

Mombas, Jan. 15, 1855

Reverend & Dear Sir -

On the 5th inst. we have received a letter from Dr. Krapf dated May 24, in which he intimates to us his intention of coming out again to E.A., the Committee having decided on forming a station at Kadiaro, & that this should be the last trial to be made in E.A. . We cannot but regret that the Committee did not put off their decision to some later period, when the information we have now to give them would have been in their hands. During the last six or seven months, events have taken place, which not only for the present put all travelling in these quarters out of the question, but in general are calculated to show the fearful degree of insecurity, in which all Missionary labour is at present involved, & which will last ever so long as the present Arab Government is in power. The events are shortly these: Last summer, when the Wakamba-caravans were advancing from the interior, the Wanika of Duruma went to meet them on the road (as they usually do in order to take them to their homes & thus to profit by acting as go-betweens in selling their ivory to the Muhamedans on the coast) when two were killed by the Teitas of Ndara (one of them was the slave - but treated more like a son - of Mana Zahu, whom Dr. Krapf knows very well). Another had a very narrow escape, being wounded in the hand by an arrow, & who afterwards applied to me for medicine. Teitas again (even of the Kadiaro-division are suspected to have been among them) surprised a large Wakamba-caravan, who were returning, killed many & robbed more, the fugitives throwing down their loads & leaving them to the enemy. Facts as these certainly promise no great safety for any regular communication between a coast- and an inland-station. As the appearance of a Missionary in the interior is sure to turn the Africans at once into a host of beggars, so it is to be feared that a regular communication between the two stations would turn into robbers even such tribes, as were thought to be of milder & more settled habits. - But the last of my information is the most important: The Masai, the brother tribe of the Wakuafi, between whom, notwithstanding exists a deadly hatred, have, since the beginning of December last, made their appearance in the wilderness which stretches between the Wanika-country & Jagga. Already at Tanga Mr. Erhardt had heard the report from Suaheli traders, coming from the interior, that the Masai had crossed the Pangani-river, which is the traditional boundary between the malignant tribes, & were about to go on a robbing-expedition towards the Wanika & Wakamba. As however African reports have well nigh lost all their meaning to us, he attached little or no importance to it. But early in December, a small party of them, who seemed to be spies, was seen within only a day's distance from Kisuludini by Durumas, from whom they endeavoured to get information about the cattle-places of the Wakamba, declaring at the same time, that the Wanika, being "people of the hoe" had nothing to fear from them. While trying to come to an understanding, a Duruma-youth wantonly shot an arrow at them, in consequence of which provocation the Masai killed the Durumas (six in number) & took one prisoner, who was to show them the way to find cattle. A day or two afterwards 4 other Durumas were found killed in their plantations. It being impossible to conjecture how it might end, & thinking it rather imprudent & unnecessary to stay till the last moment, in case it actually came to a general flight of the Wanika & Wakamba around us, we in the latter end of Dec. repaired to Mombas, where at the same time we knew we should have greater facilities for the literary work we are at present engaged in, with respect to native assistance. A single attack upon a Wakamba-Kraal excepted, no further attacks

have since been made by them, but it is most probable (& so the Natives look upon it) that the small party of Masai, which was seen, only came to reconnoitre the country, in order to make a grand attack by the time of the next rainy season, when in fact it is only possible, while now the scarcity of water, which is peculiar to this wilderness, renders it simply impossible. – A few days ago a great native-traveller of Tanga arrived here, bringing the intelligence of Madjanu in Jagga having also been beaten by the Masai & of a Suaheli-caravan having lost their property in consequence - & that one caravan, starting from Tanga & seeing that large numbers of Masai had advanced towards the neighbourhood of Gonja & that the Wasambara had therefore left their plantations in order to take refuge on their mountains – abandoned the journey for the present, while another, with a more daring leader, resolved to press onward through another & more circuitous route. Whatever importance we may attach to these last mentioned reports, so much is certain that there is a great movement among those fierce nomads of Inner Africa, which easily might end in their occupying the same wilderness which formerly was claimed by their brethren, the Wakuafi. In this case the Missionary would no longer traverse it with nothing more but his umbrella. Up to this day the Suaheli-traders never venture near or among them for trade, except with at least 400 or 500 firearms, while larger caravans are said to number even 8 + 900. With these traders the Missionary could never mix himself up without violating his sacred character as a messenger of peace; for they likewise, whether willingly or unwillingly, must be ready at all times to become murderers & robbers like their enemies. With the Masai & the Wakuafi, as with the Gallas, murder has become the greatest delight – traders seen single & stragglers behind of a caravan are sure to be killed.

When in the Ch. M. Intelligences for May 1850, the removal of the Wakuafi from the wilderness between the Wanika & Jagga is reckoned among the providential circumstances, which had occurred to open to us a way of access into the interior – the occupation of that wilderness by the Masai equal to their brethren in fierceness & from their being the stronger party, the more to be dreaded, must on the same principle be looked upon as a providential circumstance for shutting up again what during the last ten years had certainly been opened. It is very true, that from the wandering habits of that inimical tribe, intervals might always occur, in which the travelling through their plains might be practicable even for the unprotected Missionary, wherefore Dr. Krapf with his fellow-labourer, Mr. Daimler, might well succeed in pushing their way to Kadiaro; but what would be gained by this, if sooner or later they would find themselves cut off from all communication with the coast? But even if we leave the Masai out of the question, what warrant of security & safety for life & property exists even between the Wanika & the Teitas? None whatever. From the cause above mentioned just now the Durumas bear a deadly hatred to the Teitas & they will not rest until they have revenged themselves. So one bloodshed leads to another. The way to the Kadiaro, moreover, leads for a whole day's journey through their country, & the great question will now be, whether, as they themselves can hardly be engaged as porters by the Missionary, they will contrary indeed to what they did about 15 months ago, permit the European with his porters of the Rabbai-tribe to pass unmolested through their territory.

Dark, very dark, is the aspect, at present, of the E.A. mission. There seems to be no spot where the Missionary might boldly set his foot upon. But in truth the doors into the interior of E.A. had never been fairly opened. Our footing was never any thing better than the compulsory favour of a Muhamedan prince.

Other instruments than Missionaries are first to be employed in E.A. before a real door of usefulness will be opened to the Christian Missionary. God never employs His own people, but rather strangers & even enemies for the general preparation of a nation with regard to His Kingdom. He knows how to press into His service both the most cruel slave dealer & the most wicked boor. They evidently were to W. & S.A. what the Romans had been to the rest of Europe, namely "the iron plough-share, destined by God's Providence to prepare the soil of the known world for the reception of the seed of Christianity." (See Chr. Observer for Aug. 1850, Page 539). Why are we so slow in admitting in one case, what every Christian, well informed mind so readily agrees with in another. The same truth has in still stronger language been recently stated by the Bishop of Victoria, when he says: "So it has been and will be in all ages – the bloodless victories of the cross following in the train of carnal warfare, bloodshed & tumult"(See: Chr. Sc. Int. August 1854, Page: 182) Since I have made myself acquainted with the history of the West- & S. African Missions – I have become most fully convinced of the utter hopelessness of the E.A. Mission, until the eternal decree written against all heathens in the second Psalm (v. 9) will have been accomplished there also, as it has been & is still accomplished with other heathen nations in the world. It is in the light of that Scripture, that we should view all conquests made by Christians (though perhaps only in name) over heathen-nations. It is Christ, breaking the heathens with a rod of iron & dashing them to pieces like a potter's vessel. He works by instruments, & for work like that He makes use of the roughest. When however those instruments forget their being instruments & come to sacrifice unto their net & burn incense unto their drag, the sentence is also written against them: "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his". And thus while the Lord ordaineth one nation after another for judgment & even allows vengeance to be executed by them who are far worse, He at last fulfils His own eternal purpose "that the earth shall be filled with knowledge of His glory". Hab 1+2.

I inclose the duplicate of a document, despatched, together with a letter, in Nov. last, & would mention at the same time, that in Sept. I transmitted to you a translation of a letter, written to Pastor Harms, together with two letters to yourself & the Committee.

The Imam of Mascat is said to be still engaged in settling his affairs with Bender Abbas & is not expected to return to Zanzibar during the monsoon. Dr. Krapf will therefore have no prospect of an interview with His Highness.

No rumours being anymore heard of about the Masai & the climate of Mombas not agreeing with us, we intend to go back to Kisuludini on Monday next, the 22nd of Jun.

Commanding ourselves to to your Christian sympathy & prayers,
I remain, my dear Sir
Yours respectfully

J. Rebmann