

# Our Boys and Girls

## MAY DAY.

By Carrie Primrose.

Radiant is the smiling May time!  
Happy birds, and blushing flowers,  
And the brooklets loosed from fetters,  
Gushing, laughing through the meadows—  
'Neath the trees with emerald branches  
And the reeds with piercing lances  
Where the zephyrs waft their perfumes  
Gathered from the flowers' costumes—  
Brilliant in their rainbow hues,  
And decked with diamonds made of dews,  
Cheered with sunshine over all,  
Gathered here at Spring's first call,  
While golden sunbeams all infuse.  
Everywhere 'tis gala day!  
Chosen is the Queen of May;  
See she is yon rose so rare,  
Nodding sweetly to them there.

## MPINDA.

"I am going to stay here at Mutoto. My father, Chief Cimanga, is a Roman Catholic adherent, while I am a Protestant." What is one to do with such a statement from a boy eleven years old, who comes to you under such circumstances?

In the village of Cimanga we had had a good work, till instigated by the priests, Cimanga had gone into the church one day and broken up the service, beating up seven of the worshippers and forbidding them to worship any more. We sent the affair to the State, but the State officer, fearing the priests had only sent Cimanga to us with the request that we arrange the matter among ourselves. Cimanga had come and reluctantly agreed to pay damages to the men whom he had beaten up and also to allow the Protestants to worship God. He had left my office about 10 A. M. and gone to the Elder Kacunga's for dinner and as soon as he left Mpinda had stepped in wishing to stay at Mutoto.

Mpinda said that if he went home that his father, the chief, would not allow him to worship God, but would try to force him to attend the services of the Roman Catholics, which he did not wish to do, so he had decided to stay at Mutoto. I had never seen an uglier native; he could not read and so I tried to persuade him to go home, telling him that we hoped his father would not persecute them any more. Finally he left my office and I thought that the matter was settled.

About 4 P. M. Elder Kacunga came to my house and said, "What shall I do with Mpinda, the son of the Chief Cimanga, as he refused to go back with his father?" When his father got ready to go, he called to his son, "Mpinda, come, let's go." But Mpinda said, "No, I am going to stay here at Mutoto so I can worship God." His father came and caught him by the arm, but Mpinda locked his arms and legs around the veranda post and his father could not get him loose. After his father had tugged at him for awhile and could not get him loose, I interceded for the boy, asking that he be allowed to stay, so the father finally agreed and Mpinda is now at my house."

I took him on to work in my garden and he began going to school, but there was trouble ahead. The State man came along about a month later and fearing that the boy's father would prosecute us for having his child, we asked that the State man would give us permission to keep the boy. He replied, "The boy must do as his father orders till he is 21; where is the boy?" We called him and the officer

arrested him then and there in order to send him back to his father. The State man had an eleven-year-old boy, grandson of Kalamba the Lulua chief, go along as a messenger. Mpinda was put in his hands for safe keeping.

That afternoon there were services in the church at 2 P. M. Mpinda asked permission to go to church, saying that he would return as soon as church was over. Perhaps his ideas of the phrase "word of honor" were a bit vague, as instead of going to church, he made for the woods, through the woods, struck the path homewards, and we wondered where Mpinda was. He met some of his relatives coming to Mutoto who persuaded him to return with them. About two days later the State man was back at Mutoto and we decided that it was best to surrender Mpinda once again, which we did, but it did seem like it was betraying a friend, as we had begun to like the little chap, always so happy and contented. The State man took him on away, and Mpinda and the little messenger waited on the State man's table and did little odd jobs for about two months, till they finally got back to the State post. Mpinda did not run away any more, accepted the inevitable.

Once back at the State post the State man said, "I am sending you back to your father and you must go to the Roman Catholic school, as your father wishes you to do." All Mpinda said was, "No, I am a Protestant and am going back to Mutoto." The State man would repeat the same thing and Mpinda would repeat his same reply, "No, I am going back to Mutoto; I am not going to the Catholic mission."

When he reached home Cimanga said, "Don't call me your father any more. Your father died when you were a small child and I adopted you and forbade my people to tell you and had always been proud of you, but now that you have become a Protestant, I do not want to have anything more to do with you; I do not even want you to come into my yard; get out of here; you are nothing to me." Perhaps Mpinda's little heart was grieved; everybody was against him. He turned and walked out of the place which he had always called home. He went to an old man in the village and asked him to tell him the facts in the case. This old man said, "It is as Cimanga says. When you were a child your father died and Cimanga took your mother as his wife and forbade us to tell you otherwise. Later your mother died. Now that Cimanga has himself told you, the secret is out."

One day whom should we see come walking in but Mpinda, saying, "Well, I have come to stay." We were so glad to have him back. He began working in the garden and going to school and learned so fast that within a year he was reading in the Bible. Having satisfied all the requirements he was received into the church. When he smiles his upper lip slides up and all his front teeth come outwards. Possibly he sucked his thumb when he was small, but we have ceased to think of him but as the best native boy we have had yet.

He was always willing to do a favor and seemed to be a part of our family. When our son was about three days old he came walking into the room and gave my wife six eggs and apologized that he had not a fowl to give her. A few days later he came in with the fowl.

While down at our new station for three months with another missionary Mpinda was my personal boy and a good one he was. There may be natives who can beat him at ironing or cooking, but he suited me. He took good care of me. One day he came to me, "There is a franc missing out of your money box, did you get it?" I told him that I had gotten it out to put into the collection the day before and he seemed happy, rather relieved. One night about 9 o'clock he came in and waked me up saying that one of the goats was gone and asking that he might have the lantern so he might go and hunt it.

After a three month's stay at the new station we came back, making about forty-five miles the last day—two days' travel in one day. As I had hammock men it was not so hard on me. At the half-way place I said to him, "Suppose you rest here till tomorrow and then come on in." But he said, "Why? I want to go on in with you." He came on in, but how he did it I do not know. He is about as tough as I have seen yet. He can travel twenty-five or thirty miles and then cook for me as well as arrange my bed.

After we got back from that three month's trip we had no good goat boy for about two months. We had tried two or three, but they were no good, so we said, "We must have goat's milk for the baby; it's up to you, Mpinda." He went for the goats in his usual way and we never had to bother about milk for the baby. During that time a good friend of Mpinda's came to Mutoto for a day or so, and chided Mpinda for not sitting down to entertain him more. Mpinda replied that he had to be looking after those goats. It was a strenuous life. So after eighteen months we told him that if he would teach some one else that work that we would promote him to table boy and house boy.

Going on an itinerary I always want him along, as he takes care of me so well and without any worry on my part. I have never missed anything and I do not think that he steals. Usually when a boy begins taking small things the habit grows on him so fast that he has soon stolen too much and is caught up with. Sometimes on a trip I lock my trunk, but he usually carries the key, so that he may get there and arrange things before I get there. Three times a day he comes and says, "The food is on the table," or "If you are ready to eat, I will cook the eggs." I do not know what we are to have till I go to the table. He is always on the lookout for some extra dish. On my last trip we were within an hour of his home. He went home and came back with some fresh corn meal and fresh peas and plantains, all of which came in well. Light bread had about run out and I was wondering what I would do. The average native would have said, "I have nothing to cook, what are you going to eat?" When I am through at one village I get in my hammock and ride to the next and Mpinda takes down the bed, packs up everything, sees that the men bring them along and then unpacks at the next village. He gets along well with the men and they rarely complain to me against his decisions. One time a man put his end of the load down and ran away. The load came in, Mpinda carrying one end of the pile. Then when I am sending a man back to Mutoto with a letter he comes along and says, "Suppose you write your wife to send another tin of lard and a little coffee and soap, as we will soon be out." Not long ago, when I got in a village, he came out to meet me, saying, "When we got here, the house that they showed me for you was so bad and the roof so rotten that I made them