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No. 1

A SKETCH OF THE LIVES AND SERVICES

OF THE LATE

CAPTAINS H. B. MACKAY, W. H. ROBINSON

AND

W. G. STAIRS

BY

CAPTAIN A. H. VAN STRAUBENZEE, R. E.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
CAPT. H. B. MACKAY, D. S. O., R. F.

Huntly Brodie Mackay was born at Kingston, Ontario, on 14th March 1858, and died at Mombasa, of West African fever, on 16th April 1891 at the early age of 33. He was the elder son of H. B. Mackay, Esq., of Montreal and came from a good old Highland family, being connected on his mother's side with the Gordons and Sutherlands. His paternal grandfather served in the 42nd Royal Highlanders, the famous Black Watch, and went through the Peninsula Campaign. He was educated at the Montreal High School, but left at an early age to join the staff of the "Daily Witness" one of the leading papers of Montreal; during this time, part of his occupation consisted in reading through the "London Times" and by his good memory, he stored away a mass of useful information, which stood him in good stead in after life. The R. M. College was established in June 1876, and at the half yearly entrance examination in February 1878, Mackay passed in first with a good lead. From that time every examination saw him at the top of the list, until he graduated in June 1881, winning the Governor General's gold medal and several prizes, a first class certificate, with honours in 8 subjects. During his College course Mackay worked conscientiously and hard, making the very best of his opportunities, he was a general favorite with both Staff and Cadets, and many an old graduate will gratefully remember the assistance he cheerfully gave them in working out a difficult problem in

mathematics or D. G. He was a good swimmer, fond of boating, and a hard working forward in the foot-ball team.

Some of you may remember how at one of the quarterly examinations in Mathematics out of a maximum of 25 he lost 1 mark, at this grievous loss he expressed surprise and deep regret, so that for a long time there was a standing joke against him. How about that mark ! this illustrates his earnestness of purpose. He was gazetted to the Corps of Royal Engineers on 25th June 1881 and joined the head-quarters of the Corps at Chatham in September of that year, the next 2 years were spent in going through the ordinary courses at Chatham. Surveying, construction, field works, mil, law, tactics, chemistry, telegraphy, drill, &c., the batch of officers to which he was attached were fortunate in having several instructional tours, one for construction in the South of England, for fortification to the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth, a geological tour in the N. of Wales, mounted reconnaissance from Chatham to Canterbury, and a foreign tour to Germany visiting many of the battlefields in the last Franco-German War.

In November 1883 he joined the 29th Co. R. E., at the Curragh Camp Ireland and remained there until May, of the following year when he obtained 4 months leave to Canada, prior to going to India, for which he had put down his name. On his return to England from leave, he volunteered for service in the Bechuanaland Expedition, which was then being organized. Sir Chas. Warren the Commander of the Expedition, who, as Instructor of Surveying at the S. M. E. Chatham, had recognized Mackay's ability and devotion to his profession, gladly accepted his services, and he was appointed to the Topographical Department under Com. Bethell R. N. Here he worked very hard for about a year, being appointed eventually to the party under Major Conder R. E., employed in surveying

and laying down the West boundary of the Transvaal. This work was carried out at a time of considerable excitement, and during its course Lieut Mackay was more than once left in charge of the frontier party. On one of these occasions a dispute with the Transvaal Guards might have led to serious consequences, but for the combination of firmness and patience with which he met the emergency. He was afterwards despatched northward to join Sir Chas. Warren on his visit to the tribes near Matabili Land, and here his knowledge of astronomy and skill as a surveyor were of great geographical value, the situation of places never before properly fixed being determined with great exactitude by the use of very portable instruments in a manner which was to a great extent originated by himself, at the close of this expedition the boundary being peacefully settled between the Transvaal Republic and the new Crown Colony of Bechuanaland, Lieut. Mackay was sent by the War Office in September 1885 to the West Coast of Africa and superintended the erection of batteries at Sierra Leone, where he was employed every year till 1889. During this period he served with the expedition against the Yonnies from November 1887 to February 1888 under Colonel Sir F. de Winton (mentioned in despatches). He afterwards took part in the expedition to the Sulymah district against the Chief Mackiah, where he distinguished himself, being in command of the rocket party, by being the first to climb over the stockade of the town of Fanima and the mud wall beyond. His promptitude and courage were considered to have been mainly instrumental in preventing another of our small wars, which might otherwise have become necessary ; and for his services he received the decoration of the "Distinguished Service Order." Promoted Captain 28 December 1889. Returning to England in 1889 with health somewhat impaired, he was appointed

to the Ordnance Survey at Southampton ; but his eagerness for active work rendered him restless as soon as health returned. He therefore accepted employment under the Imperial British East Africa Company and started in June 1890 for his new field of African labour. At Mombasa, he was to be the company's resident agent, and to have a military command, proceeding to the Uganda district as soon as he had mastered the Swahili language. It was that part of Africa which Alex. Mackay, the devoted missionary, who died of fever 15 months before our Mackay, had made known to us and where he had worked so hard to christianize and civilize the natives. In a letter written shortly before his death Mackay refers to the missionary in these words " Alex. Mackay, the missionary to my mind, is one of the greatest of the Mackays," the two had many traits in common, both were engineers of acknowledged ability, occupying important positions in Africa, and both were possessed of great energy, perseverance, courage and a high sense of duty. On reaching Mombasa, Mackay found the Company were making arrangements for the construction of a railway towards Lake Victoria Nyanza, the responsibility for the survey, and work of construction (up to the date of his death) devolved upon him, a most onerous and dispiriting task, when one realizes that all the work had to be done under a tropical sun with unskilled natives, to whom labour of any kind is uncongenial. It is to be deeply deplored that the previous fatigues, combined with the labours of this new and arduous undertaking, proved too much for his strength, and that he succumbed to fever just when his fitness for high employment had been recognized by the directors at home. Since he was first taken ill, he had been living in the administrator's house and it was thought that he would sooner pick up, if he had some light office occupation that would take him off himself.

Mr. Mackenzie the administrator, therefore informed him of the director's desire and decision (which he then heard for the first time) that he should fill the post of acting administrator. He was much gratified, and at once interested himself in all Mr. Mackenzie's doings and ideas, which the latter freely discussed with him. He started for Witu in the Henry Wright, with the administrator it being thought that the sea trip would do him good, but he found himself unfit to undertake the journey, and had to return to Mombasa by mail steamer.

Mr. Mackenzie on his return from Witu, found him still so far from well that he induced him to place himself in the hands of the doctor. The doctor considering it a critical case, recommended a sea voyage, and Mackay elected to go with the Administrator by the first mail steamer to Aden, but did not live to carry out this plan.

From the 11th April two medical men were constantly in attendance, and though his appetite was good and he took as much nourishment as they thought advisable, he gradually grew worse. On the 16th he seemed in some respects to have made very decided improvement, and it was hoped to get him away by steamer, but a change set in that afternoon, and he passed away about a quarter past nine the same evening.

The funeral took place with every mark of regard and respect, at 5 o'clock on the evening of the 17th at the Church Missionary Society's consecrated ground at Freretown. During his time at Mombasa, he took part in the Witu Expedition, which was under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir E. B. Freemantle, K. C. B., the town was taken and destroyed on 27 October 1890, the loss on the enemy's side being about 100 killed and wounded, the British casualties 12 wounded. Mackay was the first man to get over the wall and into the town, being followed by

Capt. Smith of the 1st Life Guards. On receipt of the news of Captain Mackays' death, the directors of the Imperial B. E. African Co., passed the following resolution.

“That this meeting of the Directors of the Imperial British East African Company expresses its sincere sympathy with the family of the late Captain Huntly Brodie Mackay in his sudden death, and record its high appreciation of the ability and zeal he always displayed, and its regret at the loss of so valued an officer.” Also, in forwarding the telegraphic news of his death to H. R. H., the Commander-in-Chief, they desired “to add an expression of their deep regret at the loss of an officer of so much promise, and to whose zeal and capacity in the performance of his duties this company has been much indebted, during the past year.”

The Directors of the Company have also erected a stone to mark his grave, the stone bears the following words :—

IN MEMORY OF
CAPTAIN HUNTLY BRODIE MACKAY, D. S. O.
ROYAL ENGINEERS, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR,
IMPERIAL BRITISH EAST AFRICA COMPANY.
BORN 14TH MARCH, 1858.
DIED 16TH APRIL, 1891.

At the time of his death Captain Mackay was in charge of the important office of administrator of the company's territories, a position to which the directors had appointed him with the fullest confidence in his abilities.

The writer of an obituary notice in the R. E., journal said of him. “To a handsome person Captain Mackay added a courteous and winning manner, combined with great determination and prompt decision.”

He was a type of the highest order of British Officer, capable both of military and also, by a rare combination of civil administrative work. A cheerful humour distinguished his accounts of his adventures, and never deserted him, even in times of fatigue and anxiety. He made friends of all under whom he served, and of the humblest of those who served under him, and was regarded as one of the most distinguished officers in the army for his age and service.

Having had the privilege of his friendship for 13 years I can heartily endorse these sentiments and feel sure they find an echo in the hearts of all who knew him, he visited Canada in 1884, 1886, 1889 (was present at the closing exercises of the R. M. C.), and so kept in touch with the large number of friends and admirers he had on this side of the Atlantic, who one and all mourn his loss but none more than his old College comrades, the interests of which College he has done so much to advance both in Canada and abroad.

One of the valuable lessons we may learn from his life, has been well expressed by a wise man of old "whatsoever thy hand, findeth to do, do it, with thy might."

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
CAPT. W. H. ROBINSON, R. E.

William Henry Robinson was born at St. John, New Brunswick, on the 18th July 1863, and was killed in action at Tambi on the 14th March 1892, when taking part in a Frontier Police Expedition in the Tambaku district, West Coast of Africa.

He was the eldest son of the late Major W. Robinson, 26th Foot (Cameronians) and 3rd W. I. Regt., and received his early education at the Collegiate School Fredericton, N. B.

At the half yearly entrance examination in February 1879 he passed into the R. M. College at the early age of 15, here he found himself pitted against many good, and older Cadets, but his great abilities soon brought him to the front and he graduated in June 1882 winning the Governor General's gold medal and several prizes.

He never took a very active part in field sports but was an inveterate reader and fond of society.

He was one of the earliest subjects of the "Mock Court Martial" held in the smoking room which were initiated by the renowned MacVicar, and caused us all much innocent fun, in what we are now pleased to style "the good old days," both court martial and smoking room are now things of the past. After spending 2 years at Chatham going through the usual courses, he was in 1885 selected to go through a special course of instruction at Sir Wm. Armstrong's work, Elswich near Newcastle, after this he spent about 2 years at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, where he was practically traffic manager.

In February 1888 he went out to Sierra Leone under the late Capt. H. B. Mackay, D. S. O., R. E., whom he succeeded in Nov. 1889 as C. R. E. and was given the local rank of Captain, retaining this appointment up to the day of his death. Promoted Captain 22 September 1890.

Major Fairtlough, R. A., of whom, many of you have kindly recollections, has written and spoken in the highest terms of praise, of the quality and amount of work done at Sierra Leone by both Mackay and Robinson.

Capt. Robinson was under orders for England but volunteered to accompany the expedition which left Freetown on the 7 March 1892.

The following extract from a letter written by Major A. McDonnell Moore, R. I. Fusiliers, Commanding the expedition speaks for itself :

Kukuna, 16th March 1892

... It is with the deepest regret that I write to tell you of the great loss we have all sustained in the death of poor Robinson. He had been so hard working all the way up that everyone was full of admiration for his soldier like qualities, but our just appreciation of him was heightened, if possible, when we saw his magnificent conduct under fire. He was as cool as on parade, fired his rockets and watched their effect with interest, and when at last he was asked to blow in the gate, agreed at once.

He ran back a good distance for his explosives, and then with an "All right, Major, I'll be back in a minute" was through the first fence and up to the gate. The man carrying the gun cotton did not follow him past the fence, so Robinson returned and himself carried up and fixed the charge.

It was a beautiful thing to see him calmly lying down amidst the rattle of fire arms at the gate and fixing the

detonator, as if he were at practice in the school. He came back safely, and he, Lendy, Cockburn and their men charged twice for the gate, but failed to effect an entrance. Robinson, who had been in each time with his men, was at the end of the second charge shot straight through the heart and lungs, and fell dead. I ran to him at once, but as I lifted him to bear him off, I saw that he was dead, My God ! my heart was sad. Such a good fellow, such a soldier ; and just slain at the moment when we were full of admiration for him, at the moment when he had so distinguished himself and gained, without a doubt, such a recognition as the soldier covets. I would he had lived to wear it ?

“ Receive my deepest expression of sympathy for the loss you and the corps have sustained by the death of such a brilliant officer.

AL. McDONNELL MOORE.

The body was brought to Kamassasa and buried there on the morning of the 15th March. Robinson was gifted with splendid abilities and was a most conscientious and energetic officer. He is a great loss to the army and to his old college to which he did honour, the example of gallantry and courage displayed on the day of his death has thrilled our hearts with pride and serve, only to add to the sorrow we all feel at his untimely end. He visited Canada in 1884 and 1891, but never managed to pay us a visit at Kingston, It was his intention to come out again in 1892 to be present at the wedding of one of his sisters, but alas “ Man proposes, but God disposes ”.

I may add that MacKay and Robinson were both entitled to a medal and clasp for their services on the West Coast of Africa, the issue of this medal was only approved of last autumn and has since been sent to their relatives.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
CAPT. WILLIAM GRANT STAIRS.

William Grant Stairs, was the son of the late John Stairs, Esq., of Halifax, N. S., and was born in that city on the 1st July 1863. He received his early education at Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, and subsequently passed into the R. M. College in Sept. 1878, being the youngest cadet in his class. During his time at College he worked faithfully and well, was a prominent forward in the football team, a great favourite, full of fun, and noted for his sound common sense. He graduated in June 1882, and soon after sailed for New Zealand where he spent the next $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, working as a surveyor, and in the rough bush life there, gained much valuable experience, which stood him in good stead, later on in life, it was this experience, that in the main, made Stanley decide to select him as one of his Staff.

In 1885 a number of extra commissions, in the Imperial Service were offered to the R. M. College, and Stairs accepted one of these, being gazetted to the corps of Royal Engineers on 30 June 1885. He had barely completed his course of studies at Chatham when he started in the spring of 1887 for Africa on the staff of the great explorer H. M. Stanley. His services with the Emin Pacha Relief Expedition are well known, and to recount them would make it almost necessary to write again "In darkest Africa". He was one of Stanley's most efficient and loyal lieutenants and exhibited at all times great courage, and

devotion to duty. It was Stairs who rescued Surgeon Parke and Captain Nelson from starvation, it was he who ascended the snowy Ruwenzori to a height of some 10,000 feet. "One of those rare personalities oftener visible among military men than among civilians, who could obey orders without argument, who could accept a command, and without ado or fuss execute it religiously; courageous, careful, watchful, diligent and faithful." Such is Stanley's testimony to the many good qualities of his right hand man.

On one occasion he was wounded severely in the breast by a poisoned arrow, and his life was more than once despaired of, but his usual pluck, and the devotion of his friend Surgeon Parke, were the means under God, of his pulling through.

A recent writer in the R. E. Journal states "whatever may have been said of the expedition, Stairs name was always above reproach, and the credit he gained undimmed by a breath of calumny."

On his return from Africa he was appointed Adjutant R. E. troops at Aldershot, and a dinner was given specially in his honour by the Corps of Royal Engineers at Chatham.

On the 3rd December 1890, he was entertained at dinner at the Canada Club, London, and was presented by Sir Charles Tupper with a handsome piece of plate subscribed for by the corporation and citizens of Halifax, N. S.

On 25th March 1891, he was transferred to 'The Welsh Regiment (old 69th) with rank of Captain, but never joined his new corps. On 12th May 1891 he left England to command the expedition to the Katanga District sent out by the King of the Belgians, to establish trade relations with the natives. From the following account which appeared in the February member of the R. E. Journal, it will be seen how successfully this difficult duty was carried out :—

CAPTAIN STAIRS' LAST EXPEDITION.

We publish below extracts translated from *Le Mouvement Géographique* giving the official report of the events of the last expedition undertaken by Capt. Stairs, mostly quoted from that officer's reports, and Capt. Winn, R. E., has kindly furnished us with extracts of a letter from Mr. Daniel Crawford, a missionary at Garenganze, to the editor of the *Echoes of Service*, which we publish with it (the spelling of proper names in each has been retained as in the originals).

From LE MOUVEMENT GÉOGRAPHIQUE.

It was on the 4th July that the Belgian Expedition placed under command of Capt. Stairs left Bagamoyo, opposite Zanzibar, for Karema. It consisted of Capt. Stairs, in command; Lieut. Bodson, 2nd in command; the Marquis de Bonchamps, adjutant; Dr. Moloney and his assistant, Robinson; 3 Englishmen, 1 Belgian, and 1 Frenchman conducting a caravan of 336 Zanzibaris and Mombas.

We have no need to detail the march of the Expedition to Tanganika, as our readers have been kept *au courant* with events in previous issues.

Suffice to say that, thanks to the energy and experience of the commander and his companions, and thanks, too, to the benevolent protection of the German East African authorities, this first section was covered with extreme rapidity—on the 7th September the Expedition was at Tabora, on the 9th October it reached Karema, whence it crossed the lake to the Congo territory on the west bank, at Mpala, which place it quitted in good order and perfect health on 31st October.

The further account we quote from Capt. Stairs' report :—

“ From Mount Rumbi, the station of Capt. Joubert, we directed our way towards the river Lualaba, arriving on 12th November at Gwena on that river.

“ I have obtained from the house of Kassongomwana a deed of submission by that chief, and have given him the flag.

“ From Gwena, I sent messengers to Lake Moero, and brought to my camp the powerful chief Mpueto. I succeeded in putting an end to a quarrel which had lasted a long time between this chief and Gwena, and obtained from each of them an act of submission, and gave them flag. Meanwhile, Kafindo came to my camp, and I managed to make arrangements with him, he pledging to do his utmost to keep the route open. On the 14th I despatched messengers with presents and letters in Swahili and English to Msiri.

“ After crossing the Lualaba in my two steel boats and some canoes lent by Gwena, we began, on the 20 November, our march on Bunkeia.

However, the rumour spread everywhere that I would never be permitted to enter the kingdom of Msiri, or even the neighbourhood of his abode. We nevertheless continued our march forward.

“ My messengers returning from Msiri met me near Kifuntwe. They brought me the chief's reply couched in terms of warm friendship.

“ After crossing a fine stream, the Lufira, we made our entry into the capital, and pitched our camp there. We were at the end of our journey. It was then the 14th December. We had covered the distance which separated us from Bagamoyo in 120 stages of an average length of eight English miles each. I am glad to report that during all

this time we did not lose a single load, and that five only out of 200 rifles were missing.

“ The situation at Katanga was bad. For more than nine months there had been constant warfare between the Wasanga (the aborigines of the district) and Msiri's men. A large number of inhabitants were in flight, deserting the country to take refuge with the Wasanga and other tribes, in fear of the consequences of Msiri's anger. Entire villages, formerly flourishing, were abandoned, one and all for the same reason. Famine naturally was the consequence ; everywhere one met entire tribes living solely on roots, and waiting till the few crops still standing should ripen. Unfortunately, little sowing has been done this year, and for seven months more the famine will rage worse than ever.

“ The allies of the Wasanga against Msiri are the Balunda, the Baramba, and other small tribes that the common need of defence against the enemy of all has forced to forget their ancient feuds and unite for the common weal.

“ The outbreak of this interminable war is due to Msiri himself. He claimed a total monopoly of the ivory of the country, and refused absolutely to allow anyone a tusk on any pretext whatever. The revolt at last broke out. It has never been marked by a decisive victory for one side or the other, but has resulted in the disorder of the country, the flight of the villagers into the forests, and a fatal blow to agriculture, owing to the cessation of sowings.

“ Msiri, indeed, has behaved to the Wasanga in a brutal and barbarous fashion for years. He considered them to be mere dirt. He has driven away several of his most devoted chiefs, who were obliged to fly to save their heads from the effects of his next ebullition of rage, and has taken to live with him all the women that pleased him that he

found at these chief's homes. Also, the chief people among the Wasumba, who are of the same tribe as himself, nourished a dire-hatred against him. Everyone would have been glad to contribute to his downfall, except, indeed, his own entourage, whom he paid well.

"Up to the day of my arrival he continued to stick the heads of his victims on stakes erected round his village, and only stopped doing so to try and conciliate me.

"Le Marinel's Expedition arrived here six months before me, and left here two Belgians, who have built a station on the river Lifoï, not far from the river Lufira. They have declared to the chief that the country belongs to the King of the Belgians. Little by little Msiri has come to detest them, because they refused all countenance to his despotic proceedings.

"When I arrived here, relations were very strained, and the chief's policy betrayed itself at once in the attempt he made to excite me against the Belgians, and in his vacillation when he found that my opinion agreed with their's.

"The three missionaries, Messrs. Thompson, Lane, and Crawford, were completely at Msiri's mercy, who did what he liked with them, turning them to public ridicule before his people, and constantly endeavouring to compel them to give up their property to him. The work of the mission was naturally checked, and it was going to be removed to the Lifoï, for life had become intolerable for white people in the capital. Msiri, in fact, considered Europeans to be, as he called them, 'white slaves.' M. Alex. Delcommune, chief of the expedition of the Katanga Company, arrived at Bunkeia in October last. Msiri tried to keep him, but the explorer's instructions did not allow of his staying; he had to visit the country to the south, and continued his journey. From this time, Msiri began to understand that he would soon have to deal with Europeans.

“ M. Legat, commander of the Government post established on the Lifoi, has, throughout the whole of the difficult period, during which he has remained, so to speak, alone, exposed to the machinations of the despotic negro, shown a very firm attitude. He took up a strong position in the country, thanks to the construction of a very powerful fort and to his unceasing energy in expressing his opinions to Msiri without fear. Unfortunately, the smallness of the number of men under his command prevented his taking up other than a passive attitude of observation. Until my arrival no one had succeeded in obtaining from Msiri an act of submission, or a contract equivalent thereto, nor had they been able to make him hoist the flag. Mr. Sharpe, of the British South Africa Company, who had been here last year, only stayed a week. He offended the chief by his insistence in demanding the site of the gold mines, and in pressing him to hoist the English flag. Msiri absolutely refused to sign any paper that Mr. Sharpe presented to him, and the latter left the country, leaving in the hands of Mr. Swan, the English missionary, the act of submission for him to get the Katanga Chief to sign as soon as he could persuade him to change his mind.

“ M. Le Marinel had obtained, it is true, a letter from Msiri in which he explicitly agreed, to a certain extent, in his submission to King Leopold ; but neither he nor Delcommune had succeeded in getting the flag of the Free State hoisted at Katanga.

“ Arriving on the 14th December, 1891, I visited Msiri on the 16th. I was received by him with great effusion, for he imagined I had come to drive M. Legat out of the country. I let him think so, and promised at the first interview to put an end to the war raging between the Wasanga and the Wasumba, but I refused to give him any powder. At the close of his interview I told him that

the land could never prosper under the reign of such a cruel man as himself, whose favourite method of getting rid of those who displeased him was to shut them up, bound, with famished dogs, to be eaten alive.

“ On the 18th, Msiri opposed the departure of the missionaries. Legat and I promised to ensure their security, and to fire on anyone who tried to stop them.

“ On the 19th, I arranged to obtain a second interview with the chief, and took with me this time a flag, after giving orders to Bodson to carefully reconnoitre round the camp.

“ For 3 hours and 40 minutes I talked with Msiri in Swahili, trying to persuade him to accept the flag.

“ I kept incessantly before his eyes the attempts of the British South Africa Company. It was imperatively necessary that he should hoist the flag of the Free State first. At the end of this long interview Msiri at length consented to take the flag the next day, provided I exchanged blood with his brother Chikako. I replied, ‘ No, I will exchange blood to day, and with you, and I am going to hoist the flag.’ I saw clearly that Msiri wanted to gain time to get together those of his soldiers who were away from home. In the end he rose to go back to his *boma*. Then I said to him. ‘ Very well in that case I am going to hoist the flag whether you like it or not.’ Presently Bonchamps and I, with 25 armed men, taking a pole from the chief’s own *boma*, ascended the hill near Msiri’s village, and the flag was hoisted there without opposition. But about nine in the evening, Msiri, seeing the situation was getting strained, secretly left Bunkeia and went to the village of Moemena. During the night more than 150 inhabitants fled for fear of war.

“ The next morning I sent four times to inform the chief that I was waiting to exchange blood with him. The reply came that Msiri had not risen.

"I had his house searched and found he had gone to Moemena. I gathered from these occurrences that Msiri was planning the assassination of all the Europeans in his country.

"At nine in the morning, the same day, 20th, I struck my camp and occupied a strong position in the village of Maria. I was accompanied by M. Legat and about 10 of the Dahomeyan soldiers. At the same time we told the English missionaries, who were on the Lifoi, to retire immediately to the station of the Free State, for war was imminent.

"As soon as all was ready, and we had secured our position in Maria, I resolved to bring Msiri before me, by force, if necessary. Accordingly 115 rifles were detailed under Captain Bodson and the Marquis de Bonchamps, who were directed to go to Moemena, see Msiri, and bring him before me. They started at 11 o'clock."

We now give the Marquis de Bonchamp's account, from a letter to us, of the events of which he was an eye-witness.

"At 11 in the morning Bodson and I set out from the camp in the direction of the village (about two miles distant) where Msiri was said to have taken refuge. One hundred men followed us with a pretty martial bearing, but did not inspire us with much confidence; it was the first time we had taken them under fire. It was a little after midday when we reached the outskirts of the village. Moemena is a collection of about five score huts scattered over a considerable distance, and protected by palisades of stakes and thick hedges of euphorbia. We deployed our small force at once in a single line facing the village, with our backs to the hills. The inhabitants did not appear to take much notice of us; we saw some, certainly, from time to time, mostly armed with guns, hiding behind the pali-

sades, but that was all. At last, after about a quarter of an hour, the chief of the village came to ask us what we wanted. We replied that we wanted to see Msiri and speak to him, but assured him we intended no harm to the villagers. The chief then invited one of us to accompany him.

“ Captain Bodson wished to go, despite my entreaties, for all those armed villagers hiding behind the palisades inspired me with serious fears.

“ He went, however, with about a dozen soldiers and two of our *Nyamparas*, leaving me in command of our small force, and telling me to attack immediately if I heard revolver shots.

“ Ten minutes at most had passed since his departure when I heard several revolver shots, followed immediately by rifle firing.

“ I attacked the village at once. At 50 paces from the gates we were received with a well-sustained fire, and the greater part of my men hesitated and halted. This was only natural, as it was impossible to see the enemy across the clumps of euphorbia.

“ It was necessary to lead the way. I did so, and had the satisfaction of seeing all my men follow me across the labyrinth of lanes bordered by euphorbia which separated the huts.

“ Firing was still going on when I arrived with some of my men at a sort of central space, from which some inhabitants were escaping. Alas, there, close to a *tembé*, lay my poor friend, grievously wounded by a bullet in the right side. Near him lay Msiri, pierced by several revolver bullets. Further off was the body of one of Msiri's relations, and in a corner of the clearing one of our soldiers and one of our *Nyamparas* lay groaning and wounded--the one had his ankle fractured, the other his knee pierced by a ball.

“ I interrogated the Nyampari, who was able to tell me what occurred. Bodson, on entering the village, had been conducted to the central clearing, with his escort. There he found Msiri sitting in front of his house, surrounded by about 300 of his followers, nearly all armed with guns. The captain, when brought into the presence of the chief, begged him to follow him and he would conduct him to our camp, before our chief, adding that no harm should be done to him.

“ At this juncture Msiri rose and made a menacing gesture with his sabre. Bodson, seeing himself threatened, fired four times at Msiri with his revolver. Msiri fell, hit by two bullets from the *Nyampara*. At the same moment my poor friend was hit by a ball fired by one of the chiefs round Msiri. He fell in his turn, and the fight became general.

“ There was I in the middle of the village ; I would not desert my comrade, who suffered terribly, while on the other hand I was afraid every moment of being cut off by the villagers. After a long quarter of an hour I managed to get together about one-third of my men. The rest were looting, or firing blindly on the flying enemy. I got myself at once into a defensive position, and at the same time sent Stairs word by a Nyampara of how I was situated. In two hours and a-half Stairs sent me the doctor, and reinforcements in men and ammunition. All being now quiet, we took our way to the camp, carrying the unfortunate Bodson on a stretcher.”

Such is the Marquis de Bonchamp's narrative. In their private letters, as in their official reports, the companions of the lamented Capt. Bodson pay eloquent tribute to his courage and his memory. Mortally wounded by a shot fired at close quarters by Msiri's follower, he survived his terrible wound only, alas, a few hours. Capt. Stairs thus commemorates his last moments :—

“ Capt. Bodson was brought to camp on a stretcher by Dr. Moloney and the Marquis de Bonchamps. He suffered terribly. On seeing me he said: ‘I am dying, but you may tell my countrymen I have not died in vain, thank God, for I have delivered this beautiful country and Africa from one of the most hateful of tyrants.’ At eight in the evening he died like a hero.

“ According to Dr. Moloney’s statement, death was the result of a bullet wound, which pierced a vital organ and caused internal hæmorrhage.

“ This sad death has deprived the Expedition of a capable and energetic officer, faithful, full of zeal to do his duty, and always ready to carry out the instructions he received. I had become his friend, and could appreciate how his heart was in his work, and how suited he was for employment in Africa. He was certainly destined by his abilities to fill high office in the Congo, had not death so inopportunately cut short his career.

“ On the death of Msiri becoming known, the country was thrown into a state of agitation. The people armed themselves and prepared for war, but we remained entrenched in our camp. No one was allowed to go out.

“ The next day, 21st December, we buried Capt. Bodson, and moved the camp to a village whose position was stronger. Then, on the 22nd, I began the construction of a fort—Fort Bunkeia—about 750 mètres from Msiri’s old abode, not far from the site of an ancient village.

“ Here I was visited by his two brothers, Nicanda Wantu and Chamundu. I told them that my line of policy was to establish myself in the country, and punish whoever provoked war with his neighbours; that now that Msiri was dead I intended to choose as his successor another chief who would agree to my terms, and that in future the Wasanga would be free, and the Wasumba have nothing to do with their affairs.

“ When the news of Msiri's death spread through the country, several of the most important and influential chiefs of the Wasanga and other tribes came to see me, and submitted to my authority. I made them sign acts of submission, promised them peace, and had the Free State flag hoisted over their villages. Before leaving the country, on 4th February, I had brought the eleven most important chiefs in the whole district to submit, and the flag of the Free State now floats over their territory.

“ Msiri's death greatly strengthened our position in the country, and made the Wasanga our most devoted allies. These are, in fact, the true owners of the soil.

“ Soon after Msiri's death I nominated his son Mkanda Wantu chief of the district of Bunkeia, but I limited his authority to the immediate neighbourhood of Bunkeia itself, depriving him of all power over the Wasanga and Walomoto chiefs, who are the original owners of the country, which is called Garenganze by the Wanyamwezi, and Katinga by the inhabitants.

“ We have set at liberty at least 200 women and children, and a large number of these unfortunates showed proof of the brutal mutilation they had been subjected to by Msiri. Moreover, I have given permission to bands of other illtreated slaves to return to their own country. I have given the Wasanga and Walomoto permission to gather as much salt as they like from the extensive salt beds, about four days' journey south of Bunkeia, on the river Lufira.

“ It was absolutely necessary, in my opinion, before embarking on any other undertaking, to construct a strong fort near the capital, where I could leave some of my men and goods, whilst, with the rest of my party, I scoured the country in search of the copper mines and reported gold ore. To leave Bunkeia, no matter when, before the middle

of January would have been fatal unless we had a fort in rear to serve as a retreat for those we left behind us. Moreover, the work we had done up to date would have been thrown away.

“Consequently I determined to set out for the S. W. on the 15th January, 1892, to visit the copper mines nearest the capital, pacify the Wasanga people, take possession of the mines, and hoist the Free State flag everywhere.

“Unhappily, my hopes were terribly dashed. The Marquis de Bonchamps was taken seriously ill on 1st January. Robinson was dangerously ill, and on the 5th January I had a villainous attack of hæmaturic bilious fever, and had to keep my bed, where I stayed till the day I left, 4th February.

“Dr. Moloney, in spite of these drawbacks, set himself to complete the fort. Moreover, he got together the chiefs who had submitted, and sent, from time to time, messengers to the chiefs in the south, and succeeded in obtaining acts of submission from them. For 12 days I was in a state of semi-unconsciousness, and during several relapses Dr. Moloney feared that I should succumb. Nevertheless, I determined not to leave the country after this bad attack, but to do my utmost to await the arrival of Capt. Bia.

“Delcommune's Expedition has been in the country since the month of October. He was well received by Msiri, who hoped at first to get him as an ally against Legat. He went south, and intended eventually to return northwards by the Lualaba. I have made three attempts to communicate with him, but without success hitherto.

“Capt. Bia reached Bunkeia on the 30th January. He and his officers were in good health and had been successful in their journey.

“Since we arrived at Katanga we had been a prey to

famine. My men were dying with hunger. They perished at the rate of two and three a day. We could not get any supplies whatever, whether for Europeans or natives, right up to the beginning of February. We were lucky when we got fried locusts or boiled herbs to eat. To stay in the country under these conditions was to condemn all the soldiers of the Expedition and, at least, three Europeans to death.

“ I consulted, therefore, with Capt. Bia, and having put him in charge of Fort Bunkeia, a certain portion of my bales, and one of my steel boats, I left on 4th February for Mpueto, on Lake Moero, to recruit carriers and allow the men to recover health and strength.

“ Although famine and illness have compelled us to leave Katanga without being able to accomplish our mission, we have nevertheless been able to effect the following results after a stay of, at most, a month and a-half :—

“ (1). We had got the flag of the Free State hoisted in the capital and highlands.

“ (2). We have deposed of the late Msiri, and later, unfortunately at the cost of the brave Capt. Bodson's life, got rid of this same Msiri, who, by his barbarous acts, had ruined the whole country.

“ (3). We have obtained no less than 12 acts of submission, signed in our presence by the most important chiefs in the country. We have hoisted the Free State flag at the villages of those chiefs and have succeeded in satisfactorily explaining to them that they were for the future under the sovereignty of the Free State.

“ (4). We have, in fact, delivered the three English missionaries from the position in which they were placed by Msiri's caprices, and have succeeded in establishing them in the country, and placing them in a secure and advantageous position.

“ (5). We have delivered some 200 natives doomed to a miserable end and enabled those who could to return safe and sound to their own country.

“ (6). Finally, we have rendered possible the sowing of cereals and vegetables by the Wasanga, and we have practically ensured the safety of inoffensive inhabitants.

“ If the true state of the contry when we arrived be considered and compared with the changes that have followed that event, I think it will be fully acknowledged at Brussels that we have done our duty well.

“ Attacks of dysentery and fever have carried off, at least, 73 Zanzibaris, not to speak of others. This is the consequence of the heavy work we were obliged to undertake in the rainy season. There is not the least doubt that for eight months of the year the country is very healthy, that at least two-thirds of it is well watered, and that it contains building materials of all kinds. It fulfils apparently all that was reported of it by the natives, and now ‘ absolute peace ’ is ensured.

“ As to the natural productions of the country, I must refer you to my special report.

“ M. Legat, when I left, was in a favourable position on the Lifoï, ready to build his station. He had not been able to render us other assistance than to stay with us with his 10 soldiers until pacification was complete. Ever since my arrival he has shown himself at all times most courteous and obliging in giving me information.

“ The letter of submission, brought by M. Le Marinel, was absolutely repudiated in my presence by Msiri. He told me he refused to acknowledge the authority of the Free State ; that he was *ipso facto* the enemy of anyone who approached to ask him to acquiesce in such authority ; that he would sign no act of submission in any form ; and that he would accept no flag whatever, whoever it was that

brought it to him. He prepared to resist by force our presence in his country, and was daily concentrating his troops at the capital to strike a blow at us when he felt strong enough.

“ With him dead, the country is tranquil and at peace ; the European is not only feared, but respected. It is possible now to explore the country and open up its resources, undertakings which formerly would have ensured the massacre of those who attempted them.

“(Signed), STAIRS.”

We break off the publication of Captain Stairs' first report at the point where he left the Katanga, struck down by illness.

During the whole of this Expedition, which he led with a courage and rapidity that showed a perfect knowledge of the necessities of African life, the English officer gave proof of rare qualities. On all occasions he showed himself a keen observer, scrupulously faithful to the instructions he received from the Katanga Company for the accomplishment of his difficult and delicate mission. His return journey took him to Mueeto, which he left on the 21st March for Abercorn, an English post at the southern extremity of Lake Tanganika, where he arrived on the 25th of April. On the 14th May he reached the northern extremity of Lake Nyassa, which he traversed from end to end on board one of the steamers of the English Lake Company. On the 23rd he was at Matope, on the Chire ; on the 3rd June at Vincenti, at the apex of the Zambesi delta ; and next day he arrived in sight of the Indian Ocean.

Alas, it was there, at the moment of embarking on the Portuguese boat, which should in a few days have brought

him to Zanzibar, whence his expedition started, that the brave explorer was attacked afresh by a severe bout of hæmaturic bilious fever and expired on the 9th June in spite of the assiduous care of his two companions, Dr. Moloney and the Marquis de Bonchamps.

* * * *

MM. de Bonchamps and Moloney, with their party of 200 men, arrived at Zanzibar, whence they set out on the 4th of July on board the Messageries Maritimes Steamer *Ava*, and arrived at Marseilles on the morning on the 22nd.

From the ECHOES OF SERVICE.

The long interval which elapsed after the departure of this very doubtful relief party (the Belgian Exploration Expedition) saw me waiting on at the capital, hungering for a scrap of news assuring me of the welfare of our friends. While thus situated with hopes all expectant, looking to the west, you can imagine my surprise one day—the 28th November—while sitting taking to an Arab under his verandah, to see five Zanzibaris march up, turbaned and armed with breech-loading rifles. From the east, no doubt, I said to myself, and messengers too!

Their chief, Massondi (who crossed with Stanley in the Emin Pasha Expedition), handed me a letter from Capt. Stairs, dated a fortnight before from the Luapula river, in which he stated he was coming to Msidi on a mission from the King of the Belgians, and earnestly requested that we would oblige him with any information we might think necessary for him to have regarding the country, etc. Accompanying this letter were two for Msidi in English and Swahili respectively, in which Capt. Stairs and his

four white companions formally sent their "Salaams" to the chief and intimated that they had come from the sea expressly to visit him ; further, that their intentions were peaceable towards him, and that in all they did they desired to act slowly and with his (Msidi's) consent. Capt. Stairs, in conclusion, mentioned casually that the Wa-sumbwa (Msidi's own people) were his friends, and signed himself "The Englishman, W. G. Stairs."

The last two statements contained in the letter fairly made Msidi's heart "white" (as he termed it) towards the new-comers, but *specially* the fact that they were Englishmen, as he mistakenly thought them all to be. "They are English, do you hear, sons of the dust?" shouted Msidi to the crowd of his people, "and we know the English to be true people."

The five Zanzibaris returned, bearing a letter from Msidi written by me, full of expressions of goodwill towards the white men, and requesting them to come on to his capital without delay. At the same time I wrote Capt. Stairs, telling him of the disagreeable surprise that was awaiting him and his three hundred men at Msidi's, where hunger prevailed almost to starvation. My report of the land may have been dreary and the outlook bleak to those new-comers, who were pressing on to Msidi's as to some "El Dorado." But as on the evening of that day I stood on the hill-top overlooking the valley of the capital, and contrasted the scene with that of one year ago, I was convinced that no true description of the state of the country could be other than dreary and depressing. I never realized how far things had run to riot in the country until I looked down upon long stretches of tilled land without any people, where once, and that scarcely twelve months ago, stood hundreds of dwellings compactly built together. What will Mr. Swan say when he hears that after leaving

Mutombo's village, going eastward, he would not encounter one mud hut right on to Munema !

Msidi spent the interval that elapsed after the departure of the Arabs in rallying all his remaining men, and haranguing them all day long on the great things he would do when the powder came, for, of course, the white men were bringing him powder ! These remarks regarding the powder were accompanied by many a scornful glance at me, as though he would let us understand what a worthless lot we missionaries were. When he spoke of the Belgians at present in the country he grew fierce, charging them with all sorts of treacherous motives.

December 14th.—This morning, at Msidi's request, I met Capt. Stairs, who was at the head of his caravan, and conducted him to the camping ground appointed by the chief. The large caravan of three hundred Zanzibaris filed in with flags flying and a very travel-stained look, accompanied by Capt. Bodson, the Marquis de Bonchamps, Dr. Maloney, and Robinson, Capt. Stairs' servant.

Lieut. Legat pitched his tent in the new-comers' encampment, which at once raised Msidi's suspicions, and he ordered the lieutenant to remove from thence, and charged him with trying to come between him and his new friends ; but the real fact was that the chief dreaded lest they should effect a junction, and to prevent this he tried all in his power.

Msidi having finally accepted our presents, we were glad to leave the capital on the 17th, the day appointed by Msidi for the reception of Capt. Stairs. The events which happened after our departure were so momentous and so calculated to turn this whole country upside down that I shall endeavour to give you them in as much detail as possible.

17th.—As arranged, Capt. Stairs saw the chief to-day

and gave him his present. Msidi expressed the wish that the captain would become his blood brother.

18th.—Capt. Stairs was with Msidi again. The chief again expressed the wish to become Capt. Stairs' blood brother, but wanted a large amount of cloth and powder first, before he would consent to the ceremony or the taking of the Free State flag.

19th.—To-day Capt. Stairs planted the Congo Free State flag on the high hill immediately adjoining the head village of Mukurru, and as Msidi did not realize the full import of this act, Capt. Stairs sent four of his chiefs to inform him that in future he (Msidi) was excepted to obey the white men, and that there must be no more skulls seen hanging round his village. Of course, this last order roused Msidi's anger, for it meant that he must give up that prerogative which he alone had exercised—alas! so ruthlessly—during all the years of his lording it in these parts. But though he stormed and fumed at this order, he was still shrewd enough to see that he could not quarrel—that is, profitably—with the new-comers, and so, after declaring his right to cut the heads off his slaves or any others who would oppose his rule, he mentioned the day following—the 20th—for the blood-brotherhood ceremony.

20th.—A long-to-be-remembered date in Garenganze history! This was the day appointed by Msidi for his becoming Capt. Stairs' blood brother; but events showed that he had no intention of keeping his appointment, nor indeed of being the captain's friend at all. Early in the morning a messenger was despatched to the head village to know if Msidi was prepared to receive Capt. Stairs on that day, but the messenger returned with the word that the chief was sleeping. A little later, a second messenger brought the news that Msidi had left Mukurru at daybreak for Munema, one of the first villages occupied by him in

this country. When the messenger went to Munema he found Msidi, who told him that he would receive the white man on conditions *that he would come alone, and unaccompanied by any soldiers.* This proposal bore on the face of it some intent on Msidi's part of foul play, and so Capt. Bodson and the Marquis de Bonchamps started for Munema, with a body of Zanzibaris, to know definitely whether Msidi would submit to the white men or otherwise. On arriving outside the village of Munema, a halt was made, and four headmen went to the chief to inform him that the white men were outside. This was about 11 a.m. An hour passed and the headmen not having returned, Capt. Bodson took six men and went into the village, leaving the main body outside with the Marquis de Bonchamps, it being understood by the latter that if the sound of firing was heard inside the village, he was to rush in with his Zanzibaris. Not many minutes elapsed after Capt. Bodson had gone into the village when the loud report of firing was heard, and the Marquis, rushing in with his men, found outside the verandah of the largest house the dead body of Msidi lying opposite Capt. Bodson, who, though himself conscious, was in a dying condition. Near by Msidi lay the dead body of Masuka, one of his warriors, whilst opposite lay two of Capt. Bodson's men, one with two legs broken, and the other with a bullet in his thigh. Capt. Bodson was at once removed to the camp, and though in great agony explained in the few remaining breaths which he drew in this life what had occurred. On entering he found Msidi armed with a fine sword, which Capt. Stairs had given him, and surrounded by between thirty and forty men. Some distance off he saw the four headmen, evidently prisoners. Advancing towards Msidi he asked him what he intended to do, and had only said a few words when Msidi with the drawn sword in his hand

made a thrust at Capt. Bodson, which the latter, springing to one side, evaded ; at the same time, drawing his revolver, he shot Msidi dead through the heart.

Msidi had no sooner fallen than the contents of several guns were fired into Capt. Bobson's back by some men, wounding him mortally. He spoke with Lieut. Legat (who was an old friend of his) up to the last, saying that he was dying as a soldier should die, having rid the Garenganze country of a tiger, and with one shout " Long live the King " this loyal soldier passed away.

How things are going on at the capital now you will best understand from the following letter, which I received the other day from Capt. Stairs :—“ On the 21st we left Maria's village, and moved about 800 yards to Mumoneka's, and next day started building Fort Bunkeya. I called up the chiefs Chamunda and Mukanduvantu, told them we had no desire to fight, but would punish anyone who made war in this country. Meantime I sent for Katanga, Ntenke, Mulawanyama, and others, to come to me before electing a chief of the Va-yeke, who will only have power over this immediate neighbourhood. There will be no more Va-yeke tyrants over the poor Va-sanga, Va-lomotwa, etc. ; each district will have its local chief, and the head over the whole will be the white man. Already the people have returned in great numbers to their hoeing and planting. The Va-sanga are delighted, and at last see hope ahead. We are building our fort out of Msidi's own Boma, and the door of his big hut is now my table, off which this evening we eat our Christmas dinner. . . . I will work hard to keep powder out, and let the country get full breathing. . . . There are no skulls visible at Bunkeya now.”

On Dec. 29th Capt. Stairs wrote :—“ We are progressing favourably with our fort, but the want of food is taking it out of our men. I elected Mukanduvantu to-day as

successor to the late chief. Likuku has not come in, nor Cikako. Mulawanyama has come and got the flag from me, and several others the same." ¹

¹ The sorrowful news of the death of Capt. Stairs would not be known for some time in Garenganze.—ED.

It appears therefore, that he died from malarial fever on the 9th June 1892 at Chinde on the Zambesi, thus ended his short but brilliant career. Stairs was possessed of an amiable, and cheerful disposition, was most energetic, and painstaking in anything he undertook to do, and looked upon difficulties as only to be overcome.

It is always difficult to gauge the value of men, but the name of Stairs was better known than that of any graduate, and we have just cause to feel proud that he was one of our number, he together with Mackay and Robinson, had all given promise of future distinction had they lived, the three were so closely connected in their lives, and in their deaths, that it seems fitting we have decided to place their names together on one memorial brass. They all reflected honour on their old College, and well upheld its good motto "Truth, Duty, Valour". May we who remain strive to be as faithful.