

CHRISTIAN HEROES: THEN & NOW

# C.T. STUDD

No Retreat

**JANET & GEOFF BENGE**



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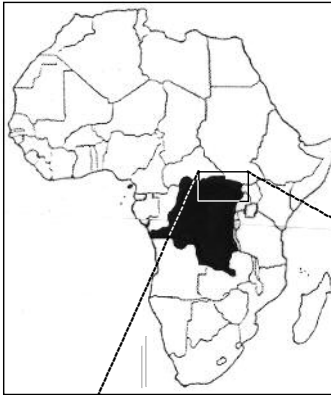
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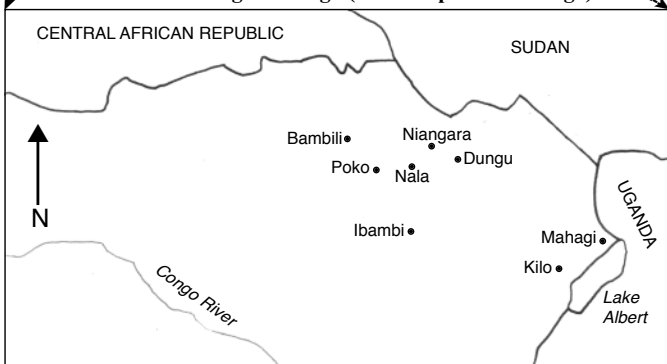
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**Africa**



**Northwestern Belgian Congo (Dem. Rep. of the Congo)**



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*Contents*

1. Lost . . . . .	11
2. A Religious Fanatic . . . . .	15
3. A Star Cricketer . . . . .	27
4. The Cambridge Seven . . . . .	37
5. China at Last . . . . .	49
6. He Had Never Met a Woman Like Priscilla . . . . .	63
7. Foreign Devils . . . . .	75
8. India . . . . .	89
9. For Want of a Christian Missionary . . . . .	101
10. Africa at Last . . . . .	113
11. Lunch with Cannibals . . . . .	123
12. In the Heart of Africa . . . . .	133
13. Bwana Mukubwa . . . . .	145
14. God Is to Be Found in Nala . . . . .	159
15. A New Venture . . . . .	169
16. No Chocolate Soldier . . . . .	181
Bibliography . . . . .	189



## Lost

**W**e're lost," C.T. Studd said, shaking his head. C.T. and his traveling companion, Alfred Buxton, had been trying to find their way back to the trail through the dense African jungle, but all they had succeeded in doing was walking in circles until they were now totally disoriented.

"And hungry," Alfred added.

The men's porters, from whom they had become separated, were carrying all of their food and supplies.

The two Englishmen walked on a little farther and came upon a small clearing. They emerged from the sunless gloom of the jungle into the bright sunlight of the clearing. C.T. studied the sky above, searching for a cloud, a migrating bird, anything that might help him get his bearings.

"You know, this is the area where that elephant hunter we heard about was shot and killed with a poison dart," Alfred said.

A shiver ran up C.T.'s spine at the thought. "I know," he replied, "and I have a strange feeling we're being watched right now."

"Yes, I know what you mean," Alfred said. "Do you have any idea which direction we should head to get out of here?"

Before C.T. could answer, the men heard a rustle in the jungle behind them. They spun around to see an African man emerge from the dense foliage. The man was naked except for the tattered shirt that he wore. C.T.'s and Alfred's eyes were drawn to the bow and arrows the man held in his left hand. The man smiled, revealing teeth that had been filed to sharp points.

"The teeth, a sure sign he is a cannibal," C.T. said.

It was then that C.T. noticed the plaited basket the man was carrying in his right hand. The basket was filled with sweet potatoes and cobs of maize. The man was still smiling, and sensing that he meant them no harm, C.T. smiled back and pointed to the basket. He then patted his stomach to indicate he was hungry, and the man seemed to understand what he was saying. He walked forward and handed several cobs of maize and some sweet potatoes to C.T.

"Thank you," C.T. said as he took them, though he knew the man had no idea what he was saying.

C.T. did not want to just take the vegetables from the man. He wanted to pay him for them, but neither

he nor Alfred had any money on him. C.T. wondered what he could give the man in return. It was then that he noticed the buttons on his pants. "Why do pants have so many buttons?" he asked Alfred.

Alfred gave him a bewildered look, unsure what such a question had to do with their present situation.

"I'll tell you," C.T. continued. "To give to undressed cannibals." With that he tore six buttons off his pants and gave them to the man.

A broad smile spread across the man's face, and his sharpened teeth glistened in the sunlight. Then, suddenly, the man beckoned for the two missionaries to follow him as he set off into the jungle. C.T. and Alfred looked at each other and then followed him.

An hour later they came to another clearing, in which was located a small village.

"Do you think this might be a trap and they're going to kill us and eat us?" Alfred asked as they approached the village.

"No, I don't think so," C.T. said in a calm voice. "Look at us. We're too lean and lanky and tough for them to try to cook and eat. There are more tender and appetizing animals to eat in the jungle."

The man guided them to sit beside a fire near one of the grass huts. Once he was sure they were comfortable, he placed the sweet potatoes and ears of maize into the embers of the fire. Half an hour later he pulled the vegetables from the embers and served them to C.T. and Alfred. He brought some cooked meat from inside the hut and served it to



them as well. The two famished men began to gobble down the meat and vegetables.

"The sweet potatoes and maize are cooked perfectly," Alfred said as they ate. "And the meat was tender and tasty. I wonder what animal it is from."

"In a cannibal village that might not be a good thing to inquire about," C.T. said dryly.

Their host sat smiling as the men ate.

"Imagine if people in England could see us now," Alfred said.

"Yes. Most of them could scarcely believe it," C.T. replied.

As C.T. chewed on an ear of maize, he thought more about Alfred's remark. What would people in England think? C.T. had been raised in a privileged family. He had attended the best schools in England. He had been the top cricket player in the country. Thousands of people used to come to watch him play. Could those who came to watch him have ever imagined that their cricket hero would one day be sitting in the middle of a dense jungle in the heart of Africa having lunch with cannibals? C.T. could scarcely believe it himself. His life had certainly taken a different turn from what he had ever imagined it would be. Indeed, if people back home could see him now!