Mbule.

On a lovely morning the 16th of Jan. started from Bingwali for Mbule. The red clouds of dawn glowed behind the Amabele Hills. The morning stars still sparkled in the sky. The cocks were crowing. The birds twittering in joy and gladness. About six we got on our way Mr. G. and Mr. St. on the Spider I on "Elen" a good spirited horse. For several miles we ascended the steep hills leading to the Bolo. For an hour we kept the Station Thuto in view. From the top of the hill a most extensive view can be had all over the Bingwali district as far as Dohme. Teams of oxen with loaded wagons met us now and again bound for King W. Town. Over steep hills down into valleys we went until the Kei was reached. There we were introduced to grand picturesqueness. The banks of the river are mostly precipitous.
with great kloofs opening here and there. The ruggedness of the place speaks of great volcanic upheavals. At the summit of 1000 ft. or more, the aloe and euphorbia have their native soil. Apes thalarns find there a choice haunt. The river lay between us and the wayside hotel. At times it rushes down with great fury causing all traffic to cease. Tent campsments be made for days or even weeks. At the side my horse became restive & fearing that his capers would end in a dunking for one. I buckled up flapped through the shallow part.

The hotel is a wooden erection roughly put together & covered with iron. The heat of the valley was great & the house worse. The air was anything but refreshing. We made a tolerably good breakfast with bad tea & seerums of flies hungry. Flies devourous settling on our plates & drowning themselves in our tea.
Thus we left the rapid fall and took to horseback and began the steep ascent over the Rei heights. From several points panoramas of scenery of the grandest description burst into view. Mountain range after mountain range stretched as far as the eye can reach. As we were going up a steep hillside I saw a sheep sheltering from the heat under the shadow of an overhanging rock. Thought of Isa 32: 2.

On our way we called at an English church station called Laha. The children were getting drill outside as we passed the school. The boys were dressed in a simple shirt of striped cotton and the girls in a frock of calico. In a land of warmth sunshine little clothing is required. The son of the chief we found the teacher. After leaving the school we rode forward to the chief's house. Bosy Ras pronounced the host. He was able to speak tolerably good English, received us cordially.
Hodman's House at Lake.

This man a pretty dame was super-intending cooking outside. I also came to shake hands with us. His house unlike others is a square with three compartments; thatched roof leaves on two sides. The first few minutes I was in the house convinced me that I was in the company of one vastly superior to the most of Fijians. As soon as cups were brought he poured us out a refreshing drink of anaia from the kalalash. He then entered into an interesting conversation about the country. I had many questions to ask about Scotland, which he urged him to visit. Being a rich man, he would have liked us to have stayed a a chief would have been killed in our honour. The merry twinkle in his eyes bespoke a happy disposition. He spoke of apparent want of means to carry on the English Church Mission because withdrawal had taken place of men. I in other cases salaries reduced.
Such a chief has the power of trying petty cases against the guilty person, but always subject to the Magistrate to show an appeal may be made. The ascent from the chief's house was exceedingly steep under a burning sun we reached the top. The wonderful mountain scenery to be seen from the summit well repays the hard climb. Sorapid is the descent into the Mbabi valley that we had to dismount and lead horses.

Within a mile of the Station we came to one of the principal tracks. A number of the people were busy clearing the corn that had been trampled out by oxen. As soon as they saw Mr. and Mrs. Stirling, who had been with them for nine months during Mr. Davidson's absence, they left their work and crowded round to see. Others came out of their huts and dwelled their numbers. Then the shaking of hands took place and inquiries about their welfare. They then enquired who this was with you and whence he came. What is he going
to do here? I was introduced as an “un-fundisi” from Scotland. Every one then came I gave a hearty shake of the hand. Their happy faces bespoke a cordial welcome. Just as we rode up to the house the bell rang for an afternoon service preparatory to the communion. Being warned with the sun feeling tired we did not go to the meeting. Mrs. Welsch very kindly received us. I had a refreshing cup of tea very soon ready.

It was very pleasant to renew our acquaintance again some years of separation. Mrs. Welsch seemed cheered by the visit. Next day I went out a ride with him. I saw the height beside the magistrate's house get a view of the mountains of Kimber-land. When we returned the boys had killed a snake the first I saw of any size in the country.

Its slimy skin is repulsive. It is difficult to bring it without a shudder.
On Sabbath, Jan. 18th, the Communion was dispensed. The morning opened dull after the thundershow of the previous evening. The heat was very oppressive, indeed I scarcely stayed at a hotter place. Over the hillsides the people wended their way to Church, some on horseback but mostly on foot. Round the Church they sat in little companies, the women generally by themselves. Chatting and mending were carried on briskly. Shaking of hands with each other is exceedingly popular and no one seems to omit it. The old were those who had been the salvation of God before they departed. The young seeking Christ as a guide. About 10 A.M. the bell rang to call them together. By 11 o'clock the church was full with a well-dressed audience. A better-looking congregation I did not see in the whole field. The women were arrayed in clean calico dresses with the usual napkin head dress. Some, however, in their red blanket at
in the back seats. Two of women had their faces painted with red clay which gives an unearthly appearance. On their heads were two babies with a chamois round the neck as the only article of clothing. There was one man present with large rings in his ears and adorned with armlets and anklets. It was very pleasing to see them there within hearing of the word. This is always a hopeful step when they come to church. They are not long there until they say that the word is strong & the man inside is thinking.

After a good stirring sermon preached by Mr. Stirling the ordinance of baptism was dispensed to several. First 10 children were baptized, 5 of them only the mother appearing, the husbands being still heathen. 4 of the women then came forward, professed their faith & were also baptized. One of the women had a little girl about 5 years of age, with a red cloak on that she thought to be baptized after herself. It was
touching to see this little girl with a sweet face evidently not comprehend in all that was being done admitted into the church. The interest seemed great in the event from the way the people watched all that happened.

In the afternoon the Communion supper took place. The majority of communicants were women. A reason can be given for this. Men have often more wives than one & conversion means this way of living brokne up. These wives have children what is to be done with them is a great difficulty. The heathen love their children dismiss them well. When a woman is converted she can leave the husband if he has more wives. Indeed she cannot remain under such a system. Let us be encouraged by the women coming they will bring the children.

A great storm of wind and rain came on shortly after we were in church.
The noise on the roof was so great that Mr. Melsh's voice could scarcely be heard. After the elements were distributed I gave an address first to the members then to the unconverted sitting at the end of the church. The young men I sought especially to reach.

On Monday a Prayer Meeting was held to pray for rain. The Heathen were summoned by their headmen to attend. About 250 were present. The company in red blankets and painted faces was a sight never to be forgotten. Surely it is a sign of trust in the white man's God, that among the heathen better things, when they forsook their witch doctors and came to seek rain from the God of Israel.

The same evening we had a happy evening spent together under the Mission House roof. The next morning somewhat sadly I bid goodbye to Mr. Melsh and Sterling at the gate.
to the Yacoma River. Two days before I sent a letter to Mr. McLean at Blythwood asking him to meet me there. The letter had not been delivered, hence there was no appearance of him. Mr. Welsh kindly offered his horse to take me to Blythwood and then we crossed the river. It is one of the worst in the country. Truly full most dangerous. The rough shoulders in the bed caused the horse to jostle about much, but I got safely over. The parting at last came, as I looked into their eyes it seemed as another river to crossing — to the friend that would be with me then. Our river will be much as we make it, deep or shallow. Sin will make it cold, full of cramps. They parted from me who were as brothers during the time I spent in their company, but not the heavenly friend! On the opposite side of the Yacoma
The feast I saw by the way. Ox fallen down healthy.

We found an old headman who was going to his home near Bithah. He put one in his Rithwood. They put one in the rest of the way. He could speak a little English. I found him a chatty companion full of questions about my personal affairs of the country. I had a chat with him. He began to drop one for dinner as payment for conducting me. Mr. McConahy kindly supplied his wants. He went off evidently satisfied from the hill top the institution burst into view. It is a long building two stories in height with many windows abundantly spread over the walls. The middle portion forms a tower with bell, two long wings stretch out on each side. The one being used as a school, the other rooms and dormitories, the other the dwelling houses of the teachers.