

MASSACRE IN CONGO STATE

Missionaries Say Villages Have Been Burned, Many People Slain, and Some Eaten by State Troops.

Special to The New York Times.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Jan. 4.—The Southern Presbyterian Board of Missions in this city received letters to-day from the Rev. L. C. Vass and the Rev. H. P. Hawkins, missionaries of the church stationed at Luebo, Congo Free State, Africa, giving accounts of the burning of fourteen villages and the killing of ninety or more natives by State troops. They report that some of the victims were eaten by cannibals, and that the bodies of all who were slain were mutilated, their heads having been cut off.

Mr. Vass was formerly of Newbern N. C., and has been engaged in mission work at Luebo since Feb. 18, 1899. Mr. Hawkins was formerly of Vicksburg, Miss. Mr. Vass states that tidings of raiding by the Zappo Zaps in the Bena Kamba country having reached them, and the work of the missionaries being threatened, the Rev. W. H. Sheppard was sent to make an investigation. He went to the Zappo Zaps's camp and found that fourteen villages had been destroyed by fire and plundered. He saw forty-seven bodies lying round the camp. From three bodies the flesh had been carved and eaten.

The chief said that eighty or ninety had been killed and five persons eaten by his people. Mr. Sheppard saw eighty-one right hands cut off and drying over a slow fire, in order to be afterward taken back to the State officers. Sixty women prisoners were confined in a pen, and sixteen men had already been sent away prisoners.

It is said the raid was ordered because the people could not pay the exorbitant tribute demanded by the State. The missionaries state that they reported the matter to the proper officials and demanded the withdrawal of the troops, and that the Chief instituted a counter prosecution on account of the charges made. The missionaries further say the Zappo Zaps are a tribe kept by the State for its protection. They are sent out to collect rubber, ivory, slaves, and goats as tribute from the people, and can then plunder, burn, and kill for their own amusement and gain.

The missionaries say they are collecting evidence about the massacre, and will send it to Boma and to Europe. Mr. Vass says: "The whole country is plagued, and not a village left standing. The people are in the bush. To-night in a radius of about seventy-five miles there are possibly over 50,000 people sleeping in the bush unsheltered, and we are in the midst of a rainy season. The state is a terror to every one."

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