**and edited it into various written forms, thus creating variations, especially in the numbering of stanzas and the overall length of the poem. Near the end of the poem, the author mentions that she has composed 102 stanzas. Although Mwana Kupona, in the opening stanzas, asks her daughter to "Come with paper and ink," no manuscripts survive in the hand of either mother or daughter.**

***FROMA* MOTHER'S ADVICE AND PRAYER: AN EPIC POEM + 73**

**Rather than lecturing, the author threads together, stanza by stanza, the "beads" of her advice, which she aptly portrays as precious and protective orna­ments, into a poem she variously describes as a pendant, a charm, a necklace, and a beautiful garland of fragrant flowers. In the absence of an authoritative original text, we have chosen stanzas to provide a flavor of the whole. These foetis on admonitions to the daughter and a passionate prayer to God to care for her fam­ily and community, revealing a consciousness of her own failing health.**

**The poem is of the *utendi* narrative genre of Kiswahili poetry in quatraind: Each line contains eight syllables; the first three lines rhyme; and the fourth line of every stanza rhymes with the fourth line of every other stanza. The language is the Kiamu dialect of Kiswahili, spoken on Lamu Island and its environs even now The prosody has been sacrificed in order to provide a new modern translation.**

***Naomi L. Shitemi***

1. **Come near, my dear daughter, You, a young inexperienced woman, Listen to my advice**

**That I hope you will remember.**

1. **I have been ill**

**The entire past year,**

**So ill that I could not speak Even a word of advice to you.**

1. **Come to me and hear me, Come with paper and ink, For I have a story**

**That I want to tell you.**

1. **Now that you are near me,**

**Say *Bismillahi,* In the Name of God. Pray for the Holy Prophet**

**And also his companions.**

1. **After you pronounce the name Of God Almighty,**

**We will pray for a future**

**That God may grant us.**

1. **The human being is nothing And the world is not ours, For certainly, there is no one Who will ever be immortal.**

**74 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

1. **Take my advice, my child, And my blessings also,**

**For God will protect you And keep you from evil.**

1. **Take this charm that I give to you, Tie it securely with a cord, Honor and treasure it. May you care for it always.**
2. **I will string for you a precious amulet Of pearls and coral beads**

**To adorn you elegantly.**

**May it glow upon your neck.**

1. **1 would like to give you a pendant, One precious, perfect, without fault, To wear around your neck.**

**You shall see its benefits.**

1. **If you remember my advice, My child, you will never suffer. You will walk across this world, And later you will enter paradise.**
2. **First, remain loyal to your religion: Fulfill the *Faradhi* that is required, Follow the *Sunna* that is advised. This is your obligation.**
3. **Second, be virtuous: Have a sweet tongue**

**That you may be respected Wherever you may go.**

1. **Be trustworthy.**

**Hold firm to your beliefs. Avoid those who are unjust; Shun their company.**

1. **My daughter, take special care When you meet the powerful: Wherever you may meet them, Quickly show them respect.**

***FROMA* MOTHER'S ADVICE AND PRAYER: AN EPIC POEM + 75**

1. **As they approach,**

**Rise to meet them cheerfully, And when they depart,**

**Escort them as they leave.**

1. **Be amusing when you speak, Without being malicious. Do not argue needlessly, Lest people despise you.**
2. **Speak jokingly with people; Use pleasant and joyous words. Better to be quiet**

**Than to use words that spite.**

1. **Avoid those matters You do not understand; Even aimless talk and grumbling—Avoid these, I beg of you.**
2. **Stay away from the slaves**

**Except when doing chores,**

**For they may harm your reputation. Perhaps I have said this before.**

1. **Avoid the company of the ignorant, Who do not behave properly,**

**Showing no generosity toward others. Keep away; do nOt approach them.**

1. **Darling, listen to what I'm saying: A woman requires five approvals If she is to rest**

**In paradise and on earth.**

1. **These are of God and the Prophet, And of one's father and mother.**

**The fifth is of one's husband,**

**As you have heard many times.**

1. You should have your husband's approval As long as you are together,

**76 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

So that when you are separated,

His approval will have been given.

1. Should you die before him, His approval should be with you. You will carry it with you.

It will show you the way.

1. On the day of resurrection, Your husband's wish will be granted. He will be asked what he wills, And all will be as he wishes.
2. If he wills paradise for you, Certainly, you will enter.

If he wills that you perish in hell, Certainly, there you shall go.

1. Live with him courteously. Do not drive him to anger.

Should he be angry, do not respond; Make every effort to remain silent.

1. Be in harmony with him; Deny him not what he desires. Do not quarrel with him;

If you do, you will be the loser.

1. If he leaves, bid him farewell.

When he returns, welcome and honor him, Then prepare a comfortable place

Where he may rest.

1. When he sleeps, do not stir about, But lean towards him, and stroke him. He should not lack

The enjoyment of a cool breeze.

1. If he dozes while leaning on you, Move not, nor raise your voice. Sit still, stir not,

Lest he be startled awake.

1. **When he awakens, care for him. Offer him a fine meal. Also care for his body: Massage him and wash him.**

***FROM* A MOTHER'S ADVICE AND PRAYER: AN EPIC POEM + 77**

1. **Shave him, caress him, Trim his beard,**

**Burn incense around him From morning until evening.**

1. **Care for him as though He were a very young child, Who could not yet speak;**

**Anticipate his needs and desires.**

1. **Amuse him until he's entranced. Do not reject his command.**

**If he behaves disgracefully,**

**Surely God will take revenge for you.**

1. **My child, do not be slovenly. Act as you see best,**

**But never ignore, not even once, Matters of cleanliness.**

1. **Bathe often and carefully.**

**Braid your hair,**

**Adorning it with jasmine blossoms; Also put them on your bedclothes.**

1. **Dress yourself beautifully As though you were still a bride. Wear ankle bracelets**

**And bangles on your wrists.**

1. **Hang amulets and pendants Always around your neck.**

**Smooth your body with fragrance Of perfumes and sweet oils.**

1. **Wear rings on your fingers And henna on your palms. Put kohl around your eyes And also on your eyebrows.**
2. **Keep your house neat To lift your husband's status, And when company enters, Praise him to them.**

**78 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

1. **Whatever he desires,**

**Follow that same desire.**

**What he disapproves,**

**Be not the person who brings it to him.**

1. **If you must go out,**

**Seek his permission.**

**If he does not give it,**

**Stay at home; do not argue with him.**

1. **Follow his guidance To ensure his approval.**

**Do not stay outside,**

**Especially after ten at night.**

1. **Do not engage in idle chatter. Do not unveil yourself.**

**Cast your eyes down in humility. Your expression should be shy.**

1. **Quickly return to your home To keep your husband company. Prepare a place of comfort**

**Where both of you may sleep.**

1. **Praise your husband.**

**Make his reputation known.**

**You should not compel him**

**To undertake what he is not able to do.**

1. **Receive whatever he gives you With joy in your heart.**

**What he does not willingly do, It is not for you to tell him.**

1. **When you encounter his face, Smile and laugh.**

**Do what he tells you**

**Unless it is against God.**

1. **My darling, do not be quick to speak. Ask me, your mother.**

***FROM* A MOTHER'S ADVICE AND PRAYER: AN EPIC POEM + 79**

**I was married for ten years;**

**Not once did we disagree**

1. **Your father married me**

**In joy and in bliss.**

**We never embarrassed each other All the days we were together.**

1. **Listen to my words, beloved daughter; I beseech you not to ignore them.**

**You surely will see their benefits**

**In heaven and here on earth.**

1. **That is the end of my words Of advice to you, my daughter. Now I will pray to God**

**To grant my prayer.**

1. **However much we talk, Human beings are worthless. God is the one who is able To destroy and to save.**
2. **I pray to You, Almighty, To aid me**

**In what I say**

**And in what I have not said.**

1. **All that I have said, God, accept from me;**

**And I pray to you again, Dear God, provide for me.**

1. **Look after my children**

**And my younger brother.**

**May their names become renowned And known in other places.**

1. **God, take care of my family,**

**And the children of my family members. May they extend throughout the world In goodness and prosperity.**

**72. Those of the Islamic faith,**

**God, please bless them. Fulfill their desires**

**And make them happy.**

***Translated by Ann Biersteker and Naomi L. Shitemi***

***Emily Ruete, also known as
  
Princess Salma of Zanzibar***

**A ROYAL CHILDHOOD IN ZANZIBAR**

**Tanzania 1886 German**

**This extract is taken from the autobiography of Princess Salma (sometimes spelled Salme) Said, later known as Emily Ruete. Princess Salma was born in 1844 according to her own statements, or 1840 according to other sources, in the house of Seyyid Said, who was Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar from 1804 to 1856. Princess Salma was one of Seyyid Said's more than thirty children. She grew up in her father's various palaces until she was about sixteen. After her father's death, she eloped with a German businessman, Heinrich Ruete, went to live in Germany, and converted to Christianity; adopting the name Emily Ruete. Her husband died in an accident a few years later, leaving her with three small children. She lived and raised her children on her own with very meager resources. Her attempts to recover the inheritance she would have been due as a member of the royal family *of Zanzibar were not successful.* She *died in* 1924 and was buried in Hamburg.**

**Princess Salma's autobiography, *Memoiren eine arabischen Prinzessin,* was com­pleted in 1886 and first published in Germany in 1888. It was soon followed by an English translation. In her preface, the author says she wrote the book for her children, since she feared she might not live long enough to tell them her story when they grew ura concern that turned out to be unfounded.**

**Princess Salmas is the first full length autobiography written by a Tanzanian. It provides a unique insider's glimpse of life in Zanzibar, and especially in the royal palaces, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Even more remarkable is the fact that the story is told from a woman's perspective, casting light on the rights, duties, and predicaments of upper-class women, in the midst of incessant palace intrigue; the relations between Arab rulers and African servants in the palace; and the general court culture and manners. Princess Salma's depiction of her life in German culture, as a lonely Arab-African widow in an alien—and cold—land makes sad and engaging reading. In her memoir as a whole, she emerges as a courageous and single-minded rebel and provides what is probably the first record of a Tanzanian woman of her stature defying the strict social norms of her time, place, and position.**

**In the Zanzibar of Princess Salma's time, it was quite unthinkable for an upper-class Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim, let alone a foreigner.**

**80 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**Upper-class women in Zanzibar were usually secluded from the prying eyes of all males other than their very close relatives. They were required to hide themselves whenever visitors entered the house, and to be fully shrouded, and escorted by armed eunuchs and servant women, whenever they Went out. It is thus difficult to know how the young German businessman managed even to meet Salma, let alone come to an agreement to elope with her. In any case, had their love affair been discovered in Zanzibar, Princess Salma would probably have faced death, and the German would have been expelled from the islarids.**

**A ROYAL CHILDHOOD IN ZANZIBAR + 81**

**At the same time, Princess .alma's writing reflects the prejudices** and limita­tions **inherent in her position as a member of the Arab ruling class in a slave sod­ety';'Ihese attitudes may explain her negative sentiments regarding Africans. Zanzibar in the middle of the nineteenth century was an Arab feudal §ultanate reigning over a commercial and plantation empire inhabited largely by Africans, whose dominant culture was Swahili. The island of Zanzibar became a province of Oman following the puster of the Portuguese around 1700, and in 1840, Sul­tan Seyyid Said, Princess S alma's father, derided to move his capital to Zanzibar. In the nineteenth century, Zanzibar was at the center of European gunboat diplo­macy and was eventually ceded to the British in 1890. The Arab sultanate nonetheless remained in place, in some form, until the month after Zanzibar's independence in 1963, when\* it was overthrown by a violent revolution and Zan­zibar united with Tanganyika to form Tanzania. Of late there has been a revival of interest in the Arab period; currently, a whole room in Zanzibar's Palace Museum is devoted to Princess Salina.**

*MM,Mulokozi*

As long as the child does not have ehough strength to wear sandals (the wooden ones for girls and women are called *hubkab,* the leather ones for boys and`men are tailed *watje),* it runs' about barefooted. Because the *watje* are con­siderably lighter to wear than the *kubkab,* very, small girls initially are made to walk on the former until they have acquired the necessary skill to wear the *ku\*bkeib* forever. Neither children nbr adults of both sexes wear stockings; only more aristocratic ladies use them now and then when riding, as custom requires one to cover the ankles.

Already at the age of two to four months, two or three slaves, besides the wet nurses, were allotted to the child by our father. From then on they remained its property. The older it grew, the more slaves it received for its personal atten­dance. If one of them died, our father replaced him, or gave an appropriate sum of money. Up to 'a certain age, little girls wear boys' caps in the house.

Until his seventh year each prince at home stays among the women. At this age the mosaic rite [circumcision] is performed on him. Ceremonies of course play an important role on this occasion, the closing of which, after the child's recovery, forms a peculiar festivity, in which all dignitaries and high officials are allowed to take part. This deed, Win any way possible, was enacted in the coun­try and in the presence of our father. A public entertainment, usually lasting for three days, also accompanied this.

**From this time onwards, every boy received a quiet mare of his own. His escort could take their mounts from the stables, where a couple of hundred Arabian horses were standing. In this way the boy, at a very early age, learns to ride well and acquires a very outstanding skill and nimbleness, which only a trained circus rider is otherwise credited with. Since we had neither a true sad­dle nor stirrup, it required of course much more dexterity to gain a firm seat than in this country. Our father followed a characteristic custom when his sons ran into some mishap while out riding. In that case not only they themselves but also their escort could expect punishment. For our father assumed that the latter, with the tight warrants and instructions which he had conferred on them, must have behaved much too indulgently towards the princes.**

**82 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**Not one of us was spoiled in any way. My father's high sense of justice and unparalleled generosity was combined with an equally firm consistency which did not know any weakness. All of us had to obey our teachers and educators on the strength of their word [be they Arabs, Abyssinians or simple negroes). If occasionally we complained to our father, we certainly left his presence in tears or shame for our behaviour. This severity taught us the reverence due to such people, and with increasing age the appreciation of how deep our moral indebt­edness to them was also grew.**

**The nurses, even if they had served as such for a very short time, were partic­ularly honoured and enjoyed special esteem for the remainder of their life. By birth they were always slaves, but as a rule they were freed in reward of their fidelity and devotion. The black wet nurses especially distinguished themselves by extraordinary fidelity and attachment. Even the most cautious mother might in all confidence leave her child with the wet nurse, who usually considered her­self as its second mother and acted accordingly. How the lack of interest and the heartlessness of the wet nurses in these parts stand out in stark contrast with this! Often enough have I felt myself forced to give, on a public walkway, a good talking to such a character, totally unknown to me, for her brutal treatment of the little thing entrusted to her. This contrast between the wet nurses of these parts and our Arab ones may possibly be explained by the fact that the former are forced by their poverty alone to entrust their own beloved child to complete strangers under much sacrifice. Only for money's sake they serve masters; whether the child to nurse is called Tom or Dick is indifferent to them; their thoughts and feelings naturally linger with their own child. And which mother would hold this against her!**

**How very different is a black nurse's attitude towards her mistress's child entrusted to her. For years she is in the latter's service, she may even have been born in her house; it then is understandable that she does not have many private interests, that she makes those of her masters her own. Moreover, there is the most important fact that a black wet nurse only very rarely, if ever, is required to part with her child, but may quietly retain it. The wet nurse's child then receives the same nourishment as its little master or mistress, the same milk soup, part of the same fowl, etc.; the same goes for the bath, and the used dresses fall no**

less to its lot. When its mother stops serving as a wet nurse, her child continues to be the playmate of her second foster-child. Though remaining a slave, it is always preferred to the rest of the slaves, and only bad people offend against this attachment to the foster-brother.

**A ROYAL CHILDHOOD IN ZANZIBAR + 83**

The black wet nurses, however, have one very bad habit. They know how to tell the little children of three to five years old very dreadful stories and fairy­tales. Partly to amuse them, partly also to keep them quiet. The lion *(simba),* the leopard *(tshui),* the elephant *(tembo),* and the numerous witches *(watchawi)* occupy of course the first place in these often also for adults horrifying fables.

On the whole, rearing a child in the south is unquestionably much easier than here in the north: above all, the everlasting colds and everything they, usu­ally entail are rare. Notwithstanding all indolence, children there are very inde­pendent and adroit, for they are allowed to play and jump freer and more unconstrained (both in space and in dress) to their heart's content. Though gymnastic exercises are completely unknown, it is no rarity that a boy of ten to twelve in playing takes a stiff run and leaps over one or even two horses. High jumping in general plays an important role, and everybody strives as much as he can to surpass the other.

Swimming in the sea was practised no less eagerly, and everybody taught himself without any guidance. Shooting too began early and was pursued with great passion. Mock-fights were extraordinarily favoured; from youth onward many an hour was devoted to them. Though the boys went about armed to the teeth and carried as much powder and lead as grown-ups, one hardly ever heard of an accident caused by imprudence.

Up to-a certain age only, the young princes, as already mentioned above, lived in their father's house. Then a house of their own was assigned to each to keep independently, as a rule with their mother if she was still alive. As maintenance he was granted by our father a certain monthly allowance, and then he had to "cut his coat according to his cloth," which was certainly matching the needs. At marriage, at an increase to the family, or also for exceptional conduct, he might count on an extra allowance, but in no other case. Only when our father's ships arrived annually with the new purchases, did all my brothers and sisters living outside the paternal house come with their families to receive each the share belonging to him, whether he needed it or not. If any one of them had the great misfortune of spending more than what his allowance brought in, it was never made easy for him to pay his debts; nothing was more hateful to our father, and the one who had brought this disgrace to himself was very much on his guard not to incur the same a second time.

If a war broke out, as unfortunately was so often the case in Oman, all the princes, the half-grown included, had to take the field too and to take part in the fight like any common man. On the whole, discipline was strict, but it only raised the respect and reverence of the sons for their father. As a child I often saw with astonishment how my elder brother, anticipating the slaves, hurried to put, in readiness the sandals my father had left at the door of his room. The

**elder brothers appeared also in the paternal house several times a day, as soon as our father was present, and then took part in the meals.**

**84 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**There is but very little to say about the education of a princess; the first years it is the same as that of her brothers, with the exception that the latter at their seventh year obtain a much greater freedom outside the house. The only thing deserving mention at a princess's birth is that, in accordance with the hairdress in our country, a broad comb, generally of silver, is placed under the back of the newborn to give it a flat shape for later age. When a Princess is married to one of her cousins, who to be sure are more numerous in Oman than in Zanzibar, she of course leaves the paternal house in exchange for that of her husband. The former, however, the sole and real bulwark against all hardships of life, remains always open as a place to live. But if she prefers, she can also go and live with a brother. Every sister has her favourite brother, and vice versa;•in joy and sorrow these two stick together and support each other by word and deed. As praise­worthy and, for those concerned, as much a blessing as this habit was in such a numerous family circle as ours, it understandably created many jealousies among brothers and sisters, and it often required a strong character to overcome all these.**

**Often such a loving sister had to intercede with our father for some impru­dence of her favourite brother, for he liked to favour his daughters and rarely left their requests unheard. To his elder daughters in particular he was extraor­dinarily obliging; he usually went to meet them from afar and had them seated by his side on the sofa, while the grown-up sons and we little people stood respectfully before him.**

**Schooling *(mdarse)* is of very little importance for the Oriental in general and consequently for us too. In Europe school is at the center of State and Church, without distinction for prince and citizen; for both the formation of his character and his prospects for the future, the individual depends essentially upon it for his success. But in the Orient the *mdarse* is altogether a matter of secondary importance; for a good many people it does not exist at all. But before engaging in further discussions, I wish to say something about what we called school in our house.**

**At the age of six to seven, all my brothers and sisters, boys as well as girls, had,to enter the *mdarse.* We girls were only required to learn to read, the boys to read and write. For teaching there was at both Bet il•Mtoni and Bet it Sahel only one lady teacher, whom our father had sent for from Oman. When the teacher fell ill and was confined to her bed, there was always great joy among us; no replacement could be procured for her, and so we had holidays.**

**There was no specifiCischoolroom, lessons took place in an open gallery, to which pigeons, parrots, peacocks and ricebirds found free entrance. From there we also had a free view of the courtyard and were able to amuse ourselves with watching its,busy life down there. The furniture of the schoolroom consisted of a single, immense mat only. Our school equipment was equally simple: we only needed a Kuran with its stand *(marfa),* a small inkstand with ink, a bamboo**

quill, and a well-bleached shoulder-blade of a camel. The latter is the substitute for the slate; writing with ink on this is quite easy, and the nerves are certainly less assailed than at the scratching on the slate. Our slaves usually took care of wiping off the blades.

A **ROYAL CHILDHOOD IN ZANZIBAR 4. 85**

The first thing we had to learn, exactly as is done here, was the very compli­cated Arabic alphabet. Then, for want of any other school-book, we started reading the Kuran with which, as mentioned above, writing lessons were con­nected for the boys. When one was able to read a little, one joined the others who all read in a chorus and mostly very loudly. But that was all, for what is read and learned is never explained. Hence there was at most only one among thousands who understood word by word all the meanings and precepts of the Holy Script of the Muslims and who was able to explain them, though proba­bly,eighty out of one hundred had learned half of it by heart. Reflecting upon the Holy Script was even considered irreligious and unauthorized; people should simply believe what they were taught, and this maxim was rigorously carried out.

Having enjoyed some fruit, we had to assemble at seven o'clock in the morn­ing on our mat, which had been rolled up during the night and was now swept clean, and had to await the arrival of our severe lady teacher. Until she arrived, we whiled away the time to our heart's content with wrestling, boxing, jumping, climbing the railings which was life endangering, and other favourite amuse­ments of the children's world. We set a watch at the bend of the gallery, who by simulated coughing announced the teacher's arrival from afar. In no time we were all sitting on the mat, an image of the greatest innocence, and only when her steps came near, did we rebound like India rubber balls, to shake hands respectfully with the dreaded one and to wish her good morning. She always carried the detested bamboo cane in one hand and a large brass inkstand in the other. We stood in file before her until she had taken her seat; only then were we permitted to follow this example. All of us sat cross-legged oh the mat, flocked together in a circle around the teacher.

She now would begin to recite the first *sura* of the Kuran, the Muslim Lord's prayer as it were. We prayed in chorus after her and concluded with the well-known Amin *(not Amen).* Then we repeated what we had learned the day before, and after that We were given a new piece for reading or writing. Lessons regularly lasted until about nine o'clock, and then, after breakfast, again till about noon, the time of the second prayer.

Each of us was allowed to bring some of his slaves to school to take part in the lessons; they sat at some distance behind us, while we grouped ourselves as we pleased, for there were neither fixed places for us or division in different forms. People had not the faintest notion of school reports, which a few times every year occasion feverish excitement in this country. If someone made par­ticularly good or bad progress, distinguished himself particularly through good or bad behaviour, this usually was reported orally to the respective mothers and to our father. From the latter the lady teacher had the explicit order to punish us

**severely, if there was any cause. And our great wildness obliged her to use 'the evil bamboo cane.**

**86 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**Besides reading and writing, we were taught a little arithmetic, numbering up to one hundred in writing and up to one thousand orally; what is beyond that is believed to be from the evil one. With grammar and orthography not much pain was taken, and the rather complicated** *llnaba* **[grammar, from Ara­bic** *al-nabw]* **was only acquired by much reading over the years. At home I never heard of such sciences as history, geography, physics, mathematics or how they are all named let alone that I learned them. It was only in this country [i.e., Germany] that I had the pleasure to become acquainted with all these fields of knowledge. But it will remain an open question to me whether, with the little wisdom laboriously acquired here, I am now better off than the others over there. That I have never been more deceived and swindled than in the time of my greatest knowledge, this is certain. Oh you happy people at home! Not even in your dreams do you surmise all that is connected with holy civilization!**

*Translated by E. van Donzel*

***Martha Thabi*My GOD, WRY HAVE You FORSAKEN ME?**

**Malawi 1890 Ngoni (Zulu)**

**Martha Thabi was born about 1870 and was educated in Njuya, in what was then called Ngoniland, now the Mzimba. District in northern Malawi. The region's name reflects the area's pettIpment, earlier in the nineteenth century, by the Ngoni people, who had migrated north from the kwaZuln-Natal area. Thabi was one of the first women to attend a mission** school **opened by the Scots at Njuyu in 1886, and she became a teacher before she was twenty years old. While Njuyu was a primary school, as early as 1894, Scottish missionaries opened a high school and technical college at Khondowe called Overtoun Institute. Thabi\*clid not enter OvelEtoun Institute because of her early ‘niarriage to Reverend Andrew C. Mkochi of Engalaweni.**

**In addition to her teaching, Thabi took a prominent part in church affairs as the pastor's wife. She also cultivated gardens, harvested and pounded maize, and bore eight children, four female and four male, all of whom went to school. A highly respected citizen of her community, she died some time after 1912. Thabi begins this poem, which takes the form of a prayer, with Jesus's famous appeal to God from the cross.**

*Desmond* **D. *Phiri and Fulata L. Moyo***

1. **My God, my God,**

**LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED + 87**

**Why have you forsaken me, my Lord? Behold, you are far away from me. Help me, my Lord.**

1. **My God, I cry**

**Day and night,**

**But you do not answer me.**

1. **I am but a worm.**

**I am not a righteous person.**

**I am unworthy of you, my Lord.**

1. **Do not move away from me Since troubles are very near.**

**But you are my strength, my Lord.**

1. **My God, come**

**back to me, my Lord. Help me.**

1. **Hear my cry. I cry to you, Father,**

**Answer my prayer.**

***Translated by Desmond D. Phiri***

***Jessie Nyagondwe*LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED**

**Malawi 1890s Chitumbuka**

**Jessie Nyagondwe, the composer of this hymn, is the only woman composer whose name appears in a collection of hymns published in the Tumbuka language (Chitilmbuka) in 1961. It is quite possible that many other hymns, credited to "Anonymous," were also composed by women, who were such a primary force in church life.**

**While the hymn was not published until 1961, evidence suggests that it was composed in the 1890s. Jessie Nyagondwe was one of the earliest Christian con-yens among the Ngoni and Tumbuka in northern Malawi in the 1890s. She must have been born in the area sometime in the 1880s, and she was among a group of enslaved girls rescued from slave traders by Dr. Robert Laws on the northern**

shores of Lake Malawi. She was kept at-the Livingstonia Mission in Khondowe, where she became one of the first girls to be educated at Overtoun Institute. Like other talented composers, she began to express her new faith, Christianity, in the form of hymns.

Her song and others were introduced and practiced at great choir festivals organized by the Scottish Missionary Donald Fraser in the first quarter of the twentieth century. During this period, Fraser organized large revival meetings throughout the Mzimba District in the northern part of Malawi, and he con­verted many to Christianity. Nyagondwe's composition proved so popular that it spread rapidly and became part a body of locally composed hymnology in use throughout northern Malawi.

*Fulata L. Moyo*

Let not your heart be troubled By all earthly things.

Instead rejoice

That we shall sing to Jesus.

**Refrain:**

*We will sing*

*To Jesus, our Redeemer. We will sing to Jesus.*

*We will all rejoice in Him.*

Do not pile up

Treasures on earth.

They perish while you hoard them. Weevils and rust destroy them all.

**Refrain**

Instead, you should store

The enduring treasure in heaven, Where Christ, Our Leader,

is gone.

**Refrain**

Around us and within us

Are foes who would destroy us. Protect us from them, Jesus, And we will gladly praise you.

**88 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**Refrain**

**TEN TIMES A SLAVE + 89**

**On earth many sorrows Press upon us daily.**

**Lord, free us in your mercy**

**From all these foes.**

**Refrain**

***Translated by Desmond D. Phiri***

***Bwanikwa*TEN TIMES A SLAVE**

**Zambia 1895 Chiluba**

**The survivor of many crises and dislocations, Bwanikwa told her story of having been "ten times a slave" shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, while liv­ing in the relative quiet of a mission-sponsored community in northeastern Rhodesia, the present-day Luapula Province of Zambia. The experiences she nar­rates took place mainly in what is today the southeastern Congo province of Katanga (formerly Shaba), first in a time when the stamp of colonial boundaries was still to be impressed and then as the colonial conquest took place.**

**In the late pre-colonial decades, the commercial hegemony established by Msiri, a Nyamwezi trader, was buttressed by state-building. By the 1880s, Msiri ruled a large kingdom and received tribute from neighboring areas. At Msiri's capital, hundreds of slaves contributed to the maintenance of services and provi­sions for the caravans that arrived and departed, both to the Atlantic port of Banguela in Angola and to the Indian Ocean coasts dominated by the Sultanate of Zanzibar. Msiri's origins were in Unyamwezi, id west-central Tanzania, and his control of the Katanga area, in the years after 1890, faced crises of insurrections by the indigenous people and of famine, both dislocating people even before the coming of the Belgians.**

**Bwanikwa's origins in the Luba-speaking society meant that from birth she spoke Chiluba, part of a language family widespread in eastern Congo and north­ern Zambia. In that language she recounted her narrative of slavery to missionary Dugald Campbell, who in turn translated it into English. The tale of her succes­sive owners and alliances provides, from a rare female point pf view, a picture of dislocation, insecurity, and opportuniSm, up to a kind of stabilization within the early colonial situation. The English translation of Bwanikwa's story was pub­lished during World War I as part of an appeal to British women for material suppbrt of missionary endeavors on the part of Campbell's society, the Plymouth Brethren. A book subsequently written by Campbell supplies information about Bwanikwa's later life as a successful petty trader and practitioner of herbal**

medicine and also tells of her self-redemption: She eventually repaid her husband the amount he had given her last slave-master. Following this act, as Campbell tells it, the pair lived as equals to a degree exceptional in local African society, sharing tasks, eating together, and addressing one another in highly respectful terms. In old age, Bwanikwa returned to Luba country in Congo, residing there in a Christian community.

**90 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

*Marcia Wright*

**I, Bwanikwa, was born on the banks of the Dindie, a small river in our Luba-land.**

**Our part of the country was thickly populated, and our principal chief was Goi-Mani. My father's name was Kankolwe. My mother was called Mikomba. I was one of a family of five. Our only brother had died; four girls remained, of whom I was the second oldest.**

**My father had a dozen wives. His head-wife was the daughter of chief Katumba. She was an important woman. At the time I refer to, the head-wife had just died. According to Luban custom [my father] was mulcted for death dues. He was ordered to pay three slaves, as compensation for his wife's death, and to ensure inheritance by the dead wife's sister. They did not produce a sister to take the dead woman's place till the death had been paid for to the relatives. Three slaves were demanded, and my father could only raise two.**

**One of his four daughters had to be handed over to make a third, and I was chosen. I was the second oldest, as I said, and my father loved me. When he handed me over to my master, he said to him as we parted: "Be kind to my lit­tle daughter; do riot sell her to anyone else, and I will come and redeem her." As my father was unable to redeem me, I was left in slavery.**

**My father did not come to redeem me, and my master sold me to some of Msidi's people who were out man-hunting. I was sold for a packet of gun­powder, worth two shillings and sixpence, and was taken to Chifuntwe's village in the Balomotwa country. At that time I was small, unable to walk.**

**It appears that my master had, at this time, offended the principal chief, and was ordered to pay up several slaves. Amongst those slaves given to pay for my master's crimes, I was handed over. Thus I was sold again. The chief to whom I was given in payment of a fine handed me to one of his warriors as wife, saying, "Take her as yolk wife, she's yOung." After a while he said "She's only a young girl, and I don't want her:" He sold me to** a rrian **named Mukoka for a gun. Mukoka bought me, with another woman and child, intending to sell us later to the Biheans. He took me as his wife. I bore him a child which only lived three days. His other wives were kind to me. Though he sold many other slaves to Biheans, he never sold me, nor did he threaten to do so.**

**I lived with Mukoka•till Msidi's death and the break up of his power by the Europeans. At this some of us slaves saw,rour chance and fled. We scattered. Men, tired of Msidi's despotic rule, would take some or other woman slave, and**

**both would head north, south, east, or west, in search of freedom and a new start in life. When possible, each headed for the old homestead.**

**TEN TIMES A SLAVE + 91**

**A well-known elephant hunter and fellow-slave in the same village, whose name' as Kabongo, took** me, **and we ran off east. Our old master set out in search of a new home and village site. We crossed the Luapula River to Kazeinbe's to try and begin life anew. Chief Kazembe cast his,eye upon me and asked Kabongo to give me to him for a wife. Kabongo refused. We left Kazembe's capital, came back west, and settled in Sakungami village. We lived and cultivated there for two years. Some slaves heard of our old master having built at the Luisi River and suggested Pour returning together. My husband refused at first but afterwards agreed to join the party.**

**When Chief Mukoka saw me come back, he said, "My wife's come back." On hearing this, Kabongo was angry, and said, "No, I won't let you take her from me; she's my wife." Thus the altercation grew, and they almost came to blows.**

**Kabongo had killed a bull elephant and intended to give the tusks to the chief. However, owing to Mukoka taking me from him, he hid his ivory in the forest and threatened to kill some of Mukoka's people in revenge. Mukoka was afraid of Kabongo's threats and sold me to a band of West Coast slavers who had just turned up. Said he, "If I'm not going to have her, neither shall he." He sold me to the Biheans, and I started, a slave bound for the West Coast. Imme­diately after I left, Mukoka caught Kabongo and killed him.**

**On the road west I took refuge with Inansala, Msidi's sister, who hid me in one of her houses. Shortly after, she was caught and eaten by a lion. On account of her death I was afraid, came out of hiding, and traveled to the mission sta­tion. At this time I had never heard the Gospel and was very ignorant.**

**I met a man named Wafwilwa, who, seeing me alone, asked me to be his wife. I refused at first, but he persisted and would not leave me. I had need of a protector, so I finally gave in and became his wife. We lived near to the mission at Lufoi. Wafwilwa, with two others, was sent to build a mission house on Lake Mweru. We women accompanied them there. On arrival he was sent to the Government Post Office with mission letters, and Wafwilwa insisted on my going with him. His reason for my going soon appeared.**

**On arrival at Kalunguisi, in British territory, he sold me secretly to some Arabs for calico. I overheard whispered conversation among the Arab traders. Said one of them, "She's very pretty" *(Mzuri sana).* I became suspicious and said to them "Who is pretty?" "Oh," they said, "we're just talking." Then I heard someone say, "She's the slave they're buying." I became afraid and began to cry. Shortly afterwards the Arabs came to me and said, "You're our slave now Go into the house and sleep; it's night." Then I knew I had been sold again. I refused to enter the house, but my refusals were met by force.**

**I was pushed inside the house, and a woman kept guard over me. Wooden bars were put across the doors to prevent my escape. The woman was soon fast asleep, while I kept awake. I got up in the middle of the night, removed the**

**bars, and, getting out, ran to the soldiers' headquarters in the government loca­tion. I hid there. In the morning the Arabs, finding their slave had escaped, went to Wafwilwa and made him disgorge his ill-gotten gains.**

**92 + THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES**

**The soldiers threatened to report the matter to the magistrate, but Wafwilwa paid them up and begged them to say nothing. They then handed me back to him; we recrossed the lake and rejoined our friends. Mishi-Mishi was then a Christian, and on hearing my story was angry with Wafwilwa. I refused to live longer with him.**

**Mr. Campbell then came from the West Coast, via Lufoi. A man in his car­avan named Kawimbe, nephew of Chief Mwemmena, asked me to be his wife. I married him. Wafwilwa, seeing this, sent in his account *for* my keep while I was with him, and Kawimbe paid him a gun. Thus I was enslaved for the tenth and last time.**

***Translated by Dugald Campbell***

**THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**(1900-1935)**

***E. May Crawford*FACE TO FACE WITH WANGU WA MAKER!**

**FACE TO FACE WITH WANGU WA MAICERI + 95**

**Kenya 1913 English**

**The title of May Crawford's 1913 book, from which this excerpt is taken, is *By the Equator's Snolury Peak A Record of Medical Missionary Work and Travel in British East Africa.* What Crawford describes as a "record," factually accurate as it is, is by no means dry, detached, and neutral, but reflective, interpretive, and engaged.**

**May Crawford and her husband, Dr. T.W.W. Crawford, were Canadians working with the British Church Missionary Society in what was then the Kenya Province of British East Africa. The Crawfords first lived among the Gikuyu (Kikuyu) people of the Fort Hall District from 1904 to 1910. When they arrived, the missionary presence in Gikuyu country was less than five years old. The East Africa Protectorate had been set up in 1895, and the first foreign trading post in the area dates from 1890, while Gikuyu expansion to the south was still proceed­ing. Therefore, unlike workers at the coast, the missionaries arrived with virtually 'no prior briefing about Gikuyu language, customs, social institutions, or cultuial phenomena such as the pentatonic scale, which May Crawford could not at first recognize as music. The couple had to learn as they went along. "What strenuous lives they led . . . I found out by degrees," says May Crawford, presenting the overseas reader with a remarkably close analysis of women's routine. Dismayed by such traditions as the chewing of fibers to make string and the cosmetic stretch­ing of earlobes, she may soon have found out that her own long hair and boots were repulsive to some.**

**From 1910 to 1912 the Crawford served in Embu District, where, amid priva­tions and hardships, the couple worked with great devotion. The medical treat­ment and education they offered were largely appreciated by the communities they served. As far as the "transforming touch" of Christian divine love was con­cerned, the couple looked thankfully at the "first fruits of the coming harvest," yet, confronted with "the greatness of the need" had to conclude that "what ha[d] already been done s[a]nk into absolute insignificance."**

**The most extraordinary aspect of the passage below is the meeting between the missionary and the first female chief to serve the British Protectorate govern­ment, Wangu wa Makeri. Wangu has attained an almost mythical status in Kenyan 'culture. She is referred to in poetry and drama, although the first book-length study of her life and achievements appeared in *Wangu wa Makeri* by Mary W. Wanyoike only in 2002.**

**In May Crawford's book we see Wangu through contemporary European eyes as a handsome and energetic physical presence. She immediately takes charge of proceedings, being probably more familiar with intercommunal protocol than anyone else present: At the time she had been in office for two years. By confer­ring her friendship on the missionary she enables the meeting of cultures to pro­ceed. On the other hand, May Crawford failed to see Wangu's position and example as an extension of the trading activity that she recognized as important to women, though in sadly dismissive terms.**

**Wangu reputedly took her duties seriously and applied traditional punishments**

**with gusto. Her downfall came though failure to observe social limits. She usurped male prerogatives in several ways, most dramatically when she joined male dancers in the *Kibaata* dance, which is performed virtually naked. This *was* a breach of taboo that society could not tolerate, and she had to resign from office. The circumstances are ambiguous, since her mentor, District Chief Karuri wa Gakure, was also defying tradition by dancing with younger men. Wangu nonetheless continued to be greatly respected until her death in 1936. Her son, Jacob Muchiri, occupied her old post as headman of Weithaga Location from 1915 to 1936. Her administrative camp is today the site of an orphanage, and a sublocation has been named after her.**

**96 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

***Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye and Emilia Ilieva***

**The most interesting event after our arrival at Weithaga was the welcome extended to me by the Kikuyu women. Led by their chieftainess, Wangu [wa Makeri], they ascended the hill in hundreds to perform a dance in my honour. Nothing would content them but that I must be dragged into the center of the ring, to endure with as cheerful a countenance as I could muster the din of their savage song and the smother of dust raised by their feet. A presentation of a sheep followed, and after this Wangu seemed to claim me as her particular friend! She is quite a remarkable person in her way, and is the only female chief we have ever known. Probably she would never have been recognized by the Government in this capacity had not her husband, to whom the authority of sub-chief was originally given, proved incapable, while Wangu demonstrated herself to be "the better man of the two"! With well-oiled body, draped with skins, smeared with red clay ind grease and ornamented with an amazing quan­tity of beads, Wangu is well able to hold her own as the "leading lady" of the country!**

**Every Kikuyu woman wears a "tailor-made" costume, the goatskin clothing being shaped and sewn by the men; and she is very,particular about the cut, although the fashion is unvarying from year to year! Her skirt hangs long behind, terminating in two points or tails, and is folded across a short leather apron in front. A goatskin cape, suspended by a string from one shoulder, cov­ers the upper part of the body but is usually laid aside during manual work. The women have their own methods'of dressing the skins, which are rubbed with fat until quite soft and pliable, when they are frequently smeared over with red clay. White or coloured beads are sometimes sewn into the seams and round the edges of these garments, thus rendering them ultra-stylish!**

**It is strange how dearly an African loves a decoration of beads! The Kikuyu women are sometimes quite heavily laden with them. Large hoops of beaded wire hang from their ears; and bead necklaces, varying in number according to the estimation in which they are held by husbands or lovers, are strung around their necks. Young girls are decorated with a frontlet of beadwork over their foreheads and a .kind of corset to blue and white beads just below the waist.**

**Beads are not, however, the only ornament. Coils of brass wire, kept brightly shining, are worn on the arms and above the ankles, if the woman be a person of any importance. If she has attained the rank of *mutumia* (a married woman with grown-up children), she must keep her head entirely shaved and also insert huge brass rings in the distended lobes of her ears. The younger women shave the front and back of the head, leaving only a circle of hair on the crown. As soon as a girl is able to take a part in the general work of the village, her hair ig cut in this curious way, and the wretched custom of distorting the ears begins. Three punctures are made in the upper edge, into which small sticks of equal size are inserted. A much larger hole is made in the lobe, which is continually stretched by the introduction of chunks of wood. These are again and again replaced by wedges of a larger size until the lobe is so extended that it will sometimes reach to the shoulder. Necklaces are often threaded through the ears, making it somewhat difficult and painful to turn the head. Little girls sel­dom wear anything but a small leather apron, and a string of beads round the neck.**

**FACE TO FACE WITH WANGII WA MAKERI + 97**

**As I sat in the center of the ring of merry women and girls dancing in my honour, I could scarcely realize what strenuous lives they led, but this I found out by degrees, as we watched them come and go day by day and visited them in their villages. Though practically slaves from childhood they bear life's burdens very philosophically and are generally ready with a laugh and a jest. See the tiny girl of four or five years trotting bravely along with a baby almost as big as her­self on her back! Look at her again as she follows her mother with a bundle of sticks poised on her slender shoulders or a little gourd filled with water from the river! As she grows year byiyear the burdens will become gradually heavier and heavier, but her muscles will be so strong that she will usually carry them cheer­fully. We have seen women carrying loads of firewoods that weighed quite 180 lbs.! The small Kikuyu maiden is early taught to handle her little cultivating knife in the gardens, digging and weeding all day long beside her mother; then after assisting to carry home the produce of the fields, she must help to cook the food for the lazy men folk at sundown! If not engaged in the fields, the women may be seen busily employed at home, pounding maize in a large wooden mor­tar or grinding the corn on a smooth slab of stone, by means of a smaller stone which they work to and fro with their hands. This latter process, being accom­plished in a kneeling position, must be very fatiguing.**

**Sometimes when taking a walk in the cool of the day, we have come upon a number of women pounding'sugar-cane for the brewing of native beer. For this a large log of timber is felled, and as it lies on the ground a long row of holes resembling mortars is carved on its surface. Pestles of hard wood are prepared, about six feet in length and each weighing seven or eight pounds avoirdupois; with these the cane is pounded to a pulp, which is then carried to a group of men sitting near, whose duty is to wring out the juice. This is poured into large gourds and allowed to ferment. A still more intoxicating drink is made from honey. Pottery is an important industry which is entirely in the hands of the**

**women. They will travel many miles to procure the right kind of sand, and it is really remarkable with what skill they will fashion the large cooking-pots which are so much in demand.**

**98 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**A Kikuyu woman scarcely knows what idleness means. Her leisure moments are occupied with the manufacture of string bags which are used for carrying the garden produce or the ripe corn from the fields. Even when she has become habituated to attending the mission service on Sunday, she may be seen in her place in church busily plying her fingers as she pulls the threads in and out, while a half-finished bag lies on her lap. The twine for these bags is made by a method which would hardly commend itself to friends at home, namely, by chewing strips of wild ramie fiber in the mouth before twisting them into string.**

**Although the women have no share in the discussion of public affairs, yet in buying and selling they are experts. Were it not for the native markets which are held every fourth day at recognized places all over the country, there would be indeed be little to sharpen their wits. But the constant bargaining over the exchange and sale of their wares and garden produce tends to somewhat develop their otherwise dull and torpid minds. The market is a place of social reunion, and between the hours of eleven and twelve in the morning, when the fair is at its height, it presents a seething mass of black humanity:**

**Of recreation the women and girls have little, but on moonlight nights they come out to dance on the open spaces outside the homesteads, and the hillsides echo with the shrill trilling of their peculiar song. It is only as a woman advances in years that she may hope to meet with much respecefrom the other sex. Young men are expected to step out of the path to allow an old dame to pass, if it be a very narrow one. The head wife of a member of the *Kiama* (coun­cil of elders) is permitted to be present at the tribal councils; of this privilege, however, the women seldom avail themselves: During a woman's existence she passes through the following stages: (1) *Karegu* (little girl);) (2) *kiregu* (big girl); (3) *muiretu* (marriageable girl); (4) *muhiki* (bride or young marriedwoman); (5) *wabai* (mother of young children); (6) *mutimia* (mother of children who have attained their majority); (7) *kiheti* (old woman).**

***Anonymous*BINTI ALI TILE CLEVER**

**Kenya 1914 Kiswahili**

**The story "Binti All the Clever" is taken from a children's book *Black Tales for White Children,* compiled by Captain and Mrs. C.H. Stigand and published in London in 1914. The book contains a brief account of tl}e,Swahili people and of the circumstances of oral narrative, as well as drawings of African musical instru­ments and other cultural objects. Unlike other stories in the book, which are sim-**

ply presented as traditional communal tales and end with a formula in the Swahili idiom, this one is attributed. The authors indicate that this "tale comes from the Wazir and his daughter, the last born, who was called Binti All the Clever"—the latter also the heroine of the story. (The wazirmas the chief administrative officer under the ruling sultan.) This tale, written during the period of the British East Africa Protectorate, invites comparison with earlier and later versions of the woman-outwits-man theme.

**BINTI ALI THE CLEVER + 99**

Captain Chauncy Hugh Stigand gives himself the title of "Swahili inter­preter." A British army officer, colonial administrator, geographer, explorer, natu­hlist, 'and big game hunter as well as a ling-hist and writer, he traveled through East Affica'and the Sudan in the early years of the twentieth century, writing about wildlife, language, administrative methods, and local history. His best-known books are *The Land of Zinj* and *Hunting the Elephant in Africa and Other Recollections of Thirteen Years' Wanderings.* He later became governor of the Upper Nile Province (Sudan), where he was killed in a revolt in 1919.

*Marjorie Oludhe•acgoye*

**Once upon a' time there was a Sultan and his Wazir, and that Sultan had seven children, all sons, and that Wazir had seven children, all daughters.**

**Those daughters of the Wazir had no mother; their mother had died, and they were very poor.**

**The sons of the Sultan used to laugh at the daughters of the Wazir, saying, "You poor people, what do you eat? It is our father who pays your father his wages, and how do they suffice for you seven people who are in one house? You poor creatures, you have not even a brother to help you."**

**Now those girls used to plait baskets and sell them. They lived for many days like that, their work being to cry every day, and when they came out of school they used to plait- and sell their baskets. Till one day the youngest daughter, who was called Binti Ali, was sitting with her father, and -she said to him, "What advice have you to give us, father?"**

**Her father asked her, "Why, my child?"**

**She said to him, "We are only seven girls; we have neither husbands nor brothers. Should anything happen to you, who will be our headman? Father, you must arrange to 'have a ship built for me, and it must be ready in the space of three years."**

**Her father said, "All this wealth, where shall I get it from, that I may build a ship?"**

**She answered him, "God, the merciful, will provide."**

**In the morning the Wazir arose and went to the Sultan and- said to him, "Give me help, for my youngest child wants a vessel built for her."**

**The Sultan-brought out nine lakhs of rupees and gave them to his Wazir. Then the Wazir sought for workmen and told them to build a ship and have it ready in three years' time.**

**Now that child, Binti Ali, was very beautiful, more beautiful than all her**

**sisters. Many men had come to seek her in marriage, but she had refused them, saying, "I am poor; my father has not wealth to suffice for my wedding."**

**100 + THE EARLYTWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**A't the end of three years the ship was ready, and her father called her, "Eh, my child, Binti Ali." And she answered him, "Lebeka, father," which means "Here I am" in the language of today; but long, long ago, Lebek was the nameof the god worshipped by the Phoenicians at the temple of Baal-lebek (Bal bek).**

**Her father said to her, "Your ship is finished and ready for you."**

**So she went to see it and found that it was built in a wondrously fine way. When she returned she said to her father, "Now you must find me a captain and sailors, and you must put on the vessel enough food to last three years."**

**So he found a crew for her and provisioned the ship and returned. Then she said, "Father, now you must buy for me fine raiment, a sultan's turban, a shirt and coat, and a sword and dagger. Also you must get for me sandals of gold braid and two men's gold rings."**

**So her father searched for one hour and half a second and then returned and said, "My child, the things you want are ready."**

**Then he asked her, "My child, where are you going? Tell me."**

**She said, "Father, have you no understanding? I am going to the country of the Sultan Makami."**

**Her father said to her, "My child, you are already lost. Do you not know that a woman may not go to the country of Sultan Makami? Any other than a male who enters the country is put to death."**

**Binti All said to him, "Father, have you no wits, you, a full-grown man, who rules all this land? Do you not see that all these clothes which you have brought for me are men's clothes? want to go and see Makami's country.),**

**Her father said, "I do not approve of this** journey you are setting **out upon."**

**His daughter replied, "What coma to me is in the hands of God."**

**Then she entered the bathroom and washed herself, and when she came out she was dressed as a man. Now that girl had wisdom ..more than all her sisters, and she was well read in the Qur'an.**

**She took her dog, whose name was Atakalo, and she entered the ship and set sail.**

**She travelled day and night, for three years, and there in the midst of the ocean she taught her dog till it attained great kai-ning.**

**At the end of the third year she drew near to the country of Sultan Makami, and she ordered 'a salute to•be fired, and the people on land replied also with a salute.**

**When her vessel drew near, the Sultan's son rowed out to meet her. He climbed** bn **board, and there he saw a handsome Arab youth sitting on the deck.**

**Binti Ali arose, and they greeted one another after, the fashion of men: "Peace be with you," "And with you-peace."**

**She went ashore with that son of the Sultan, and they came to the palace.
  
When they came to the palace he said to his father, the Sultan, "How shall
  
we see that this is a man and not a woman? Let us give him very hot gruel and**

**if it is a woman she will not be able to drink it, and then we will kill her."**

**BINTI ALI THE CLEVER ♦ 101**

**So they ordered food to be brought, and slaves were told: "Take matting and platters and very big trays and cups of gold, and place them ready for the feast."**

**When the food was ready they brought gruel for that foreign youth to drink, and it was very hot.**

**Binti All took it and threw it away, saying, "Am I a woman, that you bring me cold gruel like that?"**

**So they prepared fresh gruel, steaming hot, and gave it to her and she said, "Ah, that is more fit for a Sultan's son to drink."**

**So she put it beside her, and her dog Atakalo blew on it, so that it quickly cooled, and she drank it.**

**Very good food was then brought, and they fed, and she returned to her ship.**

**The Sultan then said, "To-morrow we must take this foreigner to my store of jewels and ornaments, and if it be a woman we will surely see, for she will take delight in women's jewellery."**

**All night long Binti Ali taught Atakalo what he should do, and in the morn­ing the Sultan's son came to fetch her.**

**He said, "My father says that I am to take you to his store and show you his treasures."**

**So they went to the Sultan's treasure-house, where they showed her neck chains and nose pendants, anklets and bracelets, women's gold rings and ear ornaments.**

**She. said, "Have you in this country no men's ornaments, that you should show me nothing but women's jewellery?"**

**So they brought her to the next store, wherein were gold-hilted daggers and all manner of arms, swords, and pistols, guns, and muskets. These she admired, and meanwhile Atakalo went and swallowed all the gold ornaments he could find and took them to the ship, till he had brought much wealth aboard.**

**Then the Sultan's son said to his father, "Now what shall we do so that we may kill her if she is a woman?"**

**So the Sultan said, "Make him take off his turban, and then we will surely see by the manner in which he ties it whether it is a woman or not."**

**So the Sultan's son said, "Now will you not wash?"**

**Binti Ali said, "Thank you, I have already bathed on board."**

**So he said, "If it is only your face, I beseech you to wash."**

**So she said, "Certainly; but first you and your father must wash."**

**So they took off their turbans and began to wash, when suddenly there was a shout from outside: "The Sultan's house is on fire."**

**Behold, that dog Atakalo had brought a brand and set fire to the palace. Then the Sultan and his son and all the people in his house rushed out, With their turbans in their hands, to see what was the matter and help put out the flames.**

**Binti Ali went down swiftly to her ship and got on board, and meanwhile Atakalo had run round and bored a hole in the bottom of every boat and ship in**

**the Sultan's harbour. Then Atakalo came back to her vessel and said, "Mistress, I have finished."**

**102 + THE EARLY TWENTIE'TH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**So she weighed anchor and changed into her woman's clothes. The Sultan and his son and all the people, when they saw that she was sailing off, rushed down to the beach and tried to row out and stop her, but every boat they launched sunk; and so they were not able to get to her.**

**Then they saw her come up on the deck.**

**Then, changing her clothes as a woman, she sang-**

**"Makami, behold my bracelets and rings. See my anklets, Makami. Aha, behold!**

**See the chain for my neck of beautiful gold. Behold now my ear-rings and nose-stud see. Lola, Makami, lola, look well at me.**

**I'm Binti Ali, the Wazir's daughter;**

**I came, Makami, from over the water. We are seven in all, the last born am I.**

**Farewell, Makami, for I bid you good-bye. Lola, Makami, lola, farewell."**

**Then she said to the captain, "Set sail, and let us return home."**

**When she arrived home there in her town her father and sisters were hold­ing a great mourning for her, for they said, "Our youngest one has now been away many years; surely she must be dead."**

**When they saw her their hearts were veryglad, and a feast was made for her for the space of three days. And the riches she brought with her, which her dog Atakalo had taken from the Sultan's treasure house, were brought to land; and when he saw them her father.rejoiced greatly:**

**After a space of ten days she said to her father, "I know.that Sultan Makami's son is making a plan to get me. If he comes here and asks for me in marriage, do not refuse him, but agree. My cleverness, which I have in my heart, is that which will save me."**

**One day the Sultan of Makami's son arrived and came to the Wazir and said, "I want your daughter, Binti Al, in marriage."**

**So the Wazir agreed.**

**Binti Ali took a large pumpkin and filled it with honey and placed it on her bed, and she herself got under the bed.**

**That night the Sultan of Makami's son came into her room and said, "Ee, woman," and she replied, "Lebeka, master."**

**Then he said, "You, woman, you think that you can come to our country and cheat us, pretending' that you are a man. Behold, to-day is your last, so make profession of faith quickly, so that you may be prepared for death."**

**Binti All said, "I testify there is no God but one God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God."**

So he drew his sword and struck a blow which cut the pumpkin in two, and then he went out quickly and got on his ship and sailed away. When he came to look at his sword, to wipe the blood off, he found no blood but only honey stuck allover it.

**MY STUDENTS + 103**

This is the end of the story.The tale comes from the Wazir and his daugh­ter, the last born, who was called Binti Ali the Clever.

*Translated by Captain and Mrs. C.H. Stigand*

***Jane Elizabeth Chadwick and Eva Chadwick*MY STUDENTS**

Kenya circa 1920; 1935 English

Jane Elizabeth Chadwick arrived in Africa in 1895 as part of the first group of female missionaries sent to Uganda by the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, founded in 1799 in London by the Evangelical clergy of the Church of England. She held various posts, eventually joining her brother Walter Chadwick, whose job it was to set up a station in Butere, in the present-day Western Province of Kenya. Arriving in 1916, she committed herself to pastoral and educational services among the women of the area. She served for almost ten years until her retirement in 1925, when she returned home to Ireland.

By 1918, Jane Elizabeth Chadwick=wlio went by the name Lissette--had attracted a large !lumber of girls to the school she founded, which grew into Butere Girls High School. Chadwick's involvement in and 'perceptions of pioneer education for girls are captured in an undated, handwritten manuscript and in the almost one hundred letters written to her friend Ethel Magowan of Belfast.

Students at Chadwick's school might awake at three or four in the morning, do their field chores, and then walk miles from surrounding villages to school. The school day began with prayers, and then music and some recitation, before the arrival of older students who had morning chores to dp before they could come to school. Students learned to read and write, to draw and to sew., They were expected to read and own a Bible before being baptized, a significant out­come of the educational process. (Chadwick refers to the "catechumen's class," meaning those preparing for Christian baptism.}

Students were also expected to arrive at schdol properly clothed, and when a family owned but one dress, girls had to take turns at school. According to Lis­sette Chadwick's manuscript, the most severe punishment one could mete out to girls was to keep them at home. Schoolgirls were expected to return to their vil­lage and tell others what they had learned.

This excerpt from Lissette Chadwick's 'manuscript focuses mainly on a stu­dent named Kitandi. The additional text, written in 1935 by Lissette's sister Eva Chadwick, appears on a page inserted, into the manuscript and is included here-because it continues the story of Kitandi.

*Fran Etemesi and Naomi L. Shitemi*

***By Jane Elizabeth Chadwick***

**104 + THE EARLyTvvENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**Amongst my first school girls at Butere were two, Kitandi and Mapesa, who came together a walk of over two miles. I noticed that whenever one was absent the other did not appear. On asking the reason I heard that both girls had been partly betrothed by their fathers to heathen men with several wives already; i.e. a couple of cows had been offered and accepted as part payment for the maidens; who however wished to be single wives of Christian husbands. But if either came the long walk to school without a friend to raise alarm, she fully expected to be seized and carried off to the undesired husband, as the Bahanga custom was.**

**Kitandi was,a strapping,,big lass and often came carrying on her shoulder a devoted four-year-old cousin, who would cry if left behind, but could not walk too far; and as time went on a 'group of young girls from all along that road attached themselves to the first two so that they made quite an addition to my flock. Both Kitandi and Mapesa advanced quickly and were admitted to the catechumen's class, and Kitandi, always the leader, became a pupil teacher. Early in the days of the great war, I had seven of these bigger girls helping to teach besides the two Baganda women who had answered my appeal for help from the center.**

**As thousands of Kavirondo boys were month by month drafted to the war, a few as recruits in the army but most of them as carriers, and after my brother had followed them down to "German East [Africa]," the girls, with fewer to cook and work for at home, came in increasing numbers to learn; especially on Sundays we often had more than three hundred in the girls Sunday-school alone so that when the drum sounded for service I could only send the Senior class on to church with the adults and the boys, while with the juniors we car­ried on a little service of our own, with a great deal of singing. These Bahanga, unlike the Baganda, were naturally a very musical people and loved to sing in parts. During this time of crowded school my friend Kitandi disappeared for a fortnight, and I was told that her mother was very ill and Kitandi was nursing her day and night, the two other daughters, heathen, leaving all the work to her. Then one day they told me that the mother was dead and Kitandi dying. I had seen ler a feW days before, tired but well: So immediately after school I called my car-boys and set out to their hill where I found the heathen funeral customs being carried on in even unusual wildness. Wailing was loud and continuous; men would from time to time climb up the poles of the little grain stores and fling themselves down yelling; one would rush into the cook-house, seize a water pot or cooking-pot, and fling it into the midst of the circle in the court­yards, smashing it to atoms; another caught a fowl and wrung its neck; yet another tore a cloth from a woman's back and tore it to shreds. All these hyster­ical doings supposed to propitiate the spirit of the departed as being done in her honour. My inquiries as to Kitandi only elicited, "She isn't here." At least I per­suaded a young boy to guide me a quarter of an hour's walk on a track over the**

bill to the house where she had been deposited. They tol4 me that when the mother died her relations started the wailing and called the girl to join in; she refused and knelt down to pray in a corner. Again they called her to help wrap up the body and found that, worn out with sorrow and watching, she had fainted. Imagining that the spirit had struck her down because she refused to wail, some of them lifted her up, carried her unconscious to the nearest Christ­ian house, and flung her in the doorway saying, "Take your Christian." She had a severe illness after that, tended only by one little brother who would come to fetch soup and medicine for her and by the Christian young man into whose but she had been so unceremoniously thrown.

**MY STUDENTS + 105**

After the war was over, when our boys, diminished in numbers, returned, I soon became distinctly anxious over my pupil teachers, who came late instead of punctually, dull instead, of cheery, shrugging their shoulders when asked to put out the reading sheets or slates, cross or falling asleep in their classes. **I** began to wonder whether we were to have an outbreak of sleeping sickness, and whether the government doctor would come and examine them! Then one day a man catechist came and asked me, "Do you think that it is wise what these girls of yours' are doing?" and I begged him to tell me what it was. So it came out that the boys during the campaign had been much laughed at by the more civilized coast boys both because their faces showed the old tribal marks, or scars, of heathen days, and because most of them could not read. And on their return they found that their sisters had got ahead of them. So as many of them had acquired lamps or lanterns each held one of my pupil-teachers and made them start night classes, fifteen or twenty youths to each lamp, and some of these carried on up to 3.00 a.m., the lassitude of the girls thoroughly accounted for. The help of the men catechists made some other arrangements, and the girls were told only to teach by daylight in the kraals, say for an hour before sunset. Kitandi, a few months later had got together a village gathering of sixty under a big tree, some old women and little children who could not come so far as Butere to learn. She was later married to a teacher of the Luo tribe who at this time of writing (1935) is in the divinity school preparing for ordination, and she is the mother of five children. When her probation time was over and she asked me to select a name for her in baptism, I chose Lydia, remembering the women in faraway Philippi who gathered by the'riverside for prayer.

***Note added by Eva Chadwick***

When my sister, after her retirement, told me the story of Lydia, she told also of the following episode, which I eventually add, because it seemed to me to be the climax of the whole.

Shortly after my mother's death my sister was visited one evening by a group of those wild young men on their way home from the war, of whom she has written in another place. This group came from a village on the foot-hills of Mount Elgon, and they told her their needs bluntly enough: "We just learnt one thing at the war, that is that we must have the whole men's learning so give

**us a missionary." My sister had to tell them sadly that it must be a long time before that could be. The Archdeacon, who had been in charge of the whole district, was dead. The mission was depleted, few young recruits arriving. They must be patient, but they were anything but patient; after a few minutes debate among themselves they turned to her again. "Then we will take you."**

**106 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**But again she must refuse. She tried to explain to them that she was in a position of trust, left alone to try and keep her brother's work together until it should be possible to fill his place. Greatly as she was touched by their even thinking, it possible that a woman should teach them, she could not go.**

**"Give us one of your girls."**

**But it was unthinkable that she should send one of her young, newly taught Christian maidens away in the hands of men like this. They must be patient—they must indeed. Yet she thought of them and their crying need for a long time that night. She would see them again in the morningand assure them that she would do all she could to help them. But in the morning they had vanished—and they had taken Lydia with them.**

**There was nothing she could do at the moment. Her work must go on. But when, a few days later, one of the nearest clergy cycled over to see her, hopeful of a pleasant visit and refreshing cup of tea after his long hot ride, he found himself, instead, promptly dispatched on a longer and hotter journey in search of Lydia..**

**He had considerable difficulty in finding the village, but once there no diffi­culty at all in locating Lydia. She was established in all honour in the largest but in the place, surrounded by most of the children and as many of the women as could possibly be spared from digging, intent on the rudiments of that most diffkult art of reading.**

**The education of the young men had not yet begun; they were still fully occupied in running up at all speed a good sized school house in which all sec7 tions of the community, might take their turn of instruction, and where per­haps, some day they might all meet in worship. When they had learned what worship meant. Lydia was entirely mistress of the situation. She was a born teacher and here was a whole village hungering to be taught. What could be happier?**

**The missionary, only mounted his bicycle and rode, wearily homewards. There was nothing he could do, except indeed to resolve very earnestly that he would second all Miss Chadwick's efforts to secure a teacher as quickly as pos­sible for a village among the foothills of Mount Elgon.**

**I wonder whether, in after days, Lydia even introduced her Luo Padre to her own first parish.**

***Siti binti Saad* FOUR SONGS**

**FOUR SONGS + 107**

**Tanzania 1920s Kiswahili**

**The renowned singer Siti binti Saad was born in Fumba village in Zanzibar in 1880. Her family was quite poor, and she followed her mother's practice of mak­ing and selling pots and mats. The extraordinary voice that would later win her fame was first heard as she walked through Zanzibar town, singing to call atten­tion to her pots.**

**Ski moved to Zanzibar town, as the popular story goes, after her pottery busi­ness came to ruin when she fell one day and broke all of her wares. She soon became the only woman in a small musical group. In the beginning, the group was poorly equipped, and Siti faced some resistance as a singer both because she was a woman and because of her poor rural background. She nonetheless quickly gained popularity, reaching her peak in 1928, when she traveled to India to record under the Gramaphone Company's His Master's Voice label. During that trip and another in 1929, her group recorded a total of 126 songs. These were proba­bly the first gramophone records ever made bx East African artists.**

**Ski binti Saad sang in the *taarab* musical tradition, which blends Swahili music with Arabic and Indian. Prior to Siti, *taarab* sin**g**ers were most often well-**off, **cultured, and male and sang in Arabic. Siti, Who was illiterate but had a gift for memorizing songs, began the now well-established practice of singing in Kiswahili. Her career served to give the language prestige and bring it to audi­ences outside of East Africa. She performed in the sultan's court and for many events hosted by the wealthy residents of Zanzibar's Stone Town; thus gaining considerable financial rewards.**

**Although she eventually earned an international reputation, Ski's songs were most popular along the East African coast, the listeners in the interior finding her lyrics too closely tied to the context of Zanzibar and thus too opaque. Siti had the gift of transforming various important social and cultural issues of Zanzibar into songs offering critical commentary. She sang on love, on class and gender inequalities, on the injustices of the court system, and more generally on the var­ious sagas of Zanzibar town. Her lyrics are usually allegorical, filled with allu­sions, often touching on the political and moral implications of behavior.**

**Ski's achievements prepared the way for other women singers to join previ­ously all-male taarab groups, and her recordings came to be heard internationally as the voice of East Africa. When she died in 1950, she had become not only a musical legend but an icon of Ta\_nzan i an women's struggle for equity and recogni­tion. The Tanzania Media Women's Association, for example, acknowledged her by naming their magazine *Sauti ya Siti,* or "Voice of Ski." ("Ski" translates to "woman" or "lady.") Ski was also the subject of a biography written by Tanzania's Most prominent male poet, Shaaban Robert, in 1958.**

**In "Kijiti," Siti recounts the true story of a man who killed a woman visitor from Dar es Salaam. He took the woman out, along with her friends, then raped and killed her. Siti questions the system of justice that jailed the woman's friends but allowed the murderer to escape to the mainland. "There Is No Damage" also**

**recalls a real incident in which a wealthy Arab landowner and government clerk was arrested by the British government for embezzling public funds and sen­tenced to work in a quarry. The man had also ben in the habit of defrauding poor people by taking advantage of their illiteracy. "With Missive I Am Sending You" is a prayer for good health and true friendship, perhaps referring to Fatuma binti Baraka, known as Bi Kidude, a protégé of Siti who also became a renowned *taarab* singer. "Do Not Expose a Secret" is a medley of allegory and allusions to love, sex, and infidelity, with a hint about promiscuity in the last verse: In typical *taarab* tradition, these verses allow listeners to hear what they will, depending on the context in which they are sung.**

**108 + THEEARLYTWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

***Saida Yabya-Otbman and M.M. Mulokozi***

**KIJITI**

**Look, look you all, what Kijiti has done,**

**To take a guest and give her the runaround.**

**He took her into the bushes and brought her back dead. We left home without permission;**

**We had our gin in our basket.**

**The dance was in Chukwani; death awaited us in Sharifumsa.**

**Kijiti said to me, let us go,woman.**

**If only I had known, I would not have gone. Kijitiyou will kill me for one peg of gin.**

**The judge, presiding, was angry.**

**He §aid "Bloody fools!" to Kijiti's witnesses,**

**And sentenced Sumaili and Binti Subeti to prison.**

**These matters are strange, however you look at them. Kijiti killed someone who was pregnant.**

**He crossed the river but the witnesses drowned.**

**Kijiti, I advise you not to go to Dar es Salaam; You will encounter there a man with a razor.**

**Everyone is cursing you that you may get elephantiasis.**

**THERE Is No DAMAGE**

**There is no relationship; I am so and so.**

**The word, like a sin, is branded on the chest.**

**The name is yours, old man, and the stone is on your head; The stone is on your head.**

Stop your meanness and robbing of the poor,

**FOUR SONGS + 109**

Especially those who speak not, the ignorant of the ignorant. Their pen always is ink on their thumbs,

Is ink on their thumbs.

Pilfering is wrong; stealing from the government. Their books are open, with all signatures,

A matter of long ago, comes under scrutiny,

Comes under scrutiny.

Friends, don't be duped; hark my words.

Maintain caution; don't let it leave your hearts.

Let little satisfy you; that which is your right, clerks; That which is your right, clerks.

**WITH MISSIVE** I Am **SENDING** You

Oh, missive, I am sending you, to my confidant, To my generous Lord, who has no compare. The stones have turned well, with speedy peace. I pray respectfully, with my hands beseeching: Rid us of enmity and secret envy.

Prayers I have read; may they reach the heavens, May they reach the heavens.

Your compassion, oh, Lord, let it be with you.

Every time I look at them, I discover them in my heart. I pray for health and freedom from suffering,

And freedom from suffering.

Oh, Prophet, stand up with the angels in heaven, Together with Bi Fatuma and Hussein her grandson. Oh, Prophet, it behooves you, since God mandated you To pray for the human race in heaven and earth,

In heaven and earth.

**Do NOT EXPOSE A SECRET**

Po not expose a secret

With colored ink.

You have to understand:

If you have many problems, You self-destruct

Through your own ignorance.

**Give the poison to the cat Who has many lives,**

**Not the goat;**

**You will kill it,**

**For every lecher**

**Dies deprived.**

**Poor stars**

**In the clouds,**

**I never imagined**

**That you would be unfaithful. Come back, my love,**

**And end my grief.**

**Show me.**

**I swear I can't sleep;**

**Quench my desire by action. Being apart from him**

**Makes me crazy.**

**A ripe fruit must be picked.,**

**A dry leaf is withered by the sun.**

**The one with a scar may still be hurting. My love, don't agitate me.**

**Love does not last without tolerance. Understand, speed is not progress.**

**The sweetness of sugar**

**Does not surpass that of sugarcane. Sugarcane has juice**

**Dripping down on you.**

**With sudden sweetness,**

**The soul melts.**

**A decorated cup Is good for tea;**

**Add some milk**

**And sugar aplenty. When you depart, Another is waiting.**

***Translated by Saida Yahya-Otbman***

**110 + THE EARLYTVVENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

***Communal*SONG OF THE COFFEE GIRLS**

**SONG OF THE COFFEE GIRLS + 111**

**Kenya 1922 Gikuyu**

**In colonial Kenya, many young women worked on privately owned coffee estates in order to earn money and get away from uncongenial home conditions. Labor on the plantations was not compulsory, though no doubt there were violations of the law. On 15 March 1922, Harry Thuku, a government-employed clerk and telephone operator and a leader of the East Africa Association, one of the earliest groups formed to oppose the injustices of the colonial system, was arrested. He had particularly objected to women doing forced roadwork and had communi­cated directly with the Colonial Office in London.**

**The government charged Harry Thuku with subversion and placed him in detention in Kismayu. On 17 November 1922, the Presbyterian missionary Dr. J. W. Arthur sent the text of a song with his translation to the Chief Native Com­missioner as evidence of the strength of feeling in the community about the abuse of women's labor. His letter provides documentation of the exact date and group authorship of the song. For the rest of his life, Thuku would often be addressed in the Gikuyu language as "Chief of the coffee girls." His protest is also a landmark event in nation-building in that Thuku, who came from Kiambu, received a warmer reception in the Nyeri and Murang'a sections of Gikuyuland than in his home area, where he was seen as a threat to the authority of the Gikuyu chiefs appointed by the British government.**

**As sung, the song contained four verses, all identical except for the names of the four Gikuyu chiefs, whom the coffee girls blamed for allowing the detention of their champion, Harry Thuku. We know that there were other versions of the song that were forbidden by the government. Thuku is quoted in supplements to the *East African Chronicle* of 17 February and 8 March 1922 as having called Koinange wa Mbiu, Josia Njonjo, Philip Karanja, and Waruhiyu (his spellings) "Judases."**

***Ma****rj****orie Oludhe Macgoye***

**Fri lipu let him be cursed.**

**It is they who have caused to be taken away the Chief of the girls**

**who live in the coffee.**

**Koinange let him be cursed.**

**It is they who have caused to be taken away the Chief of the girls**

**who live in the coffee.**

**Josiah let him be cursed.**

**It is they who have caused to be taken away the Chief of the girls**

**who live in the coffee.**

**Kinyanjui let him be cursed.**

**112 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**It is they who have caused to be taken away the Chief of the girls**

**who live in the coffee.**

***Translated by \_LW Arthur***

***Luiza
  
I* WANT A DIVORCE**

**Zambia 1922 English**

**"I Want a Divorce" is taken from the record of a February 1922 civil court cases in what was then Northern Rhodesia. A young woman named Luiza, of Luangwa district in the Eastern Province of the country, is suing her husband, Luka. She wants the legal process to free her from her absent husband. As her testimony reveals, she had tried once before to obtain a divorce but was denied, and she has come back again determined to state her case. Her complaint is recorded more or lessiverbatim by the court.**

**In general, it was taboo for a woman publicly to question the actions of her husband. Such matters as wife-abuse were considered the private domain of fam­ily elders. Wives were to bear whatever befell them, and certainly they were not supposed to move their private Iins into courts of law. It was also common in those days for husbands to leave their wives and children in order to find work in the mines of Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) or South Africa, as was the case with Luka. In his absence, he was'represented by his brother.**

**In her testimony, Luiza explains her reasons for wanting the divorce, and objects to her husband's demand for Akshillings as reimbursement for cloth he allegedly bought her. In other testimony from the case, her brother-in-law claims that she has "refused" to sleep with her husband. The divisional headman, Ambisia, then testifies that "defendant is impotent" and that the cloths were pur­chased prior to the marriage, and the headman of the village, Tensiako, confirms that testimony. The verdict of the court is "divorce granted," without any reim­bursement for Luka because "these cloths were supplied during the time defen­dant and plaintiff were betrothed?**

***Nalishebo N Meebelo***

***Luiza states:* I am the wife of defendant Luka. I married him two years ago. He paid one shilling as earnest of dowry. I have married him according to our cus­tom. I now want to divorce defendant because he has'beaten me three times and I don't like him and also because he hasn't yet paid dowry. I co-habited with**

**defendant for two months after we were first married, and last June I came with defendant before the M.C. Feira and claimed a divorce, but the M.C. refused my application and ordered defendant and I to live together for six months because there was no sufficient grounds for divorce. I still refused to live with defendant and ran away.**

**CIVILIZED MOTHERHOOD + 113**

**Shortly afterwards defendant went away to S[outh] A[frica] to work. He is still• away but has written a letter to his brother Gutinyu who is appearing for him offering to divorce me if I pay 30 [shillings] being the cost of clothing he has provided me with during the time since we first married. Defendant has only provided me with one large cloth and one small one of [one] yard only. These cloths would not cost.30 [shillings]. I refuse to pay 30 [shillings] for this because he co-habited with me for two months. . . I cooked and worked for defendant all the time until he went away to work. I have not got 30 [shillings]. Both my mother and father are very sick and cannot appear. 'They have heard about the letter and refuse to pay 30 [shillings] to defendant.**

***Zeina binti Mwinyipembe Sekinyaga*CIVILIZED MOTHERHOOD**

**Tanzania 1926 Kiswahili**

**Nothing is known about Zeina binti Mwinyipembe Sekinyaga, other than the fact that she wrote a letter to a local publication in 1926, when literate Tanzani­ans, were few, literate women fewer still. The publication, *Mambo Leo,* was a colo­nial government monthly paper in Kiswahili that began publication in 192**3**. In 1926, the British had dominated the colony they called Tanganyka Territory for less than a decade, having obtained control of this part of German East Africa after World War I.**

**The sophistication and smooth style of presentation in Sekinyaga's arguments give an impression of formal education. Depending upon her age, she may have been educated in a British missionary school or more likely attended classes run by the Germans. However, while names are not always sure indicators of religion, it is worth noting that Zeina is a Muslim name, and it would not have been easy for her to attend a missionary school as a Muslim. If this was indeed the case, it is an added credit to Sekinyaga's character as a radical woman of her time, who either,disreg?rded religious differences or was so eager to learn that she could risk being submerged in an alien religious environment.**

**Sekinyaga's letter indicates that she was a keen reader of *Mambo Leo* and an activist for gender equity, who was dismayed by the deep-rooted male chauvinism around her. One could call her an early African feminist, since she strongly advo­cated the elimination of certain cultural practices, such as bride price or dowry and polygamy. A further interesting feature of this letter has to do with the Kiswahili language, since she wrote at a time when Kiswahili orthography had not been standardized, and this is deafly reflected in her letter, in the spelling of**

words and in nominal concord. To strengthen her final point, the author uses a variety of words in Kiswahili, Kihehe, and Chigogo for bride price, a custom she strongly opposes.

**114 + THE EARLYTWENTIETII CENTURY (1900-1935)**

*Joshua Madumulla*

Please allow me to join the community of your readers, in your esteemed "coun­cil," and permit me to exchange a few ideas with the gentlemen who are your' readers and get some answers to my questions.

1. In all the things that are being said, intended to enable Africa to prosper in future, I have yet to hear of a black African man who endeavors to speak for women and defend us so that we may be treated justly and well in our pres­ent state of oppression. I read Mr. Peter Kiobia of Bukoba, who has a repu­tation for despising women, and by following up his endeavors to the end,1 realize that he wrote because he knows how to write not because he intended to. If this is indeed the situation, will men alone really manage to make Africa of the future prosper? I beg all of you who desire to see your countries succeed in the light of this civilization to read my words as a favor to me, Oh blessed ones.
2. Many traditions of black people in the world were not codified into law, hence I feel they were in the dark. Among the many savage practices that existed, the most enduring was to despise women, deprive them of their rights and enslave them. All men demand many wives, so that they will not have to work in the fields or on construction sites. When a man has slaves, such tasks are done by the slave and the man's wife. Now, judge for your­selves whether it is a mark of respect for the wife to toil with the slaves. At home we black women have no rights, except by chance. The man goes wcierever he wants without his wife. Sometimes he has his dinner
     
   there and comes home and says: "Today I do not want to eat!" Or maybe because of his wanderings, he returns later than his usual time and when he finds the food cold, raises hell more **terrifying** than the thunderbolt. Nor is justice observed in such cases, for:if the wife tries to defend herself by claim­ing that it is not her fault that the food has gone cold, the man retorts: "Shut up, after all you are my property, I can do anything I want with you!" For these and other reasons, we women are whipped worse than stubborn don­keys. I won't tell you of the insults and bad words that we receive from our husbands. Anyone who is kind at heart can realize the bitterness we black women carry in our bosons: trembling every hour, worried every minute, forever steeped in sadness. These afflictions, which have hounded us for many centuries of savagery, have forced us not to trust men, so that very often we meet to denounce and speak evil of them. These problems, which are like a cancer, have come into existence because, when we marry, the man has to pay something to our parents. Indeed this custom ispo different from slavery. For whoever buys a slave must pay, and likewise whoever wants a

**woman to be his wife must pay, and sometimes the value of the slave is higher than that of the wife. This shows that, to her husband, the black woman is at the same level as the slave and is equal to a chattel, such as a cow, a goat, or a chicken.**

**CIVILIZED MOTHERHOOD + 115**

1. **Being sold by our parents lands,us in slavery; deprives us of our dignity, and renders us devoid of any rights before our husbands. For does a chattel have rights vis-a-vis its purchaser? That is why when men are beating their wives, they often speak to them the words I have cited above! Know ye that we women are bereaved without a death, are hurIgry in the midst of plenty, and are dead while still living.**
2. **Had these things been mere primitive acts, i.e., [customary] law, we would ignore them if the men who have converted to any of the religions would treat us justly as ordained by their religions. Yet, the worst offenders in doing bad things to women are these converted husbands! Now, didn't these reli­gions create laws to help us and ensure that we have dignity and are justly treated? I would like this to be clearly explained to me,**
3. **In anticipation of that dawn of Africa of the future, I request you, our par­ents, to abolish this custom which is worse than a cancerous sore this cus-**
     
   **tom of selling your daughters to whichever man you choose! Why should the parents' permission be necessary for marrying off the daughter? Why do you demand "wealth" before the marriage of your daughter? Isn't the love of the betrothed enough to cement their union permanently? Or does it mean that without money your daughter has no valid marriage? Uhderstand that this custom is primitive and whoever follows it, even if he or she sleeps on learned books, is primitive too.**

**Et. To my fellow women, I say this: Shall we not be obedient daughters to our .parents if we refuse to be sold? Shall we not earn the title of "wife" if we are not auctioned to wooers as they are used to auction us? Whether.it is *mahari* or *kilemba, mafungu (Wabehe), vigumo (Wagogo),* it is a traditional custom not a law. Can't it be abolished by a new, law? Why was a man allowed to become "master" of many wives, but a woman not allowed to become "mistress" of many husbands? And who indeed invented this custom? Mr. Cock and Ms. Hen claim that the custom emanated from them. Without our contribution, would the world be as full [of people] as it is today? Women, let us not devalue ourselves, let us understand that we are precious, superior beings of great value, for through us the Almighty God creates human beings whom we bring out [into the world] imbued with life. So from now on let us know that we are the "mothers" of the civilized who will teach the Africans of tomorrow. Let us always keep our eyes open, force ourselves to go to school, even if our elders won't like it. Let us turn a deaf ear. to them, let us go to school, and let us learn civilized motherhood. And you men, allow your wives [to study], even if it is only once a day, for it is better to get [a little], even if it is an "a," than to miss everything. The greatness and dignity of our country will not be manifest unless we women acquire what the schools can**

**offer. And you men, if you want civilization, you have first to educate your wives and daughters, the mothers of the civilized, so that they may be on the same level with you, even if you are still the bosses. If you do that, the noise and wrangling at home will cease, and the words "divorce me" as used at present will no longer be heard. You husbands will be happy to see your wives, and you wives will be joyous to see your husbands. Certificates of divorce, which are stacked up in all government offices, will be returned to where they came from.**

**I hope I will be excused and will receive an answer to these questions that I have posed today.**

***Translated by M.M. Mulokozi***

***Mwana Hashima binti Sheikh*A PETITION**

**Kenya 1930 English [Kiswahili]**

**The author of this letter is writing, at the age of ninety, to protest the breach of an agreement between herself and the government that took place perhaps half a lifetime earlier. At that time, the British colonial government had asked Mwana Hashima to help resolve an issue of,local warfare by negotiating a peace with her stepbrother, who had run off to the mainland and whose sons had been arrested. The government sought Mwana Hashima's assistance, believing she could proba­bly get her brother's attention in this matter. She was promised a reward in return for her help. Mwana Hashima made known the demands of each group to the other, and the fighting was resolved amicably.**

**While Mwana Hashima successfully fulfilled her obligation, her mediation was never acknoWledged, aid she never got her reward. In a time of severe need, shemrote anew petition letter asking for the compensation she was due. At an advanced age but with a clear mind, she is bold enough to hold the government to its word and ask them to keep their early promise.**

**The letter testifies not only to aspects of resistance to colonial rule but also to the colonist's clear need for the assistance of influential members of society in order to secure their control. Mwana Hashima's plight in her old age propels her to reveal history that might have been irretrievably lost. The letter, written on 30 Septeniber 1930, was collected by Alice Werner and William Hichens and pub­lished in 1934 as an appendix to the poem of the mother of Binti Sheikh (Mwana Hashima),: "A Mothet's Advice and Prayer" (see page 72 in this volume). The account notes that, according to Mr. Whitton, the local justice of the peace men­tioned by Mwana Hashima died before the case was resolved. Werner also com­ments that, though published in English and probably translated by an unknown Arab clerk, Binti Sheikh's letter was originally written in Kiswahili, most likely in the Kiamu dialect spoken on Lamu Island, off the Kenyan coast.**

***Naomi L. Shitemi***

**116 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (190G-1935)**

**I have already informed Mr. Whitton, Justice of the Peace, to send my news to the great officers of the Government regarding my work, which I did with my clear heart in the Government, when I was in great hope that the Government would recognise my work which I offered to them. My work I did as under:**

**A PETITION + 117**

**Two young men were imprisoned, and they were the sons of Sheikh Omar bin Mataka; their names were Muhammad bin Omar and Sheikh Mataka bin Omar. Mr. Rogers imprisoned them in Lamu Fort. Their father, Sheikh Mataka bin Omar, had 'run away to the mainland with a great number of peo­ple, and he had made trouble at the mainland to the inhabitants, as same as the Siu people; the Liwali of Siu, Omar bin Isa, could not stay at Siu, and he came to Lamu, and one Akida Abdulla bin Selim was sent to Siu. The late Provincial commissioner, Mr. Rogers, had sent people to the mainland several times to Sheikh Omar bin Mataka in order to make peace with him. Afterwards he instructed the late Liwali of Lamu, Abdulla bin Hemed, to go owing to great hostility. Mr. Rogers came to my house and said that he came in order to send me in purpose of the Government's work.**

**He said that he knew that I could not afford this as I was a woman, but there was no help but to send me, and as Sheikh Omar bin Mataka is my brother, there was no one who could talk with him as well as I. He had prepared a boat to take me to Siu and from there to send some men to the mainland with my lettet to my brdther asking him to come and make peace. And he said that if peace was made and guns were returned to Government and he (Omar) came to Siu, the Government would be glad because they did not want trouble to be made on the mainland— "so if this is done and the Government becomes grateful, you will be given a reward." I followed Mr. Rogers' requests, and I left with my son and husband for Siu, and from there I sent my husband and son and my nephews to the mainland with my letter to my brother Sheikh Omar bin Mataka who wanted his sons to be released from prison and I sent a letter to Mr. Rbgers asking him to release the sons of Sheikh Omar from prison, and let them stay at Lamu until Omar returned to Siu and to take away Akida Abdullah bin Salim from Siu becausefitinaTintriguel increased when he was at Siu, and many people had moved from Siu to the mainland owing to his *fitina.* Mr. Rogers released the sons of Sheikh Omar b. Mataka and allowed them to stay at Lamu, and he took away Akida Abdullah b. Salim from Siu. I informed my brother that his sons were released and that they would stay at Lamu till he came back to Siu and gave up all the guns; that was the Government's request. He agreed with my advice. . . . So I came back to Lamu, and he sent me all the guns, and I handed them over to Mr. Rogers who had them broken and put them all in the sea in front of the Customs House, and Sheikh Omar bin Mataka came back to Siu. Mr. Rogers gave me a certificate for my work which was taken by the Interpreter to Mr. Harding, Salim bin Azan, to show to Mr. Harding. Afterwards Mr. Rogers called me to go to take my certificate as it had**

been returned by Mr. Harding, and he informed me that he would start soon from Lamu for Zanzibar.

**118 + THE EARLY TWENTIEM CENTURY (1900-1935)**

But at that time I was ill . . . and my son was away, and when Mr. Rogers went away I kept quiet because I had means. My husband was alive, and my son was employed. But now I am an old woman, I am ninety years of age and ill; my husband has died, and my son lost the Government's work owing to illness, and he cannot do any other work; so I became poor. For this reason I have commu­nicated to the Government my request, and I hope that the Government will remember me and give me something.

The above mentioned information was known to all the people of Siu and others who have served the Government since they were young men till they become old men and retired. Also I made peace at Jongeni but failed to com­plete it because the inhabitants were bad people. As far as I know if anyone serves the Government, he is usually given something as reward or pension, and I did a great work for the Government and **I** hope that the Government will not cast me aside, for I am an old woman now, of old age and poor.

***Nyambura wa Kihurani, Raheli Warigia wa
  
Johanna, and AliceMurigo wa Meshak***

**LETTER OPPOSING FEMALE CIRCUMCISION**

Kenya 1931 Gikuyu

In 1928, Protestant missionaries in central Kenya began requiring church mem­bers to adjure the practice of female circumcision. For Gikuyu parents at that time, circumcision was part of the ritual, process by which socially and bodily immature children were made into responsible adults. Pubescent girls and boys from a given locality were circumcised on a public initiation ground; afterward, they went through a weeks-long education on proper social and sexual conduct. **The** missionaries, who had begun work in central Kenya in the late nineteenth century, made no objection to male circumcision, and male adolescents were being circumcised 'by mission hospital attendants as early as 1912. Female cir­cumcision could not so easily bb medicaliied: After attending a 1915 circumci­sion, a Dr. Philp declared himself appalled at the "cruelty shown by the old woman" performink the procedure. Missionaries argued that the cutting the girls experierked at adolescence inhibited childbirth by blocking the birth passage with fibrous scar tissue. By September 1929, Presbyterian missionary Dr. Arthur was touring Gikuyu churches, requiring members to sign a pledge against cir­cumcision.

Many Pikuyu people were horrified by the church ruling. In their view, the churches' anticircumcision campaign attacked the basis of gendered order. They were led in argument by the Kikuyu Central Association, a party of men educated at Protestant mission schools. Writing from the city of Nairobi, KCA leader

Jessie Kariuki argued that "those who are protected [from circumcision] are the first to join prostitution." The anticircumcision rules were thought to undermine sexual morality, inhibit biological reproduction, and make girls beastly. Besides, the churches' critics argued, circumcision was no hindrance to childbirth. "Cir­cumcision has been practiced since long ago among us," went an anonymous' 1929 letter to Dr. Arthur, "and you do not produce more children than we do."

**LETTER OPPOSING FEMALE CIRCUMCISION + 119**

The song *Muthirigu,* the "Song of the Big\*Uncut Girl," elaborated on these arguments: "I cannot marry an uncircumcised girl," went one of its many verses: "She tells her husband she will make the baby sleep, then beats him." *Muthirigu* was first sung in the southern Gikuyu district of Kiambu late in 1929. One elder, James Miti-ini Weru, remembers that people in his village in northern Gikuyu­land sang it on Christmas Day. Instead of going to church to sing "The Savior has been born," he recalled, people gathered on a public ground to sing "I swear by Mount Kenya I would rather rear a monkey than rear a *kiri gu* [uncircumcised girl]." Some Gikuyu women and men, however, did support the missions' ban on circumcision. Women at the Presbyterian mission station at Tumutumu formed Ngo ya. Tuiritu, the Shield of the Young Girls, in 1930. They vowed to protect girls who wished to avoid circumcision. Most of the members were wives or daughters of church teachers or evangelists. Cecilia Muthoni Mugaki, daughter of a teacher, remembered living with adolescent girls in the mission's dormitory and locking the door when their fathers came to take them away for circumcision. It was fearful work. Daniel Muriithi,ison of an early member, remembered that crowds gathered around his mother's door, singing *Muthirigu* and ridiculing her as a servant of the whites.

In October 1931, Wairimu wa Nguyo, a Tumutumu boarding school student, was forcibly circumcised while returning home to collect her school fees. Her mother held a hand over her mouth while other women performed the circumci­sion. With this and other forcible circumcisions in view, incensed members of Ngo ya Tuiritu wrote this letter to the government's Local Native Council for legal redress. It is hard to ignore the Christmas-day date on the church women's missive. Was this their reply to the singers of *Muthirigu,* who had on an earlier Christmas ridiculed uncircumcised women as willful, wayward, and barren? Were th.esc, women casting themselves in the model of Mary, reminding their critics that even unlikely vessels could bear children?

The "female circumcision controversy," as it has been named, was a pivotal moment in Kenya's , political and ecclesiastical history. Thousands of men and women left mission churches, forming "independent," Gikuyu-run church organ­izations. A'later generation of historians would see in this early controversy evi­dence of a nationalist consciousness among Gikuyu people. But as this letter, found in the archives Presbyterian Church of East Africa, shows, there was no united Gikuyu perspective on female circumcision. Both critics and supporters of the circumcision ban thought themselves defenders of Gikuyu womanhood. Both sides argued that outsiders should not intervene in matters best left for mothers and fathers to decide. And both sides cast themselves in the light of the nativity, as fruitful, productive, and responsible to Gikuyu motherhood.

*Derek R. Peterson*

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| **To Local Native Council South Nyeri District, 25 December 1931**   1. **The Council of the NO ya Tuiritu met here at Tumufumu because we've heard that the people in the country have prayed for female circumcision to be allowed by the government.** 2. **And we of the Ngo ya Tuiritu heard that there are men who talk of female circumcision, and we get astonished because they (men) do not give, birth and feel the pain and even some die and even others become infertile, and the main cause is circumcision.** 3. **Because of that the issue of circumcision should not be forced. People are caught like sheep; one should be allowed to cut her own way of either agree­ing to be circumcised or not without being dictated on one's body.** 4. **Because Agikuyu say women cannot give birth without being circunicised, and because Gikuyu girls have given birth to children even having not been circumcised, what then is the reason for circumcision? We cannot see any reason.** 5. **Because among the Agikuyu, if a girl fails to give birth, she can be returned to her father even if she is circumcised, where then is the profit for circumci­sion? It can only be given by one who advocates circumcision.** 6. **Now what we ask from the government, because Gikuyu men have more power than women, is that women be assisted in their complaints by the government to avoid further suppression.**   ***Translated by Joseph Kariuki Muriithi***  ***Lusi kyebakutika***  **THE WORD *PROSTITUTEBAS* CONFUSED US** |

**Uganda 193,2 Luganda**

**This letter appeared in *Matalisi,* a colonial-controlled newspaper in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, in June 1932.•Nothing is known about the author, Lusi Kye­bakutika, other than the fact that she was one of a handful of women then liter­ate. Probably she had attended a mission school, since her first name, Lusi, is the Lugandan version of the Christian name Ruth. Since writing, even in the nation's capital, was the province of men, it is not surprising to see her opening plea that her letter be published.**

**As a •very early feminist text, the letter is striking. Kyebakutika's prose is politely logical. She doesn't need to raise her voice. She poses a real question aboura commonly used word, *prostitute,* and asks for a word that might describe the men who, in fact, partner with the women in their immoral act by soliciting and buying sex from them. Her ultimate weapon is humor. Hers is a rare voice**

**120 + THE EARLYTWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-1935)**

**that stands out uniquely amid the silence of gender-related oppression. (A note on the place names to which Kyebakutika refer in her letter: Bwayise is a suburb north of Kampala, and Bulemezi is a county that was regarded at the time as backward.)**

**THE WORD *PROSTITUTE* HAS CONFUSED Us + 121**

***Jane Kawalya***

**Sir,**

**I am humbly trusting that you will be able to publish my letter to the readers.**

**Sir, I am asking why a woman is called a prostitute. For what reason? When a woman is called a prostitute; what should a man be called? The woman who is called a prostitute, with whom does she go? Does she just go to the streets and get men to go with her? Yes, it is a man who tells a woman to sit on his bicycle that,they may go to his home. If you refuse and say that a woman is not to be picked from the streets, the man says, "Aren't you a prostitute?" Then,he drives away hooting, to go to Kampala, where there are many women who are beauti­ful and smart, and he will show off his car, and they will all come, and he will choose which women to take. When he starts the car, he tells them how he has met a backward woman, maybe she was not from town, "I found her at Bwayise, she is from Bulemezi." Then they would all laugh.**

**You know, a man is the real prostitute. Sometimes, you are walking on the road, when you see a man coming from a house. Then he calls you, "Madam, come and have some tea and rest. I will take you later where you are going." Yet the resting he is talking of is not good. Therefore, was it the woman who called the man? It is a pity!**

**Sir, the man also needs to be called a name. The word prostitute is too much in use for women alone. When somebody sees a woman without a husband, she is called' a prostitute. Perhaps one should consider the proverb: *"Gwe busulako aciuma gwe bukyalira,"* meaning a person who is more of a fool blames the one who is less foolish. Therefore, a person who is more of a prostitute blames another. It reminds me of a man who divorced his wife for being a prostitute, and yet in his own house women are his pillows because they are too many and there is nowhere for them to sleep, but he lays his head on some of them.**

**Yours, sir,**

**Lusi K. Kyebakutika**

**Makerere Kyadondo, 17 June 1932**

***Translated by Jane Kawalya***

***Emily Mkandawire*SHOULD WOMEN BE EDUCATED?**

**122 + THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900=1935)**

Malawi 1933 Chitumbuka

Apart **from what is found in her published letter, no information** exists about **the life of Emily Mkandawire. Mkandawire—which may be either the writer's maiden name or her husband's name—is a very common name in northern Malawi. We know she was one of a handful of women then literate and that she lived in Mzimba, in the north central part of the country.**

**Mkandawire was probably educated at one of the mission schools run by Liv­ingstonia Mission in the north. Though Livingstonia encouraged both women and men to develop independent minds through education, women's education even in more recent times emphasized domesticity and child care. Emily Mkan­dawire seems to be thinking of this kind of education for girls. She suggests that education benefits young women both as an alternative to early or hasty mar­riages and as a means to acquiring the judgment they need to choose a husband wisely when the proper time comes.**

*Vyaro na Vyaro* **was a mission newspaper that Livingstonia Mission began pub­lishing in 1932. It accepted articles in Chitumbuka'as well as in English. Emily's letter was written in Chitumbuka. Unlike the common** practice of women con­tributors using initials **to protect themselves, especially when writing about unpopular issues, Emily Mkandawire chose to sign her full name.**

*Fulata L. Mayo*

Friends, listen to me now! Some elderly women, girls, elderly men, and drunk­ards say discouraging and painful things about educating girls. They say, "Why should you girls go to school? Where will school lead you? If you fail, what can school profit you?" "Just get married! All your friends are married, and some even have children! You are just wasting your time." "Do you really believe school would make you useful?" "Do you really think that women should be educated?"

Sometimes you answer them, "We are not- supposed to rush into marriage. We are supposed to get a formal education first and then later, after much thought, get married."

One day I was reading an article by Maria Gondwe in *Vyaro na Vyaro* where she argued that waiting patiently is important so that God can choose someone who is suitable with whom we can share our lives in a Christian marriage and family. "Yes, waiting is good and yields sweet results! My friend, do not be attracted by clothes on the body, hats on the head, and shoes on the feet. Such appearances might deceive you, and yet on the inside, a man may be like a bit­ter fruit! Before you say 'yes' to any man, discover whether he is well-behaved, trustworthy, and educated. To such a man, were he even an orphan, you could still say 'yes.'"