CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

WHITE VERSUS BLACK.

THE CONGO TRAINING INSTITUTE
FOR NATIVE AFRICAN MISSIONARIES, COLWYN BAY, NORTH WALES.

There are no words in our language which so appeal to and fascinate vigorous earnest Christians of both sexes as, "Go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Under their influence they leave home and relations and go into strange lands and among strange peoples whose habits and speech they are ignorant, and think no sacrifice too great if only they may convey the Gospel message to the heathen. That is the spirit that is still living in far-off lands with physical powers unsuited to the climate, and in utter ignorance of the language or dialect of the district in which they are working, and before they have had time to learn to express even their most simple needs, they fall victims to the poisonous malaria.

Even supposing them to get beyond the A B C, it is very difficult to preach and pray in public in a newly-acquired or partly-acquired language. I was speaking with a missionary a short time since who had been some years in Central Africa, and he said, "Even now after all these years I find it difficult to preach and pray in a language not my own."

I was surprised that many experienced and earnest missionaries, who know the difficulties of climate and language and the obstacles they form to successful labours, should have come to the conclusion that if the conversion of the heathen in Africa is to be effected it must in a great measure be the work of the Africans themselves.

The work of missions is one that calls for immediate action, seeing that at the present time there are 200,000,000 more heathen and Mahomedans in the world than there were years ago, while the Christian converts of all the Protestant Missions are not reckoned at more than 3,500,000. It is strange that the special mission work of which I am about to speak was not put into practice long years ago as a supplement to the white missionaries' labours. It is so obviously the means of saving invaluable lives of both races and of reviving the souls of the heathen, that all who have mission work at heart should hail with delight and deep thankfulness the plan adopted at Colwyn Bay, to train and educate young black and red religious native youths to be missionaries to their own people.

The founder and pioneer, the Reverend W. Hughes, is a Welshman, who was for many years a missionary in the Congo, and who, during his residence there had many opportunities of seeing the utter inadequacy of the number of workers to touch even the fringe of heathenism. Nor was it the inadequacy of numbers only that forced itself upon his attention; it was the insurmountable difficulty of learning the many languages and dialects of the country, of which there are 600 in the Congo; and in Sierra Leone alone there are spoken every day by the descendants of the old slaves who went there to be freed, and he emphatically declares that it would be a greater miracle for a white man to learn them all than for the Congo than any that were worked in the old days. In addition to this difficulty there is the evil effect of the water and atmosphere upon the health and spirits of the white missionary.

At length Mr. Hughes was himself ordered home; and a sea voyage being his only chance of life, he prayed earnestly that a scheme for remediying the evils which beset the white man in his mission work, he determined to put it into practice.

He therefore brought with him from the Congo two coloured students whom he knew to be of good character, and begun his work of training them in April 1889 in Colwyn Bay, at his own expense, and in a quiet unostentatious way, trusting as the work progressed to the money to support and recognition, and so increase gradually the number of students.

The idea consists in bringing over to this country coloured students who have given every evidence of real conversion to Christianity, and who know their own language or dialect thoroughly and a little English as well, and are then sent on a high moral, religious and industrial training, and at the end of four or five years to send them back to their native land to work with and under the superintendence of the white missionaries or native pastors.

The work has steadily developed from the day it was started. It began with two students who have since received the approval and co-operation of good and well-known men such as the King of the Belgians, the late Lord Corderidge, Lord Chief Justice of Engla(l). and other great work for the Church. It is approved of and assisted by the people in whose midst the African Colony is seated; it is governed by a committee of good practical men, and the work is being conducted by Mr. W. W. Hughes, whose life is devoted to the work. A matron and tutor are attached to the Institute. A report of income and expenditure, prepared and examined and audited, is issued every year. The first year's income was a little over £60, it has gradually risen to £150, and is worth noting that £278 of this sum is contributed by Colwyn Bay and the Ecclesiastical District. There is a high estimation in which the Institute is held in its own neighbourhood.

Most of the students have been sent from the Congo and Cameroon districts, the American and German missions, and lately a Zulu chief is very anxious for his sons to come. Never was a plan more wisely established, for it is which is more in harmony with the wishes and aspirations of the Africans than this. For the first time we hear of natives of their own accord taking the job of being a missionary and of the enterprising and prominent and educated of the natives all along the West Coast have formed organisations for the purpose of co-operation and collection of funds towards its support; the Sierra Leone committee have sent as a first instalment a collection of £15, and Lagos has contributed in the course of the year £100. This is an Institute, in fact the scheme seems really to have touched the black man's heart.

The Congo is not rich, and as a rule the boys bring to the Institute nothing to support themselves, but the scheme brings £40, and another £20 towards their support, these are the only ones able to do so.

It is satisfactory to know that these young Africans stand our climate and way of living exceedingly well, indeed they enjoy better health here than in their own country; on the whole the sacrifice to them is small compared with the sacrifice of the white missionaries who go out to Africa.

In the matter of cost also the Africans have the advantage. A white missionary spends £80 a year to go to £100 before he leaves this country; his passage to some parts of the west coast is £30, and the cost of his keep and work when he reaches the scene of his labours in the Congo is £25 a year. Now look at the other side. To keep a student here for five years' training costs £125, or £25 a year. Of course, the expense would be much larger were it not for the great generosity of good friends, such as Messrs. A. H. and J. B. and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They bring the students over and take them back free of charge because of their strong belief that the work of this institution is the very thing under God's blessing to civilise and evangelise Africa.

Another Company, the Tudno, shows its appreciation of the work by bringing the students from Liverpool to Llandudno without charging a penny, and a Welsh cab proprietor, no whit behind, adds his help by bringing them from the Llandudno landing-stage without charge. Thus every expense of the journey is saved. Again, as every student is apprenticed to some trade, the cost of fees would be enormous, but that in no instance have the masters taken a fee; they give the young men a thorough knowledge of the various businesses as their contribution to what they believe is the work of their Company.

Thus, side by side with secular and religious training, the business is learned by which each hopes to earn his living while carrying out the same work at home. The chief man of the Company, his people, much as St. Paul did in the early days of Christianity, The students are allowed to choose their trades when they start work, and to save as much as they can. They are furnished with wheelwrights, masons, printers, tailors, chemists and photographers. There are four printers amongst the present students. There will always be a trade for the work, and the report given by Dr. Lees of Chester is very good. He says to the director: "It gives me great pleasure to testify to the high state of efficiency shown by the students, in the recent First Aid Ambulance Examination held in your Institute under the auspices of the St. John's Ambulance Association. The quality of the work done by each of the candidates was of a very high order . . . I purposely made the examination to bear as much as possible on the accidents and injuries likely to occur in African conditions, that is to say, bleeding, fractures, personal wounds and snake-bites. I trust that this work will always occupy a prominent position in the college system." The reports of the various masters are exceedingly good; they speak of their African apprentices as "attentive, eager to learn, willing, diligent."

The reports of the several professors are equally satisfactory; they speak of the papers as of a high order, evidencing thorough knowledge of the subject, whether of Biblical knowledge, English composition, music or arithmetic. Nothing could be more practical, and at the same time elevating, than the treatment of these African students; their training is entirely with a view to an African career. They are brought under gentle and elevating influences, and mentally equipped with all that will enable them to be teachers among their own people; they are removed from old habits, superstitions and temptations, and they come under the influence of a Christian civilization.

Beside this, the trades they have learned will enable them on their return to build a house, mend a boot, sew a garment, print a book. They will have a library of books, be accustomed to earn their living and help to raise and civilise their country. Not only so, but as each student returns to his own land an endeavour is made to place in his hands such
books as the works of Spurgeon, Moody, John Bunyan, Matthew Henry's commentary, and so on. I have learned the English, and so be able to tell their contents in their own language to their own people, for they have no instruments so effectual and natural for translating as the natives themselves.

There are no books to be found in their language. But all that is the New Testament, published in the Duala, is in the imperfect portions of the Scriptures in the Congo.

Two of the students in their spare moments have translated hymns into the Duala or common language of the Cameroons, the result being that 2000 copies have been forwarded to all that Joseph Dibumba for the native converts in connection with his work. This native pastor, who has had two sons in the Congo Training Institute, in acknowledging their receipt, says, "I am a source of joy to all Christian people in the Cameroons, and are the best books ever published in the Duala tongue."

Let it be mentioned that there are two girls now in the Institute; they are both half-castes—their fathers being Dutchmen and their mothers Congo woman. One pays £20 and the other £10 per annum, which is the sum of practical lessons in addition to those which will eventually fit them to go back to the Congo as missionaries to the women.

The靠着 of collections from young Africans who are desirous of training, and as he is able, he gladly receive them.

Up to this point we have spoken only of the training of these young Africans to be missionaries, and if that has been found satisfactory, the results will, I am sure, be equally so.

Students resident in Colwyn Bay have returned to their own lands and commenced their careers as missionaries, and are doing well. It is a great advantage that they can begin work the moment they arrive. They know and speak the language; they are well acquainted with the habits and customs of the people, for they are their own; the climate, which is so suitable to the European, does not affect them; they were born and brought up in it, and they carry life, light and interest to the people to whom they have returned.

From most of them come very encouraging reports. Several are working in connection with the American missionaries on the Congo, others are engaged in the Cameroons.

I have taken the deepest interest in this work from the commencement, and it was in no wise lessened when I visited the Institute a week or two ago and saw the progress made, and how the plan was more than fulfilling the great things anticipated from it. For the sake of Africa, no branch of work is ever lost sight of by the committee, who have that country's welfare thoroughly at heart. Successful as the work is, however, there must be no resting on the oars, for the needs are pressing and increasing.

One of the returned students writes: "I am thankful that I acquired a trade, because, owing to the state I met in church in, I have found it necessary for me to imitate the best of all missionaries and work with my hands for my support, and help on the cause of my Master and his kingdom.

Alfred Dibumba, together with another student, returned to Africa two years ago, and on his arrival he wrote:—

"Alvra Town, Cameroon River, November 29th, 1895.

"Dear Mr. Hughes—I am exceedingly glad to hear of your arrival last week, together with Joseph, for the steamer did not call at Victoria, so he was obliged to land and stay with me for five days. He preached his Sunday at our chapel and also some of his students. I think much of his address seemed to give spirit to the people. Owing to the great extension of the work, I doubt whether the people will be able to support me without a camera and the rest of the photographic apparatus, so that I may be able to support myself. Thoroughly have been to me already wishing me to take their photos, but returned with regret when they learned that I had not yet got my camera.

"I cannot express to you how thankful I am for all your efforts in capturing your people. I will write to you fully after visiting the various stations.

"This lad went back to assist his father, and he has already sent for photographs to Mr. Dibumba at Ndota. He is a good scholar and, like his father, an eloquent speaker. By his knowledge of photography, he will be able to give his services for free of expense. His travelling companions of whom he speaks has learnt the tailoring business thoroughly, and has been a most successful student. He has returned to his home at Victoria, Angoni. Young men will be able to preach to and pray with the people in their own tongue, as well as interest them in all they themselves have seen and heard in the Congo.

"Last year four students left the Institute to labour in their native land, and very encouraging results have been received from them and from agents at Soba, etc.

On my last visit I spoke with the student, Kwesi Quarshie, in whom the late Lord Coleridge took such deep interest. His history and the way in which he arrived in England is so marvellous, that I feel sure everyone would like to hear it.

"He is a member of the Gold Coast League in the West Coast of Africa; his parents were Christians, and when quite a little boy he was sent to a mission school, in which he learned of God's great love.

"He was so impressed by it that he longed to study as much as possible, so that when he grew up he might be able to tell his people of this great love. His father was, however, too poor to keep him at school, and, after a long sickness, he induced his father to send him to one of his brothers at Accra, in the hope that when he might be able to provide for him in the higher grade school. This brother, who was a telegraph clerk, was too poor to pay the school fees and books, too, and he obtained work for him in the Cocoa estate, which was clean and go errands. But so employed he did not forget his longing to study in order to be able to preach the gospel to his people, and he prayed to God every day to show him some way by which he might get an education which would enable him to be useful to his people and to tell them 'the old, old story.'

In the meantime he had heard people say that there were good men and women in England, and he thought they might like to give him something to do good to his own people, and he made up his mind to write a letter to England to someone to send for him and train him there for the work of God.

"He spoke of this to his brother, who laughed at him and pointed out that the passage alone to England would cost £25. His brother got £100 from his father; he wrote a letter to the Board of Trade, and got £100, £200 from a friend, £50 from his uncle, £25 from his father, and the rest £200, for England was a cold country, and all this meant money, and they had none. The boy was not discouraged, for as he said money as long as God was in the world belonged to God, and as he was God's child he would pray to Him for money, and he went on praying.

"One day he saw an old almanac on the office wall the names of English statesmen and noblemen, and he made up his mind to write to some of them. From the number he picked out one was the Night High, W. E. Gladstone, then the other was the Chief Justice of England. He begged the clerk in the office to give him some paper, and the clerk, not allowed to use that belonging to the Government, gave him a couple of sheets partly spoiled.

"He cut off the parts that were not good, and after all the clerks had gone home and he had finished his work he walked to the windows and doors and knelt down and prayed to God to show him how to write the letters. He cut out two, one to Mr. Gladstone and the other to the Lord Chief Justice of England. There was still another difficulty, he had no money with which to pay the postage; each would cost two-and-halfpenny, so again he had recourse to prayer. The next morning one of the supervisors of customs called him and gave him twopenny-halfpenny in copper, the change he had brought from the post-office.

"The boy was thrilled and full of joy at the answer to his prayer; he at once bought a stamp and fixed it on the letter to the Late Lord Coleridge and put it into the letter-box.

"In due time a steamer came in, and it was from Lord Coleridge's secretary. "His lordship could not do what he wanted as he had heavy claims upon him.

"Kwesi was very sorry but did not despair and determined to try again. He made a special prayer, and then wrote a second letter to his lordship, and an answer came in about two months, telling him that everything would be made to see what could be done. Several questions were put to him which he answered and went off in a third letter; this was forwarded by Lord Coleridge to the President of the Congo Training Institute in Colwyn Bay.

"The next letter was to say that the Committee had been asked to send him as a student, and that he would be at once prepared to come to England without paying any money, and that the British and African Steamship Company (Mosses, Elder, Dempster and Co.) were going to arrange it all for him.

"As he was an office boy in the employ of the Government he had to give thirty days' notice before he could go. He had called for the steamer would leave by which he was to come. He prayed again in this dilemma and then wrote his resignation giving twelve days' notice instead of thirty. He placed it on the table of the Comptroller of Customs. He was busy and did not notice it; it was placed before him again in the afternoon and arrived the next day.

"Kwesi wrote a fresh one next day and at length the Comptroller saw it and called out, "What do you mean by giving twelve days' notice instead of thirty?" The lad did not speak for he knew he had broken the laws; he stood there trembling and was bid to sit down.

"At length one of the clerks spoke to him and asked what he could mean by making the Chief so vexed.

"Sir," he said, "I am going to England.

"Is your father going to pay for you?" questioned the clerk.

"No, sir," was the answer, "he has not money enough, but the Chief Commissary in England who is taking me free of charge, has to be trained, so that I may be able to preach to my people."

"The clerk did not believe it until Kwesi gave him one of his letters to read, and then he said, "I see, so you are the boy." He then went to the Comptroller, who sent for his father, and Lord Coleridge's letter, and said, as the clerk had done, "I see you are the boy!"

"Kwesi could not understand then, but a few days later he heard that the chaplain had
been searching for some boy who had written to one of the great men in England, but he did not find him and had gone back without him. Thus it came about that Kwesi was allowed to leave without giving the full notice.

The Comptroller was very kind, and when he wished him good-bye he said he hoped God would bless him and make him useful to his people.

At length the steamer came, and he went to the agent to get his note for the passage accompanied by his brother; a boat was waiting on the shore to take him to the steamer free of charge, otherwise he would have had to pay 2d. He went on board without a penny in his pocket, for his brother confessed that he could not give him any. He went to the captain as he was ordered to do, and was passed from one officer to another until he found himself before the pantry man who said, "Do you know what I am going to make you do here?"

"No, sir," said Kwesi.

"I am going to make you sweep and scrub the floor, wash the plates and dishes, clean the knives, and anything else I may require," he answered. "I shall be only too glad to do anything, sir." So he took off his coat and shoes and started at once to make himself useful in the ship.

On the voyage he received four shillings from friends.

The vessel reached Liverpool on Sunday. Everyone went on shore except Kwesi—he remained until Monday—when the cook came to him and said:

"You were very good on the way here; here is a shilling for you, and I am going to take you to the office of the company for nothing."

Another of the officers gave him a shilling, so that he now had six shillings in his pocket.

On arriving at the office the gentleman in charge telegraphed to his lordship in London that he had arrived, and telegraphed back to send him to Colwyn Bay. He himself wrote to Lord Coleridge immediately after his arrival at the institute, and he, Lord Coleridge, wrote to him in his own handwriting, calling him "My dear boy." "Fancy says Kwesi, one of the best gentlemen in England calling me his 'dear boy,' and a black one too."

He sent him some pocket-money and invited him to spend Christmas with him and Lady Coleridge at Ottery St. Mary's in Devonshire. Lady Coleridge gave him a watch. The young man, in referring to this visit, said: "See how kind cares for me, and how great it is to trust in Him as your own personal Heavenly Father." The morning he left Ottery St. Mary's, his lordship went to the boy's room, and, putting his hands on his shoulders said:

"I am sorry you are going away, my dear boy. I hope you will come and see me again, but if I do not see you again, may God bless you and make you useful to your people in Africa."

His lordship is dead now, but Kwesi says he shall always thank God for putting it into Lord Coleridge's heart to be the means of helping him, and he begs all his friends to pray that, while he is being trained over here to be a doctor, he may do everything to God's glory so that He may use him to do His work.

There is still very much I should like to tell you of this grand work, but I hope I have said enough to give you an impression and to induce you to go and see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears, all that is being done in the little Welsh town. Both the doctor and I are sure that God would send every opportunity for doing so.

CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

A REAL CHRISTMAS.

First line.

W e re + 125 of Christ

Second line.

We e a iiii with joyous cheer

Third line.

Th e th of

Fourth line.

Th e d y s ou l e t h

Fifth line.

WHAT BLISS WITHOUT.

His g + he hb

Sixth line.

An p he yen who to

Seventh line.

W emigh t brig d su mg do

Eighth line.

Th e x e reed just

Ninth line.

COMMENTS.

I. "Puzzles to the amount of six guineas (one of which will be reserved for competitors living abroad) are offered for the best solutions of the above Puzzle Poem. The following conditions must be observed:-

1. Solutions to be written on one side of the paper only.

2. Each paper to be headed with the name and address of the competitor.

3. Attention must be paid to spelling, punctuation, and neatness.

4. Send by post to Editor, Girl's Own Paper, 56, Paternoster Row, London. "Puzzle Poem" to be written on the top left-hand corner of the envelope.

5. The last day for receiving solutions from any part of the world is February 15, 1898.

N.B.—This competition is open to all, without any restriction as to sex or age.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.