

A VISIT TO NG'AMBO.

THE first difficulty in getting to Ng'ambo is to find one's way. In all I believe there are something like 30,000 natives. It has grown much and is still growing. Now and again a hut is pulled down or left in skeleton condition—just the large beams tied together with rope. One thinks very triumphantly, "There is a landmark, anyhow," but in a few weeks the broken or unfinished huts are intact again. They are very close together, and one can only take one's bearings by the position of the sun in the evening.

How one wishes there could be a big school for the children. They run around in numbers—mischievous faces, sad little faces, merry faces, and sulky little faces "in all shades" of brown. A great many of them learn to read a few chapters of the Koran.

The other day a very bright girl was employing herself in writing pieces of the Koran on a white china plate; that was supposed to be a charm to affect the food. A great many of the doors are decorated with texts from the Koran, and also occa-

sionally amateur drawings of ships, etc., and the quaintest mixture of English advertisements, often upside down! So and so's potted meat, trade marks from American longcloth, "Best Bird's Eye," "Finest Ale," and so on.

No photographs can give an idea of the pretty colouring one meets everywhere. Each native one passes seems to be an Eastern picture. The Hindi women are very gay. One costume I saw was very bright orange yellow silk trousers with gold and black embroidery at the ankles, a long overvest of crimson silk, and a purple and black silk wrap over head and shoulders; really it seems quite a pity they should wear them on muddy days!

Many Hindi shops are to be found along the main routes in Ng'ambo, and very picturesque they are; some seem to be universal providers. The ubiquitous *kikapu* (basket) abounds in all sizes filled with flour or grains of various kinds or fruits, bright green or yellow oranges and limes, great big pale green jack fruits, green and red embes, and scarlet *pili pili* or capsicums. Generally great bunches of

unripe and ripe bananas hang along the front. On one baraza one will see men and



boys busy making white muslin kanzus, on another some women plaiting their pretty mats, just like those sold at the Dartmouth St. Office.

It is not all work by any means: here and there one sees a group of men in beautifully white kanzus playing cards, often I fear for money. Another crowd will perhaps surround some dancers. These will be very gaily dressed, some of them wearing a savage head dress of feathers, others whitened faces, which make them look very weird. Once we saw some very excited brightly clad women; they were making dreadful noises and drummings and squeakings and whistling, but they stopped and disappeared when we drew near, for they know we disapproved of their "casting out evil spirits," as they call it.

In one large open space beneath some great mango trees some men are often making sails for their big dhows, and the women sometimes are making vermicelli.

It is amusing to see the *way* things are worn. Bath towels are used as turbans; to-day I saw an old lace curtain used as a shawl; and old waistcoats worn outside a kanzu seem to be fashionable. Many of the people are very friendly; most of the Arabs and the richer Swahilis who follow in their wake (and wear flowing white kanzus and loose sandals and carry Mohammedan rosaries) regard us from a height of lofty superiority. We meet a number of them just before six o'clock (p.m.) when

they are making their way to some of the many mosques, or performing their ceremonial ablutions outside the mosque just before entering.

If only we had a priest who knew Arabic and would work in Ng'ambo!

Islam has such a great influence on the Swahilis through the Arabs. At present all that seems possible is to pray for them and to try to remove some of their perverted ideas as to what we *do* believe. One realizes more and more the enormous difficulty of individual conversions from Islam to Christ; one does trust the rising generation will, from more contact with Europeans, be less likely to continue polygamy. An Arab lady quite unused to any self-support would have a very difficult course before her if she were really prepared to be a Christian.

EVA D. DAVIS.

ZANZIBAR, February 21, 1901.



TREES AT LAKE NYASA.

(PHOTOGRAPHS BY DR. HOWARD.)



THE MLAZA OR FAN-PALM is perhaps the most useful tree found growing about the shores of Lake Nyasa. Its trunk is very smooth and straight and tall, sometimes reaching a height of more than fifty feet. It tapers off slightly towards the summit, and is crowned with a great bunch of exceedingly

large stiff fan-like leaves, from which the ordinary palm fans are made. The natives also use these leaves for making mats and rope. They tear them into narrow strips which they plait together into a broad band about five inches wide. When a strip of about thirty yards of this plaiting is finished they begin to sew it together—the needle and thread both being made from the palm fibres—till they have produced a kind of tube. This is then cut open and laid flat, the raw edges are neatly bound over with another piece of plaiting, and the mat, which measures about two yards long and one yard wide, is complete. It is a long and tedious process but quite a mechanical one, and so little does the native value his time that he thinks sixpence a very good price for all that labour.

The rope is made by twisting many strands of the fibre into a single plait, and is very strong and durable. Native bedsteads are made of a quadrangular wooden frame, supported by four legs and laced with this rope in a sort of diamond pattern, and are exceedingly comfortable. The trunk of the *Mlaza* makes a splendid flag-staff, and lately, instead of brick or stone pillars to support the verandahs of the houses, these trunks have been used, and are very effective and picturesque. In old days, before salt was brought into the country by the traders, it was obtained by the natives from the ash left after burning pieces of *Mlaza* wood.

The *CHIWALI* or *RAPHIA-PALM* is an exceedingly beautiful tree, and is generally found in damp marshy places, or on river banks. Its leaves, which often exceed thirty feet in length, are so wonderfully graceful and picturesque that it seems a sort of desecration to cut them down and strip them of their lovely green for any purpose so prosaic as house-building. The mid-ribs, however, of these same leaves are so strong and light that they make admirable rafters for roofs. They are smooth and shiny outside, but the



inside substance is soft and fibrous. Excellent doors are made of strips of the shiny part nailed neatly on to a light frame, and the natives make dainty little boxes and bird cages out of the soft fibrous inner portion, cutting it into strips and bending it into shape, fastening it together by means of little pegs made out of the fibres themselves.

For church decoration there is nothing more effective than these graceful leaves, though they are difficult to manipulate owing to the sharp prickles with which they abound; and a Palm Sunday procession at Likoma or Kota Kota is a lovely sight, never to be forgotten when one has once beheld it.

The *BAOBAB TREE* abounds on the island of Likoma, and forms one of the chief



features in its scenery. For the greater part of the year groups of these gigantic trees stand leafless and bare, like so many grim sentinels on its shores. The trunks are so huge that some of them cannot be spanned by a chain of six or seven people joining hands. However, in November, at the hottest time of the year, when all the country is dry and parched, buds shoot forth on the apparently lifeless branches, and soon the whole tree is clothed in a profusion of foliage which altogether transforms its appearance and that of the whole landscape. Its blossom then quickly follows, white, very large and handsome; would that it were not so evil smelling! The fruit, which remains hanging on the tree long after it has lost its leaves, is like a hard green gourd. There is a hard outer shell, and inside are a number of white seeds. A piece of the shell is the receptacle usually provided by patients for carrying away their ointment from the dispensary. The seeds, though very acrid, are eaten by the natives. The timber of the Baobab cannot be used for building purposes, being quite soft, and crumbling like touch wood.

Some of the harbours on Lake Nyasa are beautified by the ACACIA TREES, which



grow right out into the water and cast delightful shadows with their graceful drooping branches. They have clusters

of bright yellow flowers which seem to blossom on when all their sisters on the shore have grown tired of so much sun, and languish for the rains. Another sort of Acacia, which has been imported from Zanzibar, grows in dry places, and just about Christmas time bursts out into a blaze of scarlet flower, as it were warning all beholders to arise and shine for the Light has come.

The NINEPIN TREE—will some kind botanist please tell us its scientific name?—is rather common also in these parts. It is a



large tree, with beautiful dark green foliage, and it produces quantities of fruit in the shape of hard grey gourds somewhat resembling ninepins. This fruit is very heavy and absolutely useless; it might perhaps serve as a missile in warfare, and would do a fair amount of damage.

Y. Z.

April, 1901.

VISITING IN ZANZIBAR.



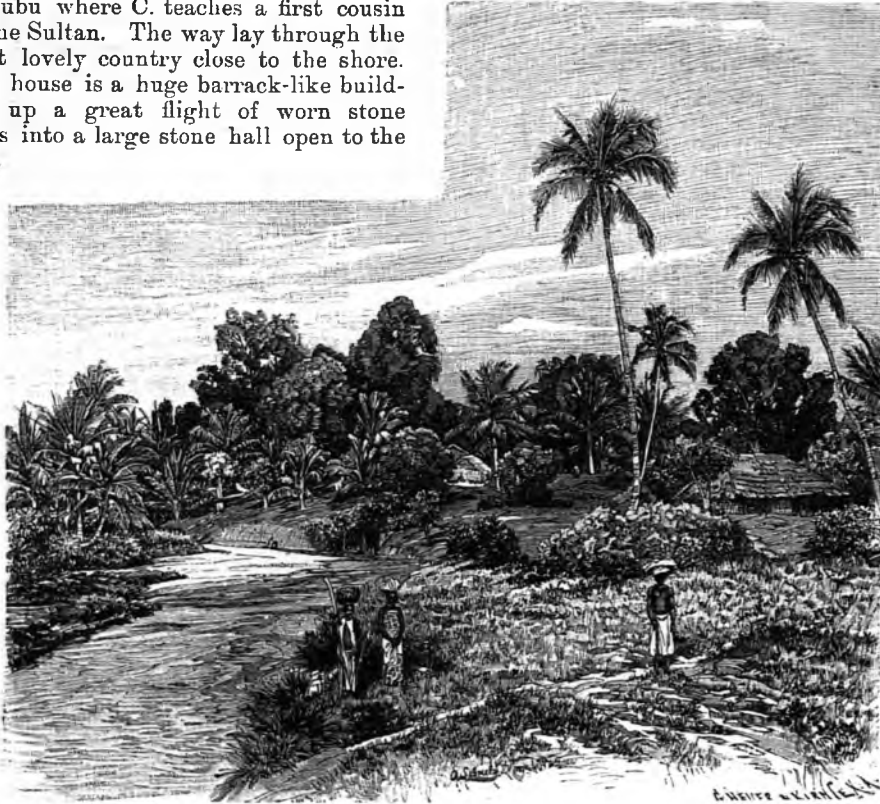
It is now the rainy season, and we live in a sort of vapour bath. The roads are in a very bad condition, and the streets are simply rushing torrents. To get to church from our house we either have to wait until the rain has run off a little, or else wade through water

which in parts is ankle deep. I believe they are going to try to fill up the biggest holes, but the rush of water is so great that it sweeps everything along, and wears away all repairs in no time.

Yesterday C. and I went right away to a shamba seven miles out of town to Bububu where C. teaches a first cousin of the Sultan. The way lay through the most lovely country close to the shore. The house is a huge barrack-like building up a great flight of worn stone steps into a large stone hall open to the

one place I got into a nasty hole, but managed to right myself.

A day or two ago I went to see another Arab lady whose son has been slowly dying of heart disease for some months. Since my last visit he had passed away, and the



THE MOUTH OF THE BUBUBU, ZANZIBAR.

roof. We were shown into a long narrow carpeted room with two beds in it and cushions and seats, and after refreshments we were allowed to proceed with the work on hand, viz., the instruction of — in the truths of our religion. It was quite dark before we got home, and we went splashing and stumbling along the roads. In

poor mother was in great grief. I felt so sorry because I could say nothing absolutely to comfort her, for her son was a rigid Mohammedan. The poor thing just laid her head on my shoulder and sobbed away, and then she felt better. The son's wife had been taken away to her own mother together with their little son, a bright little

fellow, who was most keen to hear about our Lord when I went to teach. Presently the lady said, "Come into this room," and took me into another apartment. At one end was a woman dressed in long white garments from head to foot, sitting on a mat fanning herself. This was his minor wife, and she had to sit there for several weeks as a sign of mourning. I thought she wouldn't speak, but she did and most cheerfully too.

In another house where I visit, the lady generally sits in a great stone hall with pillars, surrounded with her slaves, who are generally plaiting mats. Goats, chicken,

This is a peculiar sound made in their throats, only uttered by women. I was told that it is considered a disgrace for a man to give vent to it. Upon hearing this the bridegroom came out from an inner room and led us back there. This room was crowded with Arab and Hindi ladies, dressed in all the most brilliant colours imaginable, and laden with gold chains, etc. They were sitting on mats; those we knew arose and shook hands with us. Chairs were then brought to us, and a slave handed us sherbet to sip and another gave us jasmine blossoms, and after that we gazed and



ZANZIBAR HOUSES.

cats, and guinea pigs run about in the most friendly manner, and yet the husband of this lady is in the Sultan's household. I should like to show you over a few of these curious houses.

I went to a wedding some time ago. First of all we went through two rooms, dens I might call them, where there were several huge cauldron sort of pots full of a kind of hotch potch. They were standing on three stones, over wood fires, which is the usual mode of cooking here. It reminded one of the witch scene in Macbeth with all these black slaves flitting about. Up we went to a large stone landing crammed with slaves, who upon seeing us set up the wedding cry.

smiled at each and exchanged greetings. At the end of the room there was a bed all covered up with a red and white net. Presently a lady came forward and took us up one by one to see the bride who was sitting in state inside the net which was raised to admit us. She was dressed most gorgeously, and the amount of gold ornaments she wore in her nose, ears, on her hands, neck, waist, ankles, arms, and hands, and on her toes even, would have set up a modest little jeweller's shop. The heat was really overpowering, and only an Arab or a Hindi could have sat so patiently and calmly through it all. She told us that she would have to remain there all night while

her friends and slaves feasted! Her husband-elect was the only man present. After a time we left, followed by deafening wedding cries. For nights before this wedding the husband-to-be had gone out upon his housetop praying aloud for hours, much to the distraction we heard afterwards of some of his European neighbours.

We have been to several Arab functions. When I had only been here six months and was very lame with my Swahili, a slave stopped me in the street and told me that I was wanted at once. I went, not knowing in the least why I was required. I was taken to a house which I had often passed, but had never entered. I was led into a room which was full of women all sitting upon mats. Directly I went in some of them began to wail, so I knew it was a funeral party. A lady, covered from head to foot in dark blue, beckoned to me to come and sit on a cushion at the head of the room, and I immediately sat down feeling very nervous. Presently they stopped their wailing, and then one whom

I knew told me that the daughter of the house was dead and would I read to them? So I opened my Testament and read the raising of Lazarus. When I had finished, I with difficulty made them understand that another of our ladies who could speak Swahili should come and see them that afternoon. I would have given all I possessed to have been able to speak at such a time—when their hearts were longing for real sympathy and comfort—and tell them about our dear Lord. One of our ladies did go in the afternoon, but many had gone and others

were sleeping, but some listened most attentively.

You know how strict they are during the Ramathan fast. It closes at the appearance of the new moon, and this is very anxiously watched for. I happened to be returning from Kiungani on the night. I could see the shore lined with people watching for its appearance. Presently a man passed me running saying most excitedly "Look, Bibi, look, look, look, there is the new moon, and they haven't fired the cannon



STREET SCENE IN ZANZIBAR.

yet! No more fasting! Have you seen the moon?" And he wouldn't be contented until I *had* seen it. At that moment the guns went off twenty times, and from every quarter there went up shouts and cries. It all sounded very weird. The man darted off wildly again shouting, "No more fasting," etc., quite beside himself with joy. This doesn't end the fast for women; *they* have six days more. There was no merry-making or procession this year because of the Queen's death. I felt very sorry for the people, for it is their great festival. I hope they will have their rejoicing later on

for they have been so nice over their deprivation. All the swings and merry-go-rounds were taken down and everything stopped even before we heard of her death. When the news came an Arab lady asked me if we "had placed her with Jesus"? If, when she died, "Jesus had received her"? There were such curious notions too about her funeral, and I can scarcely get in a word of teaching as they always revert to the "Queenie," and ask hundreds of questions about her and her habits and customs, and about her successor.



HOUSES SHOWING THE MAKUTI ROOF.

This afternoon (January 27) I went to see some Comoro people; there are numbers on the island. They are of an olive complexion with dark hair and eyes—rather a handsome race on the whole. Three sisters live together. They are always reclining, but when I go in I receive a very warm welcome, and then they sink back in a seemingly exhausted condition. Very comical it is at times, and I feel very much inclined to have a good laugh. Sometimes there are as many as six women all reclining, four or five slaves and as many children.

The door, which is always ajar, opens on to the street, and people hearing a strange voice always flock in, and at times I have quite a large congregation. It is only a large hut, with a mud floor and walls formed of thick sticks filled in with mud through which the daylight shows in many places; no windows of course, but rather lofty and with a *makuti* (split cocoa-nut leaves) roof. It is a very dirty place, like most of the houses here, but still you are welcomed, especially if one of the sisters in particular is there. To-day (January 27)

she told me she had been to see an old aunt (or sister she called her) who had been ill for ten years. The poor old thing was left alone, her slaves having deserted her when they found she was dying. Before doing so however, they had put some food in a plate on her chest that she might not starve! and then took themselves off. Having heard this she went round to help the poor old dame in her last moments.

J.

"Miss Jameson is now in charge of all our five schools—boys', girls', little town boys' schools here, and boys' and girls' schools at Kasamba. To-day Miss Glover made her first medical visit to Kasamba. The news that we had lost our good Queen came like a thunder clap on January 24th. It was explained to the boys how the Prince of Wales would at once become King, so different from what might happen in this land when a ruler dies.

M. A. CAMERON.

KOTA KOTA, Jan. 28.



LAKE NYASA.

TWO weeks ago I went for a trip on the s.s. *Charles Janson* to Mponda's. It is very nice travelling by the "C. J." now with her new fittings; you can sleep in comfort, and not fear to be awakened by the rain pouring upon you or the sea dashing through the port holes. At some of the villages, at the south end of the lake, there is a great scarcity of food, and Mr. Eyre is doing all he can to bring food from the more fortunate villages to help the poor starving people to tide over this their time of adversity. This trip we took down a large quantity of cassava shoots, giving a quantity to the chief of each village for his people to plant. Cassava hitherto has not been grown at these villages. Cassava grows almost anywhere with little cultivation, no drought having any effect on it whatever; you can judge of this, for it even grows at Likoma. Mr. Eyre also bought large quantities of Indian corn at Lungwena to sell to the people at a very much reduced price. The people also buy rice which is grown here at Kota Kota; I went ashore one morning to help Mr. Eyre dispose of these food stuffs. I think I shall never forget the sight. The people brought fowls, cloth and enamelled plates to exchange for food. They were so anxious to buy that they forgot to bargain (all Africans love to bargain, in

fact they think they are being cheated unless a long discussion precedes any buying).

The rains are coming now, and the crops of Indian corn should soon be ripe. I heard the other day that the collector at Fort Johnston had given away £15 worth of rice to the people in his district. A good many people think that B.C.A. would have been in a very sorry way but for the rice grown here; about 500 tons of rice are, I believe, produced annually in this district. The great majority of people here pay their taxes in rice, ninety pounds for 3s., and of course the traders buy all they can get at the same price. Just now we are sending several tons to Mponda's for the men working on the new steamer, for it is almost impossible to get men down there unless you can supply them with food.

Mr. Crouch seems to be going on splendidly with the new steamer.

We intend to build a new church here after the rains, but I can do nothing to forward the work as the people are busy gardening and growing their food for the coming year.

Building operations are more expensive every year; the native wages are continually rising. Natives from here can easily get



"CHARLES JANSON" ARRIVING AT LIKOMA.

double the wages in North-East Rhodesia, and if they care to go to Fort Salisbury the wages are enormous. I try to keep wages as low as possible, but I cannot hold back too much or I should lose my best people.

Before I went to Unangu last year I left two boys apprentices here who were learning bricklaying. During the time I was away one left and went to Rhodesia, tempted by the large wages. The other day Padre Stokes received a letter, and ls. for an offertory, from him! Sometimes we think if our boys leave us they forget all about the Mission. J. PERCY CLARKE.

KOTA KOTA, February 8, 1901.

KILIMANI.

The new chapel in the Boys' Home was opened on February 4, by Archdeacon Griffin. We were very sorry that the Chaplain, the Rev. F. Weston, was unable to be present. The day began with celebration at 7, the boys who had been confirmed making their communion. Miss Clutterbuck came over and spent the day with us. At 4.30 tea was provided for all the Europeans who paid us a visit, and afterwards we sang Te Deum in the chapel.

The collections for the day amounted to about £4.

LIKOMA GIRLS' SCHOOL.

On December 14 the priest-in-charge distributed prizes to those girls, thirty-seven in number, who had made 75 per cent. of attendances during the year. The prizes were books, and all those who can read a little were keen to get them; but the discontinuance of giving dresses as prizes has caused a falling off of some of the elder girls. The greatest hindrance to the work is the long visit of weeks and months to the mainland of the girls to help get in the millet harvest. Many Likoma people have shares in mainland gardens, and usually the whole family "flits."

Scarcely a week passes without several new girls appearing at school; sometimes as many as a dozen have come; but experience teaches that it is unwise to enter them on the register until they have had about a month's probation. Some of them are satisfied that they "don't like" school after a day's trial; others appear about once a quarter; and some do not wish to be "written down," which in their minds seems to be a sort of charm.

On the whole, the result is encouraging, for those who come now do so for the sake of learning, and as they get an insight into the lessons, they are anxious to succeed. The "staff" of native teachers is ample in quantity, there being five teachers and two monitors; but the quality of the instruction leaves much to be desired. But all do their best, teachers and children, and the latter are much easier to manage than English ones, though they do not learn so quickly and have not so much "go" in them.

LIKOMA, January 7, 1901.



SCHOOL CHILDREN AT LIKOMA HARBOUR.



A MEMBER of the staff, who came home for a short holiday, writes of her work in England—

"How pleasant it is! As one goes from town to town there is the same kind welcome from all. The easiest chair is drawn forward in the warmest corner, and every care taken for one's comfort. How keenly interested all are in hearing the details of the work, and how full of sympathetic hints and suggestions—homes for training to acquire additional usefulness, economical receipts for puddings, cheap stuffs for dresses, and homely remedies for childish complaints. At the meetings, too, all listen with such kindly attention till speaking ceases to be an effort and becomes a real pleasure. When one leaves the hosts of perhaps only a few hours it seems almost like parting from friends of long standing, and one is quite delighted to promise an-

other visit next holiday. It is such a help, too, to feel so many kind friends are taking a real interest in the work and are keenly anxious for its successes and sympathetic in its failures. When one looks back and remembers the biting cold and grey skies of England, one will always think of the warm and sympathetic friends who live there."

Two priests, we very sadly record, have been taken from us in the Masasi district. Ernest J. A. Nichols died on Good Friday, April 5, and eleven days later the news came telling us that Francis E. Zachary had passed away on the 16th. Mr. Nichols had previously worked zealously in the Magila and Kologwe stations; Mr. Zachary was in his second year, and was due to come home in June. The loss to the Mission, and to those who loved these workers, is a very great one.

We hope our readers will try and read the glowing, burning words of the Archbishop at the annual meeting of S.P.G. They stirred up one priest, we know, to come in and offer himself the very next day to go out at once to fill one of the vacant places at Nyasa.



THE BLACK BABY.

WHAT a solemn, earth-weary mite it is when it first comes to us. It cannot smile or prattle nonsense, but regards every one and everything with sad resignedness. When one tries to make the thing happy by giving it weak sweet tea and a bit of bread, it re-

gards the giver speculatively as much as to say, "What's this for?" Gradually, however, stray oranges, bits of sugar and bread begin to make it less cynical, and when during some childish ailment the mite finds the white person's side a pleasant seat and her shoulder a convenient resting place for the

heavy little head, it begins to condescend to chatter. Perhaps it finds the stray ends of hair on the aforesaid person's head in its way and tries to smooth them down with its grubby little fingers or kindly suggests the scissors to remove them; or else it finds its perch a safe position from which to insult and tease the elder boys. Gradually the thing becomes communicative and one hears how it likes fat instead of lean for its dinner, how fish are too "thorny" to be pleasant, and what a great delicacy a bit of dough off the pudding is to toast in the kitchen fire. After two or three months the merry little scamp, who is the plague and joy of the white person's life, would never be recognized as the once solemn, doleful little baby.

M. B. S.

—o—

MY DEAR CHILDREN,—

Some of you were not quite right in the meaning you put to *dawa*; it is really the Swahili for medicine, but it is often used by English people for dispensary also. Though fruit is very plentiful in Zanzibar, people cannot live on it; they eat a good deal of rice, as it is sent over from Bombay. On the mainland the people eat *thick* porridge, which is usually made from Indian corn or millet at Magila and Masasi, but from cassava in Likoma. A relish of fish or a tiny piece of meat or some vegetable is eaten with the porridge. There are no cocoa-nuts in Likoma; they will not grow far from the sea.

RESULT OF THE APRIL COMPETITION.

Seniors.—Full marks, 30. M. March, 26; A. Aldersey, P. Haigh, E. Fleming, E. Hartley and D. G. Edwards, 23; E. M. Wilson and M. A. Jenner, 22; R. G. Shepherd, 15; G. F. Payne, 14.

Juniors.—Full marks, 15. M. Sparling, 15; H.

Webb, 14; N. Roberts, G. Butler, W. Farthing, W. K. Scudamore, W. G. Norman and A. A. Gegg, 13; D. Evans, 12; T. B. Oliver, F. de Rienzi, A. Monckton, J. G. Weller, W. Hatcher and N. Hayler, 11; C. Watts, L. Hatcher and A. Mayhew, 10;—E. Orton and M. Couchman, 7; L. Hamblin, D. Hadley and H. Drummond, 6; E. Drummond, 5.

JUNE COMPETITION.

Seniors.

1. Give a short account of the Girls' School at Kasamba.
2. Name some ways in which Arab ladies differ from English.
3. Mention the names of three native clergymen, and give a little account of one.
4. What happened on May 1, 1861?

*Square Word for Seniors and Juniors.*¹

"My first you must double, a place on the Lake;
My second's the contrast to 'under';
My third is the name natives give to a thing
On which we cut chickens asunder;
My fourth is a lily of pearly white hue,
We gaze on its beauty with wonder."

Juniors.

2. What lessons do the girls have at Kasamba School?
3. How long did it take Miss Minter (K.M.) to get there? and how did she go there from Kota Kota?

Answers to be sent before June 30, to

The Editor of "The Children's Page,"

8, Ancona Road, Highbury, N.

RULES.

1. Competitors will be divided into two classes, in each of which Two Prizes will be given quarterly to those who have gained the highest number of marks. Class I., Seniors, those over 13 and under 17. Class II., Juniors, those under 13. Certificates are given to those who take the 3rd and 4th place. Holders of Six Certificates are entitled to a Prize.
2. One side of the paper only to be written on.
3. Name, age last birthday, and address to be written at the top of the first sheet.
4. Every paper to be signed by a parent or teacher to certify that it is the unaided work of Competitor.

¹ Many thanks to the sender.

