Anna Hinderer of Yoruba.

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ANNA HINDERER OF YORUBA.[1]

I.

EARLY DAYS.

ONE of the best features of this latter part of the nineteenth century is the awakening of the conscience of the Church of Christ to obey her Master's last command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

We do right to praise God for this increasing interest in foreign missionary work. We must not, however, forget that although for many a long year the Church "slumbered and slept," there were places here and there which stood out as bright spots.

Such a place was Lowestoft in the days of its revered vicar, the Rev. Francis Cunningham. His wife, less known perhaps than her sister Elizabeth Fry, was no less devoted to the cause of Christ. In Lowestoft the banner of the cross was uplifted high, and not only were sinners roused to a sense of their need, but Christians also to a sense of their responsibility.

It is not surprising that a number of missionaries went forth from such a parish. How many men offered themselves for work amongst the heathen we know not. But in the fly-leaf of Mrs. Cunningham's Bible there is a list of "Female missionaries who have gone forth from us." Of these there are nine names, one of them being that of Anna Martin, afterwards Mrs. Hinderer.

Anna Martin was born on March 19, 1827, at Hempnall, in Norfolk. No mention is made of her father. Her mother died when she was only five years old, but she never forgot her. All through her life that bright and gentle mother was fondly cherished in her memory, and she loved to recall how she had taught her to repeat little verses from the Bible. It may be that the Word of Life thus implanted in her memory was the cause of the yearning which she had, even when a child, to be a follower of Christ.

[1] This Biography has been compiled chiefly from original matter kindly placed at the disposal of the author by relatives of Mrs. Hinderer. A few extracts have been made from *Seventeen Years in the Yoruba Country*, first published by Messrs. Seeley & Co., afterwards by the Religious Tract Society.

When she was twelve years old she went to live with her grandfather and aunt at Lowestoft, as it was thought that the pure, bracing air of the North Sea would benefit her health. But not only was she to gain physical strength and vigour in Lowestoft; better still, her soul, restless for so long, and panting after something she scarcely knew what, was to find joy and peace in believing.

As a child she had a great love for Sunday and the worship of God's house. "I felt," she wrote long afterwards, "I was in a holy place, and that holy words were being used. . . . 'Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, from whom no secrets are hid,' made me afraid of sin, and when inclined to do wrong, and be naughty, that passage would come into my mind, so that I feared, but it was not the fear of grieving my God and Saviour." Step by step she was led on. The desire to do something arose in her heart and would not be subdued. She longed to teach in the Sunday school, but feared she would be thought too young. At last she mustered courage to ask for a class, and to her great delight had six little scholars given to her. Then it was that the great turning-point in her life came. As she taught the little ones of the infinite love of Jesus she began to ask whether she herself knew Him. "I saw," she said, "my need of a Saviour, and in the Saviour I felt there was all I needed." Then, having accepted Christ as her own personal Saviour, she determined to serve Him faithfully, and with no half-hearted devotion. Religion was a very real thing to her, and was inseparably bound up with every part of her life. It was no wonder then that she could say: "I was permitted to feel a great spring and glow in religion. It was all in all to me; it was all that I wanted to make me happy in this life and in that which is to come." Would that there were more joyous Christians to tell by their bright faces, even when their lips are silent, of the gladness which Christ alone can give! We cannot measure the power of such a testimony. And it was no doubt this brightness, the beautiful reflection of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, which made Anna Martin so charming to all who knew her, and which won a way for her Master's message not only amongst the poor Suffolk fisher-folk, but afterwards amongst the dark heathen in the wilds of Africa.

II.

IN THE HOME FIELD.

WORK in the Sunday school necessarily brought her into contact with Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham, for whom from the first she entertained feelings of the warmest regard. She was often at the

vicarage, helping to lighten the many parochial burdens of the busy vicar and his wife. In fact, she became so indispensable to them that after a time she lived with them altogether.

The years spent in the vicarage at Lowestoft had a marked influence on her life, as she herself was always thankful to acknowledge. The example of bright, holy, useful lives must indeed ever act as a powerful stimulus to one who desires wholly to follow the Lord, and in both Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham she had before her eyes an eloquent testimony to what the grace of God can do for those who are entirely consecrated to Him.

No one was idle at the vicarage, and Anna Martin was not the least active of the party. Self-forgetful, her happy face telling of the joy of the Lord which possessed her soul, she had a peculiar charm for the poor and sorrowful, and her visits were eagerly looked for by her many humble friends. An intense lover of children, it was only natural that they should love her and cluster round her. A Sunday-school class for ragged children, which she commenced when only fourteen years old, became in course of time a school of over 200.

Missionary work had always a great fascination for her. "I had a strong desire," she says, "to become a missionary—to give myself up to some holy work, and I had a firm belief that such a calling would be mine." This desire grew and intensified with years, and with it the belief that some day, she knew not when or how, God would honour His servant by sending her forth as an ambassador of the gospel of peace to the poor heathen in some far distant land. The longing of many years was satisfied when on the 14th of October, 1852, she was married in the beautiful old church of St. Margaret's, Lowestoft, to the Rev. David Hinderer, a missionary who, though of German birth, had received part of his training for the ministry in England, and since 1848 had been working in connection with the Church Missionary Society in Yoruba, a country situated on the eastern part of the Slave Coast district, in Western Africa, bounded towards the sea by the Bight of Benin, and extending northwards to the central table-land through which the Western Niger flows. This district, as well as those adjacent, was known then as now as "the white man's grave." The risk to life which she must needs encounter in such a country was no secret to her, and she knew that in choosing a missionary's lot she would have to exchange ease and comfort for hardship and privation, and that she must endure the pang of parting from those who were so dear to her that she loved to call them her "parental friends." But, intent on doing His will, her eyes were ever towards the Lord, and she saw His finger in a call to fresh service. Promptly and gladly she obeyed.

III.

ABEOKUTA.

On the 6th of December, 1852, Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer set sail from Plymouth. They formed part of a little band—ten in all—proceeding to West Africa.

The voyage was a rough one almost throughout, and for ten days the wind blew a gale; but two days before Christmas, "on the most lovely summer evening," they anchored in the Gambia opposite the little town of Bathurst. Here Mrs. Hinderer was delighted to see for the first time some of the people amongst whom her lot was to be cast. These were easily known by the tattoo patterns on their faces, which constituted their distinguishing tribal marks. Their delight was great when Mr. Hinderer addressed them in their own language, and reached its climax when they learned that he was taking a wife with him to Yoruba.

It was not until the 5th of January that the party landed at Lagos. Here they remained for just three weeks. During this time Mrs. Hinderer had her first experience of African malarial fever, and she had barely recovered from it when they started on their three days' journey from the coast to Abeokuta. In spite of her weakness, she found much to enjoy, the richly-wooded banks of the river Ogun, along which they travelled by canoe for the greater part of the way, presenting, with their infinite variety of shrubs, flowers and trees, a feast of delight to the eyes. In the river itself water-lilies, pure and fragrant, seemed to tell of England rather than of the tropics, an illusion quickly dispelled by gay parrots, little birds of many-coloured plumage, and chattering monkeys. At night the brilliant moon added its charm to the scene, cheered the travellers with its light, and compensated in some measure for annoyances from wild beasts and insects.

It was late on Saturday evening when the travellers arrived in Abeokuta. As early as six o'clock the next morning the natives were to be seen assembling themselves together at the ringing of a bell that they might begin the Lord's Day with prayer, and this in a place where but a few years before there were none but heathen.

Abeokuta was not to be their home, however, as missionaries were greatly needed in Ibadan, a city lying fifty miles to the north-east. Mr. Hinderer, before his visit to England, had penetrated thither, and had been received with open arms by both chiefs and people. He was the first white man whom they had ever seen, and they warmly invited him to come, as they expressed it, and "sit down" amongst them that he might instruct them in the truths of the Christian religion.

It was important that the work should be commenced with as little delay as possible, in order that the Mohammedans, who were already trying to gain an influence in Ibadan, might not have time to prejudice the people against the gospel.

But before they could settle down to their work in that place it was necessary that Mr. Hinderer should go in advance to secure a house for their future home, and to conclude arrangements for the mission with the chiefs. It was only natural that, "a stranger in a strange land," Mrs. Hinderer should keenly feel the separation from her husband, but she wisely did not allow her thoughts to dwell on it, keeping herself as much occupied as possible in studying the language, so as to fit herself for future usefulness. And she did her best, besides, to make friends with the people, especially the children. Two novelties she possessed were a great help in cultivating an acquaintance with the natives. One was a harmonium, around which the people would gather, their eyes and mouths wide open in astonishment that the Iya (mother) could "make wood and ivory speak with her fingers." The other was the colour in her cheeks, which was something so novel to African eyes that, she says, "they were all pleased to think me a wonderful sight."

Preliminaries being at last arranged, they were ready to leave for Ibadan, when sickness seized several of the mission party, and within two months of their arrival in Abeokuta two had died, victims to the pestilential climate of Africa.

IV.

IBADAN.

We must now follow the missionaries to their new sphere of work. Travellers in Africa are wont to complain of the dull monotony of its scenery. There is certainly no cause for this in Yoruba, of which some parts almost rival Switzerland. Near the coast are the still, placid lagoons which form a chain of waterways for many miles. Next to these stretches a dense primeval forest. Still further inland there are wooded tracts, with abundance of rich colour from many flowering trees and shrubs, while the highly cultivated plain, with its profusion of flowering plants, presents, we are told, the appearance of a vast garden. Here, too, are to be seen patches of corn, yams, tobacco, cotton, and other useful crops, for the Yoruba people are industrious as well as intelligent. They are good agriculturists, and make the most of their naturally fertile soil.

The road from Abeokuta to Ibadan lay partly through a cultivated tract and partly through thick bush. For two days Mr. and Mrs.

Hinderer, with a number of porters, journeyed on in single file. On the third day they reached Ibadan.

It will, perhaps, help us better to understand what missionary pioneering in Ibadan meant if we take a hasty glance at the town and people.

Some who are accustomed to think of Africa as thinly populated may be surprised to learn that Ibadan is a city enclosed by mud walls eighteen miles in circumference, and that it contains, according to Mr. Hinderer's computation, from 160,000 to 200,000 inhabitants. It lies on the slope of a very high hill, a spur of the Kong range of mountains, and stretches down to the river which flows in the valley beneath. The houses are low and thatched, most of them enclosing a square court. They have no windows, the door forming the only break in the wall. The Yorubans are clever builders, and the houses of their chiefs are often large and decorated with carved work. In the old town, where the dwellings are closely packed, the streets would look very monotonous, as the houses are all of one pattern, were it not for the break afforded here and there by the orishas (idol-houses) and by open spaces planted with trees. These latter are used as market-places where native produce and manufactures are sold. The people seem long to have understood numerous useful arts, and there are to be found amongst them potters, weavers, dyers, and makers of agricultural implements, as well as many who follow other trades.

Formerly the whole Yoruban race was under one monarch, but in 1820–21 the old empire of Yoruba was dismembered by the Fulahs, a people of the Soudan, known even as early as the fourteenth century as a conquering race. After this, the country was divided into a number of independent states, of which Ibadan was one, each governed by its own chiefs, although nominally subject to the "Alafin," or king of the Yoruba country proper. Some of the laws of this semi-barbarous people might be worth the study of more civilised nations. One part of their form of government is especially noteworthy. All questions relating to women, before being finally decided by the king, are brought before the "Iyalode," or mother of the town, the wise Ibadans rightly judging that none can enter into women's difficulties as a woman can.

The people are idolaters, and their gods are numerous, having different offices and powers. These they look upon as mediators between them and one supreme God. If asked why they worship idols, they say that they do not worship the image, but the spirit which dwells in it, who, they believe, is a messenger to convey their petitions to God. Mr. Hinderer asked one of the people one day

why, as they believed in one supreme God, did they worship orishas (idols). The man replied: "Ah! you see we are such a simple people that we should not dare to approach God, and so we want our orishas to come between us." Strange to say, even Satan is received into their Pantheon, and is worshipped by the traders as the god of money. But, although he represents the lucre they so much covet, they regard him as evil, and place his altar outside the house, considering him too bad to be admitted inside it. They have, too, a kind of spiritualism grafted on to their religion, and are deluded by their priests, who thus enrich themselves at their expense, into a belief that they can

hold communication with the spirits in certain groves. The transmigration of souls also holds a place in their creed, as well as a kind of purgatory after death, from which they believe that souls may be delivered by the offerings of survivors.

Such was the town, "a stronghold of the enemy, of war and slavery," and such the people among whom Mrs. Hinderer and her husband were called to labour. Their hearts might well quail, did they look only at the difficulties of the work and at their own impotence, but their trust was in God. Their entrance into the town caused a great commotion, people shouting and screaming,

"The white man is come; the white mother is come." "Why," asked Mr. Hinderer, "do you call me 'Oibo'?" (the white man). "Because," said they, "you have peeled off your beautiful black skin, and have left only the white one." Even after the missionaries had entered their house many of the natives, not unlike their white brothers and sisters in England when there is any sight to be seen, stood round it, "just to catch a glimpse of the wonderful white woman."

From the very beginning the gospel message seemed to come home with wonderful power to the hearts of these dark Africans. Even on the first Sunday after the arrival of the missionaries a young chief who was present at the service exclaimed, "The words are sweet." It may be that the very religion of the people, with its system of mediators by means of orishas, made it easier for them to receive the truth of the One Mediator between God and man. But would this alone account for the marvellous way in which the people received the Word? Was not the cause rather to be found in the full consecration and perfect trust of the messengers, who, filled with the Spirit, spoke with pentecostal power? In a very short time so many were convinced of the errors of heathenism and of the truth of the gospel that a class for candidates for baptism was formed, while so many wanted to be taught that Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer were obliged to give up their faithful servant Olubi, one of the converts from Abèokuta, to act as schoolmaster. This was a great sacrifice in the way of personal comfort to the missionaries, but a great gain to the work.

Although the climate of Ibadan is not so bad as that of places nearer the coast, it is very prejudicial to the health of Europeans. Fever seemed always ready to seize with deadly grip on the workers, who longed for health only that they might use it to labour the more earnestly. Yet in her own illness, and in her husband's, which was a still heavier trouble, Anna Hinderer never lost heart, but was always cheerful and bright in spite of it. The greatest trial was that it kept her from doing the work to which she believed God had called her. Yet, if her Master bade her lie still when she would rather run on His errands with swift and eager foot, she was content to do His will. "The happiest way of thinking," she said, "was that this was my time of education and preparation for future work, and so I endeavoured to lie passive, only seeking to be made entirely resigned to do or to suffer my Father's will. This is a grace one especially needs in a missionary's calling. You come with a desire to do something; you see your work before you; see thousands of children, hundreds of people, and you are utterly helpless in mind and body. It is hard work, and only One can give strength to bear it."

After nearly a year Mrs. Hinderer—who had not only been enfeebled by illness herself, but had had much anxious nursing both of her husband and of Mr. Kefer, the assistant missionary—was persuaded to go for a short time to Abeokuta to recruit her strength. When she left home she was accompanied for some distance by the little boys who had been under her training almost ever since her arrival in Ibadan. They were very much afraid that they would lose their dear Iya (mother) altogether, and it took many promises to the contrary to reassure them. When they were obliged to turn back to Ibadan their hearts were very full, one little fellow crying between his sobs, "Go, dear Iya, and make haste back."

The love was quite a mutual one. While Mrs. Hinderer was absent from Ibadan those for whom she so earnestly laboured were ever present in her thoughts. "I long," she wrote, "to be at home again, and grudge every hour from my beloved Ibadan. Only the assurance and advice of everybody, that I ought to have some sort of a change, could have moved me."

The rest and change of air, as well as the kindness and care of Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, the missionaries at Abeokuta, were most beneficial, and she returned to Ibadan greatly invigorated. When that time came, her little maid Susanna, who had accompanied her, remarked with great delight, "Please, ma'am, bone all gone away. I think we may go home now." She had taken Mrs. Hinderer's loss of flesh greatly to heart, and used to say sadly, "Please, ma'am, too much bone live here."

When Mr. Hinderer was first invited to Ibadan, he told the chief that if he wanted him to "sit down" there, he must give him a house to live in. He then had a very tiny dwelling assigned for his use, which, although so diminutive, did not escape the notice of covetous eyes, their owner making good his entrance during the night. To poor Mr. Hinderer's horror and dismay, he found himself awoke from his first sleep by a pig, who thought himself at liberty to run over the rightful occupant of the hut, possibly with a view to his ejection altogether. A missionary's powers of endurance are very great; but this was more than flesh and blood could bear. Mr. Hinderer promptly laid his complaint before the chief, and a native house was then given him, some distance from the dirty bustling town, with a view from the back of it of a palm-forest, and with gardens planted with orange, banana, and many other trees in its immediate neighbourhood.

This mud house was Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer's abode for a year. It was anything but a luxurious dwelling, being so small that two people could not walk abreast. Innocent, like all native houses, of

windows or door, a curtain hung over the entrance was the sole barrier between the missionaries and the outside world. The roof made of grass was a poor apology for protection from the torrents of rain which invaded the house during the wet season, while it served as a harbourage for many kinds of pests in the shape of spiders and insects, not to speak of snakes more or less venomous.

Snakes were a very real source of danger. One night, hearing a noise apparently proceeding from the compound, Mr. Hinderer got out of bed to ascertain what it was. In doing so he put his foot on a deadly snake, which happily did not turn and bite him. At another time they were sitting in the piazza of the house they afterwards built, when they heard a noise in the larder. There they found a large snake, which had put its head through a hole in the shelf, and was busily engaged in taking about forty eggs which lay in a basket. Having satisfied itself, it wanted to get back again through the hole, but its upper part was so filled with eggs that it was unable to do so, and the cracking of one egg after another in its efforts to escape was the noise which Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer had heard. But perhaps the most alarming adventure with a snake was one which happened one Sunday in church. Mr. Hinderer was preaching, when his wife, looking at the roof, saw just above his head a cobra, which seemed about to strike him. A glance at the catechist standing near sufficed to show him the situation. He quickly and quietly mounted the pulpit stairs behind the preacher, who was quite unaware of his danger, and with the thick stick which he used as a wand of office to keep order in church struck the serpent on the head, and it dropped dead on the floor.

Ingenuity, perseverance, and above all a cheerful spirit, can transform even a very primitive habitation into a place of comfort. So, in spite of their circumscribed quarters, Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer found it possible to be happy. It was necessary, however, not only for their own comfort, but for the furtherance of the work, that a piece of ground should be acquired, on which a new house, as well as a mission church, could be erected. This Mr. Hinderer lost no time in securing. On his asking what he should pay for it, the chief replied: "Nothing. The land is God's. He gave it to us. You cannot pay for what belongs to Him."

The land secured, there were plans to be drawn, and workmen to be superintended, so that Mr. Hinderer and his assistant missionary were kept busily employed in the intervals of more spiritual work. Sometimes they were themselves obliged to help in building, for a missionary must needs be versatile, and be able to turn his hand to anything. At last the house was finished, and was ready for

Mrs. Hinderer's reception on her return from Abeokuta. It was a source of great wonder to the natives. The head chief arrived to pay his respects a few days after Mr. and Mrs. Hinderer had taken possession. He was lost in astonishment at a house with two stories, while the stairs were a terror to him. For some time he could not be persuaded to mount them; but at last, by dint of pushing and pulling, he safely accomplished the ascent.

The church, although not completed, was used for the first time on July 23, 1854, the old palm-leaf shed which had done duty for

many months having been wrecked by a tornado. But it had served its purpose well, and week after week the people had gathered there in large numbers. A service in Africa lacks a great deal of the conventionality we are accustomed to in England. The people not only listen to the preacher, but if they do not understand his meaning ask him questions. In those first months of missionary work there were many who were anxiously weighing the difference between

heathenism and Christianity. Some of those engaged in the building of the church began to see the folly of their past "fashion," as they call it. Even those who had showed open enmity to the missionaries, amongst others a priest and a priestess, became dissatisfied with their orishas, the priest saying, "I get no peace. I want to give my heart to God."

V.

WOMAN'S WORK IN YORUBA.

It might well be said of Mr. Hinderer, as of all true-hearted servants of God, that he was essentially a man of "one thing." At the age of fourteen, when walking in the lonely forest, the German boy had solemnly dedicated himself to God's service in the mission field. From that purpose he never swerved. Ultimately he entered the Missionary Training Institute at Basel, and then the Church Missionary College at Islington, subsequently proceeding to Yoruba under that society's auspices. Mr. Hinderer was no ordinary man. Enterprising, energetic, ready to enter any door which the Master opened to him, undaunted by difficulties, patient in trial, he was eminently fitted for pioneer work. Although their work was necessarily different, he had a very real helpmeet in his wife. While he was engaged in preaching the gospel both in the church and in the open air, in shepherding the converts already gathered in, in opening up fresh ground wherever possible, she was none the less busy in work amongst the women, and more particularly amongst the children.

Very soon after reaching Ibadan children were gathered together to be trained and taught. These were Mrs. Hinderer's special charge, and, added to her many other duties, kept her very busy. Her patience was often sorely tried, for if English children need a great deal of that commodity in their bringing up, African children need far more, since discipline is to them an unknown quantity, and their parents exercise over them no kind of restraint. Love has, however, a wonderful power to tame even the wildest spirits, and it was not long before they had learned to obey the white lady who had come so far to teach them. Most of their native ideas had to be remodelled, as, for instance, one that it was not necessary to wash more than once or twice a week.

"You would have been rather amused," wrote Mrs. Hinderer to her old friends the Lowestoft school children, "at our washing palavers (disputes). I would have them wash every morning, but this was to them an unheard-of absurdity, and it had to come to this, that any child who refused must have no breakfast; but if you had seen them you

would have thought they were all going to be whipped. However, they have overcome that difficulty now, and are so fond of the regular refreshing wash that they would almost sooner go without their breakfast than without their bath."

From nine to twelve there was school, other children from outside joining the little party, and all worked diligently at reading, sewing, and knitting until twelve. The quickness and aptitude of these children seemed to be quite phenomenal, for be it remembered there was no such thing as a school or any books until the missionaries settled in Ibadan; yet in the short space of four months some of them were able to begin to read the Yoruba Testament. Their greatest pleasure was to acquire a knowledge of English, and in their walks together Mrs. Hinderer would make use of this desire to add to her stock of Yoruba, they telling her the Yoruba names for the objects they saw, and she giving them the English equivalents. As a rule they remembered what they were taught, and politely said, "Good morning, ma'am," as their daily salutation to their teacher. But sometimes it happened that after learning for a little while they were taken away by their parents to work on the farms, and when they returned to school again their knowledge of English had become shaken. One day, as Mrs. Hinderer sat writing in the piazza of their house she was surprised by a boy who had been absent from school for some time, who, suddenly appearing before her, uttered the word "Yes" with great emphasis. His own face expressed intense satisfaction at his performance, which caused much amusement to his schoolfellows. They, however, good-naturedly took pains to teach him his forgotten salutation.

If Yoruba children are sharp and clever they are not behindhand in their love of fun. In their teacher, as we already know, they had one who showed what brightness true religion imparts to a life. She was quite ready to be a child with them, and from five to six every day might be seen playing and romping with these little black children, for, as they said, "Iya must play with them as well as work." It is easy to see how their hearts would go out in love to her. The children who lived in the mission compound almost idolised her. If a fly came near her they would brush it away, and when she was laid aside, as she frequently was, by an attack of fever, they would wander about looking most disconsolate. Yet they had come to the compound in great fear and trembling, and at first would not venture to stay the night, having an idea that after dark the white people would kill and eat them. One of them was the son of the chief Olumloyo, who had been so interested in the services the first Sunday. Akielle was a most affectionate child, though very

passionate. One day, finding him beating another boy unmercifully, Mrs. Hinderer interfered, when he lifted his hand to strike her. Then, of course, it was necessary to punish him. He declared he would go home. "Very well, Akielle, go; good-bye for ever," she quietly said. This touched his heart. He burst into tears, crying, "Oh no! oh no! I will never leave my Iya."

But it was not only mentally and morally that these children were trained. Mrs. Hinderer could never be satisfied with anything short of leading them to know and love the Saviour. It was for this, the joy of leading souls into the fold of the Good Shepherd, that she had given up so much, that she could cheerfully endure sickness, privation, and peril, and this was the mark she ever aimed at.

"You will not think me egotistical," she once wrote, "but this I do think, if I am come to Africa for nothing else, I have found the way to a few children's hearts, and if spared, and I have health and strength, I think I shall not, with God's blessing, find it very difficult to do something with them. . . . My boys that I have now would never tell me an untruth, or touch a cowry, or anything they should not. This is truly wonderful for heathen boys, brought up all their lives hitherto in the midst of every kind of deceit. Dear fellows, I feel sure the love and blessing of God is over them, and their young hearts are opening, I humbly trust, to receive Him as their only God and Saviour."

"Do you love Jesus?" one of them was asked. "Yes, yes," was the reply. "I want to hear more of Jesus, and know more."

It is a well-known fact that African children are great mimics, but that their religion was no mere imitation was quite evident by the change in their lives. If they did wrong they would not only voluntarily come to their teacher to confess their fault, but would ask God to forgive them. Three of the boys had once eaten some fruit which, being unripe, they had been forbidden to touch. Not long after their lips began to smart, and soon became very much swollen. They were greatly alarmed when an older boy told them they would die. Then Akielle said: "What naughty boys we have been! We have been like Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. Let us go and pray to God, and ask Him not to let us die this time, and we will not do so any more."

The Yorubans have a custom on first waking in the morning of saluting their idol before speaking to any one. After their conversion God was substituted for the idol. None of them, whenever awoke, would ever speak to another until they had met their Lord in praise and prayer. A little girl was found in prayer one night at twelve o'clock. The next day Mrs. Hinderer asked her whether she had

thought it was morning. "Oh no, ma'am," she said; "but I think I hardly ever woke in the night before, so I thought it would be nice to pray."

Their faith was very steadfast, and although they were often tempted by their relatives to conform to heathen practices they were firm in their resistance.

Some of these children would have had a sad fate if the mission-house doors had not been open to them. There were little slaves whose piteous cry, "Era mi" (buy me), it was impossible to resist, and who were redeemed from the horrors of slavery. Sometimes a little castaway was brought in to find a home with the "white mother." The people believe that their gods dislike twins, and that unless one is got rid of ill-luck will befall them. So, although there are noble exceptions to this cruel practice even amongst the heathen, many a heartless mother puts away her child to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey.

But there were others who were brought by their parents to the mission compound. Although at the beginning the people were afraid to let their children attend school, lest, as they said, "book should make them cowards," they quickly perceived the advantages of it, and the school grew and prospered.

Anna Hinderer might well find the days were not long enough for her. It often happened that she was too tired either to sleep or to eat. In addition to looking after her large family of black children and receiving many visitors, she made it her business to visit the women in the neighbouring compounds as much as possible. There were many difficulties. There was the climate, with its terribly depressing influence on mind and body. There were disappointments from some in whose hearts the good seed of the kingdom sprang up, but, "having no root, it withered away," and they relapsed into their old heathen "fashion" again. But, on the other hand, there was much to encourage. Many who had found that their heathen idols could never satisfy their craving, came to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. One of them said, "Iya, all my life I have served the devil; he has been my god; but he never gave me peace in my heart. . . . But since you white people have come I have heard the words of the great God, which we never heard before, and they are sweet to me." And they were not afraid to confess Christ. Some brought their idols to the mission house. Many endured cruel persecution rather than join their relatives in their heathen practices. "Kill me if you will," cried one, "the sooner I shall be with my Saviour in heaven; but I will not, I cannot, serve these foolish things."

VI.

ENDURING UNTO THE END.

WITH the exception of a stay of some months in Europe for the sake of Mrs. Hinderer's health, it was in work such as we have seen her engaged in that nearly seven years were spent. In those days one of Mrs. Hinderer's greatest trials was the frequent and prolonged absence of her husband on missionary tours to the eastward. The fame of the white people in Ibadan had spread to other places, and many were the requests which came for teachers. In order to arrange for these to be sent he was obliged to take long and frequently perilous journeys. It would be a great trial to the nerves of any ordinary woman to be left alone in a vast heathen city. She knew, however, the secret of a quiet heart. Although "Babba de!" (father is come) was always a glad sound to her, she could write cheerfully while he was away, "I lie down as quietly at night as if I had every earthly guard. Now this is not natural to me, but is given me by a loving God."

A terrible trial began to overshadow the work and the workers early in the year 1860. For a long while after the Fulah wars at the beginning of the century the country was very unsettled. The various tribes, in their mutual jealousy and desire for power, made use of the smallest pretext to make war on one another. The inhabitants of the places which they surprised were captured and taken to Lagos to be sold as slaves. The strife continued until an incredible number of towns and villages had been destroyed, such of their inhabitants who were able to escape taking refuge in the walled cities. No country, probably, has suffered more than Yoruba from the slave trade. None, certainly, has had greater experience of the evils which war brings in its train. It was a Yoruban king who once exclaimed that if he could find the town where war had its origin he would march against it and destroy it, to prevent any further wars. One of his chiefs replied that the town was not unknown, but that it was impossible to attack it, since it was the human heart.

Some check was put upon this continual state of warfare by the suppression of the slave-market at Lagos through the intervention of England in 1853. But the feeling of ill-will between rival towns and tribes still remained, and it needed but a little fanning for it to burst forth again with redoubled fury. And now, when the year 1860 was scarcely three months old, not only was the King of Dahomey with his band of Amazon warriors marching upon Abeokuta, but the large cities of Ibadan and Ijaye had quarrelled. After exchanging insulting messages for some time their quarrel had ended in the proclamation of a general war. The whole country was at once in a state of ferment.

Kidnappers lurked on every road; robbers lay in wait for spoil. Abeokuta, with the whole Egba tribe, having declared for Ijaye, Ibadan was cut off from the rest of the world. Supplies of what are to English people almost the necessaries of life very soon failed, while letters from friends at home only arrived at uncertain intervals, and even then only at the risk of the bearers' lives.

It was a terrible situation, certainly, and the danger was great. Still they felt that, whatever the risk to themselves, they must not forsake their post, but, faithful even unto death, if needs be, must stay to strengthen the Christians with their prayers and counsel. Insufficient in themselves, as they well knew, they doubted not that He who said, "Lo, I am with you alway," would be present with them to sustain and enable.

The question of supply for the daily needs of a large household was indeed a very serious one, for, as Mrs. Hinderer said, "children's appetites do not lessen because of war." As soon as war seemed imminent she very providently laid in a large stock of such provisions as the country afforded, as well as cowries—the small univalve shells which are used as money in Western Africa. At the close of 1859 she wrote in her journal that she had collected more than a million of the latter. There are some who seem to fear lest missionaries should live too luxuriously, and to prevent this they would furnish them with as little to live on as possible. Such would no doubt be filled with horror to hear of a missionary millionaire. But a million cowries are not immense riches after all, since they only represent a little over £50 in English money, and, with so many mouths to feed, they could not be expected to last for ever, even with the most careful husbanding. And there were not only those in the mission house to be provided for. After a very few months the converts outside began to feel the stress of poverty and to need help. "Our people," she wrote, "are troubled for want of cowries, and we have to open our store, in faith and hope that they will last till peace comes." By the close of 1860 their stock was almost exhausted, and, every road being shut, there seemed to be no way of getting more, since the traders from whom they were usually obtained were unable to reach Ibadan. The chiefs, from whom Mr. Hinderer tried to borrow, refused to lend, saying that Ifa, their chief god, had forbidden them "to lend the white man cowries." Then they were obliged to sell their possessions to purchase food. But her cheerful spirit had not forsaken Mrs. Hinderer. Writing of the purchase of her cloak by one of the war chiefs, she playfully says, "We laugh and say we have all been living on Iya's cloak."

At last it became necessary to make an attempt to obtain a supply

of cowries and European provisions from Lagos, so, committing himself to the care of Him who ever watches over His people, Mr. Hinderer started on the 6th of March, 1861, for the coast. He was accompanied by only two of the boys, none of the men daring to venture on such a perilous journey. The little party reached Lagos in safety, but the return journey some weeks later was one of extreme danger. The King of Ijebu, who had always been much averse to Europeans entering his country, set a price upon his head, and posted men to watch for him along the road to Ibadan. Mr. Hinderer knew this very well, but he said, "There is no road for me but the Ijebu road, and by that I must go; and after all my time is in God's hand and not in the Ijebu king's." And so he started with his two boys. They were filled with terror. His own heart, full of trust in the Lord, was quiet and tranquil. Skeletons of the slain lay in gruesome array for many miles, but not a living man did they see, although they once passed the smouldering fires of the Ijebus, who were evidently at no great distance. By God's mercy they reached Ibadan in safety, and to the great astonishment of the king, who said it was "God who had protected the white man, and none but God."

But privation and scarcity were not done with. Attempts were made by the missionaries at Abeokuta and by the Governor of Lagos to send them help, but without success. Yet, although there was much darkness, they were not left without bright rays of heaven's sunshine to cheer them in their trouble. God opened the hearts of the people to show them kindness. Now it was a handful of corn or a few yams which were brought to the mission station, now a few cowries, and to such extremities were they reduced that they were glad to accept even the value of twopence. Then when Mrs. Hinderer's shoes were worn out, God put it into the heart of a missionary some distance away to send her three pairs which had belonged to his wife, who had lately died.

In spite of all the trouble the church in Ibadan prospered, and although, owing to the war, it did not increase in numbers so fast as formerly, the Lord "added to it such as should be saved," among them some who had in times past been the greatest persecutors.

In March, 1862, the town of Ijaye was utterly destroyed, but the war was by no means ended, for by this time all the neighbouring tribes had been drawn into it. Five long years passed away, and all that time the brave missionaries endured cheerfully privation and suffering, and met undaunted difficulty and danger. Again and again were they disappointed in their hopes of succour. Yet their faith never failed, for their hearts were stayed upon God. They knew that whether living or dying they were the Lord's, and could leave all,

whether for life or for death, in His hands. Their physical sufferings were great. Illness after illness attacked them. The coarse, insufficient food they were obliged to subsist on, and the long stay in a pestilential climate had so enfeebled them that sometimes they were constrained to say in the morning, "Well, this day we must do nothing, but just try to keep ourselves alive." Yet each day brought its duties, and although bodily strength failed, their love for their Master enabled them to fulfil them.

At length, after many futile attempts at relief by various friends, a brave young officer, commissioned by the Governor of Lagos for the purpose, safely accomplished it. With a band of chosen men he cut a new track through the bush, and, before the enemy had had time to discover it, conveyed Mrs. Hinderer to Lagos. God seemed so clearly to have marked out for her a way of deliverance that she dared not hesitate to accept it, particularly as there was good hope of her husband being able soon to join her in England. This he did two months later, having successfully arranged the affairs of the mission. Some months were spent in England and on the Continent, and then with renewed health they were eager to be at the post of duty again.

Just before Christmas, 1867, they once more arrived in Ibadan by a road open to them through the influence of the Governor of Lagos. About forty of the Ibadan people arrived in Lagos to act as their carriers, and some miles from the city they were met by the whole of the converts, who filled the air with shouts of delight.

Then work began again, and God graciously owned it. The simple faith of some of the converts was very touching, and their love for prayer, besides their gifts for the support of the mission, to which they began from this time to contribute regularly, showed how real it was. Besides the original church, there were now two others in the town, so much had the work grown and prospered.

The country was still very unsettled, and their neighbours, hostile as ever to Europeans, often begged the chiefs of Ibadan to expel the white people. But after holding a council they sent word to the missionaries: "You little know how closely we have watched you, and your ways please us. We have not only looked at your mouths but at your hands, and we have no complaint to lay against you. Just go on with your work with a quiet mind. You are our friends, and we are yours."

But the labourer's work was almost done. After her return to Ibadan Mrs. Hinderer was constantly ill, and at last it became imperative that she should seek medical advice. She reached Lagos after a difficult and dangerous journey, a plot having been formed against her life. There she became so ill that she was obliged to get

to England as quickly as possible, and the spring of 1869 found her once more in the old country, her husband, who had also been ill for a long while, joining her the following autumn. Her constant pain and consequent exhaustion were sad to witness, and in addition to her ill-health she had lost the sight of one eye—a result probably of long residence in an unhealthy climate. Bright and sunny still, she was manifestly so ill that no thought of a return to Africa could be contemplated. But, although enfeebled and suffering, she threw herself with almost her old energy into the work of the parish (Martham) in Norfolk to which her husband was appointed in the spring of 1870. Three months only was she permitted thus to labour, and then, in the midst of her loving ministry, she was suddenly stricken again with illness. Her sufferings were most acute, but the spirit was joyous and peaceful as ever. "Are you not glad," she asked, "that I am going home—going to be with the Lord?" A few hours before the end God mercifully answered prayer in giving her release from pain, and she passed in a quiet sleep into the presence of her Lord on June 6, 1870, at the age of forty-three.

And what of the work in which the best years of her life had been spent? Nothing is a more thorough test of what work has been than the removal of the worker. When they left Ibadan it was impossible, owing to the want of communication with the coast, for any European to take charge of the mission. It was therefore left in the hands of three tried native teachers, and since that time, war still prevailing more or less, the converts have necessarily been left to their own resources.

The many letters written by these black people, most of them once Mrs. Hinderer's pupils, abundantly testify to the intense reality of her life and work. One of them, writing to her husband after her death, said: "The sons and daughters she had kindly brought up and cared for in the gospel will ever lament her loss, and her good deeds, as books, will ever be read among us." "Our dear Iya, though she died, she yet speaketh," wrote another. "Her work in Ibadan still lives and bears testimony of her, till such time that she will say, 'These are they whom Thou hast given me.'" There are now (April, 1895), notwithstanding the vicissitudes to which the mission has been exposed, some 600 native converts, with three European ladies working among them, and a house is being prepared for a missionary and his wife.

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