

**THE STORY OF UGANDA
AND THE
VICTORIA NYANZA
MISSION; PP. 1-220**

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The Story of Uganda and the Victoria Nyanza Mission; pp. 1-220 by Sarah Geraldina Stock

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RUBAGA, THE CAPITAL OF UGANDA.

THE STORY OF UGANDA

AND THE

VICTORIA NYANZA MISSION

BY

SARAH GERALDINA STOCK

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

'A POSSESSION of a burying-place' was the first thing acquired by the patriarch of old in the land which was promised to him and to his heirs for ever. A woman's funeral inaugurated the beginning of Abraham's ownership in Canaan. As the mournful procession passed up the field and beneath the spreading trees of Machpelah, to the cave which was to be Sarah's last earthly resting-place, did there pass before the tear-dimmed eyes of her husband a vision of the future, when one of his children's children should be crowned as king in the neighbouring city of Hebron? Under the teaching of the Spirit of God he looked for something even higher—for a 'city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.' Yet the purpose of God was to be fulfilled literally. And as the long years passed away, others beside Sarah were interred in the same spot, while the body of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel was laid to rest some miles further north, at Bethlehem. These graves were as a seal set upon the land of Canaan, marking it out as the inheritance of the people whom God had chosen.

And although the Israelites grew into a nation, lived, died, and were buried in Egypt, the body of him under whose auspices they had settled in that country was kept, embalmed and uninterred, until the time came when it should be laid to rest in the land, no more of Canaan, but of Israel.

Pass over 3,200 years (in round numbers), and look at the funeral of another woman, the wife of a 'stranger in a strange land.' A solitary mourner, in much bodily weakness, follows the coffin up the sandy beach, and a little farther on, under the shade of the palms and mangoes, the body of Rosine Krapf is laid to rest, the waters of Mombasa inlet chanting the requiem, while the blue hills of Rabai and of Shimba looked down upon the novel sight of a Christian burial. Here is the first occupation of East Africa by a servant of Christ. On that day the land was taken possession of in the name of Him whose rightful inheritance it is. A day or two after her motherless babe was buried in the same place. But the bereaved husband and father, steeped in sorrow, yet strong in faith, wrote thus concerning the hallowed spot:—

'Tell our friends that there is on the East African coast a lonely grave of a member of the Mission cause connected with your Society. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle with this part of the world; and as the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of many of her members, you may be the more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore.'

A few years later, up among the hills of Rabai, there

is another funeral. The piece of ground newly purchased of the Wanika by Krapf's fellow-labourer, Rebmann, is hallowed by the interment there of the young missionary Pfefferle, whose life has been given for the Redeemer's cause in these regions. And once more Krapf takes his pen and writes, not in the language of despondency, but of hope and courage:—

'The first resident of the new Mission ground is a dead person of the missionary circle. Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church or dwelling-house; showing us by this lesson that the resurrection of East Africa must be effected by our own destruction.'

Yet for some time longer the conquest of East Africa for Christ seems almost at a standstill. Krapf, worn out with labours and hardships, returns to Europe, and occupies himself with linguistic work. Rebmann grows old, infirm, and blind at his post, but will not leave it. Both have their eyes fixed on the goal, which to most men would have seemed a mere idle vision, the setting up of Christ's kingdom, not only on the coast, but in the interior of this vast country, knowing that His mark is on the land, in the graves of His faithful servants.

And at length the time comes for the purpose of God to be fulfilled. Close to that solitary grave on the shore a Mission settlement is planted. Round about that grave on the heights another settlement grows and flourishes. In Frere Town and in Kisulutini the Word of God is taught, and souls are won for the Saviour. A part of the land has been conquered for Christ.

Look back now once more at Israelitish history. The time at length comes for the conquest of the land of Canaan by the hosts of the Lord. The Jordan is crossed, and Jericho and Ai taken by storm. And this first foothold being gained in the land, Joshua and the Israelites proceed to do what under ordinary circumstances would have seemed a most foolish thing, and have probably brought upon them defeat and destruction. Instead of advancing carefully, step by step, they march boldly forward into the very centre of the country, not to erect a strong fort, but to set up an altar to God, and write on the stones a copy of His law. In the lovely valley of Shechem, in the midst of that hostile and heathen country, the solemn assembly is held, and from the opposite hills the blessings for the obedient and the curses for the disobedient are pronounced. This was done in no mere bravado, but at the express command of God, given some months before. They 'made haste, and delayed not, to keep His commandments.' And they found obedience the path to victory.

We find a parallel to this in the action of the Church Missionary Society in East Africa. Having obtained a foothold on the coast, they proceeded to send a missionary expedition into the heart of the country. Instead of advancing gradually inland, they ventured at once to occupy one of the countries on the shores of the great inland sea known by the name of the Victoria Nyanza, and this one of the most fertile, wealthy, and powerful kingdoms of the whole continent. It was in 1875 that Frere Town rose up on the coast opposite Mombasa, as a refuge for liberated slaves, and