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PEACE AND GOODWILL

George Grenfell on the Congo - II

After the fire

News of the fire was made public in the *Missionary Herald* of September 1886, with an appeal for funds to replace the losses. Home response was magnificent, raising £5,793 within a few months. Among Grenfell's letters was one from Robert Arthington, asking about the possibility of a route right across Africa. Grenfell graciously explained the geography, and his own tiredness, but promised a full report on his next furlough. Meanwhile the *Peace* took missionaries, Davies and Richards, to establish the first station above Stanley Pool at Lukolela. On the voyage they explored Lake Leopold, again suffering heavy storms and hippo attacks. The vast marauders tore pieces of wood off the gunwale of the *Peace*, but the missionaries retaliated, shooting and eating some of the animals. Mechanical problems arose too. The engines needed regular lubrication and only palm-oil was available. This tended to corrode the brass bearings. Later they found that raffia-palm-nut oil worked better and was not corrosive.

In the autumn of 1886 Bentley returned to the Pool from furlough, with four new missionaries. In addition, the first single lady missionary in Congo, Miss Martha Spearing, had arrived in June to do school work. Before long, Grenfell and Bentley were ready to take the *Peace* on a further voyage of exploration, up the Kwango river, which was full of floating, dead trees which threatened to hole the *Peace*. Grenfell was surprised to find Kikongo-speakers higher up this river. The local people were not so much antagonistic to the missionaries, as eager to exploit them. On the return journey the *Peace* found the way barred where it was narrow with canoes full of armed warriors, demanding exorbitant payment to allow the vessel to proceed. Grenfell and his crew sounded the steam-whistle at full blast, which was enough to scatter their terrified would-be attackers, to the delight of the *Peace*'s African crew.

Returning to England on furlough, Grenfell had a busy time. He addressed the Royal Geographical Society and was warmly congratulated by his old friend, Sir Francis de Winton. He was awarded the Society's Gold Medal for his exploration of the Congo river. In Belgium he had an hour-long audience with King Leopold. Less happily, his little daughter, Pattie, had an accident with scissors and, like her father, lost an eye. Then another missionary, J. H. Weeks, returned home with the sad news that, on his way back to Britain to restore his failing health, Thomas Comber had died off Loango and been buried at Mayumba. Grenfell, shaken by the loss of his closest friend and colleague, wrote at once to Alfred Baynes, the BMS Secretary:

Not only does this blow fall on us, who have lost a loving-hearted friend and devoted fellow-worker, who was ever ready to sacrifice himself, and whose charity never failed; but you will remember, as I do, the heaviness and bitterness that this stroke will bring to the hearts of dear relatives and a wide circle of very affectionate friends.

Grenfell and his wife were anxious to return to the Congo, although Baynes and

others tried to persuade them to stay longer in England. In August they set out from Liverpool, with two new colleagues.

Back in Congo, Bentley and the others were extending the work, in spite of illness, deaths, and political turbulence. Bentley could now produce a Kikongo grammar and word-book and begin Bible translation. The Arabs at Stanley Falls had attacked Lt Deane and his men, forcing them to flee down-river. Stanley arrived, demanding food for a force of 700 men, and requisitioning the *Peace* to help carry his supplies. Although Stanley regained control at the Falls, he was well aware of the weakness of the Congo State government, so he proposed that Tipu-Tib be made the State representative at the Falls. Tipu-Tib seemed a reformed character and turned religious: one of his men told Bentley, 'Mr Tipu-Tib, he been very bad man, wicked too much; but he has changed and become religious - he is getting old. If a man does not turn religious at 50 years of age, when will he?' Eventually Tipu-Tib removed to the more congenial climate of Zanzibar.

Charters and Bentley, with his wife and baby, set off in the *Peace* at the end of July to visit the Lukolela station and explore Lake Mantumba. At one stop for wood the local people began to gather in hostile manner, equipped with spears and shields. Hostility changed to curiosity when they were shown the white baby, and they readily believed that the missionaries' intentions were friendly, for no-one would take wife and baby if going to war. At Lukolela they found Richard and Darby settling in.

Home supporters continued to hear about exploration and ask about spiritual progress but it took time to win the people's trust. BMS missionaries were deliberately slow to accept professions of faith and even slower to baptize. They wanted the people to understand what they were doing. Moreover, they did not want to separate converts from their tribal situations, unlike early Roman Catholic missionaries who had worked by gathering orphans and Christianizing them at strictly regimented mission-stations. The first Baptist converts tended, naturally enough, to be those who had worked with the missionaries for some time, like Bentley's servant, Nlemvo. Taken on as a lad, he gradually learned of Christ, made a profession of faith, and a few years later was baptized. He was related to his tribe's chief and was subsequently asked to succeed him. He was reluctant, knowing that many tribal customs would conflict with his new faith. In particular, he had no wish to conduct witch-hunts to establish the cause of catastrophes. Eventually he agreed to become chief, but on the understanding that he was a Christian and would not conduct pagan rituals. The elders promised to respect his scruples, but these promises were not honoured, so Nlemvo resigned and returned to work for Holman Bentley. He then met his future wife, Aku, who had lost her family in an Arab slave-raid up-river in 1883. She was sold as a slave to one of Comber's workmen but, as the missionaries did not allow the keeping of slaves, she was given her freedom and the workman was duly compensated. Aku went to England briefly as nurse to the young Pattie Grenfell, but returned in 1885 to help Mrs Bentley. Converted in 1887, she was baptized a little later. The wedding of Aku and Nlemvo was the mission's first Christian marriage, and Bentley and his friends were concerned that it should be both truly Christian and truly Congolese. Bentley said bluntly, 'We have to Christianize, not to Anglicize'. So Nlemvo and Aku were dressed in their best Congolese costume, not European clothes. The Congolese were

amazed at one Christian concept, when they heard Nlemvo actually promise to care for his wife! When Nlemvo's pagan mother died, Bentley handled matters sensitively: she had a Congolese funeral, buried in yards of cloth, but with Christian prayers.

In explaining what it meant to become a Christian, Bentley made use of a local custom. If a slave ran away from one master and joined the service of another, this was made official by a ceremony in which the new master and the slave would have a special feast of goat together. The Congolese referred to this as being ready to 'eat goat' with the new master. Bentley described Christian conversion and admission to communion as 'to eat goat with King Jesus'.

By July 1888 the San Salvador church had eighteen members, and soon after another Christian church was founded at Wathen, on the route round the cataracts. Also in 1888 Cameron's Kikongo version of Mark's gospel was printed in Britain, and Bentley's translation of Luke was soon to follow. Following a furlough in 1887 Charters did not return to Congo but trained as a doctor and went to East Africa, where he eventually vanished in mysterious circumstances. Percy Comber returned to England sick, and in July 1888 Richards, the last survivor of the group who had come out with Tom Comber in 1885, died at Banana on his way home. The deaths continued into 1889, but new missionaries continued to come out, including William Forfeitt, who took many of the early photographs. In 1888 the government began to survey for a railway from Matadi to Stanley Pool. As conditions remained difficult at Stanley Pool, Grenfell decided to move his headquarters up to Bolobo and to build the *Peace* a dock there. Building there had been started by James Showers, one of Grenfell's loyal Congolese workmen. By February 1889 the missionaries were able to start a school, and by April the first church-building was usable, though some of the congregation had to sit on the half-finished walls. The new building was 22 feet square, and the upper walls were made from the arrowguards from the *Peace*. This was a mark of confidence and a tribute to the way Grenfell and his helpers had convinced the people of the river that the ship truly came in peace. At Easter Grenfell was able to hold the first baptisms at Bolobo. Among these was Bungudi, a Congolese chief's son trained by Grenfell as an engineer. He later helped to build the *Goodwill*, sister ship to the *Peace*. One of Bungudi's friends, Jack Dikulu, a believer, although not baptized, became mortally ill. Bungudi and the other lads prayed with him to the end. Grenfell wrote,

Though he was not admitted to our church, I feel sure that he is safely in the heavenly fold. Folk at home are talking about the 'cost' and 'Missions a failure'. Some of us missionaries are failures - that can't be gainsaid. But still I maintain that if Missions are a failure, then is Christ's death a failure, and woe is me!

In the next seven years there were fifteen baptisms at Bolobo.

Later in 1889 a chief at Upoto asked for a mission station and Grenfell viewed this as a better proposition than Lulunga, nearer Bolobo, a site the BMS later passed to the Congo Balolo Mission. Weeks and Stapleton, who were to have started the work at Lulunga, went to Monsembe instead. The Upoto site, a thousand miles inland from the Atlantic, was purchased in the spring of 1890. The price was: 800 brass rods, 2 pieces of cloth, 3 jam jars, 2 knives, 2 forks, 2 spoons, 2 mirrors, a

cup of beads, and a cup of cowrie shells. Upoto was beyond the thick forest that bordered the river above Lukolela and the area was thickly populated. The missionaries had to convince the locals that they were not traders. William Forfeitt and Oram settled at Upoto. Some of the photographs taken by Forfeitt and Grenfell were not deemed modest enough for the *Missionary Herald*. Although the Upoto people were not cannibals, they would sometimes sell those killed after witch-trials to the inland tribes as meat.

Cannibalism was still rife up near the equator, although the Congo State had passed laws prohibiting it. Some tribes would only trade ivory for human beings to eat, and they continued to raid for human victims. Bentley wrote of cannibalism:

To this awful depth have these children of the Heavenly Father fallen, until they have indeed become children of the Devil . . . This is how they live up to their light! Again we say, if the light that is in them be darkness, how great is that darkness! This is no 'worked-up' picture. It is the life of thousands at the present time in darkest Africa.

State organization was, however, gradually improving: there was now a State Post Office at Stanley Pool, a boon to Grenfell who wrote and received so many letters.

The Grenfells rejoiced in the birth of another daughter, while George struggled with Bible translation. The mosquitoes drove him to desperation: 'How is it to be expected of me to get up a proper Christmas frame of mind?' he lamented, as he hunted for a Congolese word to express 'forgiveness', putting off the even harder 'sanctification' till later. His letters lamented his grey hairs, his fatness, and the old dead friends he missed. He longed to go to a really good Christian service, envying a friend the privilege of hearing F. B. Meyer preach. Nevertheless, he was getting a slip-way made at Bolobo for the *Peace*, amazing the local people as she was hauled up with the aid of pulleys.

At the end of August 1890, a small State steamer ran alongside the *Peace* at anchor in Stanley Pool and the officers demanded that the missionary ship be handed over to the Congo State government to carry soldiers and munitions up the Kasai river against the Arabs. Mr White, the young missionary in charge, attempted to negotiate, offering on Grenfell's behalf to take stores up the Kasai but not arms, but it was with an army captain aboard that the *Peace* steamed up to Bolobo. Grenfell again offered to carry stores, even offering to make two trips, with one for mission business in between. The State would have none of it. Although the Congo river was officially an international waterway, on 15 September 1890 the *Peace* was taken over and the British flag came down. The BMS in London received a telegram from its legal representative at Underhill: 'Peace seized. Flag hauled down. Grenfell coming.'

Diplomatic incidents

White reported bitterly, 'We on the upper Congo know full well that the very life of our work is wrapped up in the life of our little steamer, still the pride of the Upper Congo fleet.' Worst of all was the sight of their ship armed - in White's

words: 'And now the "Peace" is to carry the terrible maxim gun¹ at her bow, its nozzle over the brazen letters PEACE! A good thing the poor natives of the Kasai can't read those letters.' Grenfell loved that ship, and felt her disgrace so keenly he expressed the hope that she would be wrecked. He hurried back to England, pausing on the way to complain to the resident Belgian governor, who tried to placate him by ordering that the British flag be again hoisted on the *Peace*. Meanwhile, Mr Baynes had telegraphed Brussels, protesting at the seizure. There was considerable agitation both in Britain and on the continent, not helped by Reuters, who put out a report denying that the British flag had been hauled down and saying the missionaries had agreed to the requisitioning.

The affair dragged on into 1891. The Vice-Governor in Congo tried to bulldoze the local BMS secretary, the Revd Lawson Forfeitt, into accepting an indemnity payment to quieten things down. The young missionary refused, pointing out that the up-river mission stations were in grave danger of running out of supplies. To the suggestion that they could replenish from government stations, Forfeitt retorted that government stations used to come to the missionaries for supplies. The *Peace's* crew had worked the ship throughout, with White on board to represent the BMS. The officer in charge, a crusty Norwegian sea-captain, was impressed by Grenfell's crew, and found Francis Steane, the Cameroons engineer, 'the most gentlemanly black I have ever met'. At last apologies were given and the *Peace* was handed back, with assurances that it would never happen again.

Back in England, Grenfell put before the BMS the case for a second steamer and during 1891 Thornycrofts built the *Goodwill*. She was similar to the *Peace*, but had larger accommodation and some engineering refinements. Bungudi had gone with Grenfell to advise on the new steamer. Grenfell went again to Belgium, meeting on the way Captain Thys, director of the Congo Railway Company. Later in the year, the Belgian king presented to Grenfell the insignia of 'Chevalier of the Order of Leopold' for his work in Congo, a sign that the requisitioning episode was now closed.

Although Stanley had brought Tipu-Tib temporarily to heel, there were still occasional Arab encroachments. They apparently hoped to make peace with the British and Germans in the east (Tanganyika was a German colony), and establish a Muslim empire in central Africa, reaching to the west coast. The exertions of Baron Dhanis for the Belgians, prevented this. In 1891 he had finally broken the power of chief Msidi in Katanga, an area where there had been Brethren missionaries since 1885, led by F. S. Arnot. In 1892 the Arabs massacred Hodister's expedition and Baron Dhanis set out against them with a motley force, mainly mercenaries from Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria, under Belgian officers. These were reasonably disciplined, unlike the accompanying Congolese irregulars, led by Gongo Lutete, a former ally of the Arabs. The expedition was ill-armed and badly provisioned. Gongo Lutete's men were often given prisoners to eat, the only justification offered being that the Arabs did the same to any captured Belgians.

By 1894 Baron Dhanis had broken the power of the Arabs on the upper Congo, but he then had to repel a southward push by Dervishes from the Sudan, and in 1895

1

An early machine gun, still in use in 1914.

and 1897 mutinies among the Congolese troops were savagely put down. In the remote upper river region, justice was rudimentary. The British were shocked to hear of the execution of an English trader, Stokes, for gun-running. He was guilty, but most diplomats thought imprisonment or expulsion would have been sufficient punishment. Then the Belgians seized Gongo Lutete on a trumped-up treason charge and executed him in 1894. Allied with the growing exploitation of the Congolese by the rubber companies, such actions were to cause an international scandal.²

Grenfell had probably heard reports of atrocities by 1890, but put them down to aberrations of local traders, which he hoped the State would punish. The *Goodwill*, after trials on the Thames, was shipped for Africa. Grenfell was ready to return to the Congo after a holiday with his aged mother at Sancreed, when a request came from the Belgian authorities for his help in drawing up the frontier line between the Congo Free State and the Portuguese possessions in Angola. Grenfell and the BMS were not at first sure whether to accede to this unprecedented request, although it was clearly a great honour to a missionary who had amassed such knowledge of this part of Africa. Grenfell also saw in the expedition an opportunity to further the work around San Salvador. This Lunda expedition was expected to last several months, during which the *Goodwill* would be transported to Bolobo, where Bungudi awaited her. Grenfell was given the title 'Plenipotentiary', and was accompanied by his wife and the engineer, Francis Steane, who looked after Grenfell's surveying instruments. The Portuguese treated Mr and Mrs Grenfell as VIPs, even lending them a carriage-and-pair. Grenfell was rather embarrassed by all the well-meant ceremonial - he was happier wearing 'pyjamas tied with a string' in the jungle. He accepted only the pay he would have received as a BMS missionary; the Society made nothing out of the expedition which was to stretch into 1893.

A relay of couriers kept Grenfell in touch with the BMS and with the progress of the *Goodwill*. Francis Steane distinguished himself as hunter and fisherman. Braving swamps, smallpox and native wars, they eventually met up with the Portuguese at Kasongo. The present border between Zaire and Angola stands as a

² The international ramifications of the Congo story go back to the Act of Berlin, signed in 1885 by fourteen European powers following two months of negotiation presided over by Prince Bismarck. Holman Bentley was among the expert observers present in Berlin. The Act of Berlin set parameters for the activities of European powers in Central Africa, and in particular the basin of the River Congo. Of special relevance to the BMS was the provision that in the whole Congo basin 'all flags, without distinction of nationality should have free access to the River'. Rules were laid down governing the preservation of 'native tribes' and the protection of all religious, scientific or charitable institutions. Many of the activities of the missionaries, including Grenfell's voyages of exploration on the 'international waters' of the Congo River, fell strictly within the terms of the Act. Had the 'noble purpose' of the Act been more honoured in observance, history might have been very different. It is this international agreement that underlies Grenfell's attitudes and explains the protests of the British consul and British parliament. See Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act*, Oxford 1919. [We are grateful to Miss Ruth Page, former BMS missionary, for this explanatory note.]

monument to Grenfell's work in 1891-93.

Grenfell was able to stop off at San Salvador on the return journey. There Mr and Mrs Lewis now led a church nearly fifty strong, with schools for both boys and girls, and services were being conducted in a number of outlying villages. Work on the railway had brought them into contact with Chinese labourers. The Congolese at San Salvador remembered Herbert Dixon, who had worked there in the early days and was now a missionary in China, so they took up a collection to help him evangelize the country from which these foreign workers had come.

At Bolobo, Grenfell found work on the *Goodwill* was not as advanced as he had hoped. One or two engine pieces had been lost in transit, the most important being the high-pressure piston-rod. The Belgians at Stanley Pool forged a replacement, but Grenfell and his African workmen had to make the delicate adjustments. It was not until January 1894 that the *Goodwill* made her first trip.

There had been more trouble between the government and the Bateke people around Stanley Pool. After some fighting, the Bateke all fled across the river into French territory, where the rule was more relaxed - or disorganized, according to viewpoint. This was to happen on much of the lower river, causing considerable depopulation on the Belgian side. Further up river no such flight was possible, and that was where many of the 'Red Rubber' atrocities were later to occur. Down at Boma, the official governor probably took little heed of this early migration but the flight of the Bateke disrupted missionary work among them and rendered useless much of Holman Bentley's work on their language. Thereafter the BMS work would be centred on San Salvador, Bolobo, Upoto, and such other stations on the upper river as the Congo Free State would allow - there were already signs that the Belgian authorities, under pressure from Roman Catholics, were not going to be very sympathetic.

Goodwill and the upper river

The *Goodwill's* first voyage was a chapter of accidents. All started well, after Grenfell had had the pleasure of baptizing three African workers at Bolobo. At Upoto, however, they found Oram dying, and news came that another missionary had died on the way back to England. William Forfeitt was left at Upoto with a new colleague, who had still to acquire the local language. Grenfell went up the Aruwimi, intending to explore the possibilities of missionary work there, but was thwarted by low water levels. One of the crew got his foot caught in the propeller and was badly injured, in spite of swift action by his fellows. Fortunately they were able to get him to a doctor at the government station at Basoko, whence he was returned to Upoto. Next the *Goodwill* ran on to a sandbank, bursting a number of bolts and fracturing a propeller-shaft. She limped back under half-power, and was caught in a tornado which tore away a large part of the sun deck and awning. Back at Bolobo, Grenfell had to transfer all his gear to the *Peace*, both slower and heavier on fuel but operational. A trip to Stanley Pool followed, and a further attack of fever, before Grenfell had to face more trouble at Bolobo.

A State soldier had been murdered and the Belgian Commissaire, there to investigate, was insisting that seven other men should serve as soldiers for seven years as punishment, since the actual murderer had escaped into the bush. The Grenfells were called in as peacemakers. Mrs Grenfell was able to get the local

people to see that wrong had been done and some reparation had to be made. Eventually all were reasonably happy, although the Commissaire departed sick with fever. The grateful local chiefs presented Mrs Grenfell with a large pig.

At Christmas 1894 Grenfell wrote of games and feasts, as well as Christian worship. Schoolchildren feasted on pig, and there was a tug-of-war between mission staff and villagers. He noted that the Congolese girls were better swimmers than the boys: the girls not only collected all the brass rods thrown for them but also some the boys had left as beyond reach. The new year saw a rush of new witch-accusations, and a local war broke out over a trivial matter, but a heavy storm foiled attempts to fire their old flintlock guns.

The repaired *Goodwill* was soon involved in a rescue. The steamer carrying de Brazza, now Governor of French Congo, ran on a rock and sank with the loss of nine lives. Grenfell picked up the survivors, including de Brazza, and took them to Stanley Pool. Another rescue was effected by some of Grenfell's schoolboys and apprentices. An old chief near Bolobo died and, according to old custom, some slaves were bought to bury alive at his funeral. One woman, being brought by canoe, shouted for help as she passed the Bolobo station and about forty lads set out in pursuit. They forced the canoe ashore and freed the woman, taking her back to the Grenfells.

At home early enthusiasm for the Congo mission had waned. The BMS had large debts in 1895, and overseas work was liable to curtailment. Grenfell felt the restriction very much. Always careful with money, he had earned significant amounts doing transport jobs for others. He still dreamed of expansion, and in late 1895 was able to take Mr White to set up a station at Yakusu. He also took back up river two Bolobo church members taken as slaves by Arabs some years earlier. He resettled them in their old area, where he hoped they would be an influence for Christ.

Always an engineer, Grenfell had many practical projects under way. In 1885 Mr Josiah Wade of Halifax had given a printing press for use in the Congo and this had been located at San Salvador. Some work from this press was exhibited at an international exhibition in Antwerp in 1895. Subsequently Mr Wade gave another press which came to Bolobo, where Grenfell trained Congolese printers. Bolobo also had a brickworks, using rosewood moulds, as well as the steamer dock, where *Peace* and *Goodwill* were serviced. In 1895 the *Peace* had new propellers and shafts fitted by local workmen under Grenfell's supervision. He saw the training of Africans in trades as an important move towards changing African society, and believed a free, wage-earning class, between the ruling élite and slaves, would make for a more stable society.

Missionaries still succumbed to tropical disease. Mr Davies died at Wathen, while others had to retire home. Mr Scrivener came out to look after the Bolobo printing press. At last the BMS agreed to allow single women to work in the Congo. One of the first was Miss Lily de Hailes, In spite of her fiancé's death shortly after reaching Congo in 1885, she trained as a nurse and in 1889 joined the Congo Balolo Mission (successor to the Livingstone Inland Mission), since the BMS would not then take single women. Six years later, when BMS policy changed, she joined the team at Bolobo, working under Mrs Grenfell. She was to become the great pioneer of work with Congolese girls. Lily de Hailes, readily distinguished

by her large hats, was also instrumental in starting regular medical work which eventually resulted in the Bolobo hospital.

Up-river at Yakusu the first years were grim. White survived for two years, but his successors succumbed quickly, until the Stapletons arrived in 1897. With them came Salamu. Taken by Arabs as a slave, she had been passed down the river until freed by the missionaries at Monsembe. Returning with them, for the first time in years she heard her own language, Lokele, and recognized the place where she used to live. Her local knowledge made her invaluable to the Stapletons, and she was their interpreter in the early stages. Grenfell longed to plant more stations, but he was a realist as well as a dreamer, and worked at providing better conditions for missionaries at existing stations. Alarming incidents continued to interrupt the work of preaching and teaching. In 1896 Bwala, the printer at Lukolela, was taken by a crocodile. The missionaries, Bentley and Clarke, eventually killed the 17'6" monster, finding inside it the bronze bangles of several local people who had disappeared.

In 1897 the Grenfell's eldest daughter, Pattie, joined them. Educated at a boarding school in Sevenoaks, Kent, she had grown up a keen Christian. After some time at Bolobo, she went to Yakusu to help Mrs Stapleton with work among girls there.

Early in 1897 the State government ordered the BMS to quit Yakusu. Mr Pople, one of the BMS missionaries, referred the matter to Mr Baynes in London, and the demand was eventually withdrawn. Grenfell thought the government was none too pleased with the publicity some of its policies were receiving, especially the treatment of rubber collectors, and also blamed Roman Catholic opposition to Protestant missions: 'The Pope pulls lots of strings, and I have reason to believe he is very busy with Central African affairs. The *Goodwill* lies moored within sight of two Roman Catholic bishops!' The Congo Free State had its own troubles as mutinous soldiers from Baron Dhanis' expedition to the Nile threatened to attack around Yakusu. They were finally driven off, with loss of life on both sides. Sickness, scourge of all Europeans, traders, colonial officers and missionaries alike, struck again. Mr Pople died of fever, followed by his wife and baby. Bungudi developed sleeping-sickness. He recovered, but it is a disease that remains in the body.

In 1898 the railway opened from Matadi to Stanley Pool. The BMS station at Arthington had a special siding. The 29½ inch gauge railway, built at terrible cost in human life, especially among the imported African workers, was making the Congo more accessible. Grenfell recorded in September 1898 the visit of Monsieur Buls, Burgomaster of Brussels, to the Bolobo mission station. Although a Roman Catholic, he was impressed by the Protestant missionary methods.

Grenfell was feeling ground down by many years of missionary effort. His old colleague, Holman Bentley, was on furlough in Britain, with grave questions about whether his health would permit him to return to Africa. Mrs Scrivener died of fever, and other missionaries were ill. Yet Grenfell could write in a letter,

I won't get into the dumps - how can I when as I am writing this letter there are over forty young people squatting on the floor of the next room, singing a translation of 'Lo, He comes with clouds descending' to the tune 'Calcutta', with a swing that makes my poor old heart beat fast again with the assurance

of our blessed hope.

The boats kept him busy. He twice reported that he was busy renewing boiler tubes, yet the two Thorneycroft vessels did well compared with other ships on the Congo. On one occasion Howell took the *Peace* to tow the French missionaries' *Leon XIII* after her propeller-shaft had broken. Bishop Agouard, an old acquaintance of Grenfell's, was on board and gave the BMS some carved ivories in gratitude. One State steamer had been lost, with most of the crew, after capsizing on the Kasai river; another had broken down, and a third waited interminably at Stanley Pool for spares from Europe.

Early 1899 found Grenfell up river again. He had an inconclusive interview with the Belgian governor and made an abortive attempt to find a way east up the Lidi river. All this he related to Robert Arthington in a long letter. He also reported further clashes between the Arabs and the State troops, and wondered whether it was God's time for the eastward advance. Better news came from San Salvador: a new mission station was opened at Quibokolo, and work in Angola was extended to Bembe. Grenfell picked up his daughter at Yakusu and proceeded down river, visiting some American missionaries at Lake Mantumba. There Pattie became ill and soon the dreaded symptoms of blackwater fever appeared. Grenfell wanted to hurry back, but the *Peace* was not going at full speed. Overnight he stripped down the engine but achieved little improvement. A storm and a sandbank further delayed them. Pattie was eventually delivered to her mother's care at Bolobo, but died a couple of hours later, aged only nineteen. To the devastated parents came news from England that their second daughter, Gertrude, was severely ill, but fortunately she recovered. It was a month before Grenfell could write down an account of his daughter's death. Mr Baynes urged the Grenfells to return to England, but they were not ready to retire, although they took a furlough the following year.

Nkoko and Red Rubber

Looking back, Grenfell divided his time in Congo into three periods. From 1874 to 1884 was the period of native rule, the Congo that had first horrified him. Ivory and slaves were sold for gin and rum, slaves were buried alive at funerals, and there were witchcraft accusations and the terrible deprivations of the Arab slave-raids. The Congo Free State began, 1884-1894, with great idealism. Drink-traffic was put down, slavery was restricted, Arab raiders were defeated. Peace prevailed and enlightened colonial administrators did their best to improve the Congo. In the third period, 1894-1904, came the rise of rubber production, and with it oppression of the people. There was a headlong rush to extract profits from the country, with a gross over-estimate of the population, and a system of paying officials that encouraged abuse. At first, Grenfell put the atrocities down to the sins of individual agents and administrators, but gradually he realized that the system itself was responsible.

He discounted the first complaints against the Congo Free State in 1890, but by 1893 the reports were becoming more serious and Grenfell was worried. He knew that isolation, illness and even mental unbalance could turn a normal bureaucrat into a monster. Nasty things might be done up-river and, even if he heard, a Governor-General far away at Boma had little power to remedy the situation. Grenfell saw that the Belgians were trying to colonize the Congo at ridiculously low cost. The government paid officials very low salaries, and agents of the rubber companies

were expected to make their living by commission on the rubber they collected. With the end of slave-trading, the only exportable products were ivory and rubber, so poorly paid agents and officials extorted far more than their due from an increasingly demoralized and oppressed population. The Congolese could not understand the white man's idea of taxation: they were required to hand over a quantity fixed in advance, irrespective of how much was actually gathered, and they were resentful. In spite of the worst exactions, the Congo was still running at a loss. The missionaries were helpless spectators, because it was so hard to get proof. Grenfell wrote to Robert Arthington in early 1896, hoping that the furor over the execution of Stokes might encourage others to look into the atrocities, hitherto dismissed as 'missionaries' tales', for various 'international travellers' had returned to Europe saying 'they had seen nothing',

When rubber was not forthcoming, the companies' agents turned their Congolese troops to extort what was due or take vengeance. In 1896 the Governor-General travelled up river to investigate, followed by the British consul, Pickersgill. Grenfell hoped they would put a stop to the atrocities, especially when two Belgians involved were given considerable terms of imprisonment. To his horror, no sooner had the Governor passed one village than the companies' soldiers cut off the hands of twenty people for not producing their rubber quota. Grenfell wrote, 'If this thing is going on while the Governor-General is still up river on a journey of inspection, and at places comparatively close to a mission-station, who can say what is going on in the wide districts whence no reports can possibly come?'

The government appointed a Commission for the Protection of the Natives, to which both Bentley and Grenfell were appointed. Grenfell was less sanguine than Bentley, saying the facts were well enough known and the Commission was largely impotent. Any interested officials could obstruct it, and the Belgian 'Inspector' spoke none of the local languages. Grenfell continued to raise the question of atrocities in the equator region until the Governor-General and his staff came to dislike his persistence. This in turn did not help Protestant missions applying for new sites; Grenfell wryly remarked that the missionaries did much better with the local chiefs. Grenfell attended meetings of the Commission, which produced some damning reports, largely ignored by the government. The State was struggling in a chaotic way to maintain power with inadequate resources, and even in 1899 there were border clashes with the Arabs up the Aruwimi.

At Yakusu school-work had started and Mr Stapleton was studying the local language. Salamu married one of the Congolese helpers. The way she lived out her Christian faith particularly impressed Grenfell. Proceeding up the Aruwimi Grenfell noted the depopulation caused by Arab raids. Another of his helpers found relatives in the villages there, from which he had been taken as a slave. Grenfell watched with interest the local smelting and woodwork techniques.

Mr and Mrs Grenfell, with their small daughter, Grace, returned to England for a last furlough. He wrote to the Baptist colleges, seeking one volunteer to help run the printing presses, and another to release Howell from the day-to-day running of the steamships for more directly religious work. He visited Brussels, and had an interview with the king. He spent a last holiday with his mother in Cornwall before setting out for Africa again in October 1901.

Meanwhile concern about the atrocities was growing. From 1896 the Aborigines

Protection Society had agitated on behalf of the Congolese. In 1901 Mr Morel, of the Elder-Dempster shipping line, left his work to start the protests that led to the Congo Reform Association (1904). The story, first uncovered by missionaries on the upper river, was told in Fox-Bourne's *Civilization in Congoland: a history of wrong-doing* (1903). In 1904 Grenfell wrote to his daughter, Carrie, then in Brussels,

It may be that as the daughter of a Protestant missionary you may have to share some of the obloquy that Belgians are just now pouring out on Protestant missionaries in the Congo. They attribute much of the agitation re Congo affairs to the political aims of the British missionaries. There is no doubt that great cruelties have been inflicted upon many of the Congo people, though only a few instances have come under the personal observation of Baptist Missionary Society men. I have spoken out, as a good man and true should do, concerning those things that have come to my knowledge.

Protests against the atrocities clearly affected the progress of Protestant missions on the Congo. As Grenfell said, Protestant missions did not breed dumb and docile people. He generally got on well with local State officials and local Roman Catholics, but decisions were taken in Brussels and the Vatican, and he was to encounter much more opposition in his last years.

On his return in 1901 he began to negotiate for more BMS stations. He received favourable responses from the Belgian Vice-Governor and from the local Commissaire near Yakusu, and enjoyed a conference of missionaries at Stanley Pool, where he was glad to see Bentley again. He marked out a site for a station at Yalamba, and explored further up the Aruwimi, hoping for permission for another station. Yet he was aware of the pressures of the Roman Catholic authorities, in concert with the State government. He wrote to Alfred Baynes,

In any country such opposition would be a serious factor, but in the Congo, where Roman Catholic missionaries have the active support of the government, it constitutes a difficulty which people in a free country cannot understand . . . The weapon on which we rely is 'the Word', and this, unfortunately for themselves and for Christianity, the Roman Catholics seem afraid to wield. When they take to its use, we shall rejoice with them in their successes. Much of their recent success lies in more or less fictitious occupations, with a view to keeping us at a distance. The present phase of affairs is such as to lead one to write you a word or two on the paramount importance of translation work and schools. The people must have God's Word placed within their reach . . . In this is the only hope of Evangelical Truth making its way in Africa. We white people cannot go everywhere preaching the Word, but with God's help we can scatter it far and wide.

Grenfell was also facing up to the need for a new steamer, eventually met by the stern-wheeler paddle-steamer, *Endeavour*. It was also becoming apparent that Bolobo might not be as convenient as Stanley Pool for docking and repairing ships. The *Peace* was now in continual need of repairs. When a steam valve blew and a vital part went to the bottom of the river, Bungudi made a replacement valve. When the cylinder cover blew up, a Congolese carpenter, Mawango, made a wooden

replacement, which eventually found its way to the BMS museum. Years earlier Mawango had stowed away on the *Peace* with two other small boys to escape Arab slave-traders. Such helpers gave Grenfell the idea of developing proper technical training for Congolese workers; he found time to write a paper that found its way via Alfred Baynes to interested experts in London. Another of Grenfell's young Congolese workers, Disasi, settled at Yalamba to teach and evangelize, and Grenfell was delighted to visit him and hear some hundred people using the Lord's Prayer in the local language, Eonga. Disasi continued this work for the rest of his long life. Grenfell took more boys from the tribal areas up river back to Bolobo for schooling, with a view to becoming evangelists. He was concerned that the Belgians were failing to cultivate a class of educated Africans to help administer the country, and looked forward with foreboding to the possibility of instability and anarchy, especially if black and white ever got across each other.

During his last term of service, Grenfell was much more subject to illness. By now the Africans referred to him as *Tata* (Father) or even *Nkoko* (Grandfather). In the summer of 1903 he explored above Stanley Falls, which are only six feet high but present an impassable barrier to shipping. A young colleague, George Moore, was to have accompanied him, but he died at Yakusu on Easter Day. Grenfell pressed on, reaching Nyangwe where Livingstone had first encountered the great Congo river, and continuing to Kasongo. The *Peace* and the *Goodwill* were soon both on the Bolobo slipway for repairs. Grenfell wrote,

The poor old 'Peace' is in a really bad way, but I shall have to patch her up somehow for a year or two yet. Perhaps she will last my time! As soon as she is ready, I am proposing to go up the Kwango; and by the end of the year I hope to be starting for Yalamba again, to do something serious there.

After much frustration, he and Bentley were contemplating withdrawal from the Commission for the Protection of the Natives, finally convinced that it was a 'blind', set up to give the impression the inactive government was doing something. News came that the State had refused BMS requests for further sites, but had granted the Roman Catholic Premonstrant Fathers 2500 acres in the desired area. Grenfell sent back the decorations given him by King Leopold, with a covering letter, via the BMS in London. This was never delivered, perhaps overlooked because of Baynes' retirement, perhaps held back deliberately because Baynes thought it would just exacerbate the situation. They remained undisturbed in a BMS safe until rediscovered during the move from Gloucester Place to Didcot in 1990 y. The letter to King Leopold, here reproduced in full for the first time, shows Grenfell's frame of mind on 10 August 1903. This was before he heard of the atrocities uncovered by the British consul, Roger Casement.

Sire,

From time to time I have been honoured with indications of your Royal favour, and on two occasions I have received decorations you have conferred upon me that I have been proud to wear.

I have been cognisant of Your Majesty's work on the Congo since its inception, and rejoiced very sincerely when I first learned that Your Majesty was undertaking the task of administering this wide and lawless territory. My satisfaction was all the more keen because I had been one of those who had

unavailingly petitioned our own [the British] government to undertake the responsibility of governing another and equally needy part of the continent, and remembered very vividly the disappointment that was felt when the petition was refused and the country condemned to remain for ten more years the prey of native misgovernment and anarchy, the bitterness of which I had learned only too well from hard experience.

It has been with the keenest sympathy that I have watched the progress of the enlightened rule which put an end to the slave trading I have seen carried on on the lower river both by Europeans and natives, which has so markedly curbed the drink traffic and so effectually rolled back the tide of Arab invasion that at one time threatened to devastate the valley of the great river right down to the sea. It has come within my experience to have to face the muzzles of slave-raiders' guns. I have walked in cannibal villages along paths bordered with the skulls of victims, and I have stood by open graves and ineffectually striven to prevent living slaves from being buried with their dead masters in territory where for years past Your Majesty's rule has rendered such experiences impossible, and, in the light of these facts, I very gratefully remember the immense benefits that have been conferred upon certain sections of the Congo country.

I recognize that the work of civilizing a barbarous people, and that the evolution of order out of the chaos which characterized the wide region now under Your Majesty's sway is not the work of a day, or a year, or even a score of years - I am glad to have lived to see so much accomplished. I do not shut my eyes to the fact that mistakes have been made, and that even serious crimes have been committed by those charged with the administration and development of the country - the records of your judicial courts furnish proofs of these. There are those who maintain that these have been the natural outcome of the policy of the State; for myself, I am convinced that the spirit of the Codes Congolais is entirely opposed to them, though, undoubtedly, the authority given to or assumed by officials of various grades leads to regrettable infractions of the early ideals of the Congo State.

Serious events such as have recently attracted so much attention in Europe, and as have quite lately evoked the remonstrances of some of my colleagues, have never come within range of my own experience. Those wrongs of which I have had personal knowledge I have reported to those in authority, and in no case has my representation been disregarded, and where possible justice has been done.

There is, however, one matter of which I have to complain to Your Majesty - and in so doing I shall surprise some by the fact that instead of taking action upon what they regard as the great failing of the State, I emphasize what appears to them as a comparatively secondary point. If I believed the Congo Administration to be directly responsible for the wrongs suffered by the people, as they believe it to be, I should be compelled on that account to discontinue to wear the honours Your Majesty has conferred upon me - unfortunately I find myself driven to that conclusion on another count.

It may be that, after having conferred very substantial advantages upon other missions, the Higher Policy of the State has prevented Your Majesty from

granting the comparatively small requests of the Society I represent; but Your Majesty will not be slow to recognize that it has been rendered impossible for me to continue to wear the insignia of the royal favour of the Sovereign whose will blocks the way to the realization of the well known plans of our Society, plans that were formed before the State came into existence, while the more or less similar plans of newer organizations are fostered and even substantially endowed at the expense of the State, and all this notwithstanding the claim to equal consideration we believe we possess.

It is therefore, Your Majesty, with extreme regret that I find myself compelled to return the decoration of Chevalier of the Order of Leopold, as well as that of the Order of the Lion of Africa your Majesty did me the honour to confer upon me.

With the assurance of my unflinching devotion to the work of securing the progress of the Congo and the good of the people, Your Majesty's subjects, and with profoundest regret, I remain, Sir,

Your Majesty's faithful and dutiful servant

George Grenfell

Grenfell was grieved with King Leopold on several counts. The king, he felt, had been two-faced, giving him encouragement to his face but then thwarting the BMS plans for further stations. At that stage Grenfell was generous, if somewhat naïve, in allowing the Belgians and Congo Free State the benefit of the doubt over the worst allegations of atrocities. Within a few weeks of sending back the decorations, he was to hear evidence that turned him decisively against the Congo Free State. On his way to Bolobo, after making some representations to the Governor-General, he met the British consul, Roger Casement, who had been making his own enquiries. On hearing Casement's damning evidence, Grenfell immediately resigned from the Commission for the Protection of the Natives and wrote to Baynes and his friends, detailing the new allegations of misgovernment.

Grenfell was in the worst of situations. There were those at home who criticized him for not protesting enough against the 'Red Rubber' atrocities. Other BMS missionaries had been far more vocal. J. H. Weeks had protested strongly after the Yanjali massacre in 1903, when 117 were slaughtered, including women and children. By contrast, Grenfell had been cautious, only protesting when he had unimpeachable evidence, and always working through the 'official' channels. Nevertheless, he was now also in bad odour with the Belgians, who were always ready to blame Protestant missionaries for the furore caused by their own misgovernment. Grenfell was aware that vocal protests from him might have had the effect of closing down all missionary work - that was why he had left the return of the decorations to Alfred Baynes' discretion. He could put up with personal shame, but was greatly concerned for the work of Christ in the Congo.

Lawson Forfeitt, back in England in 1904, managed to persuade the Belgian authorities to lease land at Yalamba for a mission-station, in part reparation for State occupation of land bought by the BMS at Mundungu on the Itumbiri river. The Red Rubber controversy rumbled on. Casement wrote to Grenfell, thanking him for his help. Opposition to Protestant missions increased: petty bureaucratic restrictions showered down, including the preposterous order that 'orphans' at BMS stations should be removed to the care of Roman Catholics. In June Grenfell heard from

other missionaries of murder and cannibalism by soldiers of the rubber companies up the river. Back in England photographs of mutilated remains and charred bones swelled the mounting dossier of crimes.

Grenfell's last years

Poor health restricted Grenfell's dealings with the Royal Commission of Inquiry which came to the Congo at the end of 1904. He heard that Alfred Baynes was proposing to resign as General Secretary of the BMS, and asked 'Who knows Congo affairs as he does? or who else can so steer us through the present crisis?' Baynes found his urgent letters to the authorities in Brussels were not even acknowledged. At Monsembe the rapacious activities of the State had led to serious depopulation, so J. H. Weeks moved down to Wathen, leaving Congolese teachers to work with those still left.

More happily, Grenfell visited the out-station at Bongende, founded by one of his Congolese workers, and found a hundred present at a service. By September he had some Congolese helpers installed at Yalamba, starting services and school work. Out-stations around Yakusu were flourishing: with joy Grenfell contrasted the present situation with the devastation he had seen after an Arab raid twenty years earlier. Already many places had choirs, which were to become such a feature of Congo church life. At that time Grenfell remarked that sometimes the singing was not particularly tuneful but it was hearty and 'he had to join in'. He recorded a lovely experience one evening as he was anchoring at sunset and heard a group of schoolboys singing 'All hail the power of Jesus' name' as they fished from their canoes.

Weakened by recurrent sickness, Grenfell eventually settled at Yalamba and revelled in fresh pioneer work. When people there were not suffering the depredations of the tax-men, they continued their old feuds. Once Grenfell found two lines of furious warriors, armed to the teeth and decorated with paint and feathers. Grenfell went down between the lines, laying about him with a bamboo stick. He recorded, 'They must have felt very ridiculous standing there, being licked with a stick by a little old white man'. Next morning many thanked him for saving bloodshed. Sixty miles away two Europeans were killed by Congolese enraged by the continuing exactions of the rubber companies. Grenfell still dreamed of an humane and righteous government that would oversee the proper development of the Congo, but he had a nasty clash with the Governor-General at Monsembe. The Governor called Grenfell, whom others deemed complacent, the worst of all Protestant missionaries. Grenfell pointed out that he used to be proud to wear the royal decorations he had now sent back. He wrote to ask Baynes what he had decided to do with the decorations. Publication of the long-awaited report of the Commission of Inquiry did nothing to allay worries. Grenfell thought even government supporters should feel uneasy.

In January 1906 there was a Conference of Missionaries.³ Lawson Forfeitt arrived with sad news of Holman Bentley's death in England from a disease

³ This was the third meeting of the Conference of Protestant Missionaries, which had first gathered in 1902. The BMS contributed 15 of the 56 members.

contracted in the Congo. Grenfell paid a passionate tribute to his friend, observing that, although twenty-five years service would be quite ordinary at home, in Africa it was remarkable. Photographs show Grenfell the only white-haired missionary at the Conference, portly after years of eating *kwanga* (manioc-root porridge). With his little thin-rimmed glasses, he looks the elder statesman.

The Conference passed a strong resolution deploring the misrule of the Congo Free State. Grenfell contrasted present exploitation with the old days, but still his faith prevailed:

I rejoiced in the prospect of better times. I saw the fall of the Arabs; then saw the door closed against strong drink, and when His Majesty bestowed his decorations upon me I was proud to wear them. But when the change of regime came, from philanthropy to self-seeking of the basest and most cruel kind, I was no longer proud of the decorations . . . We are serving a great Master. We are on the winning side. Victory is not uncertain. Truth is strong, and must prevail. We are checked, but not disheartened.

After the Conference, Grenfell sailed up river again to visit out-stations around Bolobo, his wife accompanying him part way. The old *Peace* struggled against the stream, towing three other boats with house fittings for the new Yalamba station. Grenfell was glad to hear the pieces of the *Endeavour* had arrived safely at Stanley Pool. He had slight worries about stern-wheelers, since the *Roi des Belges* had recently capsized, but he had spent £1000 on having the *Endeavour* made wider and the plans had been approved by the designers who made the boats in which Sir Thomas Lipton, the millionaire grocer, made several attempts to win the America's Cup. He was also interested in plans to make slides of BMS work in Congo to show in England. Some years earlier, Bentley had used slides in teaching Bible stories to the Congolese, but this was the first attempt to take material the other way.

The voyage from Bolobo to Yalamba took six weeks. Finding all the Yakusu team busy, Grenfell could not take a missionary colleague to Yalamba. With government harassment still a threat, and in failing health, Grenfell relied a lot on his Congolese workers. One of these died as a result of a quarrel with some local men and, when those responsible were punished, someone tried to set fire to Grenfell's house.

Grenfell still kept in touch with the outer world. He knew of the British General Election and the education question. He followed with interest debates in the Belgian parliament, where many favoured proper annexation of the Congo. He wrote to his wife in Bolobo and to English friends, thanking them for the care they were giving to his children. On 5 June he wrote to his sister:

During the time I was down with fever and was so much on my back, I often used to think of the old place, and wonder if I should ever see it again. In the spirit, perhaps I may; in the body, it is hardly likely. A man at my age in Central Africa is an old man, and these last two or three years have told on me a great deal. However, God has been wonderfully good to me - infinitely good, and I can wait the unfolding of His will concerning me with all confidence.

On 17 June Grenfell's workers, led by Disasi, sent a letter to the missionaries at Yakusu:

My dear sirs, Millman Kempton and Smith. We are very sorrow because our Master is very sick. So now we beging you one of you let him come to help Mr Grenfell, please, we think now is near to die, but we dont know how to do with him.

Grenfell was taken down to the State station at Basoko. He had been concerned to send the *Peace* to pick up the British consul and Millman. When Millman arrived, he found Grenfell's workers weeping outside the house because Grenfell had asked them if they thought he would ever see his wife again. A Belgian doctor attended him but the dreaded blackwater fever took its course. Grenfell died in the early hours of 1 July 1906.

He would have liked to have been buried at Yalamba, but State permission could not be obtained in time, so the funeral took place at Basoko. One of his workers, Baluti, wrote an account:

Workmen toiled through the darkness by lamplight, and made a good coffin. Cloth was put round him well. The soldiers were dressed in their uniforms, and came to the burying. First we and the teachers sang a hymn 'Shall we gather at the river' (in a native version). then the soldiers fired their guns, and we raised the body, and carried it gently gently, the soldiers blowing their trumpets as they marched. When the body was laid to rest, they fired their guns again. Mr Millman read the service. Then we sang another hymn, the State white men looking on, and a Roman Catholic priest. Last of all, we closed the grave, replacing the earth, and so the death of Tata finished.

A large cross and stone slab mark the grave at Basoko, with the inscription

In memory of George Grenfell, Tala tala, Nkoko,
of the Baptist Missionary Society
Missionary and explorer in Central Africa
for over 30 years.
Born August 21st 1849. Died July 1st 1906
"A servant of Jesus Christ".

Epilogue

Mrs Grenfell was at Bolobo when her husband died. A month or so later she received a letter from Mr Baynes, addressed to her late husband, continuing the correspondence about his decorations. Howell's reply on her behalf joined the decorations in the BMS safe until 1990. The BMS were in something of a quandary about Mrs Grenfell. She had never been officially a missionary of the Society, yet they felt a responsibility for the widow of a famous missionary. Moreover, her daughter, Caroline, had offered herself as a missionary teacher in the Congo. After consultations with other missionaries and with Mrs Grenfell, it was agreed that she should leave Bolobo. She still had a brother in Fernando Po and relatives in Jamaica. The BMS felt she would do better to go to Jamaica. Caroline's offer was turned down, on the grounds that they were not sending single ladies to Congo. The BMS ensured that Mrs Grenfell would be properly supported, minuting that:

The Finance Committee, in response to the desire of the Special Congo Committee, have given to the important question of the allowance to be made to Mrs Grenfell their careful consideration. They cordially concur in the opinion expressed by the Special Committee, that in view of the signal, long continued and unique services of their devoted brother, the late George Grenfell on behalf of the Native Peoples of the vast Congo regions of Central Africa, the provision made for his widow and children should be generous and sufficient, and they have unanimously resolved to recommend to the General Committee that an annuity of £120 per annum be granted, with a further sum of £15 per annum for the maintenance and education of the youngest child Isabel, until she reaches the age of eighteen, in accordance with the Regulations of the Society.

Mr Hawkes, Grenfell's lifelong friend, was appointed to administer the money. Mrs Grenfell appears to have spent some time in England before eventually moving to the West Indies. Her daughter Caroline is buried in the family grave at Sancreed.

Mrs Grenfell lived on in Jamaica until 1928. Her obituary in the *Missionary Herald* acknowledged 'she was frequently his companion upon his journeys in the little steamer. She was mission helper as well as companion, for during the many years of her home life at Bolobo she gave valuable help in teaching the women and girls.' By then her husband's story was already slipping into history.

Grenfell's charts and compass went to Bristol Baptist College. Models of the *Peace* and *Goodwill* still featured in some missionary exhibitions, like one on the Isle of Wight visited by the son of the Thorneycroft who had built the *Peace*. The *Peace* had indeed lasted out Grenfell's time, but little more. A committee met in 1907 to consider what to do with the steamers. The names of those attending read like a roll of honour for service in the Congo: Lily de Hailes, Cameron, Lawson Forfeitt, J. H. Weeks, T. Lewis, John Howell, and the new BMS Secretary, C. E. Wilson. They decided to lay the vessels up for the time being. Subsequently the *Peace* was lent to the British consul. The BMS explicitly declined any financial gain from this, but stipulated that the good name of the *Peace* should be kept, as a ship known to be associated with the BMS. In June 1908 both steamers were back at Stanley Pool, where the *Goodwill* was repaired, but John Howell wrote:

Now I have to report that the 'Peace', I fear, has finished her career on the waters of the Congo. She came down last Saturday week to be turned over to the Consul. The young men in charge reported trouble with the pumps on the way down. We stripped the boiler for an examination, which revealed a very bad state indeed; the tubes were worn out, a number had burst. How they got down here I know not. It is impossible to get up steam unless the boiler be retubed, and it is very certain that you would have to order a new hull for her. It is a case of the old skipper who is said to have sent a hawse-hole to have a new ship made to it.

Here she lies, dented, worn, weather-stained. What a history behind her, what a work she has done! I cannot picture her without Grenfell on board, I don't want to do so; they are and ever will be inseparably connected. I am sorry not to be able to suggest aught but breaking up. I might suggest that the front cabin be sent home for exhibitions; it is not heavy, is the original cabin,

and I would think would be an interesting relic.

The *Peace* had undergone many changes during her period of service. Some old photos even show a hen-coop on top of the awning. Patched and repaired times without number, not much was original, but now all parts were wearing out at the same time. The BMS General Committee agreed with Howell and breaking up began, just as the Belgians were finally taking over the Congo from the discredited Congo Free State. The old boiler remained at Stanley Pool, and can still be seen in the garden of the BMS compound. Much of the remainder was brought back to England. In October 1908 Howell wrote to the BMS in London:

The parts of the 'Peace' left yesterday for Matadi, and should be down for the English steamer calling here this weekend. We cut the hull up into four transverse sections. After a good bit of consideration, this seemed the best thing to do. It should be easy to fit together, and will allow you to take a part, or more as you have room for exhibiting. We have sent you hull up to boiler, cabin, cabin fittings, hand rails and awning. If you can rebuild this, you will be able to give folk a very good idea of the principal end of the boat as she was afloat on the Congo. A short history in pamphlet form ought to sell well; you have plenty of matter and photos for such a purpose. Most likely this has been suggested. If so, please forgive.

So much of the *Peace* came back to England, but it proved rather a large 'relic'. In 1910 the Lectures, Loans and Exhibitions Sub-Committee had to act:

S.S. Peace. The Sub-Committee have carefully considered the question of the future utility of the S.S. 'Peace'. The cost of her storage is a constant expense, and she can only be used at large Exhibitions, and with increasing difficulty. They have instructed the Secretary to make enquiries respecting the practicability of using the material of the boat as souvenirs, with the exception of certain parts which can be easily erected for use in future Exhibitions.

In November 1910 the Sub-Committee finally recommended that 'the 'Peace' be now broken up, with the exception of such parts as can be conveniently used at Exhibitions, and that steps be taken to use the plates as souvenirs. The Secretary has been instructed to proceed with the matter.' The hull was cut into pieces about the size of a postcard and, for an outlay of between one shilling and sixpence and half a crown (7½p to 12½p), many friends and supporters of the BMS acquired a tangible piece of missionary history.

[For acknowledgements see Part 1, July 1993, pp.139ff.]

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