

SECOND
PRIZE

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Class C.

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Royal Empire Society Essay

Competition

Selwyn House School.

Form 4

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A day in the life of a school boy of my own age in a
British Commonwealth or Empire country other than my own.

I am going to tell you how Bumba, a native
boy of twelve years old spends the day.

Bumba lives in Tanganyika, a state on the
east coast of Africa which belongs to the
British Commonwealth.

Bumba sleeps with his family in a hut, made
from bamboo sticks with a straw roof, and a mud
floor.

When he gets up in the morning he doesn't
have to spend much time dressing, as he only
wears a little skirt or a pair of trousers made
of animal skins, and no shoes.

After breakfast of porridge made from manioc, and sometimes a little fish, Bumba has caught in the river near their hut, Bumba and his brother leave for the Mission School.

There they are taught by a white missionary to write, to read, to do simple sums, and to learn all about the life of Christ and the stories of the Bible.

Luckily they are not taught Latin, Algebra, Geometry, or Physics, as they are simple people.

Bumba and his brother are glad, when school is finished.

They walk home along the jungle path, and talk of what they will do the rest of the day.

The sun cannot penetrate the thick leaves of the tall trees, and as they walk along monkeys chatter, and brightly coloured birds fly over their heads.

Their mother has lunch waiting for them, and it consists of, some yams, and berries which she has gathered from the bushes near the clearing, where the native village stands.

She asks if they will help her hoe the garden, which is planted with corn, yams, and manioc, after that duty they are free to do as they wish.

First of all they go down to the river, and getting into a canoe made from a hollowed tree trunk, paddle their way up the river; when they see a good swimming place fairly free from alligators.

After their swim, they let the canoe drift down the river in the hot sun, while Bumba scoops out a fish, with lightning motion of his hands.

After they have given the fish to their mother, they decide to go to help the older men of the village dig an elephant pit.

These pits are dug and covered with leaves, so that the poor elephants fall in and cannot escape.

Then the natives kill the elephants and cut off their long ivory tusks, which are sold for a huge price.

The elephant meat is usually eaten for a feast and what is left is smoked over a fire and can be used later on.

This habit makes Bumba sad, as he likes the elephants, so he suggests to his brother that they

help the younger men of the village gather the fruit of the oil palm trees.

This work requires a steady head and strong feet, as the fruit grows at the top of the trees, at the base of the leaves, and the younger boys, and men have to climb up the palm tree holding onto a strong rope, and then cut the cones of fruit.

The nuts are boiled in water to remove the outside shell, and the oil that rise to the top is used by the natives for cooking.

Then the fibers are crushed, and boiled again, and this time, the oil is skimmed off and will be sent to Europe, to be used for soap, margarine, and lubricating oil.

Bumba and his brother enjoy this work, as they are strong and light, they can get to the top of the palm trees easily, but they are tired as they set off for home.

Suddenly without warning a heavy downpour of rain starts, and the jungle starts steaming as the cold rain hits the hot underbrush.

Bumba starts to run, although he is used to these heavy rainfalls he doesn't like getting wet.

As he and his brother speed along the jungle path, there is a lightning movement in the branches above, they stop suddenly, and with horror stricken faces start back from where they came.

A long poisonous snake has uncoiled itself, and is ready to strike at whomever passes.

Bumba waits until one of the older men comes along and tells him what has happened.

The man goes ahead with the sharp knife he used for cutting the oil palms, and with one swift stroke cuts off the huge snake's head.

Now Bumba and his brother run harder than ever as they are cold, and very wet, and very hungry.

Their mother had their favourite supper waiting, roast wild pig, and corn cakes.

They tell her all their adventures of the day, and when they have finished, she tells them her piece of news.

She tells them that they are going to move to a new place.

One of the reasons, is that the soil around the - village has lost its fertility, as the same things

have been planted in it for so long, also the rainy season was coming on; and many of the natives were tired of the incessant rains.

So after a conference of the older, and wiser people of the village, it was decided to trek inland away from the swampy forest land, up into the higher grass lands.

At this Bumba and his brother become greatly excited at the thought of miles of grass, and sky above them; instead of the everlasting foliage of the jungle.

They know they will see lions, antelopes, leopards, giraffes, zebras, rhinoceroses, and many other species of animals.

Instead of climbing the oil palm trees, they will accompany hunters, and adventurers, carrying their equipment on many treks.

By this time Bumba realizes how sleepy, he is, and says goodnight to his mother, and curls upon his little mat of animal skins.

Though he is very tired, he is very happy, and dreams of the wide grasslands, sunlight, and all the different animals he will see.

The End.