sun we would all meet together in one of the large rooms. At that time we sang songs that were quite new to me. The white man read from a book which he said was the Book of God. He told us things about God which were quite different from what my father taught me. Then some days there would be folk stories given by some of the boys. After I had been there some weeks the white man said, "Wanga is a new boy, and

he has never told any of his stories from his father's village. Come, Wanga, it is your turn to tell us a *bokolo* (story)."

I was glad to have this invitation, and I decided at once to give one of our stories that showed how bumptious some of us could get. Some of the boys seemed to get more conceited every day, but I was pretty sure there were things about our own Congo people they had never heard. I therefore chose the story of the blacksmith boy named Nkondaka (No one teaches me).

I began my story like this: "A long time ago there was a certain man who had a wife and a child who was a boy. The name of the man was Bokumbe, and his wife was Ekila. Bokumbe and Ekila put on their child the name Bokumbe, also. It was a name common in that family for many generations.

"The father of that child, Bokumbe, was a blacksmith of very great wisdom, and his reputation both in his own village and in distant villages was well known. He began teaching his son Bokumbe the trade of a blacksmith as soon as he was old enough and able to hold the tools. When the boy grew to youth, he had learned all his father could teach him. In fact, because of his skill he had as good a reputation as his father.

"When Bokumbe had really grown up, he knew how to do any kind of blacksmith work. He could do any job as well as his father. But he was still called by his childhood name, while other youths had taken different names. He said to himself, 'I am as good as my father in this trade, and he and I have the same name. I am going to get another name. Then people will know us apart.' He therefore said to his father

and mother, 'I don't like this name of my childhood. I want another name, now that I have grown up.'

"Bokumbe, the father, and Ekila, the mother, said: 'Your name is all right. What do you find wrong with it? It is a name of your father's family for long generations. They were all blacksmiths. That is what you will be some day.'

" 'When I grow up?' said the child, Bokumbe. 'I am grown. I am a blacksmith already. I am going to choose a new name of my own.'

" 'What name do you want?' asked the mother. 'A name from my family? None of them were blacksmiths.'

" 'No, I am not taking a name from my father's family nor from my mother's people. I am giving myself a new name altogether. I shall call myself Nkondaka.'

"The father, Bokumbe, smiled and said: 'That is a strange name, son—Nkondaka (No one teaches me). It may get you into trouble. But all right, you are the one who names yourself. I am still Bokumbe, the blacksmith, and you are Nkondaka. Listen—if that name gets you into trouble, it will be your own affair and you must get out of it yourself.'

" 'That will be all right,' boasted the young man, the child of Bokumbe and Ekila. 'I now take that name, because I am a perfect blacksmith. No one is able to teach me anything new about working in iron. I can make anything that is wanted in the village, and I can repair anything that is broken. I am on my own, and I shall answer only when people call me Nkondaka.'

"From that day on Nkondaka made his own shed to work in and he had his own helpers. He made his own forge and the bellows for keeping his charcoal fire hot. Nkondaka

might be a bit boastful, but he asked no help from anybody, and he was not lazy. He worked from morning until night. He squatted over his anvil as his father had done. He had a hammer without a handle, but the hammer was long and heavy, and he could strike hard enough to do all the work that came to him.

"The father's and the son's work sheds were side by side. There was no strife between them. They both had all the work they could do. Men came from villages near and far, bringing pieces of iron that had been smelted from local ore, or bands of iron they had bought at some store of the white man. Sometimes they brought brass or copper, and then Nkondaka made anklets and bracelets. If it was iron, he made knives and hoes and axes, or anything else the villagers wanted.

"When the people had had their tools made, they paid for their work and returned to their home villages. They talked of Bokumbe the elder, but they praised the work of Nkondaka beyond measure, and the fame of Nkondaka spread not only to nearby villages but to far distant places also.

"In one of those far-away villages lived a great chief who lacked a blacksmith. One day he sent for three of his men, and he said, 'Go on that journey until you come to the very place where Nkondaka lives. When you find him, bring him to my village. I want a lot of tools made for my people.'

"Nkondaka said good-bye to his father and mother and went with the three workmen of the chief, but he also took with him one helper of his own who knew his way of working. When he got to the village of the big chief, he was well received. He was given a house to live in, and soon

food already cooked was brought to him. The village could boast an old blacksmith shed, and that had been cleaned up and a new stack of wood for making charcoal was there ready for work.

"The chief met Nkondaka next day and said that he had a great need of new tools. He had plenty of pieces of scrap iron and band iron and smelted iron. The only thing he lacked was a blacksmith. The old blacksmith who had lived in the village was dead, and he needed someone to take his place.

" 'Here I am,' said Nkondaka. 'I can make anything and everything you need. When do I begin work?'

" 'Well,' said the chief, 'I have heard of your fame, and I have called you to see if you could make the hoes and spears and anklets and many things the village needs where I am the grand chief. We got the raw material out of the store this morning, and you can begin work at once. When you are finished with the work, I will pay you two thousand francs.'

"Then the chief called to some men and they unlocked a room in his house and brought out great quantities of band iron and scrap iron. The chief seemed to know every piece of iron he had stored away, and he counted out every item to Nkondaka.

"Nkondaka rejoiced when he heard how much he was to be paid. He saw at once that he would have to work hard and long for that sum of money. He did not want the chief to know he felt happy, so he hid his gladness by saying that he could make anything the chief wanted, but that with all the raw material there was to work up, the pay did not seem

to be very plentiful. He would need help to get water and make charcoal and blow the bellows at the forge.

"The chief said, 'I do not lack men. I am a big chief, and I have all the helpers that you need. You take this iron now, and I will tell my headman to see that you have the workmen you need. One of our wives will cook your food for you.'

"Nkondaka began to work the next morning. He was a fast worker as well as a clever one. He was soon turning out a new style of tools as well as the kind they had always used in that village. Old men and children gathered at the shop to see him work. They marvelled at his skill, and they said his name was certainly the right one, because none of them could teach him anything. The chief, too, seemed to be pleased, but being a chief he would not say so publicly.

"When Nkondaka had finished all the pieces of iron and made the hoes and knives and anklets agreed upon, he went to the chief and asked for his two thousand francs. The chief, however, did not want to pay him. He said, "There is one other thing I want you to do. When you have done that, I will pay you as I promised.'

" 'Tell me what you want,' said Nkondaka. 'Let me hear whether it is part of the bargain we made the day I came here. I have done my work. Now pay me and let me go.'

" 'No,' said the chief. 'I am not ready to pay you. I want something else. Make me a person (statue), the like that has never been seen. I want a person made which must not be a man and it must not be a woman. You must not make it during the daytime, and you must not make it during the night-time. When this man is made, I'll pay you twenty

thousand francs. If you don't make it, you will lose your two thousand francs as a forfeit.'

"This request just about struck Nkondaka dumb. What could he say to the chief? He wanted a person that was neither male nor female. The work could not be made during the hours of daylight, and it could not be made during hours of darkness. When was he to work? Nkondaka did not have an idea equal to the occasion. He thought of his name, No one teaches me. The thing he needed most at that moment was for someone to teach him. How could a person be made that was neither man nor woman and that was not made during daylight nor darkness? He felt sorry for himself. Evidently his father had expected something like this to happen. No one teaches me! Now he wanted a teacher.

"He told the chief he would think the matter over, and he noticed sly smiles on the faces of the chief and his men who sat around him. While the chief was speaking, they never said a word. They were having some fun no doubt. Nkondaka returned to his house, and he consulted with his helper. That he had never done before. But the helper had no suggestions to offer. They soon would be the laughing-stock of the village.

"Next morning Nkondaka went to meet the chief. He said, 'I have thought about that man you want who is neither male nor female and can not be made during the day nor the night. I shall have to return to my own village to get some extra tools. I shall be back in a few days.'

"He had to put the best possible face on the matter, and when the chief had greeted him, he and his helper started home to his father and mother. There was a great welcome

for him, and the villagers were profuse in expressing their pleasure at seeing him again. As soon as possible Nkondaka took his father aside and said, 'I made a great mistake about my name, No one teaches me. I need your help.'

" 'You have had that name for some time. What is wrong with it? You remember we agreed to that name, and if it got you in trouble, you would have to get out of it as best you could. What is wrong?' asked his father.

"Nkondaka told how he arrived at the village of the great chief, did his work, and was promised two thousand francs, and that he had come home empty-handed. Now before he could get his pay, he had been asked to do an impossible thing. At least it was beyond any of his wisdom. 'The chief wants a person that is neither man nor woman, and that person must not be made during the hours of darkness or daylight. How is such a job to be done?'

"His father had been joined by his mother, and they smiled. The father said, 'You have the name, No one teaches me. You do not lack wisdom. Why do you come to ask us how to forge the things the chief wants? Your name means that you do not want any advice from anybody. Now you must teach yourself.'

"This was pretty hard to have his father and mother laugh at him and refuse to give him any aid. He begged them with tears to stop the story about his name and to teach him how to forge the person the chief wanted so that he could have his money.

"Then the father and mother of Nkondaka felt sorry for him and said they would help him, but his father said, 'Now you go to bed and in the morning I'll see if I can have a

thought that will puzzle the chief. Now, mind, not a word in this village. Get hold of that helper of yours and see that he does not talk.'

"In the morning this was the father's advice. 'Here is your lesson. Keep your name for the moment. Listen to what I say and learn it properly. Take some tools with you and return to the chief. When you get there you must greet him at once and say that you have now returned to do as he wishes. You must say that since he wants a very special kind of person it is necessary for you to have a special kind of charcoal. Since the chief alone supplies the charcoal you must ask him to send and have it made.

" "The chief then will ask you what there is peculiar to the charcoal and you will answer like this. "The charcoal must be made from one certain kind of tree that grows on high ground far from any water. It is a hard wood tree and makes excellent charcoal. The men who are sent to make the charcoal must be instructed that they must make the charcoal where the tree grows. Those workmen must take with them a certain kind of basket known as *tofole* and in those baskets they must carry water which flows in a stream some distance from the tree. They must burn the wood until it is charred and then douse it with the water from the baskets. If the charcoal is not made in the right way the person who is not a man and is not a woman will never be made." "

"Nkondaka felt happy to hear his father's plan. He went over the matter several times just to make sure he had mastered the details. Long before the morning rooster woke the village, he and his helper were on their long journey back to the chief. They walked through the long forest

stretches, and waded the swamps. They slept at a small village and after another very early start they arrived at the chief's house before midday.

"Nkondaka asked the usual *losako* and then said he wanted to begin next day on the person that was neither man nor woman and was to be made neither at night nor in the daytime. Then he went to rest in his house.

"When the visit of Nkondaka took place next day the chief happened to be alone in his large open building. Nkondaka greeted him and then said, '*Bokulaka* (Chief), I have come prepared to make that person you want. Since your order is very special and you have arranged difficult instructions to follow, I must have a very peculiar kind of charcoal. I must have a special place to work in and if the charcoal is not made under very careful taboos no person will be made and the loss then will be yours.'

"The chief, trying to show as little interest as possible and expecting some kind of a trick, asked: 'What are you talking about? What preparations do you want?'

"Nkondaka intended to draw the matter out a bit as he wanted the chief to remember that he was a blacksmith and because of that he was a man of importance. He said, 'The work of forging a person that is not a man and not a woman requires great skill. It requires very special preparations. The person you want must be made in secret and there are taboos that you and your workmen must observe. If there is any lack of cooperation no person will be forged.'

"The chief showed he knew what Nkondaka was talking about and he just moved his head and never said a word.

"Nkondaka therefore said, 'These are the rules. Send your

workmen to that part of the forest that is on high ground and where the trees grow straight and tall and whose wood is very hard. There must be no running streams near by and no swamps. There those workmen must make me the charcoal I need. When the fire is burning well and the hard wood is just right to be doused with water, those workmen must run to the stream some distance away and bring water, not in pots or gourds but in *tofole* baskets. I can't use charcoal made in another way. If those workmen do not obey my rules the fault is with them and no person can be made. Then you must pay me both the sum promised for the original job and for this one also.'

"The chief next morning gave his orders to many workmen. 'Go to the forest where the trees are tall and straight, where there is no water near by. Choose hard wood trees. Make charcoal. When the wood is seared, put the fire out with water drawn from the swamp. Take neither pots nor gourds with you. Get from the women their *tofole* baskets. Carry any water you want from the streams in those *tofole*. Any breaking of my orders means trouble for you. Go. Go at once.'

"The workmen found a nice piece of forest that was not near any running water and not near to a swamp. They soon had hard wood ready and they piled up the wood in the approved fashion for charcoal-making. Because there was much gum in the green trees they burned well and soon a large fire was blazing. Then the headman said it was time to fetch water and each man went with his *tofole* to the stream about half a kilometer away. But the water ran through the holes in the baskets. They tried and tried but they could carry no

water from the stream to the fire. When they returned to the burning wood, what did they see? Only a pile of ashes. There was not one piece of charcoal.

"They had failed and they had to return to the chief. They chose one of their number to speak to him and they helped him prepare what he must say. He knew his tale well: 'Chief, we carried out your orders. We were not lazy. We found the trees on high ground and not near water. We cut down a very large one and we made a fire and when the wood was seared we went to get water in those *tofole* baskets of the women. But those baskets would not carry water. We tried and tried and when we returned to the burning wood this is what we found—only ashes. That blacksmith, Nkondaka, is a very deceitful person. He knew we could not make charcoal that way. He just made fools of us. The women are laughing at the whole thing.'

"The chief was angry and he called Nkondaka and he said, 'You are a very deceitful person. Get out of my village. I will not pay you one centime because you tried to make people laugh at me.' He said a lot more that Nkondaka would not like written down.

"Nkondaka answered, 'That one who made the deceitful plan first was you. You said I had to make and forge a person who was not a male and not a female and I was not to work at day and I was not to work at night. You knew such a thing could not be done and you tried to rob me of my two thousand francs.'

" 'I never tied you up,' shouted the chief. 'You have no skill and since you cannot do as I command you, you never get one centime. Call the elders.'

"The elders came. The chief said, 'Elders, look at this stranger in our village. He is a most deceitful person and he says he is a blacksmith but he has no sense and no skill. He wanted charcoal and he ordered my men to carry water in women's baskets and no water could be carried that way. The fire burnt itself out and there was no charcoal. Does a stranger make fools of us that way?'

"The elders said, '*Kilo!* (An expression of great surprise at an unexpected thing) We never heard of water being carried in women's baskets,' and they hit their legs with a loud clap and they covered their mouths with their hands as they enjoyed their merriment.

"Then Nkondaka said, 'Fathers, hear me a moment. Let me ask you a question or two. You have lived a long time and you are the judges of this village for many years and are very wise men. Fathers, have you ever seen a person that is not a male and not a female, yet is a person?'

"They said, 'We never have seen a person like that.'

" 'Another question, Fathers. Have you ever known a blacksmith that did his work neither in hours of darkness nor in hours of light?'

"The elders asked one another if a blacksmith could work at all if he was not able to work neither during the day nor during the night.

" 'This is the reason for the palaver,' said Nkondaka. 'I did all the work of a blacksmith that the chief required. Then to get my pay he said I was to make him a person that was not a man and was not a woman and I could not work at night and I could not work during the day. He just did not mean to pay me my two thousand francs.'

"The elders marvelled greatly at the story. They said it was a new thing in their memory. They could not decide such a palaver in public but would have to leave the village and go out into the forest and talk the matter over just by themselves. They filed out one at a time and in the forest they sat on their heels and talked and talked. Then they came back and this was their decision.

"The chief falls down in the palaver and Nkondaka wins. The chief made a clever plan to catch Nkondaka and if he had won, the chief would not have paid him anything. But Nkondaka was very clever too. He only made his plan so that he could be paid what was due him. He therefore wins and the chief must pay.'

"Nkondaka went home with his money but he told everybody his name now was Bokumbe, the younger."

To end my story to the school boys I said: "If a boy knows one thing pretty well there is no reason for conceit. There are many things he does not know. We all need to be taught as long as we are alive. Nkondaka was conceited because he was a good blacksmith but he found he could learn many things from others."

I WENT TO THE PROTESTANT MISSION TO ASK FOR WORK. The white man who was a missionary had seen me in school and knew my name, but he had not asked anything about my village life. When I asked if he could give me some work, he replied at once, "Yes, come tomorrow morning." I was very happy about that as I thought I would get a little money

for my work. Up until that time I had not worn much clothing. Now I could buy some.

Now that I had a promise of a job, I returned to my father's house. I said: "Father, I have some work to do at the Mission. I have been going to school, but I did not work for the white man; but now tomorrow morning I am to work at the Mission. Don't look for me in the village as I shall not be there. It may be late afternoon before I get home." Perhaps I should have asked my father's permission, but I did not.

This is what my father said: "My son, I hear what you say. You are going to work for the white man. That will be something quite new, because you never have done any work like that before. It will be good, because you will be taught a great many things. There is one thing I have noticed about those who go to work for white men, and that is they so easily get into debt. Those boys used to do without things that the white man has brought into this country and they had few worries. Now as soon as they begin to work they get into debt. I say to you, flee all kinds of debts, lest you get into very great trouble and maybe become a very mean person—and what is worse, you may be a fool."

I thanked him and said that I would remember about the danger of debt. Then my father told me a new proverb, "*Boola bofa la nyongo* (Poverty is not a penalty)." If man goes about with what he owns, even if he lacks a good many things, he has no need to be ashamed. If he is in debt, and he goes about with a lot of fine things that are not paid for, he is trying to bribe people by making them think he is well-

to-do. To go without things and have contentment in your heart is much better than having a large debt.

If a man becomes rich and then overspends, he will have people calling on him every day asking for their money. Instead of being happy he will have a great burden in his body, and he will be sad because of his many debts. He will not rejoice in his spirit, and he will have many troubles. He will get angry with those who ask to be paid and then there will be loud talking, and perhaps before long there will be a very bad fight.

My father knew many proverbs about people who were in debt. He gave me another one as we visited together. It went like this: "*Nsombi tola, njuow'olemo* (Borrowers smile, asking again anger)." The borrower comes to ask for a debt, and he is all smiles; but when the lender comes and asks that the debt be paid, then there is anger.

The borrower goes to the house of a friend and smiles, and he talks in a very pleasant way. He tells his friend the many good things he has heard about him since they last met. Then he asks for a loan and promises that he will pay back the debt in due time. Time goes on and, strangely, these friends never seem to meet again. The one who lent the money has to make a special effort to see his friend, and when he asks about the borrowed sum the friend is quite hurt to think he should be followed. Pay the sum now? No, it is quite impossible, but in due time he will pay. "Due time" seems to be very long.

The money is not paid, and again the one who lent the money follows his friend into his house and says that he does not mean to leave until the debt is entirely paid. He

meant to be peaceful, but in a short time there is very loud talking and then real quarrelling and then fighting. The chief comes and stops the fight, but there are bruises and a fine, and the borrowed money is still unpaid.

My father sent me off with the admonition: "Keep your stomach down and your courage up. In regard to your pay, go carefully. Watch how you spend it, and don't obligate yourself beyond your means. If you borrow to buy something, you are a slave. The thing you want is not yours. It is better to save your money and wait until you have enough cash to buy what you want. Otherwise you will be a slave to your debts."

I then went to the Mission. I worked as hard as I could each day, and there were still some hours when I could go to school. I had many desires for new clothes, but I did not have the money to buy them. So I waited and saved. I remembered the teaching of my father. I did not become a slave to anybody or anything.

At the Protestant
mission I was born
to new life....



MY FIRST WORK AT THE MISSION

was cutting grass. In many open places the grass grew very fast. After every rain it needed to be cut. This we did with grass hooks. Then the paths all over the Mission needed to be cleaned and their edges made straight. All this was new to me, but I soon learned how it was to be done. I was in the young men's group. Afterwards I had to show the smaller boys how to do the work and I also had to see that the work was done each day.

One of the paths which we had to keep clean led to a nice pool of water out in the forest. The pool was used when people were baptized by the missionaries. I found the Christians called it "The Pool of Jordan." I was not a Christian at that time and I learned many new things.

The path was very long, for the pool was way out in the forest. The grass on that path seemed to grow very fast. Roots of trees were everywhere and the surface of the path had not been made very level. My friends and I were kept quite busy getting that path into shape. We did not complain about the grass that grew in the path or about the roots of the trees, because we were happy to be working for the Mission. Every day we worked on that path and we sang as we worked. We sang many different kinds of songs and we were happy in our contentment. We also visited as we worked. If we cannot visit we are not very happy.

One day the white man came to see what we were doing

and he seemed quite pleased with the amount of the work we had done. He said, "You who work on this path have done a good job. You have made the path very clean. Tomorrow is the day called Sunday and some people will come down this path to the Pool of Jordan to be baptized. They want to be followers of the Messiah. There will be many people with them who will help in the service and they will be glad that the path is clean and that they will not spoil their clothes in the long grass. We shall all rejoice that a number of people have repented of their evil ways and are now baptized in the name of Jesus."

One of the boys said to the white man: "When we began this job I thought we would never reach the Pool of Jordan. The ground was dry and hard and the grass grew everywhere. Now the grass has been cleaned and the roots dug up and we are glad."

The white man said, "Don't be afraid of a hard job. If you keep on working, even though the job is difficult, you'll finish it."

Then he smiled and turned to go back to the house. But I said, "I have heard my father say: '*Ikooke afa la bolo belemo nitak'onto afa ndamba.*' Do you know the saying and the way we think about it?"

"You must excuse me," he said. "I never heard that proverb before. I think the meaning is: If you go carefully at the job you will find that the work is not an elephant."

I gave him some additional meaning I had learned. If you are given work to do and it proves to be very hard and difficult, you should keep right at it. You will finish the job and you will be successful. The reason is that even in a

hard job a man can succeed if he keeps going. Let him show wisdom, skill, and much perseverance, and he will finish the job. A man is not like an elephant. You can chase away an elephant and he runs from you. A man has more wisdom than an elephant even if the elephant is bigger than he is. He can conquer any work he undertakes.

The white man liked the proverb and said that there was a good idea in it. If you have a thought like that in your mind you will not run away from a hard job. You will try and try and you will get a reputation that you always finish any job that is given you to do.

Soon after that time of the baptism in the Pool of Jordan the Mission began growing a large field of rice. I had never seen rice before. I had never seen it grow nor had I ever eaten any. The Mission grew the rice for two reasons. One was to have it for their own food, and the other was to introduce that new crop to our village people. I learned afterwards that this was a kind of paddy rice that grows on good soil and not the swamp rice of lands like China that we read about.

We watched the rice grow and we were very curious as to what it would be like. When the crop began to head a number of my friends and I were chosen to guard it from thieves. The thieves were the weaver birds. As soon as the heads of rice began to form these birds would come and strip the field of the kernels. There are other birds, too, that like the rice, but the weaver birds are the worst. They would build their nests near to the field and then take away as much of the rice as they could. The male weaver bird has yellow feathers and is very beautiful but he is also very de-

structive. These birds like not only rice but corn, too. If the ears of corn are not tied up those birds will rip the covering leaves and take the whole of the crop.

Every morning before the sun was up I woke my friends and we started for the rice fields for fear the birds would be there before we were. When we arrived we scattered all over the field and each of us hid under a little shelter he had made. That shelter was against the hot sun and also the rain storms. From each of our shelters we had strung small vines all over the field and these were tied to sticks. We pulled the vines and shook the rice and made as much noise as we could to keep the birds away. Those birds, however, soon forgot their fright and would return again and again. We had to watch all the time to keep the crop from being stolen.

It was a long morning from sunrise until the sun reached right overhead, at the time we had begun to call *midi*. Most of us had nothing to eat before we left our houses, but sometimes we would find a stalk of sugar cane growing, or a fruit called *piapia*, or maybe we would find some palm nuts which we would roast over a little fire. We passed our time at our work by singing native songs and calling to each other. The more noise we made the fewer birds came to steal. At noon other boys came to relieve us. They did as we had done until sunset. Then the darkness made it impossible for the birds to steal.

When the crop was ripe it was harvested. It was put in large baskets and carried to the Mission. There it was thrashed by men and boys and then the missionaries divided it as follows: They kept some for food and for seed. Then

they gave some to the village people, some to the workmen of the Mission, and some to us who had watched the crop. What they wanted was that the native people would like the rice and would want to plant it themselves. Some of our people did, but the long time necessary to watch against the birds made many of them unwilling to plant crops of their own.

The Mission also brought in sheep. It was the work of the boys to take care of them and put them in a shed at night to protect them from the leopards. These sheep, too, were brought in to help provide food for the village. Some time afterwards many natives kept sheep of their own.

The white man noticed my work at the different jobs and one day he asked me if I would like to work as "boy." I was happy to consent and soon I was learning how to wash dishes, make beds, and cook the white people's food.

I was glad to get that kind of work. Mama, that is the wife of the white man, taught me and some of my friends how to take care of the house and to cook. Three of us worked in the house and we would rotate each week at the different jobs. One week I would work at waiting the table and cleaning the room. The next I would wash and iron clothes, and the third week I would cook. We had certain hours off each day so that we could go to school. The school, of course, was taught by the missionaries. They had no time to keep house and teach school and do other mission work. They were most busy people and we liked to work in their house.

Sometimes the white man for whom I worked went on long journeys to the villages. That white man was very

earnest in teaching people the path of the Kingdom of God. He was well liked by the people of Yuli. He learned to speak our Mongo language very rapidly, and in a short time showed himself to be sympathetic with the people. He joined them in many of their ways.

On some of those journeys I was taken along. I was glad to see how the white man learned the songs, stories, and proverbs of the native people. He soon was using them as illustrations in his teaching. He was very active in teaching the things that would strengthen those who were becoming Christians and show them how to worship God. He had to have a number of workmen to take his things from village to village. That first time I went along with him, I was the cook. I was happy in my work.

On one of those journeys we went in a canoe on the river called Ikelemba. The workmen liked to paddle, and we rejoiced in seeing how fast we could make the canoe go. Each man did the best he was able. While we went down stream, the canoe raced along at a great rate. They gave me the job of pounding the drum for the rhythm of the paddlers so that they all would start and end the strokes together.

As the journey proceeded, we sang canoe songs. The white man soon was learning to sing as we did. We made up part of the song to fit the occasion. One of our paddlers was very good at that impromptu composing. The white man learned the phrases for turning the canoe towards the land, or turning it to the middle of the river to avoid the snags of trees which stood up in the water or had to be detected by the rush of the water.

Hidden tree stumps, perhaps a foot under water, had to

be watched for and avoided. We had another call that would stop the singing or change the movement of the paddlers. This change was not always brought about without some murmurings. If some of the crew liked the song we were singing or the rhythm of the paddling, they wanted to keep it going as long as possible. Others wanted to change so that the paddlers could rest in the different movements.

Part of the time the paddlers on one side of the canoe would all make their stroke together. Then the others on the opposite side of the canoe would give their stroke. This method of paddling would rock and roll the canoe, but it was a large one and no one minded it as the canoe continued to race through the water. Our custom is to stand up and paddle the canoe. Enough room is left between each two men of the crew so that each can dip his paddle deep into the water and then pull back for all he is worth. There is a half step forward in the first part of the stroke. Then the foot comes back at the end of the stroke.

The white man thought he would like to try our method of paddling. He stood up with the men and soon was getting the pull of the paddle. We made good speed with the singing, the pleasure of the work, and the white man singing with us as he learned how to paddle. Before we expected it, there on the bank of the river was the village where we were to spend the night. The people of the village came out to welcome us. When they saw the white man standing up in the canoe, paddling like the rest, they said, "This white man is surely a teacher come from God."

After we had landed, the white man told the Christian teacher to pound the drum. In a little while many people

came to the gathering. It was getting late in the afternoon. The meeting was in the village street. The white man himself did the teaching. He taught about fellowship.

The people of the village liked to hear that white man teach. They did not want him to stop. In spite of the fact that the sun was setting and the village would soon be dark, they still stood around. A number sat on small low seats, while some of them had pieces of logs which they found near by. They continued to visit about the gospel and the proverbs of our folk-lore. Everybody was much interested in this visit to the village.

After awhile, when they had visited and sung some songs, one of the men of the village suddenly called to the white man, "*Bondele, losako-o.*" The white man answered at once, "*Mbaala nko mbimbi* (Looking is not satisfying)." When the white man answered so quickly, the people marvelled, because they saw that he understood some of their proverbs. But one wanted to test him to see if he could explain the proverb, so he said, "White man, what does your proverb mean?"

The white man answered: "That proverb, 'Looking is not satisfying,' may have many meanings. One might be like this: A man has a wife who cooks some food and comes and spreads it out before her husband, but he does not eat the food. He is very hungry, but he does not try to eat the food set before him. Will he be satisfied by just looking and looking at the food?"

The people answered, "A man could never satisfy his hunger that way. Looking does not stop a man's hunger, and never will."

The white man then illustrated his proverb in another way. He said, "A man is ill. He is quite seriously sick. Another man brings him some medicine that will help him get rid of his sickness. But instead of drinking the medicine, he places it on the table or chair where he can look at it. The medicine will cure him of his sickness if he takes it, but he only looks at it. Will he get well that way?"

The people answered, "A man will not get well by just looking at his medicine. He will get well if he takes it and drinks it down."

The white teacher continued. "Maybe a man comes to teach some things of wisdom, and you gather together to hear him and to be taught his wisdom. Perhaps it is a method of working in the garden. You all go to the garden spot, and all you want to do is to look and look and to visit with one another and with the man who came to teach. Will you have any garden of your own? Will you be able to make any money just by looking?"

The people said, "We will get nothing out of the new teaching unless we make our own garden and practice the new wisdom that has been given."

To end the matter the white man then applied the teaching of the proverb in this way: "A man comes to the gathering for the gospel teaching and hears the words of the teacher. Perhaps that man goes every day. Every day he hears the teaching. But he does not change his heart nor the deeds he does, and he does not follow after the way that God desires of him. What can we liken him to?"

The people said, "We think that man who goes to the church gathering each day, and each day hears the teaching

but does not forsake his evil ways, is like that proverb of yours, 'Looking is not satisfying,' for just looking and not doing is not enough."

The teacher then said, "Don't be just hearers of the word, but become doers of the word you hear."

After this long visit we found the village had become quite dark. Here and there we could see the fires of the women near their houses where they were getting the supper ready. In that evening hour many who heard that teaching decided they would give up the old ways of their lives and become Christians. I was among that number. I decided that I, too, would be a Christian.

The white man and the workmen who were with him packed up next morning. In our canoe we went from village to village, and the white man strengthened the church and had more converts. I watched the way he and the native evangelist worked. One evening as I cooked his food and set it before him, I said, "Teacher, I am learning the way of the gospel in the things I hear and see. Some day when I am grown, I shall surely want to be a teacher too."

The white man said to me, "Wanga, if you choose to become a teacher of the gospel, you will choose a good work. You will be working with people. In your teaching you can straighten them out in the things that are righteous. If people are made better because they listen to you, you will be blessed with a blessing by God himself."

A few days afterwards we returned to the village of Yuli.

Soon the missionaries chose some teachers to go to the villages to teach the Good News of the Kingdom of God. They sent these teachers out two and two. There was an

older man and a boy who could read very well and who could teach some classes in the village to which they were sent. Not many in Yuli could read, since there was quite a scarcity of teachers. It was at that time that they asked me to help in a village school.

I had already said I would become a Christian, but I had not been baptized. I was trying to do what was right, and I now knew how to read and write very well. I wanted to go to any village where I might be sent. I thought I could teach children. I said I was not yet a Christian since I had not been baptized, but I went with an older man to a village not very far away. The older man was a good teacher. He was quite eloquent in teaching the things of the Kingdom of God. I helped all I could.

I suppose we were in that village for the best part of six months. Many people came to us, and their children came every day to school. Those children gave great attention to their school work. In a short time a number knew "The Book." I was very happy. Then another thing that was good was that many of the people asked if they could be Christians, too.

It was the custom to return to Yuli every so often. At that time the enquirers who could go with us and who were in earnest about becoming Christians always planned to go. We made quite a little party. We sang as we went through the forest, but now it was a new song we sang. It was the hymn of the church and the school. Quite a number who went with us were baptized. I do not remember the number, but I do know I was among them. I was baptized in the

name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The date was September 5, 1920.

I was very happy on that day of my baptism. It was with great joy that I became a Christian. In the first place, I knew the date of my baptism. I did not know when I was born, because neither my father nor my mother nor any of my family could read or write, therefore they kept no record. I myself could now read and write. I put the date of my new day away in my memory, and I wrote it down. I thought about it every day, and I called that day "The time of being born again." I took that thought from the Scriptures. In the New Testament I read about the visit Jesus had with Nicodemus and his teaching about being born again. I now understood that teaching better. It was a new day to me.

After I was baptized, I returned with the older teacher to the village near Yuli to teach school. The work went very well, but I was sorry about one thing. I could not teach the children any work of wisdom that they could do with their hands. I wished that I could teach the children some work of the hand that would bring them in some little gains when they were in distress, as they often found themselves.

I could not teach those village children any work of wisdom that they could do with their hands, because I myself had never been taught. In the school I taught reading of books, arithmetic, and writing. That was all I could teach. At first I thought that kind of teaching was enough, but I soon realized that I lacked quite a lot. If the children knew how to use their hands, they could get a few centimes at times when they needed them most. I thought my school work was not a success, because I lacked that wisdom myself.

OF THE VILLAGE OF YULI

I felt I should try to go somewhere where they taught hand-craft. In that way I could be a greater help to my people.

I finished the term of teaching, and then did not return to that village.

I HEARD ABOUT A NEW KIND OF WORK, CHAIR-MAKING. The chairs were made from forest vines and the work was quite famous even though it had not been going on very long. The mission station at Ikau was doing the work. Two friends and I decided to go to Ikau to see if we could learn this work of wisdom in chair-making. It was quite a long journey from our village to Ikau. We walked all the way. It took four days' walking. We slept three nights at different villages. The path was not very good for our bare feet, and we were often quite tired. Trucks and automobiles were unknown at that time.

When we got to Ikau we went directly to the Mission to see the missionaries. They asked who we were and what we were doing in Ikau. We said we already knew "book" but that we had come to learn how to make chairs from the forest vines and that we hoped we could have such an opportunity. Those missionaries received us very well. They called some of the chair-makers and told them to find a place for us to "sit down" and that we would begin the next morning learning the new wisdom.

Next morning the foreman of the chair-making wrote our names in the roll book. He then told us the first thing we must learn was how to scrape and split the vines. We thought that was unnecessary as most every boy knows how

to scrape and split forest vines. I had helped my father in thatching our house many times and of course we used to tie on the palm leaf mats with the split vines. I saw, however, that our old way had to be learned over. The vines needed very careful scraping and cleaning and they had to be blanched in the sun. They became white and smooth. Then each vine had to be split into so many pieces and the inside pith taken out and the vines scraped until they were all the same size. If the vines were different sizes the finished piece would not look right. These vines were somewhat larger than a lead pencil and they were often brought in from the forest four or five meters long. It took us some time to learn how to prepare them properly.

In a few weeks my friends and I knew how to scrape and split the vines and to do the work quickly. Then we were given a chance to learn how to weave the vines onto the frames. The foreman said he would teach us and we were made quite happy when we at last started in that new work. The frames were made from larger vines and from certain sticks that can resist the Congo borers. Borers spoil a great many kinds of wood. The frames of the chairs had to be dried in the sun for several days. If the vines and sticks of the frames were not shrunk the vines that were wound around them would soon slip off.

I went at the work of winding the vines around the frames with great enthusiasm. I wanted to become a chair-maker in as short a time as possible. The foreman was pleased with my efforts and told the missionary that I was doing very well. I learned how to start the winding and to join the vines and finish the ends so that they would not become loose. When

I could do that well I was given the next stage of the work, which was frame-making.

Frame-making was the hardest part of the work and the most skillful. A set of chairs had to be the same size, but I made them all sizes and shapes. I fear I wasted quite a lot of material in learning how to do the job. We made table chairs, big armchairs, visiting tables, coffee tables, and book-cases. I was quite happy as I began to be able to do my work well.

The fame of the wicker work spread all over the Congo. More orders came in than we could fill. We continued to make new kinds of house furnishings. Our finished chairs were bought not only by missionaries but by commercial men and state officers.

After some time we were told that an order had come from Bolenge, the station of the Disciples of Christ Congo Mission. It was quite a large order as there was to be a large missionary conference there, representing most of the different missions in Congo. My own mission, the Congo Balolo Mission, made a special effort in this industrial work to show that we people of Congo could be quite skilled in handwork if we were given a chance.

We worked very hard on that order and some of my friends and I were asked to go to Bolenge to help take care of the chairs and to see they were not spoiled on the journey. The chairs proved to be quite cumbersome. They could not be put in the hold of the steamer, as the dampness there made the vines mould. The sparks from the steamer were liable to burn the chairs which were in the open. Then again,

the hot sun made some more frames shrink. So we were kept very busy repairing and rewinding the chairs.

At Bolenge we found missionaries from all over the Congo. Our wicker work was much admired. When the conference was over every chair was sold and we did not have to take any of them back to Ikau.

One day the Mission entertained the state and commercial white men. That gathering was the largest group of white men I had ever seen. Some of our people could not tell those white men apart. They all looked alike to us. We could tell apart the tall ones and the short ones and the fat and the lean ones but in their faces they looked very much alike.

When that great gathering took place the missionaries found they lacked enough waiters to serve the tables. They also wanted a foreman who would keep the "table boys" on the job. Many of the boys had had little training and it was quite a job to see that every table was properly spread. I was asked to be the foreman and so it was that I was head waiter almost as soon as I arrived at Bolenge.

I never had waited on so many white men at one time. I quickly learned the name of each table boy, and those who did not know their work I taught as well as I could in the brief time between meals. The tables were set in a large open room in the building now used for the Bolenge Press. At that time all the visiting missionaries and the DCCM missionaries ate at a long table in that open room. I never saw so many happy men and women and children before. We did not know their language, but when they laughed and joked we laughed too.

OF THE VILLAGE OF YULI

Just about the time that the big meeting was over a large steamer landed at Bolenge. I went to the beach with everybody else and there on the steamer was the first white man I had known, just returning from furlough in England. We were very happy to see one another. He asked me to return with him to Yuli, my own home town. I could not do that at once but he went with me to the missionaries of Ikau and begged them for my services. I was well content to return to my own people and there I had many new things to talk about.

The name of that white man was Mr. Mathers. He was a very fine preacher and he knew our language very well indeed. He too wanted to teach our people some handwork. He had a lathe and soon was showing us how to carve ivory. This is really a famous kind of work. He took the great elephant tusks and made very beautiful things like napkin rings, salad knives and forks, and many other things.

My work was in the kitchen and at the table, but every time I heard that there was to be a lesson in carving ivory I hurried up my work so that I could be there to see and hear what was going on. The hours I had off from housework I spent in the shop. Mr. Mathers saw I was interested and he soon made a place for me so that I, too, could learn how to make those pretty things.

The months soon passed and our mission held its annual meeting. During that meeting Mr. Mathers was transferred from Yuli to Ikau and I went along as cook and general helper. This missionary was a great teacher and preacher. We always liked to hear him speak. He did not live long.

He died in the work of the gospel. He was greatly beloved by all of us and we were very sad at his death.

The Mission had a steamer known as the "S/W Livingstone" and I wanted to know about the way that steamer ran. It was all arranged for me to become a worker on the steamer, but just then I had an accident. I cut my foot near the ankle. Infection developed a large sore. I could not go on the journey because I could hardly stand upright.

When the white man saw I was quite ill he gave me work that I could do sitting down. That work was carving ivory. I liked the work and was given all I could do. Sometimes we ran out of elephants' tusks and when that happened we had to wait until someone came with tusks for sale, or perhaps an elephant was killed in a trap near by.

The sore on my foot healed and that was because the white man cared for it. I could now walk again just as before. They said I got well so nicely because I was patient and did as the white man suggested, which was to keep off my foot and to keep the wound clean.

The captain of the mission steamer was needing a cook and I took that job and went on many journeys with him. The time for furlough soon came and the missionary was due for a voyage to England. I went with him as far as Leopoldville, the capital of the colony of Belgian Congo.

When I returned from the trip to Leopoldville I did not go to my home village again but sought a job as cook in the "house of strangers"—that is, in the hotel at Coquilhatville. Coquilhatville is the capital of the province of Coquilhatville. There were many ways and customs quite different from those of my village of Yuli. This was the first time I

had worked for white men other than missionaries. I resolved not to get into any disputes with anybody. I found native people from my part of the country and they helped me to adjust myself to all the things that were strange.

This white man, too, made journeys and I of course had to go along to prepare his meals and wash his clothes. When he learned that I could read and write he had me help keep the records of his work. He was in commerce as well as being owner of the hotel.

I tried to do my work as well as possible. The white man offered me a job as foreman over his many clerks through that part of the country. That job did not appeal to me because I did not want to get into commerce. I was too young and in that kind of work there were plenty of opportunities to cheat. The clerks were in constant trouble because they sold cloth and other things and failed to bring back the amount of money they should. Many of those clerks cheated so badly that they were sent to jail for stealing. I therefore remained as cook. But one day my white man said, "Wanga, I want you to become a chauffeur in one of my taxicabs."

I was pleased with the change. I first had to learn to drive. I had been in a taxi only two or three times and everything was new. The white man gave me one or two lessons in driving and then he turned me over to one of the other chauffeurs to finish the lessons. When they thought I was well enough taught I was sent to the state officer to get my driving permit.

The state officer gave me a long examination. First he wanted to know how long I had been learning. Then he asked me about the rules of the road. He showed me pic-

tures of driving signs that I would see along the roadways and asked if I knew what those signs meant. He warned me of two things. I must obey the native policeman and I must be polite to all the people who might hire the taxi. When all those questions were answered, he asked me to drive him all over the city. He tested the speed of the automobile and he made me back and turn until he saw that I had learned how to handle the machine. Then we went back to his office and he wrote out my *permis de circulation*.

I was now ready for my first trip as a real taxi driver. We got our passengers in this way. People would call the hotel and ask for a taxi to bring them to the hotel for meals, or there would be those who wanted to drive about shopping. When the mail steamer came in I had to go to the beach to meet the steamer and look for passengers. Sometimes missionaries would want to go to Bolenge, which was ten kilometers away. People would want to drive to see the Botanical Gardens which also were ten kilometers away. At that time no native could be a passenger. Few, if any, had money to pay for the fare. Now some taxis can be hired by natives, but not all of them.

The owner of the hotel and taxis gave us very strict rules to follow and he checked on us to see that we did as he wished. He said we must see that the taxi was not damaged, and each chauffeur had to clean his machine every day. Each taxi was to take the limit of four passengers and the driver. The taxi was small and not strong enough to bear greater loads. All the taxis at that time were small and the rules were for all of the drivers.

I worked at taxi driving for a long time and earned good

money and kept myself out of trouble. One dark night, however, towards midnight there was a call for my taxi and I went to the address given. I found seven men who wanted to get into the little taxi. I spoke to those men in words like this: "The owner of this taxicab has given me certain rules. It is not my taxi and I have to obey the owner. I am not permitted to take more than four at one time. If you wish I will have another car sent to you or I'll make a second trip after I have taken four of you."

The men did not listen to me but they all climbed into the car and they said, "*Allez* (Drive on)!"

I did not start the car and they became very angry, for they were drunk. I tried again to tell them my rules, but they shouted at me and said they would beat me if I did not drive on.

There was nothing for me to do but to start the car and that I did. I drove back to my boss at his hotel. That made the men still more angry and they called loudly for the owner of the taxi and they said to him: "This driver of yours is most insolent and will not obey our orders. He refuses to drive us to our homes. He should be punished."

The owner came out and called me aside and asked what was the trouble and why I was rude to my passengers. I said I was not rude but was obeying the rule that he himself had given me, which was that I should take only four passengers at a time lest the car break down with overweight.

The owner went to the car and counted seven men. He, too, became angry and told them to get out of his machine. He said he would not hire a car to them that night or any other night. Those seven men had to get out of the car and

go home the best way they could, on that dark Congo night at near midnight.

I think I had a good reputation as a taxi driver because I tried to follow these rules every day:

- (1) I respected everybody, whites and natives.
- (2) I cleaned the taxi every day and made it shine.
- (3) I did not try to deceive people as to the price of the taxi and I did not overcharge the passengers.
- (4) I did not use wine or strong drink.
- (5) I kept out of palavers with my boss and the other workmen he had.

I was a chauffeur for four and a half years. I was well paid and the tips increased my pay. I was not happy, however. The hours of work were long and I was called at any time of night or day. I seldom could plan to go to church gatherings, for often just as I was starting out someone would want the taxi. I thought about getting another job.

I remembered that my contract had about three more months to run and one day I mentioned to the hotel keeper that I wanted to leave him when the contract was finished. He did not want to let me go, but as I had been with him a long time he could not but agree that I was free to look for another job. I said I wanted to get some work that would allow me to go to church any time there was a service, and also to attend committee meetings. When the time came for the contract to end I left and went to spend a few months learning the tailor trade.

I soon became a sewer of clothes in my own right. I had owned a sewing machine for a long time and now I had

patterns and methods of doing work on my own. Now I could go to church any time I wanted to go. The church I attended was at Coquilhatville and the missionaries were those of the Disciples of Christ Congo Mission. The men and women of that mission and I were very good friends. They treated me well and helped me in many ways and I, too, could help in the church services. Sometimes I was asked to preach. This I liked to do very much.

There were many sewers of clothes in Coquilhatville and each of us was registered at the *administrateur's* office as a native tailor. The large number of these tailors did not hinder me from getting all the business I could do. I studied their methods and I thought I could find some better ways to carry on my little business. We talked freely to one another and I found out the reasons why some of them did not get much work to do. Here are some of the reasons.

When a customer bought cloth to sew, the tailor would ask him also to bring the thread for sewing. Then the tailor would sew the garments very fast and very poorly and in a short time all the sewing would rip and the customer would not be pleased at all. The tailors never sewed on the buttons and never made the buttonholes. They often cut the garment so that they could save some of the cloth and that cloth they would hide and sell to someone else. Long arguments about the price of the work would often end in their calling one another bad names. Sometimes the state officer had to settle the dispute and those tailors got a very bad reputation.

Most of these things I heard about in the visiting that went on in the town. I decided to do the opposite to those

already established in the sewing trade. I knew there would be good reward for running my business along the right lines and I knew my father would have wanted me to do that and certainly the church had no other thought. I saw also that I must plan my methods of work or I would not be equal to the occasion when difficulties came. I thought out seven rules that would help me in the tailor business, and because I had these rules I always knew what to do. These are the methods I worked out:

- (1) Agree with the customer as to price when the job is accepted.
- (2) Arrange in advance about payment for the work—that is, cash or credit. White men always paid cash.
- (3) I would use my own patterns and I would sew the garments so that they would not rip at the first wearing. I would shrink all the cloth in cold water.
- (4) I would not promise the work unless I knew I could have it finished at the time agreed upon.
- (5) I would supply the buttons and cloth for bindings and make the buttonholes and press the garment when it was finished.
- (6) I would estimate before the garment was cut the amount of cloth brought. If there was too much, I would return it to the owner.
- (7) Because I had plenty of work I would often agree to teach a worthy man the tailor trade. I also taught him honest and fair methods.

IT WAS DURING THE YEAR 1932 that I began to think seriously about going to the school known to us by its French name, *Institut Chrétien Congolais*. That school was located at Bolenge. The school had a new plot of ground that joined the old Bolenge station. Coquilhatville and Bolenge are just ten kilometers apart. I had read about the school in the mission journal, *Ekim'ea Nsango*, but at first I did not think I could become a student. Each time I went to Bolenge I went to see the new plot of land and I saw they were building all the buildings with bricks. Even the student cottages were made from bricks. The place did look very nice.

One day when I returned from Bolenge I was telling the Coquilhatville missionaries all about the lay-out of the school and how happy the native Christians were at this new opportunity in education, when *Mama* said, "Why don't you enter the school?" That was a bit of a shock. I said that I would try and the very next day she gave me the entrance examination that she had received only a day or two before our conversation.

I waited for the report on my examination with a little impatience, as I had never written anything like it before. In the meantime I learned as much as possible about the school. I was soon speaking of the school as the old-timers did, as "I.C.C."—only we gave the French pronunciation "E, Se, Se" to those letters. It was a happy day when *Mama* sent a note to my home telling me that I had passed that examination.

One thing we learned about the school was that each student besides passing the examination had to be sponsored by the elders of the local church. The elders approved me as

a suitable student, but many questions came because of the request for me to leave Coquilhatville. It was not just a matter of questions, but there was a real temptation to continue my work at Coquilhatville, where I was doing quite well, rather than to break off there and make a new beginning by becoming a student in the Congo Christian Institute.

Quite a lot of my friends heard of my plans and they came to me and argued in this fashion: "Wanga Yoane, why is this that you are going to leave us? What have we done that you should now hate us? We are glad to get our clothes made by you and we always pay our debts, don't we? If there is any one that won't pay you, let us know who it is. Why should you go to school again? Get the thought out of your head that you are leaving Coquilhatville, because we are not going to permit that to happen."

I said, however, that I fully intended to go to the Congo Christian Institute. They came again with these words: "You do not lack wisdom. What other wisdom is there that you could learn? You make a very good living by sewing and tailor work. You are a full grown man, not a child any more. School is for children, not for grown people. If you go to school again you will not be able to sew any more, and you will be hungry and so will your wife. Give up that notion of going to school again and we shall all be happy."

I could only reply like this: "Friends of mine, you talk very well and maybe you think I have finished getting wisdom because I sew quite well. I myself know that I lack a great many things. I am not well educated. I am like a little child in wisdom and like one just beginning a journey who cannot see far ahead. Even if I cannot sew while there

as I do now, and I may be hungry and lack many things, still I am going. My wife wants to go, too, and in November we shall move to Bolenge."

Those friends of mine did not want to give up the argument and they kept on talking. "You are a full grown man. Children's heads are not hard like yours and they can learn things out of books. But at your age your head has become hard and it will be waste of time for you to go. We want you to stay with us."

I smiled and said, "When the dry season comes and all the village goes to the swamp to fish, will all those who go in the early morning come back at night with the same amount of fish?"

"*Lako* (Not at all)," they said. "There will be great differences between the people. Some find a good place where they kill many fish. Some bail out the water in the pools but there are no fish in them. Some always come home disappointed and some very contented. But what has that got to do about you leaving us?"

"That is what happens to those who go to school," I said. "Some get a great deal out of a class and others very little. Some are interested in the subject and some are not. At the end of the school year there will be quite a difference in the amount of wisdom that the various students have gained. It is not just a matter of being *hard-headed*, but rather the amount of effort they put forth. Some who went fishing did not find good fishing places, it was true, but some did not try much. They visited the whole of the day and they fished very little and at night their baskets were not very heavy."

"But you are now an elder in the church at Coquilhatville.

Are you going to become just a learner once more and give up your position as an elder? You mean that you want to discredit yourself in this town and have the people say, 'See, Wanga Yoane is now only a student'?

"Even if I did abase myself, which I am not doing, it would not matter. 'Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' If a blind man leads another who is also blind on a long journey to a town far away will they get very far?"

"*Lako!* A person who is dead in the eyes will never lead another on a long or short journey. Both will fall into a hole."

"The blind man and I do not differ at all. Even if I may be counted worthy to be an elder in the church, I know I do not have enough wisdom for that kind of work. I wish to go to a school among Christians so that I may be taught the right way. If I am not taught properly, and I still try to do the work of an elder, I may teach people things that are not true and I may lead people into many errors. I know I must prepare myself for the work. If you stop me from going and there are mistakes in the future, you will share with me the shame of those mistakes."

After this my friends left me, but as they went they still complained that I had made a great mistake and I should soon find that out. My wife and I moved to Bolenge and we were given one of the school cottages to live in. With the house went a plot of ground out in the land that was once forest. We were told to plant one third of it and allow the other two thirds to rest. We planted manioc and plantains

there, and we had tomatoes and pineapples and onions and ducks and chickens close to the house.

Things were pretty hard for me. I was somewhat older than most of the students, but they were not children as my friends had supposed they would be. I soon found we had to live on very much less than we had grown accustomed to. I was the first student to go to school and support myself wholly by sewing. I could give only a limited amount of time to that work, and of course I lost many former customers. I paid my own tuition, bought books, papers, pencils, and other things needed. Then my wife and I were raising two children from our families. Their parents had died and we looked after a small boy and a girl. We got along well because we were determined to show courage in every matter that came.

I never made a debt while I was in school. I paid all the tuition myself and all other expenses. Our children grew and our garden helped us in food stuffs and both my wife and I were able to help others in many small ways. By sewing a few minutes each day I was able to earn enough to keep us going.

I was happy to find my memory was still good. I could remember almost the exact words of the teacher when the important part of the lesson was taught. My grades were A's and B's. The long courses in the Scriptures were a great delight to me. We studied God's Word from cover to cover. In mathematics and geography I did very well, but French was more difficult for me.

The studies of our own people were very helpful. I found that people from other sections of the country had different

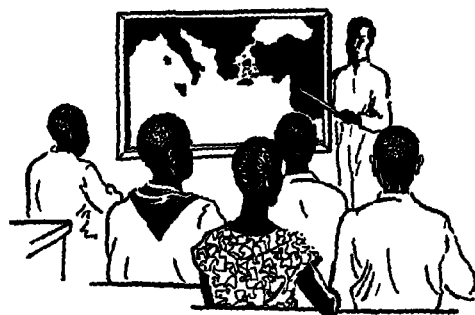
ideas and different folk stories. I learned all those that I could. The class was taught so as to encourage us to adjust our thoughts and our habits to the new teaching of the gospel. Some of our old ways had to be put aside but there were many basic ways of our fathers that were greatly strengthened by the teachings of Christ.

I found how true the teachings of Jesus were. I wanted to follow him and I was given many opportunities to serve him. At the Bolenge Church where all the students attended, I first helped in the Sunday school classes. Then the church asked me to become an elder and I helped with the Lord's Table and attended the elders' meetings every Tuesday afternoon. The pastor of the church sometimes asked me to preach on Sunday morning. Preaching was a delight and I enjoyed very much setting forth the gospel.

The fellowship in the school and church was good. My wife found many friends among the wives of the students and I had a number who came to visit between classes. Before I could believe it the three years were ended and graduation day came.

Two native teachers were members of the faculty during my years at school and now two more were to be added. I was surprised to learn on graduation day that I had been chosen for that work.

*In teaching the way
of truth I have my
greatest joy...*



SOON LEARNED THAT A GOOD way to teach in the Congo Christian Institute was to tell our native proverbs and to sing our folk songs. I learned, too, that things seen on the blackboard were much better remembered. My chapel period once a week gave me an opportunity to illustrate what I wanted to say. The large blackboards built into the walls in all the classrooms at the school provided plenty of space for outlining of lessons and drawings. On those blackboards I would put a proverb or a line of song or an illustrated sermon and that helped to hold the attention. Many of the students made copies of my illustrated talks and took them home to their villages.

We found that the students did better work when we had six weeks of school and one of rest. School work and doing things by the clock were so strange to all of us. We never did things in a hurry in our village homes. Only a very few of the students owned a watch or clock but they could tell the time by the large school clock. The women were not as good at telling the time. They followed the path of the sun to arrange their work. The drum called us to work and the bell called for school.

Some of the students, I noticed, were a little duller than others and when they failed to catch the meaning of any of their school lessons they felt ashamed because the brighter students laughed at them. At one of my chapel periods I thought I would give a little encouragement and urge every-

one to persevere in his work. I told the tale of how a tortoise won a race with an antelope because the antelope, overconfident, lay down to rest and fell asleep. The tortoise just kept going.

The students laughed at this story as they always do at such folk tales. I said: "Stay with your perseverance in all things and at all times. The tortoise won his race not by speed but by perseverance. Any of you students can pass the term's examination if you, like the tortoise, press on to the end."

After that I noticed that some of the students who were behind in their studies took on new life. They tried harder and when the end of the term came they passed with credit.

AT ANOTHER TIME I was giving a course in the customs of our fathers. I was teaching a class of women who were the wives of the students. One of the women surprised me by asking, "Our fathers never knew 'book'—how could they teach anybody?"

That was a question to keep in the open. I did not want to answer it myself, so I said, "Can any of you say why our fathers sang folk-lore or answered proverbs?"

"Our fathers sang folk-lore and answered proverbs because they taught people that way," answered one of the women.

Another said, "I was taught much in the villages by the songs of our fathers and the answers to our salutations. Some nights we would gather in front of the house of an

elder and he would tell us long stories with many a truth in them. Then we would say, 'Quote us a proverb,' and he would answer with some short sentence that was worth thinking about."

The women continued to talk about the way their fathers passed on their wisdom. One said, "Teacher, could not we women give a little pageant in chapel some morning and show what our fathers did?"

I was very happy to hear such a suggestion but I did not want to seem too enthusiastic lest the rest of the class would turn the matter down. Our fathers did not have many good things, it is true, and there is sometimes a tendency to belittle what they did have. I hoped the women would make good this suggestion. I said, "What do you all think about giving a pageant?"

"How shall we do it?" they nearly all said.

We had caught them in the right mood and soon we were working on the program for the pageant.

We arranged that six would give proverbs teaching wisdom and five would be the guests of Louisa who would be the one to introduce the meaning of the pageant to the students. The six occasions for the pageant scenes would cover different attitudes toward life in the village.

These were the subjects as the women planned them:

- (1) Beginnings may be small, but don't despise them.
- (2) The attitude of a wife in a harem.
- (3) In-law relationships.
- (4) Take good advice; don't get into a fight.
- (5) Prepare for something better than you now have.
- (6) Don't make friendship one-sided.

Louisa was the oldest woman in the class. She began speaking in a very high voice, which showed how nervous she was, and she had great trouble keeping her feet still. She said: "Our fathers did not know 'book' but they did have much wisdom. They had no schools, but they did teach proverbs and stories. Five of us women will sit in my house and other women will come to visit us and give us answers to our questions. I hope you will notice that our fathers did teach wise things."

Then the women came in, each bringing her little low stool that is used when preparing a meal or sitting over the cooking pot. They found places around Louisa and greeted her with our different salutations: "Mama Louisa, are you awake?" "Older sister, are you there?" One even tried a little French, "*Bon jour, Madame.*"

They all sat down except the largest woman in school, whose name was Ludia. Louisa asked her, "Ludia, have you come?"

"Yes, I have come."

"Give us a proverb," asked Louisa.

"*Me-Me—akita nta.*"

The students roared. Her proverb was: "The little kid begins by just being able to bleat and in a very short time it is a full-sized goat." Ludia was a very big woman, but she was once very tiny. She laughed with the rest, and she said: "Little beginnings are not to be despised. The kid was so very small but he soon was the large goat in the village. We women are making small beginnings. We are not as clever as the men, but if we keep on we too shall be able to learn wisdom. Our fathers never did despise little things. Those

beginnings might grow very large. This school grows from year to year."

Then Sala stood up. Her face had many tribal markings on it and she could imitate others. In her reply for a proverb her voice was very sarcastic. For a brief period she had lived in a harem and so her proverb may have had some past experience in it. She said, "*Eka ngoya, eka ngoya, ntoy-leka tenake* (At my mother's, at my mother's, do you not bring anything that we can see)?" This is the remark of a polygamous husband who sees one of his wives just returning home. This proverb does not give the whole of the conversation, but it is something like this. "Where have you been?" asks the husband.

"At my mother's," is the wife's reply.

The husband is seeking a quarrel and he says, "At my mother's, at my mother's! If you were there, where is something you bring back to show you were visiting your home? You take things from this house to your mother. What do you bring back again?"

It was evident that the husband did not believe his wife had been to see her mother. If she had, she would have brought back something wrapped in a leaf—maybe a piece of fish or some dried meat, perhaps some salt that was made from burning grass, or something else that her mother had given her. But Sala came home empty-handed and her husband knew she had been visiting somewhere else. He would keep scolding her until he found out where she had been visiting.

Now Sala had done her part very well and the students clapped their hands. Sala added, "We women who are

Christian can't be like those women who live in a harem. Those women lie to their husbands all the time and the husbands scold and beat them. The Scripture teaches that husband and wife should not deceive one another, but should love one another."

As Maria stood up from her place in the circle you could see she was quite young and she giggled a great deal because she was really afraid. Her voice was musical and her salutations were given in a sing-song cadence. This was her proverb: "*Olanga waji ko otona ilongo* (You love the wife and you hate the family)." Then she went on: "That sort of thing will never work. If you take a young wife and love her you should remember she has a mother and father and perhaps many other relatives. You have to get along with the family of the wife, too. If you treat them unkindly the young wife will not be happy long." She was about to sit down when she remembered the other side of the story. "The wife must love her husband's people, too, or the marriage will not be a success." She was a young wife and she was trying to follow the teaching of her proverb. The relationship of in-laws is complicated and difficult and needs much study in Congo.

Then a very graceful woman stood—one whom the women greeted as Kaala. She was quick in her movements and had a pleasant smile, but her temper could flare up at times. Her proverb was "*Bakosukaka, wamamalaka*." She gave the meaning of the proverb something like this: "If you have an occasion to get very angry in your heart and you are so irritated that you want to fight, just remember this teaching. Someone tried to advise you and stop you from using a knife

or a stick. Wait awhile till your anger dies down and the inner feeling is more peaceful. If you do not follow the advice of the person who is trying to stop you from fighting, you may find yourself in great trouble. You will regret what you have done, especially should you fall down in the palaver before the elders and have to pay out money for damages. African advice is to arbitrate before you fight."

Doluka was a friendly woman and very much liked by her fellow students. She stood up and gave her proverb: "*Imola ntondo, tumbe tokamba* (Take away the smaller nets and put up the stronger ones)." Doluka went on with the proverb: "The little things of the past are gone. Now is a new day for bigger things. Our fathers and mothers lived in the day of little things but we, their children, need to know 'book' and to learn the wisdom of the new world that has come to Africa. Take away the small nets and put in their place the big strong ones."

The sixth lesson of that day was about true friendship. "Don't make friendship one-sided." Malata was the speaker and she had a voice that was unafraid. She was a good woman and her proverb suited her and her life very well. She said, "*Boseka w'ampulu, eoto eyalengola* (Friendship of lies is the same thing as friendship of mockery). My proverb is like this: If you and your friend make up a partnership it may be a very good thing. It must be on a basis of real understanding and truth. You cannot be friendly before your partner and then when she is not present say mean and untrue things about her. You must speak well of your friend both when she is absent and when she is present. If you do not do that, you are her enemy and not her friend. That is

what my proverb means. The friendship of lies is the friendship of mockery."

Our pageant had run over into the next class period, but we had given several lessons that would be well remembered. The women then all stood together and finished the chapel service by praying together this prayer:

"O *Yawe*, God, we pray you that you do forgive us our sins. Stop our tongues that they do not speak the things that are not pleasing to you.

Remove shyness from us so that we may be bold in doing all your work.

Bless your workmen. The people who hold authority and the people who are poor, bless abundantly.

Let thy will be done on the whole of the earth in the same way it is done in heaven.

Both now and forever. Amen."

BOTOMOLE WAS THE CHILD OF ONE OF OUR STUDENTS. He was a nice little fellow but he was lame in his left leg. His parents said he was a perfect child when he was born, but one day when he was about three years old he was suddenly taken ill with fever and pains in his leg. They thought he would die, he was so ill. He finally recovered except that his leg was lame. It shrank and he was never able to walk very well afterwards.

I noticed that Botomole wanted to play as the other children did, but he could not keep up, and the children teased him a good deal. He had a very sharp tongue and sometimes

he would say in anger: "Is your mother still living?" Or maybe, "Did you have a mother?" That is very bad manners. We think of it as cursing, and many a fight grows out of such expressions. Botomole was not alone to blame. The children often teased him for a very long time.

I knew that something should be done, so one day I called the children together and said I had a story I wanted to tell them. I did it for the sake of the lame child and for the benefit of all the children who were with their parents at the school. It went like this:

Once upon a time Mosquito and another insect, which we will call Jinkinya, made a friendship between them. They helped one another each day and got along well together. Whenever there was food to eat, they ate their food together. One day they would go to the house of Mosquito and next day they would meet in the house of Jinkinya. They were quite happy as they did things together. The rest of the insects marvelled that these two could get along so well.

One day Jinkinya suggested that they go on a journey to the next village to see who lived there. Mosquito was quite willing and they arranged to start the next morning. Mosquito said, "Let's start early in the morning. I like to travel in the dark. At the very first crowing of the cock let us get on our way."

Jinkinya would much rather have waited until the sun was up but he said, "You go first and lead the way. I'll come on behind you, but do not get out of sight. I don't know the way."

Next morning as soon as the roosters began to crow those

two friends began their journey to the next village. Mosquito buzzed away as he flew and Jinkinya came along behind, following the sound. The path went through the deep forest. *Soon the sun was shining in long slanting shadows between the trees.* The morning grew on, and the sun came overhead, above the forest. As they traveled, Mosquito and Jinkinya talked about many things they saw in the forest path. There were great big holes that showed the footprints of the elephant. There were the marks of the leopard and the prints of the wild pig. It was a nice journey but they began to be tired. They still talked, however, never stopping one minute.

Then suddenly Jinkinya began to laugh out loud. Mosquito asked what the joke was, but his friend only laughed and laughed. Mosquito said, "What is it that you see and I don't? Tell me the joke."

Jinkinya said, "The joke is your legs. They are so very tiny and they are not straight. They are so small that they tremble all the time. You never eat enough to make them grow."

Mosquito was not pleased at these remarks and he replied with considerable warmth, "Why do you mention such things while we are on this journey? I could say things about you, but we are friends and it would not be nice for me to say what I know about you. This is your journey. It was you who asked me to fly this very long way and we have not seen the village yet."

But the other insect continued to laugh, and said, "Your legs are so funny. They tremble like a leaf in the morning breeze. You must be tired out."

Mosquito was now getting very angry and he said, "I can still fly. It was you who mentioned first some small things about my body. I could call up quite a few things about yourself if I wanted to do so."

"I have no infirmities like yours. Those tiny legs and that slim body are the funniest things I have ever seen. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mosquito was quite angry by now and also insulted, and he called out as loudly as he could: "O my, the smell of Jinkinya! I know now why the other insects laughed when we became friends. Your body gives off a very offensive smell all the time. You must not have had a bath for three years. When we get to the village people will say, 'Here comes Jinkinya. You don't have to see him, you can smell him.' Jinkinya, your smell is terrible. I don't see how we ever became friends."

When Jinkinya heard these things he was very much ashamed. He could not help the smell that came from his body because he was made that way, but he too became very angry and in his anger he did not say a word. He rushed out into the forest and found a long vine and hanged himself.

This was a very old story of ours, but it was new to the children. Most of our stories are given and no application is made to local affairs as the story speaks for itself. But I wanted the children to see that Botomole had had trouble through no fault of his own. They needed to help one another and not talk of his lameness, and he should not curse the mothers of everybody. This is the way our little visit ended:

"Botomole was a perfect child when he was born. All the people of his village marvelled at the beautiful way his body grew. He smiled and laughed at his mother and the children came to see him and soon he was beginning to crawl and walk. Then one day he was sick and after that he never walked well. We should not laugh at people's troubles and we should not say hard things about our friends' parents, because if we do someone may get very angry and do something terrible. Remember what the insect Jinkinya did to himself."

I LIKED TO HAVE FRIENDS COME TO SEE ME. The students I always called friends. They would come into my house and we would visit about many things. Sometimes it would be about the subjects I taught in the school and sometimes about the subjects the missionaries taught. One day we began something like this:

"How many of you students make an agreement about *ikelemba* (pooling money) and why do you do it?"

They replied: "We all belong to little groups of money pooling. We do it so that we can have a little extra money." (*Ikelemba* is a Congo plan between relatives or friends whereby the weekly wage, perhaps the whole of it, or perhaps a certain part, is given to different members in the pool each week. "A" takes all the wages the first week. "B" and "C" take none. The second week "B" takes all the wages. "A" and "C" take none. The third week "C" takes all the wages, and "A" and "B" take none. Then they begin over again. Among real and true friends who are honest the

method works, but if one proves unfaithful there is much trouble. If there are too many in the pool, the lean weeks are very hard ones. It is a method of helping one another brought down to us from the unforgotten past.)

"Do you find *ikelemba* a safe and good method?" I asked.

"Yes, among friends and people whom you know well, and if the pool is not too large. If, however, it is among strangers, there will be no end of deceit."

"Wanga Yoane," they asked me, "don't you have an *ikelemba*?"

"I used to do that as a boy, but I have not done so for years. I now try to take care of my own money and then I do not get into quarrels with friends or strangers."

"You have more money than we have, so you don't have to have a little extra each third or fourth week," said a little freshman.

"You do it to have a little extra money," I said. "What do you do to *save* money, if you have any to save?"

Malako said they made their way through school in this way: "First we work each afternoon on the school campus and we are paid by the hour. That is regular work. Then we make a garden which helps to provide our food; then we have a cash garden where we grow tomatoes and cabbage and lettuce. On Saturdays we go to Coquilhatville and we can usually sell all the garden produce we take with us. Our wives gather great leaves which the native women of Coquilhatville use in their cooking. That is how we get money. If I had any to keep, I should keep it in my pantaloons because I wear them all the time and no thief can steal my money."

We all smiled at that new freshman, and I asked, "Do you all think that the place to keep a little extra money is in the pockets of your pantaloons?"

Albert didn't think so. "If I had extra money I would not keep it in the pocket of my pantaloons. If it was hard money some of it might fall out and that would be a loss. Then again, if it was paper money, you might go to the river to wash and forget that you had money in your pantaloons and all the money would be spoiled. Didn't Luka yesterday go to Is'otomba with some spoiled money to see if he would change it? If, however, you kept money in coin it would be far too heavy to carry around. If I had money I would keep it in the house in a strong box."

"Do you all think that is the best way?" I wanted to know.

Matayo said it would do if you had a very strong lock, but he added, "My father used to say the best protection against a thief was some strong charms. If the thief sees the thief-charms he lets the money alone."

Thomas said, "A good lock is best. Thieves do not fear charms any more. People used to be afraid of them but many no longer are. They could not hurt you, anyway."

"Well, Thomas," I asked, "what are you doing with your extra money? You sew and make a little."

"I ask the missionary to keep it in the mission bank."

(Translator's note: The Mission takes care of cash for the mission people. It is only an accommodation and no interest is made on the money and none is given to the depositors. The reason for keeping the money is to encourage men to save and also to help them protect themselves from the new kinds of thieves that civilization brings. Regular commercial

banks had not begun to receive deposits from the natives when this was written.)

Tito, however, had another idea. He wanted to build a strong room inside a house and have a strong box inside the strong room. The house he called strong would be made of poles and vines and mud. He said, "If a man wanted to keep his money, he could keep it in that strong house. The owner of the house would receive the money and give it back again when the man wanted it."

I asked, "Would the owner of the house be paid for taking care of the money; and would he give back some more money on top of the amount he received?"

Tito had not thought the matter through but he replied that the owner would not be paid, but he would keep the money in separate places and give the same money back again just as he received it. He said, "That is the way our fathers do with rods and anklets." (*Translator's note:* Only a few years ago the people of Africa used brass rods and anklets for currency. They also did much trading by barter—a bunch of plantains for so much wild meat, or a pile of manioc for so many fish.)

"If some one breaks into that strong house, who would be the loser?" asked Pierre.

That would be for the elders to decide, everybody agreed.

I continued to ask questions about things that were new to them. Our people never had friends keep money for them and then return that money with interest. Getting the money back safely was considered quite an accomplishment. Something else on top was another thing. We knew about trading

and exchanging and making profit, but not with money as such.

Filipo asked, "In one of the classes taught in the Congo Christian Institute they tell about banking money in a bank and returning money over and above the amount you put in. I have not had that study yet. Is there anything in such a statement and how is it done?"

A senior was present and of course he could answer. "Up at Coquilhatville is a bank. It is in a very large house on the road in front of the river. It is called the *Banque du Congo Belge*. The native people call it the *Société*. At this bank they receive deposits from white men and they lend out money to commerce and other activities. They get a profit from lending the money. They lend their own money and the deposits also and they give an agreed amount to those who deposit their money with them. They call that 'interest.' It is a bit strange to us but it works, so they say."

I could hear the rest of the group clicking their fingers and making noises with their lips as they wondered at such a method. Our people never trusted strangers in that way. They asked, almost all together, "They are all friends, aren't they?" I could not tell about that, but I said that people working in the bank had to be very honest people and before they were given such a job they had to be very well trained for their work. They were known as very good people.

Some of the older men who had seen their fathers handle brass rods and anklets didn't at once see how such ways would work, but the younger ones who had had francs and centimes as long as they could remember felt that they would like to see how the new ways work in the new Africa.

Leon insisted that these things would be African ways, too, in the near future. Leon was born in a white man's town. He never had lived in a forest village. He summed up the matter this way:

"When we have a little extra money we should save it and the best way to do it is to put the money away where these three things are possible:

- (1) You bank your money where interest is paid on the deposits.
- (2) The bank is known to have a strong place made of iron where thieves cannot break in and steal.
- (3) In such a bank there must be a good caretaker and there should be police to guard the place night and day."

I thought that would end the matter, but Eliya came back with these thoughts: "That is a good idea that Leon has given, but it does not end the matter. There are means of destroying money. What about rust and moths and thieves that break in and steal? We have not heard about those things yet."

I urged Eliya to tell us a better place where money could be kept than the bank of Congo Belge or any other place. He then said: "I think the bank that is safer than any place on earth is the Bank of Heaven. In that place there are four things that you can be sure about. They are like this:

- (1) In that bank rust does not destroy your money.
- (2) Moths cannot destroy anything there.
- (3) There is no chance for a thief to do anything.

- (4) There is no need of police to stand before that bank
· night and day."

"How do you get to heaven," I asked Eliya, "to bank your money there? I know it says in the Scriptures that you should lay aside your wealth in heaven but it is not clear to me how it is done. That airplane that was flying very high this morning over the school—you could see it for a moment between the clouds and then it was gone entirely. Did it reach heaven?"

"No, of course not. We could not see it but after awhile we heard it land at Coquilhatville. People who have been up in airplanes say they never have seen heaven that way. Some of our natives who are servants for the Governor fly with him and they don't seem to be very astonished at what they see."

I continued, "Banking money in heaven—is it a real thing that you can do, or is it a parable—something you do in an indirect way?"

Mose said, "The way we understand you lay aside money in heaven is this: You cannot bank francs in heaven but you look after people who are in need of help—that is, sick people, or people in trouble, hungry people. Or you give a cup of water, or you visit the sick and cheer them up, and you encourage people to follow the Christian way. You may even go to the prison and talk to some of the prisoners as they come out to work—tell them about their families and encourage them in their days of troubles."

"That is a very good way to bank money in heaven, and the opposite is when you do *not* feed the hungry, or give water to the thirsty, or care for strangers that come to the

village, or buy a shirt for the naked, or visit the sick or those in prison. When you neglect those things you bank no money in heaven."

Then Mose read from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46. From that passage we learned these two things: A group of people who cared for those in sore need would inherit the eternal kingdom. A group of people who were mean and stingy and would not help others would receive punishment that never would end.

From this discussion it was agreed that there were ways of taking care of your extra money on earth which had to be discovered, but the way to wealth in heaven was quite clear in the Scriptures: "Sell that ye have, and give alms . . . lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

WHEN I FIRST BECAME A TEACHER in the Congo Christian Institute many visitors came to see me and my wife. Visiting has been one of the strong ties in our African life. At the school, however, we could have visitors only for brief periods, as the opportunity on the school ground was limited. I built a brick house out in the village and in that we could do as our fathers had done before us—visit to our hearts' content.

In our house visitors always found things strange to them. My wife and I eat our meals together. That is not done in most villages. We read all the books, and especially the

Bible, together. I have note-books and school papers and maps that go with my school work. The maps on the wall were always a source of new conversations.

One day five men came for a visit. Three of them were as old as I am and perhaps older, so I asked them for the usual polite greetings in our Congo proverbs. The two younger asked me for my proverbs. In this way we show respect for age.

It happened that on this day of the coming of my visitors I was just finishing a map of Palestine in the time of Christ. It was made on white cloth and was about a meter in length and about eighty-five centimeters wide. The provinces were made in different colors and the roads and rivers likewise.

As soon as my guests were seated, the oldest one, Bokungu, asked, "Did you make that *carte* (map)?"

"I have just made it," I said. "It took me nearly a week and I have now hung it up to dry."

"I could never do anything like that," said Bokungu. "It is too hard a work and I am not skillful enough for anything like that."

"*Mpokuseya ntakambak'olemo* ('I am not able' never does any work)," I said.

"I don't forget that proverb of our fathers," Bokungu replied. "I have often said the same thing to my son. Several years ago I went to school to search for some wisdom. I learned to read and write a little and I could do some simple sums, but when they began to teach geography and other things I left school because I was not able to do the work. I think my god does not give me wisdom and therefore does not like me. Your god must like you because you can do so

many things—build a brick house, sew garments, make maps. And you can write book. Your god likes you.”

I saw at once that our visit would be profitable if I could keep the conversations in the right lines, so I said: “Our fathers always thought just as you do now, that each person had his own god or helper. If a man did well he thought his god was a great helper and if a man was not a very good worker, his god was not much good. Those thoughts are not correct, however. There is one God only. He is the Creator and Father of all men. He loves all men and he gives to each person all the powers he should have.

“When you went to school, if you had put all your heart into your work and never had turned back, you most certainly would have been able to do such work as you now see on that map of Palestine. In our school, the Congo Christian Institute, we try first to teach the right truths and attitudes regarding God and when students get those thoughts correct they find they can do many other things.”

There was a buzz among the visitors and each of them tried to have his say. It was plain that all did not agree with Bokungu about each man having his own little god.

Iyombe gained a hearing and he said: “That is the point about those students in the Congo Christian Institute. We are amazed at what many of them can do. Those boys surprise their own fathers and mothers when they come back to their own villages. Before some of them entered that school we thought they were lazy. They had weak and puny bodies. Now we watch them play ball in a way we never dreamed was possible and we see them cutting grass with long, sharp knives. Their bodies shine in the sunshine and they work and

act like giants. They are different in many other ways. They are like people who have a purpose in life and they always seem to have a great deal of work to do. What is it that you teachers do to those students? Do you give them some kind of charm, or some new kind of medicine which brings about so great a change?"

I saw a smile on the face of one of the guests when Iyombe mentioned charms as a means of changing dispositions of people. That is what our charmers and witch-doctors wanted people to believe. In fact, that is what they taught, as such teaching helped them in their business. I then said, "No, the teachers do not give the students any charms or medicine to change them. You can ask Is'otomba about that and he will tell you the same thing. In the hospital you will not find any medicine that will change the heart or mind or disposition. The teachers do one certain thing, and that is they bring about changes in people by *teaching*."

"If the students really absorb the teaching of the school, both that of the missionaries and the teachers of this land, you will certainly notice the difference when the graduates come home. We try to give each student new knowledge and new opportunity for a different way of life from what our fathers knew."

These men understood what I was saying, but the next question showed they had discretion also. Bofiloko said: "We notice that most of the students are different, but still there are some who do not change much. In fact, after a while they become again just like us who never had the chance to hear the teaching. Why is that?"

"Yes, we have to admit," I said, "that some graduates do

not do so well. Say that we have a hundred graduates. If eighty-five of them fit into the new way of life we could then say that there are some pretty good teachers in that school. If eighty-five out of every hundred make a name for themselves in the villages to which they go we should be pleased, even if there are the other fifteen who make us very sad.

"If, however, the matter was the other way around—if seventy or eighty of the hundred never did make any change in their lives and never did much for the villages, then you could say that the teachers in that school do not amount to anything, and you might even think that the school itself is a failure. If the students go about their work with the attitude of 'I cannot do this' and 'I cannot do that,' they are headed for failure. When they come to the villages and find problems both new and old and say, 'I can't do anything about such things,' you may be sure they never mastered the first *teaching* in that school."

Then Efomi, who had been looking hard at the map and who had hardly been inside a village school, said: "You say that is the map of the country where Jesus lived. Is all the world shown on that map?"

"No, that is not a map of the world. It is a small part of the world. Palestine, where Jesus lived, was a small part of the continent of Asia."

"Is that so?" Efomi said. "We have heard that in this school you have a picture-like map that shows the whole world. Do you really have anything like that?"

I took out from a drawer in my table the map of the world and I said, "Behold, the map of the whole world!"

Efomi and his friends looked at the map in wonder. I

do not think that map meant much to them. They had never gone to school much and they found the map very hard to read. I said: "The large parts of land are called by different names. We speak of the continents of Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. Then there are of course very many parts known as islands."

Bonkema, who had not said anything, asked: "You named five continents, but one of your boys taught there were six. Was he mistaken?"

"Both of us are right. He named North America a continent and South America a continent. Sometimes people do divide the continents in that way."

They continued to ask questions. They were puzzled by the new words. "What is 'continent'?" they asked.

I said we used the French word because our fathers never had heard about the whole world, or even about the larger parts of Africa. 'Continent' was a very large piece of land and most of that large piece would be surrounded by water.

"Now is there any difference between continent and colony?" they wanted to know. "These young boys of ours are always giving out new words and we do not know what they mean and some of us get angry because we find that we ask foolish questions."

I said that no one would get angry today because we were just visiting and I would answer all questions as best I could. I said, "'Colony' is a different thing from 'continent' and is not really a name in geography. A colony might be an island or part of a continent. It has to do with a piece of land that is ruled by men of other nations. For example, we live in Africa, which is a continent, but we also live in the colony of

Congo Belge. That is, the white men of Belgium rule this part of Africa and call it a colony.

"Many white men from many nations live in Belgian Congo, but it is not their colony. The country of Belgium rules this colony, and certain of the white men who come out here to do that work we call officers of the State. Then many other white men from Belgium are here, too, and they work in commerce and industries."

"Now that is beginning to clear up," they said. "We now begin to see the way things are worked out. As we came to see you, the five of us, we had quite a dispute about the amount of water and land in the world. Three of us said that there was much more land than water, and two of us said that there was much more water. Do you know the answer?"

I could see that our students had been teaching children, and children had been teaching parents, and that things were moving in the villages. The elders in the villages thought they knew most things, and as most of them were land people and had never seen the sea or the lakes of Africa, they could be expected to think of the land as exceeding the water. The Congo is very big, but even so it is not as big as the forest around our homes. I had to tell the five, "You are three against two, but the smaller number wins." In our language of Lonkundo, it is necessary to state the matter so they can understand, so I said, "Water has three parts from four parts, and land has one part from four parts."

Bokungu took the matter up. "That is different from what we thought. We only see rivers and creeks and I never have seen a lake. We thought that land surfaces were very great

indeed. I heard a boy telling another about the great amount of water and he used names I could not pronounce. He said a name like 'Ocean Atlantic.' What does that mean? Is that all the water you speak about?"

Then I showed them again the world map with the land and great oceans, and I said, "All that water is not called Atlantic Ocean. There are oceans as there are continents. They are named 'Atlantic Ocean,' 'Pacific Ocean,' 'Indian Ocean,' and there are two more—the 'Arctic Ocean' and the 'Antarctic Ocean.' Then you must remember something about the water in those oceans that is quite new to us. That is that all the water there is salt water. It is not fit to drink. Where did the salt come from? From the land where the salt has dissolved during the ages and the rivers have carried it to the sea. These oceans are different sizes. First, is the Pacific, next is the Atlantic, and then the Indian."

My friends were still for a long time. I knew they understood only a portion of the things I had said and I was glad of a rest. They would get some school-boy to go over these things again. The lessons were too large, but these guests might not come again for a long time.

I was just getting ready for more explanations when Bokungu had this to ask: "Teacher, there have been many things we have not thought about until those boy-teachers and those grown-up teachers began to tell new things in our forest homes. We used to talk about the debts we had, the wives that had run off, the dowry we paid for those women, and the hunting and fishing. Now we hear new things all the time. For instance, our village is flat, and if I could see the end of the path that came into our village at one end and

the other end that is lost again in the forest, the land would be mostly flat. Now those teachers say the world is not that way, but resembles an orange on a very large scale. What do you say about that?"

"That is what we now believe," I said. "Africa has many hills and mountains, but here we live in a flat part of the country which is covered with forest. Now the whole earth has no small end or tip, like the tip of an arrow. It has no end like the farthest end of a village street. Truly the earth is like the fruit of an orange."

Iyombe took me up and asked: "How do people know that the earth is like the shape of an orange?"

"Let me ask you this question. When you were a child in your own village, did you think there was another village?"

"No, I thought there was no other village in the world except the one in which we lived."

"How did you come to know there was another village, in fact many other villages?"

"Well, later on as I began to notice things, I saw other people pass through our village and they did not live with us. Then some of our people went on journeys and when they came back they told us of things they had seen. And one day my father took me on a short journey. Then I saw other villages and I knew I had been wrong when I had thought that our village was the only one in the world."

"Long ago most men thought as you did," I explained. "They said that it was not safe to go on long journeys to unknown places. They were afraid they might come to the end or the beginning of the earth and fall off into great

holes. The path that goes by my house begins down by the great Congo River and the other end goes out into the forest. You might get drowned at one end in the Congo River and you might meet an elephant or a leopard in the forest at the other end, and get killed. The earth is not like that, with a beginning and an ending.

"Look at this orange. You can begin anywhere on that orange and go in the same direction and you come back to the place you started. Long ago, after the time of Jesus, men wanted to make long journeys. Some of them never came back, some died of hunger and disease, and some were killed. But other people took up the unfinished work. Those people proved that if you keep going in the same direction long enough you can return to the place where you started.

"In school we read about David Livingstone and Henry M. Stanley. They were two among the many who explored large parts of Africa. Livingstone was in parts of Africa now known as Congo Belge, but our fathers did not see him because he was in the east part of this country. Stanley, however, was well known to our fathers. He was the first white man to come down the Congo River. Yoka, who lives in a nearby village, went to see Stanley out on that island called Mwangangala and helped to sell him food. Bofeko, also, in the village of Bolenge, remembers the first visit of Stanley and other times that he visited these parts. These men helped to add to the knowledge of the world.

"In our school we teach the subject of geography, and the students are very happy about that subject as it helps them to learn many new things. They not only learn about the surface of the earth, but the different people who live

there. They learn about the food that grows there and how some of that food has been brought to Africa and is now grown in our gardens. We also send many things from Africa to other parts of the world."

This was a great afternoon for each of us. Bonkema summed up the longing of many a heart when he asked, "Shall we ever be able to do more than we do now, do you think?"

I said plainly: "He who has that attitude of our proverb, 'I am not able to do that,' will never do anything different from our fathers and will never learn anything new. But he who says, 'I'll try—I will do something else,' will most certainly succeed."

Our visit was over. I like both those who are Christians and those who are not to hear a line or two of the Scriptures before they leave our house. I therefore took my Bible and found the place where Jesus spoke these words to all people everywhere: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."

