

**MARY
HAZELTON
BLANCHARD
WADE**



**MPUKE, OUR
LITTLE
AFRICAN
COUSIN**

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Mpuke, Our Little African Cousin

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Preface

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FAR away, toward the other side of the round earth, far to the east and south of America, lies the great continent of Africa. There live many people strange to us, with their black skins, kinky, woolly hair, flat noses, and thick lips. These black people we call Africans or negroes, and it is a little child among them that we are going to visit by and by.

Different as these African people of the negro race are from us, who belong to the white race, they yet belong to the same great family, as we say. Like all the peoples of all the races of men on this big earth, they belong to the human family, or the family of mankind. So we shall call the little black child whom we are going to visit our little black cousin.

We need not go so far away from home, indeed, to see little black children with woolly, kinky hair and flat noses like the little African. In the sunny South of our own land are many negro children as like the little negro cousin in Africa as one pea is like another. Years and years ago slave-ships brought to this country negroes, stolen from their own African homes to be the slaves and servants of the white people here. Now the children and great-grandchildren of these negro slaves are growing up in our country, knowing no other home than this. The home of the great negro race, however, is the wide continent of Africa, with its deserts of hot sand, its parching winds and its tropical forests.

So, as we wish to see a little African cousin in his own African home, we are going to visit little black Mpuke

instead of little black Topsy or Sammy, whom we might see nearer by.

It's away, then, to Africa!

Our Little African Cousin

CHAPTER I.

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THE BOY.

ARE you ready for a long journey this morning? Your eyes look eager for new sights, so we will start at once for Mpuke's strange home. We will travel on the wings of the mind so as to cross the great ocean in the passage of a moment. No seasickness, no expense, and no worry! It is a comfortable way to travel. Do you not think so?

Yes, this is Africa. Men call it the "Dark Continent" because so little has been known of it. Yet it is a very wonderful land, filled with strange animals and queer people, containing the oldest monuments, the greatest desert, the richest diamond mines, in the world.

Some of the wisest people in the world once lived here. Large libraries were gathered together, thousands of years ago, in the cities of this continent.

Yet the little negro whom we visit to-day is of a savage race. He is ignorant of civilised ways and customs. He knows nothing of books and schools. I doubt if he even knows when his birthday draws near; but he is happy as the day is long; his troubles pass as quickly as the April showers.

Let us paint his picture. We must make his eyes very round and bright and black. The teeth should be like the whitest pearls. His head must be covered with a mass of curly black wool. His lips are red and thick, while his skin is black and shining. He is tall and straight, and has muscles of which any boy might well be proud. He is not bothered by stiff collars or tight shoes. He is not obliged to stay in the