

November 10th

Memory verse:

There is a river,

the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Psalm 46:4

Map work

We had a lesson from Africa a few days ago on 2nd November. Here are two more African stories – the first of which is about a very surprising discovery.

What would you think if someone came back from a trip to Africa with holiday snaps like the one on the left and told you that had been walking in snow on the equator? Perhaps you might be tempted to think they were telling you a tall tale and that their pictures were actually taken elsewhere!



Today we will follow the journey of missionary Johannes Rebmann (1820-876) who made just such a report (although he had no photographs, of course) and was disbelieved. Rebmann travelled through what is now Kenya and Uganda in an effort to establish mission stations where the Gospel could be preached. Like most missionaries to Africa at the time he had had malaria and suffered from fevers so it was assumed, by learned men and geographers, that his reports of snow on the equator were just fever-induced hallucinations.

Can you find the places I have highlighted below in an atlas? You can then chart Rebmann's journey on the outline map of Africa found in today's optional resources files. You could use the map to mark in other places we have learned about in Africa too and maybe even decorate it with pictures.¹ Do you know of any missionaries in Africa today? You could mark their location on the map as well.

Here is what Johannes Rebmann wrote in his diary on November 10, 1848:

This morning we discerned the Mountains of Jagga more distinctly than ever; and about ten o'clock I fancied I saw a dazzlingly white cloud. My Guide called the white which I saw merely 'Baridi,' cold; it was perfectly clear to me, however, that it could be nothing else but snow.

Rebmann was a young Swiss-German missionary who went to Africa in 1846 in order to help an older missionary Dr Johann Ludwig Krapf who despite immense difficulties, opposition, sickness and bereavement had translated the New Testament into Swahili and was filled with longing to spread the gospel across Africa. He was stationed at a place called Rabai-Mpya about 12 miles inland from Mombasa on the east coast of Africa and he had the idea of establishing a chain of mission stations each 100 trekking hours apart right across the continent to Gabon. Concerned about the spread of Islam through Africa from north to south, Dr Krapf visualised this chain of mission stations as forming a barrier to the spread of the heretical ideas of Islam. Rebmann went out to help him in this massive task.

A station was established and then a second, the first in the chain they hoped for, at Mt Kasigau,

¹ February 28th, April 7th, May 10th, July 4th, July 20th and September 5th, all included lessons from Africa. More from Africa coming on 16th and 21st of this month and on 27th December.

three days walk away. The next station was to be at a place called Jagga or Chagga. On talking to traders that travelled between Jagga and the coast they discovered that it had a reputation as a cold place and so they deduced that it must be at a higher altitude.

A caravan leader called Bwana Kheri had told Dr Krapf about a great mountain called 'Kilimansharo' or, as we would say it, Kilimanjaro. He explained that evil spirits or djinns protected the mountain and killed those who attempted to climb it. He also mentioned that it was crowned with a white substance rather like silver which the local people simply called "cold".

Dr Krapf was too ill at this time to travel far, nevertheless they negotiated with Bwana Kheri to be a guide to Jagga. Sadly, the two men knew they must part if the Jagga station was to be established and Dr Krapf remained at Rabai-mpia while Rebmann set out with Bwana Kheri. Now both missionaries were cut off from each other and all alone. No one at home in Europe even knew where they were. What a comfort to know that God knows where we are at all times, even when we are totally alone.

Rebmann's first sight of equatorial snow, recorded in the diary entry above made him the first European to see Mount Kilimanjaro – the top of which is, of course, the place where the picture that heads this lesson was taken.

Rebmann returned to the area several times. He sent detailed reports back to be published in English missionary journals as it was an English missionary society that had sent him out. One carried the following more detailed account of the discovery of Mount Kilimanjaro:

At about ten o'clock, (I had no watch with me) I observed something remarkably white on the top of a high mountain, and first supposed that it was a very white cloud, in which supposition my guide also confirmed me, but having gone a few paces more I could no more rest satisfied with that explanation; and while I was asking my guide a second time whether that white thing was indeed a cloud and scarcely listening to his answer that yonder was a cloud but what that white was he did not know, but supposed it was coldness – the most delightful recognition took place in my mind, of an old well-known European guest called snow.

All the strange stories we had so often heard about the gold and silver mountain Kilimandjaro in Jagga, supposed to be inaccessible on account of evil spirits, which had killed a great many of those who had attempted to ascend it, were now at once rendered intelligible to me, as of course the extreme cold, to which poor Natives are perfect strangers, would soon chill and kill the half-naked visitors. I endeavoured to explain to my people the nature of that 'white thing' for which no name exists even in the language of Jagga itself...

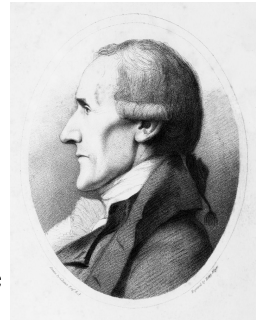
The cold temperature of the higher regions constituted a limit beyond which they dared not venture. This natural disinclination, existing most strongly in the case of the great mountain, on account of its intenser cold, and the popular traditions respecting the fate of the only expedition which had ever attempted to ascend its heights, had of course prevented them from exploring it, and left them in utter ignorance of such a thing as 'snow', although not in ignorance of that which they so greatly dreaded, 'coldness'.

I don't know if the chain of mission stations that was projected ever got any further but Rebmann, studied Swahili and other African languages, translated the Gospel of Luke into at least one of them and helped prepare dictionaries for three others. "I am not here to make geographical discoveries, but to show forth the way of escape and salvation in Jesus Christ to the people who sit in darkness and the shadow of death" he said.

Do you know *why* the equator is hot? Do you know *why* the tops of mountains are cold? Use your own science books or encyclopaedias to find out.

The second African story is about a man who devoted his life to helping African slaves.

Did you read the lessons about Wilberforce and slavery on 26th July and on 1st August? Perhaps not, as in July and August you may have been on holiday. Wilberforce was the leader of the campaign to get slavery abolished wherever the British ruled. One of his closest associates and fellow campaigners, the Quaker, Granville Sharp, (1735-1813) was born on 10th November. Granville Sharp worked tirelessly to help people who had been brought to Britain as slaves. He helped to get them legal representation which in the end ensured that such people were considered free once they arrived in Britain and also to ensure that they were not captured and returned to the West Indies where they could be re-enslaved. He came to be interested in the plight of slaves through a direct personal experience.



Granville Sharp's brother, William, was a doctor. He held special surgeries for the poor. When Granville was visiting his brother he met a young black man, Jonathan Strong. Strong had come to the surgery for treatment having been beaten by his master until he was nearly blind and then cast out into the street as useless.

The Sharp brothers helped Strong, giving him first aid and paying for him to have hospital treatment. When he recovered they found him work running errands for a Quaker apothecary. Strong's former master saw him, now recovered, in the street and had him captured with the intention of selling him to a Jamaica planter to be taken back to work on his plantation. Strong managed to contact Granville Sharp for help. A lengthy legal battle followed which involved Granville Sharp in two years of intensive study of English law. In the end Strong was freed.

Granville Sharp continued to study this aspect of the law and involved himself in many cases concerning slaves. The most important was the so called Somerset case. The case dragged on and on but in the end the judge declared that English law did not allow slavery: if a slave was brought to England, he was free.

After that it was said that if a case went to law, it was generally enough for it to be known that Granville Sharp was involved for the matter to be dropped and the ex-slave to be freed. Sharp also put a great deal of his own money into a project for establishing a settlement for ex-slaves in Sierra Leone where they could live in freedom in the Africa from which they had been taken. Sadly, the project was too ambitious to be successful.

Do you remember what we learned about the Trinity a few days ago?² Something that is less well known about Granville Sharp is that he also did sterling work, still of great value, defending the doctrine of the Trinity by means of a grammatical rule, known today as Sharp's Rule. He published this originally as a booklet: *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article*.³

An improving verse to read from Jacob Cats's *Emblems*⁴

Experience is the Best Teacher

As food for man, like many other fish,
A well dress'd Thornback⁵ is a dainty dish;
But in the cooking, less of art there lies,
Than how to hold it when you've caught the prize
For he who doth not know this fish's ways,
And grips him just as he would take another
Most dearly for his want of knowledge pays



² See the lesson for 7th November.

³ For more information see <https://www.gotquestions.org/Granville-Sharp-Rule.html>

⁴ Image of Grijpskerke By Peter van der Wielen - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0 nl,

With unexpected pain, too great to smother:
While the more skill'd and cautious fisher, he
Seizing him first by one gill, then the other,
Short work of him soon makes, and as you see,
Laughs in his sleeve to hear his neighbour's pother.

Jacob Cats (1577 -1660) was born on **10 November**. At a time when poetry in his native Netherlands was in its golden age, his work was so popular that in every Dutch home, however humble, there was a Bible and a copy of the poems of “Father Cats”. His *Emblems* were short poems with moral teaching and they were each accompanied by an engraved illustration. Cats's rhymes are a little too jog-trotting for modern taste and perhaps his morals also have gone out of fashion. However, his verses were highly popular in the Netherlands for many years and were also translated into English. He was a hard working, if not very effective statesman and visited England twice on behalf of his country. A lawyer by trade he was also good at dyking the land and farming it. At his country home, Grijskerke (pictured on the right) near Middelburg, where his “flock of children played under the trees,” he wrote the *Emblems* and other poems which made him famous. His dykes were destroyed and his farming interrupted by war with Spain. When the war ended he went back to this work. I'm not sure how well the English translation above reflects Cats's original but if you have ever stepped on a weever fish in a pool on a beach you will know he is right about the “unexpected pain”!



Something to read from French history⁶

Did you know that today's date was once known in France as *20 Brumaire*? During the French Revolution, an attempt was made to change the calendar to remove all Christian associations, and to start numbering the year, not from the coming of Christ (as in *Anno Domini*) but from the day the French National Convention had proclaimed France a republic in 1792. Even the seven day week that goes right back to the creation of the world⁷ was to be replaced by a ten day week⁸ and on **20 Brumaire** Year II of the Republic (which we would call 1793AD) a grand Celebration of Reason was held in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. In today's Optional resources files I have included a retelling of the background to the celebration from Mary MacGregor's *The Story of France* which is a companion volume to the well-known *Our Island Story* by H. E. Marshall.⁹

When the day of the celebration dawned it was raining but this did not put off the crowds. Members of the Commune (government of Paris) and Department (area government) came first then followed a crowd of people until by 10 o'clock (which as far as I can make out was about 4.25 hours after midnight in the *new* system of time keeping!) the ancient cathedral was full of people gathered to “enjoy the sweetness of equality”.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21442765>

5 This is the weever fish which has poisonous spines on its gills but which is good to eat, tasting rather like sole.

6 For an in depth study of the French Revolution for older children see <https://answersingenesis.org/blogs/patricia-engler/french-revolution-is-warning-for-christians-today>.

7 See the first two chapters of Genesis.

8 Read more about this in the lesson for 31st December. (Yet to come.)

9 You can find it here: https://www.heritage-history.com/site/hclass/christian_europe/ebooks/pdf/macgregor_france.pdf if you want to read more French history simply told.

Notre Dame means “Our Lady” and this cathedral was built for idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary. Now it was going to be used for something else that was no better. Anyone entering the cathedral that day thinking they were going to bow to the ancient image of the Virgin and Child was in for a shock. The choir¹⁰ of the cathedral was blocked off by curtains and the image was no longer visible. Instead, at the top of the nave was a stage representing a mountain which had been constructed out of linen and papier-mâché. This was topped by a little round temple in Greek style which bore the words, *A la philosophie* “to philosophy”. Instead of the statue of the Virgin and Child, four busts were visible flanking the temple entrance. They were representations of four French philosophers. About halfway down the artificial mountain was a rock on which was a circular altar decked with oak leaves and branches and topped with a torch representing something so vague that no one is now sure whether it was “the flame of Reason”, “the flame of Truth” – or was it liberty that was being worshipped?



Le Décadi 20 Brumaire de l'an 2^e de la République Française une et indivisible. la Fête de la Raison a été célébrée dans la Cattedrale d'Notre Dame.

As the crowd watched in awe, the National Guard band began to play and a procession of young girls (singers from the opera house) in white costumes with oak-leaf garlands on their heads descended from each side of the “mountain” and moved across it. Then Liberty herself appear from within the temple, dressed in white and wearing the Phrygian cap that symbolised the Revolution. Bowing to the altar of Reason or Truth or whatever it was, she sat down on a bank of leaves as the musicians from the opera house began to play the introduction to a Hymn to Liberty, newly composed by François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829) director of music of the national guard and official composer to the French Revolution.

This performance was greeted with enthusiastic applause and cries of joy and a great many long speeches followed.

Similar festivals took place in other towns and cities all over France, although it was not always clear what exactly was being worshipped. Was it Reason, Truth or the Supreme Being who had set the world in motion? We learned about this last idea, sometimes called Deism, in the lessons for 3rd

¹⁰ A cathedral is generally cross shaped and the choir is the top limb of the cross. The bottom end of the cross is called the nave and forms the body of the cathedral. The two lateral limbs form the transept.

and 23rd of March and it was a very important factor in French Revolutionary thinking. Voltaire¹¹ (1694-1778), one of the philosophers who were represented outside the temple at the celebration, was an enthusiastic Deist. He spared no effort to oppose Christianity and the God of the Bible. But if the Bible is abandoned as a moral standard, something else has to be set up on which to base our moral code. Voltaire decided that it should be “what is good for society” and the widespread adoption of this idea left the French revolutionaries with no definition of “good” and no one to determine what was “good for society” except themselves. The results were the unspeakable horror of the French Revolution. This in turn led to the rise of the tyrant, Napoleon.

Voltaire and his fellow philosophers extolled tolerance but displayed none for Christianity.

Ours is assuredly the most ridiculous, the most absurd and the most bloody religion which has ever infected this world. Your Majesty will do the human race an eternal service by extirpating this infamous superstition, I do not say among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke; I say among honest people, among men who think, among those who wish to think. ... My one regret in dying is that I cannot aid you in this noble enterprise, the finest and most respectable which the human mind can point out...

he wrote to Frederick the Great.¹² Hardly a tolerant attitude!

11 See the lesson for 30th May.

12 Although he was here strictly speaking of Roman Catholicism, Voltaire had no time for Protestantism either as he considered it had divided France.