

Letter Gives Details Of Native Life In The African Belgian Congo

Following is the text of a letter received by Fay A. Puckett from Banda, Africa Inland Mission, Niangara, Congo Belege under date of Aug. 14, 1937. The letter is from Mr. and Mrs. Earl Dix who are friends of Mr. Puckett and missionaries in Africa. It contains some interesting facts about the life of the natives in the Congo region. The letter is as follows:

I have often thought of writing up a few of the reasons why the natives would not be better if we left them alone. In America it is often said that they would be better if we left them alone. I well remember one Sunday morning in a Bible class in a large church at Plattesville, Wis. Almost every member of the class, if not everyone, felt that the natives were working among would be better off if we left them alone. One man spoke up and said, "They are happy in their ignorance. Even their work is accompanied by a song. Why not let them remain happy?" This is often heard even among Christian people. I will try and show why they are not better off left alone. Other well meaning friends often told us that we had spent five years out here, they reasoned that we had done our part and advised us to remain at home and rear our family. We started our work but it is far from completed.

We read in God's word that if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. These people certainly have no hope except in this life. Therefore they are of all people most miserable. I will not tell of their religious customs. I will tell of the more apparent reasons which are the result of their spiritual darkness.

It is true that the native does his work to the rhythm of a song. They carry their loads over a hot stony path to the rhythm of a song. "Song" has a very prominent place in their life but it does not always mean happiness; it is often used to cover a very heavy heart, or forget the weight of the load they are carrying. Yes, they appear happy, content and carefree, but these are some of the things they face.

One hundred per cent of the people believe that some among them have evil spirits, which dwell in their inward parts. They are so positive that this is true that they declare that they can show you the house in which this spirit dwells; this house is like your thumb growing on the intestines. This evil spirit is the cause of all sickness, failure, grief, death; causes hunting and fishing to be fruitless, or anything undesirable.

Chief Mboeli lived about five miles from us until his death three years ago, had according to official census 325 wives. One of my Christian workmen had a sister that was a wife of the chief. She tells of some of the things she witnessed. When a person that was associated with the chief or the chief himself was sick, a crude method of divining was used to find the person that was causing the grief by their evil spirit. When the divining claimed it to be one of the chief's wives he sometimes asked her about it. If she denied having any knowledge of an evil spirit, he sometimes tied her to a

tree and opened her abdomen with his knife. If he could find a piece that looked like a thumb he would show it to her and say, "So you do not know anything about an evil spirit? Look at this." Of course she lived only a very short time after that.

Keke, a son of chief Mboeli burned his own mother to death in an open fire, while the old chief sat leisurely by, eating bananas. He did it because the spirit of divination said that it was his mother that was causing the sickness of his young brother, by her evil spirit.

Several people were sometimes gathered together in a house and fire set to the grass roof of the house. These were burned to death, because they believed there was an evil spirit dwelling in them.

You no doubt wonder how it is possible for anyone to be so cruel. From their point of view it is justifiable, the same as we justify murder in time of war; it is in self defense. They think that unless these are dealt with they will kill them sooner or later with their evil spirit. This belief is held by 100 per cent of the people. They have been taught this from childhood for generations. Neither governments nor missionaries can remove this belief. Using the Bible term they "Must be born again." They must become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." They must have their old beliefs replaced by a living faith in God thru Christ. They must come to believe "that God is, and is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him."

The government is doing everything in its power to suppress such things as I have described, and they have been successful to a very large extent, but the natives often say, "If the white man leaves it will be the same as it was before he came."

Some time ago a native living near my station came to me saying, "There are buffalo in my garden." I went with him and succeeded in killing a buffalo. After my workmen had carried it in I gave a front leg to this man. As he carried his meat home, he cut off a piece in every village he passed. He was not so gracious as all that, but he was afraid that some one would envy him his meat, and cause him to become sick by their evil spirits. By giving each of them a piece they would think that he was a good fellow and he would escape in that way.

Last evening one of my workmen, a new man, came to me asking me to punish his wife for being untrue to him. I questioned him about it. He had been away for about a week and while he was away he dreamed that she was untrue. The dream was not clear enough to reveal the person with who she was untrue, therefore he wanted me to punish her until she revealed his name. The reason he came to me is that I do not permit the men on the station to beat their wives. He said, "I have bought her, she is mine. Why shouldn't she be whipped until she reveals him. It must be true, how could I be way out there and dream about her in that manner unless it was true." I did not punish his wife.

This evening I heard that there was a native here with a strangulated hernia. I went down to see him, they had given up all hopes of reducing it. They were divining to see who was the cause of it. After about half an hour I was successful in reducing it and saved his life.

They think the only way to cure measles is to give them to someone else. These are only a few of the things that the gospel can and does change. Our work is started, but far from finished. I wonder how many there are in America who say, "They would be better off if we left them alone . . ."

BRIEFLY STATED

Mrs. Mattie Soukup drove to Lincoln last Wednesday morning and returned that evening bringing her son, Francis, back so that he could spend the Thanksgiving with the home folks.

Leo Swanson of Lincoln, commissioner of public lands and buildings for the state of Nebraska, was in the city last Thursday night on his way to Keya Paha county on a business trip.

Miss Jane Mains, who is attending the state university at Lincoln, came up last Wednesday evening and spent Thanksgiving vacation with the home folks, returning to her school duties Sunday.

Mrs. J. A. Devine and sister, Miss Grace Campbell, came down from Cheyenne, Wyo., last Wednesday evening to spend Thanksgiving with relatives and old friends here. They left for home Sunday morning.

Miss Ruth Harris, who is attending Morningside college at Sioux City, Iowa, came home last Wednesday evening to spend the holidays at the home of her mother, Mrs. Esther Cole Harris. She returned to her school duties Monday morning.

Members of the State Patrol have been active the past week many have been stopped and warned to have their lights adjusted and tail lights installed. Auto accessory dealers in the city say that last Saturday they had the biggest day in history in that particular line of goods. Let the good work continue.

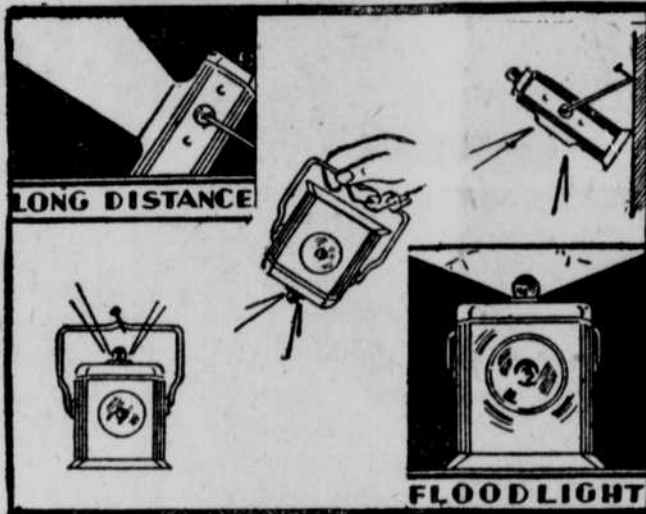
We Have . . . for Each of Our Subscribers
A FREE GIFT

We Want To Give You A Handsome
KWIK LITE Electric Lantern
Something You Need, and Which Would Cost You \$1.50
If Purchased at Any of the Stores In Which It Is Sold

THIS IS NOT A CONTEST! YOU DON'T HAVE TO "WIN" ANYTHING!—No Puzzle to solve—no subscriptions to sell or pay for! If you are a paid subscriber there is nothing to do except come into our office and ask for your lantern!

THE LANTERN IS FREE!

It comes to you with our compliments and a sincere hope that it may prove useful to you for many years to come,—but—we do NOT furnish free accessories, (bulbs and batteries) with which to operate it. Like buying gasoline for your car you'll have to pay for your own batteries and we'll furnish you the first set at the cost-to-us price of 40c per set. However you may also receive FREE batteries if you wish, in the manner explained in our ADDITIONAL OFFER, printed at the bottom of this announcement.



It Hangs or Stands—Anywhere

YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE KWIK LITE LANTERN

We think you already know all about the famous KWIK LITE Lantern which has proved to be such a sensation wherever it has been introduced by newspapers to their readers; however you have not seen it, here it is. Note that it is not just an ordinary lantern but a decided improvement in safe, dependable lighting.

KWIK LITE does not have just one light—it has two—an unbreakable trouble light on top and a long distance, focusing type, headlight in front. This searchlight is capable of throwing a beam a distance of 300 feet, thus being suitable even for an emergency headlight for your car, should your lights go out some night on the road.

The body of the lantern is of light weight steel, done in attractive silver finish, with base of contrasting red, blue and green. Switches and focusing button are located conveniently on the back of the lantern.

You will need this lantern every day—on the road at night, working on tire or car—down in the cellar or dark closet, finding something laid away about home, or out in the barn. No fire hazard with Kwik Lite either! Any one of a hundred places you have needed and will need this fine lantern.

AND REMEMBER

You may have one for the asking—we have one for you either in stock or on the way and every paid subscriber to this newspaper will get his lantern if he will simply ask for it. This is NOT a limited time offer, we're going to keep right on giving away lanterns, week in and week out until each of you have one, however we'll appreciate it if you'll call or write as soon as you can, but before you do, be sure and READ—

OUR AMAZING ADDITIONAL OFFER!

If, when you receive your lantern, you decide to pay a year's subscription to The Frontier, we will make you an ADDITIONAL PRESENT of the complete accessories to operate it—complete battery and bulb equipment for your lantern, thus giving you TWO GIFTS instead of one!

And for each additional year you pay you will receive an ADDITIONAL set of free accessories. Think of it: A free lantern and one complete set of FREE ACCESSORIES, for each year's subscription you may wish to pay when you receive your lantern. This additional offer is entirely optional, however, if you are a paid subscriber you need not pay a renewal when you get your lantern unless you wish to do so.

And The Same Gift Offer To New Subscribers!

The same offer applies to persons who are not now subscribers to The Frontier. Come in and subscribe to our newspaper and you will receive not only the free lantern which all paid subscribers receive but will receive a complete set of FREE ACCESSORIES as well. Did you ever hear of a fairer offer? Then why not subscribe today?

MAIL COUPON IF YOU CANNOT CALL AT THE OFFICE

The Frontier, O'Neill, Nebr.

Enclosed find \$2.00 in payment for my subscription (new or renewal) to The Frontier. It is understood that this amount will pay my subscription for one year and entitle me to a complete set of accessories for my FREE LANTERN, which I will call for as soon as convenient.

Subscriber _____
Address _____

THE FRONTIER

(If you wish your lantern mailed, enclosed 10c for postage.)

FREE! Y-B Cigars



Last Five Cigars in Box

AT YOUR FAVORITE TOBACCO STORE