

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

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TOTAL EXPOSURES →

B. The Church of Scotland Mission, the Africa Inland Mission and the Gospel Missionary Society have been accused of causing the critical situation which has been outlined above. The Church of Scotland Mission, in particular, has been singled out for special criticism. The European leaders of these Missions, and in particular, the leader of the Church of Scotland Mission, are said to have launched an attack on native customs in September, 1929, by the sudden introduction of legislation prohibiting "female circumcision" within their Churches. This alleged sudden attack is said to have been the root of the crisis.

We are of opinion that the preceding chapters will show that the crisis arose, not from a sudden attack on "female circumcision" by the European leaders of certain African Churches, but from an attack on these Churches by a politically-minded body of younger Kikuyu.

We recognise, however, that this popular view regarding the cause of the crisis gains support from statements made in certain public documents, notably, the (Kenya) Native Affairs Department and Education Department Reports for 1929, and the book "Africa View" by Julian Huxley. In view of this, we feel that the preceding chapters require supplementing by a further statement, in order to explain the discrepancy between the account contained in this Memorandum and that given or suggested in these above-named documents. In this section, therefore, we endeavour to show wherein these are in error.

1. Report of the Native Affairs Department 1929, Chap. 2, Para. 4.
In the course of describing the feelings of the native people, and of the Kikuyu tribe in particular, were aroused to a considerable degree of excitement and resentment, by the action of a prominent missionary, who suddenly launched an attack against the native custom of clitoridectomy, colloquially termed female circumcision. Further reference to

they who had brought about his dismissal from the councils of Government. It appears, therefore, that instead of being impressed by Government's neutrality, the Kikuyu Central Association hailed its action as a concession to its views.

Similarly, the course adopted by the Director of Education as described in Section VI., although no doubt intended to be helpful to the Missions in bringing about a reconciliation between them and the malcontents, had the reverse effect. By the interviews which he granted them from time to time, they were encouraged to believe that, by appealing directly to the Central Government, they would, when circumstances permitted, be granted their demands (See pages 55 & 56). In this way, the accepted principle of "indirect rule" through the Local Native Councils and Chiefs was directly weakened, and the Kikuyu Central Association gained in prestige.

It is to be feared that here again the Natives detected signs of weakness in the attitude of Government, and that it is due to this that they have been so persistent in their boycott of the schools affected, despite the Mission's undertaking that no teaching should be given in them regarding "female circumcision"; also that a demand is now being put forward by the discontented elements in various places for the recognition of independent schools established and controlled by the Natives themselves. This is an issue which has yet to be faced by the Authorities.

among natives that "in advocating the total prohibition" of female circumcision, he was acting as the emissary of Government. It therefore considered that he should dissociate himself from Government. In expressing this view, Government gave official support to a misrepresentation of Dr. Arthur's position, namely, that he was advocating the immediate "total prohibition" of female circumcision. We trust, however, that we have made it clear in the foregoing pages, that Dr. Arthur and his fellow missionaries were asking only for adequate protection for those who did not wish to undergo the rite. Prohibition of the custom among native Christians had been in force for many years in certain African Churches, but, although they were anxious to see its entire disappearance, it was no part of the programme of Dr. Arthur and his associates to demand its "total prohibition" among the non-Christian population.

To anyone familiar with the workings of the native mind, there can be little doubt that the effect of the Government's attitude was to create an impression among the natives that it not only favoured the retention of female circumcision, but also disapproved of the past efforts of the Missions to bring about its disappearance, even among the Christians. (1)

It has been stated by natives that the Kikuyu Central Association, the body responsible for misrepresenting Dr. Arthur's position in the first instance, were quick to make capital out of his resignation from Executive Council, averring that it was (2)

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- (1) References in the "Mithiri" song, the nature of which is shown in Appendix V, seem to indicate that the missionaries resented on the active sympathy of Government in their campaign against those who were opposed to female circumcision.
- (2) See his letter to the Chiefs, page 59.

SECTION VII.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND ANSWERS TO CRITICISMS.

In the preceding chapters of this Memorandum, we have concerned ourselves chiefly with giving an accurate presentation of the facts relating to the critical situation of 1929-30. We consider, however, that two important aspects of the situation yet remain to be dealt with. Briefly stated these are:-

- A. The attitude of Government during the crisis, and its actions subsequent to the crisis, and the way in which we believe these have been interpreted by the native peoples.
- B. The growth of criticism of the Missions' action as being hasty and ill-considered.

A. Although prior to 1929, its attitude towards the Missions in their attempts to influence native opinion on the subject of "female circumcision" had not been unsympathetic, Government had made clear its view that the onus of limiting or abolishing the practice rested entirely with the native peoples concerned. This policy had been clearly enunciated, and consistently adhered to throughout, and, during the crisis, Government has been chiefly concerned with the attempt to safeguard its own position of strict neutrality.

We consider, however, that the courses adopted resulted in misunderstanding on the part of the natives.

The position is best illustrated by Government's attitude to Dr. Arthur, the member representing native interests on Executive Council who, as a result of representations made to him by H.E. the Governor, resigned from Executive Council in November, 1929. Government took the view that the impression had been created

(1) See Appendix VII. Correspondence between H.E. Governor and Rev. Dr. Arthur.

among both Europeans and Africans in regard to expected conflict between the races. On the one hand the rumour current among natives that Dingans Day was the day fixed for the "driving of the Europeans from the country" was not unknown to the Europeans, and the acts of violence perpetrated or attempted by natives on Europeans appeared to give this rumour some basis in fact. On the other hand, the signs of awakened activity on the part of the European Defence Force were not unnoticed by the Natives. The reactions of this mutual suspicion was such as to cause considerable anxiety on the part of the Authorities.

(1) Miss Hulda Stumpf of the Africa Inland Mission, Kijabe, was brutally murdered on 3rd January, 1930, and, up until the present, the murderers have not been detected. Numerous attempts were also made to force an entry into certain missionaries' houses at night, particularly in the case of ladies, and police protection had to be provided.

The second assault occurred in June in the locality in which the original forcible mutilation (Kiambu Circumcision case see pages 35, 36 & 37) had taken place. A girl from the Gospel Missionary Society, Kambui named Nyambura Mbai, aged 13 years, was seized by her brothers while at her work in her sister's garden and carried to a nearby river, where arrangements had previously been made for her forcible circumcision. She was thereupon severely mutilated.

Certain events which occurred there furnished indubitable proof of her strong resistance, and, on her lodging a complaint, the two brothers and the five women implicated in the assault were prosecuted, and in each case sentenced to three months (1) Rigorous Imprisonment under Section 214 of the New Penal Code. It must here be pointed out that it is held by Christian natives that, in view of the far-reaching effects of the original case, this last assault was deliberately perpetrated for political ends in order further to embarrass the Authorities. No further assaults were attempted.

GENERAL

The Report of the Native Affairs Department for 1929, Sect. 2, paragraph 39, characterises the relations "between natives and Missions and natives and Europeans generally" at this time as "deplorable", and as creating, "an embarrassing situation for the Administration, especially in Kiambu District." This statement adequately sums up the position. Rumours were in circulation

(1) The sentence of three months Rigorous Imprisonment, in view of the medical evidence given at the trial, i.e., "Orinous harm resulting in permanent deformity", and in view also of the maximum penalty imposed under the relevant section of the New Code, could not be termed excessive. In the case of the young men it was probably inadequate. In the case of the old women, however, in view of the fact that imprisonment necessitated the removal of all their ornaments, an undreamt of experience for old Kikuyu women it was probably a fitting penalty.

C. PROTECTION FOR UNCIRCUMCISED GIRLS.

In 1930, during that period in which the influence of the anti-Mission faction had begun to wane, two uncircumcised girls were forcibly mutilated. The perpetrators were in each case apprehended and convicted, - in the first case, under the Indian Penal Code, and in the second, under the New Ordinance which ⁽¹⁾ superseded the Indian Penal Code in May 1930. The cases are herein dealt with separately.

The first assault took place in the South Nyeri District in February, 1930. An uncircumcised girl of the Tumutumu Mission Boarding School named Wakenya wa Ndiringi, aged 14 years had been given leave of absence to go to her home, and at the instigation of her father, she was forcibly subjected to a severe form of circumcision a few days after her arrival. An enquiry was made by the local Administration, and, as a result, the father and the circumciser, were prosecuted by the Crown. The case was heard on March 12th and both accused were found guilty of inflicting "simple hurt" under Section 87 of the Indian Penal Code. The father was sent to prison for two weeks and the circumciser was ⁽²⁾ fined 70/-.

(1) The Indian Penal Code was superseded by a new Ordinance on the 26th May, 1930. Under it, all brutal forms of circumcision such as the so-called "major" operation amount to a felony, whether performed with or without consent, and are punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 7 years. To this end a special supplementary provision in regard to the definition of "main" was introduced so as to include any such operations of a brutal kind. Simple clitoridectomy with consent however is held to be within the law. The relevant section of the code is as follows:-

Section 81A (Official Gazette 29/5/31)

Section 5. Any person who does grievous harm to another is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for seven years.

"Grievous harm" means any harm which amounts to a main or dangerous harm, or seriously or permanently injures health, or which is likely to injure health, or which amounts to permanent disfigurement, or to any permanent or serious injury to any external or internal organ, membrane, or sense".

"Main" means the destruction or permanent disabling of any external or internal organ, membrane, or sense".

(2) Compare this sentence with that imposed in the original Kiambu Circumcision Case. See page 56.

(1)
 His next action was to prepare a statement which he submitted to the Director of Education on the 13th Dec., 1930. This statement included inter alia the "statistics" and the following allegations.

1. The Outschools of the Church of Scotland Mission were practically closed.
2. The original cost of these schools had been met by the local people.
3. Dr. Arthur had made it a condition that no child, who had not "signed" would be allowed to read.
4. A heavy cess was levied by the Mission for education.

At this interview, Johnstone Kenyatta agreed to discuss the position with Dr. Arthur and that, if he reaffirmed his assurance that there would be no teaching about "female circumcision" in the schools of the Church of Scotland Mission, he, Kenyatta, would use his influence to get the children to return. He interviewed Dr. Arthur on the 22nd Dec. but did not refer to his meeting with the Director of Education. Instead, he suggested that in the Mission outschools there should be two teachers, one who had "signed" and another who had not. Such a compromise was felt to be unworkable, and the suggestion was not accepted.

From this time forward the whole position steadily improved. Numbers in the Church of Scotland Mission schools have increased each term. This is also true in the case of the other Missions affected, which, since September 1929 have experienced conditions similar to those detailed above.

(1) The Mission was furnished with regard to this statement, and the charges made were categorically shown to be false.
 (2) Numbers at Church of Scotland Mission Schools 1928-31.

	Jan. 1928	Jan. 1929	Dec. 1930	Oct. 1931
Total Outschools	788	687	665	1186
" Central School	627	607	579	688
	1445	687	665	1186

about that the Mission and the Administration were in league to confiscate Kikuyu land; that even if both Administration and Missions were against the people, there was a higher authority, the Director of Education, to whom they could appeal, and that should the numbers in the schools fall below 20 the schools would then be closed, and they the natives, would only have to hold out long enough, to get control of the schools.

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In this connection, it is probable that the real reason for the recrudescence of the opposition was the imminent return of Johnstone Kenyatta, Secretary of the Kikuyu Central Association, who at that time was in England with the object of petitioning the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of Kikuyu grievances. It was believed that when he returned, he would be in possession of sufficient influence and power to induce the authorities to meet the desires of his Association.

The net result of this opposition was a further set back in the outschools. Johnstone Kenyatta returned from England in September, and, shortly after his arrival, set about the task of having matters put right. He was interviewed by the Kirk Session of the African Church at Kikuyu, of which Church, at one time, he had been a member. He expressed his regret at the impasse which had arisen, and his intention of co-operating with the Mission in bringing about an improvement of the situation. He then visited the outschools and secured "statistics" regarding pupils attending, monies paid etc. He then applied to the District Commissioner, Kiambu for official support in an attempt to bring peace between the malcontents and the Mission. This was refused, on the ground that there was a recognised authority in the district, namely, the Chiefs, and that any peace making necessary should be achieved through them.

(1)
 Mission was consulted and the real position explained. The result was that the writer of the letter was given an interview by the Director of Education and the Chief Inspector of Schools, who made it clear that no help might be expected from the Education Department in this matter. This refusal brought about the abandonment of the claim.

In the meantime, with the opposition concentrating its attention on the legal aspects of their cause, the numbers in the out-schools were slowly but steadily increasing. It was thought that the position might be further improved if the people were told by the District Commissioner in "barazas" that (a) in two months from that date August 8th, the Administration would recommend to the Director of Education that Government grants should be withdrawn from such out-schools as had not twenty pupils, and (b) in the event of this being done and if, as a result of lack of funds, the Mission closed the schools, the Government had no intention of opening other schools in the neighbourhood.

The effect of this "baraza" was the reverse of what was expected. At Ruthimiti outschool the hostile landowner had all the school gardens destroyed on the following day. Rumours were spread

(1) COMPARISON OF STATEMENTS. A.

This agitator maintained:- "We have to show the expenditure we paid when the building this school of ours. The expenditure we spent is

Shs.10,586.75.

This was our expenditure we paid for the building of the school"
 B. Mission's abstract of accounts showed as follows:-

	<u>Mission.</u>	<u>Local people "Loyal" & "Opposed" to Mission.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Expenditure on Bldgs. 843/63		5764/47	6508/10
Teachers, Evangelists Ministers wages, & over head expense over years 1921-1930 (10 years)	15058/50	3448/99	18508/49
	<u>15897/13</u>	<u>9213/46</u>	<u>25010/59</u>

concerned formed a committee at the time of the transfer for the collecting and apportioning of monies for the improvement of the plot. This committee was responsible to the African Church. A treasurer was appointed, and, in August 1930 he held a credit of 300/- available for improvement or repairs. Accordingly, during a pastoral visit by Dr. Arthur on August 17th 1930 the main building on the plot was examined with a view to deciding upon certain necessary repairs. The anti-Mission leaders several of whom had been members of the original finance committee, opposed the building being repaired by the Mission out of local funds, saying that the Shs. 300/- in the hands of the Treasurer belonged to them, as indeed did the plot and the church-school and all contained in it, and, if repairs were to be made, the money should be apportioned by them in their capacity as trustees for the local Christian community. This was not agreed to, and so in this capacity, they laid a claim with the local African Tribunal for recovery of the money. Judgment was given against them. They then appealed to the Central African Tribunal for Kiambu district, and again lost. A final appeal was lodged with the Magistrates court, and from this it was dismissed with costs.

While the position at this outschool was being debated, a similar attempt was made in another area. In this case the leading agitator attempted first of all to enlist the sympathies of the Director of Education. He wrote to him stating that the plot, the building, and the apparatus of the school were the property of the local people of whom, he alleged, he was the representative. He enclosed a statement of accounts purporting to prove his claim. The

X a salutary effect and this form of opposition died down for a time.

Further representations were made to the Director of Education, but although these representations were considered by him they were not agreed to. Defeated on these points the malcontents attempted to have the Mission ejected from its outschool sites. Land tenure within the Native Reserves is (apart from special exemptions wherein the tenancy may be granted by the Crown) governed by native law and custom. This meant that the Mission's occupancy of its outschool plots was subject to the permission of the landowner. In certain instances, the owner was loyal to the Mission; in others he was influenced by the opposing faction. In one case the site had been bought by a number of local men for use as the Evangelistic and educational centre for the distict.

In cases where the owner was loyal, opposition took a form similar to that experienced in the Ngeca case (see above). Where the owner had come under the influence of agitators however, force was resorted to. School gardens were destroyed and other crops planted in place of these uprooted. School was from time to time disturbed in various ways. In one particular case, a hostile landowner arrived at the school in a drunken condition, removed his clothes, and lay naked on the ground singing the forbidden Mithirigi song. The usual form of disturbance was for the landowner to arrive during school hours and demand that the teachers should leave their classes, in order that the whole position might be discussed. Loyal natives who were occupiers of land were told by hostile landowners that if they sent their children to school they would be ejected from their holdings. This was a favoured form of intimidation.

In the particular case referred to above (line 13) the men

attempt was being made to appeal from the Administrative Officer responsible for the district to that of a department of the Central government and that there was a danger of the Government's authority becoming divided, and thereby weakened in the minds of the people.

The deputation's request was not granted. The result was that at the end of March 1930, the position had considerably improved. Schools hitherto boycotted had begun to be attended. Others, not boycotted, showed an increase in membership.

Opposition to the Mission, however was carried on in other directions. In Ngoca (an outschool) on the 8th and 15th December, the Evangelist in charge was forcibly prevented from conducting the church service. The disturbers contended that since they had contributed to the building of the church school, the building therefore did not belong to the Church Presbytery, nor did the conduct of the services lie within its control. They therefore felt that they possessed a legal right to prohibit, within their church, a form of service instituted by an authority with which, at the moment, they were not in agreement. The disturbers were prosecuted at the First class Magistrate's court Kiambu, and sent to prison for varying periods. The issue in this case was the ownership of the building, which the Magistrate ruled was not theirs.

The opposition at other outschools was evidenced at this time by the forcible removal of apparatus and furniture and the destroying of school gardens. Action by the local civil Authorities had

(1) Numbers at Church of Scotland Mission Schools 1928-30

	Aver. Dec. 1928.	Aver. Dec. 1929.	Highest March
Tot. Outschools	798	87	821
Central School.	547	400	700
	1445	487	521

(2) The African Church in Kenya connected with the Church of Scotland Mission, is under the Presbytery of Kenya Colony, which is the highest court. The Presbytery is composed of all ordained ministers, European and African, all European elders and representative African elders from each Kirk Session in the African Church.

The opposition leaders seemed to be convinced that the District Commissioner could be overruled and their wishes met by the Director of Education. Accordingly a deputation waited on him, and urged him to open Government schools in the Mission area, and, in the event of his doing so, offered to pay one third of the African teachers salaries. They professed to represent the whole area served by the Mission outschools and informed him that the schools were closed. The Director of Education, informed them that they would receive his reply through the District Commissioner. Meanwhile, he asked the Mission to corroborate or refute the statements made, pointing out that, if the position was as stated by the deputation "it would become increasingly difficult for Government to resist this demand". The Mission replied in a memorandum in which attention was drawn to the implications of the demand for non-Mission teachers and the unrepresentative nature of the deputation. It was pointed out that the policy of co-operation between Government and Missions in African Education was the policy of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and that this policy was in danger of being upset by a disaffected and evil disposed section of the people. It was further shown that an

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- (1) Z.W. one time elder of the Church, dismissed from the eldership for brutally assaulting his wife; imprisoned for breaking Chief Kioi's arm. In September, 1929 he caused his ward a half-witted girl of 18, whom he had formerly protected to be circumcised. B.R. ex-Church elder, Sentenced at Kiambu court for taking part in the seditious dance song. These were the leaders of the deputation. During Nov. 1929 they were reported to have been permeulating the whole of the Mission areas stirring up the people to oppose the Mission authority in church and school. They were local organisers of the Mutiny.
 - (2) This was untrue. The majority of the schools were being attended by people loyal to the Mission. Each had at least two teachers in residence.
 - (3) This also was untrue. The fact that the Mission as such conciliated the opposition party to these people was apt to convey the impression of non-existence of a loyal native party. This party, however, was represented in every outschool at that time.

with others

Accordingly, in order to force the Missions into line with their wishes they approached the Director of Education asking (1) him to intervene. Letters were sent to him from two out-schools asking that since he was head of all the schools in the country, he would cause them to be given teachers who had not "signed". The letters bore no signatures, but were indorsed "From outschool members". The Director of Education then discussed the matter with the Mission authorities and the following attitude of both Missions and Director of Education was agreed as follows:-

1. Government would not consider the sending of (Government) teachers to Mission outschools.
2. The teacher appointed by the Mission would refrain in school hours from reference to the question of "female circumcision". (2) In actual fact, no such teachings were given by the secular teacher either within or without school hours.

A Baraza was then held at Dagoretti on the 5th December 1929, at which the position was made clear to the natives by the (3) District Commissioner. This however, in no way relieved matters.

- (1) The Education Dept. had been kept informed of the whole situation by Dr. Arthur.
- (2) In this connection the points embodied in the following relevant Minute of the Church of Scotland Mission Council of 6/12/29 should be noted.
 1. It has not hitherto been the practice of the Mission to give any teaching on the subject of circumcision of women during school hours in their outschools; this has been due largely to the fact that in these schools the classes are of mixed sexes, and the teachers are in many cases young; thus such teaching has been confined to church services and catechumen classes and given by ministers, evangelists, or senior teachers.
 2. "The Mission is prepared not to give such teaching during school hours in these schools at least until such time as agreement can be come to with Government to do so.
 3. The Mission therefore will instruct its teachers that no such teaching is to be given during school hours in these schools, neither in the Bible lesson or Hygiene.
 4. It is however understood that the Mission retains its freedom to give such religious teaching out of school hours including this subject, to those who are willing to come under its influence through such of its agents as they consider competent to give such teaching".
- (3) During the interval for discussion which followed the D.C.'s speech one of the opposition leaders (see 53 footnote 1) asked the D.C. to whom the schools belonged. On being told that the schools belonged to the Mission he replied that the D.C. was not an unbiased judge of the situation.

The Mission schools were also affected. While in the Central Schools of all the societies involved, the numbers were largely maintained, the position in the Outschools was very different. In the case of the Church of Scotland Mission, Kikuyu, a large reduction took place in the numbers of scholars attending all outschools, and in some cases, an almost complete boycott was in evidence. The Mission authorities received letters stating that teachers who had "signed" were not wanted at certain of these outschools. Teachers were demanded who had not "signed". When this demand was not complied with, a further reduction in attendance took place. In some cases, the refusal stiffened the boycott; in others certain disaffected elders dispersed the scholars who had gathered for school in the usual way. It is thus evident, from the difference between Central Station Schools and Outschools, that where the scholars were less subject to intimidation, they continued to attend. Moreover, many who had been prevented from attending the Outschools enrolled in the Central Schools, or other similar institutions, some even reaching the Church of Scotland Mission School at Tumutumu, about 100 miles distant.

The position had now reached a deadlock. The Mission Authorities would staff their outschools only with teachers who had fulfilled their conditions of service. The opposition leaders would not have those teachers, and had sufficient power to prevent the majority of scholars attending school.

(1) "We have refused these two things which deny the circumcision and the K.C.A., and those teachers which you send are those who have denied these things and who have taken a vow against them; can the leopard and the sheep be shepherded together. It is well that you send us the teachers we want."

(2) (Extract from a letter in English 5/11/29). It was reported that certain leaders of the K.C.A. were at that time moving up and down the district doing what they could to stiffen up the opposition.

Kikuyu Province. They preached the wrath of God on the European, and the duplicity of the Missions in professing to champion native interests while in league with Europeans generally in scheming to injure those interests. They claimed to possess supernatural powers, and to be capable, if they so wished, of striking dead all whom they touched. They were a natural outcome of the disturbed conditions then prevailing, and in certain districts they were closely associated with members of the Kikuyu Central Association. They brought themselves into disrepute by their immorality even in native eyes, and by their disregard of tribal authority, and their activities were speedily checked by the Administration. The appearance of such "prophets" is not an uncommon phenomenon among African peoples.

B. SCHOOLS.

(In this Memorandum the terms "Outstation", "Outschools", and "Church school" appear. The reason for the use of these terms is as follows.

As the Mission work has grown, friendly natives have from time to time given permission for portions of their land to be used for Mission purposes. On these plots, buildings have been erected. The term, "outstation" means such a plot together with its buildings.

The buildings erected usually consist of an house for the evangelist or evangelist-teacher in charge, and secondly, a building in which he works. This second building in which he works is primarily erected (at least in the Kiambu area) as a Church, and frequently is licensed as such. As no complete separation of Church and School has ever been made, this building is also used by agreement as a school, and as such, is licensed by the Education Department. The terms "Outschool" or "Church-school" indicate such a building of which the primary use is ecclesiastical, but which, on week days, is used, by the local scholars as their school.)

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- (1) E.g. The John Chilembwa incident in Nyasaland.
"The Watchtower Movement" in Northern Rhodesia.
"The Kavironda Prophet" in Kenya some years ago etc.
compare "Kenya" Hobley. ("Mental instability among Bantu") pp.187/90 also "The School in the Bush" pp.291, 380, 384.

This done, the Kirk Session then decided, that in view of the doubtful and even antagonistic attitude of many in the Church, a similar declaration should be required of all Church members. As in the case of the Church elders, a simple declaration of loyalty to Church law on "female circumcision" was alone required.

The results of this action is dealt with below.

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organization which, it was believed, was insidiously and deliberately working against the Church and the Mission. Accordingly, as a measure of urgency, a declaration was drawn up to be signed by these Agents, stating their loyalty to the Mission's attitude regarding "female circumcision", and their non-membership of the K.C.A. until that body should cease its anti-Christian propaganda. A fortnight was allowed them to think the matter over. Before that time had elapsed, twelve young teachers left the Mission's employ, thirty six signed the declaration, and the remaining five while unwilling to sign, professed themselves willing to make a verbal declaration. This was agreed to.

The Kikuyu Kirk Session met on October 17th 1929 to discuss the position, and decided that the first step was to prove the loyalty of its own membership, i.e. of the Church elders themselves, before proceeding to deal with the rank and file of the Church. In view of the prevalent objection to signing anything, which had manifested itself in the matter of the Petition, it was agreed that procedure would be facilitated if a verbal declaration only, were required. Accordingly, members were asked to declare their loyalty to the Church law which they themselves had agreed to, and their representatives on the Presbytery had passed regarding "female circumcision". Non-membership of the Kikuyu Central Association was not made a condition of continued fellowship with the Church, this being considered a matter for the individual conscience. Of fifty elders, thirty two unhesitatingly made the decision. A Month's grace was given in which to think over the position, but no others made the declaration at that time. Two, however, have since done so.

The Church Missionary Society stations of Kahuhia and Waithaga were visited en route, and meetings were held in which "female circumcision" was discussed. Opposition, which in the case of Kahuhia, expressed itself in abuse, was experienced at both stations.

On arrival at Chogoria, the position was discussed at some length among the Europeans and Africans, and it was decided that the only way of meeting the situation was to demand a repudiation of "female circumcision" and the K.C.A. The following morning, the position was explained in an open meeting; the Church had made its laws, and could not go back on them; the K.C.A. had joined issue with the Church on these laws and therefore Church-members must choose between the Church and the K.C.A. This drastic action had the desired effect of bringing about a declaration of attitude with regard to the Church law.

On Dr. Arthur's return to Kikuyu on the 2nd October, it was decided, in a meeting of the European staff that steps should be taken to deal with the disaffection which now threatened to involve certain of the paid agents of the Mission. It was felt impossible for the Mission to continue to employ and pay from Mission funds persons who might be members of an

Continuation of Note 3 from previous page.

propaganda and incited the rank and file of the young Church to disobedience of the Church rules regarding polygamy, beer-drinking, "female circumcision" etc. These men professed allegiance to the Church, continued members of the Deacon's Court, and, although reported by loyal members, were sufficiently strong in character and number to refute the statements made. Such was the state of affairs which in September 1929 necessitated Dr. Arthur's visit.

- (1) These stations were visited by agreement with the resident missionaries. The C.M.S. station at Embu was also visited, but at the request of the Missionary-in-charge the subject of "female circumcision" was avoided.
- (2) A declaration was to be made in public, and signed in private.
- (3) Out of a Church membership of 180, only 14 made the declaration on this first instance. The number, however, reached 60 within a few months, and has since continued to increase.

The obtaining of signatures was gone on with, however, and continued during October in various Mission spheres in the Kiambu district, with the exception of the C.M.S. Kabete. Before the signing had been completed, the seditious "Mũthirigũ" song (1) began to be heard. It soon spread over the whole Kikuyu Province, and to Nairobi and the European farms. Comparatively few signatures were obtained, as a result of the opposition (2) which it aroused.

The cry of "Kirore" (the thumb mark or sign) now came to be heard, and those who had signed began to be subjected to violent abuse.

In the meantime, while signatures were being obtained, a pastoral visit to Chogoria was undertaken by Dr. Arthur, three (3) of his African Church elders, and one married Kikuyu woman. The visit was undertaken at the request of Dr. Irvine (in charge of Chogoria station), and in view of the fact that the position in the Church at Chogoria was rapidly becoming intolerable.

- (1) See Appendix V.
- (2) Number of signatures as at October 31st 1929.

	Married		Unmarried		Total.
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
C.S.M. Kikuyu	31	14	16	37 (31)	98
A.I.M. Kijabe (A)	2	2		2 (2)	6 (X)
Githum	24	14	9	8 (4)	55
G.M. Kambui	130	120	30	50 (19)	330
Ngenda	12	14	14	15 (4)	54
Kihumbuni	23	22	5	12 (5)	62
Gathaga	10	13	9	7 (2)	39
Grand Total	232	199	83	129 (67)	644.

- (A) Owing to a misunderstanding, only representative signatures were asked for at this station.
- (X) The figures in brackets indicate uncircumcised women; i.e. that of the preceding number, the number within brackets were uncircumcised.
- (3) Chogoria is a recently established work. The people are still in a primitive state, and the Church elders are all young men. At the time of Dr. Arthur's visit, the people were profoundly affected by propaganda regarding their land. A Kikuyu agitator from Nyeri district went there in 1927 and told the people to "watch the Mission". It had, he said, been sent out by Government to steal the land. The Church, incidentally, was a means of robbing the people of their money, which could be better used in augmenting the K.C.A. funds. He found considerable support in certain of the Church elders, who used their outschools as centres of [see next page]

The draft petition prepared by the Kikuyu Christian elders was discussed and received general approval. A further meeting was held at Kikuyu on September 17th to approve a redraft, and arrange for procedure. This redraft was finally approved and circulated to the Churches on September 19th, with instructions as to how signatures were to be obtained.

In the meantime, the Kikuyu Central Association, had come to know the nature of these meetings, and was active. Rumours were spread about that the missionaries and Europeans generally wished the Kikuyu girls to remain uncircumcised, so that they might marry them, and in this way seize the Kikuyus' land; that the signatures were being got for the purpose of petitioning Government to prevent the return of Johnstone Kenyatta from England, or even to compass his death.

The result of this propagan⁽¹⁾da was that, at Kikuyu, in a meeting of Church members to consider the petition, two men got up and abused the elders for trying to abolish Kikuyu customs, and thereby compromise the tribe with regard to their land. They were strongly supported, and the meeting had to be dismissed.

(1) This statement was made in the conference held at Tumutumu on March 11th 1929.

(2) Compare the following stanzas from the seditious "Mithirigu" song. (See appendix V.)

"You of the Church
 You are fools.
 You got Harry (Thuku) deported,
 And now you turn your attention to John(stone).

"Ten thousand shillings
 Were given for Harry.
 Now the same amount
 Is given for John.

(3) The result at the station of the C.M.S. at Kabete was that, the Church there, which ~~was~~ on reconsideration, decided that the Kikuyu petition was too long, and prepared another and shorter document, received no signatures whatsoever.

Resolutions of the Convention of Associations 29th Jany.1930.

- "That this Convention is of the opinion,
- a. "That immediate steps should be taken by legislative enactment to protect those native girls who do not desire to undergo the rite of circumcision either the major or minor operation.
 - b. "That the time has come to prohibit absolutely the major operation of circumcision of women (among the Kikuyu tribe).

Resolutions of the East African Women's League.31st Oct.1929.

"This meeting of the Council of the East African Women's League desire, to ask Government if it could give any information as to the steps that are being taken to suppress the brutal custom of the circumcision of native girls, and also to again urge Government to do all in its power to protect those girls who wish to break away from the tribal custom. The Council of the E.A.W.L.would be grateful if the Government would be good enough to keep it informed if there is any way in which the League could assist in this matter either with propaganda or otherwise."

The Christian elders at Kikuyu also took up the matter, and they decided that, in order to get protection for all girls who wished to resist the practice, and for parents who wished their children to be immune from it, a petition should be presented to Government by the Christian community, asking that Government should introduce the necessary legislation. A preliminary draft was thereupon composed by the elders.

On September 7th, the Kikuyu Association of Kiambu met at Kabete with a view to its reorganisation and a change of name, thus avoiding confusion with the Kikuyu Central Association. No decisions were arrived at. Immediately thereafter, a small, meeting representative of the Churches in the District was held. Chiefs Koinange, Waruhifi, Philip Karanja, and Josia were present.

(1) Europeans were not present. The date of the meeting was September 6th, 1929.

The Association considers it unfair that the circumciser should be sued in the court, as she was only carrying out the custom of her tribe.

The view is expressed in the course of the letter that the allegations of mortality among circumcised mothers is exaggerated and that such mortality occurs among other peoples irrespective of the custom. (1) The Association considers it unwise to adopt the course proposed by Dr. Arthur, and concludes "it is God's will we should trust to." It is added that the imposition of penalties upon the circumcisers cannot promote friendly relations between the Akikuyu and certain Missions.

Discussing the ethical side of the question in its relation to Christian teaching, the Association declares that since the arrival of missionaries in this country, the natives have never been taught that the Christian creed differed in its opinion of circumcised and uncircumcised. Missionaries have tried on many occasions to interfere with the tribal customs, and the question is asked whether circumcision being the custom of the Kikuyu Christian, he is to be a heathen simply because he is a Kikuyu.

This declaration of attitude was repudiated by the Progressive Kikuyu Party in a letter which was published by the "East African Standard" on the 9th September. In the letter, this body expressed its abhorrence of the practice of "female circumcision", and stated its desire to be dissociated from the Kikuyu Central Association in the attitude which it had taken up regarding the matter. (2) Leading Chiefs of Kiambu District, in a statement defending Dr. Arthur, similarly repudiated the actions and aspersions of the K.C.A., but, at the desire of the Administration, it was not published. (3)

The matter was discussed by the Convention of Associations and by the East African Women's League and the following resolutions were passed.

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- (1) Compare this argument with those current in India among Hindus, regarding the evils of child marriage.
 - (2) See Appendix IV.
 - (3) " " "

(1)
 Letters were also sent to Dr. Arthur and Mr. Knapp on the 29th August demanding an explanation, and on the same day, a further letter was sent by the President of the K.C.A., on behalf of his Association, to the Senior Commissioner of the Province, with a copy to the Press. Excerpts from this letter were published in the "East African Standard" in its issue of the 29th August. They are here quoted in full. (2)

"It is stated that the Association is unable to understand what has happened in the minds of Dr. Arthur and his fellow missionaries in the course they are taking. The letter continues: "we may say we view with much fear such propaganda, since we feel it is an attempt to demolish an ancient custom, and thus lead into an avenue of general demoralisation of the ancestral tribal custom." As the girls were circumcised under a tribal custom,

(1) A translation of the letters is as follows. (Dated 29/8/29).

"I wish you to explain an article which I have seen in the Standard newspaper of 10/8/29. It speaks of the uncircumcision of young girls and has your signature and that of Rev. Knapp of Kambui. (Refer page Footnote). Would you be willing to show me where the ruling was made to disfellowship, and that it was a bad thing to circumcise.

Furthermore, when the white man came to this country, he found the Akikuyu circumcising, and because of this fact, it is an established custom of theirs of all time. If then, this custom is to be abolished among the Kikuyu, it would be best, first of all, before you do away with it, to remove the things we see taking place in Nairobi, because there are many kinds of people there that do many things, (implied meaning many offensive things,) and they are not the things that please the people, and we have never heard that those people were told they were doing a wrong thing, or forbidden their custom. If then, it is you who are trying to abolish the custom of the Kikuyu tribe, it would be well for you to let us know. When you first came to this country you told us that a Church matter was not to be judged in the High Court, and now we have begun to see that the teaching we received was not of much consequence.

Furthermore, you state that it (the custom) has been condemned by the people of four places. How many people would that be? We do not know them; nor where such a ruling has been made, as we have never heard of it, nor been told of such an action. It would be well for you to tell us, so that we may know.

Please would your mind giving me an answer: I pray you, Bwana, for an answer.

President.....
 (Signed) K.K. Joseph.

(2) It, will be seen from this letter that the Kikuyu Central Association again publicly championed the retention of "female circumcision?"

Now in this matter it is well for you to be ready, for when we have this law forced upon us, it will make trouble for us later. We wish to have a reply from you soon, for we are anxious to have your reply (or opinion). Furthermore, we feel that if it is possible, you might consent with all the other Chiefs for a mass meeting of all the Kikuyu people, so that we may know where this ruling has come from, and who are responsible for the passing of this law which is to cover all Kikuyu. We would be pleased if you will consider this matter, and let us know your decision, as we are waiting, fully prepared to reply to those who have spoken on this subject, that we may know where this law came from to be passed on our children.

And now farewell,
It is we of the Council of the K.C.A. together with our President.

President.....
(Signed) K.K. Joseph.

A list of the Chiefs was appended to this letter ending with the following injunction.

(TRANSLATION).

"Will each person find his name on the above list and consider well what he can do about this abolition of circumcision, and make suggestions on what should be said, so that our children should not be prevented circumcision.

It will be appreciated if everyone will reply soon, and let us know his feeling on the matter.

It is we, the Council of the K.C.A. together with our President.

President.....
(Signed) K.K. Joseph.

It will be seen that this letter misrepresented the position taken up in Dr. Arthur's article. It told the Chiefs that a law had been passed abolishing "female circumcision" among the Kikuyu, and that Dr. Arthur and Mr. Knapp had been responsible for its being passed. The letter, undoubtedly, caused a ferment within the tribe, and gave the K.C.A. the temporary support of the majority of the older pagan members.

a leading article, the "East African Standard" took up the matter and put forward a plea for liberty of conscience for African women.

(1)
N
Meanwhile, the Kikuyu Central Association was active.

On 17th August, a week after this leader and article appeared, the Chiefs of Kikuyu country, 74 in number, were circularised as follows by the President of this Association. (2)

(TRANSLATION).

Lament on abolition of female circumcision.

To all the chiefs of Kikuyu country.

Accept this letter joyfully, because of the many matters of which we wish to notify you, which are taking place these days.

I have instructed by the Council of the Kikuyu Central Association to write this letter to you. I very humbly submit the following.

1. Firstly, we have discovered a law, and it has been made public in the Europeans newspaper, and it has been written by Dr. Arthur, and another European of the Mission at Mambui (3).

2. Secondly, this new law had made us very sad, for it says that the circumcision of girls is done away with, and that there is an agreement already in force, and will be in future, to abolish it; that anyone who circumcises will be fined, or if the fine is not forthcoming, they will be imprisoned.

It is a great sorrow that all the Akikuyu are thus prohibited circumcision, and this is announced by Dr. J. W. Arthur, and others such as the Europeans of Kabete, Kijabe, Tumutumu and Kambui.

(1) Extracts from the "East African Standard" leading article 10/8/29.
".....but it was a very great step forward for the Native Councils to interfere with this custom, even in a limited degree, and the fear in our minds is that the recent court decision will weaken rather than strengthen that forward movement.....whatever may be the actual facts, - and they were not closely probed by the Supreme Court, - the principle should, and must be, upheld that a native woman should have full liberty and freedom, under the protection of the State, to refuse to undergo an operation of this nature, if her conscience and conviction is opposed to it."
(2) A copy of this letter signed by Joseph Kang'etho is en filo.
(3) Only Dr. Arthur signed the letter.

to any person for whose benefit it is done in good faith, and who has given consent, whether expressed or implied, to suffer that harm, or to take the risk of that harm."

The charge of grievous hurt, therefore, fell to the ground but the fines were upheld, as the contravention of the Local Native Council Bye-law was agreed to be proven. There is no appeal from a stated case, and therefore the decision of the Supreme Court had to stand.

This decision produced consternation in the hearts of many African Christians. To them, it seemed that the only protection which their daughters had against being forcibly mutilated was a small fine. This feeling was increased by the seemingly frivolous comments made by one of the Judges in the case. So serious also did the decision appear to the Missionaries who had been working for freedom of choice in the matter that, in protest, an article was sent to the East African Standard by Dr. Arthur, explaining the circumstances of the occurrence, and showing the implications of the judgment. This article was published on the 10th August, and on the same day, in

- (1) For a reference to this see footnote page
- (2) (Extracts from article. E.A. Standard 10/8/29). "The account of the Kikuyu circumcision case in the Supreme Court published in the Standard on the 31st July, and the judgement of their Honours published on Aug. 5th. would hardly, I believe, enable the general public to understand, either what actually happened, or what the implications of the judgment are. . . . The result of this judgement is that any heathen relatives can now seize any of these young girls, . . . and forcibly have her circumcised. . . . I feel too, that His Honour Justice Thomas was unfortunate in his comparisons, and had he known the true facts of the custom, and its effects, he could hardly have compared what happened with either the mishaps of surgery, or the barber's shop. The native circumciser was not an old woman unskilled in her job, nor was the knife likely to have slipped. There is probably no surgeon who could have done the operation more rapidly than this old woman, the circumciser of hundreds of girls a year. . . . Surely such a condition of affairs is not incomparable with the condition of suttee in India, which was abolished by the strong hand of the law and some action should now be taken by Government so to amend the law, that sufficient protection may be made at least for the girls who are desirous of resisting its effects, if not indeed to bring about the abolition of the major operation at least."

It was alleged in Court that at first the girl resisted to the extent of screaming and struggling, but thereafter she consented. (Anyone who knows the Kikuyu would say that the girl, seeing that resistance was hopeless, went through the ceremony, held down as she was, with the stoicism of her race.) Consent was inferred from the fact that she had ceased to scream and ceased to struggle. The Magistrate, however, found that the charge of "grievous hurt" could not be upheld because of the consent given. He fined the two women circumcisers Shs.30/- each, because they had exceeded the Bye-Law of the Local Native Council of Kiambu, confining all such operations to simple clitoridectomy. (1)

It was obvious that some definition of consent was necessary, and Dr. Arthur (Church of Scotland Mission, Kikuyu), Canon Leakey (Church Missionary Society, Kabete), and Mr. Knapp (Gospel Mission, Kambui) at once consulted Mr. Dobb's, the Acting Chief Native Commissioner. He consulted the Attorney-General, who was dissatisfied with the decision of the Magistrate that consent was defence to "grievous hurt", and ~~took~~ the Magistrate, on the application of the Attorney-General prepared a "stated case" for submission to the Supreme Court for a ruling on the point of law involved. Section 87 of the Indian Penal Code seemed to be applicable. The Supreme Court, however, held that this Section did not apply, but that Section 88 did, namely, that, "nothing which is not intended to cause death is an offence by reason of any harm which it may cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause,

(1) "No person subject to the jurisdiction of the Kiambu Local Native Council in the Kiambu district when performing or assisting in the performance of clitoridectomy shall make an incision of greater extent or depth than that necessary for the removal or excision of the clitoris. Any other incision or mutilation of the private parts of a woman shall not be performed or permitted to be performed." (see page 21).

"dead man's curse". Some weeks before a circumcision ceremony which was to take place in the Kiambu district in June, however, the father asked the girl if she would like to be circumcised on this occasion. She refused, and he did not again return to the subject. About 11 o'clock on the day of the ceremony, the girl, who was alone in her hut, was seized by her step-mother and another woman, and dragged along the path to the place of circumcision. They were later joined by other women who helped in her removal. On reaching the place of circumcision, it was found that the ceremony had broken up, and the circumcisers had to be found. A young man, Gitau Nyorimi, who was no relation of the girl, then approached the supervising ⁽¹⁾ "kanga" and asked permission to recall the circumcisers. The "kanga" objected, saying ⁽²⁾ that the matter was irregular, and that, in view of this, he (Gitau) and the circumcisers, might become liable to a fine. Gitau replied that he would assume responsibility. The "kanga" then ⁽³⁾ ceased to object, and the circumcision was gone on with. The father of the girl, although in the vicinity for at least part of the time, took no part in the seizure or the circumcision, there- by fulfilling the conditions of the charge given him by his son. In the Court case, however, he assumed responsibility (as owner), stating that, "it was he who entered the girl's hut to get a blanket from her bed in which to wrap her" ⁽⁴⁾

- (1) A "Kanga" (tribal policeman) attends all circumcisions, in order to see that the owner's permission has been given. As will be seen from what has been said above (page), his attendance is of a nominal nature.
- (2) No preparation had been made for the operation. For example, the clay and castor-oil smeared binding cloth normally provided was not forthcoming. The normal time (early morning) for circumcision was long passed. The girl's "owner" was not present. The girl had passed the normal time for circumcision.
- (3) The evidence of the "kanga" was not taken in the case.
- (4) This statement has been ridiculed by natives on the grounds that no pagan elder would under any circumstances enter his daughter's hut and touch her bed. To do so would be to incur "thahu" (uncleaness).

1. "It was resolved, with one dissenting, that this custom is evil, and should be abandoned by all Christians."
2. "It was resolved by 30 votes to 9, that all submitting to it should be suspended by the churches everywhere."
3. "The Conference made no recommendations as to periods of suspension. It remitted the question back to the Churches, asking that it be carefully considered with a view to getting a definite decision at a further conference."

This declaration of attitude is important, in that it probably constitutes the first direct cause of the subsequent upheaval. The Kikuyu Central Association published the resolutions of this meeting in their paper "Mligwithania".

The Kiambu Circumcision Case followed soon after. An uncircumcised girl, an adherent of the Gospel Missionary Society, Kambui, aged about 15, was seized and forcibly circumcised in a manner which, except for the mutilation itself, did not conform to Kikuyu custom.

In the girl's family, the only male members had been the father and a brother, and the family property had already been apportioned between them. The brother's share was certain gardens, trees, etc., and his three sisters. He died in 1926. Before he died, he charged his father, to whom his share of the property would revert on his death, that his house, gardens, and trees should be for the use of his three sisters until their marriage. He also expressly charged him that they were to have liberty in matters of adherence to tribal custom. The charges were strictly complied with, owing to the fear of incurring the

(1) I.e., The brother was the "owner" of his three sisters, and as such, would receive the bride price paid for them on their marriage. "Owner" in Kikuyu is a person to whom a woman "belongs"; e.g. father, husband, or nearest male relative.

SECTION V.CAUSES AND HISTORY OF THE 1929-30 CRISIS.

Although the Kiambu area as a whole remained comparatively unaffected during the period referred to above, signs of unrest were not wanting among the young men. In 1929, the new Church at Kikuyu was begun, and a large number of Fort-Hall boys were engaged for the work. Through them, undoubtedly, anti-authority propaganda was carried on, and the boys in the boarding school at Kikuyu were influenced by it. (1)
 The Government Native Industrial Training Depot at Kabete, (2)
 was a centre of disaffection. At the beginning of July 1929, (3)
 a lewd song emanated from this school, was widely sung in a sporadic fashion, and augmented very considerably the prevailing unrest among the younger element. The Christian elders at that time spoke of a movement underneath, largely secret, which they could not understand, but which they felt was capable of disastrous results. The missionaries also were not insensible to these dangerous undercurrents.

In March 1929, a representative conference embracing all the Churches in the Kikuyu country was held at Tumutumu, as had been customary at these Conferences, the position with regard to "female circumcision" was reviewed, and, in view of the lack of uniformity still prevailing in matters of discipline, the following resolutions were passed.

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- (1) The conversations heard at this time among young Kiambu natives concerned the land, Harry Thuku, the "sorrows" (the riot) of 1922, and the oppression of the European: no reference to "female circumcision" was made.
 - (2) Cf. the songs which emanated from this school. See "East African Standard" 26/3/30, Governor's speech at Kiambu.
 - (3) This was not the "Mithirigu". The "Mithirigu" developed from it: both originated in this school.

-clined to give the required assurance.

The final action in the matter, so far as the Tumutumu Church is concerned, was taken in 1930, when the Presbytery of Kenya Colony gave sanction for the removal from the Communion Roll, after due and sufficient warning, of the names of persons who had, of their own choice, remained under suspension for over two years in consequence of their attitude to the Church law regarding "female circumcision". Upwards of 200 names were removed from the Roll. This number represents about 7% of the total baptismal roll as it stood at the end of the year 1930. The majority of these people shewed a reluctance to sever their connection with the Church, and had any compromise been possible, they would probably have accepted it.

From the time when the Church took its defensive stand in 1928, as described above, the position has steadily improved. In all areas except one (Mahiga), there has been a steady drift back to fellowship. The numbers of adherents, both in Church and school, are larger than ever before, and the work generally is stronger. It remained unaffected by the disturbances of 1929-30. The effects (1) of subversive propaganda are still felt from time to time, however, in the areas which became disaffected in the years 1925-28.

During this period the Kiambu area remained comparatively unaffected. The progressive character of its leading Chiefs and the established nature of its Missions, made this district a strong bulwark against subversive propaganda and consequently a leading factor in the situation.

(1) Report of the Native Affairs Department 1929, Section 11, para. 42.

were in sympathy with them were therefore called upon to declare their attitude to the laws of the Church to which they belonged, and state whether they accepted them in their entirety. It at once became apparent that in certain areas (in particular Nyeri and Cis-Tana) a large percentage of the members were not prepared to give a satisfactory assurance. Not only so, but in one instance they declared by letter that they intended to ignore the Church Law and to adhere to the practice of "female circumcision"; at the same time they stated their wish to break their connection with the Church.

The Tumutumu Kirk Session thereupon declared all male baptised members and other adherents of the Church in these areas to be under suspension, with the exception of those who were prepared to make known their loyalty to the Church in this matter. In the case of the women, instead of being suspended, they were invited to examine their position, and those who found themselves to be in opposition to the Church were asked to abstain voluntarily from coming forward to Communion or as candidates for Baptism or for admission to the catechumenate.

It was felt advisable also, in view of the insidious nature of the propaganda now afoot, that each elder of the Tumutumu Church should be required to give an assurance of his continuing loyal acceptance of the laws of the Church, especially in regard to the matter of "female circumcision". This was done, with the full approval of the elders themselves, at a meeting of the Kirk Session, each elder being asked to state his position. Only one elder de-

(1) Church records.
 (2) In one area (Mihuti) it was not sufficient that each person on coming forward for Communion or Baptism or admission as a catechumen should be questioned by the local minister and deacons as to his attitude; those unable to give the required assurance of loyalty to the Church being rejected.

inferred, to secure the votes of the pagan population in the forthcoming Local Native Council elections, stated that they stood for the preservation of the old tribal customs, laying special emphasis on "female circumcision". They pointed out that there existed a body of people, represented in the meeting by the members of the Progressive Kikuyu Party, who were in favour of the abolition of this custom. From the words they used it appeared that they demanded compliance with the custom on the part of every Kikuyu girl. The retention of the rite was thus made a political issue.

This declaration of the Kikuyu Central Association brought it (the K.C.A.) into direct conflict with the African Church at Tumutumu. Their leaders included some who were members of the Tumutumu Church, and it became evident that, as members of their Association, they were prepared to repudiate the Church law regarding "female circumcision". They and the Church members who

- (1) The Progressive Kikuyu Party is a political association existing in the Nyeri District. According to its constitution, it can only hold meetings in the daytime; it also asks Government's permission to do so and invites local Government officials to attend. It stands for the fullest progress of the Kikuyu people, educationally and otherwise. It affirms its desire for active co-operation with men of all races in promoting the progress of Kenya Colony in general and the Kikuyu country in particular. It wishes to abolish all harmful customs such as the sexual mutilation of girls (see appendix IV; their letter to the "East African Standard" of 7th September, 1929) and to retain only such customs as are decent. It thus resembles in its loyalty to Church and State, and in its aims the Kikuyu Association of Kiambu (See appendix II.) A few meetings have been held between the leaders of both, but the areas of the two Associations are so far separated that little effective co-operation has taken place.
- (2) It is of interest to note that Chief Nderi, a pagan, in winding up the discussion on "female circumcision", is stated to have urged the adoption of a liberal attitude towards the question leaving it to individuals to decide for themselves whether to comply with the custom or not.
- (3) Rev. R. G. M. Calderwood, in his report for 1928 delivered at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the Tumutumu Church states: "The K.C.A. at a meeting early in the year insisted on all Christians among its members reverting to the old custom of "female circumcision"."

growing friction between the Chiefs and the young men was such as to necessitate an attempt being made by the Administration to correlate their activities. Accordingly, in an open "baraza" (1) held at the Provincial Headquarters, Nyeri, the matter was discussed at some length. The Chiefs of the Province and representatives of the political associations were present. Because of the feeling which existed between the two, the debate showed a tendency to develop upon acrimonious lines, and, in order that the Africans might feel able to talk freely, the white officials left the meeting for a time. (2) On their doing so, an influential man (3) named Mũhoya, a former member of the Kikuyu Central Association, made a speech which indicated the extent to which tribal authority had been undermined. He denounced the Kikuyu Central Association for its anti-authority propoganda, made public the names of certain Chiefs who had come under its influence, and told the others that its aim had been to bring about their deposition, and have its own nominees appointed to their places. The Africans arrived at no agreement among themselves. The European officials then returned and the Senior Commissioner spoke, saying that the Government had no objection to political associations, as such, but urged the need of unity within the tribe, and the need for political expression and development to proceed through constitutional channels; i.e., through the Local Native Councils. The matter was then left, it being agreed that correlation of political activities could best (4) be achieved by this means.

When the European officials had again left the meeting, the Kikuyu Central Association representatives, in order, it has been

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- (1) A meeting of representative natives called by an Administrative Officer.
 - (2) See native paper "Mũgithania" Vol. I, No. 2, page 5, where an account of the meeting is given.
 - (3) Ditto.
 - (4) Ditto.

was prosecuted with vigour, and the loyal Christians underwent considerable persecution. The Mission in the Nyeri District and the Southern parts of Kiambu district were free from any serious trouble until 1925, when the political machinations of the younger men began to be apparent in the former.

X By 1925, the Church of Scotland Mission, Tumutumu, had built up a strong church, educational and medical work. As at Kikuyu, in 1916, the custom of "female circumcision" was debarred in the Christian community, and the teaching along this line had built up an almost solid body of native Christian opinion against the practice. The Christians lived on good terms with their pagan neighbours, and until late in 1925 no trouble had arisen to disturb the peace of the community. In that year, however, the Church of Scotland Mission, Tumutumu was attacked, but not on the circumcision issue. The rumour was disseminated throughout the District that the missionaries were Government spies, and that the out-schools' sites were planted at strategic points prior to the Mission selling the lands to European settlers. The use of land already in use for school gardens was now refused. The Missions adhered to the position that the teaching of Agriculture was an essential subject of the curriculum, and unless land were to continue to be provided for this purpose, the schools would have to be closed. In December 1926 the gardens at two outschools were dug up and the crops destroyed.

Opposition continued until 1928. Early in that year, the

- (1) Compare Report of Native Affairs Department 1926, Sect. 2 par. 25.
- (2) These school gardens were such as are in use throughout the Colony and elsewhere for practical training in agriculture.
- (3) The offenders were apprehended and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

the Kikuyu people but even all the native tribes of Kenya."

(Report Native Affairs Department 1928, Section 2, paragraph 3).

B. OPPOSITION TO ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY.

During the period from 1923 onwards, the Missions experienced increasing difficulties in their work, as a result of these subversive activities of the young Kikuyu. Opposition varied from time to time and from place to place, but, in general, it developed on lines similar to those described above. The Gospel Mission and the Africa Inland Mission in Central Kikuyuland were the first to experience the effects of this antagonistic attitude. In 1925 at the Kihumbuni out-station of the Gospel Missionary Society indiscipline in the school began to assume serious proportions. Attempts, at least one of which was forcible, were made to use the Church-school building for political meetings. The teachers and the African Pastor were subjected to abuse. Propaganda for reinstating of "female circumcision" among the Christians was an early development. The Africa Inland Mission station in the Gitumu area experienced similar difficulty. Large political meetings were held in this district, and the result of the teachings propagated there was first evident in an hitherto unknown attitude of suspicion towards the motives and work of the European missionaries. (1) Abusive letters were sent to both European and African Teachers. A teacher was evicted from his school and the school was closed against another sent there by the Mission. The propaganda for the retention of "female circumcision"

(1) The writer of one of these abusive letters was traced and dealt with by the District Commissioner, Fort Hall.

dupes who commit overt offences), or against the non-natives who are believed to be the brains of the movement, but the situation is being watched."

(Report Native Affairs Department 1926, Section 2, paragraph 25).

Government made it clear, in open baraza, and by its strong action in cases of open subversion of authority, that it would not tolerate the insurrectionary activities of the young men, and this, in addition to the growing popularity of the Local Native Councils which formed a legitimate channel for the expression of political feeling, relieved the situation considerably. The young men, however, were still clamant for direct and unregulated representation.

"The year 1927 has been free from any considerable manifestations of political or social unrest, but there has nevertheless been evident among a section of the Kikuyu tribe a continuous undercurrent of semi-articulate agitation.

The most obvious of the immediate results is a growing antagonism and a widening cleavage between the older and the younger generations.

An attempt, attended by a considerable measure of success, has been made to combine the salutary elements of the two opposing parties in the composition of the Local Native Councils, on which all native interests are represented."

(Report of the Native Affairs Department, 1927, Sect. 2, paragraphs 1, 3 & 4.)

"In the Districts of Kiambu and Fort Hall the problem is to keep within the limits of sanity and reason the initiative and enterprise of that section of the younger generation which is anxious to free itself from the trammels imposed upon it by the ignorance and superstition of the past, and in the process is prone to disregard the salutary restrictions of constituted authority."

"The Kikuyu Central Association, however, is not content with this regulated representation but prefers less constitutional methods, such as mass meetings, letters to the Press and direct petitions to Government. It advances extravagant claims to be representative of, or at least to speak for, not only all

"authority. Among the Kavirondo the deliberations of the Kavirondo Welfare Association have not invariably been conducted along the lines of moderation and common sense, while the Kikuyu have evinced an apprehension for the security of their land, which has obtruded itself into all their Councils, has formed the subject of numerous petitions and memoranda and has tended to overshadow genuine attempts towards political development and social progress. In the Kikuyu Province an indeterminate collection of malcontents, with no constitution, no representative authority and no constructive programme of reform, calling itself the "Kikuyu Central Association", has achieved a notoriety and a prominence out of all proportions to its merits or its influence."

(Report of the Native Affairs Department 1925, Section 2, paragraph 1).

In 1926, the position had become worse. Anti-authority propaganda was extensively carried on by young men of the tribe, and the result was such as to embarrass Government in its administration of the Province.

"Though native political aspirations have not manifested themselves by any serious outburst, it is nevertheless necessary to realise that they exist, and that agents are continually at work, in some cases with quite honest intentions, though often misdirected. One association at least in the Kikuyu Province seems bent on a campaign to subvert tribal discipline, and is active in spreading propaganda which ascribes sinister motives to all actions of Government and to any schemes which are initiated for promoting native welfare. The leaders of this movement are all young men who appear to live on their wits and other people's ignorant credulity. They are adherents of a notorious deportee, and have representatives in Nairobi as well as in the native reserves, whose efforts are devoted to undermining the loyalty of the native population, and with this end in view, to winning over the official headmen. Money is collected from the ignorant and foolish who are led to believe that great benefits will accrue to them therefrom, but it appears to be spent chiefly on the personal requirements and luxurious tastes of the collectors. Minor demonstrations have occurred, such as the uprooting of seeds planted in the gardens of mission outstations; this was doubtless the outcome of a carefully circulated, but, of course, quite unfounded rumour to the effect that the planting of trees and crops was an attempt to establish a title to the land and thus take it from the natives. As is always the case in such circumstances, it is not easy to collect evidence, which to some extent proceedings against missionaries, and others, from their

The strong action taken by Government on the occasion of the political demonstration in 1922 had the effect of driving underground the political feeling which had been running high during that year. Consequently, in 1923, there was little expression of open opposition to the authorities.

"The year 1923 has happily been free of any serious political unrest among the native population. A few adherents of the Kikuyu agitator, Harry Thuku, who was deported after his activities had culminated in the riot in 1922, still endeavour to carry on propaganda, but their activities are of course pursued with greater secrecy. There is reason to believe that Thuku still carries on a continuous correspondence with his principal sympathisers through the medium of the Indian shopkeepers at Kisumu."

(Report of the Native Affairs Department 1923, Sect. 2, paragraph 2.)

In 1924, which was a prosperous year, the position was a somewhat similar one,

"The native population has remained peaceful and one hopes contented. The year has, indeed, been one which makes for content; the crops have been good and the prices for them high; no epidemics have made their appearance; wages for labour have slightly increased; and, perhaps in consequence upon these fortunate circumstances, no political disturbances have taken place.

It must not however be supposed that the general prosperity of a year has killed the awakening political conscience in the people: lightly to assume such to be so would be merely to confess a misapprehension of the thoughts and aspirations of the rising generation.....

.....The whole of the Kikuyu tribe is in a state of intense anxiety about the security of its land tenure."

(Report of the Native Affairs Department, 1924, Section 2, paragraph 5).

In 1925, however, opposition was again in evidence.

"The year 1925 has been full of interest and not without its problems. There have been no political upheavals, no political movements of any considerable magnitude, but the gradual development of race consciousness among the native peoples has been very evident and there have not been wanting sundry manifestations of a spirit of independence based upon a very inadequate comprehension of the benefits that result from the rule of constituted

SECTION IV.

OPPOSITION TO CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY AMONG THE KIKUYU.

A. OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.

Previous to the Great War, there were few manifestations of political activity among the Kikuyu. There was a lack of unity between the various sections of the tribe; it was not a political unit. European domination was accepted in the face of superior force, but it is probable that at this time, the permanent nature of European rule and occupation had not been realised. The opening of the people's minds was a gradual process. British administration made travel safe and easy. The new facilities for travelling were extensively used by the Kikuyu and brought about a hitherto unknown degree of intercommunication within the tribe. The labour needs of the Colony drew large numbers to work outside the Reserves, resulting in intermingling of the various sections of the tribe, and in contact with other races. The elementary education possible in the Mission schools brought the young men together in the pursuit of a common aim, namely, as they themselves put it, - "to progress". The Great War precipitated the then dawning consciousness of commonality with the European races. The land and labour situation provided an adequate sense of grievance, and in 1920-22 the activities of the agitator, Harry Thuku, were sufficient to crystallise the position in the minds of the people, and evoke a political consciousness.

From that time onwards, the attitude of the tribe as a whole might be best described as one of suspicious watchfulness. With the younger men, however, the attitude began to express itself in a tendency to oppose constituted authority. The development of this tendency is indicated in the annual reports of the Native Affairs Department of the Colony.

to the new form, and any infringements of the Local Native Council Bye-Law which are brought to the notice of the Authorities are dealt with.

The measure is not popular among the tribes generally, but we are informed that the young girls themselves favour it because it involves less suffering. The action of the old women, however, militates against its successful enforcement, for they subject the girls who have undergone the modified operation to strong vituperation, and there is no evidence to show that it is being carried out to any widespread degree.

Native Councils of Fort Hall and Kitui have carried the same measure. These resolutions on receiving the covering sanction of the Governor-in-Council become legal and binding and disobedience involves a penalty."

(Report of the Native Affairs Dept. 1926, Section 2, paragraphs 13 and 14).

This ruling however, although passed as stated by the Local Native Councils, was not carried into effect.

"Government have from time to time made suggestions in baraza and through the medium of the Local Native Councils with a view to modifying the practice of female circumcision. With the exception of the Nyeri Council, which refused to discuss so intimate a subject, all the Local Native Councils of the Province has passed resolutions restricting the operation to the simple removal of the clitoris. It appears however, that little or nothing was done to enforce the restriction, so that it remained practically a dead letter. (1)

(2)

In April 1929, the first prosecution took place under the resolution, and two women were fined Shgs. 30/- each (Kiambu Criminal Case No. 1/29) for performing the major operation. Nobody was pleased. It was at once apparent that the Native Council had not had the people behind them when they passed the resolution, and there was much indignation on the one side at the conviction and on the other at the lightness of the sentence.

(Report of the Native Affairs Department 1929, Section 2. paragraph 38.)

The quotation given above would seem to suggest that the Administration had at no time attempted to enforce the ruling of the Local Native Councils limiting the operation to simple clitoridectomy. In Embu District among tribes related to the Kikuyu, we are informed that some progress has been made in this direction. As a result of the recent intervention of the Authorities, a number of girls have been circumcised according

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- (1) We would suggest that Government was unaware that the ruling was a "dead letter" until informed of the fact by a missionary deputation in February 1930. See Section VII.
 - (2) This was the case which gave rise to the so-called circumcision issue. See Section V.

The question was discussed at the Conference of Governors of the East African Dependencies in 1926.

"The Conference considered that -
The practice of female circumcision, which was of very ancient origin should not be interfered with, but that the respective governments concerned should endeavour to persuade such tribes as practised the more brutal forms of it to return to the more ancient and less brutal form."

(Summary of proceedings Section 10.f.)

In that year also, local action along the line of this recommendation was taken by the Administration.

"Clitoridectomy of girls is a very ancient African custom and is practised by almost all the tribes of Kenya. Great importance is attached to it by conservative natives and it will take many years to get native public opinion to view the practice with the disfavour with which Europeans regard it. Its devotees firmly believe that it is a serious disgrace for an uncircumcised girl to give birth to a child, and the operation is thus in their eyes an essential precedent to marriage, and the girls in most cases insistently demand it. When the operation is confined to the removal of the clitoris, it would appear to be harmless, but among some tribes, particularly in the Kikuyu Province, it has been carried to such an extended degree as to effect horrible mutilation which, in addition to causing acute suffering at the time, leaves eventually such a mass of scar tissue as to render child birth extremely difficult and seriously to endanger the lives of both mother and infant.

The question was discussed at the Conference of East African Governors, where it was considered that while it was not practicable to suppress a custom which carried such important significance in native opinion, it was desirable to take steps to encourage natives to restrict the operation to the less drastic form, which is also the more ancient. Encouraging progress was made in this direction, and in March 1926, the Local Native Council of Bahr District passed a resolution whereby the operation may only be performed by skilled women authorised by the Council, and no operator may remove more than the clitoris. A similar resolution was adopted by Kikuyu Native Council in September 1926, and at the time of writing the Local

Every girl however, on attaining puberty acquires a lover, who is in the position of a affianced husband and with whom she cohabits. While this practice does not appear to be condemned by local native opinion it is nevertheless considered a disgrace for a girl to have a child before she has undergone cliterodectomy, or to undergo the operation when she is already enceinte. The result is that when the girl finds herself pregnant her lover takes her to a native "expert" to have abortion effected. In some cases the result is the death of the girl; in many others the girls, after repeated pregnancies and mis-carriages, becomes incapable of giving birth to a living child. The consequential effect on the birth rate is serious. Some convictions have been obtained recently and strong efforts are being made by the Administration to check the evil.

(Report of the Native Affairs Department, 1923, Section 2, Paragraph 11).

"Circumcision of youth and cliterodectomy of girls are old and established customs of the tribe. In view of the impossibility of suppressing the latter horrible practice except by a gradual process of education, the next best step is to get the ceremonies performed at an earlier age. This, has been done during 1924 in the Tigania division and in five locations of the Ingimbe division. It is hoped that in consequence there will be an appreciable decrease in the abortions to which reference has been made in my report for 1923, and that the labour supply from the district will be augmented by the addition of the youths who have now been circumcised."

(Report of the Native Affairs Dept. 1924, Section 2 paragraph 9).

"The cliterodectomy of girls is still almost universal among the Kikuyu and the parents will apparently not be moved against the practice, though a few mission educated natives stand out against it. It is a custom which will only disappear through the spread of education and with the gradual passing away of the present generation of conservative and unteachable Elders, who still adhere to various barbarous ordeals and superstitious customs in spite of all efforts of the Administrative Officers to check them".

(Report of the Native Affairs Department, 1924, Chapter 2, paragraph 3).

SECTION 111.

THE ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT TO FEMALE CIRCUMCISION.

Government has shown, through public documents, and by attempts to restrict the practice, that it is fully cognisant of the harmful effects of "female circumcision". It has held the view that the practice is of so ancient an origin, and so intimately bound up with the social structure of the tribes which practise it, that its disappearance can only be effected through a gradual process of education. It has further held that the brutal mutilations performed among the Likuyu and related tribes are a comparatively late development of a much less drastic operation. Accordingly, Government has attempted a policy of encouraging natives to return to what it considers to be the original and less brutal form. It must be pointed out however, that it is not known on what authority Government bases this view, nor what evidence, if any, can be adduced in its support.

The following extracts from public documents will serve to indicate the position of Government in this matter, and also the extent to which Administrative Officers have attempted to ameliorate the harmful effects attendant upon the custom.

"The Meru practise both circumcision of youths and clitoridectomy of girls, but in neither case is the operation performed until considerably after puberty.

(1) See below. Proceedings of the Governor's Conference 1926.

the Kikuyu Association of Kiambu (See Appendix IV.).

From 1920 onwards, Joint-conferences of African Christians have met at various times. At these Conferences the position with regard to "female circumcision" has from time to time been reviewed, and opposition to the practice has been given repeated expression. Compare the following minute on "female circumcision" recorded by a special meeting of the All Kikuyu Native Conference at Kamuhai on October 14th 1929.

removed "The elders regret the accusations being made throughout the country that it is only the Europeans who want this custom and not the Kikuyu. As Kikuyu, they desire to record in these minutes that the decision is their own free will and not a matter of compulsion by the Europeans"

The facts enumerated above show the nature and extent of the movement for the abandonment of "female circumcision". Throughout all its stages, it has been carefully sponsored by the Christian Elders, who, it should not be forgotten, lived always on good terms with their pagan relatives. Its growth has been steady. Despite the setback of 1929, tangible results of its successful effect are not lacking. These are evidenced in the still considerable number of girls connected with various Missions who do not intend to undergo the rite; in attempts which, subsequent to 1929, were made to have unwilling girls forcibly mutilated; in the still increasing number of marriages of uncircumcised girls; and in the existence of uncircumcised girls in pagan homes. The existence of independent bodies of African opinion against the practice is shown in the letters to the Press for the Progressive Kikuyu party, and the "Council of the Shield" (See Appendix IV.), and the hitherto unpublished letter of

- (1) This is shown by the existence of Chiefs with uncircumcised daughters in the more progressive areas, e.g. Chief Koinange, Wamuhai, Philip Karanja, Gideon; also by the esteem in which the Revs. Wanyoike, Benjamin, Solomon and others are held by their clans.
- (2) Compare the dates given above page 7
- (3) Up to the end of October 1929, 67 of these girls had signed a petition to Government for protection for those unwilling to submit to the practice (see page 45). This figure represents only those who had signed in the Kiambu district. It does not include those who signed later, nor those who dwell in other parts of the Kikuyu country.
- (4) See Section VI.
- (5) An Association of women local to the area of the

this, came the United Native Conference at Kambui in 1920, resulting in the Africa Inland Mission, the Gospel Mission, and the Kabete station of the Church Missionary Society following a line similar to that adopted by the Church of Scotland Mission in 1916, forbidding the practice within the Churches, and introducing discipline in regard to it. ⁽¹⁾ Later, with a view to obtaining complete uniformity on this matter, the Representative Council of the Alliance of Protestant Missions in Kenya recommended the definite discouragement of the practice among all Christians. ⁽²⁾ Again, in September, 1922, a further resolution was passed emphasising the necessity for missionaries using all their influence to get the practice abolished.

In March 1923, a committee was appointed by the Representative Council to deal with matters relating to the custom, and it was further agreed that Drs. Philp and Jones should unite in preparing a pamphlet which would assist the Missions in enlightening their people on this subject, and that it should be published in the Kikuyu language. Dr. Philp, was also requested to write an article for ⁽⁴⁾ "Habari", a Swahili newspaper published by the Education Department. An article was published in due course, After some delay, the pamphlet was printed and widely disseminated among the African Christians of all Missions. ⁽⁵⁾

(1) See part taken by the Africans is detailed above.
 (2) Representative Council Minutes 25th to 27th April, 1921. "The Council recommend that the practice of circumcising females be definitely discouraged among all Christians and adherents of the Native Church as unnecessary and degrading, and that where a Church is ready to take a strong action in the matter the practice should be prohibited".
 (3) Representative Minutes 21st August to 2nd September, 1922. See Appendix.
 (4) Representative Council Minutes 6 to 7 March 1923, See appendix.
 (5) Kenya Missionary Council Minutes 15th to 21st February, 1927, See appendix.

unity which was achieved in facing the problem.

On July 5th and 6th 1916, representatives, both European and African, of the four Missionary Societies working in Southern Kikuyuland met at Kikuyu to consider the question of "female circumcision". The matter was thoroughly discussed but no decision was come to at this time. The war then intervened, and no further joint meetings were held until the return of the Kikuyu Missions Volunteers early in 1918. In July of that year, a United Conference of Protestant Missionary Societies in East Africa was held at Kikuyu. A number of leading settlers were also present. As the result of a discussion on "Women's Work," it was decided that the Representative Council of the Protestant Missionary Alliance initiated at this conference "be asked to consider whether the Allied Societies should unite in absolutely forbidding the circumcision of girls in their Missions, and that Government should be approached to legislate for its abolition among the heathen".

A further conference was convened at Kikuyu in 1919 for the express purpose of considering the question of "female circumcision". African and European representatives from the Churches in Southern Kikuyuland first met separately, and Dr. Jones, from the experience gained in his medical work, lectured to both sections on the harmful effects of the custom. He made a profound impression on the African elders. As a result, when the Europeans and Africans met in joint session, a unanimous recommendation was made for the abolition of the practice and for disciplinary measures to be taken against all Christians who should countenance it. Following upon

- (1) Minutes of the meeting. See appendix.
- (2) Kikuyu Missions Volunteers were a Labour Corps raised by the Protestant Missions working in Kikuyuland.
- (3) Resolution of Kikuyu Conference 1918. Section 16 "Women's Work". See appendix.
- (4) African statement and Mission records.

During the years 1915 - 1926 the Rev.H.D.and Mrs.Hooper of the Kahuhia station come to realise the evils of the Custom, taught against it, sought to get their Christian Elders to take a stand against it, and co-operated with other Missions in the Kikuyu country with a view to its abolition in the Christian Church.

The remaining Church Missionary Society stations, however, have differed from other Missions, in that teaching on this subject has been intermittent. The absence of hospitals on the C.M.S. stations in Kikuyuland, and the consequent lack of concrete evidence of the evils of the custom, which are supplied in maternity and gynecological work, has also been a handicap. A uniform policy with regard to "female circumcision" has not yet been adopted by this Society. As will be seen, however, from what follows, the Church Missionary Society, through its official representatives, definitely associated itself with other Societies in various joint recommendations and expressions of opinion passed from time to time in condemnation of the custom. Further, African representatives of the Church Missionary Society in conferences with Africans of other Churches, have joined in definitely recommending its prohibition in the Churches which they represented.

F. UNITED ACTION BY THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

It should be clearly realised that in dealing with this matter the Missionary Societies have been working in close association. Beginning in 1915, the possibilities of united action by all the Societies were from time to time considered by both African and European representatives, meeting separately and conjointly. What follows is an account of these meetings. It shows the degree of

(1) See pages compare "Lapses into heathen practices" (Mr. Barlow's Memorandum on Church discipline). August, 1925.
 (2) See section V.

30th May, 1921, when the custom was forbidden within the Church. (1)
 At the Githungu station, similar teaching was given, and here no legislative action whatever was taken by the European element. The native Christians themselves, on the return of their delegates from an Intermission Conference held at Kambui in 1920 decided to prohibit the practice for Church members.

D. GOSPEL MISSION, KAMBUI, INYANDA, ETC.

The Gospel Mission has been active over a long period in educating its peoples on the question of "female circumcision". In this Mission also, no legislative action was at any time taken by the Europeans. The teaching against the practice given by the Rev. W.F. Mrs. Knapp achieved its end on November 13th 1920, when it was moved and passed by the Church Council, a wholly African body, that, "this custom should be put out of the Gospel Mission Church, and that anyone who circumcises his or her child should be put out of the Church." (2) The discipline was not specified at this time.

The question, however, was again raised by the Church Council and in September 1921 it was finally settled that, "the Church would not tolerate the practice within its jurisdiction, and the method of discipline was laid down." (3)

E. STATIONS OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The attitude of the Church Missionary Society has varied from station to station. The Kabete station has pursued a similar policy to that of the Societies mentioned above, teaching against the practice, and achieving somewhat similar results.

(1) Church Council Minutes 1921 May, 30th.
 (2) Church Council Minutes 1920 Nov. 13th. "That the presence of missionaries in the service of the British Empire, condemn and forbid the practice of Christian and all girls under control of Christian missions, and that all transgressors shall be subject to Church discipline. That any person in charge of Church membership ridiculing one uncircumcised shall be disciplined by the Church."
 (3) Kambui Church Minutes. Translation.

results. In 1915, the experiment was tried, as at Kikuyu, of allowing the operation to be carried out by the native woman circumciser on the Mission station without any of the objectionable ritual prescribed by Kikuyu custom. Three girls were then operated upon at the Mission. Dr. Philip, who witnessed the operation, found it to be so brutal and revolting that this attempted compromise was abandoned forthwith, and, from that time forward, Dr. Philip pursued an active policy of teaching against the custom, and his influence was successful in enlightening the Africans, both men and women, as to its harmfulness. The practical training of the hospital-dressers and girl-nurses drove home the teaching in a way that nothing else could have done.

The resolutions on the subject passed by the staff at Kikuyu were submitted to the Tumutumu staff and approved by them. At the meeting of the combined staffs referred to above, measures were agreed upon for the abolition of the custom at both stations. At Tumutumu, practical effect was given to these decisions in 1920, when, as the result of debates which took place at a conference of native Christians held at Tumutumu in January of that year, the leading elders declared for absolute prohibition of the custom within the African Church, and supported the imposition of discipline on those members who might infringe the Church laws pertaining thereto.

C. AFRICA INLAND MISSION, KIJABE AND OIYEMU.

Dr. and Mrs. Davis in hospital work, and Dr. Mlataslee in girls' boarding school work, were chiefly instrumental in this Mission in bringing about a change in native opinion regarding the custom. At Kijabe, teaching against the practice was begun in 1914, but no action was attempted by the European Staff or the Africans until

After this, the matter remained in abeyance for a time. As the result of African feeling, it was reopened in a staff meeting on March 29th, 1916, and it was referred to a meeting of the combined staffs of Kikuyu and Tumutumu, the African Church meanwhile being asked to make a definite pronouncement on the subject. The African Church Committee met, and, by a majority, decided to recommend the abolition of "female circumcision" within the Church. (1) The meeting of the two staffs followed at Thika on the 21st July, 1916 and there it was decided that, in view of this recommendation, "female circumcision" be forbidden within the Church, and, with the approval of the African Church Committee, the Church Laws of 1915 were then amended as follows:- (2)

"A girl who has been baptised and has made public profession, or who is a mission boarder, or is the child of Christian parents, or is the protegee may not be circumcised."

It was further recommended that:-

"Christians, catechumens, hearers, and others be taught that the circumcision of girls is unnecessary, and that it is contrary to the principles of Christianity".

B. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, TUMUTUMU.

The history of teaching on this subject at Tumutumu followed a parallel course to that of Kikuyu. Dr. H. R. A. Philp (1910-1930) was the first medical missionary in this part of the Kikuyu country. He soon came up against the evil effects of "female circumcision" in maternity work among the Kikuyu, and found that the operation in this part of the country was a severer one than that performed in the Kiambu district, and that it was attended by even more disastrous

(1) Native statement.

(2) Kikuyu Staff minutes July, 31st, 1916. See appendix.

the usual practice for Christian boys of pagan parentage. The male children of Christian parents are as a rule now circumcised in infancy.

It is here necessary to point out that, in the early days of the Missions in the Kikuyu country, there was no circumcision problem as it is known to-day. Converts were in those days drawn from among people who were already circumcised, and it was only in later years that the Church was faced with the necessity of introducing discipline regarding it. The necessity for doing so becomes plain when one considers the nature of the whole initiatory process. To sanction the full rite, with its obscene accompaniments within the Church would have been impossible. The Native Church Laws therefore, included disciplinary measures applicable to cases for Christian boys and girls circumcised with traditional Kikuyu rites. Circumcision however, both male and female, was permitted under the conditions above, but growing sentiment against "female circumcision" in any form made this arrangement unsatisfactory, and the question had to be reconsidered. Accordingly, in January 1915, the Kikuyu Staff met to discuss the question, but it was agreed to defer action in view of the serious issues involved. The matter was then brought up in a further Staff meeting in September 1915. The advisability of prohibiting the practice within the Church was discussed, but the decision was postponed, pending further consultation with the Africans.

(1) Native Church Laws. Printed July 16th. 1915.

(2) One of the two girls referred to above as circumcised in 1915 did not wish to undergo the operation in any form, and in order to avoid it she hid herself when the time for circumcision arrived. As a result of this the woman circumciser so performed the operation that the girl was mutilated more extensively than usual. This caused considerable indignation among the African Christians.

(3) Kikuyu Staff Minutes January, 16th 1915. See Appendix.

(4) " " " " September, 15th 1915. " " "

By 1912, the teaching had begun to have an effect on the minds of the married Christian men and their wives, and also on the young unmarried men and women in attendance at the Mission. ⁽¹⁾ In view of this, in June 1914, when the circumcision time arrived for two girls who had been a long time in the boarding school, a means was sought whereby they might escape the custom. The girls were anxious to avoid it, and as their parents were pagan, it was agreed that nothing should be attempted. The African Christians had been thinking the matter over independently. They agreed that the time would come when they would be able to give support to those who wished to abandon the rites, but it had not yet arrived. They therefore recommended that the two girls should be circumcised under conditions which had been purged of their customary impurities; - namely, that the operation should not be performed in public: that there should be no dances: and that girl's ⁽²⁾ "supporters" should be Christian women. They were to be operated on, however, by the usual Kikuyu woman circumciser. ⁽³⁾ The girls were circumcised in this new manner, and in the following year, a further two girls followed their example.

In the case of boys, a similar compromise had already been effected. From 1909 onwards, two courses of action were permitted for boys who were under Christian instruction. They might be circumcised in hospital by the doctor or an hospital-assistant, or, alternatively, by the Kikuyu circumciser under conditions similar to those permitted for girls. When possible (as when the operation was performed in hospital) the traditional operation was replaced by the more simple and hygienic Swahili form. This is now

(1) Mission Records.
 (2) During the performance of the circumcision operation, the novitiate is sponsored by two older people. These people are termed the supporters. They also act as sponsors to the novitiate throughout the ceremony.
 (3) Mission records.

SECTION. 11.

HISTORY OF TEACHING IN REGARD TO CIRCUMCISION.

A. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION. KIKUYU.

The prohibition of "female circumcision" for church members at Kikuyu was the natural outcome of many years systematic teaching against the practice. It was not enforced suddenly. The Africans co-operated in every step, and, in some cases, as the following account will show, took the initiative in bringing about the prohibition.

Systematic teaching against the practice was begun in 1906. In that year, Dr. John W. Arthur assumed control of the Kikuyu Hospital, and he had ample opportunity, in maternity and gynecological work, of observing the evil effects of the mutilation. He tried, in those early years, to show the married Christian men and women that "female circumcision" was not necessary for child-bearing, and, as proof of this, pointed to the cases of uncircumcised African mothers who, in Kikuyu Hospital, had given successful birth to children. At this time, also, Mrs. T. Watson (1899-1931), and Miss M.S. Stevenson (1907-1930), first instituted boarding school training for girls. In their work, they were early confronted with the problems involved in "female circumcision", and, as a result, definite teaching against it formed part of their curriculum. Dr. Stanley E. Jones also (1914-1924), who was in charge of Kikuyu Hospital during the whole period of his service, pursued a vigorous campaign of teaching against the practice, and he was markedly successful in influencing the African Christians along this line.

(1) Women from Nyasaland and Kilimanjaro.

(2) Compare page

17

The Christian elders in particular, can see nothing to commend it in any of them. They consider the whole ceremony of circumcision so impregnated with impurities, that no Christian parent would desire his child to pass through the rites. They agree, however, to the circumcision of boys in infancy. To the "circumcision" of girls many Christian Kikuyu are definitely opposed, and, as the result of specific teaching, the observing of the evil effects of the custom on their women, and the absence of those effects on the increasing number of uncircumcised mothers, they have deliberately set their faces against having anything to do with the practice. (1)

It is true to say that prior to 1929, the abandonment of "the circumcision" of women by individuals in different areas was not a cause of unrest. Except for the championship of the rite as a national symbol by the Kikuyu Central Association, it probably would by now have been widely abandoned. (2) This faction, in spite of its professed aims as to progress, education, and enlightenment, has, through its ill-advised attitude, done more than anything else to delay the emancipation of Kikuyu womanhood.

(1) See page 17

(2) See pages 29 and 30 . Also Section V.

The latter resembles the Masai ceremonial, and probably has arisen out of contacts between the two tribes in the past. Of these, the "Kikuyu" form is recognised, as being the more extreme, and the more immoral in its ceremonial. In the Kikuyu form, the circumcised boys and girls are made witnesses of crude exhibitions of marital relationship during the post-circumcision ceremonies. This is not the case in the Masai form. The ceremonies are accompanied by feasting and beer-drinking, and in the mass emotion of the whole occasion, tend to become
(1)
orgiastic.

The performance of the rite was formerly governed by restrictions as to time and ritual; e.g. boys were initiated in many cases several years after puberty; girls before; the piercing of the ears, also the rite of second birth were essential preliminaries; a girl whose menses appeared before circum-
(2)
cision could not then be fully initiated. These restrictions, particularly in districts most influenced by Western civilisation, are now tending to become inoperative.

It is very difficult to discover what is the most essential part of the rites. The data available would seem to suggest that the actual operation is but a minor, though essential feature of the whole, and, as in the case of the Wakamba it is probable,
(3)
that it possesses no religious significance whatsoever.

A great many of the more enlightened Kikuyu realise the harm caused by circumcision and the customs connected with it.

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- (1) Compare Memo. on Indecent Native Customs prepared by the Kenya Missionary Council in 1926.
(2) For an account of this rite see Hobbly's "Kikuyu Beliefs & Magic" pp. 77.
(3) - "The Akamba" Lindblom. pp. 42, 44 & 61.

the custom, and up to 1929 suffered no undue persecution, and their non-compliance with tradition aroused no widespread manifestation of opposition.

On the other hand, cases are on record of strenuous opposition being offered to attempts to abolish or modify the practice. Among the Kikuyu, the attempt in 1929, to secure enforcement of protective legislation for those desirous of avoiding the custom was made the starting point of the disturbances of the ensuing period. A further case of opposition to the suppression of initiatory practices may be found in the machinations of the "Kakian Association" against the Church and State in Ceram (1) (Dutch East Indies). In these cases, however, it is difficult to show that the opposition was to the attempted suppression of initiatory practices as such, since, in both, powerful political and nationalist factors were in operation as well.

See some figures on p. 45. The O.C. was least by 1929. (unclear) K.K. women

C. ORIGIN AND CHARACTER AMONG THE KIKUYU.

It is a curious fact that few peoples practising circumcision have any theory or legend as to its origin. The Kikuyu, who practice both male and female forms are unable to adduce any convincing reasons for either. They sometimes assert that the practice of female circumcision is essential to child-bearing, but adduce no argument in support of this.

Two forms of both were, and, subject to the qualifications given below still are practised, - "the Kikuyu", and "the Masai".

(1) "The Golden Bough" (Compass) abridged edition page 696. also Ency. "Britannica" 11th edition Vol. 5 page 702.

are sometimes remarkable, but show a decrease in those qualities
(1)
after circumcision. This is especially so in the case of girls.
Over against what is said above regarding the psychological
effects of the rite, it is well to note that an investigator has
recently given his opinion that on psycho-pathological grounds,
the determining factor in this arrest of development is not so
much the sexual preparation by example and precept, but reaction
to the actual operation itself, performed, as it is at a critical-
(2)
epoch in life.

It is held by many that the circumcision ceremonies are
so bound up with initiation into full tribal status as to make
them essential to social stability. Cases of its abolition or
abandonment are, however, not unknown. Between 1815 and 1830, the
constant fighting caused by the invasion of the low country
plains in South East Africa by Manukosi the Ngoni general, led to
the disappearance of circumcision among the peoples invaded.
Again, among one of the clan groups of the Thonga, circumcision was
abandoned prior to the arrival of Manukosi, and they were called
"the cowards" by the other clans, who said they feared the suffer-
(3)
ing which it entailed. Again, among the Zulus, towards the middle
of the 19th century, male circumcision was abolished by Chaka; it
(4)
did not fit in with the new military system he had inaugurated.
The abandonment of this rite does not appear to have had any
adverse effect in the social stability of these tribes. Among
the Kikuyu at the present day, numbers of girls have foregone the

- (1) Compare "Kaffir Socialism". Kidd Part 2 "Education of the
Kaffir".
(2) The psychological aspect of circumcision "Jago
Kenya Med. Journal Vol. 5. No. 1.
(3) "Life of a South African Tribe". Junod. Vol. 1 pp. 15 & 72.
(4) Ibid. Vol. 1. p. 78. also "The Essential Kaffir" Kidd. p. 206.

(1)
doubtful religious significance. In the case of females, specific reasons for the rite are advanced by some of the tribes which practise it. It is suggested that the practice is a means of decreasing sexual passion in the female, and thereby preserving virginity, or again, that it is a measure of necessity to preserve extra-marital chastity by the temporary closure of the vagina. It is sometimes definitely performed where the parts are hypertrophied, or where stenosis (narrowing) has taken place; in both cases the end in view is to facilitate marital (2) relations. Again it is held, as among the Kikuyu that the practice is necessary for child-bearing.

It has been stated that, where initiatory in character, the rite is usually accompanied by definite instruction on social matters. Among the Kikuyu however, little, if any, specific instruction is given. On the other hand, the incidental teaching of village life, and the sex appeal of the dance-song, begun in early childhood, and culminating in the emotionalism of the circumcision ceremony, undoubtedly constitute a full preparation for sexual life. There is little doubt, however, that this preparation is corrupting in its effect, and, moreover, psychologically dangerous in the undue emphasis on sexual life which it engenders in the mind of the initiate.

The alteration which in most cases takes place in mentality after circumcision when the operation takes place at or about puberty is well known. Uncircumcised boys and girls exhibit a rapidity of comprehension and vivacity of expression which

(1) Ibid. pp.666.

(2) Ibid. pp.669.

attempt was made to encourage native opinion, through the local Native Councils, in the direction of limiting the operation to this, but among the Kikuyu proper the attempt up until the present has failed. There is in fact no such operation as simple (1) oliteridectomy in practice among the Kikuyu though the operation performed in Southern Kikuyu is recognised by the tribe as less severe. The cutting is less extensive, but it is still severe (2) mutilation as defined in paragraph one above.

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B. ORIGIN AND CHARACTER (GENERAL).

The practice of circumcision as a religio-initiatory rite is widespread, being known, not only among primitive peoples, but also among some which have reached a high state of civilisation. The male form is by far the more commonly practised, the female equivalent being apparently a later development meant to become comparable to circumcision of the male. (3) Its origin, and the motives for its continued practice, are accounted for by many divergent theories, only some of which are even partially (4) satisfactory. The consensus of opinion however, seems to suggest that all varieties of both male and female circumcision are ultimately reducible to two causes, namely, (a) sacrifice and sanctification of the reproductive faculties, and (b) initiation (5) into complete maturity and full tribal rights. Whatever may have been the origin, it would appear that, in its existing forms, it is chiefly initiatory in character, the ceremonial being of

(1) See page 20 & 21.
 (2) See also para 1. Statement of medical opinion.
 (3) *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 3, pp. 669,
 (4) *Ibid.* Vol. 3 pp. 664. Compare *"The Golden Bough"* Vol. 1, pp. 96.
 (5) *Ibid.* Vol. 3 pp. 667 Do. Do. Do. Do.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A. DEFINITIONS.

1. "Female circumcision" as it exists among the Kikuyu, is an operation which varies in severity, some sections of the tribe practising a more drastic form than others. The following is a generally accepted description of the "Major Operation".

"It involves the removal of not only the clitoris, but also the labia minora and half the labia majora, together with the surrounding tissue, resulting in the permanent mutilation affecting the woman's natural functions of micturition, menstruation, and parturition, with disastrous results not only to the birth rate, but also to the physique and vitality of the tribe."

2. It is beyond cavil that the operation described above fully justifies the definition suggested by the late Miss Marion S. Stevenson of the Church of Scotland Mission in Kenya, after many years' work among the Kikuyu women, -namely, "The Sexual Mutilation of Women." This term was adopted by the Kenya Missionary Council in 1929 as conveying a truer idea of the nature of the operation than the customary expression "female circumcision".

3. In recent years it has become the practice among Europeans to refer to a "Major Operation", and a "Minor Operation" as in existence among the Kikuyu. In official quarters the idea appears to have become prevalent that there was a "minor" operation which consisted only of Clitoridectomy (the removal or excision of the clitoris), and an

SECTION V.

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- " III. The Kikuyu Central Association.
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- " VII. Correspondence between R.E. Sir Edward Grigg and Dr. Arthur with reference to his resignation from Executive Council.
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FEMALE CIRCUMCISION.

MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY THE MISSION COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH
OF SCOTLAND.

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Definitions. Origin and character. So called instructional aspect. Relationship to social stability. Among the Kikuyu: general nature: attitude of the progressive Christians.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

MEMORANDUM

PREPARED BY

THE KIKUYU MISSION COUNCIL

ON

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

1st December 1931.

Kikuyu.
Kenya Colony.

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Memo submitted by
Church of Scotland - prepared
by Kikuyu Mission Council
