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Dini ya Msambwa - II
People

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c/o Barclays Bank
Queensway
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Walter S. Rogers
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522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Frequently at sunset an African climbs to a wind-swept rock ledge in Bukusu country. The ledge looks out over a deep valley at the foot of Mount Elgon and after the rains have come, the valley is deep green and the maize is taller than a man. From the ledge, the African can look up and down the valley for miles and in either direction it is dotted with the tiny thatch huts of the Bukusu peasants.

At sunset, a haze settles on the valley and it takes on a purple color. Cooking fires gleam from each hut as Bukusu women prepare the evening meal. Far off to the west, three jagged hills protrude from the surrounding plains and the hills are purple, too, in the evening haze. Pinpoints of electric light twinkle from the hills for that is the town of Tororo just over the Uganda border.

Straight across the valley rises Elgon. Its lower slopes are a patchwork of tiny shambas. Above is the dark and silent forest and in it roam elephant, buffalo and leopard. The elephant come down out of the forest now and then to raid a shamba and they eat up in a few minutes what it has taken a peasant family many months of hard labor to build up. Higher still than the forest are the brown and barren Elgon heathlands and when the valley is all but cloaked in darkness, the heathlands are still ablaze with the last light of the setting sun.

The African is very fond of the view and when he climbs to the ledge he remains there till long after the moon has risen. The African's name is Jonathan Barasa and he is chief of Bukusu's Malakisi location. He has been to school and by African standards he is a wealthy man. God, or Were, has been good to him and he has a large farm, many cattle and six sons and a daughter.

But Barasa is not always a happy man. The old world that his father knew, the one he learned about as a boy, has fallen to pieces. The white men have shaken up the lives of his people so much that the pieces still will not go together again, though many men try desperately to make them fit in one combination or another. It has been many seasons since the white men first appeared, but still the whirlwind has not died down. A man today finds that his son is just as much a stranger to him as the man was to his own father.

Perhaps, sitting on the ledge, Barasa thinks of the time when the Bukusu were warriors and of the victories they had over other tribes. Perhaps he thinks of the stories of how the white men and their black troops stormed the old Bukusu forts and smashed the tribe's military power for all times. And then there are other thoughts, of the old

Bukusu religion and customs, that used to mean so much, and of how they fell under onslaughts from other Europeans, mild-mannered men armed with an even more formidable weapon, the Bible.

But Barasa knows that the clock can never be turned back. The twinkling lights of Tororo mean much more than just electric lamps. And he probably would not want to turn the clock back, even if it could be done.

Barasa has seen much of the white man's world and, in a way, he likes it. He has had an education from the white men and he has gone abroad and travelled in their countries. He drives a car, like a white man, and he has put the white man's agricultural knowledge to work on his own farm. That knowledge has brought him good returns and promises to bring him even more. Now he is urging his people to do likewise. Still, though, there are uncertainties at times.

The valley outwardly looks the same as it did when no one in it ever dreamed that there were men with anything but black skins. But inwardly the people of the valley have been profoundly affected and at times they are at a loss for what to do.

The first time I visited Chief Jonathan was late one afternoon. When I drove up to his neat, European-style house, a number of Africans, the usual retainers, friends and hangers-on of a chief, were lounging about. One man was working, carrying buckets of manure on his head to a nearby coffee shamba. He turned out to be the chief.

Barasa greeted me cordially, though without the servility usually shown by Africans, chiefs included, to white men. In fact he showed a trace of annoyance that I had interrupted his work. But this annoyance soon disappeared. Barasa is 38 years old. He is of medium stature but very husky and as he carried the buckets of manure, the muscles of his chocolate-colored arms bulged like those of a wrestler. He was wearing khaki shorts, a sleeveless sweater, an old shirt from which the sleeves had been ripped and a pair of mud boots.

He has quick, searching eyes and a nervous manner. We sat down in the kitchen of his house for a talk but then he jumped up and suggested we go up to the rock ledge. "I always like to keep moving," he said. So we hiked up the hill next to his house, skirting around big boulders and finally emerged on the ledge.

"There used to be a boulder right where we're standing," Barasa said. "It disappeared one day in 1928. No one heard anything that would indicate it had shattered or that it had fallen into the valley," he added. "The Dini ya Msambwa people believe that the boulder will reappear soon. They believe that when it does, the Europeans will all depart." I looked over the escarpment edge and pointed to scores of small boulders below. "Maybe those are the pieces," I said. Barasa, who pronounces "that's" in the best manner of Li'l Abner, said, "Thass possible, but..."

We sat in silence for a while and then we talked about Dini ya Msambwa. The chief said he blamed the missionaries for it. "See that hut down there, thass the one," he said, pointing to a tiny hut down in the valley, "well, the man who lives there has two wives.

He's a very old man and his wives are very old. Well, this old man is very bewildered these days now that the old religion is gone. He wants to have some religion, any religion, but the missionaries tell him, 'No, you can't come to our church until you get rid of one of your wives.'

"What is the old man going to do? Turn one of the old women out of his house? He has lived with them all his life and he is very fond of them. What would happen to an old woman if he turned her out?"

Barasa didn't say so, but the old man may have found his solace in the Dini of Elijah Masinde.

When we talked about the old Bukusu customs, Barasa's manner was one of a man sighing for an old sweetheart he knows he will never see again. He smiled as he talked about the namwima, the old ancestral shrine. "We would leave beer and blood there for our forefathers," he said. "Our forefathers would be happy and we would be blessed." But now, he said with a trace of anger, the missionaries have halted the old ancestor worship.

More anger rose as Barasa said that formerly the missionaries had a monopoly on education and that the price of an education, in addition to fees, included conversion to the denomination of the particular mission and compliance with mission standards of conduct. Now the missionaries are forbidden from refusing to educate a child of a different faith or of no faith at all. "But in practice a lot of pressure and ridicule is used," Barasa said.

Like his people, Barasa's whole life has been closely connected with the missionaries. As a boy he acquired the nickname Baraza because he used to inject himself into any conversations that the elders were having. Baraza eventually became Barasa and when the Friends African Mission gave him the Christian name of Jonathan, he started calling himself Jonathan Barasa.

All in all, Barasa got about 12 years of education in the Friends' schools, but it was an on-again-off-again affair. He ran away frequently to spend several months at a time working on European farms in the Trans Nzoia. During the later years of his education, he stayed put and eventually became a teacher and finally headmaster of a Friends school in Bukusu.

Barasa presumably shared to some degree the mood of his people during the Dini ya Msambwa times. His feelings about the missionaries are very strong and he told me he once got into a row with the European agricultural officer who is said to have twisted people's ears. "I told him, 'If you lay hands on me, we're going to fight,'" Barasa said. Whether because of Barasa's husky physique or because of such unexpected defiance on the part of an African, or both, the European backed down. Most Africans take their cuffs impassively.

As a starting teacher, Barasa earned 35 shillings (about \$5) a month. One day he bought two shillings' (\$0.28) worth of salt and sold it to his neighbors---one spoonful for one egg. This brought him 200 eggs and he hired a neighbor's son to take them to the Trans Nzoia and sell them to the Europeans. Barasa kept at the egg business and finally bought some cattle with the profits.

Later he got into another business. He would give a man say 100 shillings (\$14) to purchase a cow and the man would drive it to another area where the price of cows stood at, say, 150 shillings (\$21) each. The man would sell the cow there and split the profit.

During World War II, vegetables were in great demand in Kenya and the industrious schoolmaster put much of his land under vegetables. With profits from that, he built his stone European-style house and added some land to his holding. The stone house was a prudent move in view of the Bukusu penchant for arson.

Barasa's farm now comprises 150 to 200 acres. "I don't know how many acres exactly," he says. "I'm going to have it surveyed one of these days. In consolidating his farm, Barasa had a dispute with another Bukusu about ownership, but this was settled in Barasa's favor in the African Court. He now grows maize, vegetables, lemons and oranges on the farm and has just getting started with coffee. He has 100 coffee trees and plans to add more soon. The farm has become a showplace for the location.

The chief has a large herd of cattle, but he won't say just how many. "We never tell how many cattle we have---thass at the heart of every Bukusu---and I don't want to tell you a lie. Land, cattle and women---thass the three most important things to the Bukusu. If you don't have all three, you can't stand up at a dance. Everyone would tell you, 'Sit down' or 'Go dance with the other bibis (women)."

Just after the war, Barasa's brother retired as chief of Malakisi and the government appointed Barasa to succeed him. The location was disorganized at the time and Dini ya Msambwa was making rapid headway. Barasa recalls being awakened one evening by people singing, beating drums and praying loudly as they made their way to the famous disappeared rock. "I told my askari to go up there and tell them, 'Go away. Don't you know that you are disturbing your chief?'" The crowd left. The demonstration in front of the Catholic mission occurred the next day.

When scores of people were arrested following the Malakisi police station affray, Barasa as a chief had to assist in making the roundups. "I kept telling the government, 'Putting people in jail is no way to solve this thing. If someone is making trouble, put him to work building roads here in the Reserve for three months. That will help all the people and he will have a better chance of rehabilitation among his own people.'" But large numbers were jailed.

With Dini ya Msambwa spreading into the Trans Nzoia, Barasa was called upon to speak to the settlers and their Bukusu labor. He says he criticized both the settlers and the laborers for their suspicious attitudes toward each other. As a result of that, he was invited to join Moral Rearmament.

"People ask me why I joined," he said. "Well, I'll tell you the reason. There used to be a European in the Trans Nzoia who beat his African laborers for no reason at all. Then this man joined Moral Rearmament and today he is one of the best men in the district.

"Once I went to see this man in my truck. My people here said, 'Don't go near that white man or you'll never return. He'll beat you or he'll kill you.' But I said, 'No, he's changed now. He is not the same man.'

"I told this European what my people had said about him. He filled up the back of my truck with pineapples and said, 'There, you show these to your people and tell them I have changed.'

"Well, if Moral Rearmament can do that, I'm all in favor of it."

Among the friends Barasa made in the Trans Nzoia was the Earl of Portsmouth, who is president of the Electors' Union, the chief European political association in Kenya. Barasa spent a weekend with Portsmouth as his house guest. Later Portsmouth visited Barasa's farm and had lunch there. What sort of relations exist between the two men? "Well, he's an Englishman so you never really know what he's thinking," said Barasa.

Barasa has made a trip to England to study local government methods there and has attended a Moral Rearmament conference in Switzerland. During the visit to England he was a house guest at Portsmouth's estate there. He says he was impressed by what he saw in Europe, but that he was glad to get back to Bukusu. Unlike many African leaders, Barasa's chief interest in life is his farm. While other African leaders pour into Nairobi, interested only in central politics, Barasa dislikes Nairobi and is happiest while working in his coffee and watching over his herds.

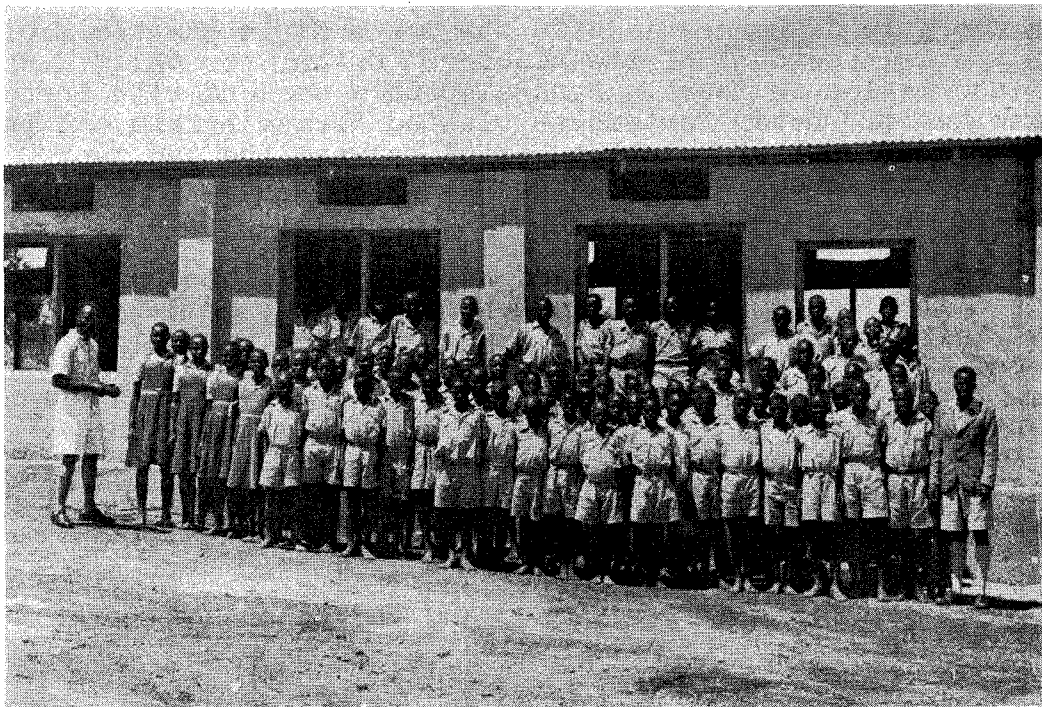
It was after 8 o'clock when Barasa and I came down from the ledge. "I'd like to ask you to stay for dinner and the night, but we have no European food," he said, very apologetically. I told him I would go to the hotel at Tororo, 30 miles away. "Come back in the morning," he said, "and I'll show you what we're doing now in Malakisi." It was raining heavily, the car skidded and bogged down in the mud several times and Oriko, my African servant, and I were soaking wet and splattered with mud when we arrived at Tororo. It was too late for food, European or no, and I had to content myself with a candy bar.

In the morning the sky was clear and the Elgon slopes were dazzling green in the bright equatorial sun. Chief Jonathan had been up since dawn, working in the coffee. Malakisi used to be one of the most backward locations in North Nyanza, he said, but now...

Bouncing along in his truck, we went on a whirlwind tour of a school where boys are trained as carpenters, a school where girls are taught sewing, a community hall (where, to the horror of the missionaries, European-style dances are held), a reading room and a community canteen (where, to the horror of the Indian merchants at Malakisi village, items are sold on a cooperative basis). All were built and are operated by the local people.

Our next stop was the Namwela Farmers' Cooperative Society, a maize depot staffed entirely by Africans which will have purchased 10,000 tons of maize for the equivalent of \$43,500 from local growers by the end of the current harvest. Barasa excused himself for a minute and went over some of the accounts with the African clerk.

Barasa had saved his pride and joy for the end of the tour. This was a school, the first to be built in Kenya by a Locational Advisory Council. After building it, the council handed it over to the government to be run as a District Education Board school. The stipulation was that the missionaries be kept out. "Oh were the missionaries angry with me," Barasa said, chuckling with satisfaction. "They all came to me and said, 'We will run that school for you' and I told every one of them, 'No!'"



The first six years of education are taught in the school. The chief asked me to take a photograph of some of the children. "The people are very proud of this school," he said. "You see, it's their school. They built it for their children and that makes all the difference in the world."

Back at Barasa's home, one of his sons told him that he had been "fined" for failing to turn out for communal labor. At the moment the people are building a sports field and all are required to work without pay. Communal labor occurs throughout East Africa; what is unusual in Malakisi is that Chief Jonathan lends his brawn to it. For missing that session, he got the usual "fine" from his people: he would have to stay in his office an extra hour the next afternoon.

Chief Jonathan had sent to Malakisi, nine miles away, for some European food that morning and he gave me a lunch of fried chicken, mashed potatoes and spinach. I asked him what he thought of the chances

of whites and blacks living together in peace in the years to come.

Barasa thought for a while and then he said, "A lot of people will tell you only what they think you want to hear." There was another pause and then he said, "I cannot talk about these things because I am a government servant."

* * *

On the east side of Elgon, surrounded by vast European farms, stands the town of Kitale. Kitale is the administrative center for the Trans Nzoia and the contrast between this modern little town and the grass huts of the Bukusu epitomizes the depth of the differences between the world of the white man and that of the black man.

Kitale looks something like a small Florida town. Most of the buildings are new and all are done in pastel shades. With an altitude of 6,200 feet, Kitale is often quite chilly at night and a warm jacket is a necessity. But the days are warm, sometimes even hot, and most of the shops have arcades over the sidewalk to keep the sun off the shoppers. Unintentionally, they keep the sun off the heads of the African population, too, as they are fond of dozing or loitering under the arcades.

The shops, chiefly Indian-run as elsewhere in East Africa, offer a wide variety of merchandise, from imported foods and wines to radios, cameras and automobiles. There has only been a slight amount of Mau Mau activity in the Trans Nzoia---and that has been confined to Kikuyu laborers---but the Kitale police station is ringed with barbed wire. However the atmosphere is relaxed and only a few Bwanas bother to carry guns. At night they sleep with doors unlocked, a real luxury in 1954 Kenya.

Some of the streets are lined with huge shade trees and Kitale even has a well-trimmed golf course. Looking around, it is hard to believe that all this sprang up in a very short time.

Kitale's brief history is due to European settlement and that in turn was made possible by the railway. Kitale is railhead for one branch of the Kenya system but that branch did not reach it till 1928. Those were depression years in Kenya, though, and when the slump finally ended, a six years' war came along. It was only after the settlers came home from leading African troops in action against the Italians in Somalia and Abyssinia that development of Kitale and the Trans Nzoia really began. Since then the pace has been fast. New buildings are going up all the time and Kitale has the air of a boom town.

Seventeen miles from Kitale there is another rapidly-developing concern, the farm of Gerard Vernon Wallop, ninth Earl of Portsmouth. Lord Portsmouth's farm, high on the Elgon slopes, is one of the best worked holdings in the White Highlands. Whereas parts of the Trans Nzoia are somewhat arid, Portsmouth's high-altitude land is generally well-watered. Cash crops thrive on his 4,000 acres and he has five European managers---an unusually high number---to look after the 350 African laborers.

The Lord and Master of Wallop Farms is every bit the aristocrat, but he carries it off in a manner that would not offend even the most

avid egalitarian. Good manners and, perhaps, a sense of noblesse oblige, have been drilled into Portsmouth since birth. He speaks to his African servants in a kind and gentle voice---not always the case with masters here---and he has reprimanded European supervisors for what he considers as their undue harshness toward the African laborers.

In his dealings with other Europeans, Portsmouth is quiet and unassuming. Some of his managers call him "My Lord"; some don't bother. He is a very friendly man and eminently approachable. At first one might take him for a vapid country squire with nothing in his head by visions of fox hunts and roast beef. But behind Portsmouth's bland mannerisms there is a keen mind that is kept busy with Kenya politics, increasing the profits of Wallop Farms and turning out articles and books on agriculture, politics and country life.

As president of the Electors' Union, Portsmouth wields a great deal of influence in Kenya. He has been here only since the war, but in that short time he has become the spokesman for the white settlers. White settlement is something Portsmouth believes in strongly but he is not the fiery and tempermental leader that his fellow peer, the late Lord Delamere, was. Portsmouth is too polite to stage a scene, as Delamere often did, to get what he wanted. Portsmouth reflects, too, the politically-dispirited mood of the Kenya settler these days.

The settlers' dreams of self-government (i.e., self-government for them, with them governing the Africans and Indians) have been burning low in face of continuing Colonial Office intransigence. Then, Mau Mau has shown them just how dependent they really are on Britain for money and men. Among some settlers there are doubts these days as to whether "self-government" is as good as it sounds in a fiery Electors' Union speech or in a bristling manifesto.

Now a new thing has been thrust on the settlers---multi-racial government. They have finally gotten into the Colonial government, but the Indians and the Africans squeezed in before the door could be shut. Few if any Europeans are enthusiastic about multi-racial government but some, after taking a hard look at the census figures, are inclined to give it a try. Portsmouth appears to be one of these.

Portsmouth is 56 years old and of medium stature. He has the pale, almost limpid blue eyes of the English aristocrat. His hair is ginger-colored and his face is freckled. His father, the eighth Earl of Portsmouth, had gone to Canada after graduating from Oxford and eventually purchased a ranch in Wyoming. Young Gerard was born on the near North Side of Chicago in 1898 and spent his early boyhood on the ranch. "In all the time my father lived in America, he never lost his English accent," says Portsmouth. "And we never failed to have tea every afternoon."

Portsmouth got the customary education that young men of his class receive. As a boy he was sent from America to a public school in England---the English public school is the equivalent of an American private school---and from there he went to Oxford. Then came service in World War I and five years as a member of the House of Commons.



Portsmouth

He has visited America from time to time---his brother still runs the ranch---but from schooldays onwards, Portsmouth's life was centered in England. As the eldest son and heir to the title, he ran the family estates and lived as much of the life of a Lord as was possible in that already-changing England. Like his fellow nobles, he was badgered about by rising taxes, the servant problem, the rising spectre of British Socialism and the changing attitudes toward the nobility.

At times Portsmouth seems to yearn for the world of his grandfathers, when a Earldom meant much more than it now does. "These days," Portsmouth says, "no one wants to work as a servant. They think it is better to serve an impersonal company of men than one man."

Or, while savoring a glass of imported wine, he will say, in a cultured and somewhat pained voice: "The thing that the modern world has lost is its leisure. Our civilization was built up on a class with leisure, a class that had time to devote itself to the arts and to culture in general. But now that is gone."

With a touch of emotion, Portsmouth will tell about the time when, temporarily pinched for money, he had to tell an elderly gardener that there might be payless paydays. "He said to me, 'My Lord, I served your father before you and now I'm serving you. Even if there's no money, I'll go on serving you.' I put my hand on his shoulder. I had known this man all my life. I said to him, 'Whatever I have left, I will share it with you.'"

For some of Portsmouth's fellow peers, the shortage of money was not temporary and they have been forced to sell their ancestral manors and go into wage employment. English commoners will always tell you with a mixture of mirth and sentimental sadness how some Lords manage to keep going these days only by conducting groups of tourists around their estates at a few shillings a head. Portsmouth, though, has survived the times and seems to be able to compete well with the new aristocracy, that of money. His acumen has resulted in one of the best and, presumably, most profitable farms in Kenya.

In 1943 Portsmouth's father died and he assumed the family title. As an Earl, he now sat in the House of Lords. The House, now shorn of most of its power, is a far cry from that of the old days. But Portsmouth feels that it still has an important contribution to make. Being removed from the political arena, it can make judicious appraisals of legislation and suggest alterations to the powerful and turbulent House of Commons. One of the virtues of the English political system is that the best men in all walks of life are deeply imbued with a sense of civic duties and responsibilities. Portsmouth, first the member of Commons and later the conscientious Lord, is a good example.

Portsmouth came to Kenya after the war to purchase a farm for his eldest son and heir, Viscount Lymington, who was in ill health. The highland climate agreed with Lymington and he recovered. Portsmouth liked the country so well that he bought a farm for himself too.

There is much in Kenya that appeals to the English aristocrat. Though there are only about 3,000 agricultural holdings and 4,000 European men and women engaged directly in agriculture, the resident

peerage includes one Duke (of Manchester), several Lords and a host of lesser ranks. The number of younger sons of aristocratic families are legion. Along with these there are a large number of high-ranking Army and Navy officers, now retired, and an equally large number of retired Colonial Service and India officials. One has to scratch around a bit to uncover a just plain John Q. Citizen in Kenya.

At least in the old days, Kenya was one of the last places in the world that allowed a gentleman full expression. The gentlemen poured in by droves, refugees from a changing England and an independent India. They were adventurous, high-spirited and eminently likeable types and Kenya had what they wanted. There was unrivalled big game shooting and unrivalled trout fishing. There were fox hunts, polo matches and, always big events, auto and horse races. Servants could be had cheaply. Farms were obtainable at fairly moderate prices and some stretched to the horizons. The all-in cost of labor, though not as cheap as the individual wage would seem to indicate, still was considerably less than elsewhere.* The owner of the farm was almost a feudal baron and there was no nonsense about unions, strikes and the such.

Taxes, meanwhile, were low---in the old days there was no income tax. Kenya was a rapidly-expanding country and there was the excitement of taming a new frontier and building a modern state in primitive, untouched Africa. Toward sundown each evening, though, the gentleman-farmer could gather at "The Club" and over generous libations of gin and tonic complain with customary Kenya irascibility about how the Socialists, the Fabians, the Indians, the Communists and the Africans were ruining Kenya.

Some of the old life remains today. There is still the same old nightly moaning at the bar about the Socialists, et. al. In one way things have improved: the farms, for the first time, have been making money. Meanwhile the race meetings continue to draw huge crowds but underneath the gaiety there are tensions, doubts, fears and anger. The Kenya settler, bronzed from years in the harsh sun, looks down into his drink after Kwaheri (Swahili for "goodbye," and meaning the last race of the day) and says, "It'll never be the same anymore."

Labor costs are mounting now. The industrious Kikuyu, who cannot be trusted by the settlers anymore, have been turned off many of the farms. Men of other tribes have been recruited and they have not always been satisfactory. A number of farms are on the market, but, where Mau Mau is hottest, there are no buyers. But a settler who has all his money and his life's work wrapped up in his farm cannot abandon it or let it go for a song. So he lives his days in barbed-wire insecurity. Each morning he picks up his newspaper to see if another settler has fallen the night before under a cleaver swung by a long-trusted servant.

The Trans Nzoia, though, with a couple of hundred miles between it and the Kikuyu Reserve, has not been affected too much and on Portsmouth's estate the easy-going old Kenya life is still being lived. The relation between the indigenous Africans the the clever newcomers is something like that which prevailed in Norman England and Portsmouth the Lord fits into the landscape fairly well.

* L. G. Troup, appointed by the government in 1952 to make a study of the general economy of the highlands, put the all-in cost of labor at two-thirds of that on British farms when expressed in terms of effective output.

His house is a small and unpretentious one, but he has built up a large and beautiful garden about it. He keeps saying he wishes he had more time to spend in his garden. The homes of the five managers are located in various parts of the estate and throughout the 4,000 acres are scattered the grass huts of the laborers. Portsmouth maintains a school for the laborers' children and there are dispensaries and shops for their use.

He is organizing the laborers into villages, where there will be opportunities for African craftsmen and traders. The laborers have their own plots for growing food and some are allowed to graze their cattle on the farm as well. The farm has its own system of roads, centers for the maintenance and garaging of farm implements and motor vehicles and facilities for the processing and storing of produce. A wide variety of crops are grown---they include maize, coffee, tea, and pyrethrum---and Portsmouth has gone in for extensive dairying and pig production.

"I'm a farmer at heart," Portsmouth said as we bounced around the estate in a jeep. "I'd like to be able to spend all my time here." We stopped from time to time so that Portsmouth could inspect an unusual wildflower or weed growing along the road. "If a man isn't interested in plants and animals, life out here is pretty dull for him." Isn't it dull anyway sometimes? "Oh, no," said Portsmouth. "The only thing I might miss is music and good books---but I can always have books and long-playing records shipped in."

The farm is at the edge of the Elgon forest and while Bach sounds from the owner's house at night, herds of elephant come down on the farm to forage for food and drink at the dams. We drove up to the forest edge that morning so that Portsmouth could inspect a new dam.

The dam had been built across an icy forest stream in a clearing surrounded on three sides by the wilderness. A lake had formed behind the dam and Portsmouth said, "There's a python in it. I've never seen him, but my managers have."

The surface of the lake was unrippled and I looked in vain for the python. "He's in there all right, but he's hiding from us," Portsmouth said. The giant podo trees at the edge of the clearing were draped thick with huge vines. You could see only a few feet into the forest. Then there was nothing but darkness. Portsmouth found a fresh leopard track. "It's very peaceful here," he said. "I think I'll build a lodge here so I can come up and get away from everything."

I asked Portsmouth where he thought the Europeans were heading, what with all the recent flurry of policy statements, conflicts, resignations and realiances. "We're trying to build up a country where we can live in peace with the black brother," he said, and there was no contempt in the use of the word brother.

Portsmouth, like the others, doesn't know just how the job will be done. He, though, is a man of good will. He invites Africans like Chief Jonathan to his house and he has braved the inevitable stares and outraged stage whispers and has taken leading Africans to lunch in Nairobi's best hotels. If the black brother and the white brother are ever going to live in peace in Kenya, men like Portsmouth will certainly help to bring it about.

* * *

"Who is that Bwana?" Oriko asked as we drove away from Wallop Farms after three days there. "Well, he's a Lord," I said, using the English "Lord" as I didn't know of a Kiswahili equivalent. We drove a mile or so in silence. "Lord?" Oriko said. "Well, yes," I replied, "he's karibu mfalme (near to a king)." Oriko was unimpressed. All white men are karibu mfalme to him. But he said he thought Portsmouth was mtu mzuri (a good man).

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The Rev. Mr. Lawrence Totty never smiles. But he is a friendly man in his own impassive way and one gets the impression that he is a good man. Mr. Totty has been laboring for Jehovah, as against Tororut, the old God of the Suk, for 23 years. But the Suk are as resistant to the Gospel as they are to the other aspects of white culture. Mr. Totty told me one time that he thought he has succeeded in gathering 300 to 400 genuine converts around him in those 23 years. On another occasion, he put the number at 200. Twenty-three years is a long time and it is a major part of a man's life. One gets the impression that Mr. Totty is a disappointed man. But he is a devout Christian, a man firmly convinced that he has been chosen to spread the Gospel in Pagan Africa and one can safely predict that he will never rest as long as one soul remains unsaved.

Mr. Totty is an Englishman and he is with the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, a "Low Church" group within the Church of England. The Church of England also has the Church Missionary Society and it is "High Church" in its missionary enterprises. "When people ask me whether this mission is High Church or Low Church, I always reply that we are the the Lowest of the Low," Mr. Totty says with firm conviction. He is quite interested in Billy Graham's evangelistic tour of England and he regards Graham's successes with immense satisfaction.

Mr. Totty is a short, thin man and his black hair is beginning to turn gray. I first met him one morning when I drove to his mission station a few miles outside Kapenguria. On the way we passed wild Suk tribesmen with their hair done up in clay and ostrich feathers. Oriko had himself a good laugh every time he saw one of them. "These people are fools," he said. "That's the way all Africans were before the wazungu (Europeans) came here."

In the mission station we saw another type of Suk. There young Suk children, dressed in neat school uniforms, were sitting in classrooms being drilled in the three Rs by industrious African teachers

of other tribes. As Mr. Totty showed me around, unsmiling, he said, "These people are terribly backward."

We went into his large rambling house and he introduced me to Mrs. Totty, who, like him, is in her late 40s. Mrs. Totty served tea and said they were both interested in anthropology and always like to help anthropologists and other visitors. Mr. Totty has a reputation of knowing the Suk better than any other white men and he is one of a handful who speak the Suk language. He is the co-author of the pamphlet, "The People and District of West Suk."

Dini ya Msambwa was more or less inevitable, he said. He regards it as having been due to the magnetic personality of Pkiech and to the backwardness and superstitions of the Suk masses. Some of the more fervent Dini ya Msambwa people were "Devil-possessed" and "Devilishly-energized," he feels.

Mrs. Totty broke in to say she thought Dini ya Msambwa was Communist-inspired. Mr. Totty indicated that he disagreed. "Well, I think so anyway," she said, giggling. "You're entitled to your opinion," he said. Mrs. Totty giggled again and said I shouldn't quote her in "the paper." "Why shouldn't he quote you if you say it?" Mr. Totty said testily. "If you think it's true, then you have to stand on your belief."

Resuming, Mr. Totty said he felt that Christianity was the only cure for Dini ya Msambwa. "I consider the most effective means of combating the spread of false propaganda is through the preaching of the Gospel since all political strife and tribal discords are but a manifestation of the unregenerate heart of man. This can only be regenerated by Christ."

I asked Mr. Totty about his attitude toward the old customs. "We don't order our converts to do anything, but they give up customs like polygamy, female circumcision, beer drinking and dancing on their own accord," he said. "Yes, that's the way it is," said Mrs. Totty. This was evidently a sore point and Mr. Totty frowned. "We have been accused of causing Dini ya Msambwa by suppressing the old customs. "That is not true. We do not suppress the old customs. Our converts realize that they cannot be Christians and do these things."

Once in a while somebody does get out of line. An African mission teacher had taken a second wife and Mr. Totty was going to fire him. "That's in the diocesan rules and regulations. The rules and regulations forbid the employment of a polygamist." This case was an exception, though, Mr. Totty said. "While we expect our converts to abstain from beer drinking, dancing and polygamy, they usually come to that decision on their own."

When I left, Mr. Totty said that he and Mrs. Totty were going to Nairobi soon. I suggested that we get together for lunch, mentioning a certain Friday as a possible date. Mr. Totty said he would telephone me when he got to Nairobi.

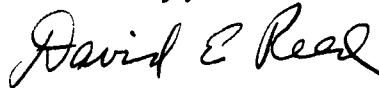
I returned to Nairobi several days later. I had forgotten about the luncheon, but promptly at one o'clock on that Friday the sad-faced Mr. Totty and the giggling Mrs. Totty knocked on the door of my room

at the Norfolk hotel. They had brought some publications on Suk customs and a thick wad of newspaper clippings on Dini ya Msambwa. "We thought these might help you," Mr. Totty said.

We had lunch and Mr. Totty said they were staying at a missionary hostel in Nairobi. It had become inter-racial, he said. "It's as a result of the Emergency---the African pastors have no where else to go," he said. But he added that an inter-racial hostel was not a great success. "Our eating habits and our habits of tidiness are so different," he said.

After lunch Mr. and Mrs. Totty got back in their mud-splattered old car to return to Kapenguria and the Pagan Suk. They thanked me very cordially for the lunch and Mr. Totty said, "Do come up to Kapenguria again and stay with us." Mr. Totty almost smiled. Then they drove off.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David E Reed".

David E. Reed