

Kisuludini, Sept. 14, 1854

Reverend & dear Sir!

The most remarkable occurrence which took place in East Africa during this half year was, no doubt, the appearance of a Missionary ship, named after the Queen Candace of Ethiopia. There she was lying, during the whole month of June, in the harbour of Mombas, presenting a spectacle glorious & lamentable at once – glorious as a living monument of the faith & love of Christians in Europe, & a visible demonstration of their compassion towards the benighted offspring of Man – lamentable, because Ethiopia at the time presented no Eunuch “of great authority”, who had gone all the way to Jerusalem “for to worship” & who, being able to read the Prophet Josiah, could have appreciated the spiritual gift offered to Africa with great personal sacrifices by Christians afar off, who had obtained the same precious faith, by which the Eunuch of old had been enabled to go on his way rejoicing. Certainly all who take a lively interest in the welfare of E.A., but have no exact knowledge of its real condition, must have looked upon the Candace with her godly number of messengers of salvation, who, to use their own words, were ready to go through fire and water – as a token for good

(Page change, text may be missing here, in any case not a logical step “token for good doubt”)

doubt, this would have been the result; & so strongly, it seems, Philip felt inclined, & so importunately the Eunuch might have asked for his company – yea & so inviting were the prospects of a speedy spread of the Gospel in Ethiopia, that nothing short of an irresistible impulse, & being caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, could have effected the reparation & Philip’s return to Palestine. We are thus shown, that our best desires & even our efforts for promoting the Kingdom of God, need to be counteracted. Our best plans do not always coincide with His. Paul & Timothy are forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia & when they assayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not. But here the question rises: How are we to know in our days, when the efforts of the Spirit are no more of that miraculous & unmistakable nature, where we have to direct our Christian efforts for the evangelisation of the world? But we might ask with equal justice: How can we know in our days that the Bible is true, when no more miracles are wrought in behalf of it? What has been written, has been written for our learning. God’s methods for the spiritual restoration of mankind, as observed from the beginning of the world, are irrevocably laid down in the word & in history. These we must study & these will guide us. What does Christ say to the woman of Canaan? I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when He first sends forth His disciples, he commands them: Go not in the way of the Gentiles, & into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. Again, what stress seems to be laid in Luke 24, 74 on the words “beginning at Jerusalem”, the city, to which God had been nearest, & where the stupendous facts of redemption were most deeply engraved in men’s consciences. The Acts of the

Apostles is full of incidents of this nature. Paul always entered first in synagogues & declared: It was necessary that the word of God first should have been spoken to the Jews. Indeed so strongly were all the Apostles impressed as to the order they had to follow in their preaching, that it was only by a miraculous interposition that they could be satisfied as to the propriety of extending their labours to the Gentiles. Among these there were again the proselytes who first accepted the Gospel. And it is a remarkable circumstance, that no undoubted records have come down to us, of any nation beyond the boundary of the Roman Empire having seen an Apostle. If we look to our own times, the fact comes out equally clear, that wherever a Mission has been crowned with success, God's power had been previously exerted in crushing the national spirit & national pride. The South Sea Islanders alone seem to form an exception; but in their case two things must not be forgotten: first, they were on the very verge of destruction by their own suicidal propensities; secondly, they were, from their insular position, comparatively small communities, to each of which the....

(text missing here)

.....of regard to the social & political condition of E.A. , the aspect of which is such, as to make it one of the last countries of the world, such a number of missionaries should be sent to, at once. How far the same argument affects our own position in these regions, it is not for me to determine. So much, however, I will say, that we have at least one instance, that of the Providence of God, in our favour, in which we see His power beginning to be erected in behalf of E.A.. I mean the presence, since a number of years, of an English Consul at Zanzibar. It is through him that British influence is felt in a measure by the Arab Government, which, if its power was not thus checked by that of England, would have effectually guarded the E. African shores from any Missionary setting foot on them.

After these general remarks I will proceed to give you the leading particulars in connection with the Missionary ship Candace, during her stay in the harbour of Mombas. She arrived on the 30th of May. Having received a note on the day following, asking me to come, I set off immediately, to give them my advice and act as Interpreter between them & the Governor. I was rather puzzled when I found that they had neither a letter from H.M. to the Governor, nor one from Major Hamerton to myself, but still more so was the Governor, when among such a number of men none could be pointed out to him as the "mikubawao" (their great one), to whom he could address himself. Nor was it easy for him to believe, that what they professed to be their object in coming, was the real & the only one. His declaration to them was therefore unambiguous: that without letters from Zanzibar in their hands, he could not allow even one of them to take his abode in Mombas, & far less on the Continent. But with the Hannovererian brethren there still remained the question: whether in order to obey God more than man – they ought not, in spite of this prohibition, make the attempt of effecting a settlement somewhere on the Continent. To this I replied, that neither was this their duty, because their affair with the Government had nothing to do

with religion & they were not forbidden the country as Missionaries, but simply as "Wasungu" (Europeans) – nor would they find it at all practicable, as the prohibition from the Government would have the effect of cutting them off of all intercourse with the Natives, & that the very ground to stand on, in acting against the Government would fail them. Though they were not ready to believe this at the time, still they became convinced of it by what they experienced before they left Mombas. Three of their number, namely, were imprudent enough to set out on a journey to the Pokomo or Ozy river, without any guide & with provisions for only 2 or 3 days. The distance alone, to say nothing of hindrances, must have occupied at least 10 days, to & back. Being stopt (sic) in their progress by the M'toa'pa river, a few miles N. of Mombas, a canoe-man, whom they fortunately met with, but to whom they could not make known their object, turned them out of their course, in taking them up the river till they found themselves near the Wanika-mountains, when they, of course, concluded, that they must be near our Station, while the Wanika most readily shewed them the direction they had to take. On the evening of the second day after they had set out, they surprized us by an unexpected visit. But what turn did things now take? First one of my servants, whom I desired on the next morning to accompany them back to their vessel, refused from fear of being imprisoned, knowing they had no permission for going about in the country. (I prevailed, however, on a Kinika boy to go with them a short distance).

In Mombas the consequences were that the Governor restricted them to their vessel, & ordained them to sail within 2 or 3 days. Only the Captain & one who practised medicine were still allowed to visit the town. Again, the Mombasians asked 100 Dollars instead of 50 for towing the Candace out of the harbour. Having some provisions to forward to Mr. Erhardt at Tanga (such is the connection between Mombas & Tanga, that those provisions could never be sent. Things could indeed be forwarded from Tanga to Mombas, but nothing vice versa. During the next monsoon the opposite state of things will take place. Oh, the misery of native navigation!), I again went to Mombas on the 19th of June, when I was detained for several hours by the Governor in the business of interpretation & mediation, the result of which, to my great satisfaction, was, that the Governor pardoned them, & in proof of it allowed them to come again to the town; the wages also, for helping them out of the harbour, were limited again to 50 Dollars. The Governor seemed appeased chiefly on the consideration, which I tried to press upon him, that the disobedience in question was not to be charged on the whole party, but be limited to the three who had left the vessel entirely without the consent of their comrades. Now my arguments against any attempt of effecting their object in defiance of Government, sure no more wanted, after its futility had this been proved by dry matter of facts. I then took leave of the brethren, with whom, notwithstanding the difficulty of my position, I felt truly united in the spirit. About a week afterwards they sailed for Port Natal, where, I have no doubt, they will soon be usefully employed first among their own countrymen, the Germans.

Referring to my own work I would first mention that Abbe Gunja, on the 3rd of August, took possession of his new cottage. It is as well built as ours in Rabbai Mpia, only a little smaller. I not only rendered him assistance through my servants, but also personally – doors & shutters being entirely made with my own hands. His wife, though continuing a heathen, still is pleased with the improved cottage. As to himself, he is making though slow, yet steady progress in divine life, nor is he ashamed to confess his faith before his countrymen. I shall never forget how highly rejoiced he was, some time ago, when for the first time he made out the sense of a passage quite by himself (It was Luke 6, 43 A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit etc.). Before that time he had discovered to read: His boy generally reads with him, & just while I am writing this, pleasant sounds of words slowly pronounced come over to me from his cottage. My dear wife has also begun to teach the boy English. Of the Wanika in general, however, the grievous statement must be made, that they continue as determined in their heathenism as ever.

I have gathered about 2.300 words of the Kiniassa-language, of which I gave you information in my last, & have arranged them alphabetically. Before this is done, no real insight into a language is afforded. I therefore look on all vocabularies, which only follow the Alphabet of a European language, as most unsatisfactory half-work. Words, which should stand together in a group, with the root at the top, are there unintelligibly scattered about. I intend to send you a copy as soon as I shall have fixed the meanings in English; for as it is, they are only given in Kisuaheli.

In conclusion, I must say a few words about the Usambara-Mission. Mr Erhardt has continued his stay in Tanga ever since March. His letters from there to me are an unbroken tale of miseries & vexations, as experienced from the wretched condition of the place itself on one hand, & the unsatiable beggaries of the so called "great ones" on the other. His health also has never been good. I believe I am fully justified to say, that what Mr. Erhardt suffered at Tanga far exceeds all that either Dr. Krapf or myself have experienced all the time we have been in E.A. I invited him already some months ago to return to our Station here, but seeing he did not act upon it, & having had a farther intimation

(that? KJ is missing, possibly – since it is the start of a new page in the original, more text is also missing)

Dr. Krapf, who never stayed in Usambara any longer than he required for delivering up his – I suspect – too large & handsome presents, entirely lost the opportunity of getting acquainted with the awfully wretched state of things in that country. And now – woe to those who remain, or who succeed to carry on the work, & to struggle with the difficulties consequent on such system! We rarely find that this mode of proceeding among ignorant savages, eventually melts away in the light of Gospel day. There are exceptions; but these are associated with painful & protracted conflicts with the evil, which the system, now deprecated has! I must say, the E. African Mission has not yet learned to

deprecate it), engenders (Vid. Missionary Labours & Scenes in Southern Africa by Robert Moffat, P. 237). I confess that I fully agree with this view of a venerable Missionary, who has grown old in his Master's service. The evil, certainly, is diminished, if the Missionary, who has thus gained the friendship of a Savage King, himself stays in the country at least so long, till his real intention has been, in a measure, understood, for this great point, it must be remembered, is never gained by a few speeches to the King & his counsellors or rather sorcerers. No African believes at once what we say, we are liars as well as themselves. Years, years are required, before even the shadow of a conviction is forming in their dark mind, that we, unlike to them, really mean what we say. A Missionary, therefore, who does not mean to stay himself in a country he has thus opened by his presents, had far better have left it altogether. If he travels, let him do so without engaging himself or others almost in every country he passes, for coming to remain, except this can be done at once; for if only one year should elapse, some presents must be given over again. Missionary journeys can certainly only be made with a view of planting Missionary Stations; but, while keeping this end in view, we should never forget to distinguish between what can be done at once, & that, which from the necessities of the case, can only be the work of time. In this blame I willingly involve myself as well as others, for want of experience betrayed me also to make similar engagements in Teita & in Jagga. On my last journey to Jagga however, they were providentially broken, when, by my endeavours of going beyond their own territories, I forfeited the friendship of the rulers. When I look back to that period of our E. African Mission, I am struck with the absence of any thing like a sober view of the formidable, &, under the present circumstances, insurmountable difficulties which stand in the way of Stations in the Interior. I will illustrate this by a few simple instances: If a Missionary, stationed at Rabbai, had, on a very pressing occasion, to send a letter to one stationed at Jagga, he would be under the necessity of getting a little caravan of at least half a dozen men, whose wages, to say the very least, would amount to 50 Dollars = £10, while this enormous postage would not, after all, procure the slightest assurance neither for the letter reaching its destination at a given time, nor even reaching it at all. Equally uncertain is the sending of letters by parties going or returning, as in the case between here and Wakambani: I remember several instances of persons having been entrusted with letters, & promised a handsome present upon their delivery, but who, after arriving at their homes, most leisurely stayed for months, before they made the final effort of delivering them. If goods, such as beads & cloths, for these are the money of a Missionary in the Interior, were to be sent, & the bearers were robbed, either by violence or the beggary of chiefs, through whose countries they had to pass, no redress whatever could be found. The difficulties in connection with cooks & servants are equally great, for such is the national pride of all these pagans, that none will stoop to engage as a servant. And what would be the security of a Missionary's life & property in the Interior? Why nothing better than the caprice of a Savage King. Let the Missionary one day think it his duty to resist the demands of a royal beggar, who is the greater a savage, the greater he is a Sovereign - & his life no less than his property will be at stake - & the

Missionary, should he fail to escape with his life, might be left to the only but awful alternative of falling a martyr – not in the defense of the everlasting gospel, but – horrible dictu – in the defense of cotton cloth & beads!!! I wonder now how we could ever talk of a chain of Missions, to be established through the whole breadth of this Continent, in a way, as if we had all the advantages, securities & facilities of British power & influence at our command. It is said in the Review of Memoir of the late Rev. J. Trott, that in his time men addressed themselves to their work at first with more of love & zeal, than of calculation. Men spoke of penetrating & permeating India, just as they might of reckoning how many bibles or teachers would suffice for an "English village". X see Chr. Observer for May, 1849, P. 325. This marks exactly our own case likewise. With them however the want of a due estimation of the difficulties they had to encounter, was more justifiable than with us; because in their case it referred to a country, which had been subjugated long before to British rule & sovereignty, while in ours it refers to an immense portion of a Continent, whose numberless chiefs & kings are nothing but ignorant savages, who, on the appearance of the Missionary, are, as it were by magic, turned into as many all powerful beggars. To satisfy the horrid cupidity of these, after the white man's goods, with a view of seeing it ultimately changed into a desire after the Gospel – is to penetrate into the fortresses & recesses of hyenas & tigers to feed them with lambs, to see if they will lay aside their prowling nature. The lambs they will eat but never will they be changed. All knowledge of human nature, all the testimony of scripture & history, proclaim aloud, that man, this rebel, the apostate, is never changed by such gentle measures. Crushed he must be first & trampled upon – & well nigh ready to persist, before he bows to a pacified Saviour. Grace & love & mercy are all nothing to him, he despises them until his maker has laid him low & caused him to remember, that before Him he is but dust & ashes, & that without Him he must be miserable for ever. And if even those Nations, who had never sunk to the fearful level of the African in these quarters, who had never so entirely & so universally prostituted their mental faculties to the service of the mere animal appetites, if even those who in a measure sought after knowledge & wisdom & retained some nobility of character in honour of human nature wanted the severest judgments of the Almighty to be visited upon them in order to lay them prostrate at His feet & cause them to seek for His Sovereign mercy – what will & must become of the children of Man?

One must have got acquainted with them here in the Eastern portion of the Continent, where they have been left almost entirely undisturbed by the European slavedealers, because they were too far distant, in order to understand why a holy & merciful God permitted, for so long a time, part of his own intelligent creation to be dealt with like brutes & while we have to charge the slavedealers with an affront against the majesty of God, in fixing a price on a being whose rank in creation baffles the whole universe as an equivalent, we must say to God: Lord God Almighty, Thy judgments are true & righteous!

Since the loss of our cat – for I suppose through Mr. Candy you have heard of its death, both Mrs. Rebmann & myself, have, thank God, continued quite well.

Asking for your continued Christian sympathy & prayers, I remain

Yours respectfully

J. Rebmann