Beyond the Rivers of Cush

Eldred Echols

Beyond the Rivers of Cush

by

Eldred Echols

Published by:

J.C. Choate Publications

Winona/New Delhi/Cape?Town/Singapore/Cebu City

Typesetting: Eulene Ramsey
Layout and Design: Barbara A Oliver

Printing Information

Order From:
J.C. Choate Publications
PO?Box 72
Winona, MS 38967
USA
Phone: 662?283?1192
Fax: 662?283?1191

Alas, oh land of whirring wings,
which lies beyond the rivers of
Cush.
Isaiah 18:1

Publisher s Statement

As far back as I can remember, the name Eldred Echols has been associated with mission work. He has served in several African countries, but more in South Africa than any other. Although his wife has passed on, and he spends a lot of his time now at his home in Richland Hills, TX, he still returns often to the part of the world which he loves so much, to Africa, and especially to South Africa.

In 1970, I was in Africa on a mission trip. In Johannesburg I visited with the John Hardin family, and on Sunday evening I was invited to speak to the church at Benoni. Knowing that brother Echols had been scheduled to preach that evening, I spoke briefly about our work in India and then encouraged him to proceed with his lesson. I was greatly impressed with him then, not only as a preacher of the gospel, and as a missionary, but also as a scholar.

Some years later while visiting in Durban I was invited to stay in the home of brother Echol's daughter and her family. They continue to work in that country up to this time, part of the Echols legacy that lives on in South Africa.

Brother Echols has authored several books in recent years, including **Wings of the Morning, the Saga of an African Pilgrim**, which is the recounting of many of his mission experiences. Since I have printed a number of books by other missionaries, I suggested that if he decided to write another mission book I would be honored if he would allow me to serve as his publisher. It wasn't too long after that that he sent this manuscript.

Beyond the Rivers of Cush provides a window to allow the readers to participate in the varied experiences the Echols had in their mission years. I am confident that you will enjoy reading

these pages.

May God bless you, brother Echols, for all of the work you and your family have done to spread the cause of Christ. You have set a great example for all of us. The fruit of your labor will continue to compound itself in the future, and may the Lord be with you and care for you and your needs.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS
May 16, 2000

Foreword

From the time of the Phoenicians until now Africa has been a vast unknown land of strange and exotic creatures. The Mediterranean littoral of Africa was, of course, known to the ancients. The Nile valley was a cradle of civilization, and Cush (the archaic name for the regions of The Sudan and Ethiopia) was a mighty power from early Old Testament times. But of what lay beyond the two great rivers whose confluence formed the Nile proper (i.e., the Blue Nile which arose in the highlands of Ethiopia, and the White Nile of then unknown source) Africa was a continent of incredible size and unfathomable mystery.

It is from this dark hinterland of unfolding mystery that the experiences in this book are drawn in the hope that the reader will develop a concern about what happens to Africa, the future of its peoples and resources, and see in this great treasure trove of a thousand tribes a land, in the words of H. M. Stanley, "worth some effort to reclaim."

Introduction

This is not really a book in the ordinary sense of the word, since it does not follow any cohesive theme or time line, but is rather a "dog's breakfast" of Africana — scraps left over after my first book (Wings of the Morning — the Saga of an African Pilgrim) was published in 1989. A number of my friends, after reading that book, encouraged me to put out a follow-up volume of additional African experiences and trivia that were not included in the first volume. I have now done so.

Let me make one thing clear in the beginning: the material in the following chapters does not reflect the day to day life of a missionary in Africa. Most of a missionary's life is taken up with routine activities such as Bible classes and preaching. Some spend much of their time writing, printing and distributing religious literature. Others devote a large part of their time to conducting home Bible teaching, or "cottage meetings". Still others are employed in training schools, equipping local Christians with leadership skills and knowledge.

Much of my own life was spent teaching in mission schools where a general curriculum was followed but with the emphasis on Bible instruction. Weekends and school vacations were spent in evangelistic travel, usually done on foot with African porters carrying my camping gear. Many months might pass without anything happening more exciting than finding a scorpion in one's pocket. But it was inevitable that over a half-century span of time in Africa there would be some experiences that were unusual or even bizarre, and it is those experiences that people in general are interested in hearing about. They want to be introduced to strange creatures and odd customs, not to be walked through the typical humdrum activities of a missionary's every-

day life. It may therefore be inferred from my tales of Africa that we spent much time hunting and exploring. That was not the case.

My introduction to the African mission scene began when I arrived in Cape Town in early 1944 and met the already legendary veteran missionary, George M. Scott. So it seemed appropriate to begin this volume by recalling that experience which remains vivid in my memory after more than fifty years.

Table of Contents

The George Scotts

The small brown man extended his upraised palm toward me in a signal to stand still and remain quiet. He then furtively approached the subway (pedestrian underpass) going beneath the tracks of the train we had just alighted from. Sliding his body along the concrete apron flanking the entrance he extended his head just far enough into the entrance to peer down the passageway. Instantly he relaxed and beckoned me to follow. "You have to remember," he explained, "that this is District Six in Cape Town, and the skollies (thugs) lurk in these subways to rob people, especially whites."

The little coloured man was guiding me to the house of an elderly missionary couple who had retired to the Cape from Northern Rhodesia for health reasons. It was typical of George and Ottis Scott that they had chosen to live among poor and down-trodden people of one of the more squalid areas of Cape Town, for they had spent much of their lives ministering to deprived and suffering people.

Scott was a living legend. I had never met him, but had heard and read many stories about him and had looked forward to seeing him in person. I had attended university with one of the orphan waifs the Scotts had taken in and reared, so I knew they were unusual people. I was graciously received into their small, nondescript house with spartan furnishings. Scott himself was a frail ole gentleman of medium height with a large handlebar mustache. His wife was tiny and bird-like with intelligent eyes. They could have stepped out of a Norman Rockwell painting.

The Scotts had been alerted that we were coming and Ottis Scott had prepared dinner for us. She was anxious about whether she had cooked enough. "We don't eat much," she explained,

"and normally we just have a dish of oatmeal for our supper." I assured her that there was more than enough, which was an outrageous untruth. I was twenty-three years old, had just disembarked after three weeks on a freighter from South America, and could have eaten all she had prepared in three bites and then have polished off a leg of lamb. Nevertheless, it was an unforgettable dinner. Just spending an evening with these gentle old people and listening to them re-live memories of the African frontier evoked images of David Livingstone and Robert Moffat, of all that band of pioneers who ventured into the African hinterland and all too often never came out again.

I was on my way to a bush station in central Africa, had no experience in missionary work and was eager to learn as much as I could from these veterans in the short visit I had with them.

"You'll not find missionaries easy people to get on with," Mrs. Scott told me. "But, of course, you should expect that. They are people of strong and stubborn views or they never would have gone to the mission field in the first place." I was to experience all too soon the stark truth of what she was telling me.

George Scott had very little formal training in theology. Most of what he believed came out of a life-long study of the King James Version of the English Bible. Since I was a recent recipient of a degree in biblical studies, and so of course knew all the answers even to theological questions that hadn't been yet asked, it was inevitable that he and I would have some doctrinal differences. For example, the Scotts were "one-cuppers", that is, they believed that at a communion service the entire congregation should take the wine from one container. I had been brought up in large congregations where, apart from the question of

hygiene, use of one cup would have been impractical because of the amount of time it would take. The Scotts avoided any kind of problem when they attended churches using trays of small glasses by simply sharing one of the glasses between themselves.

The Scotts were members of a hardy breed of Africana missionaries — committed people who most often had little or no formal training to prepare them for the mission field except a wealth of hard-earned experience in surviving the challenges of life. George Scott was in his mid-fifties when the pull of Africa became a fire in his bones that could not be quenched. He had been engaged in salmon fishing in Alaska, but his boat blew up and he was seriously burned. As he lay recuperating in a hospital, he had time to reflect on priorities in his life, and then and there resolved to give up fishing for salmon and become a fisher for men. He wired his wife and daughter, who were living on the American west coast, to pack up and get ready to leave for Africa. And so the Scotts had given their hearts and lives to Africa and left footprints there that will never be erased. And here they were in the fading twilight years of earthly life, still holding on to the continent of their pilgrimage, albeit the very tip of the continent.

Later on I would often walk in the giant footprints of George Scott on the rolling plains and in the remote villages of Northern Rhodesia and I would be reminded of that evening spent with him and his wife in their cozy little kitchen in Cape Town.

I once sat with an old village chief who had known George Scott, Will Short and others of the pioneer missionaries. He complained that American churches no longer sent out missionaries of the caliber of those early preachers. In particular, it was a source of grief to him that they so seldom saw us, whereas those

men regularly visited all the village churches and spent much time teaching and encouraging them. I pointed out that we had to spend a great deal of our time in daily classes, educating and preparing young people to become leaders, and so we were not free to travel as much as they had done. I went on to suggest that we were doing a better job for the future of the church than the pioneers had done. The chief took immediate offense. "Young man," he admonished me sternly, "before you criticize your betters, you need to understand that those men often had to farm or raise cattle to support their families, and they lived under harder conditions than you have to, and yet they still had time to do a great deal more evangelistic work than you do. They were great preachers." And then he added peevishly, "I don't really know what you people are. School teachers, perhaps. Certainly not preachers."

That old chief is long since dead, but the sentiment he expressed reflects the fact that generation gaps are as much a fact of missionary work as of any other area of life. Now that I and my peers have retired from the field, another generation is shaking its collective head over the appalling ignorance of sound mission principles that our methodology displayed, just as their children will do when their own moment comes.

As a matter of fact, the point the old chief was making was, and still is, extremely valid; programs, however well organized and implemented, must never overshadow the emotional needs of people for interpersonal relationships. An hour of visiting around a cooking pot may have more real impact than a day spent in workshops, lectureships or seminars.

One of George Scott's stories he liked to tell came about

because of the very precarious support base the early missionaries had. Once he had found it so difficult to feed a household of orphans on the little money he had that he got into debt the equivalent of five hundred dollars, a daunting sum indeed in those days. He was a man of simple faith, so he prayed long and fervently for the Lord to do something about it. The next time he opened his post box in town, to no surprise on his part, there was a check made out to him for exactly five hundred dollars. There was no letter, no explanation of any kind, just the check. After paying his creditors he was immensely relieved to be out of troublesome debt and extremely thankful to a benevolent Providence.

The next week a letter came which the sender of the check had omitted in the first envelope. The writer explained that George Scott was to divide the money equally among all the missionaries in the area. Scott told this story with great satisfaction. It was a beautiful illustration to him of God's methodology in dealing with His servants; He gives us a helping hand whenever we're in trouble beyond our own solution, but He never relieves us of the pressures of life completely. The check had bought for Scott the brief respite he needed while he explored other alternatives, which was all he needed. George Scott and his fellow missionaries in Central Africa did not have the advantages of having had college courses in missionary principles or of learning from pioneer missionaries who had preceded them on the field. They were the pioneers, so they had to learn by trial and error. In the words of J. D. Merrit they were the "dew breakers" — the first to make a path through the dew-drenched grass of the early morning.

A few years ago, a young teacher in one of our colleges, excited and self-confident at just having completed a graduate

degree in missiology, mailed out a letter to all of the missionaries then on the field. The gist of the letter was that missionaries who hadn't been trained in missiology were doing many things wrong, and he implored us to leave the field and undergo training in missions before we did any further harm. Although it is unquestionably wise to get all of the training one can in any field of endeavor, it apparently had not registered on the young man that the very principles he had been taught were derived from the collective experiences of the missionaries whom he was so eager to train.

Cape Town

Cape Town is a very old and very beautiful city, nestled between Table Bay and the slopes of Table Mountain. A settlement was first established in 1652 by Jan van Riebeeck of the Dutch East India Company. The surrounding farmlands were given out to Dutch freemen five years later, and the importation of slaves began the following year, first blacks from West Africa and then Malays in 1667. There were clans of Hottentots, closely related to the Bushmen living as pastoralists in the Cape, and with whom the Dutchmen traded, but there were no black African tribes in the area and it would be more than one hundred years before the burgers of the Cape would come into confrontation with the Xhosa tribe from the northeast.

The cultural framework of the Cape is therefore essentially Dutch colonial and the striking Cape Dutch architecture of the older buildings is one of the areas' most charming features. One of the most beautiful and best preserved is Great Constantia, a manor house and winery on the slopes of Table Mountain situated among three hundred year old oak trees, and reflecting early Cape culture at its most gracious. Although the colony was strengthened by the arrival of French Huguenots (fleeing persecution in Europe) in 1688, the newcomers were not allowed to maintain their own cultural traditions but forced to adopt the customs and language of the Dutch. Use of the French language was punished severely. Although many present-day South Africans have French names, those names are pronounced according to the phonetics of Dutch and these descendants of the Huguenots are as stolidly Afrikaans (South Africana Dutch) as any descendants of Dutchmen from Haarlem or Amsterdam. This infusion of French blood dramatically changed one aspect of Afrikaner agri-

cultural and commercial life: grape growing and the wine industry. The first attempts of the Dutchmen to produce saleable wines were a dismal failure, but the French connection has made South Africa a world leader in viticulture, and the valleys and mountain slopes of the southwestern Cape are carpeted with the vines that have made names such as Paarl and Stellenbosch famous in the fine restaurants of Europe.

Cape Dutch cookery reflects the fact that Cape Town was established only as a way station for revictualing ships in the Holland-East Indies spice trades. Some dishes for which the Cape is justly famous are *bobotie* (a sort of curried meat loaf), *sosaties* (curried grilled chops), and tomato *bredies* (piquant stews). Curries of all sorts are popular throughout South Africa. In the Cape they have Javanese and Malay roots. In Natal they are due in great measure to the large population from India, brought over to tend the sugar cane fields in Zuzuland in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the Indian market in Durban, vendors fill orders for curry powder from large piles of the piquant mixture labeled with descriptive labels such as *hell's fire* and *mother-in-law's tongue*.

South Africans generally love what Americans call cookouts, which they refer to as braais (short for *braaivleis*, which literally means a meat broil). With the meat roasted over an open fire they generally serve *stywe pap* (stiff cornmeal mush) and tomato gravy. Along with the steaks and chops they *braai* a quantity of *boere wors* (farm sausage). For dessert, which is called either the sweet or the pudding, they like *melktert* (literally, milk pie), which is similar to what my mother used to call a cream pie and some referred to as a butter pie. They also like *koek sisters* (the cake sisters) which are braided syrupy dough-

nuts, and Dutch pancakes (large crepes rolled around sugar and lemon juice).

Afrikaner culture has naturally been changed and weakened by the influx of people from Europe, and more particularly from the British Isles. Great Britain first attempted to take Cape Town from the Dutch settlers in 1781, but was unsuccessful in establishing a garrison there until 1806. The Afrikaners found the rule of the *rooineks* (red necks, as they called the British, apparently because the strong African sun was not kind to the fair-skinned Anglo-Saxons) intolerable and, beginning in 1835, large groups of them left the Cape in what has since been called the Great Trek. Eventually new settlements were established in what became the provinces of Natal, the Orange Free State, and The Transvaal. The British already had established a foothold in Natal, which was eventually to attenuate Afrikaner culture to a great degree as the two main white population groups flourished and grew, but most of that phenomenon transpired in the twentieth century.

Other branches of the Great Trek who settled on the vast plains of the Free State and as far north as the Soutspanberg range in the Transvaal, have maintained their cultural identity to a considerable extent. Vast areas of central and northwestern South Africa had been depopulated by the armies of Mzilikazi, the Ndebele chief who deserted the Zulu king, Chaka, and re-settled in Rhodesia, cutting a swath of death and destruction all the way. The Boers (literally farmers, but used as a generic term for the Afrikaner nation) found a great empty country where they were able to settle without warfare with African tribes. In these areas, where the hated British had not arrived, they were able to carry on their customs and traditions for a long time. The modern age

of communication and mass media has, nevertheless, had a leveling effect on the whole civilized world and the Afrikaner has not been spared.

I think one of the most endearing customs of the Afrikaners of former years is the *opsit* (literally the sitting up). When a young Boer wanted to pay court to a girl, she entertained him in the *voorkamer* (living room) of her parents' farmstead. The couple was given a short length of candle to light their tryst and when the flame began to wane the young man had to take his leave. As the courtship progressed, the smitten couple was allowed ever longer candles until, on the final night before the nuptial ceremony was to be read by the Dutch Reformed predikant, they were given a long candle that lasted the whole night through; hence the name the *opsit* for the wedding eve.

Color Bar in South Africa

At the beginning of the last decade of this millennium, political and social changes in South Africa are occurring at a staggering pace. Dialogue between the races undreamed of a generation ago is becoming the norm. Climactic changes do not occur in any society without generating enormous tension and trauma, but out of the crucible of friction and bewilderment it is to be hoped that a healthier and more just society will emerge.

We Americans who carried on religious and social programs within the framework of a racially-oriented country had to tread very carefully. On the one hand we had to meticulously observe the letter of the law or face deportation and other interdictions. On the other hand we were conscience bound not to be, or even appear to be, supportive of a system of racial repression. It was a balancing act that was never easy, for we knew that the "moles" of the secret service often were present in public meetings we addressed or attended. In actual fact, statutory laws did not hamper us as much as might be supposed, but traditional attitudes were a constant thorn in our flesh.

For example, we had established a small congregation in the Turffontien suburb of Johannesburg, a predominantly white area. But, of course, nobody is actually white, unless he has just seen his grandfather's ghost, and I have yet to see my first black person. Whether red, yellow, black or white, we are all actually some shade of brown. The question is how brown you can be and still be white. Some very arbitrary calls were made in South Africa on people's racial classification.

I remember one case that caused a flap in international circles that concerned a Greek tourist to South Africa. He had come out on a passenger liner from Europe and obviously had spent the

entire cruise sunbathing in a deck chair. The sun tan he acquired, added to an already swarthy complexion, produced a shade of walnut that was not exactly de rigeur in an Afrikaner-dominated state. The young man went into a whites-only hotel and was promptly arrested. Since he was an international visitor, the sun tan lotion hit the fan shortly afterward, led by the South African English language newspapers.

Red-faced officials eventually sorted out the contretemps, but much damage was done to South Africa's already scarred image. It pointed up the fact that it is clearly impossible to objectively classify people by purely racial criteria.

Anyhow, in Turffontein most of the people claimed to be white, but few would have been willing to take a lie detector test. In the first place, the Aryan backgrounds of the two major European segments, the Afrikaners and the British, were seriously compromised. Because of productive liaisons between British colonists and their cane field workers of African heritage, anthropologists estimated that the genetic make-up of the average citizen of Britain was eight percent African. On the Afrikaner side, the Dutch Cape settlers of the East India Company had been so smitten with the charms of the Hottentot maidens that they had blessed their descendants with an average of sixteen percent African blood. And since genes submit to no laws but their own, it is inevitable they will show up from time to time in wondrous combinations.

We had a good, faithful and very ordinary family with an English surname in the congregation. They were a bit browner perhaps than the average member, but not to the degree that would focus racial prejudice on them. This was not true in the

case of the husband's brother who started attending the congregation a year or so later. His hair and facial features gave strong indication that he had more in common with the indigenous people of South Africa than just a shared homeland. In fact, his African ancestry was unmistakable. To be fair to most South African people of European blood, the overwhelming majority of the congregation welcomed the man into our fellowship. Eddie Osner's response was somewhat different. "That bloke is a chancer!" he exclaimed indignantly. He wanted us to tell the man we couldn't accept him into the congregation, which we refused to do. Eddie then declared that his wife (not he personally, of course) felt so strongly about the matter that they would have no choice but to cease attending services. We expressed our regrets at their decision, but made no attempt to mollify them by acceding to their demand.

A jarring incident of segregation occurred in South Africa a few years later. The government of Jan Christian Smuts had been swept from power in 1948 and a very "VERKRAMP" (ultra right wing) government of Afrikaners had replaced it. The new government immediately set about segregating the races. Apartheid (literally "apartness", and pronounced a-part-hate, not a-part-hite) was to be carried to an extreme degree over the next few years.

I was teaching at Southern Africa Bible School at the time the incident occurred. It came about at our annual lectureship which ended with a banquet and an evening's entertainment at some hired public hall or banquet room. That year we had hired the Boksburg town hall. Boksburg is a neighboring town to Benoni (where the Bible school was located) but was dominated by a much more extreme population of Afrikaners than was true of

Benoni. Our lectureship, which was held in the auditorium of the Benoni church, was attended not only by whites but also by blacks (Native Africans) and "coloureds" (people of mixed black and white ancestry). Two coloured mothers from Cape Town had brought their teenage sons to the lectures and had bought tickets to the banquet. Somehow the Boksburg town board had gotten wind that these coloureds planned to attend and cancelled our reservations. I might point out that these coloureds were culturally superior to many of the Boksburg Afrikaners and were also of a higher economic bracket. When the two mothers learned of the problem they immediately said, "Do not have the banquet cancelled on our account. We are accustomed to discrimination and do not wish you to incur any problem on our behalf." But the teenage boys were devastated and deeply humiliated. We held an immediate "war" council. Some were in favor of cancelling the banquet altogether rather than kowtow to such blatant segregation. I for one stated that I would not attend if we accepted the restrictions. The majority of the staff, however, felt that we would be doing an injustice to several hundred people who had bought tickets to the banquet and were entitled to attend. It was too late to find another venue, so we had no choice but to back down and assure the town board that no coloured people would be present. I asked the two teenage boys to be my guests at the international restaurant at the Johannesburg airport which, like certain first class hotels, were desegregated so that important political and business people could visit the country without precipitating an international crisis. The boys were given a splendid meal but it didn't, of course, heal the raw wound of rejection.

Today, as I write, the rule of the Afrikaners has passed into history and the *"verkramptes"* (extreme racists) who were so

heavy-handed in their treatment of non-whites are receiving much better treatment from the black government than the blacks ever received from them. Apartheid was, of course, an abomination, but the practice of segregation was not unique to South Africa. Discrimination against blacks in the American south of my childhood was far more vicious than I ever observed in South Africa.

"Apartheid" (segregationist) South Africa had many anomalies. For example, Chinese were "black" but Japanese were "white" although the average verkramp could not have distinguished between them if his stiff neck had depended on it. The reason behind it was cynically simple. South Africa had no commercial dealings with China but had a lively trade with Japan. I lived next door to a lovely Chinese family during a couple of years I stayed in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg. Their surname was Lai which according to their custom was the first name. The family consisted of a young couple who ran a small grocery store (and lived in the back of it), their two small children, and Lai Johnny's father. Johnny was a good neighbor and I freely forgive him for giving me "three hundred year-old" duck eggs and bean curd for dinner. He and his gracious young wife served the courses which I and my good friend from Germany, Uli Steiniger (who was visiting me at the time), shared with the aged father (a Cantonese who didn't speak a word of English). The 300 year-old eggs proved 200 years too old for Uli's stomach and he was violently sick afterward. I didn't tell Uli that the raw ground meat spread on bread, which I had been given at his house, was just as bizarre to me as the superannuated duck eggs. Anyway, the dinner menu had nothing to do with the point of this recollection which we now reach. I asked Johnny how they fared

under apartheid's laws.

"It's extra-ordinarily complicated," he replied. "We are 'black' in one context and 'white' in another. For example, we are blacks if we want to eat in a restaurant but whites if we ride a bus. Of course, if we state that we are Japanese, we are white all the time. But, as a Chinese, you must learn every situation where you are white and where you are black."

American missionaries were in an awkward position. On the one hand open opposition to the policies of the government meant immediate deportation and the refusal of the applications for visas for Americans seeking to enter the country. On the other hand, even tacit approval of apartheid would destroy our credibility with the majority black population besides being morally wrong. Mostly, we never referred directly to government policies but taught principles that were opposed to segregation.

I personally experienced the disfavor of the ruling authorities only twice and both involved entering black areas from which we were barred without special permission from the central government, which was time consuming and not always granted. On one occasion I drove into the Transkei to visit brethren there. I was seen there by an Afrikaner operating a trading store. Fortunately, he didn't get my car license number, so the A.P.B. police broadcast could only identify me as "an unknown person driving a blue Chevrolet sedan." By the time they had set up their net I was back over the border into the Eastern Cape, so they never caught me.

The other occasion was a result of several of us who from time to time visited the Zulu congregation in Daveyton, the black township of Benoni, making quick trips there without official

permission. It came in the form of a captain of the Criminal Investigation Department who came to my house in Benoni. He told me they were well aware of every visit I had made and also visits made by Al Horne and John Hardin. I remarked that his intelligence network seemed pretty thorough. "Oh, we have a dossier on you that thick," and he held up a thumb and forefinger measuring a gap that could have accommodated a Sears catalogue. "You can tell Al Horne that we knew he was in Daveyton yesterday. We know every time one of you speaks there and what you said. Fortunately for you, none of you have ever meddled in politics so we do not perceive you as a threat to security. Keep it that way and there will be no problem." And having so said, he stood up and cordially shook hands and departed. We were not surprised that the officials were aware of what we were doing, because we knew that they had "moles" in virtually every public meeting including church services. As a matter of fact, many political activists and agitators used church meetings as the venue for spreading their political views. We never preached politics and never privately advised Christians to join any subversive movement. Consequently, we seldom experienced any serious confrontations with the government. We did have one of our evangelists arrested in Natal. We were surprised to find out that he was a communist agent who carried a Ghanaian passport and who had been under surveillance for many months. He was using his "conversion" and evangelistic activities to screen his real purpose, all of which the security police knew.

The Dutch Reformed Church

The dominant religious group in South Africa is the Dutch Reformed church. In most of the smaller towns and villages of the country, the *dominie* (pastor) is the real political muscle of the place and not much happens that he doesn't sanction. As a matter of fact, the *Broederbond* (brotherhood), a secret society and political pressure group of mainly hard-line Afrikaners akin in some respects to the Ku Klux Klan, has reputedly been dominated by Dutch Reformed ministers.

There are two main branches of the Dutch Reformed Church, the larger *Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk* and the *Herformde*. The Nederduits group has far more political clout than the Herformde brethren. Once John Hardin and I spent the night at a Herformde mission station in Vendaland in northern South Africa. They were very gracious hosts. The missionary couple in whose home we stayed had a young son of about nine years. Apparently having company was an infrequent occurrence in their home. He brought all the youngsters on the station into the house, and throwing open the door to the room in which we were staying, he exclaimed, with evident satisfaction, "Just look what we've got!"

I later asked his father how their group differed from the mainline Gereformeerde Kerk. He laughed shortly and replied, "They dance and don't drink and we drink and don't dance!" Then he added ruefully, "Actually, the main difference is that they have the government and wish they didn't, and we don't have it and wish we did."

In the evening we were invited to a *braaivleis* (cookout) of all the mission personnel. They certainly were a merry lot and our host was right, they did indeed drink.

In theory, the Reformed churches are presbyterian in government, that is, each congregation is under the authority of *ouderlinge* (elders) who wear dark suits and white ties, but really they are very much under the domination of the dominie. In fact, his title derives from the Latin *dominus* (Lord). The dominies have extensive theological training, seven years, which includes several years of the Hebrew and Greek languages. They are, nevertheless, very much the prisoners of their creeds. Once some of us were discussing a point of Bible interpretation with a Nederduits dominie and he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, of course, there is no question but that that is what the Bible teaches," then added apologetically, "but unfortunately the Kerk teaches otherwise." Largely because of this rigid adherence to tradition, vast numbers of their former members have left them for the more experiential charismatic movements, the various Pentecostal sects. In spite of these defections, the Dutch Reformed Church remains the seat of both social and political power.

(Note: The manuscript for this book was written several years ago, so it does not reflect the great political and social changes that have come about. Whites no longer govern South Africa, and so the Dutch Reformed Church no longer wields the power it once enjoyed.)

Personal Evangelism

Personal evangelism is a necessary means of propagating the faith in most countries. The use of mass media — the press, radio and television — are important because they reach such large audiences that some people are certain to be touched with the gospel message. Their impact on a given community where a missionary is trying to establish a congregation is likely to be from very little to no impact at all. Also, in third-world countries there are multitudes who do not have access to mass communication systems. Even in highly developed countries the percentage of the population who listen to, or read about, religious programs is very small indeed. On the local or community level there is no substitute for personal contact.

In the villages of black Africa, this face-to-face contact with people generally is not an abrasive experience if one remembers that a tribal African is, first of all, a part of a clan or village, and only secondarily is he an individual. To attempt knocking hut doors in an African village in order to evangelize the occupants is unlikely to be productive, and is a hindrance to, rather than an aid to, communication. Africans are so integrated into an extended family that they are inclined to use the pronoun we much more often than the particular I. To approach an individual African family's hut violates protocol. Courtesy requires that anyone wishing to preach or teach must first approach the village chief or headman and request permission from him. Usually, he will not only grant the request, but will personally undertake to bring together an audience at a stated time and place.

It is a very different matter if the objects of evangelistic outreach are persons of European extraction living in African cities. Here one is likely to encounter a wide range of attitudes from

complete indifference to open hostility. To reach the two percent of the population who have an interest in furthering their religious knowledge, it is necessary to make some personal contact. Of course, where business or social contacts are established already, it often is possible to explore their interest in religion. However, most people will be strangers who must be contacted at home, and that means door knocking. Some religious sects are indefatigable door-knockers and are so abrasive and persistent in their approach that the average householder is more than a little chagrined to find a couple of them standing at his door. As a consequence, any religious worker is likely to encounter a negative attitude when he approaches a stranger's door. This is compounded when the householder is of British extraction, because of their reserve and love of privacy. This is epitomized in the aphorism that "an Englishman's home is his castle."

It is not easy to motivate members of your congregation to visit the homes in your neighborhood. They undertake it, if at all, with dread and trepidation. One sister in a congregation where I preached in Johannesburg described door-knocking as "the most demeaning, degrading and humiliating experience of my life." People sometimes are curt and sarcastic and the canvasser leaves the doorstep feeling depressed and rejected. Vicious dogs inside the fenced front yards of South African homes can be a problem, particularly when the owner refused to call them off. One student of Southern Africa Bible School with whom I was paired to canvass homes was very much intimidated by dogs, and his solution to the problem was simple but highly discriminatory. "When I see a mean-looking dog inside the front gate, I just regard that resident as having judged himself unworthy of eternal life and pass on to the next house."

To be fair, a rude reception is unusual. Most people, if not enthusiastic, are at least formally polite. Nevertheless, the possibility of being insulted is a daunting prospect and congregations usually leave door knocking as a last, extreme solution to the problem of going out into "the highways and hedges (in the words of Jesus) to constrain them to come in."

The leading members of a small congregation near Johannesburg were meeting to address the problem of reaching the surrounding community and every option was explored before finally and reluctantly the possibility of having to knock doors came up. We were all agreed that we didn't want to do it, but some felt we would have to do it. Numerous and elaborate arguments were put forward to support the argument that door knocking is a waste of everybody's time. Finally, Frank spoke up. "I agree with the feelings of everybody here that door knocking is distasteful. But I have a problem with saying it won't work, because, you see, I am a Christian today because some stranger knocked on my door."

It Takes All Kinds

"Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Lord." Perhaps nowhere is it more evident that God can use individuals of very different talents than on the mission field. Farmers, mechanics, printers, teachers, doctors and nurses — there is virtually no end to the list of gifts and qualifications that are of great value in spreading the kingdom. It is seriously mistaken to suppose that only pulpit preachers are required to evangelize the untaught billions who inhabit our planet. As a matter of fact, eloquent pulpit evangelists who are key to the growth of the church in the United States are often relatively ineffective on a mission field. Their polished sermons and well-turned phrases mean very little in most third-world countries because they have to be translated by an interpreter into the native tongue, and what the audience actually hears is no more fluent than the interpreter.

During the years I was in South Africa I had the pleasure of knowing, and to a limited extent working with two men, both named John, who were very successful missionaries but with almost opposite talents.

John Hardin was "an Israelite without guile." He was one of the original four men who undertook to establish the church among the Europeans (i.e., whites) in South Africa. He was chosen because he was a very fine song leader and was a great asset to our early efforts to evangelize the English and Afrikaans speaking people of the Republic of South Africa. His greatest aptitude, however, turned out to be working with the black tribes who made up the vast majority of the country's population with whom he had a rapport that none of the rest of us had. For one thing, he had infinite patience, and would gladly sit into the wee hours with people who were willing to learn, and patience is cer-

tainly a monumental gift in working with Africans. As a young student I remember attending a lecture by a veteran Rhodesian missionary. At the end of his talk he invited questions from the audience. One question was: "What do you consider the most important qualification to be a successful missionary in black Africa?" Without hesitation he answered: "Patience. If you are impatient you should choose some other mission field."

Although John Hardin served as pulpit preacher for several white congregations, he lacked the eloquence of Guy Caskey and Waymon Miller, two other members of the Johannesburg team. He was really a teacher, and therefore, more sensitive to the soundness of the material he taught than to the limitations of his audience, the exact opposite of an evangelistic speaker, who is more concerned with keeping the attention of his hearers than he is with the meticulous accuracy of his material. Like most pulpit teachers John was inclined to thoroughly cover his subject, even at the expense of sometimes exceeding his allotted time by a wide margin. I sometimes felt that he got considerably more out of a scripture than the Holy Spirit had ever intended putting into it.

But with the native Africans, and particularly with the people of Vendaland, he was a natural. Vendaland was a large tribal area in the northern part of South Africa. The rapid growth of the church among the Vendas was due in large part to the patient labors of John Hardin. When Vendaland became a semi-independent country, the hereditary tribal chief was elected the first president. He and John were friends. One day John wanted to see the president so he simply walked into the suite of offices where the high government officials, including the president, carried on the country's business. A guard stopped him and asked what he wanted. "I want to see President Mpephu," John replied. "But

you can't just drop in to see the president" the astonished guard exclaimed. "You have to go through official channels." But the president had seen John from his partially open door and shouted, "Let Mr. Hardin in."

It has often been stated that no man is irreplaceable, but many years have passed since John Hardin left the mission field and if there is a replacement who can fill his shoes he remains undiscovered. Grizzled old African church leaders still speak wistfully of the great John Hardin who once walked tall among them.

I first met John Maples when he was the dapper pulpit evangelist for the Saner Avenue Church in Dallas. He was a restless bundle of energy who wanted to get everything done right now. Later on he was to wear the nickname of "Spit-on-the-Griddle" Maples because of his extreme impatience. If anyone stopped by his office with a long story to tell, John would begin drumming his fingers on his desk and make it obvious that he wanted his visitor to depart forthwith. Before he went to Africa he expressed to me an interest in working with the black tribes. I shook my head and told him, "That work is not for you, John." "Why not?" he asked. "Because you are too impatient. However, I think you'd be successful working among the whites." He was somewhat taken aback, but he did indeed go to work among the white people of the large city of Durban and was very successful in establishing a fine congregation in that city. He had an immediate rapport with the white business men of both British and Afrikaner stock, who like John, were movers and shakers to whom time was of the essence.

Years later John said to me, "I want to thank you for doing me a great favor." "What was that?" I inquired. "When you said

to me in Dallas that I would not be successful working with the black tribes, I was very disappointed, but now I know that you saved me from disaster."

John regarded the work of an evangelist to be of the highest priority, so he never bothered searching for a place to park his car. He simply parked in a loading zone. I was with him one day when he did just that. I told him, "You are going to get a whopping big fine!" "How much?" he wanted to know. "Fifty rand." "Then I am way ahead. I've saved a lot more on parking meters than the fine amounts to," he stated triumphantly.

In many ways John Hardin and John Maples were exact opposites, but the Lord had a use for their disparate talents and each of them filled a significant role in their generation. To be fair, both Johns owed a great deal of their success to gracious and charming wives. A man's wife can make him or break him on the mission field. I am in accord with those elders who always insist on interviewing a prospective missionary together with his wife, but that is a different subject. The point of contrasting the two Johns is to make the point that the Lord can use almost anyone on some mission field somewhere provided he is an earnest soul seeker who is willing to overcome all the frustrations and disappointments that he is almost certain to face. Education and training are important, of course, but they are not nearly as important as having the heart of a soul winner and the humility to serve.

It is not possible to absolutely categorize people, of course, and sometimes people who enter mission fields with apparently little to commend them turn out to be very successful and vice versa. Often when I have been asked what is the most important consideration in choosing a prospective missionary to Africa I

have half-jokingly replied, "that he not be a pulpit preacher!" There have been pulpit preachers who have been successful among African tribes, but they are the exception. In the first place, they feel frustrated that their polished skills in sermon delivery are completely wasted on an unsophisticated audience, particularly if they are preaching through an interpreter. The repertoire of little stories and jokes generally have no relevance for an African audience.

I recall an occasion when a recently arrived evangelist from America was addressing an East African tribe. The point he was belaboring was that names are important and that the name of the church should reflect that it is the bride of Christ. "How would you feel," he demanded, "if your wife refused to be called by your name?" The audience was completely bewildered. The answer to his question was that they would all feel just fine, since their wives never took their husbands' names in any case.

Lion picture

John and Evelyn Maples

Medical Missions

Christians with special skills are much needed in mission fields, and that is especially true if they (both men and women) are also capable teachers of the Bible. If those skills are in the medical field then their importance can scarcely be exaggerated, because in primitive areas of the undeveloped world there is generally almost a total lack of even basic medical treatment available to the people. Christian doctors and nurses make a tremendous contribution to the spread of Christianity in the third world countries where what is an easily-treated illness in developed countries is a virtual death sentence where no medical help exists. I wish it were possible to persuade every medically trained Christian to give at least six months of his/her career to the mission field.

At the same time, I can think of no profession that would be called upon to make a greater sacrifice and be more vulnerable to frustration than that of a medical missionary. These people have been used to having the hygienic conditions and sophisticated machines that are taken as a matter of course in modern medicine. Without some of this technology it is impossible to carry out many procedures in the crude facilities they generally have to practice in, which means that a great many patients die who could have been saved in a well equipped hospital. So we are asking them to serve in a situation that will bring them many disappointments. On the other hand, they will experience great joy in saving thousands who, without them, would certainly have died.

In addition to the frustration of having to work with a minimum of equipment and inadequate supplies of essential drugs, they incur two problems that may exist to some degree everywhere, but seem to be the norm in primitive areas of tribal Africa,

namely, the un-ill and the too-ill. Those who are not really ill fall into two categories — hypochondriacs who are convinced that something is really wrong with them, and people who use the clinic or hospital as a social center and feel they need an excuse for being there. The latter affect a cough or stomach distress that legitimizes their presence. A doctor at one Christian hospital told me that it is never expedient to tell these people that they are not sick. He coped with the situation with sugar pills in three colors. He first administered a white sugar pill with the observation that it should set things right. If they returned with the complaint that it hadn't worked, he gave the yellow pill and assured them it was almost certain to make them better. In stubborn cases he gave them the red pill which had never been known to fail. This most generally worked whether the patient was a real hypochondriac or simply a socializer. This doctor said that telling a person he has nothing wrong with him makes him look like a fool in the eyes of his friends and will incur his ill will. This, of course, is a social problem rather than a medical problem.

A much more serious problem is the too-ill patients who have very serious medical problems which have been neglected too long while they relied on traditional (witch doctor) medicine, and are brought to the hospital after the illness is no longer treatable. Since they die after they are admitted into the hospital, it reinforces the claim of the witch doctors that it is a death sentence to enter a mission (or any other "European" hospital). Missionary doctors render a great service quite apart from the fact that they save thousands of lives that would be lost without their skills. That is the credibility that their enormous prestige lends to the total mission effort. The work of the church in Tanzania provides a good example of this.

Tanzania (Tanganyika as it was formerly called) was a League of Nations mandate under British rule. In order to be able to evangelize there, we had to acquire property to get around a law there (or maybe policy is a better word) that no religious group not represented there before 1932 would be allowed in to do missionary work. On the other hand, if you were allowed entry for any other reason, there was no objection to your practicing missionary work. In order to be allowed in the country, Guy Caskey, Martelle Petty, and I purchased two farms at Chimala in the southern highlands of Tanganyika. Martelle Petty was killed in a motorcycle accident in Pretoria before he could realize his ambition to preach in the country, but Guy Caskey and I were able, on the basis of our possessing land there, to enter Tanganyika as farmers and so were able to establish the church and a training school for evangelists there. One of the several tribes of our area were the war-like Wasangu who lived on the great Usangu plain on the edge of which one of our farms was located.

The Wasangu were not easy people to get along with. A silent witness to this was a flat-topped hill that stood on the edge of the plain and was a holy place to the Wasangu, although no one remembered why it was sacred. Cultural historians have surmised that the hill was the place where the invading Nguni people (the best-known branch of which were Chaka's Zulus) from southeast Africa, reached the end of their incursions to the north. The Nguni were a fierce people but the Wasangu were fiercer still. Their army had stopped forever the progress of the Ngunis northward and the final battlefield was around the flat-topped hill. The Wasangu were still reluctant to entertain strangers and their paramount chief, Melele, gave our preachers from the Bible

School a great deal of grief, arresting and fining them for preaching in his territory. He never dared to go so far as to confront us Americans directly as long as the country was under British rule, but the time was fast approaching when it would revert to African control and, as we were not legally registered to carry on religious activities, we would have no protection from persecution. It was therefore of some urgency to gain recognition. This was possible if we would establish a hospital. The brethren at the Park Row church in Arlington, Texas, undertook the hospital project and in due time Dr. Jerry Mayes of Lake Jackson, Texas, arrived to organize and run a small medical facility. This achieved the primary objective of gaining recognition and legal protection for the church to carry on missionary work, but it resulted also in more direct benefits as the following incidents will illustrate.

Several of us from the Bible School were making a trip on to the Usangu plain to preach in the villages there. We were going ahead in a 4-wheel drive vehicle to mark out a way for Dr. Mayes to follow with a makeshift clinic set up in a 5-ton truck. The Usangu plain is a quagmire of black mud in the rainy season, but in the dry season it forms a hard crust that will bear the weight of even heavy vehicles. There are, however, small streams draining the plains which continue to flow for several months and whose muddy beds are difficult to cross, even for 4-wheel drive vehicles. We came to one such water course which proved uncrossable. On the other side we could see a village in the near distance. We needed to lay a bed of poles across the muddy bottom in order to gain some traction but, of course, there were no poles to be had on the plain. One of the Bible School students was wading in the shallow water when he suddenly exclaimed: “Here

are a lot of poles lying on the bottom!" Thanking Providence for this almost miraculous piece of good fortune, we set about arranging the poles to form a roadway across the muddy stream. We had just finished laying the poles when an irate villager arrived and demanded: "What are you doing with my roof poles?" "We didn't know they were yours." "Well, you knew they were somebody's. The poles didn't bring themselves here!" We subsequently learned that the local Africans cut their rafters in a wooded area several miles away and carry them to the stream to soak. It seems that soaking them in the muddy water several weeks renders them distasteful to termites. This particular pole owner demanded that we put the poles right back were we found them. "We will, but can't we just cross on them first?" we pleaded. "You most certainly cannot," he stated firmly. "That's a great pity," one of us observed, "because the daktari won't be able to reach your village." "Daktari?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean a daktari is coming here?" "Yes. He is just a few minutes behind us." "Then why didn't you say so in the first place and avoid all this unpleasantness? Of course, you may use the poles!" Jerry arrived shortly afterward with his mobile clinic. Meanwhile the news had spread and a large crowd of would-be patients had gathered at the village. Jerry announced that he would be holding a clinic after a bit, but that first we had some words we wanted them to hear. He then delivered a short sermon that introduced a longer (much) sermon by one of us "professionals", which at the conclusion several villagers professed themselves interested in being baptized — so a village church was born. Had he held the clinic first our no-longer-captive audience would have thinned considerably and missed the sermon. The daktari was our best guarantee of a good audience. At the hospital in Chimala a preaching service was held daily for the ambulatory patients and

the numerous hangers-on.

The salient point is that quite apart from the physical good that doctors and nurses do in mission fields, they perform a tremendous "enabling" ministry in paving the way for the teachers and evangelists to do a much more effective job. Unfortunately, there are not enough medically trained people to go around. Those few who are willing to sacrifice their time and money to make possible more effective outreach deserve the greatest praise and gratitude.

Southern Rhodesia

While I was a resident teacher at Nhowe Mission in the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia in the mid-forties, I encountered some interesting historical traditions. Much of ancient African history is preserved in oral tradition by casting it in the mold of easily remembered folk lore. These so-called myths of many ancient cultures encapsulate factual history in fairy-tale form. A good example is the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, which encompasses in fabulous language the history of an attack by the Athenians on the royal capital of the Minoan people.

One of the myths of the Shona people concerns two prominent mountains separated by a deep valley. The mountains are named Mrewa and Mtoko, which also are the names of sub-tribes living in their respective areas. According to legend, these two mountains once met in a terrible battle which went on for some time with neither side a clear victor. Eventually they decided to settle their differences by accepting a stand-off with each mountain retreating several miles. The intervening valley would become a safety zone upon which neither mountain would trespass.

Cultural anthropologists reconstruct the following history from the legend: Sometime during the early period of tribal settlement of the area, a territorial dispute between the Mrewa and Mtoko clans of the Mashona people escalated into all-out warfare that persisted over a long period. Since neither clan could gain a clear victory and both groups were being decimated by the struggle, the leaders agreed to a truce. The Mrewa clan would withdraw to the west of their mountain and the Mtokos to the east of their mountain. The intervening valley would remain a buffer

zone to keep down future strife between them.

History that spans only a couple of generations has not had time to become mythologized. An old Shona man pointed out a round hill topped by a bald granite knob. "That is the hill where we cornered the lion. I was still small at the time." He then went on to tell the story about the lion. The Mashona people had been subjugated by the warlike Matabele tribe who had fled from the terrible Zulu king, Chaka, and had settled the country to the west of them. They had been led by two very strong and violent chiefs, Mzilikazi, who had led them in their flight from Chaka, and his son and heir Lobengula. The old man's story related to the reign of Lobengula.

There had been a prolonged drought in Matabeleland. No grain had been harvested and the grass that sustained their vast herds of cattle had been licked up by the merciless sun. The traditional rain dances had not been effective. Finally, King Lobengula assembled all his witch doctors. One of their responsibilities was to work the secret magic that would cause the spirit world to smile favorably upon the people and who would in turn prevail upon the Rain God to open the heavens.

Lobengula was characteristically direct with the witch doctors. "I pay you a lot to keep the spirits happy so they will bring rain. You haven't done that, so now I am going to tell you what I shall do. If you haven't brought rain by such-and-such a time, not one of your heads will be left on your shoulders." They were in a ticklish spot, but if they hadn't been smarter than average, they never would have become witch doctors in the first place, so they employed delaying tactics. "O mighty Black Elephant!", they exclaimed, "we will surely bring the rains, but first the spir-

its must be satisfied." "What do the spirits want?" demanded Lobenbula.

"A live lion without a scratch on him," they replied.

"They'll get him!", Lobengula growled.

Now the witch doctors had thought that their demand would prove impossible to fulfill, but they had not reckoned on the resourcefulness of Lobengula. The King simply sent an impi (battalion) to the Mashona people with the orders to "Get us a live lion in a cage without a mark on him or we'll butcher you all like goats." Faced with such alternatives, the Mashonas got the lion. A great horde of people surrounded a lion and drove him to the granite-topped hill. Gradually they converged on him until he was cornered in the middle of the rock knob. The lion, with no place to go, predictably turned nasty. He wreaked fearful havoc with his slashing claws and snapping fangs as the circle grew tighter, but the people continued to bore in until hundreds of hands eventually held the lion in a vise from which he couldn't break out. They loaded him into a cage made of saplings and presented him at the court of Lobengula.

Lobengula set the lion before the witch doctors and said, "Here is your lion. Now if you have not brought rain within a certain number of days, your days will have come to an end." The period of grace expired and a public decapitation of the sorcerers was held. The consensus of the people was that they looked much better without their heads anyway!

The Rainy Season in Tanganyika

Tanganyika's Usangu plain was a green wonderland after the rains had fallen. The drab gray-brown was transformed into a sea of brilliant green and the scattered acacia bushes became mounds of yellow flowers. Migratory birds in incredible numbers winged in from countries as far north as Germany. There were many species of geese and ducks, spoonbills, ibises and various breeds of storks standing in the the shallow pools that formed in every depression. It was an exhilarating but chancy experience to drive around in the rich meadows and see the newborn fawns of the various antelope species gambolling about in the lush grass. There was a brief period when the ground surface was still firm enough to support a car without breaking through to the perma-mud.

One afternoon my brother Roy and I took my G.M. pickup and went for what we intended to be a short drive on the plain. We were cruising along in foot-high grass when we suddenly became aware that the grass was standing in several inches of water. In such a circumstance it is absolutely vital not to stop or you certainly will sink. So we began to execute a large circle in order to get back to dry ground without diminishing our speed. We didn't make it. The tires began to sink into the soft mud. In a vain attempt to increase traction by gearing down, I lost all traction and we were firmly stuck. It was too late to walk back to our Chosi farm, which would have taken several hours and already the sun was setting. There was nothing to do except to get into the covered bed of the pickup and settle down for a long night. As soon as darkness fell the mosquitoes came in hordes and made sleep impossible. From time to time we heard herds of game

passing by us. Once a herd of buffalo almost brushed against the car, their heavy feet plodding noisily through the mud and water. Toward morning a chilly wind rose and carried the mosquitoes away and we managed to snatch moments of sleep in spite of the discomfort of the cold and the hardness of the pickup bed.

When light broke in the east we looked out on an unforgettable sight. Reedbuck in small groups were staring at us from every side. We guessed that there must have been close to a hundred in all, their red coats glowing in the morning light.

A couple of hours after sunrise a party of a dozen Wasangu natives approached and inquired whether they could help us. We asked if they would push us back onto solid ground, so they all pushed mightily and in a few minutes we were on our way back home, hungry and mosquito-bitten, but very thankful to be out of that deceptive green morass.

Polygamy

Plural wives have from time immemorial been a part of the culture of Africa and certain parts of Asia. Jewish law allowed it until the eleventh century A.D. when it was forbidden to the Ashkenazim (European Jews). Polygamy is the response of primitive societies to the imbalance in male-female populations due to the loss of men in warfare. The Islam religion condones limited polygamy, and colonial policy in Africa generally has accepted it as a legal institution and an alternative life-style.

European countries (and America, of course) have statutory laws banning polygamy. Missionaries generally have come from the West where monogamy has long been enforced and where society has developed a strong emotional antipathy against plural wives. This cultural prejudice coupled with an inference of biblical proscription has led most Christian groups evangelizing in Africa to bar polygamists from their communions. It is understandable that this clash of cultures has caused a great deal of tension in the African mission fields, often (if not usually) eventually causing a schism in the church. This results in a counter church holding to the principle doctrines of the parent church but completely indigenous in its organization and membership. That is not to say that most members of the separated body are polygamists. The majority are not, but simply feel strongly that the original body has made artificial limits of fellowship which are not based upon any clear biblical sanction.

Most missionaries arrive in Africa with a very simplistic answer to polygamy: the Bible condemns it and it can in no way be countenanced. Not a few change their views after a few years in Africa. Two of the great pioneer missionaries from churches of Christ who did in fact change their views were George M.

Scott and Will Short.

George Scott had concluded, after many years of wrestling with the dilemma, that a candidate for baptism could not be scripturally excluded from the rite simply upon the basis of his being a polygamist. I was astounded, because his view was so much at variance with all I had been taught and had surmised. I brought up all the arguments against his position which I had been taught, but he had heard them all many times. My hermeneutics were strongly influenced by Western culture and my ears were closed to his reasoning.

"Polygamy is the lesser of two evils in Africa culture," he patiently explained. "The custom of *lobola* (bride price) makes it impossible for a woman to be legally free from her husband. If he sends her away or she leaves him, she can never re-marry nor own land. Only two professions are open to her to support herself: prostitution and brewing and selling beer. We would agree that the general teaching of scripture on marriage indicates that God regards ideal marriage as based upon one man and one woman. That was so from the beginning of Creation, and yet a great many of the faithful servants of God under the Old Covenant had more than one wife and never were told that it was sinful. In fact, polygamy is never expressly forbidden in either the Old or New Testaments. Only general principles can be used to exclude it. In African culture, a man's retaining multiple wives when he becomes a Christian is not ideal, but it is ever so much better than the alternative."

The Ox

The Afrikaners, like many other groups who have built up distinctive cultures in isolated places, have been very reluctant to give up their *volk* ways. Like Peter the Great's Russians, they have had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the twentieth century. They have felt threatened by foreign influences, fearing that their own cherished values would be swept away by less wholesome importations. For instance, decades after the western world (and a good part of the rest of it) had embraced television, South Africa still had only radio and closely monitored programs, at that.

The farmers especially were very conservative people. I hadn't seen a buggy since I was a small child in the United States, but saw them in the Orange Free State over a period of many years carrying a stiffly-starched family group to *nagmaal* (communion) or to shop in one of the dusty little towns of the high plains.

Today the great wheat and corn farms of the Free State and Transvaal are plowed by tractors, but a few years back it was a hotly debated point whether tractors offered any advantage over oxen. It was a magnificent sight to see a full span of sixteen of the great red beasts pulling a battery of disk plows across the rolling plains. The oxen were a special South African breed, the Afrikander, suited to hard work and surviving on sparse pasture. The Boers argued in favor of the ox that he didn't require gasoline or diesel fuel to run, and when his plowing days were over he could be sold to the butcher.

During my years at Namwianga Mission in Northern Rhodesia, we always plowed with oxen, or rather, with cattle. Sometimes we would *inspan* (hitch up) a bull, but it was always

a tricky business. Once they were yoked, all they could do was pull, but when they were unhooked at the end of the day, they did not heave a sigh of relief and amble off to the water trough as the oxen did. Once the drivers had thrown off the yoke they ran for their lives to the nearest tree and shinnied up its bole with the enraged bull close behind. On the credit side they usually were stronger pullers than the oxen.

Most of the missionaries at Namwianga kept some cattle of their own as insurance against bad times or expensive emergencies. During an American depression churches generally found it more convenient to cut missionaries' salaries than to curtail local programs, so a few head of cattle provided some security against sudden loss of income in the short term and a sort of pension fund in the long term. Having a herd also furnished an emotional outlet from the tedium of regular responsibilities in a land where there were no movies or television.

My own view of cattle, dating from my early youth, was that they were creatures to be avoided if at all possible. I had stark memories of mucking around knee-deep in cold manure slush in the early morning winter darkness trying to get reluctant cows into the milking stalls. I had resolved that when I reached the age to make my own choices, a priority decision would be never to own any cattle.

When I first arrived at Namwianga, J. C. Shewmaker, one of the veteran missionaries, had a herd of cattle which were his pride and joy. Every morning and every evening he stood at the corral gate and watched his animals to and from the pasture. So when he presented a fine young cow and her calf to me as a welcoming gift, I knew that it was a very magnanimous gesture. I

expressed my deep appreciation for his generous and thoughtful gift, but declined to accept it. Apart from my aversion to bovines, my itinerant lifestyle was not suited to becoming a pastoralist. My hobby was gardening and since, between dry weather, hail and insects, my horticultural charges (like the grass of James' epistle that "withereth and the flower thereof falleth") generally had a very brief tenure of life. Consequently, they were never a serious impingement on my activities.

Having a *braaivleis* (literally, a meat roast) to which one's friends are invited is a favorite social institution of South Africa (even sometimes being substituted for the traditional Christmas dinner). Favorite foods at such an occasion are lamb chops, *boerewors* (a special blend of chopped meats and spices stuffed in frankfurter skins) and stiff cornmeal mush. Often there is a gravy made from tomatoes and onions to dip the pieces of stiff mush into, and always there are green salads.

Church picnics usually follow a braaivleis format, with each family bringing a salad and a dessert and enough meat for its own members. Boerewors is the cheapest meat available and lamb chops the most expensive. Claude Flynn, the pulpit minister for the Turffontein church of Christ in Johannesburg, always added a rider to his announcement of a *braal*: "Now remember, you people, don't bring *wors* and eat chops!"

The braaivleis undoubtedly has deep roots in the Afrikaner's nostalgia for the past glories of the Great Trek when their Voortrekker ancestors travelled north from the Cape in covered wagons and cooked their meat over open fires. Americans try to recapture the same pioneer spirit in their addiction to cookouts. It is a mystical ritual to evoke "the spirit of Christmas Past," so

to speak, an attempt to hold onto precious fragments of their culture.

Mutton, and particularly lamb, is the entree of choice in South Africa. The price used to be strictly controlled in the cities and it was maintained at a pretty high level. It was much cheaper bought from farmers in the countryside, but the police put up road blocks on the major highways around the cities and searched cars for contraband meat. It became a kind of game to think up ingenious ways to hoodwink the patrols.

Professor Abraham Malherbe of the Greek Department of Yale University, was a youngster living in my home in Johannesburg in the early fifties. He was an apprentice surveyor with the electricity supply commission and he and his workmate, Van, worked out in the countryside every day, which meant passing through the police traps every day. They carried enough equipment and paraphernalia in their truck that half a lamb carcass was not difficult to conceal, so we had as many roast legs of lamb and broiled chops as we had a taste for.

One Johannesburg housewife was not so fortunate. She dressed a lamb in baby clothes, lace cap and all, and bundled it in a blanket. She cradled it in her arms, crooning softly and gently rocking as her husband stopped the family sedan at the police block. Something about the profile of the bundle aroused the suspicion of one of the policemen. He pulled back the corner of the blanket and voila! A sense of humor is not a common quality in minions of the law, so instead of complimenting the good woman for her inventiveness, as he might very well have done, he slapped her with a nasty summons to the magistrate's court and, to compound injury, heartlessly tore the sleeping "babe" from her maternal arms.

The Royal Visit/Livingstone/MacMurgas

The year 1947 was of great significance to the people of Northern Rhodesia, as the British Royal family paid a visit to their African colonies and dominions that year. They were scheduled to cross the Zambezi River above the Victoria Falls in a launch from the Southern Rhodesia side to a boat landing near Livingstone on the Northern Rhodesia side. Protocol required that at mid-point in the river they must be met by the traditional rulers of the River People (Barotse tribe) and given safe passage. The two traditional rulers were Lewanika, the King of Barotseland, and the Mulena Mukwai, the Queen of Sesheke.

In a conversation with the provincial education officer, Dr. Winterbottom, I learned that he had not originally expected to be invited to the royal garden party to be held in Livingstone, but that he now felt that he would be. (It turned out that he wasn't invited after all.) It was an agony of suspense for all the senior civil servants, sweating out whether they would be on the much-coveted list, as that subsequently would draw the line between the elite and the peons. Anyway, the good doctor confided that he had earlier planned to go down to the boat landing, since all the crowd would be gathered in the town itself and few, if any, would think of seeing the royal family as they alit from their launch.

I decided to take up Dr. Winterbottom's plan, since I had no fear of being invited to any garden party. The plan worked perfectly as there were perhaps a half dozen people at the landing. One of them was an Afrikaans newscaster for the South African Broadcasting Company who was covering the landing live. He

obviously had just come up from Johannesburg and couldn't have known any less than he did about Northern Rhodesia. He would break off his commentary frequently to get a fresh supply of information. One question I remember he asked me was, "Are there any crocodiles in the Zambezi River?" (Can you imagine anybody seriously asking that question?) I assured him that they were there, so he told his listeners that the river was *"volop krokodille*" (full up with crocodiles).

We could not see the royal launch very clearly when it left the Southern Rhodesia bank, but it was plainly visible by the time it reached the middle of the river. At that point, the most colorful ceremony I have ever witnessed transpired. I have seen the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace a few times and it does not compare with the splendor of that river drama. There was a thunderous roll of drums that was deafening and two large barges swept down the river at great speed. The drums were on the barges and they were the fabulous royal drums of the Barotse nation. On a clear night they can be heard from forty miles away. They are revered by the people who believe that within them live the spirits of their departed kings. A new king cannot be enthroned until he has spent a night with the drums in order to be imbued with the royal spirit. Lewanika's barge was paddled by twelve giant blacks in leopard skins. By tradition, each paddler had to be a chief in his own right and had been trained for years in paddling the barge. By tribal law, if a paddler missed a stroke while the king was enthroned on the barge, he was immediately thrown to the crocodiles. There were no missed strokes that day. The twelve long paddles dipped into the water in perfect unison and the barge simply leapt forward.

The Mulena Mukwai's barge was no less impressive and it

kept perfectly abreast of the barge of Lewanika. The giant queen, clad in robes of royal purple, stood like a statue in the middle of the barge.

King George's motor launch kept moving on its course as the Barotse barges swept down upon it. As they reached the launch, the paddlers did a sharp left turn and positioned the barges on either side of it. For a time they remained in formation with the launch, but a few hundred yards from the landing they suddenly shot forward, easily leaving the launch far behind, and raced for the shore. Just as it appeared they would be propelled into the bank, the barges wheeled around, stopped, and waited for the royal family to arrive. The whole thing had been executed with a precision that was mystifying.

The arrival of King George and his family was anticlimactic after the splendid pageantry we had just witnessed. The King stepped onto the landing dressed in a plain military uniform. He looked tired and ill. The Queen was prettily dressed and, as always, full of smiles. Princess Elizabeth was twenty-one and would announce her engagement to Philip Mountbatten after their return to England. Margaret was seventeen. As a family they looked very much like any middle-class family from the British Isles and could easily have been except for the accidents of birth and succession. The King gave us a weary lift of his hand. The Queen waved and smiled. The daughters looked bored out of their skulls, but perhaps royal protocol required them to assume a low profile.

Later on, the British monarch, the King of the Barotse and the Queen of Sesheke sat on a raised platform at a public ceremony. I felt sorry for King George, as he was completely eclipsed

by the giant African rulers in their extravagant finery. Lewanika was draped in leopard skins.

We had a peppery newspaper publisher in Livingstone who was the self-appointed conscience of the government. His editorial fulminations in "The Livingstone Times" made many a bureaucrat uncomfortable. The British Crown conferred a knighthood on him and he became Sir Leopold Moore. Local gossips claimed that he was knighted to keep him from criticizing the government, but if that was the object, I don't think it worked. It certainly caused tongues to wag when his ex-wife, although divorced from him and living in another town, promptly began calling herself "Lady Moore." According to the local experts on protocol that was an outrage. "I mean to say, that sort of thing simply is not done! She's got a cheek!" Less informed people simply reckoned that it was "a bit thick."

Livingstone's population grew dramatically toward the end of World War II as many displaced persons from Europe, with nowhere else to go, ended up in odd places in Africa. Hotels, and there were only three, were so terribly overcrowded that a private room was impossible to get. They put as many beds in a room as would fit and still leave enough space to squeeze through. I turned up at the Northwestern Hotel and requested a bed. The harried manager replied that every bed was spoken for, but since it was past signing-in time and one man hadn't shown, I could have his bed. After I had become enough inured to the chorus of snores to drift off into exhausted slumber, a hand shook my shoulder roughly and an unkind voice ordered me to "get out of my bed." The conversation went this way:

"How did it get to be your bed?"

"I slept in it last night and I have it booked for tonight."

"Well, the manager gave it to me tonight, so if you have a beef, make it to him."

He went away and did not return, but the possibility of his returning prevented my getting a good night's sleep.

On another occasion there were no beds to be had, not even at the Bon Accord, the sleazy number three hotel. When you consider that the number one, the Fairmont, would probably have rated as tenth class in the United States, if such a class exists, the Bon Accord didn't have a lot to recommend it. Nevertheless, all the hotels had mosquito nets over the beds, a very necessary precaution against the hordes of voracious mosquitoes.

Someone told me that a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania took paying guests into his modest house on the outskirts of Livingstone. The information proved to be true and I was able to get a bed and breakfast there. Breakfast, surprising in a Hebrew household, was bacon and eggs. "Aren't you pushing it a bit having this bacon?" I asked him. "My father would turn over in his grave if he knew it," he replied. "We were orthodox in Lithuania, but out here those things don't seem to matter anymore. You just have to do the best you can."

O course, not all Jews in the area were in any sense religious. A courtly old Spanish Jew who ran a general store, when one of us asked him if he were religious, he replied, "You know the motto engraved on your silver dollar? That's the God I believe in!" He was not the only character operating a shop there. When I first arrived in Livingstone I bought a list of supplies at the grocery. The clerk stacked up the order on the counter. After I had paid for it, I waited expectantly for him to sack up the order.

Finally he asked, "What are you waiting for?" "I'm waiting for you to sack up these groceries." "Well, really," he exclaimed irritably. "You can't expect us to provide a shopping bag for you. You must bring your own!"

On another occasion, I asked him how much the price on a dozen cans of beans would be. Now I had worked in a grocery store before I left the States and we gave a special discount on several cans of the same vegetable, and I thought he might do that. He was puzzled at my question. "Do you see the price marked on the tin?" Yes, I did. "Then you just multiply that by twelve and you have the price of a dozen."

The clerks in the stores never made any attempt to sell you anything. I tried on a hat in a clothing store. "How does it look?" I asked the salesman. "Awful," he relied without hesitation. "Well, I want it anyhow," I told him. "Please yourself," he said with a shrug.

After spending a few months in the Livingstone area, I moved eighty miles north to a mission station near the village of Kalomo. The village was dominated by the general store, which bore the name of Macmurgas, a composite of the names of the three founders: McFarland, Murray, and Gaston. Apparently, the only survivor of the triumvirate was Captain McFarland, a dapper, mustached gentleman who walked with a cane and a limp and who was some sort of war hero.

There were just two places for neighbors to meet in Kalomo: the bar at the Kalomo Hotel for the drinking crowd, which was run by a worried little German Jew who had escaped the Nazis, and Macmurgas for the rest of us. There was also a little tailor shop run by a Hindu from India who catered mostly to the black

trade and who was a non-person socially, because the European colonists didn't want to associate with him and because for religious reasons he wouldn't break bread with anyone who ate beef.

So the long counter at Macmurgas was where the neighborhood news was passed between neighbors and friends. The store was not actually run by McFarland himself, but by an Afrikaner couple from South Africa, the Heynekes. Their home language was Afrikaans, but since most of their customers spoke English, that was the language of commerce in the establishment. They continued, however, to speak to each other in their own tongue, much to the annoyance of Capt. McFarland, whose very British sensibilities were offended by the guttural tones of the Teutonic dialect. Finally, his irritation reached the point of forbidding the Heynekes to speak Afrikaans on his premises. They were mortally offended at this affront to their heritage and complained bitterly at this infringement on their personal rights to all who stood at the long counter. The community split fairly evenly on the rights and wrongs of the case. I was broadminded enough to take both sides, but only one at the time, of course, depending upon my audience. The issue eventually blew over without bloodshed, but it had at least broken the monotony of endless speculation on when the rains would break.

Valan, the Indian tailor, once sewed khaki shorts and shirts for all our male students at Namwianga Mission, about two hundred of them. It was the custom for boarding schools to provide uniform dress for their students free of charge. Partly it was following British tradition and partly it was to erase social distinctions between the "haves" and "have nots."

The uniforms were duly delivered at the mission and it fell to

my lot to dole them out to the students. One important omission was a key factor in the process. For some inexplicable reason, Valan had put pockets in about two-thirds of the shorts and none in the remaining third. After each boy had taken his uniform and returned to his room, the predictable, no the inevitable, happened. A large group of boys came back carrying their new shorts.

"Yes?" I inquired. "Is something wrong?"

One of the students replied, "Twachengwa aswebo!" ("We, ourselves, have been cheated!).

"Now, how can that be?" I questioned.

"Most of the boys got pockets in their shorts, but we didn't."

"How much did you pay for the shorts?"

"Why, nothing."

"Then, how could you possibly have been cheated? Whatever you got, you got for free."

They were completely unimpressed with my logic.

"Why should some students get one thing and not others?" they wanted to know.

"I am not saying that there is any reason behind what you see as unfair treatment. What I am saying is that's the way the shorts came to us. The supply is finished, so you cannot trade yours for shorts with pockets. If you don't want to wear them, that's up to you, but I think they'll be just as comfortable without pockets."

They took their shorts and left, but without any joy. They still were very resentful that they were the innocent victims of rank discrimination.

Visiting the Ewings in Windhoek

Henry Ewing was not at all the stereotypical missionary. He was irrepressibly optimistic, gregarious and joked his way through all of life's crises. While he was stationed at an army camp near Abilene, Texas, he met Beth, the daughter of pioneer Rhodesian missionaries Will and Delia Short. They fell in love and were married and after he was demobilized at the end of World War II, they went to Rhodesia and spent some years and had a few children.

Henry was an adventurous spirit and persuaded Beth that they should go on to some new place where the church was unknown. That new place was Southwest Africa. Henry loaded his family into a large pickup and headed south to Johannesburg and then west through Botswana to Southwest Africa (now called Namibia). We were living in Benoni on the outskirts of Johannesburg at the time, so they spent a few days with us on their way.

It was a very daring undertaking. The usual route to Southwest Africa was first south to the Cape province and then northwest, a distance of thousands of miles. There was no direct route, since Botswana's Okavango Swamp and the Kalihari desert stood in the way. The road was fairly good from Johannesburg to Gabarones, the capital of Botswana. It was pretty bad from Gabarones north to Francistown, horrible from Francistown to Maun, and non-existent from Maun (on the Okavango swamp) for hundreds of miles of desert on to Windhoek, the capital of Southwest Africa. It would have been an ambitious undertaking in a four-wheel drive vehicle. In an

ordinary pickup it appeared to be suicide. That they actually did make it was due to extraordinary good luck (which Christians usually attribute to Providence), grit and determination. They loved Windhoek and settled into a busy and happy program of work there.

A couple of years later, Al Horne and I were planning a business trip to the States, and Henry insisted that we stop in at Windhoek on the way and spend a day or two with them. We did that, since neither of us had ever been to Southwest Africa. Windhoek was a picturesque and charming city, and we enjoyed immensely its blend of African, Dutch and German cultures and its bright clear desert atmosphere. We had one experience that neither of us is likely to forget.

Henry had established an acquaintance with Olga Levinson, the world-renowned writer of books on Southwest Africa. He told her that he was expecting two friends from South Africa to visit him on the way to America. She insisted that Henry should bring them to the "castle" for tea.

I must explain at this point that there are two castles on adjoining hilltops on the outskirts of Windhoek. They were built by a German *graf* (or count) for himself and his bride earlier when Namibia was Deutsche Sudwest Africa. It seems that, although madly in love, they could not bear one another's presence, so they lived in separate castles and sent torrid love letters back and forth by post boys. Olga Levinson and her wealthy husband had bought the graf's castle, and it was to this historical landmark that Henry had managed to get us invited to tea. We had no knowledge of such an arrangement and were quite unprepared for it. Since we were only going to be in Windhoek

overnight, we had booked our luggage through to the States (which you still could do in those days before it became a fad to hijack planes or send bombs in checked luggage). We had only our small cabin bags with our toilet articles and were dressed comfortably for travel, which in our case meant faded old khaki trousers and bush jackets that we had worn in prior years in East Africa.

We were more than disconcerted to learn that we were to mix with the high society of Windhoek clad only in our old safari garb. Henry insisted that it was only a small informal affair, so we went. It was anything but a small affair; there were people all over the place. Our apprehensions were not relieved when we were asked to sign the guest book and found ourselves writing just under the signature of Johan Rissik, the President of the South African Reserve Bank. The two pages of names were a roster of the upper crust of South African and Southwest African society.

Something really funny occurred at the tea. We fell into conversation with a gentleman who showed us great deference. He was telling us that Southwest Africa was a great area for game and that safaris could be arranged easily for the very wealthy, and then added, "which you very obviously are." No doubt he thought that only the filthy rich would dare show up at such a function dressed like a couple of tramps. We left him happy in his delusion that he had been talking to the peers of Getty and Onassis.

The castle was furnished with exquisite old furniture, hand-carved from Namibian hardwoods, and other relics from the German colonial age. The view of Windhoek and its surrounding

hills was superb from the vantage point of the castle's hilltop pool.

Apart from dissimilar architecture, the most obvious difference in Windhoek and a South African city was the overt friendliness of the people. Everyone greeted you on the streets. Merchants stood in their doorways and invited you in for a cup of coffee. Of course, this was a time period before political tensions had risen to the peak they reached in the eighties.

A minor incident occurred on the main street that is not easily forgotten. Al, Henry and I were ambling along in a steady flow of pedestrian traffic and I was swinging my camera by its strap, a very bad habit. Just as the camera reached maximum velocity on its forward swing, a six-foot, very robust and very blond German girl passed close by us going the opposite direction. The swinging camera caught her smartly on the knee cap. She never broke her brisk stride, but continued for three or four paces before she let out a piercing "Ye-ee-ow!" I kept walking and never looked back. If that Amazon had laid hands on me she would have killed me. When we were a safe distance, Henry asked, "What happened?" I told him and then added, "I wonder if it damaged my camera?" Now I had, in fact, dropped my camera on the sidewalk and had bent the aluminum lens hood out of shape, so it was purely an exercise for Henry's benefit. When I raised the camera and he saw the damaged lens he gasped and went noticeably paler. He was very relieved to learn that I was "pulling his leg."

Witch Doctors

Witch doctors have always been a powerful force in African tribal society, sometimes for great evil, oftentimes for good. They combine the functions of priest, judge, doctor and psychologist. They are particularly effective in dealing with emotional and psychosomatic illness. At the same time, it must be admitted that some of their herbal remedies seem to have actual medical value.

Witch doctors usually are credited with clairvoyance, so people who have lost possessions often go to them for help. A young Australian named Walker was an area supervisor for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Tanganyika. He frequently stopped in at the Chimala Hotel for a drink and to visit a while. On one of these visits, he had the payroll for some of the local workers (amounting to 800 Pounds, roughly $2250.00) in the glove compartment of his Land Rover. When he returned to his car, the money was missing. Unless he could find the money he was in danger of losing his job, so he was desperate to recover it. A famous witch doctor happened to be in the area, so someone suggested that he consult him. And he did. The witch doctor simply said, "Come back at 8:00 o'clock tomorrow morning and I'll have your money for you." He was as good as his word. When Walker went back, the witch doctor handed him the 800 Pounds.

This particular witch doctor was believed by the local Africans to have two pet mambas that were invisible to everybody except him. If anybody dared disobey the witch doctor's orders, one of the mambas was sent to "take out" the offender. So when the witch doctor put out the word that he wanted that 800 Pounds returned, fear of snake bite had obviously overcome

avarice.

Several years later while we were living in Benoni, an interesting case involving a witch doctor occurred. In one of the towns on the West Rand (the Rand is the gold reef which extends east and west from Johannesburg) a house in town had been built a half century before by one of the mining conglomerates for employee accommodation. The house had the reputation of being haunted and it had been difficult to find any family to live there for very long. Various measures had been tried, but nothing had been effective for very long to stop the poltergeists from their malicious and unsettling behavior. Objects moved around without visible cause, strange sounds upset the sleep of the residents, and icy cold specters hovered over their beds. In the l960s a determined effort was made to exorcise the demons after the last residents had fled in terror and nobody else would live there. The parish priest sprinkled holy water here and there and recited the liturgy of exorcism, but the imps involved obviously were not Catholic, since they were unimpressed by the authority of the Church. Finally, and reluctantly, the area witch doctor was called in. Because the whole matter had excited the interest of the public and the newspapers were having a field day, the police decided to keep the affair under surveillance and posted some officers at the site.

The witch doctor came and wandered around the place, sniffing and listening, and initiating contacts with the spirit world. Like magicians, witch doctors are great showmen, and much of their mumbo jumbo (perhaps all of it) is for the benefit of the bystanders. At last he announced that he had established communication with the world of the dead and had isolated the particular spirit who was behind all the mischief. He had been an African

peasant farmer who had once owned the piece of ground on which the house was built. The land had been taken from him wrongfully by the powerful mining interests and the injustice of it all still rankled within whatever heart a departed spirit has. When the farm was forcefully taken from him and before the house was built he had buried *muti* (powerful charms for evil) on the site. It was this muti that enabled the unfriendly spirit to cause the strange phenomena which had been occurring.

Tapping a spot on the cement floor, the witch doctor declared, "If you will break through the slab and dig into the earth under it, you will find the muti."

Workmen with the proper tools were brought in and, with the police monitoring every move, the slab was broken up and the ground excavated. A few feet below the surface they found an old moldy monkey skin pouch containing various bizarre objects. "That's it!" exclaimed the witch doctor. "There will be no more strange happenings in this house." In fact, nothing further did happen and the public and the newspapers soon lost interest in the affair.

I have often wished that the exhumation had been video taped. I feel certain that at a critical moment the witch doctor, perhaps through an accomplice, had created a momentary diversion that drew everyone's attention away from the hole for a second or two, and that a video would have shown him quickly dropping a monkey skin pouch into the excavation. On the other hand...

Lobola

Often it is repeated as a truism among people foreign to African culture that the custom of paying *lobola* (inaccurately translated *bride price*) encourages husbands to regard their wives as purchased chattels and, therefore, the legitimate targets of whatever abuse they choose to heap upon them. My observation is that the precise opposite is true, and that wherever lobola has been circumvented (as it often is among de-tribalized urban Africans) domestic fights and wife-abuse are much more common than where the ancient usage was observed. Both husband and wife have increased self-esteem and esteem for each other if the lobola entailed a considerable sacrifice for the groom's family. It says to the husband that he has acquired a woman of great worth and it declares to her that her husband loved her very deeply to impoverish himself and his family in order to have her.

The Lord made women generally far more clever in social situations and inter-personal relationships than men. It compensates for the fact that men are, as a rule, larger and more powerful than women. By and at large, African women, like their sisters in other cultures, have little difficulty manipulating their men while at the same time encouraging them in the belief that the idea was their own in the first place. The demure, self-effacing demeanor that most African wives assume in public is not necessarily a true reflection of what transpires behind the closed door of the hut.

We had a young teacher at Namwianga Mission in Northern Rhodesia who had married a sweet, shy little thing who was almost invisible in public. Her husband bossed her around with the macho air of a man very much in charge of his house and all that was in it. She appeared more than happy to have such an

aggressive, assertive husband and allowed him to strut on center stage without so much as a murmur of protest. Unfortunate for him, he tried to carry this public act into the privacy of their boudoir. His decorous little mate calmly picked up a stick of firewood and laid him out cold. So it was that Henry learned a sharp lesson in territorial imperative, and domestic bliss returned to their home.

Africans: Characteristics a Customs

The ability of some African tribes to read the signs of their environment is quite remarkable. The hunters of most tribes can look at a game track and quickly determine the species, sex and approximate size of the animal. The bushmen are simply uncanny. They will say, "This eland passed here about a quarter of an hour ago. He was not alarmed, so he was not being chased by anything, but he was in a hurry, so he was heading for water. We'll find him standing at the water hole just ahead." They have perfected these skills over countless generations because their survival depended upon it. But identify an individual person by his bare footprint? Africans can do it.

Once at Namwianga Mission in Northern Rhodesia a piece of equipment was stolen from a school building. The thief had not been seen by anyone, but he had left a sharp footprint in the sand in front of the building. Although there were two hundred boys in the boarding school, the prefect of the dormitory took one look at the track and said without hesitation, "That is Mangunga's footprint!" I was incredulous, so I asked several other boys who came along, "Whose track is that?" They replied, "Mangunga's, of course." They were right. Mangunga proved to be the culprit. Perhaps at least one reason they are able to identify each other's footprints is their mode of travel. They walk in single file along a footpath, never abreast as Westerners do. Europeans will walk abreast even if it requires that all except one walk outside the path. But Africans are constantly looking down at the footprints of those who have walked ahead of them and so they come to recognize the spoor of every one of their companions.

African natives, and I am referring to those who live in tribal settings, appear to have unusually acute hearing. I doubt that their physical ability to hear is any more developed than it is in any other race, but their ability to interpret the sounds of their environment is remarkable. Once a few of us were camped on the bank of a small, sandy creek somewhere in the hills bordering the Zambezi escarpment. I had spent the afternoon panning for gold in the little stream and had a moment's exhilaration when bright yellow particles sparkled in the pan. It turned out to be yellow mica, so I never got a listing on the Johannesburg stock exchange. Boyd Reese, my traveling companion, had been out with a couple of senior students and they had shot and carried in a hartebeest.

A clear African night with its spectacular canopy of brilliant stars is sheer magic, and this enchantment is heightened when it is experienced around a camp fire. The halo of light turns the nearby foliage of the mwanze trees into a silver bower so the illusion is produced of being in a safe, cozy room that has brilliant diamonds in the ceiling. That night was such a night. The tantalizing aroma of roasting hartebeest hung like a benediction on the still air and the kettle sang on the coals. The usual night sounds of jackal squalls, barking zebras, and the boom-boom of ground hornbills looking for snakes were a familiar chorus that occasioned no feeling of unrest. But then the accepted choral background of the African night was disturbed by a harsh, rasping sound that upset the pattern. My first thought was that it was the cough of a leopard, as it often resembles the heavy, grating sound of a crosscut saw. The African students were amused. "It's a leopard, all right," they said, "but you don't hear him. He has a throat-hold on a sable at the water hole and is choking him to

death. Its the labored breathing of the sable that you hear." How they knew it was a sable instead of, say a hartebeest or a kudu, I'll probably never know, but I would conjecture that they had seen a sable herd in the late evening approaching the water hole and just had put two and two together. Anyway, they proved to be dead right. The next morning a young sable bull's carcass was lying under a rock ledge near the water hole. The leopard himself was not in evidence so the students stole his kill. I had some misgivings about that, as I felt that it was entirely possible that the leopard would come demanding the return of his meat as soon as night fell. He didn't, though.

Our students paid a visit to a village a few miles from our camp and spent a few hours there socializing. One of the older boys, Andrew, met a girl there that he was convinced he couldn't live without. They all were invited to attend a tribal dance at the village that night and Andrew was determined to set the wheels of betrothal in motion. The following morning I asked him whether he had become engaged to the girl. He shrugged indifferently, "Of course not. She's my sister!" "How is she your sister?" "She's an otter and I'm an otter."

Each member of a tribe is also the member of a clan which has some animal as its totem. An elephant cannot marry an elephant, nor may a badger marry a badger, etc. In this way they prevent intermarriage between relatives. Most enduring taboos and cultural peculiarities are the vestiges of some ancient laws of tribal wisemen to address situations that threatened the welfare of their people.

Oftentimes, missionaries (in particular) and other teachers from Europe and America have tended to react very negatively to

some aspects of African customary law. A case in point is the requirement of *lobola* (usually translated in English as bride price, although that is an over simplification). In most of Africa, as also in much of Asia, marriages are arranged between families. A typical procedure would be for a senior male member of the family of a young man of marriageable age to approach the clan head of an eligible girl with a proposal of marriage. This family representative is not necessarily the father of the boy, but may very well be the eldest brother of the father. Nor does this family member directly approach the girl's family; he uses a go-between who acts as a marriage broker. The *lobola* is the number of cows (or the equivalent of cows in money) which the prospective groom's family must surrender to the family of the prospective bride, and is the subject of intense and prolonged bargaining. Both families know very well the approximate figure that will eventually be agreed upon, but they never will admit that. If the bride's family asks fifteen cows, the groom's family will offer seven, and so it is apparent to both that the final figure will be ten or eleven cows.

The missionaries often inject themselves into the process by denouncing the whole concept as immoral and degrading to the woman. They protest the selling of a human being as if she were a cow or a slave, as constituting a basic violation of God-given human rights. Africans do not understand such logic, least of all the object of all this concern, the girl herself. She has a vested interest in the price being bid up to the highest attainable level, not because she has a great interest in her family's profiting at her expense, but because the lobola figure will impact upon her social status in the community. She is horrified at the missionary's notion that she should be given away for nothing. Much

later on, when she is a grandmother, she will tell her grandchildren with great satisfaction, "I was a twenty-cow bride" and the children's self-esteem is raised because they are descended from a woman of such stature.

Even the groom's family would not be very thankful to get the girl for nothing, as it would demean them in the eyes of families who had acquired women of some value.

In actual fact, the *lobola* is a surety for the marriage. The cows, but not their progeny, remain in escrow with the bride's family. If the bride behaves herself, the cows will stay permanently with her family. If she has a row with her husband and runs home to mother, mother is likely to send her straight back. If the marriage should break up for some serious cause, it is likely that a case will be brought before the tribal elders who will decide the cause of the break-up. If the wife is the cause and the marriage is dissolved, her *lobola* must be returned to the husband's family. If the husband is the cause, his family may very well lose both the woman and the *lobola.* It is, therefore, in everybody's interest to keep the marriage intact.

The *lobola* cows are not paid by the boy's father alone, but by his extended family, and especially the father's brothers.

Lobola has been much abused by becoming the occasion for unvarnished greed. Some families demand much more than the traditional price and the tendency has been toward rampant inflation in African marriages. The result has been that many young couples contract a practical marriage and pay a cow or two down and the rest on the never-never plan. Although such an arrangement generally is condoned, the children of such a union belong to the brides' family until such time as *lobola* is satisfied, at

which time they become members of their father's family. It is not uncommon in South Africa, where *lobola* often is ridiculously extravagant, that a couple will have grown children before they are "married." This produces some ambiguous situations.

When my wife Jane and I, and our daughter Cherry, moved south from East Africa, we bought a house in the town of Benoni near Johannesburg. Shortly thereafter, a young Zulu woman came seeking employment as a house girl. Jane asked her if she was married. "No, madam," she replied. Jane hired her. A few days later a small boy accompanied her to work. "Whose child is he?" Jane asked. "Mine, madam," the girl replied. "But, Agnes," Jane protested, "you told me you weren't married!" "I'm not married, madam." "But then what are you doing with a child?" The girl looked bewildered. "But I live with my boyfriend," she explained. "We are going to be married as soon as he finishes paying *lobola*." It was a problem of semantics. The words *married* and *boyfriend* were being spoken and heard in entirely different contexts.

Wherever missionaries have succeeded in destroying the practice of *lobola*, it has generally weakened the marriage bonds in African society and has resulted in "live-ins" with no serious commitment on the part of the men to provide permanent maintenance for their families. Only where Africans have become completely integrated into a Christian community will western marriage traditions work.

Another facet of African marriage customs is troubling to people from our culture. It appears on the face of it that the young people involved in a prospective marriage have all the decisions made for them and that they are simply the hapless vic-

tims of their elders' contracts. I once brought this up to a young man in Tanganyika named Rastoni, who had asked me to help him pay his *lobola.*

"That's just the way it appears to an outsider," he said, "but it generally isn't like that. In my case, as in most cases, I and the girl I want to marry had a very clear understanding between ourselves before I ever approached my father to make *lobola* arrangements. What usually happens in my tribe is this: A boy sees a girl he is interested in. He lets her know by eye language that he'd like to know her better. They'll then arrange through friends that she'll be getting water at the water hole at just the time he happens to be watering his goats. As their acquaintance grows, he'll let her know that she tops his list for a prospective wife. If she is interested, she'll manage to pass some personal possession to him, such as a scarf or comb. He then goes to his father and tells him, 'I want you to get that girl for me.' The marriage broker is contacted and in due course opens negotiations with the girl's father. The father wants to know, 'What if my daughter is not interested in marrying this young man?' The broker takes out her scarf and shows it to the father. After that *lobola* is negotiated in the normal way."

I lent the young man part of his *lobola* price and things went well for a couple of years. After that the young wife was bedazzled by the flattery of one of the local Casanovas and conceived a son by him. Rastoni accepted the child and the tearful repentance of his wayward wife, and he named the child Partridge. I remarked that he had not given the boy the most usual name in the world. "It's very appropriate," he replied. "Have you never noticed the furtive way a partridge ducks his head and tries to sneak past you? This kid sneaked into my family." I remem-

bered the great statement made by Edna Gladney that “There are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents.”

A Boat Trip in a Car

On a trip from South Africa to Botswana during February of 1975, I visited the local minister, G. M. Mosi, at the village of Nata. He was waiting for me with an urgent request. He had to get the signature of the paramount chief on passport applications for two of his young men who were planning to study in Swaziland for the ministry. Chief Thuma was normally resident in Nata, but had gone to Gweta, some sixty miles further west, on official business. Under usual circumstances that would have presented no great problem, but circumstances prevailing in February of 1975 were anything but usual. There had been many times the average annual rainfall and the plains between Nata and Gweta were under water.

Both Nata and Gweta are situated on the northern edge of the Mkari-kari salt pan. It is the bed of an ancient lake three hundred miles across. In fact, when David Livingstone first visited the area in 1849 it was indeed a lake. In subsequent years the water had evaporated and left a vast expanse of soda ash and salt sediment. Much of the rainfall runoff of northern Botswana runs into the Mkari-kari, so in very rainy years it again becomes a lake for a brief period. In l975 the slow runoff inundated all of the flat country between Nata and Gweta, except for patches of higher ground here and there. The road itself was well built up, but unpaved, and although it was invisible except for the places where it crossed the islands of higher ground, there was a very clear drop in the flood waters where they poured off the southern edge of the roadway. A few giant diesel transport trucks still made it through, their large wheels holding them up out of the two to three foot depth of the water.

I had only a petro-driven Toyota Land Cruiser, so I was not

very enthusiastic about Mosi's request. He appeared so distressed by my refusal, however, that I finally agreed to at least start out and see how we fared. With the pickup in four wheel drive and low gear, we plunged off into the muddy water and set out. The road surface was quite firm and as long as we kept the right distance from the drop in the water level on the southern edge of the road, we made steady progress. When the water became deeper, although it was not moving more than two or three miles an hour, the force against the vehicle's body was strong enough that we had to hold the steering to the right to stay on the road. The exhaust pipe was under water, so if we had stalled we would have been stuck. Once a large freight lorry coming from the west passed us and the driver shouted down, "Is that pickup a diesel?" "No," I shouted back. "Then how are you driving it in this water?" he wanted to know. "By just never stopping," I replied.

When we reached a little higher ground from time to time where the road actually emerged from the flood, we would stop and cool the engine. On one of these knolls a truck was broken down and the driver and his helper had built a small cooking fire. A third man had hitched a ride on one of the freight lorries to Francistown to get a replacement for a broken part on the truck.

"Can we give you any help, like food or water?" I asked them. "Water?" the driver laughed hollowly. "We're surrounded by it. We could use a little food, though, if you have some to spare." We gave them a few cans of food and left them to the peace of their small island. The inundated patches became more frequent and larger as we came nearer to Gweta until we were a mile or so from the village where we had to ford one last lake of water before climbing to the high ground where the village stood.

We found old Chief Thuma in very ill health. (As a matter of fact, he died a couple of days later without ever returning home.) But he signed the passport applications for us and we began the long journey back to Nata where we arrived in the late evening without any major problem. I could hardly believe that we had actually done it, and still wonder how I could have been persuaded to embark upon such a foolhardy journey.

I later took the two young students to Francistown for their passports and then left with them for South Africa on the way to Swaziland. We still had one ordeal to face. Between Francistown and the South African border on the Limpopo River we got stuck for hours in a deep mudhole. We wrapped ropes around the tires and piled mopani branches under the wheels until finally we got enough traction to pull out. The immigration and customs posts had been closed for eight hours when we arrived at midnight, so we had to sit there eight more hours until they reopened. Once we were across the river into South Africa, we had broad paved highways the rest of the journey.

Squeamishness About Food

I had the good fortune to be born the last of twelve children. That was the single most important factor in my training to become an African missionary. With so many mouths to feed from the meager resources of a small share-cropper's farm, squeamishness about food was a luxury there was no place for in the constant battle for survival. If it was edible, we ate it. If you showed a moment's hesitation, somebody else got it. We gnawed chickens' feet and scuffled over squirrels' heads. Pigs' ears, feet, brains — my mother even added the lungs to the spleen and heart for "hashlets." So years later when I was invited to share mopani worms or roasted lizard with some African villager I could eat with relish and a settled stomach.

In the 1950s, while Guy Caskey and I were working in the Johannesburg areas with Waymon Miller and John Hardin, we planned a trip to Tanganyika with Martelle Petty, who was at that time the pulpit minister for a congregation in Pretoria. The long trip would take us through Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique and Nyasaland. A few churches had been established in Nyasaland (now called Malawi) and the brethren there were very eager for us to visit them on the way through. One of them wrote me that they were planning to serve us a great delicacy of the region, field rats. These large rodents live in burrows like prairie dogs, and generally are fat and succulent. I was looking forward to a tasty stew of the palatable creatures, but Guy and Martelle began to express very negative attitudes. They firmly declared that rats' flesh, however flavorful, would never cross their lips. They would simply refuse to eat it.

"But you must eat it!" I protested. "If these people serve it in our honor it would be an unthinkable insult to refuse it." They

were unmoved. "Look," I said, "we are going to eat their stews. I may have to hold my rifle on you while you get it down, but eat it we shall!" They didn't, however. The expected rains had not fallen when we reached Nyasaland and so it was impossible to dig the rats out of the sun-baked ground. Our hosts apologized profusely for their failure to make good on their promise. Guy and Martelle managed to hide their disappointment very well, even going so far as to declare that no harm had been done and that less exotic food would be perfectly acceptable.

It reminded me of one of my long-time friend Leonard Gray's favorite stories. A Kentucky mountaineer was paid a visit by a flatlander. The mountain man shoved a little brown jug at the tourist and said, "Drink!" The city man declined with a polite, "No, thank you." His host picked up his rifle, pointed it at the visitor and ordered, "I said DRINK!" The man drank, then coughed and gasped, "That's awful!" "Yeah, ain't it?" agreed the mountaineer, "Now, hold the rifle on me while I take a drink."

In defense of Africans' cooking and eating habits, I must say that they generally are meticulously clean in food preparation and their diet is as healthful as they can make it. Some of their food choices seem bizarre to Americans and Europeans, but I well recall the grimaces of disgust when I told a group of Africans that people in my country often cook and eat frogs' legs. They couldn't imagine human beings engaging in such a revolting practice.

African Diet

A common article of commerce throughout Africa is salted dried fish. Every market place has stacks of the produce, which when boiled with onions and tomatoes makes a wholesome and tasty stew. Many species are dried, from the tiny sardines netted from canoes on Lake Malawi to huge Nile perch taken in the lakes and larger rivers. Perhaps the most common fish so utilized is the barbel, or catfish, which is found everywhere. It does not sun dry very well, so it is cured and smoked over an open fire. They supply scarce protein in the African diet.

What is not generally known is the fact that some of the world's best trout fishing is found in the higher altitudes of Africa, from the Cape to Kenya. During the decade I lived in the southern highlands of Tanganyika, our mountain farm (Ailsa) was located by a small rushing stream that simply teemed with rainbow trout. They had been introduced from Scotland many years before and had prospered to such an extent that there was only one restriction placed upon catching them — once caught they could not be returned to the stream regardless of their size. When the water was clear, an angler would average a strike on every second cast. One afternoon I caught thirty-one in less than an hour. We froze them and had fish on the table for several weeks. Because the stream was over-populated, the trout ran small, averaging about a half-pound and very rarely exceeding two pounds. On the Elton Plateau above us, where altitudes were above ten thousand feet, the streams were stocked with brook trout which often weighed five or six pounds.

Although Africans throughout the continent are, generally speaking, cattle raisers, they rarely butcher a cow except for a special occasion such as a funeral. They sometimes, but not

often, slaughter a goat. It is more frequent that they cook one of the scrawny tough chickens that make their own living running down grasshoppers in the bushes around the village. But none of the above are important articles of diet in the daily life of the average rural African. Dried fish is much more important as a source of protein. Eggs are commonly eaten, but in some tribes children are not allowed to eat them on the pretense that it will make them sterile. Cultural anthropologists say that the taboo was based on the need to save the eggs for the old people who had to have soft nourishing foods. Seasonal sources of protein are white ants, caterpillars and locusts, but such foods are of minor importance. Most of the protein in the African diet comes from peanuts and cowpeas.

Another plant that produces a hard, glossy seed similar to, but somewhat larger than a cowpea, has no English name that I am aware of. The plant resembles a peanut, and like the peanut, it ripens its seeds in a shell underground, but in flavor and texture it is completely different from the peanut. It takes longer to cook than a cowpea and has a rich buttery flavor.

Peanuts are widely used in African cookery. When they are well-formed but still immature, they are boiled in salted water and eaten as a main course. Frequently they are pounded to meal in a mortar and added to wild spinach or used to thicken the gravy in a meat stew. I am not partial to goat's flesh, but when it is braised in a cast iron pot and then made into a stew with onions, tomatoes and peanut meal, it becomes a gourmet's dish. The notion that Africans have a boring and unimaginative diet is very mistaken, especially when harvest has been good. It is to be readily admitted, however, that a predilection for some African delicacies is an acquired taste.

Boers and Baboons

The Afrikaner (South African Dutch) community in what used to be Southern Rhodesia, had a strong sense of racial and cultural identity. They referred to themselves as *die volk* (the people) as if they were the only group on earth entitled to that identification. They were, nevertheless, hard working, hospitable, and for the most part honest, neighbors. I think they were even more clannish than their brethren in South Africa itself, possibly because they felt threatened by the impact of British cultural influences in a crown colony. They peridocally held *jukskeis*, which were really social gatherings aimed at preserving the values of their heritage and to instill in their children a loyalty to their roots. One source of tension while I lived there was that several young Afrikaner farmers had wooed and won English girls and insisted on bringing their mates to the *jukskeis*. That was intolerable to the stricter *volk*, who felt that the presence of *uitlanders* (foreigners) would diffuse their focus on Afrikaner values.

Jukskei, by the way, is the Afrikaans name for the slat of wood which is inserted into a yoke on either side of an ox's neck to hold the yoke in place. When the wagon trains of the South African Dutch pioneers outspanned their oxen every evening to make camp, they used the yoke skeys in a game of pitching at a mark, similar to pitching horseshoes.

During my brief tenure at Nhowe Mission near the town of Macheke, in what was then Southern Rhodesia, we had many Afrikaan neighbors on the farms and ranches of the area. Occasionally we had some social contact with them, but not nearly so frequently as we did with the British colonists. Two regular Afrikaans visitors were bachelor brothers who ran a nearby

mountain farm, Bennie and Louis de Jager. They attended church services at the mission chapel every Sunday and invariably stayed for lunch, which they enjoyed hugely as a welcome change from their normal simple diet. I had heard that it was expected among country Afrikaners that a guest at a meal must refuse offers of seconds twice, and only if asked the third time could he take more. That certainly proved to be true in the case of Bennie de Jager. When invited to refill his plate, he would insist that he had had quite enough. The second time he would also refuse, but with a little less conviction. When pressed the third time he (and Louis followed his lead) would fill his plate again to capacity.

I ate dinner with Bennie and Louis at their rather rustic farm house once. The menu consisted solely of a boiled (and tough) native chicken and a large pot of boiled rice which they ate with large spoons. I didn't follow through on their third invitation to have more. The first helping had been more than ample.

From time to time the Dutch farmers would band together for a baboon shoot. Baboons teemed in the rocky bush-clad hills of the region and made forays into the corn fields in the early mornings. We were invited to participate in one of these shoots shortly after my arrival in Africa, and since I had had no similar experience, I thought it might be interesting. We all assembled at the farm of the Bothas which was near the kopje (hill) where a large troop of baboons regularly slept. A huge pot of coffee was boiling away in the Botha kitchen and the farmer handed a steaming mug of the dreadful black brew to each of us. Thus fortified against the chill of the predawn darkness, we made our stumbling way to the kopje and formed a cordon midway up the small hill. One of the farmers continued the climb until he was within rifle

shot of the sleeping baboons where he waited until it was light enough to see his gunsights. At his first shot all pandemonium broke loose. The frenzied baboons fled down the hillside barking and screaming only to be met with a fusillade wherever they tried to break through the circle of men. A few of the larger bulls did, in fact, overrun the gunners and broke free, but most of the baboons fell before the barrage of fire. I had a twelve gauge shotgun which I didn't fire at all until a young male charged straight at me. The charge struck him in the chest and he collapsed dying. I approached him as his life ebbed away. He looked at me with sad resigned eyes in which there was neither fear nor hatred. I had the eerie feeling that I was witnessing the death of a human being. He closed his eyes, gasped a few times through lips tight with pain and his life was over. That baboon hunt was my first and last.

Many years later, I took a friend from Fort Worth, Texas, Joe Knight, on a kudu hunt in the foothills of Tanzania's Elton escarpment. He and his native tracker came in one morning with a baboon Joe had shot. He wanted the head mounted for a trophy and asked me if I would skin it out for him. I had skinned out various game capes for him previously, but never a baboon. "I certainly will not skin it out for you," I told him firmly. "If you want that head skinned, you'll have to skin it yourself." He thought about it for a while, then replied, "Well, I'm not going to skin it!" "Then you're not going to have a baboon trophy." And he didn't.

While we lived in Tanganyika (Tanzania) we usually encountered troops of baboons on the mountainside when we climbed up from our plains farm (named Chosi) to our plateau farm (Ailsa). One day I was making the climb with my small houseboy,

Andondile, and my little mongrel bitch, Tiger. Andondile was very partial to Tiger because she would attack any animal, regardless of size or ferocity. He could not pronounce her name, but called her "Tak-go," which apparently suited her very well, as the two were fast friends. On that day we met a large band of baboons, led by a mean-looking old bull who was disinclined to give us the right-of-way. They barked obscenities at us and gestured threateningly with their forepaws. Tiger was outraged at their insolence and promptly charged.

Now, a dog has no chance against the great fangs of an adult baboon. In the case of a small dog, the baboon will simply pick him up and disembowel him with his long teeth. The instant Tiger started for the baboon, Andondile was racing after her swinging his climbing pole. As Tiger reached the giant male, the baboon grasped her forelegs and lifted her up to give the lethal bite. But before he could administer the coup de grace, Andondile was upon him with the flailing pole. The baboon chief was so startled he dropped the dog and galloped away in full retreat followed by his unnerved troop. I was still riveted to the same spot where I was standing when hostilities first broke out. I was glad Tiger's well-being had not depended upon me.

Baboons are highly intelligent. F. W. Fitzsimmons, the famed South African naturalist, recounted the story of a pet baboon owned by the station master of a minor stop on the South African railway line near Port Elizabeth. The man stood on the platform as the engines passed and handed the engineers the key to the water tank a short distance down the track. Since he had one lame leg he had to take the key from the office as soon as he heard the train whistle so that he would reach the platform in time. One day, for whatever reason, he was delayed and it was

apparent that he would reach his post too late. The baboon immediately recognized the crisis and, running up to his master, he grabbed the key and bounded out onto the platform just in time to put the key into the outstretched hand of the engineer.

Baboon picture.

Strange African Creatures

The first century Roman philosopher and satirist, Seneca, once exclaimed, "Out of Africa always something new!" Indeed, Africa hosts a myriad of strange animals and plants: earthworms up to six feet long; toads that walk single-footed like a dog instead of hopping and, when threatened, inflate themselves into a globe; and a host of creatures found nowhere else on earth. Of course, when we think of Africa we usually think of the great mammals such as elephants, rhinos and giraffes, but there are thousands of humbler creatures that are just as interesting. For example, there is a small bird, appropriately named the anvil bird, whose call is not distinguishable from the blow of an hammer on an anvil. It seems impossible that such a clang could come from the throat of a bird. The black korhaan (or bush turkey) has the curious habit of flying up vertically from the ground like a miniature helicopter while he emits a series of pops like Chinese firecrackers exploding.

Among still smaller creatures are some arachnids (spider-like animals) that are extremely peculiar. One of them is the rain spider. He is not really a spider, but a close relative of the spiders, who races around lighted rooms on rainy season evenings preying on insects attracted by the lamp. He has an incredibly large set of ice-tong jaws with which he seizes any insect, spider or scorpion unfortunate enough to be in his way. He is totally blind, but runs with a pair of pedipalps (resembling legs) extended in front of him. If a person is sitting in the room and the rain spider happens to run up to his foot, it will touch the shoe with its pedipalps and then immediately back away. It never bites nor climbs

upon a person. Afrikaners call them *haarskeerders* (barbers) because, according to their folk lore, rain spiders will clip the hair of a sleeping person. It goes without saying that this is only a myth.

Another very helpful creature to have in your house is the wall spider. These large gray spiders sit all day in the same spot on the wall. They are incredibly thin, as thin as a sheet of paper, as though an artist had taken a bit of gray pigment and painted a spider on the wall. At night they move about and catch insects but never crawl over a sleeping person. The wall spider competes for food with the gecko, a small gray lizard who clings upside down on the ceiling and swiftly gobbles up any insects who land there. The gecko is not quite so sure-footed as the wall spider and occasionally comes tumbling down from the ceiling. I have been startled at the dinner table when a gecko landed with a loud splat beside my plate (or worse, in the soup). No African householder would think of harming a gecko or a wall spider. They are friends and allies in the constant war to keep insects from taking over our planet. The rain spider is a somewhat more uncomfortable house guest, but he, as are the others, is allowed to ply his trade without let or hindrance.

Ants

Among the creatures that inhabit the African continent, the numerical advantage would undoubtedly be enjoyed by the ants. I have followed a column of Safari Ants that was eight inches wide and more than a half mile in length, numbering who knows how many billions of individuals. Safari Ants are extremely predatory and attack any living thing from a fly to an elephant that has the misfortune to be in their line of march. Their name, Safari, means *journey* in Swahili, and they are perpetually on a journey. They resemble Argentine fire ants, both in appearance and behavior, with one remarkable difference. Fire ants attack as soon as they contact human flesh, which gives their victim some chance of getting out of their territory before he is covered by them. Safari ants, in some uncanny way, are able to get many of their number in place on various parts of their target's body before the signal to attack is given. How they manage such sophisticated communication is just another great mystery of entomology.

One day a young man from Holland suddenly appeared before me while I was cultivating a flower bed at our home, Ailsa on Tanganyika's Elton Plateau. He wasted no time introducing himself but blurted out, "Do you have a bathroom?" "Why, certainly," I replied in some surprise. He was jerking and twitching all over his body and I thought he was having some kind of fit. "Quickly, please, where is it?" I quickly showed him the bathroom. In due time, he reappeared looking in much better fettle, but embarrassed. "Safari ants," he explained. He didn't need to say anything more, except I was curious as to why he required a bathroom. It is expected in East Africa that you (in the words of Robert Burns) "coost your duddies to th' wark" (cast your cloth-

ing to the work) wherever you are when the Siafu strike.

Another much larger, but similarly aggressive ant, is the Soldier ant. They are glossy black and march in columns like the Saifu, but the columns are much shorter, maybe a hundred feet long. When they arrive at the hut of a Tonga village in Zambia, they are welcome visitors. The householders simply vacate and turn the premises over to the ants until they have cleaned out every living thing — bed bugs, roaches, ticks, even mice. The Tongas call them *basiamunyeu* (the whisperers). This derives from the fact that if you kill their leader, they will bunch together and hold a conference to elect a new leader. At such a time they make a clearly audible whispering sound. After the new leader has been chosen, he leads the column in a different direction from his predecessor, usually the exact opposite way. He marches alone and slightly in advance of his column of soldiers.

The so-called white ants of Africa are in fact various species of termites. Some of them build giant hills, larger than an average house. I have seen highways in Zambia that were cut directly through hills that were so large that parts of them remained on both sides of the road. Another species constructs smaller elliptical mounds with the transverse axis aligned perfectly with the magnetic pole. The insects are called, appropriately enough, Magnetic White Ants. Other much larger termites which do not erect noticeable mounds, but who do great damage in grain fields, are called Harvester Termites. Their highly specialized soldiers have formidable jaws with which they can administer a really painful bite. When they are at work in fallen grain stalks they make an audible chewing noise.

All of the species of white ants are highly destructive of any-

thing of fiber content. I have had the experience of leaning against a door frame and having it collapse. All the wood frame had been eaten, leaving only the shell of paint. Once I pulled a book out of my library shelf and discovered to my dismay that the book, and all of its companions, had been reduced in width by a couple of inches. Many a housewife has made the mistake of hanging her party dress against a wall and when she decided to wear it found that the entire back had disappeared.

It used to be said in what was Southern Rhodesia, that "whatever Meikles haven't got, the white ants have." The Meikles were a family of entrepreneurs who owned shops, hotels and various other interests. My own evaluation was that the white ants got a great deal more than the Meikles did.

They are, nevertheless, an important source of protein and fat for the African population. Every year when the rains begin, there is a flight of the queens and kings from every termite hill. Incalculable billions of the insects billow up like clouds of smoke from all the mounds and the air is filled with darting birds reaping the bounty of food. The termites' gauzy wings serve only for their breeding flight and are quickly shed after mating.

Africans have a sneaky way of deceiving the millions of termites waiting within the hill into an early departure. They dig a hole into the slope of the mound and bury an open, and empty, five-gallon kerosene can. They begin beating on top of the mound with long heavy stalks of grass. Evidently the termites mistake the pattering sound for raindrops and come boiling out of the hole, millions of them tumbling down the side of the hill, and many of them fall into the can. When the can is full, the Africans pour them into a boiling pot of salt water. After boiling, the ter-

mites are sun dried and stored for future use. For an immediate snack, the natives simply pull their wings off and discard them, popping the raw termites into their mouths.

To guard against termite damage to wooden rafters, door and window frames, and any other wood components of a house, builders of European-type houses in Central Africa often put dried grass soaked in arsenic compounds into the foundation trenches before pouring the concrete foundations. As an added obstacle to the determined insects, an ant course is built into the brick walls, which is a strip of galvanized steel placed between the courses of brick several inches above the ground and jutting out about two inches beyond the wall. Even so, they must be careful that joints in the metal strip are cleanly soldered, with no holes, because if there is a hole, the ants will surely find it.

If the insects are a bane to builders, they also are a boon. Their mounds are excellent clay for bricks, since the ants go deep into the earth to bring up subsoil that is impervious to the tropical rainy season with which to build their mounds. In spite of the brick-like hardness of the mounds, they are vulnerable to attack by two very different types of anteaters: the aardvak (commonly called antbear) and the pangolin (scaly anteater). The aardvarks in particular excavate large cavities in the mounds with their massive bear-like claws. These miniature caverns are a favorite den for the black mamba snake.

Black Mambas

Very few campfire conversations in Africa end without the subject of mambas coming up. Almost everybody who has spent much time in the bushveld has some unsettling tale to add to the lore about these fearsome snakes. Most of my knowledge of mambas is second-hand, which suits me rather well. I remember reading in a Durban newspaper about a young Indian construction worker who had been attacked by a black mamba which had taken up residence in a stack of building materials. To his extreme good fortune, the snake's fangs struck his heavy leather belt, which they were not able to pierce. However, as the snake's head slid down his clothing, the tip of one fang penetrated his trouser leg and slightly graized his thigh. His fellow-workers at this point attacked and killed the snake with poles, and then rushed the young man to the hospital. By that time, he was paralyzed and could not speak, but could still hear clearly. He later described the nightmarish experience of hearing the medical personnel discussing his prospects of recovery. One was of the opinion that he had "had it," and that it would be a waste of time to administer anti-toxin. He desperately wanted to cry out, "Hey, I'm alive! Don't give up on me!" but he could make no sound or movement. Lucky for him, they did inject massive doses of serum and he recovered. The mamba which had bitten him measured fourteen feet.

In more recent time in the eastern Transvaal, the child of a farm family was playing in the front yard when a mamba entered the yard and glided toward the child. The family bull terrier sized up the situation and instantly attacked the snake and tore its head off, but not before the snake had managed to strike him. The terrier quickly collapsed and died, but he had saved the child from

almost certain death.

A similar incident arose on a farm bordering Namwianga Mission in Northern Rhodesia. The owner, a British settler named Webster, was burning a fire guard along the border of his property with ours. He was accompanied by his three large hunting dogs. The fire disturbed a black mamba who had been concealed in the long grass. The dogs became aware of him when he stood erect and they immediately charged him. In the melee that followed, the snake was killed, but he succeeded first in biting all three dogs. They all collapsed and died on the spot.

There is a grim reminder of the deadly snake as you enter Botswana's Okavango Swamp by canoe on the Tamalakhane River. A white cross against the green foliage on one of the small islands marks the burial place of "The King of the Swamp." His real name was Bobby Wilmot and he was the dean of the crocodile hunters who made their living from the vast swamp. I was told that he took more than $50,000 worth of crocodile skins in a single year.

One day he had left his boat and walked onto the island and was bitten on the ankle by a mamba. His snake serum kit was back in his boat, so he returned to it quickly and started to fill the hypodermic syringe with the serum. By this time paralysis was setting in and his hands were so numb he dropped the vial of antitoxin and broke it. Of course, there was no further hope for him. Perhaps there wasn't much anyway.

On one of our mission stations in central Africa, a man was struck by a black mamba. Two of the missionaries quickly put him into a pickup and rushed him to a Presbyterian hospital a mile and a half or so down the road. But when they reached the

hospital the man already was dead, so they turned around and took him back to the mission where his assembled relatives and friends were anxiously awaiting his return. When they saw the corpse sitting up between the two missionaries in the seat of the pickup with his eyes open, they assumed he was all right and began to shout and ululate with joy. But when the pickup reached them and they saw that he was dead, the sounds of jubilation turned into lamentation. One of the missionaries later recalled that it was the eeriest experience of his life.

Black Mamba picture

Spearfishing Experience

For a short period of time, I worked with John Hardin and Leonard Gray in Port Elizabeth. Port Elizabeth, like Chicago, is called "the windy city," and when a "black southeaster" is roaring in from the Indian Ocean it never occurs to anyone to question that nickname. But on balmy days the waves of Algoa Bay break in gentle riffles on the shores of Summerstrand and play hide-and-seek among the rock outcropping of Skoenmaker's Kop. On such a day, Leonard and I had carried our spear fishing gear to a secluded little beach between the strand and the kop where here and there offshore hillocks of rock broke the placid surface of the sea. Among those rugged formations butterfish flashed like burnished copper in the depths, and groupers lay quiet but alert in their shallow grottoes.

The waters of the coast of the eastern Cape are too cold to spend long periods submerged without returning to the beach for a warm-up in the sun. I was taking such a break on the sand that day. A few hundred yards from the shore Leonard was still hunting fish and I could see the white ball on his snorkel rising above the wavelets from time to time. He had just surfaced again when I saw a black fin slice through the water toward him. Leonard disappeared from sight. So did the fin.

Shark attacks are not as common off Port Elizabeth as they are in Durban waters. Nevertheless, great whites are always cruising just off the coast and sometimes venture into the shallows. And gray nurse sharks (locally called "the undertakers") are notorious for attacks in even knee-deep water. Whatever species of maneater was involved in the present episode, I had no inclination for an on-site inspection. We all have to go sometime, but the journey is an intensely private affair and I did not wish to

intrude upon Leonard's personal trek into the great beyond. And so I sat on the beach and thought of many things, but "sealing wax, cabbages and kings" were not among those things.

Then, Leonard's snorkel appeared again and a moment later the black fin cut the water beside him. Several times he dived and came up, and each time the fin did the same. Then Leonard reappeared alone and continued his dives without his companion. I had just witnessed a miracle. The story of Androcles and the Lion is a wondrous tale of how the savage nature can be gentled, but that story is commonplace compared to the taming of a shark which I had just witnessed. While I contemplated the enormity of the event, a torpedo burst from the sea before me and a dapper penguin landed on his feet beside me. He appeared to feel very much at home, even though he was a bit overdressed for the casual setting, in my opinion.

Leonard emerged from the water later and told of how the penguin had come over to see why this human was bobbing up and down in the sea. It was his flippers that I had mistaken for a shark's fin.

Those rocks in Algoa Bay provided some excellent seafood meals for us. One of our favorites was turban snails, or pericloves, as they are called in the eastern Cape. Each snail provides an egg-sized piece of sweet red meat which is rolled in flour and fried. You rarely can find them in the daytime because of the sunlight reflected from the surface of the sea, but at night they are seen clearly among the rocks and under the ledges in the beam of a flashlight. Catfish also are common among the rocks at night, not the siluroid fish that Southerners eat with hush puppies, but the much-maligned cephalopod, better known as the octopus. It

was not an uncommon occurrence, while peeking under an overhanging rock, to have a well-hidden octopus take a sudden swipe at you with a tentacle. This happened to me the night I took my German friend, Uli Steiniger, on his first night foraging expedition. Uli was some distance away at the time, and was completely unaware of the occurrence.

Now I must explain that I felt a certain burden of responsibility to make Uli's evening as exciting as possible. The occasion for such emotional enhancement seemed to have presented itself. "Uli, will you come here, please?" I called. He came and looked questioningly at me. "Can you reach that big periclove on that ledge?" I asked. Uli bent over and reached down into the water. A snaky arm shot out and fastened itself to his wrist with its suckers. I was not carrying a sound meter at the time, but a rough guess would rate Uli's scream at about forty decibels. Strange to relate, this titillating experience did not make Uli an aficionado of snail collecting. It, in fact, had quite the opposite effect. Such are the vagaries of human prejudice.

Spearfishing in Dar?es? Salaam

The sun rises like a ball of fire over the Indian Ocean coast south of Dar-es-Salaam. If there is any breeze stirring it is from the land side and is hot. More often, the forenoon is still and sultry. After the sun reaches its zenith, a sea breeze springs up, making the afternoons and evenings tolerable and even pleasant. To save money and for recreational reasons, when we had to come to Dar-es-Salaam for business or medical reasons, we camped on the coast about fifteen miles from the city. It was peaceful and quiet and we rarely saw any people there except for an occasional fisherman in his outrigger canoe. Since it was more pleasant to take care of business during the afternoons, I generally spent the mornings spear fishing in the cool water off the coral reefs. I always succeeded in bringing in more fish than we could eat, but food was not my principle quest. It was rather the infinite repose of shutting out a world of categorical imperatives and looking in on another strange but spectacularly beautiful universe where the inhabitants lived by altogether different rules. Looking at it through the glass of my mask gave the illusion that I was behind a protective shield, from which vantage point I could be a part of this marine kingdom without being vulnerable to its laws. This illusion was sometimes shattered when I brushed against the fiery head of a stinging coral or came face-to-face with a deadly lion fish under a coral ledge.

One morning I was floating over the reef when I saw a large fish lazing idly in the mouth of a coral cave. Maneuvering my spear gun into position, I fired the barbed shaft at him, but he darted back into the cave and the spear struck the floor in the entrance of the coral grotto. I pulled the light nylon rope that

attached the spear to the gun, but the spear was stuck fast. When I pulled the cord the spear shaft would rise to an upright position, but the point would not leave the rock. I pulled as hard as I could, but it was no use. Even though the point of the spear was not imbedded in the rock and the shaft would move freely from side to side, the point itself was immovably fixed by some unseen force. It was spooky and ominous and I had no intention of going into the mouth of that cave to investigate further. Besides, I needed to go up for air, so I cut the nylon cord to the spear and started up. Then I discovered that I was anchored by my fish stringer which was attached to my belt and on which I had strung three or four fish I had speared previously. I glanced down and discovered that a very large moray eel had seized the fish at the end of the stringer. He had his tail wrapped around a coral head, and tug as I would, I couldn't dislodge him. My lungs were bursting for air, so I crouched with my feet braced against the coral and gave an upward leap. The fish separated, leaving the tail in the moray's mouth, and I surged upward to the surface. I had had more than enough for one day, so I swam back to shore. The next morning I returned to the reef. My spear was still lying in the mouth of the coral cave, and the moray eel was nowhere in sight. I dived down and picked up the spear, which was not held by anything. What power had gripped it the previous day still remains a mystery.

Anyhow, I had learned the wisdom of a piece of advice I had been given by a friend, Joe Woodward. Joe was the chief electrical engineer for Dar-es-Salaam and an avid spear fisherman. He told me once that I should never attach my fish stringer directly to my belt, since a fish that has been speared leaves a blood spoor in the water that will be picked up by any shark cruising in the

area and expose the fisherman himself to attack. He followed the practice, and I did too, after the moray incident, of tying his stringer to an inflated inner tube and then connecting this inner tube to his belt with thirty feet or so of cord. Then, if a shark, barracuda or whatever attacked the fish on the stringer, he could simply unsnap the cord from his belt and get away.

Early Days in Tanganyika

During the decade I lived in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) it was our practice to buy staples in the small town of Mbeya, about sixty miles away. Important purchases we left for our annual vacation in Dar-es-Salaam, the capital, and about five hundred miles away as no crow would ever fly unless he had the blind staggers. Across the harbor from the city itself was a road that led along the coast to some unspoiled forest land and beautiful, but empty, beaches. We chose to camp on the coast about twenty miles out where there was a small stream of fresh water running into the sea. We made our camp under a giant baobab tree. Its trunk measured fifty-five feet around and was hollow with a narrow opening leading into the dark interior. I was tempted to explore the hidden chamber, but my natural sense of caution inhibited me. I was afraid the proprietor might be a black mamba who didn't feel up to receiving guests.

By camping on the coast, we saved a great deal of money and still could get into the city quickly to do our shopping, attend Bible classes, etc. Since I enjoyed fishing, both surf-casting and spear fishing in the coral reefs, it was an ideal arrangement. After supper I would take my surf rod, a pressure lantern, and a book down to the beach. There I would cast a large baited hook as far out into the surf as I could, stand the rod up in the sand, set the ratchet and wait. While I waited I read my book by the light of the lantern. As soon as the ratchet chattered I would grab the rod and set the hook. Then would ensure a long arduous battle with some big fish. I couldn't see what I had until I got it to the beach, so it was always interesting. Sometimes the fish was considerably bigger than I was.

My favorite recreation was spear fishing in the coral reef

which lay out about a quarter of a mile from the beach. Normally I would swim out to the reef about eight o'clock in the morning and stay until after lunch time. The swim out was a little tense, as the water was deep and I could always imagine a tiger shark rising out of the blue depths. Once I had reached the reef I felt comparatively safe as the pinnacles of the coral rose almost to the surface of the sea. There were countless grottoes and open spaces in the reef where myriads of fish of many kinds abounded.

I would shoot a half dozen or so fair sized fish and take them back to camp for supper. There were hundreds of lobsters in the shallow caves and under the coral ledges, but I had little success getting them. It was easy to shoot them with the spear gun, but they would attach themselves to the coral with the spines on their tails and were virtually impossible to dislodge. There were plenty of big fish, but I soon learned to leave them alone. I shot one giant rock cod who almost drowned me and wrecked my equipment.

Rock cod (most Americans call them groupers) grew to enormous size along the East African coast. One species locally called the green *chewa*, attains well over a thousand pounds. The African fishermen of the area set out to catch one that had been breaking their fishing lines. His favorite haunt was the deep estuary of a river that entered the ocean about four miles from our camp. Their strategy was to use equipment so heavy that nothing short of a whale could break it. They first enlisted the aid of an Arab dhow owner. He sailed his vessel up into the estuary and they attached a heavy rope to it and to the other end of the rope they affixed a big hook they had forged. Their bait was the hindquarter of a sheep.

They were right about the huge fish lurking in the estuary. They had hardly thrown in the bait before he swallowed it. Then a mighty battle got under way. The chewa dragged the dhow out into the open sea so far that it disappeared below the horizon. The rope held, however, and several hours later the dhow came sailing back with the fish in tow. I did not see it, but tried to learn from the fishermen how big the chewa actually was, no easy task when you are trying to communicate with Africans. "Well, he was about two feet between the eyes," one of them offered. "That doesn't tell me anything," I replied. "How much do you think he weighed?" "Now, how would we know that?" they responded. "Well, how long was he?" They walked off a few paces, but reminded me that a fish of that size is almost as broad as he is long. I would guess from their descriptions that he probably would have weighed maybe twelve hundred pounds. At least, that was the weight of one that was killed in Dar-es-Salaam harbor after it had swallowed an Arab boy. Eye witnesses said the youngster, about twelve years old, was swimming off one of the deep water piers when a giant mouth engulfed him much as a bass might take a fly.

A couple of miles from our camp was a small village of fishermen/peasant farmers. A youngster of about fourteen, named Omari Saidi, who was an orphan, lived with his uncle. He came to our camp and offered his services as a hunting and fishing guide. Since it is always wise to have someone along who knows the country and the sea, I hired him. I found out from him that you don't shoot lobster with a spear gun. You go out into the surf at night with a flashlight and gig and you find the lobsters out of their caves and wandering about on the ocean bed. Sometimes we would come to a deep pothole in the rocky bottom almost

overgrown with seaweed. I avoided them, as who could tell whether an octopus or a big moray eel might have taken up residence there. Moray eels get big in the Indian Ocean, sometimes ten or twelve feet long, and they're really hard to get along with. But Omari would promptly swim headfirst into the pothole and usually come up with a lobster. We also gigged sand gurnard (a fish as ugly as sin, but with a wonderful flavor) and stingrays. Both lay perfectly still on the bottom and it took a trained eye to see them.

The coastal country around Dar-es-Salaam is mostly thick brush interspersed with open glades. It is possible to travel through it for miles and never see a wild animal. If you are on foot with a keen-eyed local African, it is quite a different matter. The dense copses of low trees simply teem with animals. The first time I went out with Omari we were walking softly along a trail when he stopped suddenly and pointed. A dead bush pig lay in the path ahead. While I was pondering what misfortune could have befallen the stout fellow, Omari pointed again, this time overhead. Directly above the dead forest hog was a large horizontal limb covered with blood. Then it struck me — a leopard kill! Not caring to contest an angry cat's claim to a few pork chops, we stepped backward as quietly as we had come until it was safe to turn around, and then we went in another direction. A little later, Omari motioned toward a thick green bush and standing in front of it was a fine duiker which I shot. Since this small antelope weights only thirty or forty pounds, Omari shouldered it and we returned to camp.

On another day we came upon a small group of wart hogs digging roots in a grassy glade not half a mile from our camp. I shot two large boars and we returned to camp to get my pickup.

Dead Warthogs picture

My brother Roy and his wife Sadie and our co-workers Guy and Jessie Lee Caskey were at the camp, but since the ocean breeze was blowing inland they had not heard the report of the gun. They wanted to know where we were going. "To pick up a couple of wart hogs I shot," I told them. They laughed at the joke, since we had been gone from the camp for only a few minutes. We went back to the glade and loaded the hogs and brought them back. When we reached the camp we got out of the vehicle and I sat down in a camp chair and started looking at a magazine. "What happened to the wart hogs?" they wanted to know. "They're in the pickup," I replied airily and went on reading. They laughed again and I waited. Soon one of them got up and on the pretext of heading somewhere else, just casually passed the pickup and gave a sidelong glance into the bed. He started

with surprise, but the others though he was just spoofing them. They sat as long as their curiosity could bear it, but eventually, one by one, they looked into that pickup and saw the hogs. "But you were gone only a few minutes and we didn't hear any gun shots," the protested.

On another day we took my small mongrel dog, Tiger, with us for a hunt. Tiger is an odd name for a female dog, but she got that name from James Hall, the son of friends living in Paris who spent six months with me shortly after I arrived in Tanganyika. Even when she was a small puppy we had to hold her to keep her from running into the underbrush after leopards, so James thought no lesser title than Tiger would do her justice. On that day in the bushveld outside Dar-es-Salaam she was poking into every clump of timber we passed and when she entered one particularly dense stand, a magnificent waterbuck bull bolted out the other side. He ran a few yards, then stopped and turned around, the sun glinting on his magnificent horns. I dropped him with my .270 Winchester and we retraced our steps to the camp for the pickup.

Now I have often heard it stated for a fact in Africa that the meat of a waterbuck is so foul than even a lion won't eat it. I presume that this is based upon the diary of the early British hunter, Cornwallis Harris, who shot the first waterbuck killed by a European in 1836 and declared the meat unfit to eat. Perhaps the flavor of the meat depends upon the kind of plants they have been eating. I have shot geese that were excellent table birds and others of the same species that were quite inedible. Statements about the malodorous flesh of waterbucks rank with the claim made by many Afrikaners that a puff adder's fangs are in its lower jaw and it has to strike backward! Not only do lions regu-

larly prey on waterbuck, the meat is good. We had some fine roasts from that bull.

When my brother Roy and Sadie, his wife, joined me in Tanganyika, the road had not been built up the mountainside from Chosi, our plains farm, to Ailsa, our farm on the plateau. The distance between the farms was about ten miles, but the last three were up the sheer side of the escarpment. The altitude difference was almost a mile, so the change in temperature from plain to mountaintop was dramatic. For several months I had been moving furniture, supplies and building materials up the mountain by donkey train. Now I had the problem of getting Roy and Sadie up there. Roy was in pretty good shape, but Sadie was seriously overweight. After spending a few days recuperating from their long trip from Texas at the little farmhouse on the plains, they were ready to attempt the climb. They had come out to Africa to help me establish a training school at Ailsa, where we had several large brick buildings established by the early German settlers.

We decided the best way to get Sadie up the mountain was to mount her on a large, white Zanzibar donkey who was capable of carrying a fairly heavy load. We started off all right on the lower slopes. Sadie was pretty precariously balanced in the saddle, but she managed to stay on. But when we came to the steeper gradient, the donkey turned rebellious and slid saddle, Sadie and all over his head by suddenly dropping to his front knees and dropping his neck. It was sheer luck that Sadie did not roll back down the mountain, and she refused to mount the donkey again. We still had the problem of getting her up three thousand feet of escarpment. I held one end of her walking stick and pulled her while Roy pushed her from behind. It was a laborious job, but

finally we topped the final ridge and looked down the gentle slope that led to the Ailsa farm buildings. When we arrived at the house, Gideon, the houseboy in charge at Ailsa, met us in the porch and welcomed us into the sitting room where he had a roaring log fire going in the fireplace and the water boiling for tea. After we had a *cuppa* (cup of tea) followed by a hot bath we all felt much better about the day's ordeal. It had helped us to focus on the urgency of getting a road cut up the face of the escarpment, which, with the help of many of the chief's men, we accomplished in the succeeding months. The narrow zig-zag of rocky earth that eventually snaked up the mountainside was not for the fainthearted and could be negotiated only by four-wheel drive vehicles, but it was a boulevard compared to the donkey trail we had used previously.

Water buck picture

The Masai

Our farm on the edge of Tanganyika's Usangu Plain was at the southern end of the Masai people's annual migration. They and their vast herds mingled with the plains game, and the massed animals seemed to stretch from horizon to horizon. The Masai are not hunters, and that may account for the fact that the zebra, eland and topi herds ignore them and graze undisturbed alongside the herds of zebu cattle and goats. The Masai herdsmen are striking figures on the treeless plains. They stand on one leg with the foot of the other leg resting on the calf of the standing leg and with a spear butt placed on the ground for stability. They will stand motionless in this position for hours at the time with only their eyes constantly checking the welfare of their flocks and herds.

Masai are not generally meat eaters. Although they buy some millet and maize flour from African peasant farmers, their principle food is a soft cheese consisting of curdled milk and blood. By using a sharp-pointed hollow reed they are able to draw blood from the jugular veins of their cattle without harming the animals. The blood is collected in a long gourd shell, which every Masai carried tied to his belt, and fresh milk is added and the combined liquids allowed to congeal. Such a mixture should send their cholesterol levels sky-high, but medical researchers have been amazed to discover that the precise opposite is true. Their average cholesterol levels are much lower than in the general population.

Their cattle are the center of their life and the reverse is quite literally true. They live right in the middle of their cattle corrals in low communal houses or *manyattas*. We made frequent contact with them as we were working with the settled tribes who

claimed the lands they grazed on. The Masai recognized no tribal boundaries and grazed their cattle wherever and whenever they wished. They were such formidable fighters with their long-bladed spears and great shields that no other tribe dared tangle with them.

I doubt there is a more generally handsome people on earth than the Masai. They are tall and lithe and beautifully proportioned with noble heads and almond-shaped eyes that could have come straight from paintings in ancient Egyptian tombs. The warriors wore loose blankets attached at the neck which hung down their backs and covered very little of their magnificent bodies that shone red in the sunlight because they anointed their skin with an ointment of fat and vermillion. In addition to their spears, shields and food gourds, every warrior carried a fearsome knife strapped to his side.

Of course, they lived amid swarms of cattle flies that they apparently were oblivious to. Incredibly, each Masai had his own resident population of flies which formed a solid layer on the shoulder area of his blanket. The flies never went inside a hut with him. When he entered, they settled on the doorway until he came out again. If someone else came out first, his own flies, but not those belonging to his friend, would swarm immediately onto his shoulders. When the men approached their cattle, the flies dispersed among the herd until time to be transported "home" again for the night.

The Masai were friendly toward us in a haughty, detached way, but they did not allow us to photograph them. I asked a warrior why he was so adverse to having his picture taken. "Because I don't want to go to America," he stated emphatically. I looked

bewildered and requested some explanation of what he said. "That thing you have got captures our spirits on paper and you send us off to America!" "Well, that's just not so," I responded. "Then," he demanded, "why do these pictures look like us?" I knew I could never explain it, so I gave it up.

We often saw two youngsters out herding the cattle and goats, one fifteen and the other thirteen. The thirteen-year-old was one of the most handsome kids I ever saw. He stood a good six feet and had perfect features. They always waved to us when we passed. We said goodbye to them at the beginning of the rainy season and did not see them again until the dry season of the following year. But what a change! Both were all scarred as if they had been through a stalk cutter. The thirteen-year-old's classical face was horribly disfigured with hideous scars. The fifteen-year-old had deep scars and a crooked arm. We asked what happened to them.

They had been injured in separate incidents. The younger had taken the goats to the water hole in the evening and a leopard had sprung from a clump of bushes and seized a goat. The boy drew his long knife and attacked the leopard. Eventually he stabbed the cat to death, but not before it had ripped half the flesh from his face with its fearful claws. The older boy had been watching the cattle herd when a lion charged out of the long grass and leapt onto a cow. Without a second's hesitation the boy ran in with his spear and sank it into the lion's body. The great beast was mortally wounded, but still had enough strength to maul the lad badly and crush his arm in its jaws. Usually such a lion bite results in blood poisoning, but he survived. "Was it worth it?" I inquired. "After all, what's a goat or a cow compared to getting chopped up yourself?" The fifteen-year-old drew himself up

proudly, “There is just one law for the Masai,” he explained simply. “When a lion or leopard attacks one of your animals only one of you will walk away alive. It’s you or him.”

The Chimala Hotel

During my decade in Tanganyika our mail drop was at the Chimala Hotel. Besides the small rustic hotel, there wasn't much in the village of Chimala to cause a traveller along the Great North Road to stop. There was a tiny general store with a gas pump in front operated by an Indian named Shivji, and a meat stall owned by an African called Fred.

The Chimala Hotel was really a collection of rather primitive thatch-roofed, round huts with a somewhat larger building that served as lounge/dining room/bar. Practically everyone who passed along the Great North Road between Cape Town and Cairo (theoretically) and between Nairobi and Cape Town (actually) stopped in at the little hotel for a cup of tea, or something stronger, and to catch up on the bits and pieces of news that travellers exchanged with the proprietors, the Cormack family. One of the more colorful characters was a White Russian with a Sudanese passport, who served as area director for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. His name was Simansky. He was belligerently anti-communist, and he was always accompanied by his drinking buddy, another Russian emigre who was his aide. They consumed unbelievable quantities of vodka during their visits, but never gave any outward evidence of its effect beyond Simanski's collaring every new arrival and demanding, "Are you a Bolshi?"

On one extended visit, the vodka supply gave out, a serious calamity to the Russians. Mrs. Cormack, in an effort to assuage their growing thirst, brought out a bottle of South African liqueur called Van De Hum and poured them generous portions. "It is distilled from orange peel," she volunteered brightly. Simansky took one sip and drew his mouth into a grimace of extreme dis-

taste. "I should rather have thought it was distilled from dead cats!" he exploded. Mrs. Cormack, who was South African by birth although her husband was a *brau* Scot, was mortally offended at this attack on an esteemed product of her country. Matters were not improved by the turn of events at dinner a little later.

We had progressed as far as the sweet course in reasonably amicable fashion. The sweet was chocolate pudding, which was somewhat thinner than it is wont to be. "Do you know what we call this in Russian?" Simansky asked of the proprietress. "I'm afraid I haven't the vaguest idea," she responded. "Well," Simansky said matter-of-factly, "we call it soup." Mrs. Cormack's spoon stopped in mid-air. "Why, how rude!" she exclaimed. "That's a dreadful thing to say." Simansky was completely taken aback. "But I am just telling you that the Russian word for chocolate pudding is soup," he explained. She was somewhat mollified, but wasn't sure whether to believe him, nor was I.

Simansky was a great deal of help to me on a critical matter, that of getting sufficient irrigation water for our rice crop on the Bible school farm, Chosi, a mile or so away. There was plenty of water in the Chimala River, but it could be diverted only by a permit from the district commissioner. I had written applying for three cusecs (three cubic feet per second), which was exactly the amount I needed. I received a lecture in return:

Dear Sir,

> We have received your application to divert three cusecs of water from the Chimala River for agricultural purposes. That is an exorbitant amount. You must realize that the river water must be

apportioned among a large number of landowners and that we must be judicious in granting water rights. You will, therefore, be allowed to divert one cusec.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your humble and obedient servant,
(Signature)
The District Commissioner

I showed the letter to Simansky. He laughed and waved his hand. "This is just bureaucratic jargon. That chap knows nothing about how much water you require. He just assumes that every application is inflated and so he reduces it. Let's do this: you just reapply as if you had never applied in the first place. Only this time, ask for seven cusecs. I'll give you a letter to accompany the application stating that in my expert opinion, you'll need seven cusecs to properly irrigate your crops." We did that. Simansky certainly knew his bureaucrats. In due time, a letter came.

Dear Sir,

We have received your application to divert seven cusecs from the Chimala River for agricultural purposes. That is an exorbitant amount...etc....etc.... etc.... You will, therefore be allowed to divert five cusecs.

I have the honour to be, sir,
etc....etc....etc.

Major James Cormack, the owner of the Chimala Hotel, had left his home village, Caithness in the far north of Scotland, to travel to South Africa as a part of Lord Milner's war graves commission after World War I. He met and married a South African

girl in Port Elizabeth. Following World War II, when formerly German-owned properties became available for purchase, they bought four parcels of ground, one of which became the hotel site. The other three properties were purchased from them by my partners and me in the early fifties.

The Cormacks were an interesting family. James was one of three brothers, one of whom, George, became the deputy minister of transport for the Churchill government. Guy Caskey and I had lunch with him in the Liberal Club in Edinburgh, Scotland, and found him to be a gracious and charming host. "How is Jim?" he wanted to know. "Still fighting fit and sending furious letters attacking the windbags in the Colonial Office," I assured him. "That's Jim, alright," he laughed. "He's been a fighter all his life." Major Cormack's dream was for a British dominion of east and central Africa that would become an economic rival to South Africa. He belonged to the age of Cecil Rhodes when colonialism was acceptable morally, socially and politically. That time, alas, was fast running out and the great colonial empires were poised for disintegration.

The Cormacks had two sons and a daughter. The elder son, Ian, had been educated in Britain and had acquired an attractive and vivacious English girl for his wife. Ian was intensely interested in politics and emigrated to Salisbury in Rhodesia with the avowed purpose of running for public office. He could not know that Rhodesia already was in the twilight of the white man's reign.

Keith, the younger son, had no interest in politics whatever. He had chosen the life of a hunter, first a crocodile hunter in the Ruaha swamp and later a professional hunter, or, as we say in the

States, a hunting guide. I spent many pleasant days with Keith in the African bush and he worked for us as a farm manager for several months while he was waiting for a professional hunter's license. He fell in love with a pretty coloured girl named Alice and they were married at the Lutheran Mission near Chimala. Keith's mother, coming from a South African heritage, had a hard time coming to grips with the fact that she had a non-European daughter-in-law. Keith and Alice eventually moved to northern Tanganyika where he became an advisor and protector to American film makers shooting scenes of savage Africa. He was an expert in bushcraft and an excellent shot. Once on our plains farm, Chosi, a leopard sprang at him from the tall elephant grass. He glimpsed it only from the corner of his eye, as it was to one side and slightly behind him. He fired instinctively with no time to take sight, but the giant cat collapsed in mid-leap and hit the ground dead.

Roma, the daughter, was a complex individual: willful and selfish, introverted and above all, I think, unbearably lonely. When I first met her, she must have been closing out her twenties and desperate for a husband. Her prospects were not ideal. Eligible men were a scarce commodity in Tanganyika, and social events, where matrimonial contacts normally are made, were virtually non-existent. To compound her problem, her genetic allotment had made her a great deal less than the most comely among the Lord's maidens. She was tall and lank with slightly stooped shoulders, and her face, although it perhaps would not have stopped a clock, certainly would not have started one either.

It was some time after I had first visited Chimala before I actually met Roma. I had seen her gaunt figure with her face hidden in a bonnet flitting like a will-of-the-wisp between the vari-

ous huts in the compound. Eventually and inevitably, however, we met in the hotel lounge and were introduced. It was a grating encounter. She overcompensated for a painful shyness by deliberate rudeness, particularly in articulating her distaste for Americans. I had no wish to pursue the cultivation of any closer acquaintance with her. Sometimes we were seated at the same table in the hotel dining room where, to my extreme irritation, she always spooned all of the cream off the pudding onto her own dish. Over a period of time she warmed perceptibly and even began to seek out my company, ostensibly to discuss religion, a subject about which she knew no more than her pagan neighbors. She professed to belong to the Anglican communion, but during the decade I knew her, she never attended a service as far as I was aware. The whole Cormack family, in fact, had a strange relationship with organized religion. The Major was Presbyterian, but probably had not been near a Presbyterian church in half a century. They explained to me that his wife had been brought up Anglican, but when she married Cormack she had "naturally converted" to the Presbyterian faith of her husband. It seemed to me to be a kind of charade with about as much validity as a game of Monopoly, but it seemed to satisfy whatever religious sensibilities they had.

Roma, herself, had been somewhat influenced by Roman Catholicism, as her parents had sent her to a Catholic boarding school in Port Elizabeth during her teenage years. She recounted an amusing incident that happened during her stay there. On a special holiday they were served roast turkey and, as the golden brown bird was placed on the long table, Roma blurted out, "I want the Pope's nose!" Gasps of horror greeted her outburst and the Mother Superior looked very grim. She summoned Roma to

her chambers afterward and warned her in the sternest language that, "We don't ridicule the Holy Father." She concluded the lecture by saying, "It is permissible to refer to a turkey's tail as the Parson's nose."

Anyway, Roma had picked up a streak of mysticism somewhere. She confided to me once that she had been standing one evening on the bridge where the Great North Road crossed the Chimala River and she heard "the infant cry in his creche." I was amazed and thought at first she was "pulling my leg," but she was dead serious. That she had heard a baby wail I hadn't the slightest doubt, but to ascribe the cry to the infant Jesus under the circumstances was ludicrous. The Chimala River was lined with thick bush on both sides cut by numerous native paths. African women, with their tiny offspring strapped to their backs, were constantly gathering firewood, wild fruit, etc., in the trees, so a more convincing miracle would have been to stand on the bridge and not hear a baby cry. Whether the dirty old cow hides in which the mothers carried their offspring would have constituted creches, I am not qualified to venture an opinion.

Living, as the Cormacks did, some sixty miles from the small town of Mbeya, the only village of any consequence in a vast area, Roma's opportunities to meet and be courted by a prospective mate were extremely limited. She was acutely conscious of that disturbing fact, and was therefore propelled to heights of romantic excitement when a smooth and handsome Captain Charles Rainer, lately of the Royal Air Force, suddenly turned up in Mbeya and showed a flattering interest in her. She found occasion to spend a great deal of time in Mbeya, so that whenever I went to the trading post on business I generally found them sitting in the hotel lounge in an animated conversation and Roma

was obviously deliriously happy. I was glad for her, but somewhat puzzled that the articulate and urbane Englishman should be attracted to her.

A few days later the bubble burst. When I next saw Roma, her distraught demeanor left no doubt but that a tragedy of considerable scope had befallen her. "Roma, what on earth is the matter?" I asked. "Charles Rainer is not Charles Rainer!" she moaned. "Roma, you are making no sense. What are you talking about?" "I'm telling you that Charles Rainer isn't Charles Rainer," she insisted. "Then who is he?" "He's a South African Dutchman named van Rensburg." Then, in spurts the story came out. It so happened that there were several RAF veterans settled in the area, including a Colonel and a Wing Commander, and some of the professed pilot's recounted experiences did not have the ring of truth to them. They made discreet inquiries and found that Charles Rainer was a confidence man with no military credentials whatsoever. The man was certainly a consummate actor though. Usually, when an Afrikaner speaks English it is with an accent so thick you couldn't cut it with a broad axe. Van Rensburg had a flawless English accent and impeccable diction. Perhaps he was reared in a bilingual home by an English mother.

Roma at one early stage of our acquaintance settled upon me as a matrimonial object, much to my dismay. I avoided her as much as possible by spending more time at our mountain farm, Ailsa, which was ten miles from the Chimala Hotel, and less at Chosi, our plains farm which was only a mile from the hotel. It didn't help too much, as she sent runners up the mountain carrying torrid letters. James Hall, the teenage son of friends living in Paris who was spending a few months with me, shook his head after I had received one such note and exclaimed, "Boy, I would-

n't be you for a million dollars!" Unfortunately, I was having to be me for nothing.

Eventually, the right man turned up. Big, quiet, good-natured Bill and Roma were mutually attracted and the usual course of events ensued to the satisfaction of everyone. They were married and settled in Port Elizabeth where Roma had family roots.

Julius Nyerere (now for many years President of Tanzania) stopped at the Chimala Hotel one day and requested a room for the night. At that time he was the principle organizer of the Tanganyika African National Union, which would soon sweep the elections for self-government. I had run into him a time or two in hotels in Dar-es-Salaam and he was a mild mannered, polite and friendly little man.

Now the Cormacks did not accommodate blacks at the Chimala Hotel. On the other hand, Tanganyika was officially multi-racial, so they couldn't refuse them accommodation either. They resorted to rather a mean ruse. One of the sleeping huts was deliberately left in a sorry state of disrepair. The thatch roof leaked, the cement floor was broken and the furniture was broken. Mrs. Cormack showed Nyerere the hut and told him that it was all the accommodation available at the moment. Mr. Nyerere took one look, politely declined her offer and left.

When he came to power, I kept waiting for him to take some sort of reprisal against the Cormacks, but it never happened. It says something for the stature of the man that he ignored the whole affair.

Another remarkable example of African forbearance occurred when Jomo Kenyatta came to power in Kenya. One of the well-known British settlers was Colonel Grogan. He was

famous because, as a young man, he had walked from Cape Town to Cairo to win his wife. Her English father had refused to give her in marriage to any man who had not proved himself worthy of his daughter's hand by performing some feat of courage "like walking from the Cape to Cairo." Young Grogan had accepted and fulfilled the challenge. In the fifties he was celebrated among the colonists for his acerbic views on African independence movements, especially the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. Although Jomo "the Burning Spear" Kenyatta was not formally a member of the Mau Mau, he was widely believed to be the organizing power behind it. Grogan had publicly stated that the way to deal with the rebellion was to hang a dozen or so of the leaders and the rest would take to their heels. "After all," he added, "they are only black baboons." When it became apparent that Kenyatta would take over the government, Grogan was asked if he would leave the country. "No," he replied. "I wouldn't miss it for the world. I want to stay around and see them mess things up." He did, indeed, stay around. Kenyatta proved to be a very capable administrator and he never took any action against Grogan for his racist remarks.

Encounters with Freedom Fighters

The difference between a terrorist and a "freedom fighter" is a matter of perspective. There is a tremendous moral gap between those resorting to violence on our side and on their side. That gap, however, narrows to no importance at all whenever they have their guns pointed at you whatever their political stance may be.

I had two encounters with bands of armed dissidents in Botswana. In theory, Botswana was neutral since the political realities of large Rhodesian and South African armies on its borders allowed no alternative, but they in actual fact were a refuge for expatriate forces from South Africa, Rhodesia and Southwest Africa. Officially they were "refugees," but they were a mite too heavily armed and organized for the run-of-the-mill refugee.

I had arranged on a trip from South Africa to meet my Botswana contact, G. M. Mosi, at Nata village in northern Botswana. Mosi was the preacher for a congregation at Manxotai, some thirty kilometers north of Nata, and was to accompany me back to his village. We met at the agreed time and set out on the rough track leading north from the main road. Mosi was relating to me a harrowing experience he and his village had over the weekend. Zanu (the freedom fighters against white minority rule in Rhodesia) were moving large units of soldiers from camps in Botswana into Matabeleland in western Rhodesia, and their route took them through Manxotai. It had happened that just as they reached the village they were intercepted by counter-revolutionary forces who had crossed over into Botswana looking for them. As the fire-fight began, the villagers

fled in panic into the surrounding bush and Mosi and his family and many others had slept out there until they were sure the hostilities had ceased. He hadn't finished his story before he jumped bolt upright in the seat and pointed frantically. A few yards ahead a group of men was running toward the road and waving for us to stop. I started to slow down.

"Don't stop! Accelerate!" Mosi shouted. "They are terrorists!"

I pushed in on the accelerator and the Land Cruiser leapt forward. When the men saw we weren't going to stop they rushed back into the clumps of bushes where they had stashed their rifles, but by the time they had them we were past them and fast disappearing into the trees. A fairly large truck had been behind us at a distance since we had left the main road, but there was no way for us to warn them that they were driving into an ambush.

When we had gone a mile or two along the track, we approached a thickly wooded area and Mosi asked me to pull off the road behind a screen of bushes. Shortly afterward, the truck roared by full of the armed men.

"The freedom fighters wouldn't have harmed us directly," Mosi explained, "but they would have forced us to drive them to the Rhodesian border. If we were intercepted by a detachment of Rhodesian scouts they would kill all of us."

After the truck had been gone ten minutes or so, Mosi said it would be safe to proceed, which we did, and arrived at Manxotai without further incident.

On another occasion, Jerry McCaghren of Bread For A Hungry World, John Lacy, Randy Davis and I were on a trip to

Maun on the Okavango Swamp in Botswana. John Lacy and Randy Davis were doing a documentary for Bread For A Hungry World. We were in a four-wheel-drive vehicle and were accompanied by a couple of South Africans. We had planned to camp at my usual campsite on the Tamalakhane River five or six miles beyond the village of Maun. Even though it was well after dark we turned off the road and followed a track toward the river. As we entered a stand of mopani trees we came to an obstruction of saplings across the path. We got out to investigate and were surrounded immediately by armed men with automatic rifles. They shoved the muzzles of the guns at us and demanded roughly who we were and what we were doing. We tried to explain that we were on a mission to feed starving people, but they were not satisfied. When we asked them who they were they poked their rifles at us and told us to shut up. Finally they apparently were convinced that we were not South African or Rhodesian counter-insurgency agents and they told us to get back into the car and get completely out of the area as quickly as we could. We returned to the village of Maun and managed to get rooms in a run-down little hotel. There we tried to inquire who the armed men were, but nobody would discuss it, denying unconvincingly that they knew anything about such a camp in the area. The barman, however, did mutter under his breath, "They are a bad lot!"

The next day we went back along the road to the house of one of our evangelists who lived perhaps a mile from the place where we were stopped. "George," we asked him, "what organization has that military camp on the river?" Without blinking an eye, he replied, "You must be mistaken. There's no military camp there. The Botswana Defense Force used to have a camp there, but they've been gone since April and nobody else has been there."

And so we never found out what group the nest of freedom fighters represented. They probably were SWAPO terrorists from Namibia on the other side of the swamp, but they could have been soldiers of either Zimbabwe revolutionary groups or members of the African National Congress from South Africa.

Funeral Customs and Christian Ethics

Religious ethics pose problems difficult to resolve when you have two major religions in confrontation, in this case Christianity and paganism. To pagans, funeral rites are of the greatest importance and of the direst import if they are not properly done. These rites, of course, differ from culture to culture, but they are uniformly matters of first importance. A typical funeral among the Tongas of Zambia is almost a ballet, with warriors brandishing spears engaged in elaborate dances in which they pantomime battles with the evil spirits. All the while the drums throb, the horns moan, and wild chants and screams of grief pierce the night air. It is especially important that the immediate relatives of the deceased give evidence of overwhelming and uncontrollable grief. All of this is for the benefit of the departed spirit, who has not departed all that far, but is lingering in the neighborhood to see what kind of send-off he's getting. If he is disappointed, he will use his spirit power to plague the village with cattle disease, crop failures and other calamities. My garden boy, Sibaliki, was celebrated in the area for the stellar performance he put on at his mother's funeral. This ritual grief is purely ceremonial and has nothing to do with genuine grief. That is not to say that they are not as truly devastated by the death of a loved one as the bereaved of any other culture would be. They are, of course. But formal funerals are elaborate productions put on for the benefit of the spirit world.

One of the criteria by which a departed spirit gauges the grandness of his funeral is the size of the feast that accompanies the funeral. Oxen, sacrificed to placate the hovering spirits, are the animals of choice for African funerals. After they are sacri-

ficed, the meat is cooked and served to the mourners, or celebrants as the case may be. And it is at that point that problems of Christian ethics arise.

The church in the village of Mukuni had conscientious and very conservative elders. They ruled that the Christians of Mukuni would from henceforth eat no meat sacrificed to ancestral spirits at pagan funerals. Their reasoning was very sound based upon their application of Paul's admonition to the Corinthians given in 1 Corinthians 8:7-13. Their argument was, (1) the ox has been sacrificed to ancestral spirits, (2) the purpose of the ceremonial meal is to worship those spirits, and (3) Christians cannot engage in the ritual without appearing to endorse pagan superstitions. Many members of the congregation were pragmatists and they were appalled at the elders' decision. Their rebuttal was: (1) if we do not show respect to the dead of our village by attending the funeral we will lose all influence with our pagan friends, so we must attend, (2) if we attend but refuse to join in the feast, we will be insulting not only the memory of the dead but also his surviving relatives, and (3) our pagan friends know perfectly well that we eat the meat only out of respect for them and that we do not worship the spirits. Feelings ran high on both sides and eventually some of their protagonists brought the matter to me. With my usual decisiveness, I agreed with both sides.

Garden Boys

It is a prevailing practice among white householders in South Africa to employ black garden boys to help with the weeding and mowing. Because able-bodied, reliable workers can often find much better paying jobs in factories and shops, your garden boy is likely to be a youngster earning money for school, an old man who can't get a job elsewhere, or a drifter who drifts in and out of the real world depending upon how much wine he can afford to belt down. By the nature of things, it is unusual to have a long term worker who can be trusted. My list of garden boys ran the gamut from Daniel, an honest hardworking youngster who planned to study law, to Peter, an old rascal of indeterminate age who was not above dealing in drugs.

One of my most surprising experiences in garden boys was with a clean-cut hardworking kid who never gave me any cause for dissatisfaction. William was quiet and appeared to be very introspective, never smiled and gave the briefest possible answers to my questions. One night the police came and took him away along with a revolver hidden under his mattress. It turned out that his brother led a gang of robbers who operated in our neighborhood. So police patrols would not find an illegal firearm on them as they travelled to and from the black township, they left the gun in William's room after their night's activity and picked it up again on the next foray.

Daniel Mahlangu was a bright teenager whose family lived on a farm about twenty miles away. Since he was farm-bred, he knew how to work and was completely trustworthy. I often tipped him on top of his wages, and on Christmas I gave him a box of goodies to take to his folks. I drove him home in the car for the Christmas holidays. To my surprise, the family presented

me with a fine turkey gobbler. I felt embarrassed to take it, but to have refused it would have been offensive to them.

Peter was a seedy old character who did as little work as he could get by with. I kept him on because he was slightly crippled and I felt sorry for him. I noticed that he made frequent trips to the front gate where he seemed to be negotiating some kind of business with young white men who would stop briefly at the gate to converse with him. Blacks sometimes sold tickets to a gambling game operated by Chinese, which they called *Fa-Fi*, and I supposed that perhaps Peter was one of their runners. He wasn't.

One day I ventured into a corner of the back garden behind Peter's room and found a fine stand of *dagga* (marijuana) from which Peter was making joints and peddling them at my front gate. I uprooted the weeds and Peter. Legal penalties were very severe for growing dagga on your premises whether or not you knew of its presence. After Peter left my employ I saw him one day sitting with a beggar's cup at the local mall. I accosted him, "Peter, what are you doing sitting here begging instead of working for an honest living?" His reply was as direct as my question: "Because I can make a lot more by begging than by working."

My Northern Rhodesia garden boy, Sibiliki, certainly was one of the most interesting, although not the brightest horticultural assistant I ever had. On one occasion I had planted a bed of lettuce which came up in beautiful profusion. So did the weeds. "Sibiliki," I called to him, "I want you to pull all the weeds out of this lettuce." "Ncibotu," he replied, indicating that he was ready to attempt it. Later in the day, however, I passed by the bed and discovered that it was well pulverized but bereft of my let-

tuce crop. "Sibaliki!" I summoned him, "what has happened to my lettuce?" "Well," he explained, "I decided it was a hopeless job trying to separate the weeds from the lettuce, so I decided that the only way was to dig it all up and replant the lettuce."

Revenge is an unworthy motivation, so I would not want any reader to connect the lettuce bed fiasco with what occurred later. Sibaliki and I were about to cross paths, so I stopped him with a question, "Sibaliki, would you like a sweet (candy)?" "Oh, very much," he responded enthusiastically. By a stroke of bad fortune, what I was holding concealed in my hand, with only its head sticking out between my thumb and index finger, was a chameleon. For whatever reasons, Africans abhor this small inoffensive lizard. Sibiliki reached out to take the "sweet". The "sweet" opened its mouth and gave a loud hiss. Sibiliki froze for two seconds. Then with a piercing shriek, he spun around and fled at top speed. Now, who could have foreseen such an over-reaction? Certainly the chameleon did not seem to have lost his composure over the chance encounter. Whether Sibiliki regarded the event as a sequel to the lettuce bed incident we probably shall never know, but he never again uprooted any plants of mine.

Sibiliki did not come from a socially prominent family. He did, however, achieve a certain amount of fame in his village. It came about this way. People of his tribe actually hold three funerals for a deceased person. The first is at his burial, the second after one month, and the last one year after his death. The third ceremony is called *Kumalililo*, "the finish of the crying." Mourning is extremely dramatic and noisy in order to pacify the spirit of the departed loved one, otherwise it may turn nasty and inflict harm on the tribe. Curiously enough, the spirit only observes the proceedings while the funeral drums are throbbing

and the horns are wailing. During the breaks, the "mourners" are quite relaxed and even jovial, but when the instruments strike up again they resume their mode of uncontrollable grief. Some are endowed with a gift of extravagant bursts of sorrow that are almost an art form. Sibiliki was one of those gifted persons. On the occasion of the funeral of his mother he, to put it mildly, pulled a walleyed fit. His performance was so spectacular that it was greatly admired by all present and reports of it spread throughout the area. Because of it, Sibiliki achieved a degree of honor that he otherwise would not have enjoyed. Let me hasten to add, that these people experience as much genuine grief at the death of a loved one as anyone else. The public show of grief to appease the spirit world is, however, simply a staged performance, and, as in any public display of histrionic ability, there are "stars" and even superstars. Sibiliki was a superstar.

Lizards and Crocodiles in African Legend

The small, harmless lizard known as a chameleon is an object of fear to many African tribes. Perhaps they regard his ability to change his color as magic. Another explanation is that he is cast as a sinister enemy in their folklore. Among the Tongas he figures as a principal character in a traditional tale which attempts to explain differences in the progress made by different cultures. Apparently when the first explorers and immigrants arrived in various parts of Africa, their possessions and artifacts reflected technological progress that made the natives look askance at their own accomplishments. No doubt the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon ancestors of many of us felt a similar diminution of their own self-esteem when the Roman legions with their smart leather and brass accouterments marched into their domains. Anyway, the African tall tale which accounts for this perceived inequity goes like this:

In the beginning, Mungu (the creator) called the primordial fathers of the various racial groups (black, brown, yellow and white) to his throne and charged them, "Each of you will choose whatever creature you wish to race to my store room of talents and choose whatever gifts you want on a first-come first-served basis."

The brown man chose the zebra, the yellow man the impala and the white man the eagle. The black man chose the swiftest of the lizards, the chameleon. At the signal they were off — or at least all of them were off except the chameleon, who began to show off. He edged forward with hesitant, mincing steps. The black man urged him on, but the chameleon only rolled his eyes

and clowned. The outcome of the race was that by the time the chameleon reached the store room, things had been pretty much picked over. The black man was, of course, incensed at the behavior of the chameleon and placed a bitter curse on his head. "Because you have so ill-served me with your dawdling step and rolling eyes, you are condemned to doing that forever." The chameleon swelled with rage at the African's words and swore that he would someday get even (as if he already hadn't). And that is why, Africans say, they fear the chameleon.

Another story the Tongas tell involves Siatombela (the chameleon) and Siazibumbu (the horned lizard). The Creator was trying to decide whether to make men subject to a resurrection of the body after death or to make death a final state. "This is what we will do," he said to Man. Take Siatombela and Siazibumbu to a distant spot and release them. Siatombela's message will be 'Bafwa, bazoboola' (when they die they will come back) and Siazibumbu's message will be 'Bafwa bazomaninina (when they die, that's the end of them).' Whichever one gets back to me with his message first, that's the way it's going to be." The race was duly run and was a dead heat, but when the two lizards started to articulate their respective messages, Siatombela started stuttering and Siazibumbu got his statement out first. And that is why, the Tongas say, no one has ever returned from the dead.

That is not to imply, however, that Africans do not believe in the survival of the human spirit after death. They do. Some powerful spirits, such as great witch doctors and chiefs, even have the ability to return to earth in the form of a lion or elephant. That possibly accounts for the fact that they will not pass the grave of an important chief without bowing. Often they pour out libations

of beer on the graves of dignitaries.

Once I laid my hand on a cairn of granite blocks marking the grave of some early and long-forgotten Africans. The Shona tribesmen who were with me recoiled in horror. "You'll bring a curse on yourself," they warned me.

African folklore abounds with moral tales that they have used for centuries to direct the behavior of their children. To stress the insidious power of bad habits they tell the story of a man who was out hunting in the woods one day when to his great surprise, he ran into a crocodile. "What on earth are you doing so far from water?" the man asked. "I lost my way," the croc replied in a weak voice, "and I'm certainly going to die if I don't get some kind person to help me get back to the river." "Well," the man said doubtfully, " I normally don't have anything to do with crocodiles. They're too dangerous." "Me, dangerous?" the reptile gave a hollow laugh. "Nothing could be farther from the truth. Just help me get to within sight of the water and then you can put me down." The man loaded the crocodile on his shoulders and carried him to where the river was plainly visible. "Well, here you are!" he exclaimed, starting to put the creature down. "Oh, please," whimpered the croc, "leaving me here would be a death sentence. At least carry me to the river bank." So against his better judgment the man carried him to the brink of the water. "Oh, no! Don't put me down yet. At least carry me out into the shallow water," the lizard plead piteously. "You have seen that I am completely harmless." "All right," the man said grudgingly, "but that's it." And so he went a few steps into the water. Suddenly, the croc seized him in his jaws and pulled him into deep water and drowned him.

"And that is how," the African father cautions his son, "a bad habit like drunkenness or *bangi* (marijuana) or gambling starts out as a harmless little thing, but later becomes so powerful you can't shake it off."

One of the most destructive of all the aberrations of mankind is surely bias based upon race. It does incalculable damage both to the one practicing that discrimination and to the object of it. More important, it weakens the political, economic and social fabric of whatever polity in which it is practiced. It cheapens our common humanity and defaces the image of the divine spark that makes man unique among all creatures.

In colonial days, Britain controlled a major part of the African continent. For the most part, their colonial administrators were able public servants who were committed to dispensing justice to all their disparate subjects. In fact, their paternalistic solicitude for indigenous peoples was in itself a denigration of their cultural and individual dignity. Having someone to decide on your behalf what is best for you, even though he may be right, is an insidious infringement upon your freedom of choice. However, given the parameters of their responsibilities as set by the Colonial Office, most commissioners and district officers of the British colonial service were conscientious servants of the Crown and did their best to administer a complicated legal code fairly. Not so the many colonists and sojourners who swarmed into Africa out from the British Isles. While protesting their complete lack of racial prejudice, they exemplified at every contact with African society their attitude toward the black people among whom they lived.

They often were heard to exclaim, "Why, I have no prejudice

whatever toward the natives. I treat my servants like they were my own children." They apparently were unaware that adults of any color prefer not to be treated as someone else's children.

Hamish Forsythe

Hunting game for meat was as much a part of the rural life of Africa of a half-century ago as it was to the American pioneers of an earlier age. The vast herds of game seemed inexhaustible. I once sat in my open Jeep on Tanganyika's Usangu plains while a dense throng of migrating animals — buffalo, topi, and zebra, among others — moved to new grazing grounds after a grass fire had destroyed their pasturage. They seemed entirely oblivious to my presence and occasionally the jostling mass of buffalo would force an animal against the Jeep, causing it to rock precariously.

We did not often shoot more than we required for a few days' meat supply. Occasionally, we would require large quantities of meat for some special convention, and that required going out to an area where the game was more populous than it was in the settled part of the country. I recall that once in Northern Rhodesia, when we were expecting several hundred people to spend three days with us at Namwianga Mission, Boyd Reese and I made a hunting trip to an area about fifty miles south along the Kalomo River.

On the way into the hunting area we stopped at the ranch of an old time elephant hunter, Hamish Forsythe. He was a crusty old Scot bachelor whose lifetime had bridged the gap between the great ivory hunters of the early years of the twentieth century, and the later generation of white hunters, professional guides who escorted well-heeled European and American tourists on shooting safaris. When we arrived at his ranch house we were met by his head boy who told us that Hamish had been taken to the hospital in Livingstone several days before. He nevertheless insisted that his master would not want us to leave without being served tea and biscuits, so we allowed ourselves to be escorted

into the den. Forsythe had Karamojo Bell's book on elephant hunting lying on a reading table. Bell was the first elephant hunter to have killed more than one thousand elephants and was, therefore, the role model for a later generation of hunters. I leafed through the book and was amused at the comments, sometimes explosive disagreement, which Forsythe had written into the margins.

While we were having tea, Forsythe himself drove up in a buggy (he was too old-fashioned to own a car) driven by one of his black retainers. He was very frail and wan. His servants practically carried him into his bedroom and laid him on the bed and propped him up with pillows. After he had rested a few minutes he had chairs placed by his bedside and insisted that we come in for a visit. It was obvious that his lifespan was drawing swiftly to its close and that he wanted to reminisce with people of his own race. There was an undercurrent of great sadness as we listened to a man who had survived many dangerous experiences over many years of traversing African game trails and had finally settled on this ranch to spend his declining years in almost total isolation from society. The one exception to this was three weeks he spent every year in the Seychelles Islands. I remember one of the things he told us was that through the years he had killed fifty-four lions on his ranch that were marauding his cattle.

A few days after we returned from the hunting trip, we received word that Forsythe had died. He was buried in the drab little cemetery in Kalomo with one of my senior missionaries, W. N. Short, conducting the service.

But back to the hunt: The area was open bushveld, not plains, so there were no large herds, but an abundance of such

animals as the bush country offered, mostly sable antelope, hartebeest, kudu and reedbuck. We cut the meat in strips and partially sun-dried it, but even so it weighed enough when loaded for the return trip to flatten the springs on the three-ton truck. Today the sable antelope is comparatively rare in most parts of its former range, but then it was one of the most abundant species in the bushveld. A large bull with his glossy black skin, white trim, and sweeping scimitar-shaped horns is a magnificent animal.

Boyd Reese, my co-worker of many years, and I had gone out on a Friday afternoon to a stretch of virgin bushveld to get meat for the personnel on the mission station. We parked the Chevrolet in a small open glade and set up camp. It was ideal habitat for both kudu and sable antelope, and there also were quite a few roan antelope and hartebeest, so I took my carbine and set out for a few minutes walk out of camp. I had gone only a few hundred yards when I spotted a sable. But he also had seen me and trotted off a short distance before he stopped again. I followed. We kept that routine up for quite a time until I had lost all sense of time or direction. Then the sable simply melted into the trees and I couldn't catch a glimpse of him, but I knew he had to be somewhere ahead so I kept going. Then it dawned on me that I was lost — completely, hopelessly lost. When you suddenly realize you are lost, you tend to panic, step up your pace until you are practically running, and soon exhaust yourself. In short, you become desperate and irrational without the capability of calm reflection that might give some indication of your whereabouts. So I plunged on past innumerable mopani and mwanza trees that looked exactly like a thousand others I had passed. Finally, when I was completely spent, I began to use my brain instead of my legs.

Standard procedure in Africa dictates that if you are lost from your camp and you have companions still in the camp, you fire three shots at regular intervals and wait for them to fire three answering shots. Assuming that you still are within hearing distance of the gunshots you will be able to determine the direction of your camp. I resolved to do that, although it is a humiliating admission that you have neglected all the standard procedures of taking a compass bearing before you set out, etc. and that you are as lost as you can possibly be. So I fired the three shots and waited for the reply.

The reply came, not in the expected form, but in a human voice, Boyd's voice, demanding, "What on earth do you think you are doing?" I almost jumped out of my skin, and turned half around. There was Boyd sitting on the running board of the pick-up sipping a cup of tea! A few yards in front of him lay a sable antelope — my sable antelope!

What had happened was that the sable had led me in a complete circle. Boyd had seen the animal enter the clearing, had reached for his gun and shot it without ever leaving his seat. To this good hour I cannot explain why I did not hear his rifle shot. I have heard stories of lost men who were so disoriented that they could not recognize their companions when they eventually were found and I believe those stories are true. In my case, if I had not stopped and fired my rifle and so attracted Boyd's attention, I would have walked by our camp within thirty yards and have plunged on into the endless bush.

I learned something from those two hours of blind, maddening fear. I inlaid a compass into the stock of my rifle and thereafter I checked direction, time and position of the sun before set-

ting out. A still better plan is not to set out at all unless you have a native of the area for a guide.

Light Planes in Africa

During my early years in Northern Rhodesia, air travel was not a common form of transportation. Missionaries invariably travelled from the States to Africa by boat, frequently a freighter. Travel by freighter was inexpensive. The cabins generally were roomy and comfortable and the food was plain, but adequate. The handful of passengers ate in the officers' mess. Entertainment was non-existent and the voyage boring, but the long empty days were a good opportunity for reading books and for studying a language.

I first rode in an airplane, a Piper Cub, in 1945. It belonged to Terrence Spencer and he kept it at the tiny little bush air strip at the Victoria Falls. Terrence and his uncle, Ted Spencer, were enthusiastic exponents of aviation. Ted flew a freight service in the Rhodesias using a DC-3. He reckoned that the Dakota was the safest, most versatile aircraft ever built. I believed him until he crashed his, killing himself. Terrance made his living flying tourists (very few in those days) over the Falls for a couple of pounds. I wanted to make some movies of elephants, so Terrence agreed to fly me over the Caprivi strip and the Barotse Plains, both swarming with game.

We met at the little air strip in the murky light of pre-dawn. The first order of business was to chase away a herd of hartebeest that had spent the night on the field. The second was to push the little plane onto the end of the runway. The plane took off easily in the crisp morning air and we did a couple of swoops over the thundering Falls. Then we headed up the Zambezi River to view the game herds.

I had supposed that I would take pictures through the window of the plane. Not so. When we sighted a herd of elephants

Terrance told me to hand him the camera. He opened the window and, hanging with his body half out of the plane which he steered in wide circles with his foot, he aimed the camera at the elephants and pressed the shutter release. He kept circling and exposing film until the camera's spring motor ran down. I was concerned that he would disappear completely and permanently out the window and I would be left with the tedious business of landing the plane between the mopani trees. However, he regained his seat eventually and we returned to the air strip still sound in limb, if somewhat shaken emotionally. I made the prediction that Terrence would never have to concern himself with an old-age pension, a prognostication that unfortunately proved to be all too accurate. The following year he died in the fiery crash of his little Cub over those same game areas, and I have the feeling that he was flying with his foot again.

In later years, two young brothers attended a congregation where I preached in Johannesburg. The elder brother flew a small plane for a medical team that spent weekends giving volunteer treatment to remote villages in the mountains of Lesotho. To me it seemed a hazardous lifestyle and I said so, but the young pilot was insistent that private planes were very safe, a claim that he held onto until he crashed his plane into one of those mountains. When I hear all the encouraging statistics about small plane safety, I can't help wondering if they are so safe, where have so many of my friends gone?

Malaria and Mosquitoes, Leprosy

One of the more serious problems facing missionaries on remote stations is a lack of adequate medical care. A well-equipped hospital often is hundreds of miles away, though sometimes there are basic clinics nearer than that. Dentists are few and far between. When I lived in Tanganyika the nearest dentist was five hundred rough miles away in Dar-es-Salaam, the capital. I developed an abscessed jaw tooth that caused me a great deal of misery. Toothache is such a distracting pain that it is difficult to think of much else. I was driving on the main road in my pickup with my jaw throbbing like a drum beat and drove through a plank barricade that I hadn't even seen because my whole attention had been focused on my tooth. I decided that drastic measures were called for, so I got the pliers and set about doing the extraction myself. It sounds easy, but it is virtually impossible, as the jaws of the pliers continually slip off the smooth crown. Eventually I gave up on that idea and got my hunting knife. By forcing the point between the tooth and its neighbor, I succeeded after great difficulty in levering it until I could get the point under the bottom edge of the tooth. The knife slipped a couple of times and nicked the inside of my jaw, but eventually I got it firmly into place and bore down on the handle of the knife. With a cracking sound the tooth gave way. Relief was instantaneous and virtually complete. The minor pain that followed the extraction was nothing compared to what the pressure of that abscess on the nerve had been. I had some apprehension about blood poisoning, but no ill effects resulted.

Malaria used to be, and to a lesser extent still is, the scourge of all tropical countries with the exception perhaps of some of the

islands. Earlier in the century, at a reception given for an African explorer, a woman asked the famous man what African animal he considered to be the most dangerous. Without hesitation he replied, "The mosquito, Madam." She was offended, but he was dead right. For every fatality caused by a lion or elephant, there are many hundreds of deaths from malaria. Nowadays there are some drugs that are virtually one hundred percent effective in preventing malaria, but when I entered Africa there was only quinine. While it undoubtedly saved thousands of lives, it was only partially prophylactic and therapeutic. It was really only a palliative. Although we took five grains of quinine every morning, we still came down with bouts of the fever, but most of us survived, which would not have been the case if we had not had quinine. Still, there are enough headstones in lonely African cemeteries to attest the fact that many did not make it. The quinine bottle was on the breakfast table alongside the salt and pepper shakers so no one would forget it. It was so intensely bitter it made the hair prickle on the back of your neck and produced a low-key roaring in your ears that you had to become accustomed to.

I had malaria many times, but two attacks, one in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and one in Tanganyika (Tanzania), rank alongside typhoid in my rogues's gallery of bad experiences. My first attack began far out on the Namwala Flats of Northern Rhodesia with a pounding headache that was more severe than I thought possible. My pulse beat like a sledge hammer at the base of my skull. That was followed by a rigorous chill that froze me to the bone, only to be succeeded by a raging fever. During all this I was travelling in a pickup to the railway station at Kalomo, where I was put aboard a train to Livingstone and the government hospital. The next thing I remember is being in a ward of the hos-

pital with a nurse holding a thermometer and saying, "His temperature is 105 degrees." For the next couple of days I slipped into and out of delirium, but on the fifth day I was sufficiently recovered to be dismissed from the hospital. It was to be many weeks before I felt well and strong again.

The nightmares you experience during the spells of malarial delirium cannot be described in human language. Your sense of passage of time becomes so distorted that a few minutes stretch into thousand of years of torment. I well remember the theme of my delirious fantasy during a later malaria attack I experienced in Tanganyika. I was on the site of seventeenth century London after the great fire of 1666. It was my task, alone with a handful of unidentified fellows, to rebuild the city, and it was my particular job to pass along all the bricks to be used in the reconstruction. This responsibility was enormously complicated by my having to lie on my back, catch each brick as it was tossed onto my bare feet and throw it to the next person. In my fever-wracked mind this routine had gone on for thousands of years and could continue for countless thousands more. I was tired beyond exhaustion, but could not stop. These endlessly recurring things are common in fever delirium and are induced by the pounding of the pulse in your brain. You always awake weak but relieved and with your clothing and bedding drenched with perspiration.

One of the most depressing maladies that one is confronted with is leprosy. In most parts of Africa, lepers are not segregated and you not infrequently meet people without noses, fingers or toes. At Sinde Mission, in the Livingstone district of Northern Rhodesia, we had members of the congregation who were lepers. At first it gave me an eerie sensation to shake fingerless hands and I was somewhat squeamish about drinking out of the com-

munion cup after a leper had had it first. (We were "one cuppers" for the practical reason that we didn't have a communion service.) On a trip into the Zambezi escarpment country we were courteously received by the people of a remote village, and to consolidate our newly-formed friendship they had the equivalent of an Indian peace pipe ceremony. All of the men, including us, sat in a large circle and the chief started a large clay pot of warm milk around the circle. Each man took a large swallow. My discomfort with the ritual was heightened when I became aware that a man four or five places to my left, and to whom the pot would go before it reached me, had an advanced case of leprosy. It was not just a matter of a missing digit or so. He had the form of the disease that the medical books call macular leprosy. It distorts the face with hideous lesions that produces the so-called "lion face" peculiar to that form of the affliction. One thing was sure. I had to drink from that pot, so I tried to observe the particular spot on the pot's rim where the leper placed his mouth and keep track of it through three or four other drinkers. That didn't work out so I just had to close my eyes, back my ears and drink. My fears were largely imaginary, as leprosy is very difficult to contract without prolonged contact.

There was a family of Afrikaner crocodile hunters named Bekker who had a permanent camp in the Ruaha Swamp, which occupies a part of Tanzania's Usangu Plains. Whenever we camped anywhere in the area, the father and a few of the overgrown sons would visit us in the hope of being offered a cup of tea and a biscuit. They always reminded me of the stereotype Kentucky mountaineers — broad brimmed floppy hats, faded and rumpled pants and shirts, brogan shoes and unshaven faces. Each one had a rifle slung over his shoulder. Sometimes the young

teenage daughter would come with a request from her mother to borrow a tin of condensed milk or a cup of sugar. Of course, both sides understood that borrow in the context meant donate, but we generally gave it to her. We never saw the mother except occasionally when we passed their tent we could see a female figure moving about inside the open flap. We eventually found out why: she was a leper. Tragically, the teenage daughter later contracted the disease. The mother died of leprosy. I never heard what happened to the daughter.

In the bushes behind the Bekker's camp were innumerable skeletons of buffalo, most of which had to have been shot illegally. I was discussing this with the district game ranger one time. He simply threw up his hands and said, "We gave up on the Bekkers years ago. What can we do? Throw them in jail? They love it. They get three square meals and a comfortable bed, which is much better than they get at home. And after all, they depend upon what they shoot to live, so who can blame them?"

Old man Bekker had a hard time dealing with the realities of commerce, particularly as they affected crocodile skins. "The skin buyers are so stupid!" he moaned. "Back when skins were plentiful they wouldn't give us anything for them, but now that crocs are scarce, they up the price. Why couldn't they have given us a good price while we could still get plenty of skins?"

Another croc camp we often passed belonged to the Farums. Bert Farum had been one of the early twentieth century gold miners in what was called the Lupa Field in the Chunya Mountains. The gold was in the bed of an ancient river which had flowed into the Indian Ocean before the earth sank to form the Rift Valley that stretches from Lebanon to Mozambique. After the gold

played out, Bert and his lively red-haired wife became crocodile hunters. They hunted separately, each in a small boat that could ply the narrow channels of the swamp, and they were pretty successful. In one season they brought out fourteen hundred skins worth some $60,000.

The rainy and dry seasons are different worlds on the Usangu Plains. For six months from early December the plains are like a green carpet with many large shallow lakes. The acacia trees become banks of yellow flowers and water lilies are a profusion of color on all the surface water. To the eye it looks like the Garden of Eden, but appearances are deceptive. Everything sits on a bottomless sea of tar-like mud. Even four-wheel-drive vehicles quickly bog down.

Crocodile picture

Most of the crocodile hunters live on the swamp only during the dry season, which stretches from June to December. During that time a tough hard crust forms on the surface of the ground so that even ordinary cars can travel over it in safety. The grass becomes dry so that the landscape is a dusty brown prairie from horizon to horizon with only here and there a copse of acacia thorn trees to break the monotony.

One year the Farums delayed their departure from the swamp too long and an unexpected downpour deluged the plains until they became one vast morass impossible to cross. So the Farums were stuck at their camp for the six month's rainy season, but they were a hardy pair and were none the worse for wear when we saw them again at the beginning of the next dry season. Since there was an abundance of game and game birds of all sorts, and a surfeit of fish, they hadn't gone hungry. If they had not had mosquito nets to protect them against the swarms of mosquitoes they would have fared much worse. I have camped on the bank of the Ruaha River at the beginning of the dry season when the mosquitoes were so thick on the nets at night that they almost blocked out the moon.

Mosquito nets are supposed to serve another purpose during the African night, that of discouraging would-be predators such as lions and leopards. One night Boyd Reese, Guy Caskey and I were thankful for any protection mosquito nets might afford when we were camped a few yards from the Ruaha River in a stand of tall trees. After dusk it became apparent that the trees were the sleeping place of a troop of baboons. After we had set up our cots and mosquito nets, the band of apes arrived and retired for the night in the upper branches of the trees. Even though we were not particularly thrilled to have them as such

close neighbors, we decided that was better than trying to set up camp somewhere else in the darkness. Eventually we and they settled down and all went peacefully to sleep. Then it started. There was the nearby cough of a leopard, answered by the angry barks of the baboons. I really don't know why a leopard's rasping hunting cry is called a cough. It really sounds like a big crosscut saw at work on a piece of tough timber. Whatever the precise terminology, that chap was kicking up a real ruckus, intended no doubt to unnerve the baboons so they would bolt from the trees.

Now we did not think for one moment that we were the primary objects of the leopard's quest for food. We knew he was after the baboons. The problem was that he was circling our cots in ever tighter circles in order to get at the baboons, and we were losing confidence in the mosquito nets' effectiveness in holding him at bay. Our nerve gave before the baboons' did. The suggestion was made and passed with no dissenting vote, that we evict the baboons who, after all, had brought this disturbance upon us. A couple of rifles were raised and with the perched baboons silhouetted against the moon, shots rang out and a couple of heavy bodies came crashing to the ground. The rest of the baboons quickly scaled down the trees and fled into the night.

Not wishing to leave the carcasses of the dead baboons so close to our cots, we pulled them to the edge of the grove nearest the river and left them for the night. The following morning they were gone, leaving only drag marks where crocodiles had pulled them into the river. It made one wonder how safe a camp on the bank of an African river really is.

Men and Animals

In spite of the fact that man is essentially a predator in whom the killing instinct runs so strong that he has destroyed most of the wildlife on Planet Earth, he also is a sentimental conservationist who will go to almost any length to save a threatened animal, especially a baby animal. Humans make pets of wild animals which often cannot survive in captivity, or else belong to species who revert to their natural savagery when they mature.

Keith Cormack, my crocodile-hunting friend in Tanganyika, came across a small buffalo calf wandering alone on the Unsangu Plain. Probably a poacher had killed its mother, and without her protection it certainly would have fallen victim to lions, hyenas, or a crocodile. The little heifer calf was not afraid of humans, so Keith loaded her into his Jeep and carried her back to his home in Chimala. Buffy, as he named her, adapted very well to cow's milk and soon frolicked with the Zebu calves of the Cormack's herd. She, of course, quickly outgrew her companions in both size and aggressiveness. And Keith made some attempts to find a suitable home for her before she reached the bovine equivalent of a Sherman tank. A visiting American hunter wanted to send her to the Houston Zoo, but negotiations with its directors broke down over who would bear the transportation costs, and Buffy continued to grow. There is always considerable jostling and butting in a cattle herd, but this activity took on a new dimension when Buffy became involved. When a cow butted Buffy, Buffy butted back with fatal results for the cow. Eventually, Buffy had to be returned to the wilds where it is hoped she found a herd of her own kind before a pride of lions found her.

Elephants are not necessarily friendly to humans, but where they have not been hunted or harassed by man, they generally are

indifferent to them. I wanted to take some close-up photographs of elephants, so I went to an old elephant hunter who lived on the the bank of the Ruaha River. His name was Scott, which had naturally become Scotty. Scotty was actually an ex-elephant hunter who in his declining years had become an elephant conservationist. When I told him my desire, he remarked that there were a couple of large bulls feeding just across the river. We crossed to the opposite bank by boat and the huge gray shapes loomed above the scrub trees a hundred or so yards away.

"Elephants are only dangerous when they feel threatened," he told me. "If we sneak up on them and you click the shutter, they'll charge." He picked up a stick and motioned me to follow. "Now, keep talking as we approach them," he instructed. "It is important that they know we are here and are making no attempt to stalk them." Just to make sure we didn't surprise them, every few paces Scotty would break a piece off the stick with a loud crack. Each time it happened, the elephants would give a small

Kudu picture

flap of their ears and go on feeding. It was obvious that the bulls and Scotty were communicating. The ear flap seemed to say, "Yes, Scotty, we hear you and know you are there, so there's no problem."

I was more than a little apprehensive, fearing that there would be a sudden trumpet of rage followed by a nerve-shattering charge. My fears were groundless. We walked up to within a few feet of the bulls until they filled the viewfinder of my camera. I took as many pictures as I wished and we left the bulls completely undisturbed. How different that might have been if Scotty hadn't been there and I had tried to tip-toe up on those elephants.

Africa has almost innumerable species of antelope, ranging from the giant eland, weighing up to eighteen hundred pounds, to the tiny Damara dik-dik, no bigger than a rabbit. Some of them, such as the wildebeest and hartebeest are ungainly and ugly. Some, such as the springbok and the impala are a rhapsody of grace. Two of the larger antelope, the kudu and the sable, are spectacularly stately and beautiful. Both carry mighty racks of horn, those of the kudu sweeping upward in great spirals, the sables' arching over his back like curved scimitars. But, whereas the kudu is gentle and inoffensive, the sable is aggressive and, if wounded, exceptionally dangerous. I never had the unpleasant experience which many hunters have had of being gored by a sable, but I've had the great horns whistle past my belly-button close enough to give me chills. The sable's charge is completely different from the charge of, for example, a buffalo. He sprints up almost to his target, then drops to his front knees and sweeps the fearful horns laterally, diving the sharp tines into the stomach areas from the side. He handles his horns with the adroitness of

a fencer. I have seen them intercept and deflect thrown spears, and even stones, with the greatest precision.

During my years in Northern Rhodesia, I had occasion to shoot a number of both kudus and sable. I well recall one magnificent sable bull which I did not shoot. I was walking across the plains country near the Ngwezi River with a Tonga guide from the village of Siamundele and we were looking for an animal for meat. There was nothing on the pasture land grazed bare by cattle herds but a few acacia thorn trees, but we kept hoping that an impala might step out of one of the clumps of bushes. We trudged on until we came to a small dry creek bed with a few thorn trees scattered along its banks. Often game animals rest in one of these sandy washes where they are not so easily visible as they are on the open plain. But today, the creek bed seemed to be empty of any form of life. We started to cross it just where a large acacia tree cast a deep shadow on the glaring sand. Then, unexpected and incredible, a jet-black sable bull emerged from the shadow and with one great bound was over the bank and away. I was frozen with shock and did not so much as lift the muzzle of my rifle, a lapse which my guide found beyond explanation. He turned on his heel and headed back for the village. "Where are you going?" I demanded, "I thought we were going hunting." "Not today," he replied firmly. "Today is not a day when we will have any luck hunting." And that was that. There was no use my continuing alone. Even supposing that I didn't get lost, if I had succeeded in bagging an antelope I would have been unable either to carry it or guide a party of carriers back to the kill. So there was nothing for us to do but to open another can of bully beef (corned beef) for supper.

A One?Legged Man

African tribes often ascribe prophetic powers to their chiefs and medicine men who lived long ago. It is not unusual for people of all cultures to gradually build up an aura of myth around their tribal heroes. At the same time, great chiefs often were men of strong character and intellectual superiority. Zulus regard their most outstanding leader, Chaka, as having possessed clairvoyance. According to their legend, when Chaka was dying of stab wounds, he shouted at his assassins, "Dogs, whom I fed at my kraal! You think you have inherited an empire, but I can see the Europeans coming over the sea like swallows, and where we now stand will shine as the stars of the heavens." At that moment they were looking down from one of the hills overlooking the site of what would become the great city of Durban.

But Chaka had visited Cape Town and had seen something of the power and magnificence of the British Empire. Besides, Chaka himself had given permission for Henry Francis Flynn's small settlement on the Durban coast and his shrewd mind would have had no problem extrapolating that outpost into another Cape Town.

It is not so easy to explain a prophecy by the Swazis' first king, Mswati the First. Mswati bound his people never to seek a war with the white men, a confrontation which he had the prescience to realize that they would certainly lose. But he prophesied a peculiar thing: that one day a one-legged man would come to the Swazi nation and lead the people to greatness. One of Mswati's wisest successors was King Sobhuza II, who reigned from 1921 to 1982. Sobhuza interpreted Mswati's one-legged man to mean Jesus Christ, who left a single line of tracks for His followers to walk in. Sobhuza never became a Christian, but he

promised to do so if the missionaries of the many communions operating in his country would agree on the one way because, "If you men with your degrees in theology from Europe and America cannot agree on what the Bible teaches, how can you expect a simple old heathen like me to know?" Every year at Easter, he summoned all the missionaries to a meeting which he chaired. His first question was, "Have you found the one-legged man?" The response was always the same. Each group defended its own doctrinal bias as the one true way. Sobhuza would say, "Then I can't become a Christian. If I join the Catholics, the Lutherans will be offended, and if I join the Nazarenes the Anglicans will be offended, and so on. Go away and come back next year and tell me you have agreed on the one way of Jesus."

Racial Bias in Northern Rhodesia Hunting

A highly intelligent and well-educated black teacher was invited to an official reception in Northern Rhodesia. He later laughed wryly at an incident that occurred there. He was in a conversation with a small group of people when they were joined by a dowager of the uppercrust of British society. After listening with some interest to the black educator, she exclaimed, "You speak very good English, but I find your color annoying."

Not all racial incidents can be passed off as graciously as that black teacher handled it, particularly when those who suffer discrimination are very young and struggling to establish a self-image. An incident that has depressing memories for me occurred while I was a teacher at Namwianga Mission near Kalomo, Northern Rhodesia. Boyd Reese, a fellow-missionary, and I had gone on a two-day hunting trip to the nearby Namwala flats. With us was a number of Africans and a colored (mulatto) boy named Dennis Zaloumas, then about eighteen years of age.

Dennis' father was a Greek tobacco planter who had married a black woman, and to that union were born several children of which Dennis was the eldest. When the father visited his white neighbors he left his wife and children at home or else they stayed in the family car. They would not have been welcomed into the homes of the white planters. The black mother could at least have some social relationship with her own people, but the children were in a cultural no-man's land. They were accepted by neither major racial group and there were no other coloreds in the area with whom he and his sisters could associate.

We arrived at our proposed campsite, a grove of trees around

a large thermal spring. When our camping gear was unloaded and arranged, two small fires were built, a small one for the African boys so they could boil their thick mush without too much heat in their faces, and a much larger one for Boyd and me which would be allowed to burn down to beds of coals for frying meat and baking scones in a Dutch oven. The Africans gathered around their fire and we sat down at ours. Dennis didn't sit by a fire. He sat alone about midway between the two groups. The human tragedy being enacted before our eyes was sad beyond any words to express it. He couldn't have been more alone in outer space. My gut was wrenched with sorrow, outrage, and guilt. Boyd beckoned to the lad and said, "Dennis, please join us." The boy came, hesitantly and with a tentative, apologetic smile, and sat down on the opposite side of the fire from us. I felt like blurting out a confession of the wrongs perpetrated by my race, to somehow seek an atonement for the social genocide we practiced against those who were different. But, of course, that would simply have torn the scab off the wound. Better just to stare into the fire and make small talk about whether the tsetse flies were more numerous than usual and how the mopani trees were putting out new leaves.

During those days the Namwala flats were covered with game of many species. Some of the tobacco farmers regularly hunted game there to provide meat for their plantation workers, mostly in the form of *biltong*, or jerky. The natives of the area, small villages of cattle herders, were glad to cut the meat into strips in return for the scraps that were left on the bones. The youngest son of one local farmer was on their annual hunt for meat and was out walking alone in a thin patch of thorn trees one day when the thunder of many hooves broke the afternoon still-

ness, and a herd of stampeding buffalo headed in his direction. He looked around for a suitable tree to climb, but all of them had vicious thorns. When faced with the choice of thorns or buffalo hooves, he ran to the nearest tree and painfully climbed up just beyond the reach of the sea of horns. After the herd had passed in a cloud of dust, he even more painfully picked his way down from the tree and was surveying the damage done to his person when a rather aged buffalo cow hove into view. Perhaps she was hard of hearing and had not learned that a stampede was in the offing until the rest of the herd was well under way. Whatever the reason, she was a good quarter mile behind everybody else and in a testy frame of mind. She caught sight of the young man pulling thorns out of his arms and legs and immediately charged. With a resigned groan he clambered up his tree again and this time he sat in it until he was sure all the stragglers had been accounted for.

Buffalo are formidable adversaries. They are of ponderous size (a ton or more) and their massive hooked horns sometimes measure fifty inches from tip to tip. With all that bulk, one would expect a buffalo to be clumsy and slow. The reality is, he is as nibble as a goat and can wheel instantly on his front feet, so there is no hope of playing the matador and avoiding the sweep of his horns. While I was working at Sinde Mission near Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, a plucky hunter was charged by an enraged bull. Perhaps he had read about the clever feat performed by ancient Minoan youths on the wild bulls of Crete. They would meet the bulls' charge, grasp their horns and vault onto their backs. Anyhow, that's exactly what this hunter did. His story really should have a happier ending. Sad to relate, the buffalo threw him off and gored and trampled him to ribbons and then

urinated on his remains.

A witch doctor who was my hunting companion on the Barotse plains actually hunted buffalo with a muzzle loader. He admitted it was a dicey business. First of all, he had to make his powder. He cooked a mixture of salt peter, charcoal and sulfur in an old disk plow over an open fire and dried it. The results were not predictable. Sometimes the powder was so potent the kick of his blunderbuss knocked him flat on his back. At other times there was only a mild poof! and the slugs hardly cleared the muzzle. He made his bullets by sawing off short lengths of five-eighths inch bolts. Usually two bullets went into a charge, and when fired at a large animal from fifty yards the two pieces of bolt would strike within about six inches of each other. The discharge produced such a cloud of smoke that immediately upon firing he had to drop to his knees to look under the smoke cloud to determine what had happened to the animal. When the quarry was a buffalo, it rarely dropped in its tracks, but would make off into the bushes or long grass. He had imposed a rule upon himself not to follow the animal more than a hundred yards. If he hadn't found it dead by that time, he sat down and waited for the vultures to start circling. If the vultures didn't come, he assumed the bull was not fatally wounded and returned home.

Another friend, Abdullah, apparently was not so self-disciplined as the witch doctor. Abdullah lived in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika during my tenure there and made his living hunting with an ancient muzzle loader. The stock was smashed in an altercation with some animal and he pleaded with me to make him another. Since I had some seasoned African walnut, I carved one for him and inlaid it with ebony and ivory and he was very pleased. Abdullah, like his rifle, had lived a long and

exciting life, but both were destined not to increase that span by much. He took his refurbished weapon out on the Usangu Plain and wounded a buffalo which had a vindictive streak. When they eventually found Abdullah it was difficult to determine what parts were human and what belonged to the blunderbuss.

Fresh buffalo hide makes excellent moccasins. I had heard this from the Afrikaners whose pioneer ancestors made their *veld skoene* (bush shoes) by placing their foot on a freshly killed buffalo and cutting out a wide circle around it. They then pulled up the overlapping skin around their ankle and laced it with rawhide string. On a trek with my witch doctor friend to the Barotse Plains I developed a real need for a change in footwear. I had some new heavy shoes that didn't fit too well and rubbed my left heel badly. Since we had to travel some twenty-five miles from the last village to our hunting site, my heel was a lacerated mess by the time we pitched camp. Fortunately we were able to shoot a buffalo in the waning afternoon, so I made myself some moccasins. I have never experienced such relief. The hair side made a soft cushion for my feet and the hide quickly dried into a perfect fit. I walked all over those plains and my heel gave no further trouble.

It so happened that a famous elephant bull was foraging in the area. They called him Siachitema and he was noted for his nasty temper. I don't know how many people he had killed, but I remember that one of them was an American named Walker who had hoped to collect the huge tusks. Siachitema collected him first. Walker's brother came from the States to avenge his death, but Siachitema had pulled one of his periodic disappearing acts and was nowhere to be found, so the man had gone back empty-handed. Now the bull was back again and the witch doc-

tor was itching to flatten him. "If only I had a decent weapon," he said, as he looked at my rifle, "or somebody with a good rifle who would go with me." He eyed me hopefully. "Don't look at me!" I exclaimed. "I've got nothing against Siachitema and I don't intend to give him occasion to have anything against me."

For several reasons I've never had any interest in shooting an elephant. Apart from general cowardice, which tops the list of reasons, it has always been difficult for me to justify destroying a five or six ton animal just to get two teeth. Nowadays, of course, they also are shot for their hides to make boots and brief cases, but their hides were not a trade item when I lived among them. There was one occasion, however, when I thought I might have to shoot a fractious bull.

My nephew, Bob Weaver, and I had gone with a native guide in my Land Rover to shoot an eland antelope on Tanganyika's Usangu Plain. We located a herd of several hundred grazing with some zebra and topi a mile or so away. Between us and the animals was a narrow but deep watercourse so we had to drive along the bank until we found the shallow crossing that the guide said was some distance away. When we came in sight of the crossing a herd of elephants was bathing there. We waited a while, but their ablutions apparently were going to take some time. I edged the Rover forward, bumping slowly over the dried elephant tracks. The elephants raised their trunks and began trumpeting shrilly. Then the big bull started to charge, followed by the whole herd, all with upraised trunks and widespread ears. At that point the guide said, "I'm getting out of here. That bull is a bad one." So he jumped out of the car and ran off across the plain. Bob was holding my .475, so I told him to fire a shot into the air. The loud report stopped the elephants. They milled around slowly and

indecisively and then moved back toward the crossing. There were to be no eland steaks on our table that night.

But back to the hunter-cum-witch doctor in Zambia. He was as gutsy a person as anyone with whom I had had occasion to hunt. One day I had shot a warthog and we were discussing whether or not warthogs could be considered dangerous. "When they are wounded, they are dangerous," he stated flatly, "and I carry the proof!" He pulled the leg of his shorts up exposing his thigh. It was a knotted mass of scar tissue where an enraged boar had ripped the muscles with his great curved tusks.

The inyanga, as the Tonga call a witch doctor, took out insurance with the spirit world to guarantee our success in finding game. He made a stick rack across which he arranged his spears and then placed a bowl of food for the spirits under the blades of the spears, a sort of African counterpart of putting out cookies for Santa Claus. I'm sure the disappearance of the food during the night can be explained on that same basis. The porters, gathered around the campfire in the early morning, sought the expertise of a small bird they believed could foretell the future. The modus operandi is to ask the bird what game is going to be killed that day and then recite a list of possible animals while the bird is singing. When you say the correct animal, he will stop. Whether it ever works I do not know, but the African boys had fun doing it.

We were successful in getting a considerable quantity of meat, which was cut in strips and dried on strings tied between mopani trees. Someone had to watch the drying meat all the time, as the bateleur eagles would swoop down and snatch it away at the slightest opportunity. We could not wait for the bil-

tong to dry completely so it still was heavy when the porters made up their loads for the return trek. One wiry fellow undertook to carry a load that I could lift only with difficulty. He hoisted the pole to his shoulder and carried it in a slow jog trot the whole twenty-six miles. An interesting episode occurred on the return journey.

We were stopped for a brief rest when one of the porters expressed curiosity as to whether another hunting party which had gone out from the village had enjoyed any success. "Why don't we find out?" suggested the inyanga. Taking his hand axe (actually a kind of tomahawk) by the heft, he threw it to the ground some yards away where the blade stuck firmly and the handle began to vibrate with a humming sound. The witch doctor placed his ear near the singing handle and listened intently. Presently, he arose and stated matter-of-factly, "Yes, they have had some success. They have killed two hartebeest, a wildebeest and a zebra." The porters showed no amazement. Apparently I was the only member of the party who found anything weird about that bush telephone.

Another memory of that long walk home was of a misdirected impulse on my part to be helpful. One of the porters was just a kid of about eleven years. Although his load was not as heavy as the others it was by any reasonable standard a pretty heavy load. The youngster's name was Rice, and when he gave a toothy grin, it really was toothy. One incisor had not displaced its predecessor in his mouth, so he had two teeth in one spot, one on top of the other. He was grinning that day, but rivulets of sweat were emerging from his hairline and trickling down his face. "Here, let me help you for a while," I offered, reaching for his carrying pole. His grin became wider, but he handed it over. Giggles went

up and down the line of porters. Five seconds later I found out why. The two bundles, one at each end of the shoulder pole, were a lot heavier than they looked, putting a lot of pressure on one area of my neck muscle. But the main problem was that Rice and I didn't walk the same way. He walked in a steady glide, his hips moving easily from side to side as though they were mounted on ball bearings. His shoulders had no more transverse motion than a catamaran on a millpond. I, on the other hand, swung my shoulders from side to side, causing the loads to flail wildly and grinding the pole into my screaming neck nerves. I didn't last a mile. When Rice saw that I was not long for this old world under the existing circumstances, he rescued me from my folly and relieved me of my burden. Another titter went up and down the line of porters, and another do-gooder bit the dust.

Pythons, Buffalo, Elephants and Lions

African pythons do not seem to be the menace that their Asian cousins are. I have heard of children being swallowed by them, but I have never personally known of such a case. We had a goat swallowed by one at our Chosi Farm in Tanganyika, but they were more likely to swallow chickens. Iguanas also prey on chickens. We surprised a large iguana (six feet long or so) trying to force his way into our chicken pen at Chosi. I had a fairly close encounter with a python on the Usangu Plain one day. Several of us from the Bible School at Ailsa were travelling across the plain to a remote village and had stopped for lunch. While we were munching sandwiches, someone noticed that a large python was rapidly approaching us through the long grass. Now I do not mean to imply that he was attacking. I'm sure that he was completely unaware of our presence. I took a scope-sighted .22 rifle from my Land Rover and tried a few shots at his head, all misses. A travelling python moves his head from side to side so rapidly that it is virtually impossible to hit him. I dropped the rifle and picked up a Hudson Bay hand axe and went to meet him. As soon as I was within a few feet of him, he lunged at me with his wide open mouth showing an impressive array of curved teeth. I twisted my body and struck at his neck with the axe as his head flashed past me. I heard Andondile, my little houseboy, scream as I missed. The snake pulled back and struck again and we repeated this routine several times before a lucky strike of the axe connected and severed his neck bone. Each time the python struck, the occasion was marked by a horrified yell from Andondile.

I was actually in very little danger from the python, although

he could have given me a nasty bite. They are, of course, non-poisonous constrictors who grab an animal in their jaws and then envelope him in their coils. Had that happened, there were more than enough people in our party to have unwound him. It turned out that Andondile did not know that the snake was non-poisonous and he supposed that if it bit me I was a goner. If that snake had been a mamba, there is no way I would have confronted it. I would have sought refuge in the car and rolled up the windows. To paraphrase Snuffy Smith, I was "behind the door when bravery was passed out."

My experience with elephants was very limited. I often saw them crossing the plain or feeding on the islands of the Ruaha Swamp, but I left them alone and they ignored me. One old cow with a young calf held us up for a few days on a road building project one time. We were attempting to clear a short-cut through the open forest at the edge of the Usangu Plain so we could save a few miles' distance on our frequent trips to Lulanga, a giant village eighty miles out on the plain. The cow had chosen that particular area of forest to spend the first few days of her calf's life before rejoining the herd, and she was accepting no visitors. When our axe crew showed up she quickly put them to flight. It was either shoot her, which was unthinkable, or suspend the project until she was ready to leave. We chose the latter.

Our Chosi farm manager, Brian Patterson, a young man from England, was very keen on elephant hunting. Mostly he shot animals that were marauding the natives' grain fields. Since he did not have a heavy enough caliber rifle for elephants, he often borrowed mine. It was a beautiful English double, handcrafter by Albert Parker of Birmingham and was of .475 caliber, firing a bullet of five hundred grains with a striking force of five thou-

sand pounds. With it he bagged several fine tuskers whose ivory sold for a considerable amount of money. His most memorable kill was not a bull, but an ancient cow, the leader of the herd. He had located a large bull in a small herd feeding in a tall cane on the Kimani River bank. Just as he fired, the old matriarch moved in front of the bull and was hit in a vital spot and dropped instantly. The rest of the herd quickly dispersed, trumpeting wildly, but when they discovered upon regrouping that the cow was not among them, they returned and formed an agitated circle around her fallen body. When they were sure she was dead, they performed an uncanny ritual that astounded Brian. Each elephant in turn picked up a trunk full of soil and threw it on the cow's body and then filed silently away.

While we were living in South Africa I read a still more remarkable account of elephant behavior written by a game ranger of the Knysna forest, which lies between the Outeniqua Mountains and the Indian Ocean. A small herd of elephants, the remnant of the great herds that once inhabited the forest, was led by a giant bull and his mother, a very old cow. The bull was thought to measure almost fourteen feet at the shoulder judging from the mud smears he left on tree trunks after scratching himself. The old cow became terminally ill and finally the day came when she lay down and could not get up again. Elephants, as they normally do, stood on both sides of her and attempted to lift her onto her feet, but after several tries it became apparent that she would never move from the spot. Then before the astonished eyes of the concealed ranger, the great bull knelt at his mother's head, and placing the point of one tusk in the depression above her temple bone, quickly drove it through her brain and ended her suffering. However humans may feel about the ethics of

euthanasia, elephants obviously have no qualms.

I never shot any dangerous game except buffalo and hippopotamus, and that was for meat. I thought once I would have to kill a lion, but in the end I couldn't do it. Several of us from the Bible School and nearby Chimala Hospital, which had been built on the site of the old Chimala Hotel by some churches of Christ, were encamped on the southern Serengetti Plain. Because the evening and night winds roared across the plain with tempestuous force, we made our camp in a donga, a dry creek bed. My brother Roy had shot a hartebeest earlier in the afternoon and we had hung it in a tree a few yards from the donga. In the late evening we were sitting on our cots talking when some strange chomping noises came from the direction of the hartebeest. I got up and clambered up the bank and there was a large male lion eating our supper. He had pulled down the hartebeest and was chewing greedily, all the time growling and switching his tail and giving hostile sidelong glances at me. I yelled at him and with a snarl he leapt into the donga, passing between the cots of my brother and Guy Caskey, and disappeared into a small clump of bushes on the opposite bank. "Well," I announced, "I am going to have to shoot a lion. He's certain to come back as soon as things get quiet and he may maul somebody." I got a double barrel twelve gauge and loaded it with buckshot. I asked Andrew Connally to drive my pickup while I sat in the passenger seat. We first rushed the clump of low bushes and flushed the lion out. As he bounded away we easily drew up to him with the pickup and I leaned out of the car window to fire the shotgun. He was running flat-out, but he was old and overweight and quickly began to tire. His haunches shook like jelly with excess fat, and he was altogether such a comical spectacle that we burst out laughing

and I could not bring myself to shoot him. We turned around and went back to the camp and had supper. Dusk had scarcely fallen when we heard him cracking the hartebeest bones again. "Well, guys," I said, "we're going to give him this camp. Tomorrow we'll move to a site far enough from here that he won't follow us." It was a bad move.

We made our new camp among some tall acacias on another part of the plain. Game trails were everywhere and the open grassland was dotted with herds of Thompson gazelles, impala and Coke's hartebeest. A short hunt by some of the fellows resulted in seven zebra and antelope trophies, including a roan antelope, one of the less common species. We skinned them out and cut the meat into strips to dry for biltong.

Four o'clock in the evening came and the first bad omen of things to come. A pride of six lions came to within three hundred yards of the camp and began to roar and snarl categorical imperatives at us. They obviously had smelled the meat and were demanding their share. We loaded the skeletons of the game animals into a pickup and towed the zebra carcass on a rope behind us to feed the lions. They knew exactly what we were doing, so ours was clearly not the first camp they had panhandled. They waited expectantly until we threw a carcass out and then seized it and fought over it until the next carcass was thrown overboard. We went back to the camp and hoped we had reached the end of the matter. We hadn't. In less than an hour they had stripped the scraps of meat from the bones and were demanding more. We tried to ignore their roaring. When they saw that we were not giving in to their demands, they began to move in closer, led by a huge lioness. We fired a rifle shot over their heads, but instead of panicking, the big lioness flattened her ears and charged

Elephant picture

toward us a few yards and paused, growling menacingly. We threw tree branches onto the campfire and as they blazed up, the lions retreated, but not far. It was going to be a long night, longer than we realized at the time.

We had our supper and were in our sleeping bags before the last glow of the sun had faded. And then, as might have happened in an unbelievable C-rated movie, another pride of lions of six (some said eight) animals approached from the opposite side and began to roar. By some happenstance of really rotten luck, we had pitched our camp on the territorial boundary of two lion

prides, both of which were claiming our camp as personal property. Their roars now seemed to be directed more toward each other than toward us. After one pride had roared insults, their rivals would hurl them back. All we could do was pile on more wood and try to snatch a little sleep between roaring matches. My little kitchen boy, Andondile, put his bedroll as near to mine as he could get and we settled down with our rifles beside us. Just as I was dozing off, I heard Guy Caskey (who I think never closed his eyes) yell, "Fellows, here they come!" We all grabbed our rifles. They really did sound closer, but it's hard to judge how close a lion's roar is, and at least they never entered into the camp

Buffalo

itself. A column of soldier ants on night maneuvers came through our camp sometime during the wee hours and we had to tuck in our mosquito nets to keep them out of our beds. Altogether it was a rather unsatisfactory night.

During the mid 1940s when I was living near Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), a local hunter's encounter with a lion had resulted in the hunter's death. The lion had charged the man and knocked him full length on his back, pounced on him and then was opening its mouth to bite him in the neck or face. Now it is a common folk tale in Africa that if a lion stands over you with his mouth open, you should grab his tongue. This immobilizes not only his jaws, but also the huge claws on his forepaws, since his forelegs are anchored by the grip on his tongue. Maybe that ploy worked sometime somewhere. The rationale proved to be sound in this case, but it did not take into account the fact that lions also have claws on their hind feet. This lion ripped the poor man's legs and thighs to ribbons with the claws of his free hind feet. The hunter's companion eventually managed to retrieve the dropped rifle and shoot the lion, but it was too late to save the man. He died from loss of blood.

One of our African ministers was a mild-mannered obsequious little man, but he cherished a dream that was completely out of character with his personality. To realize that dream he set out to achieve an immediate goal: to own a shotgun. In those days of colonialism it was not easy for an African native to buy a gun, for obvious reasons. An armed population is not easy for a handful of colonial administrators to control. Consequently, gun permits were often sought, but seldom granted. Nevertheless, Peter Mukuni was determined to have one and so he came to me and asked that I write a letter to the District Commissioner rec-

ommending that he be allowed to buy a shotgun. I could not imagine this gentleman with the soft voice and innocent eyes peering myopically through thick lenses as a gun-toter. "Pete," I asked him, "why do you want to own a shotgun?" "I want to kill a lion!" was his prompt response. I thought about his surprising answer for a few moments and then asked him, "But have you considered that the lion might kill you first?" He had considered it and had his answer ready. "It doesn't really matter," he replied softly, "because either way I'll be somebody. My name will mean something. People will know about the man who either killed a lion or was himself killed while trying to kill a lion." And he added wistfully, "I'll be famous."

I could empathize with him. I grew up as the runt of the litter

Hippo picture

in a family of twelve children. I always dreaded recess in grammar school because I knew who would be the last, unwelcome choice for the softball side. Later on, when people tried to remember who was present at a given event they puzzled over the fact that although ten were present they could recall only the names of nine. I knew what it was to be the little man who wasn't really there. But anonymity never became such an intolerable burden that I would have welcomed a lion's claws as an alternative. Peter Mukuni was a very lonely man indeed.

A Not?So?Harmless Clown

Hippos in zoos appear to be harmless buffoons, lolling for endless hours in their pools with only their eyes and nostrils showing or else plodding slowly and ponderously around their paddocks. In the wild, the hippo is an unpredictable and dangerous animal who sometimes will charge with no apparent provocation.

On one of my trips to southern Africa, I saw the results of one such attack. I had read some weeks earlier in the U. S. newspapers about an American hunter who had been horribly wounded by a hippo attack during a safari into Zambia's Luangwa Valley. He had been taken to a hospital in Lusaka in critical condition and had spent some weeks there. When I began my return trip to the States, after the passengers had boarded in Johannesburg, I observed through the plane window that a man in a wheel chair was being boarded. When he was helped into his seat from the wheel chair it was obvious that he was severely disabled. It transpired that he was the same man who had suffered the hippo attack. His story was that he had been walking along the bank of the Luangwa River, quite unaware of any animal in his vicinity when a hippo suddenly rushed down the river bank from a screen of reeds and seized him in his jaws. The massive tusks had wounded him horribly.

Africans plying hippo infested waters in their dugout canoes have to be very careful to give the animals a wide berth, as they can, and will, crunch a canoe to splinters in their massive jaws. In spite of their ungainly appearance, they can move swiftly in water and are incredibly fast on land. Where they are able to live undisturbed by men, they frequently come out of the water during daylight hours. Where they feel threatened by human presence,

they stay in the water during the day. In either case, they come out at night and graze along the river banks. Anyone coming between a grazing hippo and the water is in an extremely precarious spot. Once while I was living in the Livingstone area of Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), a smallholder on the outskirts of the town was sent to the intensive care unit of the Livingstone hospital by a hippo in a most bizarre encounter. The mini-farmer had some dairy cows on his plot of ground, a few acres bordering the Zambezi River. One evening in the late dusk he went out to shut his cows up in the barn for the night. There was just enough light to make out the silhouettes of the animals. All went well until the last cow. When the farmer slapped the beast on what he thought was her rump, her hindquarters suddenly split horizontally and the last things he saw before total darkness enveloped him was the gleam of great curved teeth.

Hippos do not, of course, eat meat, so they do not prey upon human beings, or any other animals for that matter. They are, however, equipped with massive canines for digging water plants which equip them to wreak enormous damage upon any animal who encroaches upon their territorial imperative, be it a crocodile or a man. They sometimes even savage livestock who are drinking in their river or lake. I have not personally experienced any aggression from hippos, although one used to graze around my tent at night when I camped on Botswana's Nata River, and I once camped on Tanzania's Lake Rukwa where countless hippos wandered around and chomped the lakeside vegetation throughout the dark hours.

Mission Schools, Cultural Gaffes

As a central secondary school, we attracted students from all over the territory and from many tribes: local Tongas of several clans, Lozis (the "River people" who claimed the Zambezi River from the Victorian Falls to the Angolan border), Chewas from the east, and Bembas from the north. Some of the students were adults in their mid twenties, especially those from the Bemba tribe. Some of these young men had worked for a year or two in the copper mines to earn money to come to school and there they had lived in single dormitories maintained by the mining consortiums. Survival under almost prison conditions had hardened several of them into really tough and truculent fellows who posed a special disciplinary problem for us.

I had a few of them in a standard six math class and they were arrogant and defiant, contemptuously flouting school rules and ordinary norms of social behavior. One day a couple of them set out to completely disrupt the class. They were noisily eating roasting ears (eating in the classrooms was strictly forbidden) and talking and laughing as though completely unaware of their surroundings. I admonished them to come to order. One did, but the other continued to create a disturbance, so I ordered him to leave the classroom. He did so, but stood in the doorway until the period bell rang and then stretched his arms across the doorway so that no one could pass. I told him to step aside at once. He insolently refused so I told him to move or I would move him. He still blocked the doorway.

Now I abhor violence in any form and would rather walk five miles out of my way than to become involved in any kind of

physical altercation. Generally there are better ways to solve problems than by the use of force. There are times, though, when it seems that force is required, and this, in my judgment, was one of those times. I gave that young man a right to the point of his jaw that carried him through the doorway, across the concrete porch, and sprawling into the school yard. When he regained his senses he began to scream, "Ndipe intiba yangu!" ("Give me my knife"). Fortunately, none of his friends obliged him, so I told him, "Get up and pack your things and leave this campus before sundown." I was sorry that we had been unable to change his attitude and behavior and undo the brutal conditioning he no doubt had undergone in the copper mines. Perhaps a wiser person could have reached a better solution.

The young man laid a complaint against me with the Northern Rhodesia Education Department, and in due time Dr. Winterbottom, the provincial education officer, put in an appearance. "I understand you have been bashing up the students," he began. I told him the whole story in detail. When I had finished, he exclaimed, "You did exactly the right thing. If a similar situation arises, let him have it!" In spite of his affirmation, however, I still believe that there must be better alternatives than using violence against another person.

One of the older missionaries, although basically a kind and agreeable man, was a strict disciplinarian who would tolerate no violation of law and order in his school. While he was serving as principal of a boarding school, some student, or students, staged a noisy march of protest which drew up in front of the door of the principal's house. He stepped out to be met by an angry, shouting mob of students. He asked, "Who is your leader?" A senior student stepped forward. The principal knocked him flat and then

asked, "Anybody else want to be the leader?" Nobody did, so he told them, "Return to your dormitories and send three or four student representatives to discuss your grievance with me. But don't ever form a mob and march on my house demanding anything or you'll receive the same treatment." Their complaint was a triviality that was easily mollified: they weren't satisfied with their ration of soap, either not enough or the wrong kind.

The same missionary told me that a similar situation arose over a matter in which he was the one at fault. A student had come asking for a free postage stamp. "Am I your father?" the principal asked. The student was horrified and hurried back to the dormitory where he soon had a following of outraged students. It turned out that the question is never asked in their society unless you are prepared to do battle. The import of it is, "Since your mother is such a slut, just about anybody could be your father!"

Although offenses against cultural taboos are certain to happen when missionaries from western society are attempting to work among the peoples of other traditions, it is incumbent upon the visitor from the west to be as sensitive to local prejudices as he can be. An example of monumental miscommunication can arise when comparisons between animals and people are made.

The principal of one of our schools in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was speaking to the secondary students at chapel one morning and was hoping to address some problem that had grown out of perceived favoritism shown toward either the male or female boarding students by the faculty. "Before you can be successful at pulling a cart, both the oxen have to pull together, etc., etc." That was an unfortunate similitude. The

message the students received was not the value of boys and girls working together. They heard that the principal regarded them as no better than cattle.

One of the missionary children, a boy, had made a fast friendship with a black boy of about the same age. They were inseparable, playing together from sunrise till bedtime and sharing the games and pursuits of childhood. One of those pursuits was climbing trees, a sport in which the African child excelled. When he shinnied with ease up the bole of a large tree, the American boy exclaimed in admiration, "You're just like a monkey!" The black boy stopped climbing and slid down the trunk. Placing himself squarely in front of his American friend, he shook an admonishing finger in front of his face. "Don't ever again compare me to a monkey," he warned him sternly.

Boyd Reese and I had a crew of camp boys who regularly went on evangelistic safaris with us. Included among them were Goliat and Simeon. Now Goliat, when pronounced by a Tonga, comes out sounding very much like "gorilla," a fact that Simeon seized upon to torment Goliat by always calling him "the gorilla." Goliat, given the African aversion to being compared to any of the ape clan, hated it. Simeon persisted in aggravating him until I decided to take a hand. I had a small English dictionary. Turning to the entry "Simian, n. an ape or ape-like creature," I called Goliat and showed him the word and definition. He could hardly believe his good fortune. Laughing delightedly, he grabbed the dictionary and ran to find Simeon. I never heard Simeon call him a gorilla again.

On the other hand, African folk wisdom is filled with animal characters, so it is perfectly legitimate to illustrate points with

stories about animals. You just have to be careful about starting with, "You people remind me of a troop of baboons..." Of course, if the standard of comparison is an elephant or a lion, the response likely is to be much more positive. In fact, they often refer to their hereditary rulers as "The Black Elephant," "The Mighty Lion," etc. An American woman would be deeply offended at being addressed as "Cow Elephant," but that is a title of great honor for an African queen.

Cultural interpretations are not the only impediment to communication, of course. Misunderstandings arising from language use and even pronunciation are common. Once a young man who was a student in one of my classes in Old Testament, came to me after the class was over and expressed indignation over the mistreatment of the Jews by Americans. He had me at a disadvantage, as I hadn't the vaguest clue as to what he was talking about. "I don't think we have mistreated the Jews," I said defensively. He wasn't satisfied. "Aren't you from Amelika?" he asked. (Since Tongas always pronounce Rs as Ls, America becomes Amelika in their language.) "Well, yes," I admitted cautiously. "That's what I mean," he insisted. "The Bible says the Amalekites ruined the crops of the Israelites and did not leave them a living thing." I tried to explain that an Amelikan and an Amalekite are two very different people.

The Shona people, on the other hand, had Rs but no Ls in their language. Once George Hook, who taught for many years at Nhowe Mission, came out of a hygiene class where he had just given a quiz, red-faced with merriment. In answer to the question, "What is a tourniquet used for?" one of the students wrote, "To stop breeding." We are agreed that, while it represented the extreme in contraception, it would undoubtedly be quite effec-

tive. In Shona-English, the liver became a river and one's lungs became his rungs.

No Food for Heathen

During 1984 the church mounted a famine relief program for drought-stricken areas of southern Africa. Botswana and parts of Zululand were particularly hard-hit. We bought large quantities of staples such as corn meal, beans and milk powder from large South African produce firms and trucked them to the desperate areas. One of the food depots was established at the village of Nata in northwest Botswana. We used a pickup truck to haul the supplies to the small villages north from Nata along the bone-dry Nata River.

Somehow the rumor got started in the area that we would feed only Christians and that the pagans would be left to starve. It was a mischievous canard. We never made the slightest distinction between one hungry person and another. But as is often the case, this calumny was widely believed. Our truck entered a little village and stopped in front of a Christian's hut. Small bags of meal, sugar and beans were unloaded and carried to the door. Meanwhile, a pagan family, from the frail old grandfather down to the youngest child, was sitting on the ground in front of the house across the road. Their faces were hostile and angry. They, too, had not eaten a good meal in a long time, but unlike the Christian family, they would have nothing to smile about when the truck was gone. They were going to be left to die, of no more concern to these Christian missionaries than the tok-tokkie beetles that crawled through the dust or the yellow-foot squirrel who flirted his tail in the dead mopani tree.

While these bitter thoughts writhed like serpents in their minds they were watching the driver return to his vehicle to drive away. But the script had been changed! He didn't drive away. He picked up another arm load of food and, before their incredu-

lous eyes, turned up the path to their house. The grandfather leaned forward to peer more closely and then lowered his head and began to sob. The children were pointing and chattering excitedly. It was a day that even the youngest would never forget.

An Incident at Victoria Falls

The Victoria Falls of the Zambezi River are so spectacularly beautiful that the fairest superlatives in our language cannot begin to capture their grandeur. The huge river flows sedately between jungle-clad banks, its broad expanse broken here and there by green islands clad in ivory palms and hardwood trees. Hippos frolic in the cool water. Elephants and other game drink at its edge, and goliath herons stand like sentinels in its shallows. Then, without warning, the mighty flood plummets into a three hundred seventy-nine foot chasm with a deafening roar, sending a column of spray thousands of feet into the air. It is a mile and a half across the lip of the falls, but all that water later channels through a narrow canyon only a few hundred feet wide. The cloud of spray is plainly visible from many miles away. The local Africans, the Barotse, call it *Mosi-watunya*, "the smoke that thunders." The smoke forms droplets which constantly shower down, and this abundant moisture coupled with the brilliant African sun produce a luxuriant tropical rain forest of giant trees and lianae. Monkeys chatter in the lofty foliage and bushbucks graze undisturbed in the shadows.

Nowadays a great many tourists from all the major continents visit the Falls, and on a typical day you might find a hundred or so standing at vantage points along the chasm. But fifty years ago it was possible to spend hours there and be quite alone.

It was to this secluded paradise that a young tobacco farmer, a neighbor of ours, brought his wife for a break from the tedium of farm life. The man returned alone, with haunted eyes and dishevelled hair, and with a soul-wrenching tale that was oft

repeated in whispers with averted eyes, for it was a sad and disturbing story that he told.

"My wife and I were standing at the edge of the gorge facing the main falls," he said, "when I suggested that I take her picture with the wall of water behind her. So she stood at the edge of the chasm while I focused the camera. Just as I was about to press the shutter release, I suddenly realized to my extreme horror that she was no longer in the view finder. There was no scream — just nothing."

The police accepted his story. Whether they believed it, official files do not, of course, reveal. But I well remember an old African talking in the oblique way of his kind, about a murder he may have witnessed, although he never actually said so. "The whites regard us as invisible," he began, at which his hearers nodded their heads in solemn agreement. "They are so used to us being around that we become like the rocks and stumps, things that have no eyes or ears. They forget that they are not alone. We are nowhere, but we are every place." Again the nods of assent. "Consequently, it is possible for a man to commit murder and tell himself that there were no witnesses." At this his audience looked furtively at me and signaled him to stop. The old man coughed and mumbled, "You must pay no attention to me. Like I said, we have neither eyes nor ears, but we talk too much."

Epilogue

As I lay down my pen, my own story of Africa is to all intents and purposes now over. But the story of African missionary work is only just begun. The first lap of the relay is run as this century and millennium draws to a close, but other runners of the twenty-first century are already taking hold of the baton and the pace of the race is quickening. The real story of the church in Africa will be told in the third millennium of the Christian age.

An introduction to strange creatures
and odd customs
encountered during half a century of mission experiences
in Africa.