

NATIVE FOLK-LORE.

THE LEPRACAUNS TO KWA NGOMBE.

By S. V. Cook.

Fifteen miles east of Embu Station there rises from the Emberre Plains the lofty hills of Kwa Ngombe, nearly six thousand feet high. They are inhabited, the Embu natives say, by buffalo and a race of little red men, who are very jealous of their mountain rights. Old Salim, the interpreter at Embu, tells with great dramatic effect how he and some natives once climbed to near the top when suddenly an icy cold wind blew and they were pelted with showers of small stones by some unseen adversaries. Happening to look up in a pause in their hasty retreat, he assures me that he saw scores of little red men hurling pebbles and waving defiance from the craggy heights. To this day even the most intrepid honey hunters will not venture into the hills.

Of course this notion of fairies or little men is found in the folklore of most races. Allingham, the Irish poet, wrote a delightful poem on these people. One verse might have been written about these very Kwa Ngombe people:

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We dare not go a-hunting
For fear of little men.

I hope that no intrepid reader of this journal will be tempted to explore Kwa Ngombe after reading this, for were he captured, a punitive expedition against the little men would be a most parlous undertaking!