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THE TAILED HEAD-HUNTERS

OF NIGERIA

Nigerian Natives with Tails

A Kagoro woman from Tuku Tozo and an Attakka woman. See p. 104.

THE

TAILED HEAD-HUNTERS

OF NIGERIA

AN ACCOUNT OF AN OFFICIAL'S SEVEN YEARS'

EXPERIENCES IN THE NORTHERN NIGERIAN

PAGAN BELT, AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE

MANNERS, HABITS, AND CUSTOMS

OF THE NATIVE TRIBES

BY

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"Fables and Fairy Tales," &c.

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TO

MY WIFE

PREFACE

One of my aims in writing this book has been to show how

much the uncivilised natives of Northern Nigeria resemble some

other aboriginal races, possibly even our own remote ancestors,

and, incidentally, to prove that they are by no means as black in

many ways as they are painted. Having served in different parts

of West Africa for the greater part of ten years, first as a

Military then as a Police Officer, and subsequently in a Political

and a Judicial capacity, I have possibly a wider view of West

African things in general than many writers on the country.

The native is certainly not the equal of the European, but he is

still worthy of consideration.

If in discussing African life and characteristics I have occa-

sionally introduced examples drawn from other lands, it has not

been done with any intention of forcing them into an artificial

resemblance, but solely for the sake of comparison, for a custom,

which at first may seem strange to the average reader, becomes

more easily intelligible through the light thus thrown upon it

from other sources. I hope, therefore, that the general observa-

tions on customs and ideas will be useful to those commencing the

" study of man, 1 '' and that the notes on the head-hunting tribes,

being quite new, will interest even those who are more advanced.

A description of certain subjects, with which it has been im-

possible to deal here, will be found in the Journal of the Royal

Anthropological Institute to be published shortly.

Life in West Africa is a medley of sensations. There are

many intensely exciting moments, there are days when one is

absolutely in the depths of despair, but even at these times some-

thing may happen, with the light-hearted natives about one,

which will divert one's thoughts into a totally different channel.

Perhaps when under fire, the black soldier — as gallant in many

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PREFACE

ways as his white comrade — will provoke a smile by some quaint

remark concerning the enemy ; or the cook will prepare meals

quite unconcernedly within arrow range, singing all the time as

if there were no danger to be feared more serious than the burning

of the pudding.

One is liable after an absence of a couple of years to forget " the

madding crowd " of insects, the annoyances of official correspond-

ence, the irritating revenue returns, the noise, the dust, and the

dirt, and to remember only the excitement and the beauty of

West Africa; and if he sits down to write in this mood he is

likely to see everything tinted couleur de rose. It is only by re-

ferring to brief entries in note books, and by being thus reminded

of the circumstances connected therewith, that I can recall the

worries which, though negligible now, seemed serious enough at

the time. And, as I do not wish to describe only one aspect, I

have in places purposely " laid a complaint," not on account of

any grudge against Northern Nigeria, or its people, white or

black, but because I wish the book to be a true and living picture

of life in that country. The officials of the Colonial Office and of

the local Government have done splendid work, but there is no

need to expect them to be more than human.

The native is a humorist, sometimes consciously, more often

unconsciously, and I have usually been able to understand his

joke when with him. And though, when sitting in a comfortable

arm-chair, the amusing incidents stand out clearly, while the

accompanying pin-pricks gradually fade into the dim distance,

it is safe to say that there is plenty of laughter in the air of the

West Coast for every one if he can only see it.

A. J. N. T.

Blackheath,

October 1911.

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THE TAILED HEAD-HUNTERS

OE NIGERIA

CHAPTER I

IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

I HAD always wanted to go to West Africa, and when given

the choice to proceed as a Special Service Officer to join the

Expedition in Ashanti in 1900 instead of going back to

South Africa to join the Australian Regiment, which was due to

return home, I eagerly seized the opportunity of visiting that

fascinating country. Kumasi, or as it used to be spelt,

Coomassie, had always attracted me strongly, and so had Segu,

though I should have found it difficult to say why (unless it had

a faint connection in my mind with something to eat), and I can

remember even now that when about the age of eight I marked

the routes on a map.

My first stay in West Africa was not a long one, but I had

had a taste of the country, and in less than two years afterwards

I was back to the Coast again, this time to Northern Nigeria,

glad to feel the warmth once more, glad to hear the cries of the

natives, and to watch their interesting ways. I suppose those

excellent books of the late G~. A. Henty played some part in

arousing within me the longing for strange countries, and

perhaps the attraction of the Australian bush already born and

bred in my blood had prepared me for the call of the mysterious

African forests. Or perhaps " spell " would be a better name, for

it is more than a " call," it is a summons, a command, and one

which I should think must be quite unconquerable, though it is

rather early to judge yet in my own case, for I have left Nigeria

too recently, and have been studying West African anthropology

ever since, so I am, at any rate in thought, living to a great extent

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IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

in West Africa still. The victim once fallen must obey though

it be against his better understanding, or perhaps his inclination,

even against his will, and, whatever kind of a wreck the Coast has

made of his body, I doubt if his mind ever frees itself of the

charm of the old associations.

The bush and the forest attract in different ways. The

Australian bush somehow makes one feel a tinge of sadness even

on the brightest days ; there is often a sigh amidst the smiles ;

one wants to drowse, to think of what might have been, though

the reminiscences are not necessarily gloomy ; whereas the African

forest makes a man active — difficulties are always cropping up, and

he must be ready for them — and although one becomes at times

more dismally depressed on the Coast than anywhere else, the

usual tendency is to look ahead. This is strange considering the

fact that the Australian bush is very healthy indeed, at any rate

where the gum-tree abounds, while the African forest is quite the

reverse, and I think the sole reason is that whereas in the land

of the Southern Cross all is peaceful, on the Coast of the Dark

Continent danger may lurk anywhere, and the traveller must be

on the alert to face it. To even the ordinary man, like myself,

adventure has a strong fascination, and every one, however little

he possesses of the stuff of which heroes are made, hopes to find

himself in danger some day, he wants to test himself at some time

or other. To those more fortunate persons who have never known

fear — and there are many such people, of course — the unknown

must call with even greater force, for there is always risk, there is

always adventure for him who looks for it, and usually for him

also who does not look for it.

Why should men all over the world want to face danger ? why

should they wish to undergo hardships when they might be so

very much more comfortable at home ? Some, of course, go to

make money, some to get out of a scrape at home, some because

they command in West Africa though they serve in England.

But even then, what is the moving principle which makes men

listen with bated breath to the tales of danger, to discount the

hardships, and to look with eager eyes on the hideous mangrove

swamps? It is the old pagan instinct that will not be killed in

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IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

spite of our civilisation, in spite of our peace societies; it is a

pride in that superiority of personal strength and skill which

compels the homage of others less fortunately endowed, or less

willing to make the necessary sacrifices to raise themselves above

their fellows ; it is the old fighting spirit which has made the

British Nation what it is. The rush of volunteers, eager for

service, during the South African War must have been a shock to

many of the well-meaning folk, who imagined and, apparently,

still continue to imagine, that a few benevolent old gentlemen

would be able to settle all the future quarrels of the world, and

that modern weapons were so terrible that no nations would dare

to go to war. Austria and Italy did not hesitate even with but

slender excuse. Would the protests of a few small boys at school

prevent two bigger boys fighting? Would strong men in a

matter vital to their existence or their honour be ruled by the

weak and timorous? W r ould two powerful nations roused to

frenzy on account of some national insult, or a country in the

throes of civil war, take the slightest notice of an arbitration

award which was unpopular and appeared unfair ? Not until we

have killed the old fighting spirit, and have civilised ourselves

into becoming mere automatons, not until we have crushed out all

that is good in us, shall we consent to barter our honour or to

give up our rights at the bidding of others whom in our hearts,

perhaps, we really know to be our inferiors.

There is another point ! Many men will do things for the

sake of their party which they would regard almost in the light of

crimes if committed for their own advantage. Will arbitrators

give an award which would damage their own country ? would

they not do more for their country than for their party ? A man

has been known to send his own brother to death, but he would

not ruin his fatherland.

The political history of Northern Nigeria has been a short,

though brilliant, record of a contest of pluck and initiative against

hardships and dangers on the spot, and against discouragement

from home, and it has been only of late years that the British

Government has really done its duty towards that possession.

I have elsewhere (in The Niger and the West Sudan) given an

IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

account of the river Niger, the search for which led to the occu-

pation of the present territory of Northern Nigeria, and I need

not repeat myself, but a short outline of the progress of the

country itself may be acceptable.

Some of the outlets of the river Niger were discovered in the

fifteenth century by the Portuguese and others, but up to 1830

it had never been recognised that these comparatively small

streams had any connection with the great body of water known

to be flowing past Timbuktu (or Timbuctoo, as it used to be

spelt) ; and it was only after the expeditions in 1795 and 1805 of

Mungo Park, the first white man to reach the Niger, and also

Northern Nigeria, that it was recognised that the Niger came

further south than had been supposed. The river was now thought

to flow into Lake Chad (the old idea was that it was an affluent

of the Nile), or else that it and the Congo were one, and in 1816

two parties were sent out, one to start from the Senegal, another

from the Congo, which were to meet somewhere in what is now

Northern Nigeria. However, both parties came to grief, and the

next attempt, made five years later, was from Tripoli, Major

Denham, Clapperton, Oudney, and others arriving at Lake Chad

more than twelve months after their departure from England,

being the second party of white men to reach Northern Nigeria.

Denham explored the country around Bornu while Clapperton

visited Kano and Sokoto, and both returned safely to England

in 1825, though they lost all their European companions, they

having fallen victims to the country.

Clapperton took out another expedition a couple of years later,

but it ended disastrously, and it was not until 1830 that the two

Landers (one of whom, Richard, had been with Clapperton) sailed

in canoes from Yelwa to the Brass mouth of the Niger.

The petty little adventures and limited wanderings related in

this book seem tame indeed compared to the great dangers and

magnificent journeys of these early explorers, yet they were not

without their hardships nor their charm. There is still a good

deal of country in West Africa as yet untrodden by white feet,

and the satisfaction of having been in even a small portion of

"new country" helps one to appreciate all the more the joy

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The "Great North Road'' to Kumasi

Most West African roads are but a foot or two in width, and very crooked, but this was widened

and straightened by order of the Government. It is not easy to describe the feelings of the

traveller who for the first time sets foot on a path which leads perhaps right into the heart of this

wonderful continent.

IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

of these great men when success crowned their efforts. How

elated must Mungo Park have been to know that no white man

but himself had ever seen the Niger ? Imagine Major Laing's

feelings of pride at being the first to enter the city of Timbuktu

which had such a mysterious and wonderful reputation ! How

can one describe the joy of the Landers, after having been swept

along in unknown streams, at seeing British ships at the mouth

of the river ahead of them ?

Alas, these men, and others like them, who added so much to

the prestige of the nation, had usually but scanty rewards. Park

and Laing lost their lives in the country of their fame, and the

Landers had great difficulty in even securing a passage to Eng-

land on a British ship ! But their names are as fresh as ever,

and as long as there is an opening for an explorer, so long will

that explorer be found, and others to take his place should he

lose his life in the attempt ; and while that spirit is encouraged

and recognised by the nation, the British Empire will hold its

own. There is plenty of work to be done among us yet ; in addition

to Africa there are Central Australia, New Guinea, the frontiers

of India, and even the polar regions calling for explorers and

pioneers : let the Government enable men to go there — there is no

need to persuade men to do so — it will be well worth the cost even

for the geographical and ethnographical results alone. But there

would be a much greater gain, for the dormant spirit of adventure

would be reawakened in every breast, the old self-reliance of the

nation would be re-established, and we should not have a night-

mare every time a Continental Power added a ship to its fleet.

After the explorers came the traders, two ships ascending the

Niger nearly to Jebba in 1832, and though four out of every five

Europeans died, another and a larger party went out a few years

afterwards with even more disastrous results. Later ventures

under Baikie, however, were fairly successful, the use of quinine

having been introduced, and no doubt contributing to the great

decrease in the death-rate. In 1850 another mission started from

Tripoli, consisting of Richardson, Overweg, and Barth, the latter

being the only one to return, and with an enormous amount of infor-

mation, after having visited the Hausa States and even Timbuktu.

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IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

Trading companies now began to spring up, and though many

of the English firms indulged for a time in a cut-throat competi-

tion, most of them amalgamated in 1879, to form what was later

the National Africa Company, and later still (1886) the Royal

Niger Company, with a charter from the Crown to govern what

is now Northern Nigeria.

France and Germany, who had been busy acquiring colonies on

the coast, now began to take a great interest in West Africa, and

tried to force us out of some of our possessions by creating com-

plications amongst the natives under us, but our representatives

usually proved the smarter and more capable, and Britain managed

to keep what she had got — I wonder would she have done so if every

case had been submitted to arbitration ? Still, British Ministers

found it difficult to protect a chartered company as such against

the Governments of foreign nations, and mainly to prevent fresh

international disagreements the Company's charter was revoked,

and the territories were added to those of the Oil Rivers to form

Northern and Southern Nigeria, Lagos being amalgamated with

the latter six years later, the Northern Protectorate being almost

as large as Great Britain and France combined. This put an end

to most of the external complications, but internal troubles arose

soon after the transfer, and there has been an expedition or a

patrol operating every few months ever since, the most important

being those against Yola in 1901, Bornu the following year,

Sokoto, Kano, and Burmi the year after that, and Sokoto and

Katagum in 1906, while the Munchi country south of the Benue,

and a great part of the pagan belt in Zaria, Bauchi, and Nassarawa

has still to be thoroughly subdued.

So much for the geographical history. The ethnographical

outline of some of the tribes has been touched upon elsewhere,

and that of a few more in this book, but I have here tried to

confine myself merely to some of the main points of the political

history, and then only so far as our dealings w r ith the natives are

concerned. We are unfortunately educating the natives upon

European lines, and the results are disastrous. A Filani chief

who is proud of his rank is a man no one can help admiring ;

the ex-canoe bov with a smattering of Latin inspires one only

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IMPRESSIONS OF WEST AFRICA

with contempt. Our cantonments, too, are built according to

English ideas, and we have spoiled the beauty of many a spot

noted before for its loveliness. I suppose West Africa will some

day be as safe as Ireland. A very desirable state of affairs for

the Government, perhaps, but — heavens ! — how dreary !

The adventures of the explorers and pioneers can be learned

from their own writings, and I venture to state that there is

hardly any one who has read them who has not yearned for

chances of similar glories. But apart from the joy of entering

new districts, there is the mystery and the fascination of the

country to attract a man, and in a London fog his thoughts will

turn almost involuntarily to the feverish yet sunny, luring yet

repulsive, unhealthy yet beautiful and wonderful, West Coast

of Africa.

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CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL

17^ ORC ADOS and Burutu, the ports on the Niger for Northern

' Nigerian passengers, are dreary-looking places, set on

dismal and unhealthy mud-banks and surrounded by

hideous mangrove swamps ; but once those have been left behind

by the noisy stern-paddled river-boat, to which we have transferred

ourselves and our baggage, the real beauty of the country begins

to unfold itself.

The time taken between Burutu and Lokoja (three hundred

and thirty miles) depends upon whether one is going up or down

stream, upon the size of the steamer, and the amount of cargo on

board. A little over two days is enough for the biggest boats

when going down, but I have been ten days going up, and that

was in the Kapelli> which is supposed to be the flyer of the

fleet. We were towing a couple of barges loaded with railway

material, or rather they were lashed one on each side, and so the

progress was exceedingly slow. There were nine of us on board,

and there was some room to move about, but what the boat

would be like with twenty, the official number, I should not like

to think, especially as each man makes his own arrangements for

messing, though, usually, parties of half-a-dozen or so are formed

for convenience. As there is only one cooking-place, the respective

cooks have to take turns, and there are often some very fine

quarrels amongst them, and also amongst the other boys, who are

continually stealing each other's things — or those of their masters.

Usually, I think, the native is fairly honest, but at times he

absolutely runs amuck, and the journey up river (and a fortiori

that down river) seems to be one of these occasions. When I

went up the first time, in May 1903, shooting was allowed from

the boat, and we had numerous pot-shots at hippo in the lower

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ARRIVAL

reaches, and at crocs in the upper, though I doubt if we hit many.

One funny old man with us had a pistol with which he used to

blaze at everything showing, and he managed to amuse himself

immensely — and us too. But hippo are not often seen nowa-

days, and in any case the shooting, except from barges, has been

made illegal, as there is much more traffic, and thus as time goes

on, and every one becomes fearfully respectable, many other little

amusements will be prohibited, and, consequently, the country

will lose one of its attractions, its unconventionally.

The passenger will find that any empty tins or bottles are

capable of creating some amusement, for while passing the villages

on the banks — especially those of the tattoo-nosed Ijo — numerous

canoes will put out and surround the steamer, the inmates, who

are usually small girls or even smaller boys, calling out lustily for

these articles. These children are fine swimmers, and although

the canoes are often upset by the wash of the steamer, or by the

fighting of the paddlers themselves over the booty, one knows

there is no danger, and that all will be as happy as ever five

minutes afterwards.

When coming out on the Elder-Dempster boats, a somewhat

similar excitement may be caused amongst the crowds of natives

on the fore-hatch — who come aboard all the way down from

Freetown — by throwing down pennies, lumps of sugar, or fruit,

and the people usually know what is wanted, and pretend to

really fight and quarrel so as to induce the onlookers to give

them more and more. I do not think a native ever objects to a

quarrel, either real or imaginary, so long as there is a chance of

making something out of it. There is not always this inducement,

though, and at times it would appear as if they indulged in

these little pleasures merely for the satisfaction of hearing them-

selves speak. I have sometimes seen two natives sit down close to

each other and pour out strings of angry abuse and bad language

at the top of their voices, and as fast as possible, neither taking

the slightest notice of what the other was saying, and after fiercely

accusing each other of every imaginable crime under the sun,

suddenly both would burst out laughing, and forget all that had

been said — if, indeed, they ever heard anything except their own

25

ARRIVAL

voices — and be as good friends as before. There is but little

lasting resentment in the native's nature, and for that reason our

punishments ought to be sharp, sudden, and done with at once.

I do not believe in fining, for the real punishment is then felt long

after the offence has been committed. He understands being caned,

and Sir Sidney Olivier, an experienced Governor, recommends

it, and however severe we were, we should not hurt him anything

like as much as his own chiefs would. European boys at school are

also acquainted with the rod, and there are many old Etonians

who consider that the birch was most beneficial to them ; is a

native more sensitive than they were ? It is the long drawn-out

punishment which awakens resentment ; it is only human nature

to dread everlasting trouble, that is why we undergo the very sharp

pain of having teeth drawn rather than suffer a gnawing ache for

an indefinite period, however mild it may be. But there is a very

great difference between caning and flogging, for the punishment

can be sufficient without being brutal, and a caning need not

necessarily become a flogging, any more than a modern school

develops into an 66 Uncle Tom's Cabin."

In the dry season, especially in April and May, the rivers are

very low, and the boats are often delayed by running on sand-

banks. The shock when on the larger craft is nothing to speak

of, but when a " swine " (see Chapter XXII.) digs its snout into

the ground all one's precious crockery may be knocked over,

and — awful thought — even one's own sacred person may suffer.

Sometimes, particularly when going down stream, the boat may

get so far on the bank that many hours elapse before she is floated

again, and in 1903 we nearly lost the mail steamer at Burutu

through being thus delayed. Luckily we were far enough down

stream to feel the rise of the tide, and with the flow we managed

to get off and catch the boat for home. To have been stuck at

Burutu for a week would have been anything but pleasant. A

certain Governor and his staff managed to accomplish the feat on

one occasion, and the number of official " snorters " sent off during

those seven days is said to be easily a record.

If the steamer cannot back herself off, a small boat is sent

out with an anchor which is fixed in the bank on the other

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The River Niger— Nearing a Sandbank

Owing to the nature of the banks and bed, the river is continually changing its channel

navigation is consequently difficult.

The River Niger— On It

The " Kampala " (now a " submarine ") gets stuck.

ARRIVAL

side of the channel, and back-paddling and straining on the

cable usually bring the steamer into deeper water again. The

channels change so much each year, owing to the great difference

in the summer and winter levels of the river, and the sandy

nature of its banks and bed, that it is impossible to buoy them to

any great extent, but now that a dredger is working there should

be a great improvement in this direction. By the way, there is

a story about this queer-looking craft.

A newly arrived missionary lady was standing on deck, watch-

ing the dredger working, and after a time she was joined by a

trader who had had many an argument with her on the way out

about the laziness of the natives.

" There, you can see for yourself," said he ; " look at those

black men squatting about on that dredger ; not one of them is

doing a hand's turn."

" They must be tired, poor things," said she, and then, as a

brilliant thought struck her, she added, beaming, 66 you should

not judge only by what you can see ; just think how hard the

poor men underneath must be working to be able to fill those

buckets so quickly ! "

She won.

There is one employment which must be an ideal one for a

native, and it would suit even an unemployed park-loafer. Every

barge has a headman (from the permanent establishment of the

Marine Department) to look after the polemen, but not to help

them. All he has to do is to sit in a camp chair and give orders ;

he usually has a small boy to cook his food and call him

"captain" when there is no European about, he has a wife in

every port (even a Mohammedan is allowed four), and he gets a

shilling a day ! How popular such posts would be on the local

penny tin boats ! Alas, white men never have any luck like that,

not even in West Africa.

After some days on the river Niger, the boat passes Idda, the

last town of Southern Nigeria, and soon afterwards arrives at

Lokoja, the oldest white settlement in the country though not

now the soonest reached, for Egori, almost opposite Idda, has

that doubtful honour.

n

ARRIVAL

I arrived in 1903, with three others, to raise a police force.

Somehow or other the High Commissioner's instructions had

gone astray; he was on leave, and no one seemed to know

anything about us, although we had already had three days at

Idda on a sandbank, so we were left for several hours on board the

boat at the wharf, and we had plenty of time to admire its

beauties. Lokoja is anything but pretty from the river, but

from the top of Patti, the mountain looming up behind, it is

beautiful, the clash of the brilliant colours being very barbaric

and splendid. For on two sides are the silver ribbons of the

Niger, and its affluent the Benue, which joins it here, winding

away to the horizon; opposite are the blue Okpoto Hills,

and underneath gleam the ruby-roofed bungalows set in the

emerald-hued foliage, the whole making up a gloriously-coloured

picture of the Impressionist school. The soil here, too, is wonder-

fully fertile ; almost anything will grow, and many men are glad

indeed to be told that this will be their headquarters.

But Lokoja is more i beautiful than healthy ; the heat is damp

and stifling, the river becomes exceedingly unpleasant when

falling and leaving the banks uncovered, and altogether it is a

good place to be out of, except for the man who prefers office

work to travel, who wishes for comparatively comfortable quarters

rather than excitement. Mails are more regular, and they come

more quickly ; food is plentiful, for there are several good

canteens ; and if each man could have a bungalow to himself,

he would not have so much to complain about. Unfortunately,

he seldom has more room on land than he had on the river-boat,

four or even more men being sometimes crowded into a three-

roomed wooden bungalow ; and as each European must have at

least two servants, and, in addition, one extra for each horse, the

state of pandemonium which one has to endure may be better

imagined than described.

I have pointed out elsewhere that the discomfort and the

amount of filth a man eats are responsible for many more

deaths and invalidings than is the infamous mosquito, and

were it possible to give each man a two-roomed brick house

to himself (something like those which are allotted to black

ARRIVAL

clerks), and to encourage him to bring out wife or sister to

look after it, there would not be the same necessity to work

out wonderful schemes of soaking the ground — or himself, I

forget which — in kerosene. Doubtless much can be done in

cantonments by following rules laid down by the medical

authorities, but it is quite impossible to keep a grass-roofed

and windowless mud hut mosquito-proof for very long, and I

have yet to meet the official who can afford to fill up the holes

in his compound with kerosene when it costs perhaps £% a tin !

Nor has any one in Northern Nigeria the chance to retire under

mosquito curtains at sundown every night — the only time

available for recreation is between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., and

even were one never to go out to dinner, he would often

have work of some kind to do in the evening. Still, the local

Government does its best for the officials, and the medical staff

is a body composed of able and conscientious men (and having

once been a medical student myself, I can sympathise with their

aims, even though I may think their recommendations in some

cases impracticable), for on the whole the doctors and nurses

have worked wonders in West Africa. The Colonial Office, too,

is quite as anxious to improve the conditions, and, after all, most

who go to West Africa expect a certain amount of discomfort

and hardship.

Those men who serve in cantonments are very much better

off as regards quarters and food, but their expenses are consider-

ably heavier than those which the 66 bush-whackers " have to bear,

so things even out fairly well on the whole. And there is no

doubt that when a man is back home again, his knowledge of the

interior may stand him in good stead if he has taken the trouble

to study, while those who have had experience only of the office-

chairs in cantonments cannot be said to have any knowledge of

true West African conditions. A man can read reports or add

up figures in England, it is only the traveller in little-known

villages who can enter into the underlying charm, it is only he

who can get to know the real West Africa.

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CHAPTER III

UP COUNTRY

I WAS not longer than a month in Lokoja, though I managed

to get fever twice during that time, and I was then ordered

to the Ilorin Province, a Yoruba country which had been

conquered by the Filani.

From Lokoja, where the Benue meets the Niger, it is usually

necessary to change to a smaller boat except in the wet season, for

the volume of water is naturally very much less above the con-

fluence, but as there were only two of us now on board it did not

matter. It took some three days to reach Mureji where the

Kaduna flows in, and there I disembarked, as the rest of the

journey was to be by land. An old hulk served as quarters for

the Marine Superintendent there, and I did not envy him his lot,

for the tin roof made the place like an oven, while the sandflies

were absolutely awful. His only exercise consisted in walking up

and down a sandbank, his only excitement the passing up or down

of passengers like myself, who caused him trouble in that he had

to arrange for their transport.

I found on arrival that no arrangements had been made from

Lokoja for my journey, for all the Marine men being ill, the

department was run for the time by the Cantonment Magistrate,

and he did not know much about it. But the Superintendent at

Mureji, being a decent sort, lent me his native interpreter, and I

went over to the other side to bargain for carriers and a horse,

and at last I managed to complete my arrangements and get off,

though not without trouble, for the chief (a Mohammedan) was

usually too drunk to understand. I knew nothing of any of the

native languages, my boys were both from Southern Nigeria and

were as ignorant as I, no interpreter had been provided, I had no

escort nor guard of any kind to look after the carriers, and we had

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UP COUNTRY

to pass first through Nupe and then through Yoruba towns.

The result was that I seldom got off before eleven in the morning

instead of at daylight, and so had all the heat of the day to travel

in, and I seldom managed to cover more than ten miles before

dark, and about half the carriers would run away each day, and I

had to get others as best I could. Yet I enjoyed it, for it was an

experience, and I used to ride with the Hausa Grammar in my

hand, so that by the end of the fifth day, when I reached IJorin, I

had begun to understand a little here and there. In fact by this

means I learned the language much faster than my boys did, and

this rather surprised me, because the native's good ear and memory,

and the greater necessity for knowing what to ask for directly,

usually make him a great linguist. Probably it was on account

of the fact that the boys could converse with each other in their

own language, and so were not so ready to learn a new one ; had

there been only one Ijo amongst them he would quickly have

mastered the local tongues in order to converse with his fellows,

for a native must talk to some one.

While at Ilorin I saw in the Government Gazette a notice of

the Hausa Scholarship at Cambridge, and made up my mind to

work for it, and luckily, I managed afterwards to be ready just

when it became vacant — and that really led to the commencement

of my anthropological work. It is rather a pity that the Scholar-

ship has been allowed to lapse, for it is more imperative than

ever that a Political or a Police Officer should have a knowledge

of the language, but the Hausa Association came to an end,

and with it the per annum at Christ's College, though

a prize is to be given there every five years for an Essay on West

African work.

Ilorin is now an important station on the Lagos-Jebba Railway,

but there were no bungalows when I was there, and we lived in a

street of square mud houses, some having two, some three rooms,

with verandahs in front and behind. It was a pretty station, and

was supposed to be fairly healthy, but it did not suit me at all as

I had fever every few weeks, though perhaps the place was not

wholly responsible, for I had never really got rid of the malaria

which I had contracted in Ashanti. The two kinds were quite

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different in my case, for the Ashanti fever was like ague in that it

made me shiver violently, my teeth being almost driven through

my jaws, and exhaustion coming afterwards; whereas the kind

which I had in Northern Nigeria (and still have each month) made

me feel tired and bruised all over to start with, and there were no

shivering fits, but, on the contrary, a feeling of being boiled. I

do not mean to say that these cases are typical, for there are

many kinds in both countries ; I merely mention my own personal

experience.

Work now commenced in earnest, as our role had been dis-

covered at last, and I began enlisting men for the police as fast as

I could get them. I had no stationery, and was driven to

making up enlistment and other forms mainly from my private

supplies of notepaper, and I remember my disgust one morning

when, after having been hard at it all the previous day, one of

my kittens ruined a pile of completed papers, and the whole lot

had to be done again. By the way, I forgot to mention these

kittens. I brought out three of them in a large parrot-cage, and

also a fox-terrier, and now and then on the march I used to put

the dog in the cage too when she got tired. In addition to the

kittens and the dog, there were often in the cage a couple of

fowls for food during the day, that being the number usually

presented by the chief of each town at which I halted. At first

the occupants were slightly distrustful of each other, but they

soon made friends, and the dog and the cats always used to sleep

together in my camp chair afterwards. The fowls, I fear, never

lived long enough to become really intimate with their fellow-

lodgers.

I am not at all sure that it is kind to take out English dogs.

Certainly it is not unless you are prepared to pay a special boy to

look after them. On my next trip I brought two, and the misery

they were in when going up river made me determine never to

bring another. Even when kept under mosquito curtains they

are continually being bitten, a large stinging mangrove fly being

their particular enemy by day, and they seldom have much spirit

left after a few months in country near a river. But I could

never understand any one keeping monkeys. I had a very small

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Dusky Beauties

At least their own men think them so. The girl on the left, Isa, was from Bornu, the

other three were pagan slaves freed from Filani owners at Ilorin. The broad Hausa hats

worn by Nos. i and 3 are a good protection against the sun. Three of these women are

wearing English blouses in addition to their Hausa cloths.

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one and also a sloth at Prahsu in Ashanti, but the monkey was

too young and died, and the other pet disappeared during a

temporary absence. I found out afterwards that the monkey had

been eaten by my boys, and no doubt the sloth also found a

human grave.

I had hired a mare at one of the towns en route to ride to

Ilorin, none of the horses being available apparently, and seeing

another farther on I bought it, and also the one I was riding.

This I soon found out was a mistake, as I could never go out

riding with any one else. One lives and learns in West Africa.

After the submission of Kano and Sokoto in 1903, there was

an idea that Northern Nigeria had become so peaceful that police

could be substituted for Waffs (as the West African Frontier

Force is called), and as the civil force would cost less than a

quarter of the military one the idea was gladly (and of course

rightly) fostered by those having an interest in keepirig down the

expenditure of the country. It seems strange that such a mistake

could have been made, but it was made, and by people who had

had much experience of the country, and so firmly fixed had the

idea become that when I applied for money to build mud huts for

the men I was enlisting, I was told that we were to have the

Waffs 1 barracks, and that no Government money was therefore

to be spent on new ones for the police. It was in vain that I

pointed out that the Waffs had not yet left, and that the men

I was enlisting could not live up trees meanwhile. The reply was

always to the same effect, and in the end I had to put my hand

in my own pocket and buy tie-tie — native rope or bark — &c, and

set the men at making grass shelters. This was in July 1903 ;

the Waffs actually did leave in 1905, if I remember rightly, and

were recalled a few months afterwards owing to threatened trouble

with some of the surrounding natives, who, as soon as they saw

that the soldiers had gone, commenced playing up. Ilorin was

supposed, and I believe still is supposed, to be the most peaceful

province in the country; if it is impossible to do without a

garrison there, it will be very many years before police can take

the place of soldiers elsewhere. Later on, the police were trans-

formed into constabulary with second-hand carbines, guns, and

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Maxims, but they were reconverted in 1907, and they exist now

mostly for the purpose of providing escorts for Residents and

prisoners (with rather different duties, of course), and for the

suppression of the slave trade. They are useful and necessary,

but it seems a pity to confuse the functions of the two branches

of the service, and if the police officers have to be responsible for

legal and judicial work, and must act as sheriffs in addition to

performing the purely police duties, they will not have much time

to train their men to learn what to do in time of war. To send

untrained men into action with unreliable weapons and insufficient

ammunition seems to me little short of murder, and if it is unfair

to the Europeans who go out knowing the danger, it is even more

unfair to the recruits under them who have had no experience,

and place a blind trust in their white leaders.

Soon after my arrival I went on a little tour with the object

of picking up some recruits, and on my return some eight or ten

davs afterwards with about a dozen found that as many more had

come in from other parts, and so I quickly made up the sixty or

so required.

On tour I passed through the Yoruba towns of Oke Ode and

Igbaja, at the former managing to buy a queer head-dress in the

shape of a helmet surmounted by a man riding a horse, all in

leather, covered with cowrie shells, and said to be worn by priests.

The name of this man was Dada, I was told, and he drove the evil

spirits from the town once a year ; I suppose the object was a

representation of some deity, but I am not sure. Another interest-

ing object was a wooden figure of a girl kneeling down with a

calabash on her head. This my informant told me was the god-

dess of hunting, though if so I do not quite see why she should be

carrying grain ; but it may be so, for the Hausawa, or Hausas, as

we call them, have a similar goddess called " Corn-mother. " I

secured also some small figures which were said to represent dead

children, the images being made to prevent the surviving brothers

and sisters feeling lonely. Whether this was done only in the case

of the death of a twin or in every case I do not know ; in fact, I

understood nothing of the Yoruba speech and so little of the

Hausa tongue at the time that the few particulars I remember of

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what I was told about the above figures are quite valueless scientifi-

cally, though some readers may be able to recognise them from

the photograph, or may see them in the Cambridge Ethnological

Museum, and may be able to confirm or contradict what I have

here written. I was full of fever even then, and after less than

four months in Ilorin was invalided to England, so I had no

further opportunity of inquiring into the subject, being posted to

another district on my return. This system — or lack of system —

seems a most unfortunate one, as just when a man has begun to

know something of the people under him (and that takes time), he

is moved off to another part of the country where he has not only

to begin again, but usually to be careful to forget all he has

learned before, lest his reading of the ideas of the new tribe

should be influenced by those formed in the atmosphere of the

old one. There may be certain resemblances if both the peoples

have been ruled by the Filani for a long time ; there will be very

few if the tribes are still unconquered and are not friendly towards

each other.

I found in October that I had been lucky enough to raise the

first complete detachment in the country — I usually could attract

natives to my service when once I had become known — and within

a couple of months my little force was over strength, and soon

afterwards I was asked to send spare men to other provinces ; and

this happened in spite of the fact that we had no uniform. Gaudy

clothes are, of course, a great attraction to natives, and they are

usually responsible for the enlistment of at least one-half of the

recruits. And why not? Although we smile at the native for

this, even in England we love a brilliant uniform (think of our

country brass bands), and it is my opinion that the falling-off of

recruits for the army is due in a great measure to the fact that

kharki is worn so much. Why should kharki be seen in the

streets ? It is excellent for work, but it should be kept for those

times only. An engine-driver does not pretend to look clean in

his oily " untearables " ; why should the soldier have to wear his

filthy kharki, except when at work ? A man can never look well

in it except when it is absolutely new, and even then he looks

hardly more respectable than the borough watering-cart man, and

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is usually outshone by a chauffeur, and even more by a hotel hall-

porter. The knowledge of this makes him ashamed of his uniform,

and to some extent the service it represents suffers in consequence.

Let him show off the red or the blue which he is proud of wearing,

and he will indicate the fact in his carriage and his manner

generally, and other men will want to wear it too. Everybody,

white or black, likes show, everybody likes glitter ; it is useless

to deny the fact, it is human nature. Thousands will admire a

monarch in uniform, while a president in mufti in the same pro-

cession will pass unnoticed, and those men who decry this failing

have usually a particularly gaudy dress which even they them-

selves graciously consent to wear occasionally — and are strangely

anxious for decorations on it too — or else they don some extra-

ordinary attire that will secure their being noticed at all times.

Even in our churches the apostles are never depicted in the clothes

which they probably wore, but in most brilliant garments which,

being but poor men, they could not possibly have afforded. We

like to have those we honour worth looking at, and the higher

they are the better we expect them to appear. There is this

difference between the tastes of white men and women, namely,

that women (and native men) love glitter simply for the sake of

the glitter, European men value it for what it means, though" the

greater the amount of gold lace the higher the rank, usually, at

any rate in olden times. Women long for a diamond necklace or

pendant (6 because it is so pretty " ; men prize a star because it

signifies good service in some capacity or other. We see in the

streets messenger-boys covered with more medals than a Crimean

veteran, hall-porters wearing field-officers , caps and sleeves, and

tramwaymen (in Bournemouth at any rate) wearing corporal's

rank-badges. In fact, in that same southern city the men who

look after the chairs on the beach are known as " authorised

officers.'''' It is a great pity to cheapen the uniform and the grades

of rank, and to make them look ridiculous in this manner, and a

Uniform Proclamation seems as badly wanted in England as in

Nigeria, especially since medals are but seldom given for active

service in West Africa nowadays.

In a new country such as Northern Nigeria one cannot expect

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too much in the way of organisation ; and though there were many

glowing reports about the substitution of the police for the soldiers,

the sums for the provision of uniforms, accoutrements, &c., were

not so easy to get at. I borrowed some carbines from the officer

commanding the Waff Company, aud after a time I even managed

to get some military capes from headquarters (the buttons being,

however, forgotten), and it was a strange sight to see a guard turn-

ing out with great solemnity in capes (hooked only at the neck,

and showing an expanse of bare black tummy beneath), and Yoruba

caps and loin-cloths, the men quite believing that they were a very

important part of the forces of the Empire ! I can hardly look at

the photograph now without smiling, but it would never have done

to have shown my amusement then, for they would have been hurt

and discouraged, and I do not think that I wanted to smile then

either, for honest endeavour is always worthy of respect, and, also,

I was perhaps as keen as they were.

The Yoruba has been given very different characters by different

men; some say that he is very brave, and certainly in the last

Ashanti Expedition Yoruba soldiers did splendidly ; others hold

that he is not, and point to regrettable incidents. There is no

doubt that the Yoruba is much cleaner and smarter in every way

than the Hausa or Nupe, and in a company containing, say fifty

Hausas, fifty Nupes, and ten Yorubas, at least five of the latter

would be N.C.O.'s. Perhaps this is due to some extent to the fact

that the Yoruba is a much merrier soul than the others, he catches

the eye sooner, he is more careful about his appearance, he salutes

smartly (and that always goes a great way towards promotion), and

he is a good drill. Whether he is braver, or is even as brave

as the Hausa, and whether he is as good under continued hard-

ships, is not so certain ; I think on the whole the latter is to be

preferred, but it is a strange fact that the Hausas have never been

able to do much unless led by strangers (the Filani, or us), whereas

most other tribes have done well under their own commanders.

I had several old soldiers amongst the police recruits, they

being usually appointed to act as N.C.O.'s to instruct their more

ignorant comrades, and it was amusing at times to hear them

showing off their knowledge of English, in which language the

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executive words of command are always given. Some of these

instructors pronounced the usual orders in very good English, but

if explanations were required afterwards, there was usually rather

a hash. For instance : —

" Company will move to the ri — t in fours ; form fours, ri — t/ 1

And then, if a mistake was made, " Wass matta, you, Ojo, you no

sabby urn proppa, you fool-man too much. 11

Others had to give all the embellishments in their native

tongue, which might be Hausa, Nupe, or Yoruba, such as, taking

the first tongue : —

" Company will advance — berri, berri, sai na gaya ma-ku. By

the left — Kai Momo, ba ka iya berri ba ? Quick march. Han-

kalli, hankalli, duba hagunku. 11

But I think one of the funniest was a Yoruba corporal whose

little knowledge of English proved a very dangerous thing to him,

for while really shamefully abusing himself, he quite thought that

he was venting his justifiable anger and contempt upon the recruit.

As the latter believed it also, perhaps no harm was done, but it

was difficult to keep a straight face when this sort of thing

went on : —

" Wass matta me-you no sabby ri — t turn ? Me-you no sabby

not'ing ; me-you damn fool too much ! 11

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CHAPTER IV

HEADQUARTERS

I ARRIVED back from sick leave in June 1904, and as I had

been promoted during my absence to be Staff Officer of

Police — which, strangely enough, was a rank, not merely an

appointment — I now proceeded to headquarters at Zungeru. The

Police soon afterwards became Constabulary, and though the new

name was, no doubt, an improvement on the old one, the pay and

duties remained the same, so there was no real advantage.

Lokoja was the first and the most natural capital, as every one

coming to Northern Nigeria in the old days had to pass through

this town. But later on it was considered to be too far to the

south, and that a site nearer the great Filani Empire of Sokoto

ought to be chosen, and so Jebba was fixed upon as the head-

quarters when the Government took over the, control from the

Niger Company in 1900, and it remained so for some three years,

except during a temporary period of aberration at Kwendon,

which is not now known to fame except for the amount of

cement wasted there. Jebba, however, became unsuitable in many

respects, especially after Kano and Bornu had come under control,

and Dungeru (altered to Zungeru because Z looked u more

native ") was the next, a small village in a poor country, hard

to get at, and always short of food. It was an unhappy selection,

and ever since envious eyes have been cast on Zaria, an ideal

situation in my opinion, and it is quite possible that headquarters

may be established there later.

In case the above remarks appear to be too severe, let me add

that these changes were not at all merely at the whims and fancies

of the High Commissioner. Although unsuitable as far as health

was concerned, political and military reasons made a move to the

north necessary, and the High Commissioner could not possibly

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know everything about the country ; besides, Jebba was the old

Waff headquarters, and Sir Frederick Lugard could afford to make

some mistakes in his choice of a capital, for his administration

otherwise was magnificent. His knowledge of the details of every

department was astonishing; and although he expected every

official to do two men's work on half-a-man's pay, he set the

example himself by covering an amount of ground that would

keep six ordinary persons occupied even in a healthy country.

A very dark, intense-looking man, one felt that he knew his

business — and yet, I think, he was sometimes imposed upon by

persons who understood the art of talking quite as well as (or

even better than) the art of working. I suppose every one has

a weak spot which can be found by an expert, and no doubt

I have often been taken in myself when least expecting it. I

remember at Sierra Leone receiving presents of bananas from

a private of the West African Regiment who was always on

the spot asking if he could not do something or other for me.

I wanted to pay him for the fruit, but he refused to accept

anything, saying that I was his father and mother and a few

other people, and that his gifts were made solely on account of

his natural love and affection for me. I was very much pleased

to find a contradiction to the arguments of some of the officers

who (having had more experience of the Coast) said that there

was no such thing as gratitude in the negro's nature, but after

a few days the man asked me when he was going to get his

stripe, and I remembered that there was a vacancy for a lance-

corporal. He did not get it, poor fellow — such disinterested

concern for my wants seemed worthy of a better reward — but

I paid him the full market price for what he had given me,

and, strange to say, my relationship as father, mother, protector

and a few other people seemed before long to have entirely faded

from his mind.

I did not remain in Zungeru very long, but went to Lokoja,

and was soon afterwards appointed to act as Assistant-Commis-

sioner; but I paid a visit to the capital at Christmas time in

order to be examined in the Lower Standard in Hausa, being

fortunate enough to be placed first on the list. I had passed

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A New Force

When I raised the Police in Ilorin there were only four sets of uniform available, and

these were worn by the N. CO. 's. Military capes (minus the buttons) had been provided,

however, and the P.C.'s wore these over their ordinary native dress.

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the army examination in French during my leave, so that made

two languages for the year.

My first patrol (a miniature one) in Northern Nigeria was in

March 1905, when I took a small detachment of constabulary to

the Kukuruku country inland from Egori, and near the Southern

Nigerian border. The chief of a certain town (I forget the name

now) had committed a murder according to our ideas, and he

was wanted by us in Lokoja for trial. It appeared that on the

anniversary of his father's death he had ordered one of his followers

to shoot a stranger with a Dane-gun (to join the late chief in the

realms of bliss, I suppose), and had threatened to kill him

instead if he did not do so. Of course the wretched follower,

in terror of his own life, shot the honoured guest, and then the

chief, fearing trouble with us, seized his man and sent him to

Lokoja accused of the murder. I sent for the chief, but he hid

himself. I again sent for him, and the two police constables

who took the message were fired upon, so it was time to do

something. I therefore took a dozen men down the river and

disembarked at Egori, and a couple of days later we attacked

the place, marching from a town called Asseh by moonlight.

Luckily for us we were not seriously opposed, as after one shot

from them they fled to the bush, and we were unable to pursue

them. We burned the town, however, and later on the chief was

captured, and the district had a much-needed reminder of the

white man's suzerainty. On our side we had a casualty ; my horse,

which soon after our return to Lokoja died through having been

bitten by tsetse-flies, a great curse south of the Benue, except in

the Muri and Yola provinces, where horses can be kept alive with

care. I believe I was the first European to keep his horse at

Amar during the wet season, my horse-boy smearing the animal

with a mixture of tobacco, onions, and grease every morning and

evening.

At one of the towns which I passed when returning to Egori

I was called upon to try my first case by native custom. It

appeared that one of the parties had given the other a goat

to keep for him, and that there had been a dispute about the

offspring. Both agreed that in such cases the first kid became

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the property of the person looking after the goat, and that the

second belonged to the real owner of the mother, but whereas

the owner said that he was entitled to the third also, the other

man contended that the custom in such circumstances was for

the people concerned to take the kids alternately. I asked the

chiefs of the respective claimants (parties always appear with, and

sometimes give their evidence through, their chiefs) what the

usage was, and on being informed by both that the owner was

in the wrong, had no difficulty in giving judgment accordingly.

But cases are not always so easily settled, and European travellers

are often placed in positions of difficulty, for they are nearly

always called upon to judge some case or other, either because

the contestants have no faith in the justice of their chief, or

because the latter is afraid of incurring the hostility of one

party or the other and is only too glad to get out of his awkward

position, or again because the white man is regarded by all as a

messenger from the gods, or as a resurrected ancestor.

At Asseh, where I stayed a day and left my horse when going

to the Kukuruku town — the road being too rough for him — many

of the adult women were stark naked, although the people seemed

of quite a good type, and although there was a French mission in

the town, and this is the only district where I have noticed this,

adult women at any rate wearing some kind of protection or other,

even if it consisted only of leaves, though young girls go quite

naked in almost every part of Northern Nigeria.

After the little trip to the Kukuruku country I visited

Dekina to inspect the Bassa detachment of Constabulary, and in

the April following I was appointed to act as Commissioner in

command of the Constabulary, which consisted of 1210 officers

and men.

On this I again returned to Zungeru, travelling up the river in

a "swine," with most of my heavy kit in a canoe lashed to the side

— a most unfortunate arrangement, as the waterproof sheet caught

fire, and the boxes were swamped by the wash of the " swine," so

that when I opened them I found pieces of my kodak, soap, papers,

&c, floating about anyhow, boots, sword-belt, and other leather

articles in a beautiful state of mould, and collars stained in most

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brilliant tints, and useless then, though quite the height of fashion

now, perhaps.

I rather enjoyed being head of a department, and did not at

all like relinquishing the command four months later. But I do

not think that my ideas of the position quite equalled the imagina-

tion of the native clerks who sent a petition to the Acting High

Commissioner, Mr. (now Sir William) Wallace, asking that he him-

self should lay the chief foundation stone of their new church, and

that twelve Heads of Departments should lay lesser ones. For

obvious reasons this was refused, though we all turned up in force

to see our popular chief trying to look serious for the occasion,

and to admire the latest fashions worn by the coloured gentlemen

and their mammies.

Some little time before, sports contests had been arranged

between Zungeru and Lokoja, in horse-racing, shooting, polo and

lawn tennis, and in the September the Lokoja teams arrived for a

week's amusement, the Zungeru representatives having visited

them the year previously. I played in the lawn-tennis match, and

this was my only appearance in these contests, as I was never in

headquarters again on the dates when they took place. It is quite

a good idea, for a holiday and change of air during the tour does

one a lot of good, but unfortunately military officers are usually

the only ones who can take these little jaunts, most of the civilians

having no one who can do their special work in their absence.

I had a trip to Kontagora to inspect the detachment there, and

brought back a gun which had been handed over by the Waff'

detachment. It was, of course, very heavy, and the rivers were

full, and crossing in a canoe weighed down to within half an inch

of the gunwale made me exceedingly uncomfortable. However,

there were no regrettable incidents in connection with the big gun,

though there was a nasty accident with the small one.

I usually started my marches before daybreak, especially if

intending to do over a dozen miles, and as there was often a

chance of getting a partridge or a guinea-fowl near one of the

villages, or near water after dawn, my house-boy, Momo Kano, was

given the double-barrelled gun to carry, with orders to keep up

close behind me. He had always done so before, but one morning

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when returning from Kontagora he put it, loaded, on top of the

pile of chairs, catching it in the rope so that it should not slip out.

While halted for breakfast I saw a brace of birds walking in the

grass quite close to where I was sitting, so I called for the gun,

and Momo, in a hurry, and not looking what he was doing, caught

it by the muzzle. Suddenly there was a report, and something

swished by me, and then there was a yell, and I saw poor Momo

lying on the ground. I found that about one-half of the charge

had passed through his knee, and that he had lost part of the palm

of one hand, the hammer having evidently been caught in one of

the ropes binding the chairs together. It was a wonder that he

escaped with his life. He was, of course, quite unable to 'walk,

and was in awful pain, so I constructed a hammock with a water-

proof sheet, and had him carried to the next stage. We had

still two days to travel to reach Zungeru, and the agony that

poor boy must have suffered can only be imagined (I could

sympathise with him, having had a night and a day in an ambu-

lance waggon in South Africa, after a bullet had gone through my

ankle), and it was a great relief to hand him over to one of the

doctors at the native hospital on arrival. The accident was due

entirely to his own disobedience, so I had nothing to blame myself

with, but no matter what is the cause, one feels just as sorry when

the harm is done, especially when one cannot do much to ease

the pain.

By the way, a waterproof sheet is one of the most useful things

which one can take to West Africa. When in quarters it acts as

a carpet, or as a ceiling, or if the roof of a hut be leaky, the sheet

can be tied on outside. When travelling in the rains it is almost

indispensable, protecting special loads (particularly stationery or

bedding) when on the march, or if large enough, it may be con-

verted into a raft or a hammock, and it is an excellent adjunct to

a tent, either outside the fly, on the ground, or arranged so as to

form a verandah in front. Last of all, if a trench is dug (as for a

raft), the sheet can be placed in it and then filled with water, and

a very excellent bath is the result. It should be of Willesden

canvas, and as large and strong as possible, the cost of the extra

weight being well repaid by the gain in the utility of the article.

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In the October following I went to Zaria to sit for the Higher

Standard in Hausa, and I was very anxious to pass, as no one had

up to that time been successful. I got through only one-half,

and although the examiner wrote very nice things to Sir Frederick

about my industry, this partial failure proved very unfortunate, as I

had to wait over three years before being able to go to Zaria again

to complete the examination. At that time all the tests were con-

ducted by Dr. Miller of the C.M.S., a very fine Hausa scholar, and

it was only by going to Zaria, where he was stationed, or by meet-

ing him when passing through Zungeru, that candidates could be

tested. Needless to say, it was often impossible for an official to

leave his work for a period long enough to enable him to visit

Zaria (a fortnight from Zungeru), and he might be on leave when

Dr. Miller was passing through headquarters, so very few had the

opportunity of being examined. Now, Boards composed of any one

who has passed, or even single individuals, conduct the tests, so

candidates are more likely to be able to arrange, but whereas

Dr. Miller maintained a high and a uniform standard, there seems

to have been a sad falling off since in both directions. Still,

examinations ought not to be too difficult in such a country, for

the long hours necessary for the performance of official duties, the

heat, and the general discomfort are not conducive to extra brain

work, the "stewing" being naturally more bodily than mental.

Momo started off with me to Zaria, refusing to be left behind,

but he fell on a sharp rock en route, and I had to arrange for him

to stay at a native village, picking him up on my return. When

I went on leave I again placed him in hospital, and he was quite

happy this time, winding and rewinding a cuckoo-clock, which

lasted exactly two days, I was told afterwards.

Momo was not the only cripple on the journey, though, for

I had erysipelas in both my legs before leaving Zungeru, and

I rather dreaded the ride to Zaria ; in fact the doctor attending

the " case " wanted to invalid me to England, and it was only

after great argument that he consented to certify me as fit to go.

And my arguments proved to be correct, for although I started

off wearing long Hausa boots of soft leather, not being able to

endure the hard English articles, within a week I was quite well,

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the benefit from the change of air more than counteracting

the irritation of the saddle and stirrups. Men stationed in the

bush have a great advantage over their comrades in the canton-

ments, and those in the political department score over those

in the secretariat, in that they have to do a certain amount of

touring, and at one time this fact was recognised in the times of

service, the former having to do eighteen months in the country,

the latter only twelve. There is still a difference, for every one

now has to serve for a year actually in his station, unless pre-

viously invalided, of course, and so those who have to travel

further do not begin to count their tours of duty so soon as those

staying at Lokoja or Zungeru. Still, all these arrangements

are merely theoretical, for invaliding interferes with them very

badly at times, and I remember that while I was acting as

Commissioner of Police we had four districts without any officer

at all, though one and a half were allowed for each province.

At Zaria I had my first experience of a real harmattan, which

lasts from the end of October to the end of March (correspond-

ing, of course, to the dry season), though it varies very much in

density. It is a wind from the Sahara, and is in consequence

extremely dry — so dry, in fact, that men's lips and skin crack, and

their throats and noses become very sore. An extremely fine

dust is usually held suspended in the air, which at times is almost

motionless, and this may cause such a haze (hazo is the Hausa

name, strangely enough) that it is extremely difficult to dis-

tinguish objects even at a hundred yards' distance. The tempera-

ture, too, becomes lowered, a great-coat and perhaps also a

sweater being necessary between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 a.m.,

though the rest of the day is hot enough to suit most people.

The cold nights are extremely refreshing, and this is much the

best season of the year for travelling, since one can be certain of

keeping dry, and most of even the big rivers will not be very

\* formidable. It is only in the Sudan that the real harmattan

is met with, for as one gets nearer to the sea-coast it is not so

much pronounced, and on the actual coast-line there seems to be

more vapour than dust. I enjoyed the Zaria harmattan very

much, a hot day and a cold night being the very height of bliss

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(as any one who has lived in Australia will agree), but many men

dislike it exceedingly, as they — and most natives — suffer more

with fever and chest affections at that time than at any other.

A bungalow is quite alarming at this time, the rapid change of

temperature (perhaps over 40° in twelve hours, causing the tin

roofs to bend in and out with loud reports, any empty kerosene

tins in the neighbourhood joining in the chorus.

After the examination I returned to Zungeru, and then to

England via Lokoja, as well as I had ever been during the tour

of over eighteen months"' duration, and the sea air completed the

cure. With the return to civilisation one has to bind oneself up

again in tight collars and braces, and very uncomfortable they

feel at first. But at the end of a tour one will put up with a good

many little inconveniences to get home, for although West Africa

is a beautiful and a fascinating land, England is not such a bad

country either.

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CHAPTER V

A BENUE PROVINCE

T RETURNED to Northern Nigeria in July 1906, and went

I to Amar, the then headquarters of the Muri province, on

the Benue river, a poisonous spot which has since been

abandoned.

During my leave I had put in two terms at Christ's College,

Cambridge, under the Hausa Scholarship conditions, and had

passed the examinations at Hythe in Musketry (being fortunate

enough to be placed second on the list), at Erith in the Maxim

gun, at Woolwich in Transport, and at London for an Army

Interpreter's certificate in Hausa. And although rather pleased

at the time, I feel now that it was a mistake to have done so

much, for I had only some twenty-one days' holiday out of the

leave of over six months in England, and I went back to West

Africa feeling tired before I had recommenced my work there.

After a tour in the tropics a man wants a thorough rest, not more

worry, and although all who like to take courses of instruction

should receive some advantage afterwards in the matter of pay

and promotion, there ought to be no compulsion in the matter

as there is now, though the work I did was purely voluntary.

Unfortunately, it is by no means certain that such courses will

advantage one in any way, and until the process of promotion by

selection was checked some time ago there was very great dissatis-

faction. To some extent the regulations of the Colonial Office, as

regards civil officials not yet confirmed in their appointments, are

those of the Star Chamber, for a man who has served for less than

three years in West Africa can be accused, judged, and punished

without being able to say a word in his own defence. It is only

fair to state that such powers are but seldom used, but the powers

are there, the regulations being quite clear on the subject.

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However, to return to the Benue. Some six of us left Lokoja

on the 8th of August in a stern-wheeler, and a week afterwards

arrived at A mar, or rather, Amara, as the natives called it —

though they could hardly be expected to know, of course. It is

difficult to conceive why such a spot was chosen ; the station was

established on a swamp, there was no decent landing-place, and

the native village, about two miles off, was not of any size. A

little to the south is Ibi, the old Niger Company's headquarters,

an important town on the trade routes, much more healthy,

accessible, and better in every way, yet it was deliberately aban-

doned for Amar, which has in turn been left, Ibi having again

come into its own. Somewhat similar errors were made in the

sites of Kontagora and (I am told) Yola, Kano, and other places,

but I can only write for certain of those I myself have seen.

However, in the Year of Grace 1906 we were stationed at

Amar, so there I went and had to stay. There were two bungalows

in the station at that time, one having two, the other three

occupants, and as the new Resident was reported to be accom-

panied by his wife there was likely to be a squash, so I deter-

mined to build a mud house for myself, utilising some spare

galvanised iron for the roof, and covering it with grass mats to

keep it cool enough to be bearable. Luckily for me, a bricklayer,

trained by the Public Works Department, had just been im-

prisoned for assault or some such offence, so he was put to the

work of building the walls, having some other convicts to aid

him, and on the arrival of a party of carpenters from Yola just

about the time that the walls were finished, the roof was put on,

the whole being completed in less than a month.

The new Resident, who was an old acquaintance — we having

fought in the same district in South Africa, and having been

in the Portland Hospital together — arrived in the October follow-

ing, bringing his wife, the first white lady to come up so far.

Women are sometimes not too welcome at bush stations for

various considerations, but, as I have said before, if every man

could bring out wife or sister, the health statistics would show

a great improvement, and it is hard on the wives to be always

left behind. This ladv quickly made herself welcome, and not

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only were the signs of a woman's management soon evident in

the arrangements of the Resident's table, but she used to give

our cooks lessons in cookery — an art of which, in spite of their

positions, they had been quite innocent up to that time.

Early in the October following I paid a visit to Wase, a large

town near the Bauchi border. It is mainly notable for a high

oblong rock, the Dutsin Wase, which can be seen for miles around,

being quite detached from the mountain chain a few miles to the

north, and standing up in the clear atmosphere like a thick

Cleopatra's Needle. It has the appearance of being covered with

snow, the white being due to the birds, and is altogether quite a

fine sight. It is, or -was, of course, sacred, and all sorts of evils

were supposed to befall a man rash or impious enough to attempt

to climb it — a feat almost impossible of accomplishment on three

sides, and very difficult, though I believe possible, on the fourth.

It seems to be splitting asunder, but not knowing how many

years the rent has been in developing to its present extent, it is

impossible to say whether the rock will eventually come in two or

not. Possibly the fear of the spirits is inspired by the troops of

baboons which inhabit many of these high hills — Patti in Lokoja,

for instance — for one of the Assistant Residents then with me at

Amar was killed and thrown down by these animals from a some-

what similar mountain in Bauchi country the following year, the

reputation of the locality being, naturally, greatly enhanced since

even a white man was powerless against the Guardian Spirits.

At Wase I got fresh milk and butter, and they were very

welcome, being, with the exception of the delicacies obtained on

my visit to Zaria, the first I had ever had in Northern Nigeria.

The surrounding country is park-like, the trees being low and

sparse, the land fertile, and the climate fairly healthy. In the

vicinity are natural salt deposits, a very valuable asset, though

the native trade has, of course, suffered through the introduction

of our more refined article by white traders on the Benue.

The chief then in power was a handsome old man who had

fought us and been beaten ; he is, I think, dead now. It is the

custom with Filani for the chief and his great men to mount and

meet a distinguished stranger (which category, of course, includes

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any official) some distance outside the town, and to escort him

with drumming and trumpeting to his lodging — often in the

chiefs own home, unless a rest-house has been built by the

Government. He then pays a ceremonial visit to the stranger,

and afterwards sends presents (sic), and these are later on paid

for by the recipient in cash or kind of equal value, and the visit

is returned. On the visitor's departure, the chief again escorts

him on his journey for about an hour, or as far as some river or

his boundary, or until told to return. In addition to the drum-

mers and trumpeters meeting the stranger, there are some Masu-

bam-maganna (" makers of big words who call out in a loud

voice all the virtues, real or imaginary, of the stranger, the chief,

and the counsellors — and are suitably rewarded afterwards. Kola-

nuts nearly always form part of a ceremonial present, a great

number of them being brought overland through Sokoto and

French territory from Ashanti to the northern provinces, and

by sea to the southern districts and to Lagos, numbers of the

kola-nut traders being taken on board at various ports along

the Gold Coast.

On the King's birthday (November 24th in the Colonies) we

had u Garrison Sports " at Amar, the competitors being the

Waffs, the police, and the carpenters, the former winning the

greater number of the events, but being beaten in the great

" Half-mile Championship " by a police recruit, Alii Gishiri

(Alii " Salt "), so called by me on account of his previous occu-

pation, and to distinguish him from the numerous other Allis

in the detachment, who was quite a good man though not par-

ticularly intelligent. I here saw the Bull-fight for the first time,

but as it will be described in a later chapter I need not now

make further mention of it.

An amusing feature of these sports is u The Mammies 1 Race,"

the various dusky wives and maidens, although exceedingly

bashful and coy when first persuaded to compete, making no

secret of their wish to win the prize when once they have started.

But let the officers holding the tape at the winning-post beware,

for sometimes one or two of the older ones pretend that they

cannot stop, and run into them on purpose, clasping them around

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neck or waist, and wickedly trying to upset both their equilibrium

and their dignity. Another " good turn " is " nosing " for toros

(threepenny-pieces, sarcastically called elephants), in a pan of

flour, the black perspiring faces of the contestants — whose hands

are tied behind their backs — presenting a weird spectacle when

plastered with white, and reminding one of the Bundu girls in

Sierra Leone.

The trouble begins when the races are over, for no native can

(or will) see that only the winners should have the prizes. " As

all ran all ought to have prizes " is their argument, and they will

not be convinced to the contrary, while often their excuse for not

competing in an event is not that they cannot run well enough,

but simply that they did not receive anything on a previous

occasion. It is strange, too, because competitions for prizes are

known to them ; had we introduced the idea one could account

for their not understanding it.

One of their contests is boxing or dambe, in which both hands

and feet are used. One hand is bandaged round and round so as

to be fairly soft — like a boxing glove — the other being either

held behind the back or used to ward off blows. Some of the

men are very clever at this game, making a feint with the fist

and then landing a foot even as high as the opponent's jaw,

either by swinging the body to one side and bringing the leg

round at the same time as if falling, or even by jumping up in

the air. It is very difficult to get any adult to do this for an

exhibition, as, although they will encourage youths to hurt each

other, they seem to have a modest aversion to doing the same

themselves. And yet no one can say that they are cowardly in

any way, for they love a battle, and many of them hunt wild

beasts, and the bull-fighting is dangerous enough to please any-

body — even the spectators, for I have felt extremely uncomfort-

able on several occasions when the men behind holding the

leg-rope did not stop the animal as soon as they had intended,

and the rapid way in which the onlookers made themselves

scarce was quite worth seeing.

At Christmas time there were the usual celebrations. A

Britisher always tries (and usually contrives) to get his turkey

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and "duff" for these times, wherever he may be. Plum-pudding

is slightly rich and heavy for the tropics, but no one could

develop a proper Christmas feeling without it, so it always forms

part of the menu ; and for the other courses chop-boxes are

routed out for something that will resemble what we know our

people will be having at home. Duck, green peas, apple-sauce,

potatoes, asparagus, &c, may appear in the menu, and these do

not sound like roughing it ; alas, they come but seldom in the

bush, for the cost of transport puts a limit to the number of

chop-boxes brought up, and, even when these delicacies are pro-

curable, the ducks are mostly skin and bone, the peas are tinned,

pale, and tasteless, the potatoes are really yams or perhaps

dessicated chips, the apple-sauce is made from dried rings which

have lost their flavour, the asparagus is not very tasty, and the

butter is rancid. Still, there is one article of diet which one can

recognise, the onion, and that plays an important part in the

dishes of the West African. But what matters it? We have

met to eat, drink, and be merry, and we succeed in all, for we

cannot afford to waste any chances of enjoyment. I suppose

out of every party of, say, a dozen, one dies or retires during the

following year, and at least two others are invalided. It has

often been said that Englishmen take their pleasures sadly — that

is why we attend both funerals and balls in black perhaps ; but

we do not do so in West Africa — we have to be as jolly as possible

on these festive occasions to make up for the fits of depression at

other times, and perhaps the white mess dress and gaudy kamar-

band help towards the merriment, for most of us are greatly

influenced by colour.

In the January of 1907 I went out for a tour to the south

with an escort of twenty-five men, and slept the night at Gassol.

The chief, or Yerima, of this place having been deposed, I posted

a guard on his house, and next day the new chief was installed,

the property belonging to the sarauta (office) being handed over

to him on appointment. This is, of course, distinct from the

personal effects of the chief, and consists mainly of horses,

equipment, arms, drums, trumpets, and other articles of a

like nature, necessary and appropriate to the chieftainship,

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and is always handed over to the successor to the office, the

purely personal effects going to the family of the last holder — or

being taken by the owner himself if merely deposed.

After this had been done I went on to Bakunde, a large town

near the frontier of the German colony of Kamerun, and also

close to Adamawa, sending a message to the chief to meet me in

the usual manner, with flute, trumpet, drum, and other instruments

of music and torture. This, however, he neglected to do, though

a few of the elders escorted us to quarters in the town, and

supplied the usual presents — and I the usual payment — the

chief being both ill in his house and away to the south, accord-

ing to different accounts. He had refused to obey certain

orders of the Resident, and I had to try to persuade him to

listen to reason, but as he feared that I had come to arrest

him, he would not come near me, and so I did not have a

chance to exercise my eloquence. Each day a different story was

told as to his whereabouts, and as I could not afford to sit down

doing nothing, I went south again and visited some towns on the

Kamerun boundary; in fact, I got over it once by mistake.

There had been a fight in which some casualties occurred

between the quarters of a town called Abushishi, and as the

Sa(r)rikin Bakunde was headman of the district in which the

town was situated, and according to one account he had gone

there to make the peace, I went to see if I could patch up the

quarrel. I camped in the quarter of the people injured, and

sent a message to the others who had provoked the hostilities to

come in and see me, and this a few of them did, appearing to be

quite friendly, but on leaving they fired a couple of shots at us,

and then made off to their hills. I therefore went at dawn next

day to surprise them, but found that every one had bolted, and not

being able to do any more we burned the village and returned,

capturing, however, some fowls, which I awarded to the people of

the injured quarter as compensation.

Next we proceeded along the boundary to Wanka, a collection

of scattered villages, on the peaceful though unpleasant errand of

reminding them that tribute was due, but there was no excitement

here of any kind, nor could we get into touch with the people, so

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we had perforce to return, leaving instructions with friendly

natives on the way back to persuade the Wanka people to

pay up.

The people about here are great elephant hunters, shooting

thick poisoned arrows or harpoons into the animals from Dane-

guns, and following the beasts until the poison takes effect and

they drop. By the way, where do they get Dane-guns? The

Niger Company is allowed to sell a few under rigid restrictions

(the importation of firearms into Northern Nigeria being

forbidden), but it seemed to me that they were fairly common,

and numbers must have been smuggled over the frontier, as is the

case with liquor.

From there I went to Suntai, where we had the regular but

solitary February tornado, and thence to Wurrio and back to

Amar, having been away twenty-five days, and having covered

381 miles. In some parts the paths were too stony and deep for

my mount, and I had to walk about one-half of the way. I had

a good little pony, and a cheap one too, for it cost me only £3,

and was a splendid goer, bat I could not train him to draw a

cart which I made from packing-cases. The Taraba and the

Benue were both fordable when we returned ; in the latter river

the water would have been only up to my ankles when on

horseback had not the pony sat down in the middle of the

stream and so caused me to be wetted through, a little

accident that gave me nearly a week's fever after my return.

There was not much excitement in Amar itself. We used to

play lawn-tennis on a mud court which was so soft that a swift

serve would raise a cloud of dust or leave a deep scar, but the

afternoon game played between 5 and 6.30 p.m. was always

looked forward to, and it was very good exercise. In fact, I

think that it is about the best game for such a country, for

it can be sufficiently strenuous while it lasts, a player can

always leave off' when he has had enough, and he is actually

playing all the time, not watching or standing in the cold as

in some others, or walking a mile to have one hit, as in a certain

royal and ancient pastime. Of course, the preparation of the

court is the trouble, and a good one always costs money. In the

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cantonments cement is used, but this does not seem satisfactory,

as it soon cracks ; the glare is very trying, and the balls, which

speedily become the same colour as the court, are hard to

distinguish. In Australia, asphalte courts are the rule, and

lawn-tennis can be played all the year round. In fact, in

Victoria at any rate, it is a winter game, the matches for the

premiership all being played from April to October. The

advantage of a hard court is that it can be swept and dried

directly the rain has stopped, and it does not want rolling or

cutting, but it is expensive so far as shoes and balls are concerned,

and hardly as comfortable to the soles of the feet as grass is, the

ankles also suffering from the jar.

In the April following, I went to Ibi to arrange for the

transport of some convicts coming from Bauchi, but having, on

behalf of the Resident, to see some chiefs with reference to a

boundary dispute, I went first to Bantaji and then up from

there. It was very hot on the day I arrived at Ibi, and I

hurried over the last few miles to get in before the Niger

Company's store closed, as I had been looking forward to

some " bottled n — and it was good when I got it at last.

And, strange to say, a couple of Waff officers, who arrived

just afterwards, had the same opinion ; at least, they appeared

to have it. One was going to Munchi country, the other, I

think, to Bauchi, and while waiting at Ibi I passed him in the

Hausa Colloquial Test (success in a higher grade entitling one

to examine in a lower), thus, I trust, cheering him upon his

way. After a few days at Ibi, I returned to Amar, starting

a fortnight later for Ankwoi country.

For some time there had been trouble on the road between

Wase and Ibi, the main trade route from Bauchi to the Benue,

numerous complaints having been received of highway robberies

by people belonging to villages just to the north of the road and

at the base of the Moffat Mountains, so the Resident and I con-

cocted a scheme to give the people a lesson once and for all.

These culprits were a mixture of Langtangs, Ankwois, Yerg-

hums, and a number of outcasts and tawaye (rebels) from other

tribes, and when the roads, a foot or so in width, were bordered

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in the rainy season by grass over a dozen feet high, and wound

in and out amongst the rocks and trees, the robbers had quite an

ideal time — for robbers — being able to await their victims unseen,

and to get away if necessary without much danger of subsequent

pursuit.

I therefore sent a party of police in plain clothes, and with

their wives, to Wase to find out the exact locality of these crimes,

and followed on a day later with the remainder of the escort. I

then disguised myself as a Filani chief, and set out with a small

party, the women walking in front, some of the men carrying their

arms in bundles on their heads, while about half a mile behind

came the rest of the force. For a time there was no excitement,

but when we had gone about ten miles some men armed with bows

and arrows stopped the women, and told the men as they came up

to put down their loads. This was what we had been waiting for,

and the police threw down their bundles, snatched up their car-

bines, and bolted into the bush on each side of the road as if to

escape, thus surrounding the robbers, and within a few seconds

we had bagged the lot. The women were again sent forward as

before, and after we had handed the prisoners over to the police

in rear we started off once more, and succeeded in performing the

trick three times, capturing over a dozen of the robbers before we

reached Donkwon, twenty-two miles from Wase, from which place

on to Ibi the road was safe. It may appear to have been rather

hard on the defenceless women to have been sent ahead, but the

lives of females are always safe in such circumstances, the robbers

wanting only to take their goods. Even in war women are seldom

killed, for they can be used as slaves or wives by their captors,

though in an attack on a town no doubt many women and children

lose their lives. To make certain that this will not happen during

any of our patrols, we always give the people notice that we shall

advance after a definite time (pointing to where the sun will then

be), and warn them to get their non-combatants to a safe place

beforehand if they mean to resist.

Thence we went to Sendam, the Ankwoi capital, and other

places to receive outstanding tribute, returning to Amar on the

8th of June, and I think that the lesson taught was sufficient for

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the time, for there had not been any more robberies up to the

time when I last heard, though I do not suppose for a moment

that there will never be any more, for nothing is permanent in

West Africa — except the native's love of loot, and the malaria.

The thing which struck me most in the Ankwoi country was

the absence of hyenas and vultures, and this was explained by the

chief on the ground that the people are very clean in their habits.

This is perhaps true, for Amar was full of hyenas, there being

hardly a night but one or more would be prowling around. I

have never yet heard a hyena laugh ; the sound — or at any rate

the commonest one in West Africa — is more like a steam syren,

and this has struck the natives also, for they call the syrens on the

river boats hum, i.e. hyena. One old lion could often be heard

grunting on the other side of the river, but no one ever went to

look for him, because it would have meant sitting up all night

and being eaten alive by mosquitoes. Lady Constance Stewart-

Richardson and her husband got some of these animals a month

or two later, one of the party being badly mauled. Leopards also

are very plentiful, and wild game — hartebeeste, antelope, &c. —

can be seen in hundreds near Sendridi in the dry season. I re-

member on return from Ibi being struck with Lady Constance's

dress — short blue knickers, bare knees, long boots, shirt, belt, and

helmet — which, except for the long hair, w r as exactly the same as

my own ; but it was a very sensible outfit for the country, and a

woman brave enough to run the risks she did would be compelled

to dispense with the conventional attire ; that of a " boy scout M

suited her excellently.

I set several traps for hyenas, but the only things I ever

managed to catch were a dog, and a carrier who was not looking

where he was going. The plan of the trap was rather good, and

may be worth giving. Two concentric circles were drawn on the

ground of three and nine feet radius respectively ; then the earth

between the perimeters to the depth of about six feet was dug out,

thus leaving an island in the centre of six feet diameter. The

hollow ring was covered over with sticks, grass, earth, &c, and

the ground to a distance of another twelve feet or so surrounding

the trap was disturbed so as to present the same appearance, and

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the goat, or whatever else had been chosen, was placed on the solid

part in the centre. By this means the bait was safe whatever

happened, as if a wild beast was stalking it, taking short steps

with his eye on his prey, he would fall into the hole ; but if he was

more cunning, and found out that the ground in front was not

solid, he would not dare to spring over to the goat, for he would

not know where the solid ground commenced again. There are

other traps, spears hung from trees, &c, but there is no necessity

to describe them here as they are of the type used by many native

hunters, and are well known to everybody.

Amar is the worst place I have ever been in, or want to be in,

so far as insects are concerned ; tsetse-flies bit one all the day —

they give a sharp dig, and are usually off\* before one can hit back —

while mosquitoes were busy all night; in fact, even about 2 p.m.

in the wet season one had to be under a mosquito-net unless sit-

ting in a strong draught, and a cool, dark mud house is a place

they particularly like. Hornets give a very painful sting, and their

white, spongy nests are to be seen in most houses, hanging from the

grass or tin roof, or from trees. They are, however, usually harm-

less unless disturbed, the only occasions on which I was bitten being

once in Jemaa when my house was being repaired, and once on the

road to Kontagora, when, riding along reading, I put my head into

a nest. At Donkwon my baggage got full of fleas, and I could

not get rid of them, for they bred apace in the mud house, and at

last the incessant injections of poison took effect, and I began to

get boils. The Governor inspected the province in September, and

I went back with him to Lokoja and Zungeru, intending to pro-

ceed to Kano, as I had been transferred to the political department

and wished to go to a Hausa Province. However, I was very bad

by this time, and a new order having arrived from the Secretary

of State cutting down the tours of service from eighteen to twelve

months, I was ordered home, having completed a year and a

quarter. As I have said, Amar has now been deserted, the head-

quarters having been re-established at Ibi, from which place they

should never have been removed.

Part of the south-west of the Muri Province is occupied by the

Munshi tribe, one man of whom I enlisted in the police. This

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district was reported to have been entered by " peaceful penetra-

tion," while I was there, but whether the results have come up to

expectations or not I am not prepared to say, as I rather fancy it

might raise a little soreness in certain quarters. But it seemed

rather absurd to suppose that a strong, warlike tribe would submit

without any resistance — I mean that it seemed absurd to me, but

then I was not supposed to know — and other kinds of penetration

have been employed since.

Amar was a great place for proverbs, and when making

the hyena-trap I heard many appropriate examples. The people

w r ere a mixture, but all spoke Hausa, whereas near Bakunde the

country-folk hardly understood that language, though Filani was

well known. Some proverbs about the hyena went :

" If the owner of a goat is not afraid to travel by night, the

owner of a hyena certainly will not be."

" The cry of the hyena and the loss of the goat are one " (i.e.

they occur at the same time).

" If the hyena had a charm for curing smallpox, she would use

it on herself" (cf. our "Physician, heal thyself").

" It would be the height of foolishness for a goat to hail a

hyena."

But hyenas are also very fond of dogs (although even a fox-

terrier and some of the bigger native pets will drive one away

unless caught sleeping), and there are some proverbs on this sub-

ject also, such as :

" The dog and his collar are both the booty of the hyena."

" While the hyena drinks, the dog can only look on."

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CHAPTER VI

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ON my return to Northern Nigeria in July 1908, I was posted

to the Nassarawa Province, most of which was once part of

the Hausa kingdom of Zaria, and at first I was somewhat

disappointed, as I had been expecting to go to Kano to continue

the study of Hausa. But in the end, the order turned out to be

as lucky a one as I could possibly have had, for I came into touch

with many wild tribes, and so was enabled to have the experience

and the work for which I had been hoping. I had re-entered the

University of Cambridge during my leave (this time as a Research

Student in Anthropology), and was, therefore, under an obligation

to write two theses, one for the diploma, another for the degree in

Arts, and as no diploma had then been awarded, I had the chance

of obtaining the first one, and I was naturally very anxious to do

so. Again, apart from selfish motives, the more one mixes with

the uncivilised native, the more one wants to know about him, and

the study of one's fellow-men is a fascinating pursuit when once

one has begun to look for meanings and origins. I had also begun

eating dinners for a Call to the Bar, and had passed a couple of

the necessary examinations, and it was not long before I found that

this course also was very useful, for soon after arrival at Jemaan

Daroro (the headquarters of the administrative division bordering

on the Bauchi and Zaria provinces), I was given the full judicial

powers of life and death — though I am thankful to say that I had

to exercise them to the full extent in only one case.

The internal history of Northern Nigeria for a hundred years

prior to our declaration of a Protectorate was mainly that of the

pastoral tribe of the Filani, and a word or two on these people

may be of use, though there is no need to write more, since I have

already done so in The Niger and the West Sudan.

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It is most probable that they arose somewhere in the Central

Sudan as a result of the intermixture of Berber and also some

Arab males with females of various negro tribes, most of the latter

having been captured in war in all probability; and the site was

probably somewhere near Fezzan — there being much more vegeta-

tion then in the desert regions than there is at present.

Now half-breeds are always looked down upon, and as they in

accordance with the general rule adopted the speech of their

mothers — literally their 6< mother-tongue " — they became estranged

from their fathers' relations. In fact it is quite possible that the

name Peul (red) was given to them by the Berbers in derision in

the same way as Arabs called some mixtures of tribes Habeshi,

and other peoples Kafirs. The Hausas to-day call us more often Ja

(red) than Fa(r)ri (white). The Berber-negro blood resented this,

and when strong enough these half-breeds refused to occupy a

subservient status any longer, and, possibly influenced also by the

fact that the climate was becoming drier, they separated from

their fathers, and proceeded to the hinterland of Morocco, where

they became more firmly welded together, and began to acquire

learning, later on sending their Mallams, or learned men, as

missionaries to several countries. They now developed a national

spirit, as did the Boers in the south of the same continent, and

wishing to hide their humble origin (for they called themselves a

white race) they naturally disowned all connection with the country

they had left, and tried to invent a descent to suit their new aspira-

tions in much the same way as Virgil did for the Romans. They

therefore created a mythical ancestor, as is commonly done, but

not being very certain of their facts nor of what they really

wanted, they described him in various ways. There is a legend

that the people sprang from the marriage of a Hindu and a female

chameleon, evidently invented to account for the different shades

of colour amongst the people, black, brown, light yellowish-brown,

and even white being seen. Another legend gives their descent

from Arabs, another from the Hebrews.

They were evidently of a good though mixed stock, and they

quickly increased in numbers, in learning, and in power, and

began to spread out to the south and west. The first news we

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hear of them is that in the fourteenth century they were living

along the lower course of the Senegal, and coming further south,

though they are said to have records of their presence there for

eight hundred years before that. They continued to spread out,

always seeking fresh pasture-lands for their cattle, and somewhere

about the fifteenth century they reached Northern Nigeria, but

for a long time they had but little power, except in individual

cases, owing to the fact that they were so widely scattered. How-

ever, by the end of the eighteenth century, they had greatly

increased in numbers and influence, and in 1802, after a dispute

with the pagans of Gober, they made war against that tribe, and

encouraged by their victories under Othman dan Fodio, they

declared a jehad against all the neighbouring pagan tribes, and

within a few years had conquered most of the countries between

Gober in the north and the Niger and Benue rivers to the south.

Othman soon resigned the government of his empire to his

son, Mohammed Bello (whom Clapperton saw in Sokoto), and his

nephew, Mohammed ibn Abdullah. BehVs portion of the empire

consisted chiefly of the Hausa States, the people of which are

mostly pagans, who when once conquered, were quite content to let

the Filani look after the government so long as they could follow

their favourite pursuits of agriculture and trade in peace.

The Filani owed a good deal of their success to the super-

stitious dread in which they were held, even the humbler members of

their own tribe being afraid of the powers ascribed to the chiefs,

and another cause was the fact that they preached Islam with

fanatical zeal, and so considered that they had more to gain even

in death than the superstitious pagans. A third reason is that

many of them fought on horseback, and in chain armour, and

these conditions gave them an enormous advantage in open level

country, but many pagan peoples who lived in mountainous

country managed to defy the Filani, and in fact some have not

yet been brought under control even by us. They have small,

well-formed feet and hands, frizzy hair, and slim, shapely bodies.

They are usually good-looking, some of the women being really

beautiful, reminding me very much of some Samoans whom I

once saw in Fiji, and are verv proud. Some of the women

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are loose before marriage but strict afterwards, with others the

opposite is true.

From their centre in Sokoto the Filani spread out in all

directions, Kano and Zaria being amongst the principal cities

taken, Keffi and others in the Nassarawa country falling later;

and soon the surrounding pagan tribes began to realise that

unless they could stem the tide of conquest, they too would ere

long be under the Filani yoke.

About the year 1800, Usuman, a Mallam (learned man or

priest, and sometimes also a magician ; probably our word doctor

corresponds most nearly) of Kebbi near Sokoto, obtained leave

from the Sheik, Othman dan Fodio, to preach the Koran in the

district of Zaria amongst the Filani there, and came to Kachi-

cherri, a pagan country north of Moroa where there was a settle-

ment of his own people. At that time the Filani in that district

had no permanent abodes, but lived in rugas, or collections of

temporary conical grass shelters, with their herds, though they

had established villages in fertile spots where their slaves

(rundawa) were allowed to live and farm on reaching maturity,

the village of Dangoma to the north-west of Jemaan Daroro being

an example. The mallams, however, being often persons of

considerable influence at pagan courts, had permanent houses

when they lived in the tow r ns, and after the conquest — and perhaps

even before — the more powerful chiefs began to prefer the life of

the city to that of the grazing-ground, though that is certainly

not universal even now, many rich chiefs still clinging to their old

modes of life, and refusing to have anything to do with their

brethren of the towns further than selling them milk, butter,

whitewash (from bones), meat, and hides.

The news of the outbreak of the jehad declared by Othman

naturally spread fast, and on the capture of Zaria by Mallam

Musa, the chief of the Kajurawa (in whose country the party

of Filani with Usuman then were) called all his sub -chiefs

together, and decided to wipe out the strangers, fearing that

if he allowed them to live longer in his country he himself and

his people would be conquered later by them.

Nov/, this chief had taken a Filani girl, Indema, as a wife

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some time before, and being very fond of her, and apparently

anxious to obtain her approval, he foolishly told her of the plot

the evening before it was to have been carried into effect.

Naturally, Indema did not relish the prospect of having all her

relatives and other countrymen killed, and she began to wonder

how she could contrive to save them. Shortly afterwards she

began squirming and twisting, and on the chief asking her what

was the matter, she complained of internal pains (stomach-ache is

very common in West Africa), and said that she must have some

medicine from a man at Ungwal Tagamma, where the Filani

were then encamped. The chief, anxious for the health of his

loved one, forgot all about his little indiscretion in revealing the

plot, and said that he would send a slave to get the medicine ;

but Indema said that she must go herself — half the virtue of the

potion consisting in the fact that it must be drunk immediately

after its preparation, and in the mallam's house. So the chief —

as blind as Love and twice as foolish — gave her a cone of salt

(a form of currency in that district even to this day) as a present

for the doctor, and sent her off with a couple of slaves as an

escort.

Although at first helped along, on reaching a stream near

Ungwal Tagamma, Indema seemed to get better, and bidding her

attendants wait at a stream they came to while she bought some

butter, she went on alone, and seeking out Abdurahmanu, the

chief of the Filani there, she told him of the fate which would

overtake him and his people on the following day unless they

could manage to escape. Indema then returned with the butter,

and was evidently much better again, and full of love for the old

chief of the Kajurawa, who no doubt slept the sleep of the just,

dreaming of delicious scenes of slaughter to be enacted on the

morrow, and feeling secure in the fidelity of his beautiful wife.

On Indema's departure, Abdurahmanu at once summoned all

his headmen, and, being accustomed to travel, they all got away

in the night ; so next morning when the Kajurawa assembled for

the feast of blood, they found only the very old and the very

young cattle, which were unable to travel, and so had been

abandoned. The pagans followed the fugitives, who had gone

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to the south-west, as far as the waterfall between Mada(i)kia and

Ivaffanchan, and managed to kill a few of the stragglers, but they

were soon driven off with loss, and the main body of the Filani

escaped. On coming gradually south they expelled the local

people of Daroro, driving them towards the town of Nindam, the

only one now possessed by that tribe.

Indema had not been able to fly also — perhaps, and it is nicer

to think this, she did not attempt to do so, for had she not

returned from Ungwal Tagamma her husband's suspicions would

have been aroused — and the old chief, now seeing through her

treachery, was so furious that he had her thrown into a hole

and stoned to death. The story of Indema moved me strongly

when I heard it from a descendant of one of her family in Jemaan

Daroro, and I could in fancy see the slim, graceful girl, perhaps

not more than sixteen years of age, being brutally smashed to

death for having saved her people. Even Joan of Arc did no

more, and I pictured them in my mind as being something alike —

a foolish fancy, no doubt, but one has many such in West Africa.

Ah, well ! it does not do to dwell on these things ; the deed was

done a long time ago — and it is a cruel country !

The tribes to the east at that time were not hostile, for the

Filani wanted the level country and not the mountainous part in

which the tailed people lived, and they had not yet commenced

the slave-raiding which made them such a curse afterwards all

over Northern Nigeria. At first the fugitives camped near

Dangoma, but about a year afterwards they descended the plateau

and settled on the present site of Jemaan Daroro, the people

gradually spreading over the ground now occupied by the town.

While living in the Kachicherri country, levies of stock had

been made by the Kajurawa on special occasions : e.g. if the chiefs

wife gave birth to an infant, one hundred cattle were demanded ;

if the chiefs son's wife had a child, twelve head had to be

delivered, and any of the lesser chiefs on similar occasions took

ten, but no regular tribute had been paid. On arrival at the

new settlement these payments were, of course, discontinued, and

the loss of these very acceptable presents made the Kajurawa

all the more anxious to get the fugitives in their power again.

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For some years they were continually attacking the settlement,

and at first it was all the Filani could do to hold them in check ;

in fact, on one occasion the pagans actually rode through the

town, only to be driven out again. However, about the year

1808, after a great fight lasting some seven days, the Kajurawa

were at length decisively defeated and pursued, those who escaped

returning to Zaria country only to be conquered later on by

Mallam Musa, who gradually brought most of what is now

the province of Zaria under his control. Similar conquests

were taking place elsewhere, as has been said, and later on

Bauchi, Adamawa, and other districts came under the Filani

rule.

About two years after the final defeat of the Kajurawa,

Mallam Usuman was sent to Mallam Musa — who had conquered

Zaria, and had become its chief — to obtain a flag and a name

for the new settlement, that being the procedure for the official

recognition of a town, and when Mallam Musa asked where they

had come from, Usuman replied that the party (jemaa) had

settled close to the mountain of Daroro (to look around, i.e. high).

" Very well," said Mallam Musa, "the name of your town will be

Jemaan Daroro " (the n being a contraction of ?ia, of), and he

then gave Usuman a flag, a robe, a turban, and a fez, to be

bestowed in his name upon the man whom the people should elect

as their chief. On his return to Jemaan Daroro, Usuman con-

trived to get himself chosen, the election lying between himself

and Abdurahmanu, the old titular chief, and he then returned to

Zaria with the news, and was taken by Mallam Musa to Sokoto

to be officially recognised by the head of the empire. He

reigned for about thirteen years, when, feeling too old to con-

tinue, he took his son Abdulahi to Zaria to have him appointed

in his stead. Usuman, who died in the following year, has the

reputation of having been a good chief and a great fighter, for

the Ayu tribe, and most of the Numuna, Karshe, Moroa, and

Kajji people were conquered during his reign. Lander is said

to have visited the town about 1827, coming from the north

or north-west, and to have intended going to Bauchi, but as

the road at that time was closed by the head-hunting tribes

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through whose country it lay, he had to give up the project and

return by the way he had come.

Abdulahi was the eldest son of Mallam Usuman; he went

with the chief of Zozo (Zaria) to Lafia Beriberi, near the Benue

river, to help the chief of that town against some of the sur-

rounding tribes, and during his absence the Kagoro attacked

some people at Mongwe — a suburb of Jemaa — and killed forty-

two. Abdulahi then returned to attack the Kagoro, and having

destroyed Jigya and Tafa he went back to Lafia, and was soon

afterwards shot in the neck with an arrow and killed when

attacking Kwachigiddi.

Musa, Mallam Usuman , s second son, then became chief, being

appointed by Abd-el-Karimi, the new chief of Zaria. He was

a drunkard, and soon afterwards Hamada, the new suzerain,

threatened to depose him, summoning him and Abdurahmanu

to Zaria, but dying before he could carry out his intention. The

new chief of Zaria (Mohamma Sani) did so later, and appointed

the old chief Abdurahmanu to rule over Jemaan Daroro, banish-

ing Musa from Jemaa territory.

Abdurahmanu was now very old, and after three years he was

deposed through the machinations of Musa, who was again

appointed, only to be again removed. Musa, if a hard drinker,

seems to have been a great warrior, for, in conjunction with

Abd-el-Karimi, the countries of Ninzam, Kagoma, and the rest

of Numuna were conquered, and the Kagoro were defeated, and

most of their crops were destroyed in a war lasting some months.

These people would, perhaps, have been annihilated at that time,

had it not been for the fact that one of Abd-el-Karimi's mallams

had a dream, and prophesied that whoever finally conquered the

Kagoro would die within a year. The war had then lasted some

twelve months, and on that, Chief Abd-el-Karimi retired as he

could get no supplies — the Kagoro having buried all their

remaining grain — and the war was abandoned. The Kagoro

had been brought to such straits that they afterwards came

to Jemaan Daroro to beg for food, and about one hundred of

them were taken to Zaria as slaves. A similar thing happened

when Awudu, chief of Zaria, and Adamu of Jemaa fought

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them. The Kagoro were thus never properly conquered by the

Filani, and they never paid tribute to Jemaa, though the

Kajurawa had taken slaves from them annually.

The prophecy was supposed to be still in force when I was

in Jemaan Daroro in 1909, but as a British patrol brought them

thoroughly under control over twelve months ago, I fear that no

allowances were made in the mallam's mind for the strange

doings of the white men. And no wonder, for we are such

extraordinary beings that no one can tell what we will do.

Adamu, a full brother of Abdulahi, succeeded Musa, and

except for Abdurahmanu, the two branches of Mallam Usuman's

family furnished chiefs alternately, each taking it in turn with

Zaria's sanction to eject the other. The usual charge was

drunkenness, though there is no doubt that the claimant who

brought the best presents to the suzerain was always the most

successful, and, theoretically, the most temperate.

Mamma Adda, another son of Mallam Usuman, also had two

tastes of power, and two unpleasant removals, being finally re-

placed by the present chief, Abdulahi (or Matchu), who began to

reign in 1888. He is a grandson of Mallam Usuman, and was

appointed by Yerro, chief of Zaria, while fighting in the Kagoma

district.

There had been wars with Keffi in the time of Adamu, but

the fighting had been stopped by the Emir of Sokoto. However,

about 1893, trouble arose with the late Magajin Keffi (the

murderer of Maloney, the Resident in 1902), over land near

Tsaunin Kolere to the south-west, and the Keffi people came

in 1895 as far as Numbu while Abdulahi was at Zambar, but

the latter drove them out, and appealed to Chief Yerro of

Zaria who decided in favour of Jemaa.

About four years later a plot was formed to replace Abdulahi

by his brother Usuman, the ex-chief of Jagindi — a town founded

on a deserted pagan site by the Filani in the reign of Adamu —

the chief conspirators besides Usuman being Umoru, chief of

Delle, and Shemaa, a Filani. Another was Mallam Momo Tsula,

since made (in)famous by his work at Abuja in 1909, where he

tried to seduce soldiers and raise a revolt, but was captured and

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imprisoned. Usuman had been deposed by his brother, and had

gone to Keffi, but he returned to plot, his supplanter bringing

the news to Abdulahi at Jemaa, who persuaded a man, Dan

Zabia, to go to Umoru's house at night and murder him. The

death of the chief of Delle so enraged his followers that the

whole of the Jagindi people at once rose, and were soon aided

by the Kagoma and Kajji tribes, and by Dangoma. Fighting

went on until 1903, when the Resident of Keffi intervened, and

a year afterwards Usuman and Shemaa were deported.

The Yeskwa, previously conquered, signally defeated a Jemaa

force sent against them in 1900, and have since thrown off their

allegiance, while the Ninzam have always been restless. Abdulahi

has seen a good deal of service, having been wounded eight times

altogether; he is a strong man requiring firm handling, and

naturally does not appreciate our control. He can speak hardly

any Filani, his children know almost none at all ; they are turn-

ing into Hausawa. Owing to the fact that this country once

belonged to the Kajurawa — the principal representatives of which

tribe are now at Sanga — a courtesy title of the chief of Jemaa is

Sa(r)rikin Kajuru Filatihu.

When we occupied Jemaan Daroro, the tribes subject to the

chief became ipso facto under us instead, and although no resist-

ance was offered by the people of Jemaa itself, there has been

trouble with every one of the native tribes in the surrounding

districts. The reason of this is that although early in the

nineteenth century the Filani organised a complete system of

revenue collection (copied in great part from the Hausawa), the

upper classes soon began to lead vicious lives in the towns, and

with indulgence came the demand for more and more money, and

the less readiness to work for it, until what might have been at

first a fair tax grew into an extortion. Many districts supplied

slaves in payment of the impost, and this meant warring with

other tribes, for they did not wish to give up their own people —

though some chiefs had descended even to this level before we had

arrived — so continued raids on the pagan peoples took place in all

directions. This sort of thing naturally caused hatred and a

thirst for revenge, and though a raiding party might be successful

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so far as the capture of prisoners was concerned, no district was

ever really pacified until it had been swept almost clear of fighting

men ; otherwise, directly the Filani column had retired, the tribe

would be as hostile as before. Thus the Kagoro, occupying the

mountains to within five miles of Jemaan Daroro, were still

unconquered when I was there in 1909. However, this town was

the recognised capital of the greater part of the district, and so

we established there the headquarters of one of the adminis-

trative divisions of which five in all form the whole province of

Nassarawa.

Our policy in Northern Nigeria has been to rule the country

through its own people, and wherever possible even a chief who

has fought against us is reinstalled in his position on his sub-

mission if he has proved a good ruler, and has sworn to obey us

in future. It is the only possible way ; to bring in numbers of

new men, who, however desirable from our point of view, might

be perhaps unacceptable to the tribes themselves, would have

spelt failure from the first. Besides, the former chief is the one

to help us if he will, for he knows the country, the political and

economic conditions, and the peculiarity of the inhabitants, and

when once convinced that we can and will punish any infidelity

on his part, he is usually very anxious to act in accordance with

our rules. And we do not make these too numerous, the main

idea being that everything shall go on as much as possible as it

did before, except that acts, such as murder, slave-raiding, theft,

&c, shall cease, for these are not only contrary to our code, but

are also opposed to nearly every system of laws and customs

met with.

Most of even the wildest tribes condemn these deeds within

the tribe itself, though they may sanction them when strangers

are the victims, so we try to point out that we, being a strange

race, have no more interest in any one tribe than another, that we

are fathers to them all, and since that is so they must be brothers,

and therefore, now, of the same tribe. That is the only kind of

reasoning which they will understand ; it is of no earthly use

saying that God will be angry at such deeds, that they are not

right, and so on ; in many cases the only gods they know would

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not be at all displeased so long as no one of the same tribe

suffered, and with head-hunters he would even approve of the

acts if directed against strangers — or at any rate the dead

ancestors would. Perhaps the god might even demand victims

for sacrifice at certain times.

So much has been written on the subject of Christianity and

Mohammedanism in West Africa that I think it would not serve

any useful purpose to say much here, except that it is not correct

to say that pagans are officially encouraged to become Moslems.

It is true that we support the Filani rulers in Northern Nigeria

in each province where they are paramount, because they were in

power on our own arrival, but there are some towns still held

absolutely by pagans, and no tribe conquered by us would be

placed under Filani rule. Thus in the Jemaa division, all tribes

which the chief had conquered before we came pay their tribute

through him as suzerain, because they had previously recognised

his overlordship, but those still independent on our arrival, and

since subdued by us, pay direct through their own principal chief

to the Government, and no Filani has anything to do with the

collection.

Many of the pagan tribes have imagined that because we are

white and even more learned than the Filani, we are a glorified

edition of that people, and imprisonment for offences is regarded

as another form of slavery. We have therefore to be very careful

not to use this form of punishment if it can be avoided, though

the problem of inflicting an appropriate penalty is a difficult

one to solve, since the award of a fine in lieu appears to them

to be the exact equivalent of a ransom. Still, the people very

quickly begin to understand, and it often happens that a man

who has served a month or two in prison and then returns to his

people will prove a valuable ally in the future, for he has gained

some knowledge of our power, and has probably been better fed

and housed than ever in his life before. The affection of a native

is seated mainly in his digestive organs ; you can even beat him as

often as you like if you feed him well ; so long as his stomach is

full the rest of his body will not trouble him much.

We have therefore to be careful to explain to pagan tribes

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not previously conquered by the Filani that they will be treated

in exactly the same way as our Mohammedan subjects, for we,

being Christians, have no special preference for either, that we do

not preach a Holy War in the cause of Christianity, much less

on account of Islam, and that we not only do not want slaves

ourselves, but will prevent any other people obtaining them.

On our return from the Wai-wai country, we were greeted by

hundreds of Mohammedans from Jemaan Daroro and the district

who shouted our praises for having defeated the Kafiri; and

considering that we are also called by that name, amongst others,

I pointed out at once that the patrol had not been against the

people as pagans, but as head-hunters and slave-raiders, and that

" True-believer " or " Infidel " would share a like fate if guilty

of similar behaviour. This, I know, did not make me popular

amongst the Mohammedans, but the pagans were pleased, and

they were my especial care, for the Mohammedans are strong

enough to look after themselves, and every one is ready to con-

sider them. It is only natural for a well-read European to prefer

an educated Mohammedan to an unwashed pagan, but it is well

to remember that of all a native learns a great part is not likely

to be for our particular benefit, and that a good deal of his

knowledge only makes him all the more cunning and dangerous.

There can be little doubt as to whether Christianity or Islam

is the better suited to the natives of West Africa, but there is

no doubt at all that the limitation of only one wife to a man

is a very great obstacle to the adoption of the former, and it is,

I fear, the cause rather of immorality than of good behaviour in

a country where children are nursed for so long, and many men

are too poor to pay the fee for a wife. Still, it is well to remember

that any encouragement given to Mohammedanism will recoil on

our own heads, for the great factor in the security of our present

rule is the knowledge that we are disinterested arbitrators between

peoples varying in every possible way. Once let these tribes be

united by a common religion, once let them be fired with the

fanatical zeal of Islam, and — well, I think there will be trouble

ahead.

It would be absurd to believe that Mohammedans like being

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ruled by Christians whom they despise and regard as damned in

the next world — think of Egypt and Turkey and the fact that

a Moslemah cannot marry a Christian. It would be the height

of folly to suppose that, because we have put down slave-raiding

and tribal warfare to a great extent, all the old chiefs have

abandoned their desires for becoming rich in an easy and exciting

way, or that the warlike savage is ready to settle down to what

he once called " woman's work."

Northern Nigeria will prove a difficult problem for future

Governors, and the solution will not be helped by the multipli-

cation of revenue and other returns which occupy more and more

of the official's time, and consequently result in his being less and

less able to visit and know the people under him. The only safe

policy in my opinion — and I venture to give it with the greatest

respect, of course — is to allow those natives who want to become

Christians or Moslems to do so, but not to encourage them in

any way, certainly not the latter. Those who wish to study the

subject seriously would do well to read Dr. Karl Kumm's latest

book — the author, by the way, stayed with me in Jemaa when on

his way to Egypt. On the contrary, we ought to do everything

that is possible to maintain the old beliefs — though they may be

purged of any particularly objectionable features — by a sym-

pathetic study of them, thus keeping the tribes separate, and

avoiding the danger of their combining to expel us, and also

conserving to the savage what he most values instead of teaching

him to despise his ancestors ; for strange as it may seem to us,

there is a great deal of good in his laws and customs, and even

in his religion.

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CHAPTER VII

A BOUNDARY COMMISSION

IN the Nassarawa, Zaria, Bauchi, Yola, Muri, Bassa, and Kabba

provinces of Northern Nigeria there are many wild pagan

tribes still unknown — except by name — to the peace-loving

missionary ; still ignorant of the struggles their religion will cost

them ; not yet aware of the fact that their cannibalism, their

head-hunting, or their other quaint failings will soon be pro-

hibited by the strong and ever-conquering white man.

What is often called the Pagan Belt stretches across these

provinces on each side of, and parallel with, the Benue river, and

although the area is not so very large, the diversity of the customs

and the difference in the languages is very great. In districts

where every large town is fighting every other, there is naturally

no intercourse, for the people live and keep themselves within a

small definite area, and soon little differences begin to creep in

here and there until at length the people of one town can hardly

understand those of another, even in the cases where thev have

come from the same original stock. If, for instance, two brothers

quarrel and separate, their families will establish houses wide apart,

and as the family develops into the tribe, and the villages become

towns, the descendants forget their ancient connection by blood,

and remember only that their respective ancestors were enemies.

When once separated, internal changes begin, for a priest may

become very powerful and may alter the religious observances, or

at any rate some of the ideas ; a warrior may discover some

improvement in tactics, or in the manufacture or use of weapons ;

the people of one town may capture cattle, while those of the

other go in more for agriculture ; some will live in the mountains,

others on the plains ; and so their modes of life become distinct, and

the only agencies likely to bring the people together again are the

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advent of a strange power (either by conquest, or by causing

the different tribes to combine against them) and the rubber-

finders, or other traders, and blacksmiths. The Filani were the

first great conquerors of Northern Nigeria, but in most parts we

have now replaced them, and our conquests — being made in the

interests of civilisation, and not for the purpose of capturing

slaves — have been more humane and peaceful ; but in other dis-

tricts, particularly on the southern edge of the plateau between

the Nassarawa, Bauchi, and Muri provinces, the Hausa traders

are even now the only civilising agents. Jemaan Daroro is in the

heart of the head-hunting country, the tribes indulging in this

little pastime being situated in the eastern half of the Nassarawa

province, the southern quarter of the Zaria province, and the

south-western and north-western quarters of the Bauchi and Muri

provinces respectively. But little was known of the tribes on the

borders where the last two provinces joined Nassarawa up to 1908,

and in the November of that year I was ordered to take an escort

to join a Political Officer from Bauchi, and to proceed along the

boundary to decide upon a line definitely dividing the provinces

from one another. This district was on the other side of the range

to the Ankwoi country, and I was hopeful of being able to link up

my old route there from Amar, or at any rate to go very near to

it, but the fates in the shape of the Toffs — a rather smart name

for a naked people — decided otherwise. Leaving Jemaan Daroro

at the beginning of the month (the party, consisting of myself as

Political Officer, an escort of an officer and twenty-five men, and

some forty carriers), we marched east along the base of the Kagoro

hills, and joined a similar party from Bauchi near the border, and

then turning south proceeded along the top of the mountain range

which divides the two provinces. Our instructions were to delimit

the provincial boundary, to find out something about the people

there, and to avoid all hostilities — such an easy order to give on

paper, such a difficult one to obey in real life amongst pagans who

have never seen a white man, and, what is much more to the point,

do not want to see one !

Owing to a mistake in the identity of a town (it having a

different name in each province), we were led out of our way, and

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had to climb first down and then up the edge of the table-land (a

very appropriate name in this case, for the sides were almost as

steep as table legs), this proving an experience which will not be

easily forgotten by those who went through it. The mountains

were almost perpendicular, and there was no chance of riding — in

fact, it was as much as the poor little ponies could do to drag

their own bodies up, even though freed from their riders. The

paths — very few tracks in West Africa can be called roads, and

these were execrable even for that country — were almost stair-

cases, great slabs of rock jutting out here and there, and forming

obstacles which were even worse for the animals than for the men.

Our loads were, of course, borne on carriers' heads, and some idea

of the difficultv of the ground may be gathered from the fact that,

although we had only some fifty soldiers and about ninety others,

and there were frequent rests to allow the rear of the column to

close up, the tail w r as over two hours behind the head, both on the

day that we descended the range and on the next day when we

ascended it again.

We would mount one rise and there w r ould be another young

mountain ahead, another climb and still a further hill, again a

scramble and yet again a height. It was enough to break one's

heart. The grass, mere dry stubble in most parts, was very stiff

and slippery, it having been burnt off, except in sheltered spots or

near water, and every hundred yards or so one of us would trip on

a root or a stone and, failing to save himself, come down heavily —

and how heavy one is at such times ! The endless, endless rocks,

the uneven paces we had to take, the grasping and holding on to

tufts of stubble to keep one's footing, the continual grazing of an

ankle or a knee, the cutting of our fingers by the longer grass, and

the parching of our throats by the hot, dry air — Heavens ! how

we longed for a comfortable bed, a long drink, and a sleep ; how

unattainable they seemed, and how good they were when at last

we really got them. It is very often at these times that the native

shows how good a fellow he really is at heart ; soldiers and carriers

would help one another over specially difficult places, or take turns

to carry a load, and there was nearly always some one ready with

a joke or with a word of encouragement for his fellow-sufferers. My

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good old Yoruba messenger, Ajai (the connoisseur of cockroaches

as related in another chapter), wanted to carry me — and I am not

light — because I was very short of wind through having caught a

bad cold on the first night of exposure to the chilly air of the

plateau, the temperature there being much lower than at Jemaa.

I can see his ugly old face yet, more like that of a bull-pup than a

man, with his faithful, dog-like eyes, and a body of muscle almost

as broad as it was long. Another who showed up well was the

headman of my carriers, Balaribe, who carried the whole of a

large tent up one of the smaller hills, though it was usually

allotted to three men even on level ground. As for us four

Europeans, we did not see much of each other, since we had to

take charge of different parts of the column ; but I think the

others were just as glad of a whisky, bath, and bed as I was on

arrival at the camp, the spot chosen being a village called Ban-

dang, just over the top.

Next morning we pushed on to Monguna, which had given

trouble before (and has done so again since), and on the 14th we

entered unknown country and camped at Sha. The people, being

afraid, had all run away, and it was only towards dark that the

guides (procured from a village en route) who had been sent out on

our arrival to make overtures of peace, managed to persuade some

of the men .to come in and sell us grain and goat-flesh. There

were no yams there, the people living on guinea-corn (a red millet),

and a kind of grain which made a dish reminding me of ground

rice — I do not know the English name, the Hausa is atcha ; it is

common in Zaria and elsewhere. When this fails, a bitter root,

which the Hausas call gzvaza, seems to be the only food, a very

poor substitute for yam, being (to my taste, and also to that

of a lot of our men) very unpalatable, and liable to make the

throat sore. Eggs and milk were unprocurable — in fact, as has

been noticed elsewhere, this kind of pagan never milks cattle

even if he has them.

As we were on a mission of "peaceful penetration " we were

most anxious not to alarm the inhabitants, nor to provoke

hostilities, and so we did not enter any of the towns, but

camped outside, and invited the people to come out and trade.

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Before leaving we would ask the chief to send a messenger on

to the next town to tell the people there that we were friendly,

and that they need not run away, but that they should stay

and prepare food, for which we would pay in full, the payment

being made in strips of cloth, looking - glasses, or strings of

beads, all money — even cowries — being then unknown there. It

was very amusing to see a dirty old man, who had been a

stranger to water for years, wrap a piece of calico round his

head and admire himself in the looking-glass with the most

childish delight. Needless to say, the colour of the white

calico, after having been passed around and examined by vari-

ous friends and admirers, became almost indistinguishable from

that of the wearer's body ; but that did not seem to matter,

the main idea being, apparently, that the calico itself, and

not the colour of it, was the important thing. As each group

of towns had a different language, and many of the tribes

were at war with one another, our messages were sometimes

disregarded or never delivered, and although I thought this state

of affairs unfortunate at the time, we were thankful afterwards,

as it proved our salvation.

Next morning we marched first to "Mbun, a small town

built at the bottom of what was an enormous well of rock,

being surrounded on all sides by almost straight walls, through

which were only two natural openings opposite one another, as if

made for ingress and egress. By the way, there seems to be a great

attraction for spelling African names with an apostrophe before

the first letter. In this case, the accent is on the u bun," the

"M" being only just distinguishable, and so I think that the

apostrophe is correctly used, though I have seen another town

described as 'Mbel, though the sound was as plainly as possible

Ambel, the accent being on the first syllable.

However, to return to 'Mbun : we found that all the people

had disappeared with the exception of the chief and one or

two men, but as these were friendly and produced some food,

we had our breakfasts and then went on to the town of Toff.

It is usually a sign of danger to see no women about, so one

generally looks around for them, or else listens for the thumping

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of the pestles in the wooden mortars, or the grinding of the

stones which signify the preparation of food, and should every-

thing be quiet, it is well to be on one's guard ; another sign

is the absence of food. Naturally, when natives fear an attack,

the first thing they do is to get their women and food-stuffs

into a place of safety, and it is necessary to be prepared for a

counter-attack when this has happened, for the people may

think this their best means of defence. Even the most gentle

bird, if frightened, may try to peck the hand of one who is

doing his best to make friends with it, and savages are not

exactly gentle birds at all times.

The country from Sha to Toff was execrable — or worse if

there be a stronger word to describe it — the path lying between

high rocks for the greater part of the distance, where stones

and poisoned arrows would have been almost as effective as

bullets; and for the last mile or more, these hills had been

covered by armed men with quivers of arrows slung on their

backs, the shafts showing up above their heads, and " wanting

war " as my Orderly said. The Bauchi Resident and I went on

alone to show that we were not going to attack them, and we

were not molested, but we had rather an anxious moment when,

on arriving at the top of a rise just outside TofF, we were met by

the chief and a number of his warriors, all armed with clubs and

long knives. They seemed inclined to dispute our passage at

first, but seeing smiles on our faces — though we felt far from

frivolous, the escort being about half a mile behind with the

carriers — they allowed us to pass in peace, and, avoiding the

town, we camped on clear ground near some trees, marking

places for our four tents in the centre, the men's bivouacs being

placed around them as usual. The remainder of the column

arrived soon afterwards, the tents were pitched, and before long

we were enjoying the savoury odour of " Lazenby's " or other

delicacies, which are especially welcome in a country where a

European can eat only what he has brought with him in his

chop-box — and how anxiously one examines it towards the end of

a trek, especially if out longer than was expected !

It may seem paradoxical to say that the military officer,

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whose profession is fighting, has a much less dangerous life in

these wild countries than a Resident, whose aim is rather to

make the peace than to break it; but it is so. Whenever the

former travels, he is accompanied by troops; he camps in the

positions best suited for defence ; if there is to be fighting, he

comes prepared, and when it is over, he goes back to his head-

quarters. The Political Officer, on the other hand, has to visit

the people alone, for a small escort would often be more dangerous

than none at all since it would invite an attack, and yet be power-

less to beat it off. He has to get into touch with the people,

and so he cannot choose his camping-ground purely for reasons

of defence ; he has to avoid hostilities, if possible, and so cannot

go prepared for them, though should he be out with a patrol, he

has the same risks to run as the commander of the force, for the

two must keep together, or else, perhaps, he goes ahead to give

the enemy a last chance of submitting. And finally, after the

fighting is over and the troops have returned, he again visits the

towns alone to receive the indemnity, or fine, or whatever it may

be. In the more settled districts, these conditions hardly exist

nowadays, though there is always a risk when the representative

of the ruling power has an unpopular dutv to perform and is not

protected ; but in the Pagan Belt — occupied mainly by head-

hunting tribes — the danger is very real, and it will be found

to be the case that the great majority of the Residents there

belongs or has belonged to some branch of his Majesty's

naval or military forces, usually the latter. I do not sav that

the men have been posted there because of that special quali-

fication, but there is no doubt that they are the best fitted, and

they have in some way found their level in the districts where their

training is of the most use to them. It is often said in joke

that the Residents are the "bait," while the Waffs are the

"fishermen," and, as is well known, the bait generally has an

unenviable time, being destroyed in order to provide excitement

and perhaps reward for the fisher.

On the following morning one of the military officers had

fever, so we decided not to proceed farther that day, but to

rest the horses and carriers, who had had a very bad gruelling.

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All was quiet during the morning : the chief paid us frequent

visits — no doubt sizing up our strength — bringing a little food for

sale each time, and even showing us how he could (or could not)

dance ; so we had no reason to suspect that trouble was brewing.

Nevertheless, we did not allow any one of our party to enter the

town under any pretext whatever, these restrictions having been

rigidly enforced ever since we had left friendly country. We

thus thought that we were progressing satisfactorily in the good

graces of our hosts, and we had a rude shock when, about

3.30 p.m., some of the carriers ran up and said that they had

been shot at while gathering wood just outside the camp. Hardly

believing this, three of us took our shot-guns to make a noise,

if necessary — we did not think rifles would be required — and

went with the carriers to the spot which they indicated, and

when only about 300 yards away from the tents, we saw some

armed pagans who, however, ran off at our approach.

A little food had been brought in during the morning, but

none since then, and this act of hostility made it quite clear that

we need expect no more. And as there was a yam field close by

— these tubers were probably introduced by the Hausa rubber

traders, so we heard afterwards — and the men had no food left,

we decided to help ourselves, and to send later to the chief

inviting him to come and claim payment. This, of course, has

to be done very often under such circumstances, otherwise the

men would starve, and it usually does much more good than

harm, for among these peoples, where might is right, it is a very

common occurrence for the stronger party to carry off' the other's

goods without paying any compensation, so they are agreeably

surprised when we actually pay, and pay the proper price too,

for what we have taken, although they have not the power to

force us to do so, and they are thus all the more ready to believe

in us and be friendly. It is easy enough for a weak tribe to say

to a stronger that robbery and capture are wrong ; but when the

white man, who is even more powerful still, says so, and though

he has the power to do what he likes, refuses to use it unjustly,

the natives begin to believe that there really must be something

in our protestations of goodwill and justice.

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Two of us accompanied the yam party with our shot-guns, but

as an extra precaution, my police orderly followed me with his

carbine. We again saw some pagans, and, thinking they would

run away as before, we proceeded to the field without taking any

notice of them. But the Toffs had evidently come to the con-

clusion that the " white man's medicine " was not of much

account, and they crept up towards us through the grass.

Suddenly we became aware of sounds like " thith thith,

truth," and poisoned arrows began falling amongst us. One

soldier was wounded through his lower lip and gum, and a

few minutes later, I felt a sting on the point of my nose.

Luckily, the arrow took only a little of the outside skin, and

spent its force on my orderly's fez, which was knocked off, and

I must say that I was just as pleased, for the nose would be a

very awkward part of the anatomy to ligature. Arrows were

now coming thick and fast from our front and left flank, and we

fell back a little towards the camp so as to be clear of the grass,

meanwhile sending a messenger back for a section of the escort,

and directly the Toffs saw this rearward movement, hoarse shouts

resounded 'on all sides, and black savage heads bobbed up from

the grass in all directions, showing how well the warriors had

hidden themselves. From the number of the Toffs attacking us,

it was evident that they had been meditating the move for some

time, as many were far from their huts, and could not have

returned there and procured their bows and arrows in the short

interval between the two attacks. Our reinforcements came up

at the double, and, opening fire, soon drove off our assailants, who

retired to the shelter of some rocks, and their arrows being now

useless, they substituted abuse — at least, I suppose so ; the tone

did not sound at all friendly or polite.

We procured our yams, and then returned to the camp, but

hearing drums being beaten in all directions, we knew we were in

for a hot time, and so decided to take up a new and more open

position, and form a square round it — an Irishism perhaps, but

appropriate to the real disposition. Strangely enough they

allowed us to move in peace — perhaps fascinated by the way the

tents were shifted — but no sooner had we done so, than we were

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attacked on all sides by hordes of yelling savages, and we were

soon firing as hard as we could to keep off a charge. Their war-

cry was a cross between a dog's bark, a donkey's braying, and

Wagner's Song of the Valkyries — more loud than beautiful,

though very thrilling — and it was accompanied by drumming,

shouting, and blowing on horns and an instrument giving a

sound like that of a child's tin trumpet, the latter sounding woe-

fully inappropriate to us, but no doubt pleasing the Toffs very

much. Meanwhile, arrows were coming in showers on three sides

of the square, and we thought we were in for a long casualty list.

One officer got two through the roof of his tent, and several of

the men had their clothing pierced, but no one else was actually

hit. Luckily, the horses, which are usually trying to bite or kick

one another, when close together, gave us no trouble, and most

of the camp-followers seemed fairly at ease, though quiet. The

cooks soon began making the dinners in the open by the tents —

my boy had fought against the British force at Kano in 1903 —

singing their songs, which seem to be indispensable if the meal is

to be a success, in a high falsetto voice as usual, though guilty of

a glance of disapproval now and then if an arrow came too close.

I wonder if the twang in their voices is responsible for that

peculiar West African flavour in their dishes ? Only an African

can accomplish either.

The attack lasted about two hours. Twice attempts were

made to rush the square, but as they were heralded in each case

by extra shouting, drumming, and noisy encouragement generally,

we were able to concentrate and strengthen our fire in the threat-

ened quarter, and so frustrate them. A few men, probably minor

chiefs, with long Zulu-Kafir-like shields, strutted up and down in

front of their followers, defying us to hit them, and strangely

enough, we could not do so. We could hardly believe that the

shields were bullet-proof, the targets were plain and quite close,

and some of the native soldiers were excellent shots, yet we did

the bearers no harm, apparently. Nor was our non-success due to

unsteadiness ; nearly all of us had seen service before — some of

the men a dozen times ; the fire-control was perfect — it had to be,

for the ammunition was limited — and we hit other men who were

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without shields and were, therefore, much worse targets. The

soldiers themselves easily accounted for the fact by attributing

the immunity of the shield-men to magani (magic), but I fear

that that explanation did not quite convince us.

At about seven o'clock the attack died down, and we made

our dispositions for the night. Perhaps it ought to have been

mentioned when comparing the duties of the political and military

officers that, so long as things are peaceful, the Resident naturally

directs the conduct of the movements, the Waff officers being

merely part of the escort ; but directly hostilities commence, the

civil official becomes a subordinate, and it w r as rather strange that

the man now in command should be the youngest and the least

experienced of the four of us. The Bauchi Resident had been in

some previous skirmishes in Northern Nigeria, and the commander

of his escort had been a captain in Ashanti during the expedition

of 1900, but having transferred from the militia, in which he was

then serving, to the regular army, he had lost the benefit of all

his previous service, and had had to commence again at the

bottom of the list of second-lieutenants. I myself had seen

service in South Africa and in Ashanti, my captaincy being

obtained during the former campaign, and I had had charge of

a few police patrols in Northern Nigeria, as already mentioned,

which, although they were not active service exactly, were good

training. Yet we all automatically became junior to the lieu-

tenant in the Waffs, who had never seen service before, as soon as

fighting commenced. Regulations create strange conditions at

times, though in a way one can see the reason of such rules ; but it

seemed rather unsatisfactory that in a position of great danger

such as this was, our lives should be entrusted to the one who had

had the least real experience which could be of any use under the

circumstances. And in saying this, I do not mean to insinuate

that he did not do well ; I only wish to point out that the

regulations brought about a curious condition of affairs.

We took it in turns to go round the sentries at night, and I

found an excellent plan to keep the men awake in giving them a

Hausa proverb to pass on round the cordon until it came back

to me. The native soldier will fight like a fury while he sees the

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need of it, but he is not keen on doing sentry-go afterwards,

especially as it is his nature to leave worries to others, and there

was on this occasion a great temptation for the men to go to sleep,

for all were lying down so as to present as small a target as

possible in the event of a night attack. The Hausas, who

made up a goodly proportion of the force, are extremely fond

of proverbs, and they quite entered into the spirit of this

kind of thing, especially as some of the sayings were very

appropriate.

The moon came out about 11 p.m. and it was then evident

that there would be no further attack that night, and although

drumming was still to be heard, and fires were burning on the

hills all round us, we felt that we could relax our vigilance some-

what, and reduce the number of sentries. What would happen on

the morrow we did not know ; our anxiety was centred on the

question whether the "Mbun people and those farther on would

attack us, and, if so, would the ammunition last out. But that

was for to-morrow — this was still to-day, and we were dead-beat ;

to be fresh and ready for the work it was necessary to get some

sleep, so having arranged regular turns, those of us not on duty

went to bed.

To make certain that I did not myself go to sleep, I sat out

on a shooting-stick, but even thus, during my second turn, I

found myself musing over the events of the day. When I was

hit, old Ajai, the court messenger, tore off his long Hausa robe

and wanted to hold it in front of me, while the police orderly

snatched off his charms (bought from the Mohammedan mallams

in Jemaan Daroro specially to ward off arrows) and tried to tie

them round my waist. Although the men got in my way and

made me angry at the time, it was good afterwards to feel that

one's own followers would do these things for their white masters

(the others had somewhat similar experiences), for both really

thought that they themselves were running extra risks in thus

shielding me. Old Ajai cried when I left him afterwards at

Keffi, and although his great ugly face looked more grotesque

than ever when bathed in tears, I did not feel at all inclined

to laugh at him. As for the policeman, he proved his pluck on

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several occasions, but his name does not appear, for I had to

sentence him later on to imprisonment for theft and extortion.

It is sad to think how many of our proteges go wrong ; most

officers can vouch for the fact that some of their soldiers who

are splendid men as privates cannot be permanently advanced,

because, whenever they are given a stripe, they at once use

their authority for the purpose of extorting contributions from

the pay of the men under them. And often the relief of a white

official at the end of his tour of duty means the rearrangement of

the black staff under him, for many natives will do very good

work for one master and very bad work for another. I think it

is not sufficiently recognised that the ordinary untutored native

has but little idea of his own steady, permanent advancement ; he

lavs up no goods for the morrow, he is rich one day and poor the

next, a gradual rise in status hardly forming part of his calcula-

tions. His service is a personal one, given to the white master

who has won his affections — the Government is nothing ; perhaps

there may be some white men greater than his own master, but

they cannot compare with him in other ways, and at any rate

they do not concern the servant. Perhaps they provide the

money, but his own master gives him his pay, and he is not

going to trouble about the source whence it is obtained ; other

white men may come and relieve him, but the subordinate owes

them nothing, and so he need not mind how he works or behaves

to them — and thus the poor fellow comes to grief in at least

one-half of the cases.

But my turn of duty being up I returned again to my tent,

and, being tired out, it was not long before I had forgotten the

natives" troubles as well as my own worries.

Any chance of making friends with the Toffs then was gone,

so we had determined to leave at davbreak — in fact, we should

have done so the day previously but for the fact that one of the

officers had fever, as mentioned before. There was only one way

out of this mouse-trap, so the guide had told us the previous

night, viz. by the way we had come, and as this passed close to

the town, and was but a narrow ledge on the side of what was

almost a miniature precipice, commanded bv rocks above, and by

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other hills on the opposite side of the defile, we expected a warm

reception. But, strange to say, although we were late in starting,

and although our movements had been observed, we found that

the route was not closed, and the head of the little column entered

the pass before the natives seemed to realise that we were actually

leaving. Immediately drums began beating, and war-whoops

arose, and soon we were again engaged ; but after a short fight,

which was mainly a rear-guard action, we found ourselves clear of

our adversaries, with only one more casualty on our side. The

carriers trudged on with their loads, the horses were led along

the gravelly paths, and coaxed over the slabs as usual, and except

for the absence of singing amongst the carriers (made up for in

some respects by the yells of the Toffs), and for the frequent

"pop, pop" of the rifles, it might have been an ordinary march.

As I have said before, the great question had been whether

the people of 'Mbun would oppose us or not, for we had to pass

through their village again, and would have been even more

exposed to attack there than at Toff since the defile was much

narrower and deeper. Great, therefore, was our relief when

we saw the chief and others with whitened faces (their "white

flag ") coming to meet us, and bringing food. Had they and the

people of the villages farther on fought, it is a question if we

should ever have got back at all, for our ammunition was nearly

exhausted (we had but 47 rounds left per man out of the original

100), and we were forty miles from any tribes we could depend

upon, and even these might have risen against us if we had been

already defeated. Our horses were lame, and our carriers also,

and we could not have transported any badly wounded men.

Luckily, however, we were not called upon to decide the question,

for the people of 'Mbun and Toff were hereditary enemies, and

the 'Mbuns were delighted to think that we had fought on their

side, so we slept in peace and quiet that night and reached

Jemaan Daroro a few days later. A patrol of 100 men with a

Maxim gun subdued the Toffs during the following year, and they

did not have as much fighting as we had had, from all accounts.

But it is one thing to go out with the intention of attacking a

tribe, with some idea of its size, with a knowledge of the roads,

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and with plenty of ammunition ; it is a very different matter to

be attacked when on a peaceful mission, with but half as many

men, no gun, and with no reserve of ammunition. The smaller

the force the greater the danger, and conversely, the less chance

there is of obtaining anv recognition for it.

The Toffs were adepts in the art of taking cover ; several got

up quite close to us in the first advance without our seeing them,

and they made a flank attack in the yam field. They must have

been well directed too, for if we concentrated on one point, they

directed their attention to another. The arrows were plain reeds,

about a yard in length, with long, thin points (fashioned so as

to break off on striking the target and remain in the wound),

poisoned with strophanthus and snake virus, I was told. I cannot

understand why we had so few casualties ; we found sixty arrows

next morning in the square (an area of 900 square yards perhaps),

and double as many just outside — I have some now — there was

no shelter of any kind, and we were a perfectly plain target.

Most of us had at least one arrow within a few inches of some

part or other of his body, but yet we escaped very lightly.

Arrows would drop between the legs or arms of one of us

when kneeling or lying down ; why was it they did not find the

flesh? The lack of an iron head probably affected the accuracy

of the shooting to some extent, but the range of flight was a long

one, as on one face the Toffs were quite 200 yards away on a little

higher ground, and yet their shafts reached the square, the wind

helping them to some extent, no doubt. The range was perfect;

they simply had bad luck, I suppose — at least, we should call it so

were we to go so near and yet so far — though my sympathies were

not at all with them. The knives — like machetes — were, I suppose,

imported ; had the Toffs known how to work in iron, they would

assuredly have tipped their arrows, and have used spears also.

The men were stark naked except for a little basket-like object

resembling those worn by the Gannawarri, but much wider in

some cases ; the women, I heard, wore leaves, but I did not see

any females, and except for the fact that the houses were very

close together, I had no time to note anything of anthropological

interest.

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What induced the Toffs to leave the road open I cannot tell.

Probably they thought that they had us so safely that we could

not escape, and they intended to finish us at their leisure later

on, for as we moved off we saw numbers of warriors coming over

the hills from neighbouring towns, whither they had evidently

returned after the attack of the previous evening. Signal fires

were kept burning all night, and drumming was continuous,

while now and then there would be sudden bursts of yelling and

trumpet-blowing ; all telling, no doubt, of the mighty deeds done

by the local heroes in the fight that day, and of the very excellent

use the white men's skulls would be put to on the morrow. The

subsequent patrol found about seventy skulls in one fetish house,

I believe; I am glad none of ours were amongst the number,

for after all, one's head is quite a useful thing to keep, both

metaphorically and literally.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE TAILED HEAD-HUNTERS

ONE of my first experiences of the warlike Kagoro tribe was

somewhat startling. I had been among them during the

previous month, on my return from my trip to Zaria

recorded in a later chapter, and as their tribute had not been

coming in as quickly as it should have been (some being more

than two vears overdue), I had given them a slight hint that

there were other and more convincing arguments on my side than

mere words — arguments, the strength of which they had already

had some experience. While I had been in their district the

people had paid a small proportion of the arrears, but immediately

I had returned to my headquarters the payments ceased, and

so I had warned them that I should be coming for more at some

future time.

The road from Jemaan Daroro is steep and very bad in places,

for the ascent from the bottom of the cup in which the town is

situated is fairly rapid, and as I emerged from a path in thick

bush into a clearing near the village of Chanji, there, in line,

with their bows at full stretch and poisoned arrows fitted, were

some thirty savages advancing towards me. I had no time to call

my little escort of eleven men who were some distance behind me,

and to have retired would have been fatal ; so feeling exceedingly

nervous myself, I rode up and told them not to be afraid, my

orderly calling out in Hausa, "It is peace.' 1 I found on questioning

them that they were out after " small game " only (i.e. mice and

rats), so we were soon friends, but in the old days, in fact so late

as five years ago, had a solitary trader met a hunting party his

skull would soon have decorated a hut — and even while I was

there some women were the victims of a temporary absent-

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mindedness on the part of a small band of hunters — for although

mice may furnish good sport at times, men provide much better.

Jemaan Daroro is almost in the centre of the country where

the industry of head-hunting is seen in its most nourishing state.

To the north and north-east are the Kagoro, Attakka, Ganna-

warri, Moroa, and Katab tribes, and towards the north-west the

Kajji and Jaba, and all these are tailed. Then to the west are

the Kagoma, to the north-west the Kanninkwom peoples, both

ardent followers of the sport (shall we say ?) of kings, though

innocent of the caudal appendage. In the Bauchi Province to the

east are the Karshe, Kibbo, and other tribes, to the south and

south-east the Ayu, Ninkada, and Nadu, and to the south and

south-west the Ninzam, Waiwai, Mada, and others. Of these the

Gannawarri and Nadu are known to be cannibals, but I think

that none of the others eat human flesh now, although it is quite

possible that they gave way to the luxury in earlier times.

Head-hunters are not found elsewhere in Northern Nigeria

to-day so far as I know, except in continuation of the Pagan Belt

in the Bauchi province, not at any rate in such numbers as are

here congregated, though there are cannibals in other parts.

The Kagoro occupy part of the north and west faces of a

ridge of steep, high mountains running from the Bauchi into

the Nassarawa province, and then apparently running back again.

All but one of the towns which I saw are built at the foot of

the ridge (though there are a few villages right on top of the

plateau, belonging to Ogban and Kukkum probably, which have

not even yet been visited), and nearly all are defended by planted

labyrinths of strong prickly euphorbia hedges, which sometimes

reach a height of fifteen or even twenty feet, but there are no

stockades of any kind. The towns with the approximate popu-

lations (based purely on guess-work in most cases, any strict

mode of census-taking being entirely out of the question) are as

follows, enumerating them in order from the south : Tuku Tozo

(150), Tuku (150), Jigya or Jigga (150), Tafa and Ungwal

Giginnia (300), all isolated on the west face of the mountain

spur. Chanji (200) is by itself on the main road, with a few

scattered houses nearer the mountains. Then on the north side

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of the range come the biggest towns, all adjoining one another,

and forming a veritable nest of savagery, namely Ogban (1500),

Kukkum (1000), Fada Kagoro (1500; Fada means capital),

Apak (500), Turap (400), Safwio (200), Duchui (150), and

Kaderko (150). Opposite Fada Kagoro is Malagum (500),

while Mafor (100) and Makabbo (100) face Duchui and

Kaderko respectively, these three towns being situated on a

detached hill to the north of the big spur. The total popula-

tion is therefore about 7000, but this estimate is, as I have

said before, only very approximate.

The Kagoro say that they came long ago from Bauchi country

westwards to Nimbia, near to where Jemaan Daroro now is —

though it was not in existence at that time — and from Nimbia

they passed, after a short stay, to the site of the present Fada

Kagoro, the leader of the party being Apak, after whom one of

the towns was named. There they found the ruins of the habita-

tion of a former forgotten people, perhaps the makers of the

stone axes said to have been discovered in the vicinity. I have

not been able to secure any such implements from that particular

district, but I have been given some from just over the border,

and so I have no doubt that the accounts of similar tools having

been found there are correct, for some of the Kagoro chiefs on

being shown some axe-heads said that they knew that they had

been made by the splintering of rocks by lightning — a general

belief amongst natives. One, however, the Agwam (chief) of

Ogban, said that one of them was an axe, and this was very

strange, for the other chiefs all swore that nothing of the kind

has been used within their memory. He, however, was a good

deal older than the others, and it is just possible that he knew

that stones may have been used before iron became available, a

metal which must have always been somewhat difficult to obtain,

for the ore is not found in the Kagoro country, and only Hausa

blacksmiths seem able to work it when brought there.

As the people have no records of any kind, except the rather

confused accounts of which the foregoing is the main outline, the

story of their origin is very hard to prove or disprove. One

thing which supports their account — and an important point

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too — is that in the towns on the northern side of the mountain

spur the sacred groves are all to the south, and the people look

first in that direction when performing their mystic rites, the

reason given being that they face their place of origin ; while in

those towns on the western side of the range the groves are to

the north, and these towns we know are colonies from Fada

Kagoro. The fact that the northern towns are the oldest seems

to be rather against the theory that the people worked round

from the south, but it is quite possible that they came across the

top of the spur instead of around it, as the Attakka, their neigh-

bours, have done since. Dr. Keane, in Man, Past and Present,

mentions a tribe of Kagoro, and the similarity of the name is

rather striking, but his people are a branch of the Mande family

much farther to the west, and it would be difficult to imagine

that there could be any connection between peoples so far apart.

Nothing is yet known of the languages of the Bauchi plateau,

so no comparison can be made, but it is worth noting that

the Kagoro salutation is almost the same as theirs {sham or sha),

though the tribes do not visit one another, and also all are head-

hunters. And the fact that many Hausa words are now used in

the Kagoro vocabulary (even for the names of several of their

towns) does not militate against this, for that great trade tongue

is spoken everywhere, and there have been for a long time some

blacksmiths or traders or others amongst them. On the contrary,

the fact supports their story, for tobacco has been smoked for

many years in the north, yet the Kagoro did not know of it,

their adoption of the Hausa name proving that it must have

been introduced comparatively recently.

There is, however, one very important difference that should

be noted, namely, that the men of the Bauchi tribes which I

saw on the Nassarawa border, and inhabiting the country from

which the Kagoro claim to have come, wear a peculiar article of

dress which may be described as a " case," and do not circumcise,

whereas the Kagoro attire themselves quite differently, and do

mutilate the body. No doubt there are many other differences

also, but not knowing the Bauchi people, I cannot enumerate

them.

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When I first saw the Kagoro, Attakka, Moroa, Katab, and

Kajji people, I thought that they must all be descended from a

common stock, since their tribal marks were identical, many

of their customs similar, and the languages appeared much alike

— especially those of the Kagoro and Moroa — but all denied this,

and gave different accounts of their origin. The Kagoro, as

I have said, claim to have come from the south-east and then from

the south; whereas the Kajji, Katab, and Moroa say that they came

from Zaria to the north and north-west; and probably none of

these tribes could ever have been powerful enough to drive the

Kagoro to where they now are, for, although much more numer-

ous, they are not so warlike. The Kajurawa certainly kept the

Kagoro within the precincts of the mountain spur, and it is easier

to account for this by supposing that the latter, being a strange

and small tribe, spread gradually around the base or over the top

of the mountains, than by presuming that they — evidently the

weaker, since they paid tribute — could have forced their way

across the lower portions of the Kajuru country.

The similarity of the tribal marks is said to be due to the fact

that about two generations ago the Katab had a very skilful

operator who invented the pattern (one would think he must

have charged so much per cut, judging by the number of them),

and that people of the surrounding tribes visiting the town liked

it so much that it soon became universal. Both Kagoro and

Moroa men told me this, and the chief of Jemaa supported the

story, so possibly it is true, though it is certainly strange ; but it

must have been more than two generations ago, for even the

oldest men have now the universal marks, which, they say, were

done in their youth.

Peoples of the same origin may fight each other — even

different members of a single family will do that — but they

never keep the heads of their victims as trophies of war, though

they retain those of their enemies, and, even if taken during

the actual fighting, they are given back to the dead man's

relatives to be buried with the bodies on the declaration of

peace. If this were not done, the ghosts of the victims would

have to serve those of their slayers in the next world, and

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although such a condition of affairs would be most desirable in

the case of war with an enemy, it is not considered good form

to make one's own blood relations (or should I say spirits ?) do

such work. And in fact, it is quite possible that such a ghost

would work harm rather than good to the slayer, since it, and

only it, can worry any of its living relatives, a ghost of a stranger

being harmless. Now the Kagoro did take and keep Kajji,

Katab, and Moroa heads, but not, so they say, those of the

Attakka, and this would seem to show that there was originally

no connection between the first four tribes ; later on, however,

the Kagoro and Katab swore an agreement to restore heads

if they should have war and any should be taken, and they

say that the terms were carried out on the few occasions on

which they came into conflict afterwards.

Finally, the Attakka even now occupy the hills above Nimbia,

and their villages are built in a way similar to that adopted by

the Kagoro, though rather higher up the slope ; while the Moroa,

Kajji, and Katab inhabit the plains ; so I should say that the

Kagoro and Attakka both came from the south and before that

from the east, and that they probably had a common origin, while

the other tribes came from the north or west, though there was

most likely no connection between the Kajji and Moroa, even if

the Katab were related to either one or the other.

It is said that when the Kagoro first came to the country

which they now inhabit they did not know the use of the bow and

arrow, and that they had only wooden spears, shields, and slings.

And this is possibly correct, for the chief of Jemaan Daroro told

me that the Attakka had learned the use of arrow poison from the

Kibbo (Bauchi) only about twenty-five years ago, and that they

had then taught the Kagoro. This seems to argue both for and

against the theory of origin from the south and east, for whereas

the Toffs use even now only arrows with wooden points, and the

Gannawarri do not use the bow and arrow at all, the Kagoro

might have been expected to have brought the knowledge of the

power of poisons with them unless discovered only after their

departure. The country was so overrun with wild beasts at the

time of their arrival that they had to live underground, so the

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legend goes, and make tunnels to their farms, and this makes one

suspect that they were to some extent troglodytes, or cave-

dwellers, like the Nadu to the south ; in fact, they still have

caves where they store their food, and which they use as hiding-

places when attacked, though they do not improve them in

any way.

For a long time they were ruled by councils of elders, or heads

of families; but having been conquered by the Kajurawa, and

forced to pay tribute, they determined to elect a chief, or agwarn,

to supervise the payment. There had been desultory fighting

between these peoples for many years without any decisive result

on either side ; but about one hundred and twenty years ago, so

far as I can calculate from the lengths of the reigns given me, the

Kajurawa demanded a regular annual payment, and the Kagoro

were not strong enough to resist. Possibly the Filani were respon-

sible in some degree, for their herds had begun to enter the rich

Moroa and Kagoro country, and the Kajuwara protected them in

return for the levies of cattle described in the last chapter but

one. At any rate, two slaves per annum had been asked for, and

the Kagoro in despair called a meeting of all the elders to con-

sider what should be done.

Apparently no satisfactory solution of the problem had been

found, each elder refusing to give up his own offspring for the

good of the State, when a youth, Gundong, said that he would

supply the slaves if he were made chief ; and this having been

agreed to, he struck a silk-cotton tree with his stick, and im-

mediately two young slaves appeared, a male and a female, who

were given as tribute. A somewhat simpler explanation occurred

to me, knowing their gentle habits, namely, that something more

human than a cotton-tree was struck with the stick, and that this

was the commencement of the capture of passing strangers, an

exciting and lucrative pursuit which has been stopped only during

the last three or four years, and even now there are little lapses at

times. In fact, the Kagoro say that before that time they were

not head-hunters, nor had they any slaves.

Gundong was thus the first agzvam, and he is said to have

reigned fifty years, the magic cotton tree, as one would expect,

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withering and dying on the day of his death. His brother Bishut

followed, and lived for another forty years, and this is rather

hard to reconcile until one remembers that it is quite possible

that Gundong was born when his father was eighteen (Kagoro

marry much younger), and Bishut, by a different mother, when he

was fifty. But a wild pagan's idea of even the present time is,

to say the least, hazy, and of the past quite valueless, and it was

only by finding out which of the Kagoro chiefs fought against

certain of the Jemaa chiefs, whose dates could be determined

fairly definitely, that any approach to accuracy could be made.

After Bishufs death there was an interregnum for several

years, Jigya or Jigga (the name seems to be pronounced in both

ways) usurping the power, and playing the part of a tyrant for

some time, but he was expelled in the end and driven to the

south, where he founded a village.

The people then appealed to the chief of Jemaan Daroro to

choose a chief, as they could not agree among themselves, and

each town was fighting its neighbour, a somewhat strange pro-

ceeding, for the Kagoro and the Jemaa people have been

enemies for generations. Bishufs son, Mungu, was appointed,

but he died seven years afterwards, and was succeeded by Kaka, his

brother, the present ruler, who was recognised by the Govern-

ment in 1905, and appointed District Headman, or " D-H-M.,"

as it appears in the records. These chiefs were in no way subject

to the Filani, although they had asked the chief of Jemaan

Daroro to choose their agwam, for although the Jemaa people,

with Zaria's help, defeated the Kagoro on several occasions, they

also suffered some reverses, and never succeeded in subduing

them nor in making them pay tribute.

After Gundong had given his slaves, the head of each family

took it in turn to provide the annual contribution, and if no

stranger were available, would seize even his own grand-children

and hand them over — children do not count for much in times of

danger or famine. They have now been roughly assessed, and

most of the towns have paid tribute to the Government direct, but

the chief of Jemaa was not given the position of suzerain,

for he had been unable to conquer them before our arrival.

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On Kaka's death his successor will be chosen by the people,

and confirmed or rejected by us, and he will be a man, for

only males are eligible, females being considered incapable of

any posts of authority. The agwam of Fada Kagoro takes

one-tenth of the total to compensate him for the trouble of

collecting it, the chief of each separate town taking a smaller

proportion, and as the chiefs of such independent tribes seldom

have very much power over their people, and are always liable to

abuse and ill-treatment on such occasions, he does not get over-

paid. The incidence on the Kagoro general public is about ljd.

per head per adult, not exactly a ruinous tax compared with

what we have the pleasure and privilege of paying in England.

The Katab to the north of the Kagoro are mostly in the

Zaria province, only one town being within the Nassarawa

boundary; they are said to have originated in Kachicherri,

north of Moroa. "There is a big rock, the Dutsin Kerrima,

where sorcery was practised,' 1 I was told, " cattle being sacri-

ficed there long ago. The demons [aljen was the word used,

from the Arabic] are very powerful, and sacred earth is taken

from the rock by the Filani, and mixed with potash as a medicine

for their cattle. Years ago, Awudu, chief of Zaria, when engaged

in a war, which ended in the conquest of the Katab country, gave

the people a black bull to sacrifice on the advice of his mallams

— and yet he was himself a Mohammedan priest. Even now on

Sunday and Friday nights the hill is luminous, and ghostly white

cattle mount on top of the rock and walk about, tended by a

white Filani girl." I suppose the mountain is a volcano, and the

appearance of steam at intervals has given rise to this myth ; and

there is probably some potash in the earth ; but why the

phenomenon appears on a Sunday I do not know, though the

Mohammedan influence might account for the Friday night

performances.

The Kajji (also spelt Kaje, though this gives no idea of the

pronunciation) claim descent from the north-west; they are

thoroughly under control. Their immediate neighbours to

the north and west are the Jaba, with whom they seem to

have much in common ; in fact, they once lived on the land

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now occupied by the Jaba tribe. The migration must have

been quite recent, for Canon Robinson, writing in 1894, and

describing a journey from Keffi (or as he more correctly spells

it Kaffir i.e. " Stockade," and so " stockaded town said that

the inhabitants of this district, many of whom wore no clothes

of any kind, whilst others were content with a girdle of leaves,

were a most degraded and unintelligent-looking set of people.

According to the statement of his carriers (never a very

reliable source of information, I fear, in such matters), many

of them were cannibals. Near Zaria, his route for about fifty

miles lay through the land of the Keddara tribe ; but prior to

this his advance had been through the country of the " Kedje,"

who for the most part were professional brigands. The Kajji

still indulge in these little failings when possible, and I very

much doubt if they have yet been cured of them.

South of the Kajji are the Kagoma, but the tail-bearing ends

at the border, for the Kagoma, the Kanninkwom, and the people

south of them, wear little strips of cloth instead. The Kagoma

claim descent from the west, and are not connected with the

Kagoro in any way, but their houses are almost identical, and,

by the way, that reminds me of another point worth mentioning.

The houses of the Kagoro and Attakka on the west and south

faces of the mountain spur are conical, like those of the pagans

nearer their supposed place of origin, while those in the big

towns to the north resemble those of the Kajji and Moroa type,

and, considering the fact that the building of the Kagoma and

Kajji houses far surpasses the best the Kagoro can do, I think

it is quite probable that this peculiar plan came from the west,

and that the Kagoro were not accustomed to building in that

way.

To the west of the Kagoma are the Yeskwa, to the south the

Mada, their neighbours to the east being the Ninzam and

Waiwai. Then come the Ayu who claim descent from the Hausa

town of Katsina (as many English people do from Normandy),

the Kibbo on the Bauchi border, while to the north of the Ayu

are the Karshe people, a rather weak and unwarlike tribe, one of

whose towns, Nimbia, has been mentioned before. Some Attakka

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live quite close to it even now, though their biggest towns are right

across the spur and on the north side of it as is the case with the

Kagoro.

The Attakka, their immediate neighbours to the east, were not

under control in my time, and I was therefore unable to find out

anything about them at first hand. A patrol visited the country

and subdued the tribe just after I had left in 1909, but I do not

think that they have been studied as yet. They are head-hunters

like the Kagoro, they dress in the same way, and their customs

are said to be similar ; they are the pot-makers of the district.

They probably number about seven thousand, and live in towns

on the north and south faces of the mountain spur.

The Gannawarri have now been placed under the Resident of

Bauchi, and, as they were not under control in 1908-9 nor in my

district, I was unable to visit any of their towns, though I went

a little way into their country to settle a quarrel. They are

cannibals, and nearly naked, but the little attire they do wear

diners markedly from that of the Attakka and Moroa, their

westerly neighbours. They have not even yet been thoroughly

subdued, and no tribute was being paid by them when I was there,

their refusal to pay inciting the Attakka to do likewise, these

people in turn urging the Kagoro to resist the tax.

The Moroa people say that their ancestors came from Zaria

country to Kafanchan (north of Jemaan Daroro), and from there

Enniluchwi and his wife went east and founded Chori, or Ungwal

Tukunia, some time before the Filani came to the country — about

1730 as near as I can make it. Enniluchwi was the father of all

the Moroa, and he reached the very respectable age of one

hundred years — how we all love to regard our ancestors, mythical

or real, as hoary patriarchs ! After him came Yakwu(r)rum of

Babban Gidda who ruled for ten years, then in order, Daudu of

Mansha, eight years ; Rubu, ten years ; Unkwommakai, fifteen

years ; Dawiya of Chori, fifty years (deposed) ; and lastly Abomong

of Mansha, now eight years, the present D.H.M. recognised by

the Government.

The Moroa country is open and very rich, most of the visible

area being under cultivation at some time or other. In the dry

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season I can hardly imagine a more pleasant spot to live in, and

were it easily accessible I should spend many a week-end there.

The great blue mountains looming up on the south, the Kaduna

river flowing away to the north-west through the harmattan's

haze, the herds of cattle contentedly eating the new green grass

springing up amongst the brown stubble burnt off at the ends of

the rains, the little sienna villages nestling amongst the tall dum-

palms, form a picture which I can never forget. I was struck with

the beauty of the Kagoro country on my first visit, but the land

of the Moroa is even more lovely, and through the haze over all

I felt that throbbing heat, that panting indefinable " something "

which gives the West African countries their charm.

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CHAPTER IX

"HEADS AND TAILS"

IT is rather strange that the Kagoro, Attakka, Moroa, Katab,

Kajji, and J aba tribes should be noted for their fondness

for tails as well as for heads ; the former being prized by the

matrons, the latter being eagerly sought by the men.

The chiefs who have been recognised by the Government now

wear Hausa robes, in accordance with our instructions, made from

the native cotton, and purchased from the traders ; but no other

Kagoro wears cotton of any kind, though many Kajji men do

if they can afford it, and so do Jaba and Moroa, though to a

less extent. But even amongst the Kagoro chiefs themselves,

these robes are not very popular. I could never persuade Makka,

the chief of Chanji, to don one — for the reason, I found after-

wards, that he had sold it for palm-wine — and Kaka, the D.H.M.,

only wore his when I was in his town, or when he came to visit

me at Jemaan Daroro. I do not think that any of these robes

were ever washed, and but few of the bodies of the wearers either;

and sometimes, when measuring heads, I had to squirt eau-de-

cologne up my nose before I could get near them, although I had

even then lost nearly all my sense of smell — but some of these

people would have set up a commotion in the mucous mem-

brane of a mummy !

All males of these six tribes wear a leather triangular loin-

covering after they have reached the age of six or eight, and

possibly even earlier if the father happens to have skins to spare.

Moroa and Kajji men sometimes wear cotton loin-cloths instead

of leather, like those of the Hausawa, who always have them even

under their loose trousers. Another skin may be worn over the

shoulders as a cape, the two front legs being tied together

to serve as a cord, and enabling it to be shifted to the one

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side of the body or the other according to whichever is exposed to

the wind or the rain. Both these articles of clothing are made of

goat or sheep skin, which is cured by being stretched out on the

ground by means of pegs, the meat being scraped off, and a

preparation, which sometimes includes ash, being rubbed in to

kill the germs. There is, apparently, no softening process used

in connection with the skins worn around the shoulders, for

the hair is retained, and they are as hard as boards ; but those

for the loins are greased to some extent, and have the hair

removed, but they get stiff very quickly if unused. There is

no regimental nor society tailor, the skins being prepared by

the wearers themselves generally, or by their fathers in the cases

of young boys.

Girls from three to four years of age until married wear the

ivy an, a picture-hook shaped girdle of loose native strands of

string, not plaited nor twisted in any way, which is fitted round

the body a little lower than the waist, a long end passing from

the front between the legs, and meeting the girdle again at the

small of the back, where it is tied. This is said to be an absolute

sign of virginity, and judging from the strictness with which

the females are looked after, and the early age at which they

are married, I should say that the badge is in nearly every case

a correct one.

Instead of the girdle, married women wear a tail behind,

which has various names according to whether it is decorated

or not, but is in its most primitive form called knnnok, and this

is in shape something like a mushroom, some being long and

thin, others being short and stumpy. It is made of a palm

fibre, very tightly drawn together and bound with string, and,

except in the southern Kagoro towns, there is a wider wheel-

shaped end, plaited like basket-work, the whole being left quite

plain, or coloured red with earth to match the wearer's body.

The next step in ornamentation in some parts is a row or two of

beads around the edge of the " wheel," and brass wire may be

bound around the " stalk " or " axle " of the kunnolc, or it may

be covered with sheet brass. Finally, the under-surface of the

" wheel " may be decorated with coloured glass beads in a more

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or less regular pattern, and the two strings binding the tail to

the waist may be thus adorned also. The brass is bought from

the Hausawa ; the beads, obtained through them or other traders

from the Niger Company, are strung on a thread and then stuck

on with liquid rubber, of which there is a good deal in the

country ; they are not sewn in any way. The fancy bead patterns

were probably invented by the Jaba; I have seen none amongst

the tribes farther to the east, but the brass wire is used to some

extent. In Tuku and Tuku Tozo, the tail resembles a cow-bell

more than a mushroom, there being no axle or wheel, and there is

but little decoration with beads, and none with brass, though the

women use beads in much greater profusion for bracelets, necklets,

and anklets. I was told that a tiny iron bell was sometimes worn

above the tail, but I do not know under what circumstances,

nor did I see one.

When a girl has been married, her mother removes her

girdle, and a small branch or bunch of leaves is hung in front

to the string around the waist which supports the tail behind.

Many women — especially when old apparently — wear leaves both

fore and aft, though this is not compulsory ; but those in front,

plus the tail behind, are the sign of marriage. At certain times,

such as dances and feasts, leaves may be worn by young girls also,

and this possibly corresponds in some degree to our own children

taking grown-up characters at fancy-dress balls; or there may be

some religious reason.

No woman of these tribes would dare to attire herself in any

other but the prescribed fashion, though the only punishment

which would be inflicted is the disapproval of her own people.

This, however, is a very serious thing in such savage communities,

and the differences in the adornment and shape of the tail

seem to be the only variations allowed, and even these are con-

fined within fairly strict limits. The late Lieutenant Boyd

Alexander mentions these tails in his From the Niger to the Nile,

though the statement " when the ornament is encased in brass it

denotes virginity, 1 ' is not quite correct. He also relates that the

Yergum say of the Gazum people that they have tails about six

inches long, for which they have to dig a hole when they sit down.

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The women of the Keddara tribe wear a tail of loose string

like a tassel, while Gannawarri females sport a number of large

iron rings in front which clank loudly as they walk. The

Kagoma girls wear a small apron of string, sometimes dyed

green and ornamented with cowries, while the adult women

of nearly all the remaining tribes in the vicinity wear short

pieces of cloth, though the bunches of leaves are seen right down

to Wase in the Muri province.

The tail worn by the women of the Kagoro, Moroa, and other

head-hunting tribes is probably a survival of a phallic cult,

though I doubt if any connection would be now recognised by

the people themselves, and it is interesting to remember that

" tales of tailed tribes " have sprung up from all quarters of the

globe. After all, Englishmen should not be very much astonished

by them, since they themselves were once accused of being

blessed (or cursed) with caudal appendages. Mr. Boyle says

that he has found legends of the phenomena in Abyssinia,

Borneo, the Amazon region, Paraguay, China, Guiana, Persia,

and the Sudan, and there are tales of tails in the New Guinea,

as well as in the old. Sometimes the caudati have been long

and prehensile, sometimes short and stiff, as with the Gazum

related above, and as with certain divisions of the Mada and

Nadu tribes who tell the story about each other. And where

the people are sufficiently advanced to sit on seats instead of on

the ground, holes are bored in these seats, it is said, for the

accommodation of the appendages, while their less civilised

brethren have to carry sticks to make a suitable place in the

ground. Again, it is sometimes said that the wearers cannot

even lie on their backs.

Professor Tylor says that various reasons have led to the

growth of the legends describing human beings with tails like

beasts, and, to people who regard monkeys and savages as closely

connected, the reason is fairly evident. The satyr was frequently

depicted as a half-human creature, sometimes in a form like that

of an anthropoid ape, and in East Africa and elsewhere, the

imaginary tribes of tailed men were often also monkey-faced.

He advises ethnologists, who meet in any district with the story

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of tailed men, to look for a despised race of aborigines, outcasts,

or heretics, living near or among a dominant population who

look upon them as beasts, and furnish them with tails accordingly.

In Spain, he says, the mediaeval superstition still survives that

Jews have tails like the devil — I suppose the fear and hatred

of Satan accounts for our supplying him also with this

appendage.

In England, Professor Tylor continues, the idea was turned

to profit by priests, who claimed that the men who had insulted

St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Canterbury grew tails sub-

sequently. Bishop Bale writes that " for castynge of fyshe tayles

at thys Augustyne, Dorsett Shyre menne hadde tayles ever after

[which seems rather hard on the Dorsets], but Polydorus

applieth it unto Kentish men at Stroud by Rochester, for

cuttinge of Thomas Becket's horses tail." In the first case,

fishes' tails grew on the men ; in the second, appendages like

those of horses, and as Becket excommunicated the men of

Rochester (who plundered his baggage when fleeing from the

King, and really did cut off' his horses 1 tails), this story was

spread by the Church throughout Europe so assiduously that,

as Bishop Bale says further on, " thus hath England in all other

land a perpetuall infamy of tayles by theyr wrytten legends of

lyes, yet can they not well tell where to bestowe them truely."

And again, " An Englyshman now cannot travayle in an other

land, by way of merchandyse or any other honest occupyinge, but

it is most contumeliously thrown in his tethe that all Englyshmen

have tailes."

This story, says Professor Tylor, at last became a common

slander between shire and shire, and Devonians believed that

Cornishmen had tails until quite recently. Amongst many

savages there is a belief that human beings once had tails, and

in Brazil it is related of a certain tribe that a father-in-law,

after his daughter's marriage, would cut a wooden stick with a

flint, imagining by this symbolic ceremony that he was severing

the tails of future grandchildren, and thus securing that they

should be born tailless.

But as regards Englishmen, says Mr. Boyle, it was not

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supposed they had been created there originally, but that the

growth of the appendages was a direct result of the ecclesiastical

curse. King Richard Cceur de Lion is related to have been

roused to the storming of Messina and the massacre that ensued

by the taunts of the Greeks and Sicilians, who greeted him and

his men with cries of "tailed Englishmen,'' 1 while a century

later similar insults made the Earl of Salisbury withdraw with

his force from Damietta, apparently to the great satisfaction of

the "noble Frenchmen, ,, who were not at all anxious to have

any men with appendages and under the curse of the Church as

allies. Even at Bannockburn the Scots are said to have sung

songs about the tailed Englishmen, a fact which may strike one

as very strange nowadays, considering that the Scots were

regarded as being barbarians, and far below the level of their

brethren south of the Tweed in civilisation.

However, whether the ornaments worn by the Kagoro and

other women are the result of a curse, or are a survival — as I

suspect — of a peculiar cult, it was most interesting to find people

with them, and I was able to obtain a selection. They are not

sacred to their wearers, and if they die, the tails will be passed

on to other members of the family.

The men wear loin-coverings of leather or cloth, but they

are in many districts copying the garments of the Filani and

Hausawa which are so well known as to hardly require any

description here.

No head-covering is worn by either sex, but a cape, resembling

in shape the sack with one side cut open worn by coal-heavers

in England, may be made of palm leaves for protection against

the rain. This may have been copied from those made by the

Hausawa, for their name for it, kabiddo, is often used, but it

is quite possible that the cape is purely a local invention, as

the Ninzams have a kind of immense three-cornered grass hat

which is used for a similar purpose. These are worn only by

men, and are but very seldom seen even on them ; none of the

women of any of these tribes cover their heads, and no persons

of either sex have any protection for hands or feet, although

most pagan women adopt them readily enough if married to or

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enslaved by Filani or Hausawa in Jemaan Daroro, where large

and small hats and caps, and long boots, slippers, and sandals

of beautifully worked leather, or of wood, are fairly plentiful.

No special badges of rank are worn by either sex, not even by

leaders during war time. Youths may dress their hair, but adult

men and women and girls shave their heads. With the Kagoro

and Kajji (and probably with the other tribes too, though I have

not seen any examples), most males up to the age of about

eighteen or twenty allow the hair to grow in a broad tuft from

the forehead to the back of the neck, reminding one of the cheap

wooden horses made for children in England, and some Kajji say

that a youth should not shave his head until he has had two

children. But this is doubtful, though I suppose most of them

have a couple before the age of twenty, that is if they have more

than one wife. Some males plait their hair instead in a most

intricate fashion, and ornament it with beads, brass rings, and

cowrie shells, while others cut it in the form of a mop like the

Gannawarri, Karshe, and others. Young girls may do likewise up

to the age of about six, but they have the head shaved after that,

though the reason given — namely, that they have to carry weights

(wood, water, &c.) while the men seldom do — seems inadequate,

for the Hausa and Beriberi women carry very heavy loads and yet

wear a high, solid pad running from front to back.

The older men usually allow the beard to grow, but the

moustache is shaved now and then, though no shaving seems to

be done while preparing for the harvest. I could not ascertain

that there was any reason for this except that the men were too

busy on their farms to spare the necessary time ; but I suppose

there is some religious meaning in it (probably connected with the

hair-offering), for the heads were shaved as usual, and they would

take much longer to do than the upper lip. Kagoma and a few

Kajji men wind cotton around their beards, bringing them to a

sharp point ; some Australian tribes also do this.

Open brass bracelets are worn by Kagoro of both sexes, and

wide iron bands (probably obtained from the Gannawarri) on the

calves of any old man and old woman who can afford them, but

they are very rare. Beads and horsehair are made into necklaces

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for women, while light iron chains are hung by men around their

waists, especially if courting, and strings of beads are worn by all

females. There are no toe-rings, but beads or beans are used for

finger-rings. All ornaments are removable except the metal cases

around the legs, which seem to be a development of the wooden

protections for the ankles used by the Kibbo. They are very

heavy, and make the feet very sore, so that the wearers have to

tie on grass wads or bandages of cotton or leather for them to rest

upon ; they are, however, valuable, and are therefore kept in the

family.

Both the upper and lower lips of the women are pierced for

the reception of small discs of wood called tichiaJc, which are of

varying sizes, and may be over one inch in diameter and about

three-quarters of an inch high. Sometimes the outer face of these

discs is ornamented with a row of seeds, a flat, round piece of

native tin, or simpl^with a little red-coloured earth. Though

they are easily removable they are supposed to prevent women

eating fowls or dogs, the latter a very great privation ; but as

these people do not kiss one another, there is no objection to the

tkhiak on that score. The lips are usually pierced when the girl

is about seven or eight years of age, stalks of grass being first

inserted and worn for a time, and then sticks of increasing thick-

ness until the tichiak itself can be taken, the largest sizes of which

give the mouth a very cruel shape, and make the lips project so

much that seen sideways the wearer has a pig-like appearance.

Both ears are pierced in the women, only the left in the men,

and they are treated in the same way as are the lips ; but in the

southern Kagoro towns the piercing of the ears of the males is

not compulsory, and it is, I think, dying out, even in the more

northern parts, for I saw but few men wearing ear-rings. Beads,

usually in the shape of blue glass rings, are bought from the

Hausawa, and are worn, or if these be unobtainable string or

sticks will do, but I have not seen any metal ones, not even of

brass, wire, or tin, although all of these substances are used for

the ornamentation of other parts of the body, as I have already

mentioned. The ear-rings are very light and quite moderate in

size, and they do not weigh down the lobes, but nevertheless I

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have seen several torn lobes which could not be mended. The

nose is not pierced, as with the Nadu to the south, who wear

pieces of wood or bone through the septum of the nose, and

through both lips and ears, or as with the Beriberi of Bornu who

wear coral-like ornaments in the right nostril; nor is it flattened.

The teeth are not filed as with the Bassa, nor are they broken as

with the Yoruba tribes ; and there is no deformation of the feet

or fingers.

All members, male and female, of the Kagoro, Moroa, and

Kajji tribes are scarified in the same way, though the females are

more profusely decorated than the males, and I am told that the

same holds good with the Attakka, Katab, and Jaba as well ;

certainly all whom I saw had had some acquaintance with the

knife, though before the present pattern was adopted each tribe

had irregular cuts on the forehead only. There is now no religious

significance about the designs, they maintain, the lines being

simply to denote race, and this must be correct if what they say

about copying the Katab pattern is true.

Males and females have the same marks on the head, and those

consist of a number of short perpendicular cuts right across the fore-

head from ear to ear, and long slanting lines (thirteen or more) on

each cheek from ear to chin. In some cases — particularly amongst

the younger men — a kind of zigzag is added to the lowest lines,

but this is not compulsory, the other marks are, except in Tuku

and Tuku Tozo. The people of these towns seem to be separating

themselves from their northern relatives, and to be desirous of

settling down peacefully under Jemaan Daroro, for in addition to

this and the difference in the shape of the tail, and of the houses

before mentioned, there are no euphorbia hedges in this quarter.

Youths have the forehead scarified when able to use a hoe, srirls

when they go to their husbands.

Men may have in addition patterns on the chest, composed of

rows of cuts from about a quarter to one-half an inch in length,

and usually made slantwise, but they are voluntary and seem to

be dying out. The only persons with these chest-marks were

chiefs, but I was told that they were not in any sense signs of rank,

nor looked upon as charms, but there is no doubt that certain

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Hausa patterns which are so regarded will spread and be adopted

even by the conservative Kagoro (the Kajji have many of them

now), especially those which are supposed to have particular

virtues such as prevention of sickness, retention of a wife's fidelity,

and even those invented for somewhat baser motives. I could not

find out what the patterns which they have now were intended to

represent ; the people said that they did not know, and, if bor-

rowed, this was probably quite true. The only raised scars I saw

were on a Kajji man at Mersa, and they were said to have been

more accidental than intentional. On the first occasion when this

man noticed that I was looking at him he ran oft' in terror, but

afterwards he was quite friendly, and I got several photographs

of him.

Women's chests and backs are decorated with a regular

pattern early in life, so there is no need for them to undergo

fresh pain later for the sake of acquiring additional beauty. The

first lines to be done are those on the abdomen, and though these

vary a little in design, the usual triangular and parallel lines are

fairly well distinguishable. When a girl reaches the marriageable

age the chest and back will be scarified in two parallel sets of

long lines of short cuts, running from the breasts to join the

pattern already on the stomach, and from the shoulder blades

to the small of the back. As soon as possible after the marriage

the lines on the forehead are made, and then she is a finished

work of art — there is no danger of a Kagoro wife losing her

" marriage-lines. ,,

The scarifier is an important person, though he has not the

exclusive right to operate upon every one, and, in fact, the father

is always free to slice his own offspring about should he feel

inclined, but all the "best people" who wanted their patterns

in the most perfect style would certainly patronise the professional

artist. The office is practically hereditary, for no man would

teach the secrets of his noble art to any but his own son or

nephew.

In addition to the scarified designs, at dances or feasts or

when courting, people of either sex may paint on themselves a

black stripe about an inch wide, running from forehead to

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stomach, and sometimes there is a narrow line on each side as

well, or for each of these lines may be substituted a set of three

narrow ones. No colours are used on the body but black pig-

ment and red earth, and no other designs are permitted. The

pigment is obtained from the unripe kernel of a certain thorn

tree (called illak by the Kagoro, gaude by the Hausawa) which

is pounded up, mixed with water, and applied with the crushed

end of a stalk of guinea-corn. For scarification, which is to

be permanent, of course, the incisions are painted with grease

mixed with soot from the bottom of the cooking-pots.

The women usually smear their bodies with red earth, mixed

with grease if they can get it, and the men on certain occasions

may coat their legs up to their knees, and this custom is not con-

fined to the wild pagans, for I have seen dusky beauties of

Jemaa mixing the red earth with vaseline bought from traders,

and rubbing it into their bodies until they took on quite a

coppery-red tint. In the case of the Jemaa women, I should

think the idea was chiefly, if not altogether, for the sake of

increasing their charms, but with the Kagoro and others, the

coating may have afforded protection against insects also, for

their naked bodies must suffer a good deal from tiny tormentors.

There is plenty of red earth in the vicinity, also white, but the

latter is not used for decorating the body, though it may be

smeared on the houses, and even eaten by women under certain

circumstances. Hausa women, however, use white and even

yellow earth on their faces, especially to mark rings round their

eyes to keep off all the evil-eyes. There are no special artists for

the painting, the people doing it to each other, or to themselves.

No distinctive dress is worn for prowess in war, nor to denote

that a man had taken a head, as in Fiji, though he was not sup-

posed to have attained to the full dignity of manhood until he

had killed some one. There was a general idea amongst Jemaan

Daroro people that at any rate no Kagoro male was allowed to

marry until this most desirable feat had been performed, but the

Kagoro themselves deny this, and, judging by the early age at

which youths obtain their brides, I feel inclined to believe them,

though such qualifications are known to be insisted upon else-

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where, for instance amongst the Dyaks of Borneo. When a man

had been lucky enough to procure a head he naturally did not

hide his good deed, and on the return of the hero to his house,

his whole body was smeared with red earth, and he was carried

in procession on the back of a friend, the women of the quarter

meanwhile dancing, waving their hands before him, and singing

his praises.

It is rather surprising that the Kagoro and others have not

learned to put antimony or sulphide of lead on their eyelids, nor

to stain their hands and feet with henna, as do the Filani and

Hausawa near them. They say that they are afraid to ornament

their hands, lest it should interfere with their farming and work

generally, and it is more than probable that this idea is ardently

fostered by the men so that the women will continue to do all

the hard work — there are no Votes for Women amongst the

Kagoro !

No Kagoro, Kajji, Attakka, or Moroa woman would dare to

attire herself in any other than the prescribed fashion, as I have

said, and I have known girls, taken away when young, and dressed

in Hausa cloths, to discard these at once for the tichidk and

kunnoJc on their return. On the other hand, the mutilation of

the lips is not at all popular amongst women of other tribes, who

do not indulge in the practice. Having to judge once between

a husband who wanted his wife (a runaway slave from Sokoto)

Kajji-ised, and the wife herself, who thought her natural charms

sufficient, I decided that she must wear the leaves and tail as

she was a wife, and they were the signs of marriage in the

country she had adopted, but that her lips were not to be touched,

for the perforations should have been made when the girl

was young, if at all. They seemed to be satisfied, I am sure

I was.

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CHAPTER X

TRIBUTE TROUBLES

I HAVE already said that the Kagoro and other tribes had to

pay us tribute, and it may be as well to explain why. The

payment of a fixed amount, in cash or in kind, by a weak

people to a strong has long been recognised as the sign of the

acknowledgment of suzerainty, and it is enforced by the Govern-

ment of Northern Nigeria, not so much on account of the amount

brought in — the expenses of collection exceeding the sum received

in many cases — but rather to remind the natives that we are the

masters, and that we intend to keep them under control. This

refers more particularly to the tribes in the Pagan Belt ; in the

old Hausa States of Sokoto and KaUo, the tribute is an important

source of revenue, but in those more settled parts the Political

Officer is rather more of a resident Treasury official than a

traveller, more of a legal expert than an anthropologist, though

political problems have to be solved by all. As for those who

have always lived in bungalows in Zungeru or Lokoja, they can

hardly be said to know the real West Africa at all, and this is so

well recognised now that men from the Political Service are being

transferred to the Secretariat.

I had been waiting for a long time for the chance to complete

my higher Hausa examination, and at last in December 1908, I

received permission to proceed to Zaria to be tested. It seemed

rather strange that I should have to do a journey of over 300

miles there and back, and be away from my headquarters for a

month just for this reason, but such was the ruling against my

application to be considered as having passed in consequence of

my success in the army examination before referred to (although

my application was supported by the local examiner), and I was

very glad to have the chance of the trip. Sending instructions to

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the Kagoro and Moroa tribes that I should visit them on my

return for the tribute, I left Jemaan Daroro on the 1st January,

and, marching through Kajji, Jaba, Keddara and other countries,

I reached Zaria on the 8th, an average of 19 miles a day. The

harmattan season was then at its height, and on the day that we

reached Zaria, I walked 12 miles without mounting (we had

started at 3.10 a.m.) although wrapped in a thick military great-

coat, and I have never liked walking.

I stayed five days at Zaria, not wholly on account of the

examination, the result of which was eminently satisfactory, but

because I had been unwell for some time, and there was no doctor

at Jemaan Daroro. However, on the 13th I again took the road,

and travelling by a different route, arrived at Fada Kagoro on

the 19th, this time doing an even better average rate. I had two

little excitements en route, for at a town named Liberi I found that

the man who carried my camp bed, blankets, pyjamas, and towels

had lost his way, and was missing, so I had to sleep as I was in my

" shorts " and helmet, with only a great-coat and face towel to

keep off the mosquitoes.

Next morning I had planned to start at 3.0 a.m., and at 2.30

I whistled for the carriers. After about a quarter of an hour, one

or two appeared, and the headman informed me that the rest

would not come as they wanted to start later. I blew again and

waited, but without any result, and I then made for the huts in

which they had passed the night. I, of course, found them empty,

but the mens sleeping-mats were still there, and telling the head-

man to collect them, I set one of the servants to make a fire, and

calling out in a loud voice, " Burn the mats of all those carriers

who are missing, 11 I threw some dry grass on to the fire, and the

flames leapt up. Immediately there was a rush from the sur-

rounding huts and from the bush, and the owners being made to

pack my loads before their mats were restored, we started off at

3.30 a.m., only half-an-hour late.

Every one of the carriers who had caused the trouble in the

morning was beaten later, and that day we covered 30 miles, yet

there was no more disagreement between us, and the same men

accompanied me on several subsequent treks. It may seem harsh

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treatment, but I was going into the Kagoro country for the first

time, and unless carriers are controlled strictly, they begin looting,

so I had to teach them a lesson at once, for even a petty theft from a

man of a savage tribe may mean the massacre of the whole party

later. That night the man with my bed turned up again — and I

admit I was glad to see him about seven o'clock, just as I had

given up all hope — having travelled well over forty miles, for he

had had to retrace his steps to get to the town where we had

camped in order to find out where we had gone. And if I was glad

so was he, for he had had to sleep in a tree with hyenas prowling

around and sniffing at the bed which he had left on the ground.

The next day I reached Zungon Katab, and the day after-

wards I was met by four soldiers, the advance guard of an escort

of eleven allowed me while on trek in the Kagoro country, both

to lend weight to my arguments, and to guard any cash received.

The reader will by this time, I hope, have become thoroughly

convinced of the necessity for exacting tribute from these com-

paratively lawless tribes, but, however sound our views on this

score may be, it is unfortunately necessary to state that the

natives do not always agree with them. The Kagoro, Moroa,

and other head-hunters in the Jemaan Daroro division paid only

between a penny and threepence per head per annum, but it can

hardly be stated with any show of truth that they did so as

willingly as long-suffering Englishmen would if they could sub-

stitute that amount for what they usually have to pay. We must

necessarily be extremely lenient in all matters where time is con-

cerned with these pagans, for most of them have absolutely no

idea of any divisions of the year other than "harvest" and

u non-harvest," nor of the sunny hours of the day than meal-time

and not-meal-time ; as the Geisha has it, " a month or a week or

a day, sir," are nought to the happy-go-lucky savage. In

fact these names are quite interchangeable in his mind unless

connected with anything regarding his own welfare, and even

then only if to his advantage. One is often taken in by the

apparent innocence of the native, and this does not apply only to

the newcomer — though he is naturally the most easily victimised

— but to the men who rather fancy that they know a thing or

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two like myself, for instance, for I am quite sure that I was

deceived on more than one occasion, even during my last tour.

However, to get back to the tribute, I have said that it is

necessary to be lenient in matters of time, but there is a limit in

all things, and I thought that two years and more was quite long

enough. We 64 sat down," as the expression is, for a few days

at the Fada of the Kagoro, and wiped out most of the arrears

due by that tribe, and then we proceeded to Akut to collect

the Moroa money. One town, Babban Gidda, had been very

obstinate, and as nothing much came in on my demand, I

determined to play the people a little trick.

About 4 a.m. next morning we started off in two parties, and

surrounded the town, and then, entering quietly, stole all the

horses we could find. Day broke just afterwards, and lamenta-

tions arose in all directions, but we were by then clear of the

town, and on our way back to the camp. Within an hour or

two the necessary cash had been paid, the horses had been

ransomed, and the tribute receipts given out, and I believe the

victims rather enjoyed the joke, for they have a very clear even if

a very primitive idea of justice. At any rate, although they had

previously kept clear of our camp, they now came to sell food

and joke with the soldiers, an extraordinary fact about the

native being that he seldom has a lasting grievance against any-

body, and if you attack his town and kill his people to-day,

he will be only too delighted to join you to-morrow in an

attack on some other tribe. I remember, on my first arrival

at Lokoja in 1903, being struck by the fact that the civil

prisoners and the police escort laughed and chatted together

like old friends while at play (" work " was, I believe, the

official term for what they did), and I have even seen a

prisoner holding a constable's carbine for him ! The old story

of the prisoners having complained that they would not stay in

the prison (a mud and grass erection) unless the food was better,

is, of course, told about the gaol in Lokoja, but conditions are very

different now, brick cells and a smarter police force having trans-

ferred the choice of staying or not staying to the Government.

The next town I visited was Chori, the chief of which had

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given trouble on several occasions by beating policemen, and by

refusing to come to Jemaan Daroro when summoned. I, there-

fore, was not surprised to find that his town was empty of

horses, he having, of course, heard of the little raid on his fellow-

countrymen a couple of days before. The chief was an old man,

his name being Dawiya, and this struck me as being very appro-

priate according to the Hausa tongue, for da wvya means

u troublesome," the only thing against this translation being

that the man himself was not a Hausa, but a Moroa. He

seemed to be always chuckling to himself, and it was impossible

to speak to him without laughing. I began to disbelieve the

reports I had heard about him, for he promised, in a most

amiable tone, to do everything I ordered, and after half-an-

hour or so we might have been lifelong friends. Food was

brought, full payment of the outstanding tribute was promised

on the morrow (when is the native's morrow ?), and as an earnest

four large bags of cowries were brought forth in great style —

which, on being counted, were found to be worth 2s. each.

Next morning Dawiya came again, but without the tribute, of

course, and began to explain that it was all in his house except

for a shilling or two, and that he wished to cbmplete the whole

sum before bothering me to take it. When I suggested his

bringing what he had already got, he pooh-poohed the idea,

and he soon afterwards said that he had really not been able

to collect any at all.

What was I to do with the poor old sinner ? It would have

been quite legal to have arrested him (even we in England are

subject to such a proceeding), but in a country where enslaving

is still rampant, one has to be very careful not to give the native

the idea that arresting and keeping a man for debt is only

another name for capturing and holding him to ransom, or for

pawning. Strangely enough, at that very moment a charge of

enslaving was brought against Dawiya.

It seemed that years ago he had sold a horse to a certain

Hausa trader of Jemaan Daroro, and as it had not been paid for

(at least that was Dawiya's defence), he had seized the man's

daughter, Lahidi, who was then staying with her mother in

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Chori. The trader afterwards tendered the money, or the

balance of it, but Dawiya would not let the girl go. I

ordered Lahidi to be produced, and she came, though very

reluctantly. The system of pawning children, or handing them

over to the creditor as security for repayment of a debt, is

very common in West Africa, though now forbidden by our

proclamations, and as I had then to think the matter out, I

may as well give some account of it here.

A great-uncle of mine, the Rev. John Martin, writing at

Accra in 1845, says, " I saw an open box [placed on four posts

close to the path], containing a human skeleton bleaching in the

sun. The flesh had almost all disappeared, being carried away,

I suppose, by the birds. It was the body of a 4 pawn ' or debtor.

He, dying in debt, the body, according to the law of the country,

was refused burial until some friends should make satisfaction

to the creditor. This pawn system is most destructive to the

independence and advancement in civilisation of these people.

It is not an uncommon thing for a parent to pawn his child, or

for a man to pawn himself to a rich neighbour in order to obtain

a sum of money to gratify himself for a moment. The creditor

puts on an enormous interest, which requires the services of the

pawn to pay, while the principal remains undiminished. If he

have no friends to pay the debt for him, he dies a pawn, and his

children take his place of bondage, and should he be destitute of

both friends and children, his body is denied a grave, and is

exposed in the way mentioned. In consequence of this law, the

number of free persons is small." He notes that " Okanita, one

of the headmen, appeared to be fully alive to the ruinous

character of the customs for the dead, and to be very desirous

that they should be abolished. They are, the chief said, the

cause of more than one-half of the domestic slavery and pawns in

the country. A man, who unfortunately loses any member of his

family, must make an expensive 6 custom which consists chiefly in

drinking rum and firing muskets. If he is a poor man, there

is seldom any other resource but to pawn himself or a child."

The reason of the debt, therefore, may be a religious one, but

it is often on account of food that children are pawned and even

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sold. Thus, during the famine in the Benue provinces during

1905, many Bashima mothers actually sold their children for a

couple of bags of guinea-corn, and hundreds must have pawned

their own offspring ; but as I shall refer to this point in another

chapter, I need not dwell further upon it now. With Kagoro

and Moroa, the laws (or I ought, possibly, to say, customs) with

regard to pawning are much less harsh than on the Gold Coast,

for instance. The debtor does not appear to have usually handed

the child to the creditor as security, but if he were unable to pay,

the latter would try to seize him or one of his sons, if he had one,

if not, perhaps a brother ; and the captive would be compelled to

remain with the creditor for four years, and farm his land and

work for him generally. After that, supposing that he had

not previously escaped, he would be free, and the debt would

be extinguished. Of course, the father might pay up in the

meanwhile and so release his son, but the other would probably

be the usual course, for — as we shall see in the case of the

daughters — the father is inclined to make as much out of his

children as possible, and the pawn would, in any case, be kindly

treated and not sold if of the same tribe.

Lahidi was, as I have said, brought from Dawiya's house with

some show of resistance, and she seemed very much disinclined to

return to her own father ; but as, according to the Moroa laws, the

debt had been extinguished even if it had not been paid before,

and as I suspected that she would be under the influence of Dawiya

while at Chori, I restored her to her parents, and sent her to

Jemaan Daroro. Her lips had been pierced in the Moroa

fashion (the Hausas do not do that, of course), and she wore

only the Moroa maiden's girdle of string, and though she was

given clothes on her arrival at Jemaan Daroro, she discarded them

and escaped soon afterwards, walking alone by night to Chori —

a girl of twelve years of age, and there are leopards and hyenas

about ! I had her brought back again, and told her that she would

have to remain with her parents until she was of marriageable

age, and then if she still wished to return to her Moroa family

she would be allowed to do so. She was still in Jemaan Daroro

when I left in 1909, and her parents were trying all sorts of

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magani (charms) to make her shake off the attractions of Dawiya's

country, but apparently they had not succeeded very well, as

every now and then she would refuse to wear clothes, and that

must show strong feelings in a daughter of Eve ! Probably she

wished to resemble her great ancestress the better by wearing

leaves — that is if she knew of any Eve.

Another interesting case was one of debt brought by Kura,

the chief of the Katab town Kaura, who claimed two horses from

one of Dawiya's nephews; the defendant, a boy of some twelve years

of age, being represented by his uncle. It appeared that some thirty

years before, Kaura's father had given the boy's grandfather a

goat to keep for him, and had somehow failed to return it on

demand. As I have said before, the native has but a very short

memory for such trifles as consideration of the proper ownership

of anything he happens to be in possession of and has taken a

fancy to. The goat had, of course, brought forth many young

ones, as goats will, especially in the fertile climate of West

Africa. A calculation of the value of the descendants gave an

amount equal to the price of two horses, though perhaps I should

not use the word " price, 11 because human beings, horses, dogs,

goats, fowls and many commodities such as salt and tobacco are

really currency. Now, I myself had done a little arithmetic in

my time, and had even struggled with the Government's revenue

returns (in which the receipt of a goat, valued perhaps at Is. 6d.,

has to be entered nineteen times), but this was an absolutely new

problem, and, not being an expert in goats, I was somewhat at a

loss to know whether they increased in an arithmetical or geo-

metrical proportion.

The boy admitted that his grandfather had received a goat,

but maintained that he had paid for it, and that the goat had,

therefore, become his own property. I pointed out that no

witnesses of the transaction were still alive, and that I had

previously announced that I should not go into cases of very

ancient debts, but as it was evident that Kura's father's goat had

by some means become the property of a grandfather of the boy,

and that many descendants of the animal were now in the latter 's

possession, he would have to give Kura a male and a female from

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the offspring. It was not a Every learned judgment, I admit ; it

would, perhaps, not even appear to be logical to most of us.

But it put an end to a dispute of some thirty years' standing,

and satisfied both parties; for the boy was rather afraid that

Kura (being a chief) would some day manage to get the whole

of his goats from him, while Kura probably never expected to

get anything at all under the Whiteman's law.

It was now lunch-time, and Dawiya's tribute had not been

paid, so I told him to prepare to come with me to Jemaan

Daroro. This proved effective, and by the time I had finished

the meal, I had received the money. The cunning old man

had got most of it in before my arrival, and had been hoping

that I would go off without receiving payment, thus leaving him

to spend it on himself. On a further demand being made, he

would have said, of course, that he had not been able to get

any, and would probably have got some of his people into

trouble, although they were in the right.

From Chori I went to Bwingen, a town on the Gannawarri

border, which had not before been entered on the map. As the

afternoon was well advanced by that time, I returned to Akut

instead of going on to Zankam as I had intended, it being

impossible to camp there owing to an outbreak of small-pox. It

was lucky that we did not go on, for I heard that night that the

people of one of the quarters had laid an ambush for us, saying

that they would pay their tribute in poisoned arrows. I might

possibly have been successful had I attacked the place with

thirteen men, but I had grown a little more wary than in the

days when I went to the Kukuruku country, and, also, a Political

Officer will obtain no sympathy (and his wife no compensation) if

he gets into a mess without definite orders, so, as the tribute had

been collected from nearly all the towns except Zankam, I

determined to return to Jemaan Daroro, giving out that I would

come back and destroy Zankam the following month, if the chief

in the meantime had not come in person to pay.

Luckily, the people of Akut knew that I had decided to keep

clear of the small-pox before the news came of the ambush, and

as they told the Zankam people this we did not lose in prestige.

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I went back to my old mud house in Jemaan Daroro, well content

on the whole with the result of the tour, having travelled 362

miles during the twenty-nine days for which I had been absent.

Early the next month I was out again, visiting Fada Kagoro

first, and then going to the Kajji district with the intention of

using my persuasive eloquence on the resisters there. One town

on a hill just outside Fada Kajji, but in Zaria territory, had

made a speciality in highway robbers, and I was expecting to

co-operate in an attack on them by a patrol from Zaria. How-

ever, nothing had been settled at the time, and so, after visiting

some more Kajji towns, I went south and east to the Yesko

country, which at that time was not under control. We marched

eighteen miles and camped at Baddi, a town which had not

before been actually entered by a white man, I believe, though

its position was well known.

We were not at all sure of our reception, as a messenger,

whom I had sent ahead, reported the place to be empty, and so

we proceeded very warily, for that was a suspicious sign. The

town was defended by a network of hedges so arranged as to

make excellent cover for the defending archers, and every now and

then a bottle-shaped pit, perhaps ten feet deep and six feet in

width, yawned in the middle of the road. These are covered

over with sticks, grass, and earth in war time, and a side path

is cut for the use of the people of the village, the ground all

around being dug up and disturbed so that no one except the

defenders will know exactly where the pit and the side path are

situated. Sharp stakes may be placed in these pits, but I believe

that there is usually no need for them, the bottle-shape and the

width giving a prisoner no possibility of obtaining a grip any-

where, and thus effectually preventing any escape.

We camped below the town, most of which was built on the

top of a hill, and sent a message to the chief to the effect that he

should come and greet us according to custom, but we could not

prevail upon him to do so. We saw no one, until, towards

evening, sounds of drumming and laughter were heard, and

parties of men and women appeared, dressed in strings of beads,

cloths, and other finery, coming from another town, Kworrebe,

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where they had been feasting and dancing. They passed close

by our camp, but took no notice of us, and things did not look

too hopeful. Later on a couple of small calabashes of flour were

brought, but they were, of course, quite inadequate for the men

I had with me, and as there was evidently no chance of getting

anything to eat there unless we seized it by force — and that I

could not do — I determined to leave next morning.

About the middle of the night I awoke dreaming of poisoned

arrows, and sure enough, I was being pricked all over. It is

wonderful what a chain of thoughts rushes through one's mind in

the waking moments. I was so certain that I had been captured,

and tied up, and was now being tortured, that I could hardly

believe it when I awoke, and saw by the faint moonlight that I

was alone in the tent though there were sounds of angry words

and movement outside. Still, there was no doubt about the

stings, and I felt fresh ones continually, and pretty bad some of

them were, too. It was of no use lying there and wondering what

the trouble was, so I jumped out of bed, lit the lamp, and saw

that my bed was full of travelling ants ! To slip on my long, soft

Hausa boots and run outside was the work of a moment, and

there I saw that most of the men were rushing about with lighted

torches, and beating the ground with their sleeping mats, having

been attacked by the same enemy. Fire is, thank Goodness, a

very effective antidote, and in half-an-hour or so we were clear

of the pests, but it was a long time before we got to sleep again,

and we had but little time for rest, for we left about daybreak,

and went towards Jagindi, having more excitement en route, as

will be seen.

I was told afterwards that the chief of Baddi had just been

elected, and that when a man is appointed to the position, he

must provide a feast of guinea-corn beer. He is given usually

about three months in which to collect the necessary supply, but

even then the feast probably renders him bankrupt until such

time as he has seized enough of the property of his subjects to

repay the loans. Until the feast has been given he is not con-

sidered as having been really installed, but during the interval he

is tabu to some extent, apparently, as he must not see nor speak

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to a stranger. The chief of Jemaan Daroro confirmed this

account afterwards, so it is probably correct, though at the time

it seemed to me very much too convenient a custom to be true.

The people all speak Hausa, and they are probably a colony

from Zaria, taking their name of Yesko (plural Yeskwa) from

their original leader, a rebel.

We arrived at the next town, Kano, belonging to the

Kagoma tribe, about 8.30 a.m., and halted a few minutes while I

sent a messenger on ahead to say that I was going to pay the

town a peaceful visit, the messenger rolling up his long Hausa

robe and tying it on to the top of a stick, this corresponding to a

white flag in that country, so he said.

Kano, possibly a colony from the great Hausa capital, and so

named for the same reason that we christen new places New York,

Perth, Richmond, &c, is built on the top of a high rock, and

would be very difficult of approach if properly defended. I fol-

lowed the messenger with the Mada(i)ki (the D.H.M. of the

district), and a local man who also rolled his cloth on a stick, the

escort following later so as not to frighten the inhabitants, and

the carriers meanwhile continued along the Jagindi road until

they reached a stream, where the cook had orders to prepare my

breakfast.

I wanted a lot of guinea-corn to store for the WafF detach-

ments at Jemaan Daroro, for during the wet season, just before

the new harvest, it is very hard to get owing to the drunken

habits of the surrounding natives. There was plenty in this dis-

trict, so I gave the chief of Kano permission to pay his outstanding

tribute in kind instead of in cash, and as the headman of the

district was with me, I ordered the chief to pay over a certain

proportion to him at once.. Then, everything being apparently

in order, I descended the hill and had my breakfast. I expected

that the corn would be delivered within an hour or so, but when

two hours had passed and there was still no sign of any one I

began to feel anxious, and thought it advisable to go and see

what was causing the delay ; so, mounting again, I rode back towards

the hill. And my anxiety was increased when on coming nearer

I heard sounds of quarrelling, and saw my men coming down the

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hill without any guinea-corn, and followed by armed natives. As

soon as the latter saw me they halted, and on joining my own men

I found that they had been turned out of Kano on the advice of

two sub-chiefs of another quarter of the town, the further supply

of guinea-corn having been refused, of course, at the same time.

The crowd of armed natives on the rocks above us was increas-

ing every minute, and it was imperative to act immediately, for we

were within arrow range from that height, so giving orders for the

carriers to move on at once I fell in the escort and gave the Kano

men a volley which dispersed them and put an end to their idea

of attacking us. We waited for a few minutes to see if they would

come on again, but they had evidently had enough, and we saw

them moving off to better cover farther away. I was rather

afraid that they might make a detour and attack the party of

carriers farther on, for the low bush in this part of the country

would have made it easy for them to have eluded the escort, and

I had learnt enough of native tactics to beware of a cunning attack

on a flank, so we moved off to guard it. However, there was no

further trouble, and after having camped at the friendly town of

Kirti we passed on the following day through Fada Kagoma, and

returned to Kajji country.

The people of Kano are supposed to be good fighters, and they

are said to have fought three Yesko towns double their size, their

superiority being due to the fact that they have a particularly

strong arrow poison — at least, so I was told by the Mada(i)ki,

though I have not seen any of it myself. The Mada(i)ki also said

that the fact that we had gone to Baddi from Kano, and vice versa,

was sufficient to make us suspected at both places, for the people

of each town thought we w T ere friends of the other, and therefore

enemies to them, since the towns are in a state of intermittent war-

fare. That is the most difficult thing in dealing with natives.

One knows what one's own intentions are, but one seldom knows

what the natives will think they are, and some apparently un-

important point puts quite a different construction on one's actions.

It is a matter of regret to me that I was not able to visit this

particular part again ; Kano paid up in full later in the year on

hearing that I was in the district (we had wounded two people, so

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we were told afterwards), and I suppose Yesko has since been

brought under control. I asked for a large escort to accompany

me the following month, as there were several towns which defied

our authority, but it was refused.

Fad a Kagoma is the head town of the tribe of that name, as

will be evident, being situated on a chain of hills which runs from

Kano and Jagindi into Zaria territory. It had not been giving

trouble lately, though the people were at one time very truculent,

and as I had been there so recently I did not stay more than a

couple of hours for breakfast and for a talk with the chief and

the headman of the district, a Jemaan Daroro man.

The houses of the Kagoma are like those of the Kagoro and

Kajji, but the language is, I believe, quite different ; at least the

people say so, and a few words and sentences which I tried cer-

tainly were. The unmarried girls wear a little apron, consisting

of a fringe of string, dyed blue and ornamented with cowries, the

married ones having a very short cloth, about a foot in width,

around the loins, as do the Yeskwa. The lips are not pierced, nor

are tails worn, so I fancy the similarity in the building of the

houses is merely a coincidence ; the people, too, say they have

quite a different origin. The men wear the universal cloth or skin

loin-covering. I did not see any dye-pits in the towns, and I fancy

that the people must buy the colouring matter from the Hausawa,

who are experts, Jemaan Daroro having several pits in the market-

place (and a nasty, bitter smell they have), while the sound ol

beating the cloths afterwards can be heard every day in that town.

On my return to Fada Kajji, I found the Resident from the

Zaria side there, and we settled some border quarrels and de-

limited a boundary. The patrol against the robber town, however,

had been abandoned, as when the Governor had passed north

towards Zaria a little while before with a caravan of some 500

men, the chief had gone to him and had expressed his sorrow.

The great man was able (in theory) to do in a moment what the

Resident, who had lived in the district for some portion of his

previous tour also, and knew the people well, had failed to do in

some months, and his Excellency cancelled the proposed opera-

tions, saying, " The chief is sorry ; there will be no more trouble."

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And of course there was not, at least not until the Governor and

his large escort had passed, but only a week later there was another

case, a bad one. However, the Resident cleverly managed to get

hold of the culprits and to clap them safely in prison, and there

was no doubt about their repentance and their inability to give

more trouble after that. I wonder if His Excellency ever heard

the comments of the men on the spot as to his wondrous powers

(in theory) of judging men without having had any acquaintance

with them. I do not think so !

I had now fifteen soldiers and four policemen with me, and so

I went to Moroa again to attack Zankam, but on my arrival at

Akut I was met by the chief, who brought his tribute, and said

that the whole trouble was due to the sub-chief of one quarter

only, and that all the rest of the town had paid in full. This

being so, I set out early with the intention of catching the trouble-

some sub-chief, but he had got wind of it, and although it w T as

before daylight when I got there, his compound was bare, so I

had to content myself with burning down his house. This, con-

sidered as an actual punishment, is nothing, although it sounds

so dreadful, for, palm fronds and grass being plentiful, the roofs

can be renewed in a day or two, but, as a sign of ability to

punish, it is very often quite useful. A truculent chief may often

persuade his followers to oppose the Government, alleging that

he is much too powerful to be attacked, or that the charms in his

house will keep off any Whitemen ; but when the followers see him

hiding, and his house in flames, he loses a good deal of his evil

influence. The only time the burning can be a real hardship is

when it is done at the commencement of the wet season, for then

the grass is too short to be of any use for roofing.

One stratagem having failed, it was necessary to try another,

and the police constable, whose bravery at Toff I have mentioned

in an earlier chapter, now did a very plucky thing which deserves

mention. I left him behind when leaving for Jemaan Daroro

before daybreak next day, and as he hid in Abomong's house

until dark, no one knew that he had not gone with me. Of

course the news of my departure spread, and the sub-chief

returned that day to his house and re-roofed a room to sleep

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in, and the constable, disguising himself as a trader, went over

during the night and arrested him. I gave him six months'\*

imprisonment in the Kajji gaol — where he was joined soon

afterwards by his captor, I am sorry to say — and he returned

some time before I left, apparently full of the greatest admira-

tion for those whom he had once wanted to fight. On my

last visit to Moroa he met me with presents of food in his

hands, and a broad grin on his face, apparently a much greater

person then (on account of his knowledge of the wonderful

doings of the Whitemen in Keffi) than he had ever been before

— but with, I am glad to say, a better private understanding

of the limitations of his own powers, though I am quite ready

to believe that he did not explain this fully to his followers.

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CHAPTER XI

HABITATIONS

THE houses of the Kagoro, Moroa, Kajji, Katab, Jaba and

Kagoma tribes are of a peculiar shape, being more oblong

than round, the roof at first sight looking as if it had

originally been conical and upright, but had been blown to one

side, for the peak points in a slanting direction, and not straight

up. The dwelling-houses are built of red or black mud, the

walls usually much thinner than one would expect, judging

by the size of the house, being only from three to four feet

high, and the same height all the way round ; but many are

larger or narrower in proportion to their width, and many are

much smaller than this, the ground plan of the larger houses being

on an average thirty feet by eighteen feet. Each has one central

door, or in a few cases, two, opening from the front of the house

(where the roof is lowest), into the compound, each wife having

a separate building for herself and her family. There is a

porch or hall extending along the whole width of the house

where wood is kept, and a verandah outside that where the

people take shelter during the day in wet weather. When it

is fine, they sit outside on palm logs let into the ground. It

is rather peculiar that these people seldom seem to sit or

squat on the bare ground like most natives; they nearly

always have some form of stool when in their own compounds.

Of course, when away from home, they have perforce to sit

on the ground, but they do not do this if they can help it.

The porch has a doorway from two and a half to three feet

high, in the shape of a half-hoop, which may be closed by a

curtain of string, something like those of Japanese make so

common in England, or by a stiff grass mat which slides in

grooves specially made in the wall, or there may be no pro-

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tection. Between the porch and the sleeping compartment

there will always be a mat or a blind, fixed in a similar way.

The plan of the houses reminded me very much of that

of a Canadian Pacific Railway sleeping - car, the verandah

resembling the open-air platform for observation, and the porch

(where the fire is) the smoking-room and the washing-room,

or the conductor's room, where there is often some kind of

heating apparatus. Then comes a central passage into which

open two compartments, one on each side, which can be com-

pared to sleeping-berths, and, in fact, they are used as bedrooms,

that on the one side, always the right apparently, having a

bed of palm fronds or bamboos raised about a foot from the

floor for the use of the husband when he sleeps in the house,

the opposite room being for the rest of that particular wife's

family. Then farther on, at the end of the central passage,

is a circular room, in the centre of which, and, in fact, filling

most of the space, is a large earthenware vase for holding grain.

This will be built on stories as a protection against white ants,

and there may be, in addition, smaller granaries, reaching to

the ceiling which connects the tops of the walls with the vessels,

and has a man-hole to allow the inmates to pass up and take

the corn (for these granaries only open at the top), or to hide

themselves in case of attack. The dome of the roof is over

this granary, so as to give room for the people to climb up,

and also so that the smoke will collect there, and not only kill

the insects, but also keep the rest of the roof of the house clean.

There is no chimney of any kind, but none is required, for

the smoke naturally goes to the highest part, and from there

escapes through the thatch, and at first sight one would think

the houses were on fire.

A man can build or farm where he likes on unoccupied land,

though he will usually erect his house as near as possible to

that of his father for the sake of mutual protection, unless

they have quarrelled. I am not quite sure if the joint family

system is as strongly developed amongst the Kagoro as with

the Kajji; but in the case of this latter tribe, it seemed to be

flourishing, a very good example being in Mersa, where the

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chiefs compound included not only his own wives, but those

of his sons and nephews and their children. In many towns

this system may not hold except in the case of the chief, for

there are special benefits to all parties in this case, the chief

being thus more solidly supported in council, and his household

being made more difficult of attack, while his children and

others naturally have more property to divide amongst them-

selves, since they share in his perquisites. In an Ayu town,

Giddan Sa(r)rikin Ambel, the chiefs compound consisted of

nearly a hundred houses, and in fact it formed the whole town —

as the name implies — being large enough to shelter nearly two

hundred of us when on a patrol, there being even then plenty

of room to spare.

The father will usually choose the site of his son's new house,

and will place stones in circles or threes for the granary to rest

upon, this being because the walls are practically built around it,

or perhaps the act may be a symbolic one to ensure good crops

and plenty to eat. The blood of a fowl is spilt on the ground as

an offering to the ghosts of the people already buried there or

near, so that they may leave the house in peace, and then a few

leaves of a certain tree are put in a hole dug in the spot chosen to

bring good luck, and are covered over again with earth. After

that the prospective owner invites all the important men of the

quarter, or perhaps even of the whole village if he be a chiefs

son, and, of course, provides guinea-corn beer {akann) y without

which nothing of any importance is done by these thirsty people —

though we should not laugh, considering that our foundation

stones are usually laid to the music of the popping of corks. A

little (a very little) beer is poured on the site three times, accom-

panied in each case by an incantation invoking the blessings of

the particular person's ancestors, and the rest is drunk by the

assembled company.

However, when the guests have drunk all they can get, they

tell their host to remain in peace, and wishing him luck they take

their departure, and he commences building his house. He starts

with the granary first, so that the lower part may get the sun

before the walls shelter it, and also because, being much higher

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than the walls, it will take longer to build ; it being, as I have

said, in the form of an enormous vase with an opening at the

top, and often eight feet or more in diameter. Then the walls

are built in the form of an oblong, though the short end en-

circling the granary is rounded.

After the mud has become dry the roof is put on, long rafters

of bamboos or palm fronds being first placed in position, so as to

slope back gradually from the front, and sharply from the back

of the house, in order that the dome may be over the granary,

and longer poles are therefore used for the front face than for the

rear. These poles are lashed together with tie-tie, and the whole

has then much the appearance of a spider's web, for the lashings

are arranged in concentric circles from the apex. Grass stalks,

about five or six feet long, are then joined together with tie-tie

into a flat mat-like fringe, which is rolled on to the poles, begin-

ning at the bottom of those in front and going at first from side

to side, and then round and round the house until the top is

reached, where a knob is formed, each layer of grass being tied

to the cross-lashings and to the next roll. The knob at the

top may have a couple of sticks thrust through it horizontally,

and at right angles, to keep it on, and an ostrich egg or bottle

on the highest point as a charm.

The floors are trampled until hard, and sometimes charcoal is

mixed with the earth to harden and blacken it, while cowrie shells

are often inserted as ornaments and arranged in circles or 6< dice-

cup " patterns. Sometimes the whole compound has a beaten

floor, but this depends upon the women, whose work it is, the

men being responsible only for the actual building. The outer

front wall of the house is usually decorated in some way or other,

even if the ornamentation goes no further than a coat of red

earth or charcoal, and in some towns regular designs are

worked out.

Usually the Kajji and Kagoma houses are much ahead of

those of their neighbours to the east in every way, for the first-

named build their walls more strongly, make better roofs, and

they have more idea of decoration. The designs are usually in

some form of the double triangle or dice-cup pattern, the insides

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of the triangles being painted black, or sometimes even hollowed

out, and there may be lines in white or black parallel with the

sides of the triangles, or radiating from the centre of the dice-

cup, dots in the same colour being often added, the patterns on

the houses reminding one, in some degree, of those on the

abdomens of the women and the chests of the men. The door-

ways may be ornamented by lines running around the half-

hoop, and all of these may be simply painted on the flat wall, or

a bevel may be first sunk by pressing sticks, straight or bent as

required, into the soft mud when building the walls. One house

in Mersa had a window on each side of the door, but that is the

only occasion on which I have seen these extra apertures, and it

is just possible that the owner (the chiefs nephew) had copied the

windows from those in the Europeans 1 houses at Jemaan Daroro.

The porch generally has a long trough-like shelf running

right across over the inner door, corresponding in this (to con-

tinue the simile) to the hat-rack, for calabashes and other light

articles are placed in this — " It must not be used for heavy

baggage." There is usually a space around the house between

the top of the wall and the grass roof, though sometimes extra

mud is plastered on to the top of the wall, after, the roof has been

fixed, so as to fill up the crevices. Where this has not been done,

there is plenty of shelf room, but otherwise, not only the porch

but the other rooms also may be furnished with troughs. Sticks

or horns are stuck in the wall as pegs on which to hang bows and

arrows, &c, and I have also seen a hanging-hook of wood, some-

thing like a swizzle-stick, or an umbrella frame upside down.

These hooks are simply cut from the forks of small trees, and

are not improved in any way, but they seem to act well enough

for all ordinary requirements, for these people, having no clothes,

have but little to hang.

Low, solid, wooden stools, cut from a log, often furnished with

a handle (and possibly meant to resemble a dog), are used in the

houses, and in the courtyards also by women when cooking,

though half-sunken palm logs form seats for the majority, and

big loose logs may be arranged like forms around a fire in the

centre of the compound for the family to sit upon in cold weather.

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Skulls of men, and also of the hartebeeste, antelope, and monkey,

are strung on a piece of native rope and hung up on the outside

walls under the thatch to advertise the family's prowess, being

passed on as family trophies. In the towns to the north they are

always hidden inside the houses now, so that we may not find

them, but when we attacked Jigga and Tafa I found several

bunches, these clusters of human skulls being described by

an author writing of tribes in another part of the world as

resembling bunches of grapes, or strings of onions.

There are some medicine houses, but no stranger is allowed

to go near them, and in fact, their existence is denied, and, as I

had no wish to insult the places these people considered holy, I

had to pretend that I believed the story ; but a large number of

skulls was found in a cave behind Fada Kagoro by the first

expedition against them. The house at Mersa, the roof of

which was ornamented with an ostrich egg, was said to be a

medicine house. Blacksmiths in some of the Kajji and Jaba

towns have round houses with very high conical roofs, the

difference being due in some respect to the mystery of the iron

working, but the Kagoro pay the smiths no special reverence,

and I believe the two there before my arrival met with rather

sudden deaths, though the last one could sleep in peace, for

he was sent by me from Jemaan Daroro to make agricultural

implements at the special request of the Kagoro chiefs, who

guaranteed his safety.

There is very little refuse, the ashes being put in the goat-

houses, to be used with the droppings as manure, and the remains

of the night's food are usually eaten the following morning, or

are given to the dogs or vultures, while any loose grain is soon

picked up by the fowls and goats. Pits, however, are necessarily

made when the walls of the house are being built, and whatever

refuse there may be undisposed of is thrown in.

In addition to the granaries inside the houses, there are some

outside as well, these being essentially the same in construction

(round vases built on stones) as those already described, except for

the fact that they have separate roofs, but they often present quite

a different appearance, for a wall is built from the ground outside

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A Kajji Compound

The earth is beaten hard to some distance in front of each house, and when the compound

is small the earth of the whole may be thus hardened. In front of each house are the

grinding stones. The young boys have a tuft of hair running along the top of the head,

the rest being shaved off.

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the stones, to meet the circumference of the granary, and this forms

a fowl-house, the birds being between this wall and the bottom of

the vase (and therefore not able to get at the corn), and having

their entrance near to the ground.

The Kagoma and Kajji compounds are kept very clean, but

the Moroa and Kagoro housewives are not particularly praise-

worthy, and the air in those parts is not always as pure as it

might be. A compound has a house for each wife, and, in

addition to the conical goat-houses and granaries, other huts for

the preparation of food, or for stables, and there will probably

be some caves near the Kagoro and Kajji towns where the people

can store their grain and hide when necessity arises, but they

are merely natural cavities, and are not improved and concealed

like those of the Nadu at Ayashi, described in a later chapter.

No sacrifices are made by the Kagoro when building a house,

except for the fowl already referred to, or when felling trees, and

in that respect they are less superstitious than we are, for there

are no charms or coins placed among the foundations as with us,

and there is apparently no idea that the sacrifice of a child is

necessary to ensure the stability or the erection as was the case

in Halle, even so late as 1843. The building being an intrusion

on the spirits' domain, Professor Westermarck regards human

sacrifices as being a kind of life insurance ! !

In Angwom, a Ninzam town, I saw a rooster in a rather peculiar

predicament. A pot had been let into the ground just in the centre

of the doorway, so that the top of the pot was level with the floor

of the house, and into this had been put a rooster, the narrow

neck of the pot effectually preventing any part but his head from

protruding. Fowls are often kept in pots for fattening purposes,

and on my second visit the rooster was missing, but in the

position just described the future meal can act as a watch-dog

as well, for no one could pass into or out of the house without

disturbing him. I do not know that such a proceeding would be

popular in England, for after about a month or two the fowl

would begin to get unpleasant, but that would not matter to the

ordinary inland native, for he would be but little better himself

in all probability.

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When the building of the house is completed, a meal of

porridge (tuJc) is prepared, and the guests again assemble,

though on this occasion no beer is drunk — or rather so I was

told, but I would not insult them by believing it. When all

have eaten and departed, the family enters and lives happily

ever afterwards. A house is reoccupied on the death of the

owner, if of the Kagoro or Moroa tribe, but not always if of

the Kajji or Jaba tribe, the difference being due possibly to

the fact that the Kagoro have but little room, and the Moroa

do not want to have larger compounds than they can easily

defend, while the Kajji and Jaba have plenty of space.

As I have said, the houses of these tailed head-hunters are

peculiar in shape, and it may be of interest to note some other

forms met with in West Africa, but first I should mention that

the houses in the Attakka and southern Kagoro towns are

conical like those of the Bauchi plateau, and not oblong like

those just described.

In some parts of the Hausa country, the mosques and the

houses of the chiefs are very fine buildings considering the

materials available. The larger dwellings are made of mud,

the roofs being either flat and of the same material, or square

and sloping, or conical, in /the two latter cases being made of

grass. The whole house is called the gidda by the Hausawa, the

separate huts da{i)ki or zaure, and the wall, fence, or stockade,

bango, damfammi, or kaffi respectively, the last word giving its

name to many towns.

The first step necessary for the erection of a house is to clear

the ground, the next to mark it out, and this latter may be done

with sticks, or in the case of a round house with string, and then

the plan is drawn on the ground by the chief builder, who drags

one foot along the marks so that they become wider and more

distinct, hoes or shovels being afterwards used to make these

depressions deep enough to take the first layer of mud " bowls "

of which the walls will be built.

The next step in the building of a mud house is the prepara-

tion of the material. The earth, having been mixed with water,

is trodden and kneaded and left for a day or two, and it may then

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be made into sun-dried bricks or be simply moulded into rough

balls about the size of a bowl, being brought from the pit to the

builders by men on pieces of wood, or anything which may be

handy. These " bowls " are laid in a line in the excavation,

another line or two is placed on top, and loose mud is then

pressed into the crevices between the lumps and squared off, thus

leaving the sides quite straight. Some walls, especially those of a

large, square house, will require several rows of these bowls or

bricks, but one row is enough for those of the ordinary round hut,

the process being repeated as often as is necessary to bring them

to the required height. I have never seen any scaffolding erected ;

as the walls grow the builders climb up and squat on them (if too

high to be reached by men standing on the ground, or on boxes

or tree stumps), and as the higher the walls are to be, the thicker

they will usually be made also, there is plenty of room for the

builders to squat on the top.

The building must be done in the dry season to be any good,

else the mud will be too damp to bind properly, and, so as to give

each layer plenty of time to dry, the walls are usually raised but a

foot or two each day. Should the work have to take place during

the "rains," however, plaited grass protections are laid along the

top of the walls to keep off the water.

Only the mosques and the largest houses are square among

the Hausawa and Filani, and they may have flat roofs built

wholly of mud, with tin or bark spoutings to carry off the rain

water from the roofs, but the Yoruba nearly always use this form,

though with high, sloping grass roofs.

With a grass house, after the forked poles, bamboos or palm-

ribs, and grass have been collected, the rate of erection is simply a

question of how quickly the builders can work. A small hut, with

walls from four to five feet high, can be put up in a couple of hours,

or even less, and the weather makes no difference — though it is, of

course, preferable to have the floor quite dry at the time, other-

wise it will be a long time before it becomes so, as the sun cannot

get at it. I had a house in Ilorin built during the rainy weather,

the walls of which exuded a green slime daily, with the result that

I was soon invalided home.

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After the ground has been cleared and marked out as before,

holes, some one to two feet deep, are dug at intervals of a yard or

so around the circumference, and forked posts of the required

height are placed in them, arranged so that the forks will be

on about the same level all the way round. A number of long

supple withes (especially if the house be circular) and stouter

poles are then laid in the forks horizontally, in order to connect

the uprights, and are bound to them with tie-tie (bark or

native string), so as to make the whole as rigid as possible. Other

cross-pieces are then tied in parallel rows below these right down

to the ground, and long grass may now be placed upright against,

and outside of, these cross-pieces, being secured by other cross-

pieces outside of it again. Lastly, a trench is made around and

a foot or so away from the house, the earth being thrown on to

the lowest part of the grass, so as to make the dwelling proof

against rain streams, in the same way as we protect our tents.

Sometimes large grass mats are used instead of the loose grass,

in which case the lower cross-pieces may be dispensed with, and

fences are made in the same way. The roofs are usually put on

before the grass is arranged on the walls, but it is easier to finish

the description of this part of the subject before going on to

another, so the proper order has not been strictly adhered to.

When building a large grass house, or a mud house with a

verandah, the framework of the roof would have to be erected at

about the same time as the forked posts are set up, for all would

be connected together. With a square house, two or more (with

a large round house, one) stout forked posts, high enough to give

the proper pitch to the roof, are erected in the centre line and are

connected by a long cross-piece lying on, and bound to, the forks,

as before. These and the cross-piece are then connected with the

shorter uprights by other slanting poles— generally bamboos or

palm-ribs in the large houses, smaller palm-stalks, or perhaps even

guinea-corn stalks in the very small ones — which are again

connected with each other by more cross-pieces, the whole, which

now has the appearance of lattice-work, being securely bound. In

the case of a high house these tanka, as they are called, are first

tied on near the bottom, the builders gradually working upwards

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and using each line like a rung in a ladder until they reach the

top, when the projecting pieces are cut off or bent over.

The longer the grass, the easier is the thatching, and the better

it will be ; it is usually about three to five feet long when ready

for use. While the builders have been at work, other men have

joined the grass stalks together with igia or tie-tie, making a

kind of fringe which is rolled up like stair carpets and stacked

ready to hand, and on the completion of the framework, the rolls

are passed up to the men above, who unroll the grass over the

tanka, and either tie it (now known as bunu) or pin it with short

sticks called kinni. This is also commenced at the bottom — as

with our slate or tin roofs — and over the ridge at the top is

placed a wide layer of plaited grass like that described as being

used on the walls when building in wet weather. The framework

of the roof of a small house is usually put together on the ground

(perhaps being even thatched there), and it is then lifted bodily

on to the mud wall or uprights by half-a-dozen men.

In the case of a grass house, the doorway is simply the space

left uncovered between two of the uprights, but in a mud build-

ing a proper lintel is made by placing a stick or two across the

top of the opening, long enough to rest securely upon the wall on

each side, mud being placed on the top of this, and building going

on as before. Windows, if wide, are made in the same way, but

in the native houses, when they exist at all, they are mere slits or

holes, and so no special treatment is necessary.

The doorway is closed sometimes with a roughly-made wooden

or grass door kept in place by hinges or by a cross pole, but in most

cases, a mat, a cloth, or a string blind serves the purpose. The

floor will be stamped and beaten hard, when it is known as debbi,

and may be blackened with a solution obtained from the locust-tree

or charcoal, while the walls may be whitewashed with bone dust or

white earth, reddened with red earth, or it may be blackened like

the floor.

To the house proper many additions may be made. As with

the head-hunters, outside hut-like structures raised on stones to

keep out white ants, and perhaps two-storied, are built for grain,

while smaller ones are placed inside the house. There is also a

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lodge or zaure opening on to the street, where attendants generally

live and are at hand to announce a visitor ; the zaure, in many

cases, also acting as a stable. A small porch or verandah may be

built over the door of the zaure, or of any of the huts. Beehives

are usually at a distance, and may be made of long stripes of bark

cut in the form of a cylinder, or of gourds or earthenware pots.

Each wife has her separate hut, the husband having a larger one

which is probably nearer the zaure, and the whole will be surrounded

by a wall or fence. In markets, or at halting-places, little grass

shelters are run up for the protection of the travellers, but such con-

sideration is usually misplaced, for natives, being particularly

feckless folk, will pull out the grass at night to make a fire, though

knowing full well that they may want the shelter badly a week hence.

Europeans have, of course, tried to improve the local condi-

tions and methods, and it is usual for them to have an extra outside

roof covering two or three complete huts, the verandah, therefore,

having one roof, the rooms two. In many ways such a house is pre-

ferable to a bungalow, for the natives make but little noise when

moving about, and mud is cooler than wood, but insects find a

more congenial habitation in a hut, and the earthen floor and

walls are very hard to keep clean.

In Ashanti I noticed that the ordinary houses were formed of

small one or two-roomed oblong blocks, usually four arranged in

the form of a cross. They were built of wattle and daub, and, as

the work was well done, and the floors were raised above the

ground, I generally found them very dry. They had one draw-

back, however, and that was their publicity, for the wall facing

the compound was seldom more than a couple of feet high, and

whenever I tried to bathe or dress, there was always a crowd of

wondering (and let me hope, admiring) males and females to

watch the operations. Any performance they could not under-

stand they would watch in silence, or perhaps whisper questions to

each other, but any act resembling something which they did

themselves — like cleaning the teeth, for instance — was greeted

with loud applause and broad smiles of appreciation. That was

eleven years ago ; I fear there is not much that they do not know

now about Europeans.

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The Hausas are very fond of riddles and proverbs, and it is

only natural that many should refer to their domestic conditions.

The best known riddles are : " My mare is in foal, but I do not

ride her ; I ride the foetus." Answer, a hut with a bed. 44 The

owner is in his house, but his beard is outside " — fire and smoke.

Of proverbs, the following are examples : — " Does the rack (of

string fastened to the roof) remain if the roof is blown away ? "

which comes to mean, 44 Will a good woman refuse to accompany her

husband should he go to another town to live?" 44 The one who

lives in the house knows where the roof leaks," i.e. 44 the heart

knoweth its own bitterness," or the wearer knows where the shoe

pinches. 44 Though a naked man may be ignored on the feast-day

he will be sought after when building is on M — compare Kipling's

44 thin red line of heroes when the drums begin to roll." 44 The

only prevention against fire is to have two houses. " Grass is, of

course, easily inflammable, but the cooking is usually done inside

the huts. 44 The small pot (the wife) goes to and fro, but the big

pot (the husband) remains at home " — i.e. does no work. Yet we

think that we can teach them the dignity of labour !

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CHAPTER XII

SOME EXCITING ARRESTS

THE Ninzam, a tribe to the south of Jemaa, which I have

mentioned before, had been truculent for a long time.

Some of these towns, also, had not paid tribute for a couple

of years, and as no steps had been taken against them, other

towns had given out that they, too, would cease their payments.

Slave-raiding was rife amongst them, the worst offender being

Awudu, the chief of Ungual Kaura (" the town of Kaura," named

after its founder), and he had just added the murder of his wife

to his little list of accomplishments. Moreover, some of the

towns had been fighting amongst themselves, and quite a goodly

casualty list was reported.

The Ninzam are a hot-tempered people, and when there is

no common enemy to combine against, they indulge in private

dress rehearsals amongst themselves, though these little differ-

ences are soon over, the combatants usually killing or wounding

not more than a couple on each side perhaps — nothing to speak

of, of course. Apparently, though, they are rather cowardly,

when not full of beer (the cause of most of their internal

quarrels), for we had but very little resistance later in the year —

however I must not anticipate.

I left Jemaan Daroro on the 10th of March and went to

Sanga, a town about twelve miles off, where I camped for the

night, the chief of Sanga, who was the Headman of the District

of Ninzam, having been warned to accompany us from there.

He himself had been driven out of two Ninzam towns where he

had gone to collect tribute, and a messenger of his had been

wounded in another, so it was time to support his authority in

some way or other. I had repeatedly asked for a patrol through

the countrv, but the sanction was not forthcoming for various

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reasons, so I had to do what I could for myself, though I was

doubtful if it would be much.

I had my usual escort of eleven soldiers and a couple of

policemen, but on this occasion the chief of Jemaan Daroro

accompanied me with a following of some fifty men, who were

unarmed, and, as proved afterwards, a source of danger.

Just after we had left Jemaan Daroro, down came a tornado,

and we were soon made aware that the rainy season had com-

menced in earnest. There is no doubt about the rain in Jemaa ;

it pours down as if from a watering-can with very large holes

close together, and I have been three days without seeing the

sun, my predecessor having experienced even worse conditions,

he said. Usually in Northern Nigeria it will rain very hard for

a few hours almost every day from March to October, then clear

up, and the day will be as bright as ever though somewhat

steamy, but Jemaa has quite a system of its own, being situated

on one side of a cup of mountains which catch the rain in all

directions. For the remainder of the year there is no rain.

Travelling is apt to be somewhat exciting in the wet, for the

roads become gutters, as I have said before, and the carriers

continually stumble and slide about when walking on soft

ground, the loads rocking to and fro in an alarming manner.

However, the men have a marvellous power of balance, and they

usually manage to right themselves in time, and go along with a

" splosh, splosh, splosh, 11 as before. But, if any one does happen

to go down, the rest make no secret of the pleasure such a sight

gives them, for they are always ready to laugh at a man in a

slight misfortune, though they will help him readily enough

should it prove serious. To a man on horseback, overhanging

branches are very dangerous, and I was caught by one (not for

the first time, either) just as my horse slipped down the bank

of a river, being left hanging over a mass of mud till he was

brought back again and placed underneath me so that I could

drop on to him.

Soon after my arrival at Sanga, I received the cheerful news

that my house at Jemaan Daroro had been unroofed by the

tornado, and that two of the rooms were more or less under

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water (more, I found out on my return). However, there was

nothing to be done at the time, for I could not go back, and I

heard that the caretaker had shifted the boxes to a water-tight

hut, so I had to be content with wondering what the damage

would be. Tornados play havoc with grass roofs, as can be

imagined, and I remember once in Ilorin, when in bed with fever,

seeing a regular douche of water suddenly come through one side

of the roof. Luckily it was a few yards away from the bed,

and by shifting farther into the corner, and by putting up a

ground-sheet, I could avoid the splash — another testimonial to

this useful article of kit. It was hopeless, however, to do any-

thing to the roof until the rain had stopped, and the mud floor

of the hut might have been the bed of a creek afterwards ; it was

not really dry for a fortnight.

Well, we left Sanga next day at 5.40 a.m., and after having

passed through several towns, we camped at Zambar about

twelve miles off. Here I had to try a case of wounding, and it is

perhaps worth mentioning, as showing the Ninzam's primitive

idea of responsibility. It appeared that a certain youth, by name

Gareba, had had a quarrel with a man of another town (I forget

what about), and had gone out looking for him and for trouble.

On his way he met Umoru, a member of the other man's family,

and promptly went for him with a knife, and the wretched

Umoru had evidently had a bad time. Gareba could not see

that he had done wrong, for according to the communal idea any

member of a family is liable for an offence committed by any

other member, though it seemed to me exceedingly hard on the

innocent Umoru.

There appeared, however, to be some right on Gareba's side

as to the original quarrel, but I had to try to introduce the

idea of individual responsibility, so I gave him a month's

imprisonment, and pointed out that either the District Head-

men or I would settle quarrels between the actual parties in

future. Had he been more civilised he would have had a couple

of years in prison. It seems hardly possible nowadays that the

same notion of communal responsibility was once the rule in

England, and that the difference between tort and crime arose

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A Corduroy Road

In many parts of West Africa the ground is so soft in the wet season that travelling is difficult

over it, if not impossible. This road was constructed for the passage of the troops to Kumasi in

1900; certain parts of Northern Nigeria would be much benefited by similar treatment.

A Kajji Granary

This is built in the shape of a bowl, and is placed on stones for legs. The top has a permanent

roof most of the way up, and a removable cap (now removed) so as to allow of access to the grain.

A low wall built outside the stones at the foot enables the vacant space to be used for poultry, the

fowl-house having a separate door.

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through the notion that the disabling of a warrior injured the

chief (as representing the tribe) through depriving him of his

services, whereas a tort was a private wrong. Even to-day the

king nominally prosecutes criminals, and the victims cannot

refuse to give evidence if called upon to do so, while civil actions

are brought by the parties wronged, on their own initiative.

Next morning we went to Ungual Kaura, and halting just

outside the town I sent for the chief. After some delay he

came, and at once putting him under arrest (somewhat to his

surprise, I fear), off we moved towards Fada Wate. Immediately

there arose shouts and cries from the town, and people began

running out, and soon afterwards little bands of savages began

advancing across our left rear and front by a short cut, singing

as they went. I could distinguish the shrill voices of women,

and I was quite pleased, picturing to myself the gratitude of the

people to the Just and Great Whiteman for removing a tyrant.

Bat I was quickly disillusioned, and in a most rude manner (I

wonder how often there is a difference between what we imagine

the native thinks, and what he really does think), for back came

the Mada(i)ki and the chief of Sanga at a gallop to say that the

people were going to attack us. " But," said I, " there are

women amongst them, and all of them are singing. 1 ' " That

is so," they replied, " but the women accompany the men

here when they are going to fight, and they sing to encourage

them."

Being thus brought back to earth again, I could see, on more

careful examination, that some of the people were armed (the

men, no doubt, it being extremely difficult to tell the sex of

these people at a distance, for the women's cloths were hardly

larger than those worn by the menfolk), and calling my little

escort together, I managed to frighten them off for the time,

and so let the carriers get into Fada Wate.

This town had been fighting with Ungual Kaura during

the previous month, so the headman thought that we ought

to be safe there, but to test the feeling of the people I called

on the young men to drive away the Ungual Kaura parties,

and as only about a dozen came "out, I did not rely too much

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on our chances of a quiet day. Some of the little bands had

meanwhile come up within about a couple of hundred yards of

Fada Wate, and there was nothing for it but to give them a

fright, so we dropped a few bullets amongst them, and scattered

them for the time being.

It was now breakfast time, and after that was over, I com-

menced the trial of Awudu on the charge of murdering his wife,

and on about nine different charges of enslaving and selling

women and children whom he had seized on the road. When

a man is down there is usually no lack of others to kick him,

whatever his colour, and this case being no exception to the rule,

there was plenty of evidence. I had got about half through the

trial, when a report was brought by the chief that the people of

a town on our right were going to attack us.

It appeared that the large town of Amar (not the old Muri

headquarters, of course, which is really Amara, but one belonging

to the Ninzam tribe), had sent in some goats as tribute, but

these had been intercepted by the people of Ungual Maitozo and

seized ; that the Amar men had been driven off, and that the

nephew of the chief of Sanga had been killed. Ungual Maitozo

had also been fighting with Fada Wate during the previous

month, so I still thought we were fairly safe, and I soon found

that, beyond sitting down armed on some hills about half a mile

off, the people made no attempt to attack, so after lunch I

proceeded with the trial.

About 3 p.m. one of the carriers, who had been sent to

take over some goats which the Mada(i)ki of Fada Wate said were

ready to be delivered as tribute, ran up with blood spurting from

arms and neck, saying that he had been wounded, and lest any

more evidence was needed, the chief of Sanga reported, a few

minutes afterwards, that he had been in the town, and had over-

heard some men saying that an attack was to be made on us

during the night, and sure enough drums commenced beating, and

armed men began to appear from the huts of Fada Wate itself.

The only thing to do was to go. The chief of Jemaa's men

were unarmed, and my eleven soldiers and two policemen would

not have protected the party, especially as we had some twenty

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hones with us. I had also to get my prisoners to Jemaa some-

how, and had, therefore, to detail some one to guard them. All

retreat to Jemaan Daroro was cut off by Ungual Kaura in one

direction, and by Ungual Maitozo in another, so the only way

open was in front, but unfortunately the road had been traversed

by only one of our party, and he said he could not remember

it. However, there was no choice, and at 4.20 p.m. off we

moved.

The Ninzam let us go through their town, the unenterprising

idiots, and we were soon clear, but darkness came upon us while

we were still in thick bush, and we should have been rather an

easy prey had they come for us. We got over the river by the

light of torches of dry grass, and then determined to halt and

take our chance, being about six miles from Fada Wate. We

slept, ready to move off at any time, with double sentries on

the river, of course, but (except for the continual tapping of

drums in the distance) there was nothing to disturb us, and

we continued our march soon after five o'clock next morning.

We found that we had camped quite close to a town belonging

to the Ayu tribe, and that was probably the reason we had not

been attacked. At least I thought so at the time, but I have

since doubted if the Ninzam would ever have come against

even our small force when once we had got clear of their district,

though there is no doubt that they would have attacked us had

we slept in one of their towns, for fighting on one's own ground,

and in sight of one's own people, makes a wonderful difference

in the valour of the warriors engaged.

Passing on, we camped at the Giddan Sa(r)rikin Ambel

(" house of the chief of Ambel "), which was composed of one

enormous compound of two long zaures or halls, and enough

small huts to house about 300 or 400 people, all being occupied

by the chief and his wives and children — the joint family

system with a vengeance.

The chief was a fine-looking old native, who greeted me

with a " Hullo, Bature," repeating the English word on every

possible appropriate and inappropriate occasion. He was a

strong man, and proved rather obstinate in many ways, and

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I found that he had been taking tribute in our name from

the people of a neighbouring town, telling us all the time that

they were tawaye (rebels) and would not pay. I therefore deter-

mined to take him back with me to Jemaan Daroro, both on

account of the example it would be to the other chiefs, and also

for the chance it would give the alleged rebel chief to come

in and tell his part of the story.

Next morning, therefore, I told him to accompany me, and

so great was his indignation that I had to arrest him at once.

We then went on to Amanchi, and had only just had breakfast

when a rubber trader from Jemaan Daroro ran in (the district is

rich in rubber and palm oil), saying that two of them had been

caught by an armed party assembling on the far side of a small

hill, with the object of rescuing their chief, and that he himself

had managed to escape. A little while afterwards the chief of

Jemaa reported that some other rubber traders from his town had

been murdered on our departure (which report proved unfor-

tunately to be true), and that the chief of Amanchi had dis-

appeared with all his people. There was no help for it, we had

to leave again, and we started off at 10.15 a.m., camping at

Ningishi, some eighteen miles from Ambel. We were shot at

while crossing a stream just outside Amanchi, but, except that

one of the Jemaa men got an arrow through his clothes, no harm

was done to us, and a little exchange of courtesies drove them off

with a couple of mementoes, incidentally allowing two other

rubber traders to escape and join us.

After opening up a new road, a short cut from the main route

to Keffi, we returned to Jemaan Daroro on the 17th of March,

and I was not sorry to see the old home again, despite its dilapi-

dated appearance. Had I had another dozen men and a supply

of ammunition we might have made a stand, but the escort I had

was much too small for anything more than a running fight, the

men were new to me (the detachment at Jemaa having been

changed), and I had not much confidence in them. However, I had

got in a fair proportion of the outstanding tribute, and had brought

back four prisoners, two being the strongest chiefs in Ninzam and

Ayu respectively, so on the whole the tour was quite successful.

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Poor old Sa(r)rikin Ambel ! I gave him a month, if I remember

rightly, in the guard-room under the Revenue Proclamation, and

he died just four days before his sentence would have expired. He

had been suffering for some time with an internal complaint, and 1

suppose the confinement (or the blow to his self-esteem) made him

less able to fight against it. I had really released him about a week

before the proper time on account of his illness, pending confirma-

tion from headquarters, and had put him in charge of some Ayu

people in Jemaa so that he could hear his own language again,

and be cheered up, but without success. It was very hard on him,

poor old man, though it was, of course, absolutely his own fault ;

but it was also bad luck for me, for he was a brave and strong-

minded man, and after his lesson would have proved a valuable

ally. Many of these pagans die of imprisonment, however, like

caged wild birds, often through no complaint at all that can be

diagnosed, and simply because of the confinement.

The other chief, Awudu, I had to condemn to death, having

full judicial powers: circumstances compelled me to carry out the

sentence myself the following June as there was no sheriff available.

It was a nasty business, and I hope I shall never have to perform

a similar act. However, he was guilty up to his eyes, and had

really committed enough crimes to hang half-a-dozen men, so

there was no occasion to waste any sympathy on him. Still, taking

a man's life in cold blood gives one a weak feeling about one's waist-

belt ; it is quite different in action, when you know that unless

you are too quick for your enemy he will murder you, and you do

not think you are trying to kill a human being, but merely that

you must stop the advance of a dangerous enemy.

As to Gareba, he was released in due time, and was one of the

first to welcome the patrol later, for ex-prisoners are in most cases,

as I have observed before, quite good friends afterwards. And I

think the fact is a great tribute to the system of justice which

prevails in the country, for after all, we do not want to make

enemies of those w r ho offend against our laws, especially when the

offenders cannot be called civilised, but our aim is to teach them

some higher ideals than they have learned from their fathers, and

strangely enough, a gaol is one of the best places for the purpose.

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The tribes I had just visited were all head-hunters, and there

were others with black marks against them, who were set down

for punishment by a patrol on some future occasion, so it may be

of interest to make some remarks on warfare from their point of

view. There is a good deal of similarity between their ideas, and

though the following notes refer particularly to the Kagoro people,

most of the information will apply equally well to the Waiwai,

Ninzam, Nadu, Ayu, and Kibbo.

There is a very close connection between the hunting and the

war parties of these head-hunting tribes. A chase may be easily

turned into a battle when the arms for both are the same, even

amongst the hunters themselves; and the search for beasts may

develop into a hunt for men.

From the accounts given me by the Kagoro, it would appear

that when they first came to the country they now occupy, they were

dependent on the chase for their food, and that they at first lived

in caves. Somehow or other they discovered the bow and arrow,

and then they were able to drive off the dangerous and kill the

edible beasts. Probably they did not discover the use of poison

for some time, for the chief of Jemaan Daroro assured me that

the Attakka learned it from the Kibbo only some twenty years

ago. Possibly the Kagoro depended in early times on the sling

and spear ; the Gannawarri even now fight with the latter weapon,

and on horseback.

There is apparently no actual compulsion on male adults to

fight in case of a war, but, judging from their general behaviour, I

should think that they would be only too glad to have the chance ;

a National Service League would have a rosy time amongst that

tribe ! The country is so small that the Kagoro are always within

easy distance of their towns, so they can go out in the early morn-

ing — not too early if the cold harmattan is blowing — fight by

day, and return to sleep at night, a very comfortable arrangement,

reminding one of the Concentration Camps in South Africa.

They tried about nine o'clock one night to surprise the patrol sent

to punish them in 1908 for attacking the Resident and his escort

and wounding the officer in command, but they were driven off

with some loss, and this was the first night attack known in the

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district up to that time, but since then there have been several,

both the Mada and Nadu tribes copying the bad example in the

following year. The warriors take food enough to last them for

the day — though if they are attacking another town they usually

rely on getting something extra there — but if fighting near their

own towns their women-folk will probably bring them something

extra to cheer them up.

There is no need for any permanent organisation for war

during peace-time, for the men are always in excellent training

through hunting or farming, and they are always prepared for

eventualities since they never leave their homes unarmed, and

so are constantly handling their weapons. " Boy scouts," too,

are a recognised institution, being taught how to attack and

take cover by practising first with stones, and later with toy

bows and arrows, and those who have shown the right qualities

in these sham fights will be noted for posts as subordinate leaders

when they grow up.

Before a war is decided upon, the priests and elders repair to

the sacred grove and ask for the opinion of the ghosts upon the

question in point, and as the spirits can be approached only

through the medium of beer — of which, I fear, by far the greater

part goes down the throats of the men still alive, the ghosts

having to be content with a few (a very few) drops spilt on the

ground — the reply is usually most favourable. A leader, the

Agwarn Wuta, is then appointed, and he will probably be some

man specially chosen on account of his skill in arms and his

bravery, and not the chief or a priest, though these men will

follow behind their troops, like the Duke of Plaza-Toro, to cheer

or drive them on as the case may be. If in alliance with another

trijbe, the general of the tribe first starting the trouble would be

the commander unless the ally was much stronger in men and had

better leaders.

Their religion is conducive to warlike prowess, for the

strongest on earth will be the most influential in the spirit

world, and also, the ghost of a slaughtered enemy must serve

the ghost of him who has taken the head. Again, the hero

is the admiration of all the belles of the village ; and last, but

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not by any means least, the effect of the stories and songs of the

prowess and fame of bygone heroes must be considerable. I am

not sure if the head of every person, male or female, adult or

infant, is equally beneficial, but I think so, for I was told that

if a woman who is enceinte is caught and killed, the head of the

foetus will be taken, if old enough, as well as that of its mother.

A case was mentioned, and the name of the woman given by the

chief of Jemaa, and in a case of highway robbery I tried later,

one of the witnesses, a woman, stated that that was what she was

afraid of, so I fear it is true. One can easily believe it of the

cannibal Nadu or the cowardly Ayu, but the Kagoro seemed too

brave for that sort of thing ; however, there is no doubt that

they all kill women, for I found some female skulls.

With the Moroa, at any rate, the most foul treachery is quite

justifiable, for a case happened while I was at Jemaa. The

people of Babban Gidda had a feast to which they invited a

number of Gannawarri, and having made five of their guests

drunk, they shut them up in a hut and killed them, the rest of

the honoured guests managing to escape. The heads of the

victims were then cut off, and were set up by the chief in his

house as a memorial of the gallant deed, and such was the

condition of things when I heard of the deed.

I at once went to Moroa, and sent messages both to the

principal Gannawarri chiefs and to the Babban Gidda people,

saying that I should settle the matter, and commanding the

people to remain quiet. The latter I knew I could deal with,

but the former were warlike and were likely to give trouble,

especially as they had killed and eaten a Moroa chief on the

day of my arrival (although he had had nothing whatever to do

with the murder, but was guilty according to the communal idea)

and were reported to be celebrating the wasan wuka (" sharpening

the knife a ceremony which was said to last for three days before

the opening of a campaign. The Gannawarri sent to say that

they could manage the affair quite well themselves, and the

Moroa people were so frightened that they were escaping to

the towns of friendly tribes, strings of women laden with stores

being seen in all directions. But even so, the Babban Gidda

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people would not come near me, so I went to the town and

seized everything I could find. I then sent to the Gannawarri

through some Attakka people to say that I would give them ten

sheep or goats and five shillings in cash for every person killed, and

I went into their country as far as a certain tree which was always

the scene of any agreements between the two peoples. The

Gannawarri did not turn up though, and I was at a loss what to

do, but after waiting until near sunset, I tied up the stock to

trees in the vicinity, and returned to camp, sending again to

the Gannawarri to tell them not to leave the animals there all

night, lest leopards or hyaenas should get them. The friendly

Attakka had himself seen the goats there, and we had caught a

Gannawarri youth who had lost his way in the harmattan, and

had strayed into the camp, and they prevailed upon the chiefs

to send for the goats ; and as the chiefs were now certain that

they could depend upon me, they said that they would keep

the peace.

A few days afterwards I managed to arrest the chief of

Babban Gidda, and then the principal Gannawarri chief came

to my camp, and on receiving the twenty-five shillings (mostly in

"tenths" of a penny) his eyes glistened, and he said he would

not mind losing a few more of his people under similar

conditions.

I sent the Babban Gidda chief to prison ; it was not a case

for hanging, life being held much too cheaply in that district,

and within a month or so the two tribes were apparently as

friendly as ever before. I confiscated the skulls — which, luckily,

the Gannawarri did not want particularly — and they now repose

in peace on the shelves of the museum at Cambridge.

There is no formal declaration of war by the Kagoro, Moroa,

&c, for fights usually arise from sudden quarrels, but if there

should be any delay between the disagreement and the commence-

ment of actual hostilities, the women or people of a town friendly

to both sides usually hear of it and pass the word along. The

Gannawarri, however, have a wasan zemka, which, as I have said,

lasts for three days, during which time preparations both spiritual

and physical are made for the coming conflict.

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When the force, if for attack, has assembled, the chief and

the chief priest, after having addressed the men, hand them over

to the leader chosen, and he then marches them off to the scene

of battle. Scouts are sent out in front to avoid surprise, and

to obtain news of the enemy's dispositions, and they will climb

trees if necessary, and perhaps waylay some unsuspecting strag-

glers or scouts belonging to the other side. In fact one of the

Mada ambushes which the patrol of 1910 experienced was the

tying of goats to the base of a tree, a few men hiding in the

branches, which were covered with creepers, so as to snipe any

soldiers or carriers who came to unloose them.

Usually some plan of campaign would have been thought out,

and the men would be disposed accordingly; a fairly good line

would be kept in the open, but the men would not trouble about

the step. All would be on foot — only the Gannawarri and some

of the Kibbo having horses — and the advance would be well

concealed, probably, for all warlike natives seem to be adepts

at taking cover. No dogs are used in warfare, and I should not

think they ever could be, for they are fearful curs. The warriors

shout their war-cry — " Wifu, wifu!" — to try to terrify their op-

ponents (and a nasty sound it is if you are not expecting it), and

they insult them and boast of their own deeds, imaginary or

otherwise.

When an enemy has been slain, the victor, on removing the

head with his knife, will sing a special or impromptu song about

it, but there seem to be no general songs sung by men to

encourage themselves while the actual fighting is in progress;

nor do the women cheer them on, as is the case with the

Ninzam. I ought to mention, however, with regard to the

latter, that no women ever came out against our patrol, later,

though we could often hear them cursing and abusing us from

the bush.

Most of the Kagoro towns are defended by labyrinths of

euphorbia hedges, perhaps twelve feet high, as mentioned before,

and there are usually caves up above the towns — which are built

at the base of the mountain spur — where the women can flee

with the foodstuffs and other property. The men, if driven

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out of the town, smash the beehives (earthen pots, standing by

the side of the houses) as they leave, so that the insects will be

furious by the time the attacking force arrives, and when the

invaders have been scattered by this means, the defenders return

and pour in poisoned arrows, and probably capture a good many-

stragglers and fugitives who have taken the wrong turning.

And there must at times be many of these, for a man can

have no time to choose his direction when attacked by bees in

a narrow lane of euphorbia, and will take the first opening out

of it to escape his tormentors. The second patrol in 1909 was

treated in this way by Jigya and Tafa, three of the Europeans

and many of the soldiers and carriers being so badly stung that

they were laid up for some days, and the patrol of 1908 had a

somewhat similar experience.

The Kagoro have never dug pits for their enemies, they say,

and this is rather surprising, for many of the surrounding tribes do,

such as the Gannawarri, the Yeskwa, and the Ninzam, and holes

were made for animals before the days of the bow and arrow.

Except for the scouts in the trees, there is no idea of raising the

position of defence. Of course, they will try to get on higher

ground if possible, so as to give their arrows a longer range,

and to be able to roll or throw down stones, but houses are

not built on piles for defensive purposes, nor have the people

any knowledge of earthworks, escalading, or breaching, for there

are no walls in the vicinity, but they do cut paths through the

hedges of other towns. The euphorbia hedges are more or less

peculiar to the Kagoro, other tribes in the district contenting

themselves with hedges of some thick, strong bushes, or simply

with the ordinary grass fences, strengthened, perhaps, with palm

fronds with short poisonous spikes — as we found to our cost

near Aro.

The weapons of the head-hunters are (1) a wooden club, (2) a

knife, (3) the bow and arrow, (4) the sling, (5) the spear for

throwing or thrusting, and (6) the shield. The club may be a

mere thick stick, or a knob-kerry, or it may be a heavy wide

scimitar, as with the Kagoma, or a longer, narrower one of light

wood as with the Ayu. The knife may be of the usual dagger

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shape, or the handle may be in the form of an oval ring, and it

will be bought from a Hausa trader, or else made in their own

towns by foreign blacksmiths. The bow is not strengthened in

any way, being merely a piece of bent wood some three to five

feet long, but a ring may be worn on the right thumb when

drawing it, so as to give a better grip on the missile. The

arrows have iron heads with flanges, and are poisoned, the

shafts being notched but not feathered, and usually about

three feet in length, but Jigya used some 4 feet 8 inches

against the last patrol. The Toffs used wooden-pointed arrows,

the tips of which broke off on touching the target ; the object

in both cases being of course to keep the poison - bearing

material in contact with the flesh as long as possible. Fire

arrows are unknown, and this is rather surprising, considering

the fact that the burning of the enemy's town is one of the

objects of every attacking force.

I have not seen a sling, but the chief of Jemaan Daroro told me

that he was wounded by a stone from one at Jigya some time

previously, and others say the same thing. Stones are not

usually rolled down on the enemy, but the last patrol had an

experience of the kind, and I still wonder why the towns built up

the mountains are not always defended in this fashion. The

spear has a long head with flanges, and a small piece of iron round

the butt for balance ; it also has a projection on the shaft on

which to rest the forefinger. The shield is round and made of

hide, bullock for preference. I believe there are some made of

grass also, but I could not be sure that I saw any, though the

Attakka seemed to be carrying such weapons; if so, they are

much smaller than those made of hide. There is another shape,

more square, used by the Mada warriors, resembling somewhat

those used by the Toff people, whose weapons have been already

described.

Although these tribes are always fighting amongst themselves,

there seems to be a good deal of intermarriage between them,

and so, when one side has had enough of the war, any women

who once belonged to the hostile tribe, but have been married to

men of the tribe wishing for peace, are sent to their relatives as

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ambassadors, and they are naturally sacred, for they have friends on

both sides. If peace is agreed upon, important representatives of

the two tribes meet, each party bringing a he-goat in the case of

the Kagoro, and decide the terms of peace, and swear friendship

in the following way — all their bargains being celebrated by

banquets, as with us.

After having talked matters over, and after the usual agree-

ments have been made, payment of compensation, delivery of

prisoners, or giving up the right to a claim for territory, which-

ever the case may be, each goat is killed by having its throat

cut. Some of the blood is then smeared three times with three

incantations, of course, on a tree or stone agreed upon, and

this act apparently makes it a witness to the compact (have

not European lovers sworn by the moon ?), and possibly a

partaker in the feast also ; and perhaps is thenceforth re-

garded as sacred, like the stone used when praying for rain.

This is not impossible, for Jacob poured a drink offering on

the pillar of stone which he set up at Beth-el, and Joshua

took a great stone and set it under an oak, and "said unto

all the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it

hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us ; it

shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."' 1

Each party then divides its goat into two halves lengthwise,

except for the head, which, with the skin, is the perquisite of

the chief priest of the town or tribe bringing the animal, and one-

half is taken by each party, the members of which then separate,

each cooking and eating the two different halves at some little

distance apart in the bush. When the flesh has been eaten,

some three men of each party will be told off to accompany the

other party to their town, and then all go home, their hostages,

who stay for a few days with their late enemies, being, of

course, sacred — how that word has changed in meaning !

The Moroa apparently cut a female goat across the middle

while still alive, and give the hinder part to the party from the

Other tribe or town, receiving a similar portion in exchange, and

then all mix together and eat with one another. I am not sure

if they too smear the blood on a stone or a tree ; I saw no special

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stone at the place where I waited for the Gannawarri, nor was

the tree in any way remarkable.

A broom is constructed by the party from the people who have

made the first overtures of peace, and is handed to the other

party, the most important men on each side holding it, and swear-

ing that it will sweep out all evil-doers. In the case of the

Kagoro, the broom is made of the grass used for lighting fires,

the idea being that if the people who gave it ever attack at

night, the torch will blaze up and show where they are, for the

others will take it to their town and keep it there.

The principal causes of war are the capture of women or else

the murder of men, the latter nearly always, and the former very

often arising out of a drunken row. Sometimes the most fiendish

treachery is indulged in during a friendly feast, such as I have

described at Babban Gidda, and head-hunting was always regarded

as a popular and manly sport. In any case blood-feuds must

have lasted a long time between tribes before we were there to put

an end to them, for the children of a man killed even in battle

would keep up the vendetta unless prevented or bought off, and,

when life is cheap, and men are anxious for heads, no great sums

will be paid to keep an enemy quiet.

The Kagoro have not amalgamated with any other tribe ;

and though they have repeatedly defeated the Kajji, they never

seem to have followed up their victories nor to have deprived

them of any land. This happened indirectly, however, for the

Kajji were for a long time too much frightened to go to any of

their farms near the Kagoro frontier. I managed to make the

principal chiefs of these tribes meet and swear friendship at

Jemaan Daroro during the year, and I believe the feeling of

greater security, and the consequent increase in the area under

cultivation, nearly doubled the harvest of the towns nearest each

other on each side of the boundary. And if so I justified my

name with them, as with the Hausawa of Jemaan Daroro, who nick-

named me Maikwoshe (" the full one," i.e. " the maker of plenty

not on account of a wish to make rude remarks about any per-

sonal peculiarity, but because, while with them, I encouraged

their agricultural habits, and made every householder have a farm.

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CHAPTER XIII

CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS

SOME people hold that the wild pagans in their native state

are absolutely beyond the pale, incapable of any good

without our intervention, and quite useless in every way

unless or until they can be taught to live according to European

ideals. Others maintain that it is only in their wild state that

pagans are truthful, honest, well-behaved, and in fact thorough

gentlemen, and that contact with us does everything to lower and

nothing to elevate them. It is true that many of the inland

tribes are dirty, though the river people are often the reverse ; it

is true that they do not know of our Bible, but it is in many cases

most untrue to say that they do not know of God, or that they

do not worship Him to the best of their ability ; it is true also

that many, I might almost say most, of their songs would be con-

sidered rather too strong for even our music halls, but they do

not go much further than some of the worst of our Immortal

Bard, Shakespeare ; and as for the wearing of clothes, natives

with any pride in themselves like the Kagoro say — " We are

Kagoro, we do not know these customs, our fathers did not teach

them to us, we do not wish to change.'"

Many writers on Africa besides myself urge that natives shall

be educated as natives and not as Europeans, because the local

laws and customs are in many cases much more suited to the

black people than are those introduced by a foreign race. And

naturally so, for it seems the height of impertinence to imagine

that West Africa has been left to grow in sin and darkness for

centuries simply that the whites might come and save the

people at some future time. We do not realise that Moham-

medans regard Christians as lost, that Hindus and Confucians

consider that we are utterly damned in the next world, that even

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the wild, dirty pagans imagine that they, and they only, have found

the true God, and that we are impious because we revile theirs

while urging the acceptance of ours, not recognising them as one !

We ridicule such an idea, we think the native blasphemous for

entertaining such views, we turn over in our minds the many

absurd (to us) superstitions and customs that he has, and we

regard any arguments in his favour with pitiful contempt, or

with amusement. But before laughing at him would it not be

best to consider if we are really so very different, so very superior

after all ? Some tribes pierce their noses ! Very funny indeed ;

but do we not pierce our ears ? and not only women either, for

sailors do, or did. Some of the black women compress their arms

or legs, or tie strings around their waists ; but is not a modifica-

tion of the latter the rule in England, where a few years ago the

woman who could boast of a waist of only eighteen inches was

more envied than one who had won a University degree ? Men's

high stiff collars are as bad. Native women paint their faces to

make themselves appear more fascinating, and even that is not

unknown in England, though our ideas differ from theirs as to

what is attractive. Black mothers massage their babies' heads

to mould them into the particular shape favoured by the tribe ;

is this never done in England ? The people carry loads on their

heads, but even this can be observed here, kitchen boys being

particularly noticeable, and I have seen white women at Oporto

stumbling along under great planks and stones, and working

harder than any negresses.

So too with the beliefs, superstitions, and customs, many

of which, if we take the trouble to trace them, will resemble

those of our early forefathers, and we do not immediately

recognise even our own nowadays because they have become

modified as we have developed, and many have been lost alto-

gether. But people who will not walk under a ladder, those

who throw salt over the left shoulder, refuse to sit down thirteen

at a table, and will not cut their nails on a Friday, cannot look

down upon the wildest pagan so far as superstition is concerned.

Those who use crests, burn obnoxious persons in effigy, or believe

that the burning of the dressings has an effect on the wound

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Ugly, but Revered

The object on the left is a head-dress composed of leather covered with cowrie-shells, the

figure ot a man on horseback surmounting the cap The centre figure is that of a girl

kneeling, with a calabash on her head. The small carvings are said to represent dead

children, and are male or female in form accordingly. These are Yoruba objects. See p. 34.

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from which they have been taken, will not be surprised to hear

of totems or of sympathetic magic. The savage wears a charm to

make him victorious in battle, even our racing motor-cars have

mascots ; the native perhaps regards some particular animal with

affection, fear, or loathing — it may be as a result of totemism, it

may be for other reasons — but we know of instances of men

amongst ourselves being afraid of cats and horses, although in

battle they are as gallant as any heroes have ever been.

Again as regards religion, many tribes conceive of a Supreme

God, the Almighty Creator, in the same way as we do, but

whereas we portray Him as a Glorified Being, in shape like us,

they may think of Him as such also, or as partly animal or

element. He is at times supposed to inhabit representations of

Himself, or perhaps idols may be made which become gods, and

even nowadays it is impossible to say exactly how some of the

lower and ignorant classes in Europe really regard the figures of

the Saviour and the Virgin, or the Holy Relics ! We are often

amused at the accounts of natives reminding their gods of their

existence, or of trying to cheat them by offering gifts at their

shrines during a period of stress, but taking them away when the

danger is past. At St. Adresse near Havre in France, last year,

when on my way to Portugal, I saw many models of ships in the

church, placed there to remind the Virgin that the crews of the

vessels they represented were at sea, and invoking her aid on their

behalf. After the vessel's return the models are removed again,

and in many cases a tablet is erected in grateful remembrance,

though this cannot always have been done, otherwise the building

would have been a solid mass of them long ere this. Many of the

Roman Catholic churches abroad are like toyshops. Again, some

of the pagan hymns are more beautiful than a good many found

to-day in our hymnbooks, and we often ask for the same things,

namely, blessings on earth, and a good place in the next world.

However, there is no room in a book like this for the discussion

of all the points of resemblance between the pagan mind and ours,

nor have I the ability necessary for such a work, but it would

be as well to remember also, that whereas we may know that

we are superior to the black man, he does not admit the fact,

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but actually thinks that he is quite as much superior to us ! A

European will never get anything like as good or as willing

service from a native as one of his own natural rulers would ; the

expression " as foolish as a white man 11 is as common as one we

have relating to the people of a certain neighbouring continental

country ; and the conviction of most sects — specially Moham-

medans — that Christians will be damned in the next world is even

stronger than the belief to the contrary of our most ardent

missionaries, who think that we only can show them the way to

salvation, and without us they will have no hope.

And lest there should be any misapprehension, let me say at

once that our customs and beliefs certainly are superior to those

of the natives, for we have weeded out most of the bad and useless

parts, while they are still in a backward stage ; and I do not com-

pare their customs to ours simply for the purpose of belittling our

state of culture, but so as to invite sympathy for theirs. The only

thing I wish to insist upon is that we cannot afford to deride the

savage until we have become absolutely certain that there is

nothing corresponding to his foolishness in our mode of life.

Those men who wish to study primitive instincts have an

excellent opportunity amongst the pagan head-hunters of Northern

Nigeria, though the recent discoveries of tin in the district will

soon render the people useless anthropologically. I always

sympathised with them even when, according to our ideas, they

were doing wrong, for it is, after all, not so very long ago that

we became so exceedingly moral and orderly. Would England

have been Mistress of the Seas but for unscrupulous pirates like

Drake and others ? Did Japan give Russia formal notice that she

was going to attack the fleet at Port Arthur ? Did Austria and

Italy rush to the Hague ? Did Portugal ? Are we in our next

war going to ask the enemy to kindly get the first blow home so

that other nations may not say nasty things about us ? They will

say nothing nasty to the conqueror, whatever he does ; deeds and

not words will decide the contests ultimately, and the spectators

will perforce uphold the winning side unless they are prepared to

fight on behalf of the vanquished. Thus, when on a patrol, it was

not always a question of fighting the particular tribe destined for

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punishment ; one had to consider too what the neighbouring

people would do in the case of a reverse, for it is the nature of

nations as well as men to kick another when he is down, and to

curry favour with the victor.

Our policy with these people has been to preserve as far as

possible their old institutions, and not to interfere, unless it was

necessary to stop some practice which was harmful to the com-

munity generally, or contravening some law. And by law I do

not mean only that which we have laid down in learned enact-

ments (which are so badly expressed that thousands of pounds

have to be spent in the law-courts before any one can find out

what they mean), but what is included in the general policy of

the tribe concerned, for it is a mistake to think that savages are

absolutely unrestrained. They are not, custom being a very exact-

ing code, any infringement of which is often regarded as being not

only an injury to the society, but a slight to the gods as well.

It is not necessary that a law should be written to make

it binding ; there are some " unwritten laws \*\* with us — as was

seen lately in America — which nevertheless are almost invariably

held to be of equal authority with those appearing in the statute

book. And there are customs too, the infringement of which

would call forth a chorus of disapproval strong enough to compel

the person guilty of the offence either to comply with them or to

fly, and ostracism, or even worse punishment, might follow. Such

customs gradually tend to become fixed, and they are then equal

in every respect to laws, and their infringement, even with us,

would in many cases sooner or later bring the offender into

conflict with the law-courts. Take, for instance, the case of a 'bus

full of women except for one man, and another woman enter-

ing, it will certainly happen that the man will give up his seat

and offer to stand — but why should he ? He has paid for his

seat, and having been there first has the prior right to it, but he

will not keep it because he respects womankind, and the constant

exercise of courtesy in response to that feeling has become so

universal that it has grown into a custom, so that if a man

ignored the unwritten rules he would be made to suffer by

ostracism, or even by actual violence. Again, if a Government

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refused to resign after having lost its majority in the House of

Commons, the members would very soon be guilty of breaking

the law, for they would be spending money illegally. The

former is one of our customs, the result to a great extent of

Christianity, but regard for women is not yet universal among

savages, I fear.

A Kagoro custom, mentioned later, is that the women shall

not wear clothes of any kind, and though I gave many of them

brightly coloured handkerchiefs of the kind which gladden the

hearts and brighten the eyes (and heads) of most of the dusky

beauties, they would never wear them ; the reason given when I

asked for one being, that "the Kagoro did not do so," and

apparently no further explanation was thought necessary. There

is no reason to suppose that these particular females were ab-

solutely different in nature to all the other daughters of Eve of

every colour, and I think that it is quite likely that but for the fear

of disapproval they would have worn them gladly ; but I respected

their customs, and did not attempt to persuade them to do so.

Religion is about the last subject on which a native will talk,

and it was not until I had been known to the Kagoro some

months that I could get any information at all, and even then

it came only in little bits at a time. Had I only been able to do

another tour amongst them I should have found out most of

what was worth knowing even on this head, but it was not to be.

They believe in a Supreme God who is called Gwaza, and he

must be in some way confused with the Universe, for the names

of both are the same. So far are they from " worshipping the

devil," as is often stated about such people, that they regard

the god as a beneficent spirit who helps them against the

ghosts of their dead ancestors, and he is apparently regarded as

almighty, for at new moon there are rejoicings, and he is invoked

and asked to give the people health and good luck during the

coming month.

In times of drought he is asked to send rain on the land, a

special day being fixed by the priests for the offering of the

supplications of the people, after which they make various

mystical preparations, and rain always comes within a day or

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two. No doubt the priests arrange the time with some relation

to the state of the atmosphere, as in the Murray Islands, where

Dr. Haddon says that the impossible was never attempted ; a

rain charm would never be made unless there was some ex-

pectation of rain coming. But the explanation given by the

priests is that they are powerful and can prevail upon God, and

that any delay simply shows that they have had to argue all the

more strongly. All the people turn first to the south when

praying, if it can so be called, at this time, and then towards

the other points of the compass, the reason being that they first

look towards their place of origin, as the Jews did towards

Jerusalem, in which direction our churches are also built.

No native beer, or akann, is drunk at the time of the new

moon, but in seasons of drought some is said to be thrown three

times on each corner of a special stone which is set up for the

occasion in the sacred grove, and is supposed to be inhabited for

the time by the Supreme God, an incantation being spoken while

each of the three sprinklings is made. But before this is done a

fowl is killed, and a little of the blood and feathers is placed on

the top of the stone, perhaps also some flesh, and the Supreme

God is supposed to eat these and be pleased. I did not myself

see the stone — if such really existed — it was kept in the sacred

grove, but a Court Messenger who had travelled through the

country before we came described the rites to me, and said that

the stone was about two feet high. It is kept for these rites only,

and this, or the stone or tree used as a witness to covenants of

peace, seem to be the only things approaching idolatry or fetish-

ism. Most Europeans swear on the Bible, or on relics.

There are no other gods or spirits — for instance, none of rivers

or mountains ; ancestors are worshipped so far as their ghosts are

feared, but no further, and there are no models or carvings of any

kind that I could hear of. Some of the Mada people to the south

have various figures in wood and clay, but whether these are idols

or not must be left for some one else to determine. By the way,

why is it that these figures, idols, or otherwise, are always

hideous ? We read in Genesis that " God made man in His own

image," but nowadays the process is reversed so far as the idola-

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trous pagans are concerned. It is possible that a man knowing

that most of the petty acts of everyday life were done by some

human being like himself, imagined the greater phenomena, such

as thunderstorms, floods, &c, to be ordered by some being as

much greater than he, as a thunderstorm was more wonderful than

the pouring of water from a calabash, and since the manifestations

of this mysterious power were destructive more often than not, he

was filled with fear.

In order to propitiate this being, evidently angry or malevolent

since his acts were directed against the man, he sought in his

mind for some means of approach, and as a native usually wants

to visualise everything, he made an image. But what was the

image to be like ? He knew himself to be better as a whole than

the animals around him because of his superior intellect, though

he was often inferior in bodily strength, and so the god was

depicted as being of human form, or partly of human and partly

of animal form. The swiftness of the eagle and the strength of

the lion have always been known to man in the countries where

such creatures existed, and we often see parts of them in the

representations of the gods ; and fishes were also included, par-

ticularly amongst maritime nations. Man and all these animals

felt hunger and other emotions, and so it was natural to suppose

that the gods would experience them also, and offerings of food,

and drink, and of riches were made to propitiate them.

But, strangely enough, the malevolent gods were often made

much more of than the beneficent ones, since the former were

always likely to do mischief if not appeased, while the latter

would do good in any case, and I fear that the same thing holds

good in everyday life amongst us even to this day, for even

in Parliament it is not an unknown thing for a member who can

worry the Government to be offered a post, in preference to

a staunch supporter who will always vote for his party. Often,

then, the representation of the god was made terrible in order

to match his reputation, and that accounts for a good deal

of the ugliness of the idols, though a certain amount must

be attributed to indifferent workmanship, and also to the fact

that beauty of face seldom appeals to a West African ; a woman

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who is strong in body, and likely to be a good worker and a

prolific mother being much preferred to a girl whose face is

her fortune, or would be amongst us. Where iron is rare and

precious, it forms part of the offering to the god, and a pious

native propitiates his deity by hammering nails into its stomach,

or head, or other part of the body (so says The Globe), and goes

on his way rejoicing in the knowledge of a good deed done.

As man rose in the scale of civilisation, he gradually dropped

the animal parts of the representation, and the offerings became

of a more spiritual nature, though even to-day, at harvest-time,

food is still sent to the church by us. However, we know now

that it will not be partaken of by the Almighty, but that it will

be devoted to charitable purposes, and that we shall derive

benefit, not through satisfying any desires on the part of the

Creator, but because of our own self-denial in making the gifts.

A good example of the gradual change in our own case is seen

in the idea of the cherubim, which Ezekiel describes as having

the faces of man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle, and they were

furnished with wings. Now, all of us see birds, and flying is still

a wonderful feat to us — much more so than swimming — and thus

we have kept the wings on our pictures of the cherubim to make

them appear superior to us, though otherwise their bodies are

exactly the same. So, too, with our delineations of the Creator ;

although once depicted as a Mighty and Reverend Patriarch

clad in Eastern raiment — thus showing the origin of the idea —

the modern custom is rather to indicate His position in a picture

by a blaze of glory, through w T hich, however, we dimly see that

His shape is supposed to be like ours, for we can understand

no higher organisation that the idealised human form.

The Kagoro did not know, or at least they would not tell me,

anything about the origin of man in the world, though they had

heard of a big flood. The ancient people are said to have been

much wiser than those of the present generation, and they drew

up all the laws and laid down all the customs which the Kagoro

now follow. They were, however, in no sense superhuman; and

in fact were not so strong as the people of to-day (pointing to

the fact that they were fugitives in the mountains rather than

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conquerors in the plains), but they were also not so wicked.

They invented many things, but forgot the art of swimming

when they learned how to make bridges, and that is the reason

why no Kagoro can swim to-day — though as these bridges consist

merely of palm trees felled so as to fall across the streams, the

reason does not seem to be a particularly good one. It is more

likely that this is another sign that the Kagoro came from

Bauchi, where the level is higher and the streams are fewer

in number and smaller, than from the west, where they would

have seen rivers much enlarged since leaving the mountain.

Some Kagoro say that there will be punishment after death

for evil deeds not expiated during the offender's lifetime. But

the majority hold that he who has the stronger arm on earth will

become the more powerful spirit in the after-life, and this view is

so eminently in accordance with the general ideas of the Kagoro

that I cannot help thinking that the other has been borrowed

from the Mohammedans, for there is no Hell, and the provision of

a feast of akann will thoroughly atone for the commission of any

crime.

All living Kagoro have souls or shadows which leave their

bodies during sleep, and it is dangerous to awaken any one suddenly

lest his soul should be too much preoccupied with the pleasures of

the moment and not be able to get back properly to the body at

once, a fact which is shown by the feeling of heaviness and the

dull look of the eyes. The souls were said to be connected with

the breath as well as with the shadow, but how they could leave

the bodies of sleeping — and still breathing — persons my inform-

ants were unable to explain. The soul always has the form and

voice of the body it occupies, and each individual has one, and

one only.

If a person is likely to die, the soul leaves its bodily case and

travels towards the stream which divides this world from the next ;

and if the ghosts of the departed ancestors on the other side think

it is time that the person died, the soul is allowed to cross, but if

not, they drive it back to the body, and the sick person recovers.

It is curious to note that similar beliefs are prevalent elsewhere ;

for instance, I have seen it stated that the people of New

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Britain think that when a man dies his soul goes to the spirit-

land and meets his friends there, but if they do not want him at

that time they all drive him away, and so he returns to life again.

The stream is crossed in the case of the Kagoro souls by a bridge,

and I rather wonder if the difficulties of travelling gave them the

idea of a stream ; if so it would appear as if they had come from

the north-west, where the rivers are formidable, and as if the

bridge were a later addition. Sometimes there is a delay, the

ghosts not being unanimous in their opinion, and so deferring

the final decision, and when this is the case the soul, being without

a habitation, shrinks, and if it should in the end be compelled to

return to its body the person will feel the effects although he

recovers, and will not have the proper use of his brain perhaps, or

of one or all of his limbs. But if the ghosts decide that the person

has lived long enough on earth the soul is allowed to cross the

bridge, and it can then never return to that particular body, which

must die.

The question of the detention or return of the soul is wholly

in the hands of the ghosts of the patient's dead ancestors, and no

rites are performed by the relatives on earth because they could

make no difference; but if the person who is causing the illness

be found, severe measures are taken against him, for all deaths and

illnesses are due to black magic, and so when a person is sick it is

necessary to discover who is responsible. Souls and ghosts are like

human beings, and are exposed to the same dangers, and so while

a soul is absent from the sleeping body it may be caught by that

of an evil-wisher, or the latter may beat the victim's soul with a

stick. In both cases an illness ensues, which in the latter will be

evidenced by a feeling of being bruised (I wonder if this has any-

thing to do with malarial fever ?), but will not be serious ; while

in the former case it is known that the victim's liver has been

removed and taken to the cave in the sacred grove, where all the

evil-wishers will assemble to eat it.

An ordinary individual cannot see these evil souls, but a witch-

doctor can, because they glow like fire at night, and he is, of

course, immediately appealed to and asked to "smell out" the

owner. On being summoned he will call over the names of several

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persons, and the sick man will recognise the one who is afflicting

him, so a rush is made for some poor wretch who has evidently

offended the witch-doctor, and he is caught and shut in a house

with a fire in it, into which pepper is thrown, and he is kept there

until he agrees to remove his curse. If he really returns the liver

to the sick man, the latter will recover, but he may have only pro-

mised to do so in order to escape from the burning pepper, and

may eat the liver after all, in which case the person dies, and, if

the evil-wisher is still in the town, he will be sold as a slave or

choked to death if the family of the victim is strong enough to

exact the punishment. If, however, the sick person is very

old the evil-wisher may not be punished at all, for since

a beer-feast will result on the death of such a victim the

deed is rather an advantage than otherwise to the rest of the

family.

The Kagoro know of cases where the evil-wisher who thus

became an evil-doer gave back the sick person's liver, and conse-

quently allowed him to recover, but took a corresponding organ

from a dog or a sheep instead ; and although the culprit may

have denied the charge, there was no doubt of his guilt, for the

animal would die soon afterwards of a similar illness. Probably

the evil-wisher would be required to make good the loss, but,

as in most other cases, all would depend upon whether the family

suffering it was stronger in numbers or more powerful in influence

than that of the person causing it.

The ghosts live the lives of ordinary men — Kagoro men, of

course — and spirits of enemies will continue their feuds unless

stopped by the Supreme God. The ghosts ride, eat, and hunt

as in life, and are always ready for beer, but they cannot be

destroyed. They live in the sacred grove and in the mountains

behind Fada Kagoro — not in houses, for there are none in the

next world ; and the plants and trees in the grove being real,

there is no need for ghostly vegetation. They seem to have

horses, and dogs too, though some Kagoro say that animals

have no souls, for the shadow disappears at death; others,

however, hold that they have souls of the same shape and size

as their bodies, and all agree that they can see the ghosts of men

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and many other things which the eye of no human being can

discern unless he possesses the secrets of the black magic.

The first husband of a woman will be her husband in after-

life, and, if dead, his ghost will come to her house for her when

she is dying; the ghost of the first wife will come for a man

when he is dying ; and, also, the spirits of parents will come for

their unmarried children, and vice versa ; in fact, the organisation

of society is as much like that in force on earth as can be

imagined. The ghosts are always hungry and thirsty, and

unless well looked after will soon punish their relatives left

alive on earth, but they will first warn them in dreams. We

have many stories in England of the ghosts of murdered

people worrying their descendants until the crimes have been

brought to light, and the ghosts allowed to go to their resting-

place, so we should be able easily to understand the Kagoro

beliefs in this respect. A few cases have been known by the

Kagoro of members of their tribes having seen the wraiths of

their loved ones at the time of their death, although far distant

at the time, but it was admitted that such strokes of luck seldom

occur.

A ghost may transmigrate into the body of a descendant born

after the ancestor's death, and each may be male or female ; in

fact, such a thing is common, as is proved by the likeness of

children to their parents or grandparents and others. It is

very lucky, too, for it shows that the ghost, which was always

liable to misbehave at any time, has returned to a fleshy habita-

tion, and so will have no further power to frighten the family

until the new body dies, and it is set free again. But though

the Kagoro may welcome a reincarnation, other peoples object,

and Mr. Martin says of the Akra people that he saw one morning

a great number of women and children carrying a child about

the streets in a basket, shouting as loudly as they could. On

inquiry he learned that the mother had previously lost two or

three children, who had died when about the age of this one.

When such was the case, they believed that the same soul

which was in the first child had returned and entered the

next, and that the child would die of its own free will, unless

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prevented, through mere spite. Hence these steps were taken

to cure it of such practices. The child, while alive, was

besmutted with charcoal, put into a basket, and carried

around the town, the people taking care to abuse it for its

wickedness, or to threaten it, should it die, with further

penalties. Every ill usage that could be offered, short of

murder, was shown it, and should it afterwards die, in spite

of this treatment, its head was sometimes crushed with stones,

and the body, instead of being buried, was thrown either into

the sea or into the bush ; these things being done to prevent its

coming again into another child. Some of the people had a

notion that such children belonged to the ourang-outangs, and

that when they died these animals came to claim them. They

made images, therefore, and placed them in the road so that

the beasts might take the images and spare the children.

Ghosts cannot take up their abode in animals, nor in inanimate

things, but those of beasts are said to be able to enter the bodies

of any children of their slayers who are conceived but unborn at

the time, and this is shown by the fact that more than one case

has been known of a child being born with marks of wounds

exactly like those received by his father or mother when

fighting with an animal, or by the animal itself, if the fight

took place not long before the child's birth. There seems to

be a curious confusion of ideas here ; the former phenomenon is,

of course, familiar to us, but the other is strange, and yet would

fit in better with the Kagoro view of the transmigration of the

animal's soul. However, the idea of transmigration is common,

for Mr. Martin says of the Akra people that the spirits of

departed ancestors received daily offering from their respective

families, and when a child was carried off by a wild beast, as

sometimes happened, it was supposed that the spirit of one of the

departed ancestors had entered the beast in revenge for some

neglect on the part of the living. Other writers say that there is

a general belief in West Africa that those persons who kill

crocodiles, for instance, take their form after death, a reversion of

the Kagoro process. At a place called Zoutomy in the Vey

country, on the day of the Banquet of the Dead, Dr. Blvden

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tells us, thousands of people make offerings of rice, flour, and

meat (not fish) to their ancestors. At the call of the prophetess

in charge, a huge crocodile comes to her and is fed, and this is

repeated until the whole surface of the creek is ruffled by their

heads, the food being distributed amongst them. There are

several of these sacred places, at any of which one may see the

prophetess go down under the water, and after an hour or so

return to the surface with her hair plaited and her body

decorated with strings of beads. In New Guinea and the

East Indies, too, crocodiles are frequently respected as being

the abode of souls of ancestors, and, on the whole, the idea is

not much of a compliment to the late lamented.

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CHAPTER XIV

CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS (continued)

WHEN a death occurs, which is, of course, ascribed to the

evil-wishing of some person or other, the women related

to the deceased, and any others eager for a little excite-

ment, assemble and cry (howl would be a better word, perhaps,

or shriek) for the rest of the day, or if the death occurs at night,

until next morning, and horns are blown. It seems to be the

custom in many parts to make as much noise as possible on

these occasions, no doubt in order to frighten away any spirits

which may be still hovering around. When in the Kukuruku

country, I heard great lamentations for one of the wives of a chief,

and guns were fired off at intervals ; but the Kagoro do not shoot,

no doubt for the simple but sufficient reason that they have no

firearms. The people of the dead man's town and of other towns

collect, and the corpse is wrapped in a new mat of plaited palm-

leaves said to be kept for the purpose. The corpse is not pre-

served in any way, no coffin is used, nor is any platform erected

near the house for its reception, as I have seen elsewhere ; it is

simply left in the house until the grave has been made, the guests

assembled, and the sacrifice prepared, and then the burial takes

place.

A grave is dug in the compound, in somewhat the shape of a

bottle belonging to a tantalus, the mouth being perhaps three feet

in diameter and six inches deep, the neck two feet across, and extend-

ing downwards for a foot or so, and then comes the body of the

bottle, perhaps six feet in diameter, and six to eight feet deep.

These measurements are, of course, only approximate, and the

shape may not be universal, for the grave I saw was a Kajji one

in the town of Abett on the Zaria border, but I was told that

those of the Kagoro were similar. Dr. C. G. Seligmann tells me

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that he has seen a grave in Southern Kordofan which was in the

shape of a decanter, and had no relation to the Dinka or Shilluk

graves. In this case the narrow neck was some five or six feet

in length, so the proportion of the different parts of the grave

differed greatly from that of the Kajji one here described, but

still, there is some resemblance in the shape, and although there

can be no connection between the two, the fact is perhaps worth

mentioning.

A fresh grave is usually dug for each corpse, but there may be

no objection to burying a body in a very old grave. I do not

know how long the corpse is kept before burial, the length of

time may differ amongst the various tribes, but the Kajji girl who

had died during the night was to be buried next day, though I

could not stay to see if this was actually done. However, when-

ever it may be, at the appointed time the women and children are

driven indoors, and the most important men then present carry

the corpse to the grave (only a few yards off, unless the deceased

has died away from home) amidst shouting, blowing and drumming.

The body is then placed on the ground, and the chief priest wishes

the soul good luck in the spirit world, and hopes that the

deceased's relatives will keep well ; and this is possibly a hint to

the ghost not to worry them, for though it can never again re-

enter the body after it has once passed the stream, it can return

to its old haunts and be the cause of many an anxious moment to

the surviving relatives.

Two men then enter the grave, and the corpse is lowered in,

feet first, and made to recline against one of the sides, with its

face towards the sacred grove, according to one account (and in

this case the measurement of the width of the grave was given as

being only about four feet below the neck), or, as others say, the

corpse is laid flat on the ground, that of a male on its right side,

that of a female on its left. In the case of the Kajji the bodies

are laid on the ground, with the face upwards, the head, in the

case of a male, pointing to the east, in the case of a female,

towards the west. The two men then climb out again, and sticks

are placed over the mouth of the grave and plastered with clay

(or, as with the Kajji, a round, flat stone is found to fit the cavity),

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and the excavated earth is heaped on top, but none is let fall into

the grave itself, nor are any arms or food placed there. If the

deceased has been an important person, the head of a family for

instance, a goat will be killed at the grave side ; if unimportant, a

fowl ; if it be only a baby, there may be no sacrifice. In all cases

it is said that branches of two certain kinds of trees are intertwined

and placed on the grave, and a little of the blood of the goat, or

whatever it may be, is sprinkled on them, the flesh being cooked

and divided amongst all the relatives and others present. The

relatives are always summoned ; to forget to do so on one side,

and to refuse to come without good reason on the other, would be

giving a deadly insult, for as natives poetically put it, " Meat is

a message which must not be ignored," and this being interpreted

means that no Kagoro will miss a feast if he can help it.

After this, a pole will be set up on the grave, to which are

strung all the skulls in possession of the family, and formerly, if

the deceased had been a person of importance, people were killed

on the day of the funeral so that their ghosts might accompany

his, their dripping heads being placed on the grave and left there

until all the flesh was gone, the skulls being then added to the

other trophies of the house. Those good old times are gone,

however, in Kagoroland, and nowadays there is no difference in

the procedure obtaining between the burial of a chief and that of

any other person, except that the family of the latter might have

no skulls to exhibit.

It is thought by some that head-hunting is a survival of

cannibalism, and certainly it might once have been the fact with

the Kagoro that the bodies of the victims slain w T ere afterwards

stowed away in the stomachs of the mourners at the same time as

their heads were placed on the grave of the deceased responsible

for the funeral. But there may be no connection really, at any

rate in some cases, the skull being the token of the successful issue

of a dangerous adventure, like the scalp was amongst the Indians

of North America, and the war medal is with us ; and just as the

soldiers of a European regiment are feted after their return from

active service, so too was the warrior honoured who brought back

a hot and dripping head. In some parts, such as Fiji, for instance,

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he was even given a special name, and was permitted during the

next few days to besmear his face and chest with a special mixture

of lampblack differing from the ordinary war-paint, and the hero

thus decorated would strut proudly through the town, an object

of praise to the old men who had done the same in their youth,

of envy to his comrades who had not been so successful, of venera-

tion to the small boys who hoped some day to emulate his deeds,

and of tender interest to the village belles, the latter by no means

a negligible incentive. Dr. Haddon says of the people of Borneo

that one of the chief incentives to procure heads was to please the

women, and among some tribes a young man had to do this

before he could marry, the possession of a head decapitated by

himself being a fairly general method employed by suitors to

ingratiate themselves with the maiden of their choice. And this

can be understood, for the fact that a young man was brave and

energetic enough to risk his life in such a dangerous game

promised well for his ability to protect and keep & wife, and so

well was this recognised that formerly, amongst the western tribes

of the Torres Straits, a youth who had taken a skull would very

soon receive a proposal of marriage from some eligible young

woman, leap year or no leap year. We know from the Bible

that Saul demanded a somewhat similar proof of prowess from

David before the latter married Michal. And we have seen how

in the case of the Kagoro, a hero was honoured on his return to

his home, being allowed to paint his legs red, the women dancing

before him while he was carried in procession on the back of a

friend.

A raid to get a head was amongst some tribes a religious busi-

ness, the warriors being excluded from intercourse with the women

and compelled to live apart. The Kagoro hero boiled his booty

in private, but of the Kiwai we are told that the head was hung

over a fire until all the hair had been singed off, during which

process all the young girls of the village assembled and danced

near the fire, singing all the while ; and after the singeing process

the head was taken away for the flesh to be removed, after which

it was washed and hung up on the main post of the house. But,

unfortunately, an act of bravery was not always a necessity for the

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receipt of the honours, for we learn from Mr. Fison that in Fiji

the distinction of the Koroi was not necessarily earned by some

deed showing a noble self-devotion and contempt of danger, for

he once saw a stout young warrior adorned with all the paint, not

for slaying a worthy foe in battle, but by lying in wait among

some mangrove bushes by a river, and killing a miserable and

defenceless old woman belonging to the hostile tribe as she crept

along the mud flat looking for shell-fish. The Kagoro are said to

have even removed the unborn child of a woman who happened to

be butchered, and many of the animal skulls show that there could

have been no danger in their acquisition, yet they are hung up in

the place of honour. The Moroa also are not particular.

There is evidently, then, some other reason in some cases, and

this is, so the Kagoro say, that the ghosts of the victims must

serve that of the slayer in the next world, every householder in

addition inheriting in some way the benefits from the heads

collected by his ancestors, as well as from those he has himself

obtained. Dr. Haddon says that some tribes in the islands about

Australia have a similar belief, and in the case of such people

head-hunting would be a wise provision for the future, and one,

he supposes, which every careful householder would endeavour to

make ! Again, the members of a certain Australian tribe hold

that, when a warrior slays his first man, the spirit of the victim

enters the victor's body, and henceforth warns him of the approach

of danger, this being rather like the Kagoro theory that the spirit

of a slain animal may enter an unborn child of the slayer.

Another reason is that head-hunting in some countries is a rite

precedent to the cultivation of the land, it being necessary to show

the head to the fields to ensure a good harvest. Still, the admira-

tion of the fair sex and the pride in the number of trophies would

have a very great influence, though a father of the Kagoro and

surrounding tribes did not insist upon a youth showing that he

had not only 66 a head on his own shoulders " but one of some-

body else's in his house before he gave up his daughter to the

eager suitor's care.

As for cannibalism, various reasons are given for the practice.

The tailed head-hunting tribes do not indulge in the luxury of

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human flesh, at any rate not now, but the Gannawarri to the east

and the Nadu to the south do so, and when some of the latter tribe

came to visit me at Jemaan Daroro in 1908, I asked them the reason

why they pretended that they had given up the practice though

ei<>;ht Hausa traders had been killed and eaten the year before

(and an Ayu was treated in the same way a few months afterwards).

They would not tell me, saying that they did not like human

flesh, but when I showed them my white arm, they admitted that

it might be better than chicken, and seeing a hungry look in their

eyes, I considered it best to cover it up again.

There is evidence to prove that, amongst many tribes, canni-

balism arose out of a belief that eating a man caused his good quali-

ties to pass into the body of the host, which is only the idea that

special foods have special effects on the body, and then on the

brain and nerves, carried a little further. So brave enemies were

eagerly sought for, and the more gallant the foe, the more certain

was he of providing a "joint of black brother" for his captors, if

he were unlucky enough to be taken prisoner. Or again, the

victim might be one famed for his magical powers, or remarkable

in some other way above his fellows. Thus in Fiji, mothers have

been known to rub their babies' lips with the flesh of a warrior

who had been killed in battle, in the belief that such treatment

would make the infants grow up into brave men, and elsewhere

old people would eat the bodies of babies that they might renew

their youth, and charms were made of pieces of the flesh.

Another idea which we can understand is the thirst for revenge

which cannot be satisfied with the mere killing of an enemy, but

insists on his utter extermination and humiliation. The Psalmist

sings of dipping the foot 44 in the blood of thine enemies, and the

tongue of thy dogs in the same," and again, 44 The righteous . . .

shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." Thus Fijians

would eat the thorns which pricked them, and we know that in

the English law concerning deodands, the weapons used by a

murderer, for instance, were confiscated and perhaps destroyed.

But even when the death was through misadventure, the

instrument sometimes had to suffer; thus Blackstone mentions

that a well in which a person had been drowned was filled up

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by order of the coroner, the deodands coming within his juris-

diction.

According to the laws of Ine and Alfred, says Dr. Carter, the

thing causing the death was forfeited to the kindred, but later

on to God for the king. In 1221 some persons fell out of a boat

on the Severn and were drowned, the boat being then sold for

eighteenpence, which money went towards the building of a bridge.

The Church also claimed the proceeds in many cases on the ground

that as the person died unconfessed the thing causing death

should be devoted to buying masses for his soul, in the same way

as the apparel of a stranger found dead was applied to that pur-

pose. In all indictments for homicide, the instrument of death,

the " bane," and the value were presented and found by the jury

in Blackstone's time (thus, that the stroke was given by a cer-

tain pen-knife, value sixpence) so that the king might claim the

deodand.

Professor Tylor says the fact that the cartwheel that ran over a

man or a tree which fell on him were deodand (given to God) shows

how inert things were supposed to be alive and conscious, and the

pathetic custom of" telling the bees " when the master or mistress of

a house dies is a survival. This is made clear in Germany, where

not only is the news conveyed to every beehive and every beast in the

stall, but every sack of corn must be touched, and everything in

the house shaken, that they may know that their master is no

more. Again, the expression, " I'll have his blood for that," is still

heard, and many children have been known to take a delight in

smashing up teeth after extraction, which had been aching, and

many adults, even, will want to kick a table or door which they

have run up against. I always do so myself.

In Fiji, according to Mr. Fison, no greater insult in the way of

abuse can be offered to a man than to call him the 64 Son of a Baked

Father," and he says that more than one instance has been known

of a chief refusing to allow any one to share with him the body of

a particularly obnoxious foe. In some countries the eating of a

captive might, by sympathetic magic, have an evil effect on the

whole of the enemy. Strangely enough, in Fiji the refusal to eat

a captive was an even worse humiliation than to eat him, not only to

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the man himself, but even to his whole tribe, the body being per-

haps even cooked and then left to rot as too loathsome to be eaten.

But to find a human grave may not only be less humiliating

than to be left, it may even indicate great respect, the victim being

eaten tenderly with every mark of affection, the kinsfolk in certain

Queensland tribes eating certain parts of the deceased as a charm

to prevent their remembering him and grieving, murderers in

Prussia and Southern Italy eating a part of their victims for a

similar reason. Further, by eating part of a victim the murderer

would become related to the victim's kinsfolk, and so be free of

the blood-feud. The Gallas, too, 66 bury their dear ones in the

stomach instead of the ground,' 1 according to Bottego — in the case

of some tribes, perhaps, with the idea of preventing the ghosts

troubling them. There was often a sense of religious duty in the

act, shipwrecked mariners, for instance, being supposed to have

incurred the wrath of the gods, and so the captors had to eat

them whether they wished to do so or not, and in other parts

the human beings offered as sacrifices were eaten.

Lastly, the lack of animal food is the reason ascribed in many

cases, and where there is a scarcity it may well be the case, but

there is no doubt that a longing for the actual flavour of the

human meat is one of the principal causes, it being sometimes

preferred " high," and being kept in water for the purpose, some-

times seasoned with limejuice. Thus we are told of paddocks

where " human cattle 11 were kept and fattened for the market like

stall-fed oxen, and when in good condition would fetch about

twelve shillings each, and of the bodies of even the nearest and

dearest being disinterred and bartered for others not coming

within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. It must be

horrible enough for captives to know that they may be eaten after

they are dead, but what can we say of the people in the Congo,

who, as elsewhere mentioned, hawk their victims about piecemeal

whilst still alive, the wretched people being led from place to

place in order that individuals might mark on the body the por-

tions they wanted when it was cut up !

In some parts of the world not only captives, but even those

incapacitated by age or infirmity, were eaten alive, the victims

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voluntarily suspending themselves from a branch and being killed

directly they fell. But the depths have not even yet been reached,

for an old writer quoted in Liberia, describing a battle between

two local tribes, says of the victors that " each female leaped on

to the body of a wounded prisoner, and passed from body to body,

digging out eyes, wrenching off lips, and slicing the flesh from the

quivering bones, while the queen of the harpies crept amid the

butchery, gathering the brains of each severed skull as a bonne-

boache for the approaching feast. After the last victim had yielded

up his life it did not require long to kindle a fire and fill the air

with the odour of human flesh. A pole was borne into the apart-

ment on which was impaled the living body of the conquered

chieftain's wife. A hole was dug, the staff planted, and faggots

supplied to cook the meal, and after they had eaten all they could,

the bushmen packed in plantain leaves whatever flesh was left

over from the orgie, to be conveyed to their friends in the forest."

And lest this should be thought to be impossible, it may be said

that similar practices have been observed in New Guinea; and

Waff soldiers have told me that when they fought the Ganna-

warri the women came behind their men-folk carrying baskets

over their shoulders and knives to collect the " meat."

With such peoples there must be a wild-beast instinct for the

taste of blood, and that this is sometimes bred in the children is

shown by the following facts which came under my notice in

Zungeru in 1905, although it would not be safe to argue that one

instance proved any universal rule. A small child belonging to

one of the cannibal tribes had been found in the bush with his

mother a year or so before, the mother being already dead at the

time, and when discovered the child had eaten part of one of her

breasts. He had been taken to the Resident of the province, and

sent by him to a home, and was there taught various useful

accomplishments like the other boys in the institution. In the

middle of 1905 a little girl in the place died and was left for a

few hours during the night in the sick ward there, and the small

boy — not more than six or seven at the time, if that — heard of it,

and, dodging the person who was watching, got in, and when

found in the morning he had eaten half her face !

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Compared with such beasts, the description of whose practices

makes one want to go and wipe them out, we can turn again with

relief to the Kagoro and their relatively humane customs, though

it would not be safe to say that even they have never been guilty

of somewhat similar cruelties. I rather fancy not, however, for

although they captured a policeman and a Court Messenger in

1908 and afterwards cut their throats, there was no torturing

beforehand. The Kajji say that they took up head-hunting only

because the Kagoro practised it on them, and this is probably true,

for when I offered to pav for skulls brought me I got five Kagoro

heads from the Kajji, but I could not get one from the Kagoro,

nor would the Moroa produce any except the five Gannawarri

trophies which they had obtained by treachery, and which I forced

them to give up.

But to return to the death ceremonies. At the expiration of

seven days the relatives living in the deceased's quarter prepare

akann, or native guinea- corn beer, and this is drunk some four

days later by the adult males of the place, the feast lasting three

days if possible. Why the number is always three I do not know,

but I am told that this is the case, and there is evidently some

magic in it, for we have seen that the incantations and sprinklings

are always in threes. A big pot, some three feet high and from

twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, full of akann, is first brought

to the grave, on which fresh branches have been placed, and the

most important man present — one of the priests, usually the chief

priest — dips a calabash into the pot and pours a little akann (a

very little) on the grave around the branches, at the same time

saying mystic words. This is done three times, the rest of the

people sitting in a circle, and then a goat, or one to three fowls,

having been killed, the blood is sprinkled on the branches as

before, and the flesh is roasted close by. A kind of porridge of

grain (tuk) is eaten together with the meat, and an onslaught is

made upon the akann.

After the pot has been emptied all go to their houses, and then

the adult males repair to the sacred grove and drink whatever else

has been prepared by the family, the women and children being

also supplied with the good cheer, but being forced to drink it

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within their own houses, for it is dangerous to be about at such

times. The drumming and horn-blowing are kept up at intervals

as long as the beer holds out, but, alas ! it comes to an end at last,

and the merrymakers disperse, a good deal the worse for wear, but

none the less eager for the next bit of good luck in the way of a

death or some other event which will again give them a chance to

get gloriously drunk.

With Moroa people, on the death of a chief, his son (or heir

if he has no son) must provide a mare which is led around the

assembled guests by a laughing woman who is dressed up for

the occasion. It is absolutely necessary that a mare should be

obtained for the funeral — should the heir neglect to do so the

ghost of the deceased will never give him any peace — and she

must be sold afterwards ; if not she will die. Why the woman

should have to be laughing is past my comprehension, but that

is what I was told, and so I suppose it must be correct, and after

all, it is quite a mistake to suppose that people must necessarily

look glum on these occasions, for we need not go far — only to

Ireland, in fact — to find a parallel to these apparently festive

funerals.

Both sexes paint a black stripe from forehead to stomach

about an inch wide all the way down, and the women will prob-

ably cover their whole bodies with red earth now, even if they do

not do so at other times, and the men their legs from the knees

downwards. On the seventh day after death all the household of

the deceased, except the wives, shave their heads, but the women,

being always shaved at ordinary times, now let their hair grow as

a sign of mourning for a month — or until married again, if that

be sooner — and they remove their tails, not wearing them again

unless remarried. I am not sure if the Kagoro regard these

changes in their attire as a means for deceiving the departed

spirit so that it will not know them again (imagine any one

accusing us of doing such a thing), or whether the hair is offered

as a substitute so that the man may be left alive, but I fancy

that even if either idea once existed, it holds good no longer,

for the people can always lay a troublesome ghost by means of

beer, and there are but few amongst them who object to refreshing.

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their memories and their throats at times. Should any of the

family dream of the departed, beer must be provided at once.

The Aragga, a tribe to the south of Jemaan Daroro, and

north of Lafia Beriberi, are said to smear the corpse of a chief

with grease, and they may keep it near a fire for a month or so ;

the grease being probably a medicinal ointment, and the fire

(the smoke from it ?) helping to preserve the body. It is then

buried together with the favourite wife, child, and three attend-

ants, who have been killed for the purpose, and also the chiefs

horse and one-half of his clothes and other possessions; and it

is well to note in this connection that officers' chargers are even

now often led behind the bodies of their masters at military

funerals, the riding-boots being reversed in the stirrups, and in

Germany up to 1781 the chargers were shot. Other animals

have also been in the procession, and one often hears of cases of

people having their pets and some particular articles of jewellery

(especially wedding rings) buried with them.

In such cases, no doubt, the idea still holds that the ghosts

of these people, animals, &c. will accompany that of the chief,

though there is amongst some peoples a baser motive in killing

off the widow, namely that of depriving her of her right of

inheriting her husband's property, the principal reason for the

introduction of suttee by the Hindus. Where the belief still

exists amongst a tribe, I would suggest, not the absolute prohibi-

tion of such practices and the ridicule of the tenets of their

religion, but the introduction of the idea that substitutes and

representations can be used instead, such as animals for human

beings, and later on models in wood or even paper for these.

The idea is not opposed to either the principles of common

sense or of science, for such a process of substitution is known

to have been developed in China, and it can be observed in part

even in West Africa, where certain Guinea negroes pretend to

sacrifice a sheep or goat to their fetish, but feed upon it with

their friends, only leaving for the deity himself part of the

entrails which they do not want. In other cases a part of the

body, such as a finger (for which in further development a piece

of valuable metal was substituted) or a lock of hair was con-

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sidered to do as well, a very satisfactory conclusion for the person

who would have otherwise been the victim. A belief in the

efficacy of substitution would soon automatically put an end to

the sacrifices of human beings, for, after all, every one is fond of

life, and most of these practices are performed from religious

motives, whereas a violent prohibition would, of course, stop all

open performances, but would not stamp them out, and a good

many would still be carried out in secret.

Again, to come back to ourselves, as I always try to do in

describing customs which at first sight appear strange, as

Professor Tylor says, the offering of the model of his diseased

limb by a sufferer is distinctly of the nature of a sacrifice,

whether it be a propitiatory offering before the cure, or a

thank-offering afterwards, and there are other matters which

will occur to the reader but are better not mentioned in a

book like this.

Flour and water will be poured over the graves of important

men at the next harvest, so that their ghosts may not be hungry,

but this is done only once, and there will also be a pot of dkann

at the same time, or if that be too soon, at the first harvest after

the anniversary.

Almost every people have attached great importance to the

funeral and other ceremonies for the dead, the motives ranging

from natural love and affection to fear, and from rational sorrow

to the deification of the departed, some of the most magnificent

wonders of architecture being due to the last-named cause. The

offerings of flowers upon the graves of friends, relatives, and

parents are an indication of the sentiments which originated

in the institution of ancestor-worship, the dead parents being

pictured as real beings exercising a beneficial influence on the

conduct of the living descendants, being, in fact, guardian

angels. We have ourcelves heard expressions like 66 1 wonder

if your grandfather can see you now,' 1 and imagine we see looks

of approval or the reverse in the faces of pictures of dead an-

cestors. We regard the soul as having a continued existence, and

some authorities maintain that the praises (often undeserved)

lavished upon the dead, and the heavy tombstones placed on

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their graves, are survivals of the time when the ghosts were

flattered so that they might feel no anger against the living,

and were weighted down so that they could not get up to earth

again even had they wished to do so. The ghosts of suicides

were especially feared, and the extraordinary precautions taken

with the bodies of persons who had taken their own lives were

abolished only as late as last century.

Again, the feasts held on All Souls 1 Day are, in imagination,

a feeding of spirits, the object being to alleviate the sufferings of

the souls in purgatory by offerings on earth ; " a commemoration

of the dead,' 1 says Professor Tylor, " which combines some touches

of pathetic imagination with relics of savage animism scarcely to

be surpassed in Africa or the South Sea Islands.'" In Italy the

day is given to feasting and drinking in honour of the dead,

skulls and even skeletons in sugar and paste forming appropriate

toys for children. In England we can find a lingering survival

of the rite of funeral sacrifice even to this day in the soul-mass

cakes which girls beg for at farmhouses, and we know that by one

of the Saxon tenures {frankalmoigne) a religious corporation held

lands on the condition of praying for the souls of the grantor and

his heirs, their tenure being spiritual and not feudal.

It is often thought that, natives being simple and ignorant like

children, a study of the latter will go a great way towards the

understanding of the former ; for there are similar limitations

to the intelligence, as this little story will show — a true one, or

else there would be no point in putting it here. A fond mother

had been telling her little son, aged three, who was always afraid

of the dark, about the guardian angels around him, and that he

should not, therefore, be afraid, and to emphasise her point, she

had brought him a coloured picture showing a beautiful winged

figure floating in a protective attitude over a small boy. Her

little son examined the picture with intense interest, and the

mother, feeling that she had duly impressed him with the loving

care of the guardian angel, asked him what he thought of it.

He regarded it with great interest for a long time, and then

"Oh, mummy he exclaimed with joy, "that little boy has got

braces just like me ! " And one has to be just as sure when

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questioning natives that they really understand the point upon

which one is trying to obtain information.

We are, nowadays, so much accustomed to regard our

deceased ancestors as good spirits, that we cannot at first under-

stand the Kagoro view that the only reason for which they visit

their living relatives is to annoy them. We imagine our " guar-

dian angels n to be always anxious for our good ; the Kagoro

thinks that his ghosts will do him a bad turn unless propitiated,

and it is mainly upon these grounds that they are consulted about

important events, such as the undertaking of war, the formation

of a hunting party, or the building of a house on new ground,

though the assent of the ghosts — obtained through the elders —

was always forthcoming if the akann was good and sufficient.

Corresponding to this in some degree are the facts that in the

days of chivalry the young knight had to pass some time in a

church before setting out to put things right, and even now

regimental colours are blessed. The object of the libations of

blood and akann is that the ghost of the deceased may not get

hungry or thirsty, and return to harass his relatives. It cannot

worry any one but its own people, and it therefore differs from

the soul of a living body ; and the idea that those who succeed to

the property of the deceased are responsible for the proper per-

formance of the funeral rites is seen plainly in this, an idea with

which we in England are familiar.

It is thought that the spirits of the dead would find no rest

unless honoured in the proper fashion, though certain allowances

are made when it has been impossible to bury the deceased in the

usual way (through having been eaten by wild beasts, for instance,

or, perhaps, carried away by a river), and if they are not treated

properly, they will certainly vent their displeasure upon their

neglectful relatives. Even after the proper rites have been

performed, if any member of the family dreams of the deceased,

akann must be procured next morning, for that is clear proof that

he has visited the house during the night (the ghost being

exactly like the man was when alive) to let the relatives know

that he is thirsty. If there be none in the house, it must be

obtained elsewhere, some being poured on the grave three times

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as before ; but no flesh is provided, nor are branches again placed

there. The most important man present will ask the ghost how

he is, and when he has finished his oblations, he will invoke the

Supreme God, begging him not to let trouble come upon the

family.

The principal people at these rites are always the priests, or

medicine-men, and they may be the only persons present who are

not related to the deceased, for although the immediate relatives

might not have enough beer to suffice for the guests were they to

ask all their friends outside the family circle, they would hardly

dare to offend these powerful personages by omitting to send them

an invitation. There are no priestesses, only priests, and these are

given presents for special work, and are not paid regular salaries,

their chief having even more influence than the agwam. They

foretell events not by haruspication, but by examining a bowl of

water into which a little flour has been thrown, or by counting lip

ornaments threaded on a string, but they do not go into convul-

sions or trances. They have no power over the fate of the ghosts

so far as being able to send them to another place is concerned,

for there is only one after-world, the sacred grove, and all spirits

go there when they leave their bodies, whether chief or poor man,

whether good or bad ; and in fact, the worse — or at any rate, the

stronger — the men are on earth, the more influential will their

ghosts be after death. But the priests are supposed to have more

influence with the Supreme God in other ways than ordinary men,

as, for instance, when praying for rain, and they have certain

powers over the ghosts, for they can always summon them for

a conference on an important matter, such as the declaration

of war or the making of peace, by providing enough beer.

Priests are usually trained by their fathers or uncles, the

secrets being kept in the family, and I could not, of course, find

out what they were, but all I heard was various shouts and grunts

(imitations of the sounds of animals, perhaps ; there seemed to be

nothing mysterious about them), and they cannot perform any

tricks of sleight of hand. The Waiwai priests dress themselves in

whole suits of string dyed black, having large headpieces of palm

fibre, with horns and red seeds affixed, and I can easily imagine

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that meeting such an object on a dark night would give one

rather a shock, especially as rattles, bells, and other instruments

of torture are hung about the body in various places. But the

Kagoro seem to do nothing of this kind ; they merely smear their

faces with red earth, and rush about shouting to frighten the

women and children. Apparently they are successful in this, for

females and infants are not allowed to leave their houses at night,

and no doubt this accounts in a great measure for the morality of

the fair sex.

Dreams of animals are not feared, and if, therefore, they

have ghosts, they are not malignant, and, alas for the dreamers,

there is no need to have a feast of guinea-corn beer next day as

in the case of the appearance of a member of the family. A

thirsty man, no doubt, has many visions, and, needless to say, he

dreams of departed ancestors, thus ensuring another glorious

" drunk," and not of dead animals, which, having had no acquain-

tance with beer during life, have no longing for it afterwards.

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CHAPTER XV

CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS (continued)

THE Kagoro say that the sun falls into a great water when it

sets, and the fire in it is then put out. The water is some

imaginary lake, or else the Kaduna or other great river to

the west, for there is no lake near them, but I do not think that

the Kaduna is meant, because it rises as a small stream a few miles

to the east, flowing in a wide semi-circle westwards. It is possible

that they have heard of the Niger, and that this is the great water

referred to ; and if they have not themselves come from the west,

but from the south as they say, an account of this river may have

been brought by the Kajji, who got it from people farther to the

west again. The sun is thought to travel back to the east behind

the Gannawarri hills by night, and by a higher route, so that no

one can see it, and it is there given fresh fire by the Supreme God

and sent on its way again next morning.

If any tree or house is set on fire by lightning, all the people

will at once quench their fires and hasten to the spot with bundles

of grass to get new fire to rekindle them. To neglect this would

show that the person so doing possessed black magic, and did not

want to change his fire, and there is evidently some connection

between fire and magic, for we have seen that souls glow like fire

at night, and it is easy to understand that the ignition of a house

by a flash of lightning would make a native believe that it had

been sent by God, for he had just seen that it had come from

above. For this reason many people are very careful never to let

it go out, but with the Kagoro there seems to be no special reli-

gious idea as regards this. Fire is naturally said to have originated

in the world from lightning, but it was obtained later by the fric-

tion of two pieces of wood in what is called the " upright method,"

several kinds of wood being used for that purpose, and I believe

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the Filani, in certain parts, still make their fires in this way. The

next method was by striking steel on pyrites or flint, and this is

now very common, little leather purses containing the necessary

implements being found in all directions, and probably emanating

from one and the same source — the Hausa blacksmith.

But if there is no religious reason for keeping the fire alight,

there is an economic necessity to save the wood, for women have

to go some miles to get it, and, though now, when once fire has

been brought to a house it is practically never allowed to go out,

except when fresh is sent from heaven, I daresay the practice will

gradually be dropped as matches are introduced. The first fire

for a new house is obtained from the nearest neighbour, who will

probably be the parent ; there is no need to wait in order to get

it fresh from lightning.

Fires for warming and cooking purposes are formed by arranging

three logs on the ground like spokes of a wheel ; one end of each

almost touches the one end of each of the others, and a fire is

lighted in the triangular space thus made. As a bit is burnt away

a log is pushed towards the centre, and although there may be

no actual flame, this kind of fire seems to be almost inextinguish-

able, except, of course, in rain. It is wonderful to see how long

even a stick will keep burning under proper treatment, the embers

being sometimes placed in chaff to prevent too rapid combustion.

Generally, magic is harmful, and all accused of using it are in

danger, though this is not universal amongst natives, for other

writers have stated that men of certain tribes they have visited

are pleased to have the reputation of being able to perform won-

derful acts. No Kagoro, therefore, will own to having the power

of black magic, but every man possesses some of the white variety,

at any rate while in his own house, it being useful, apparently, in

correcting his wives and children. Charms for warding off danger

exist, but they do not seem to be worn on the person, and there

are philtres for various purposes, such as making a wife cleave to

her husband. If a man has been wounded with a spear or a sword,

and the place refuses to heal, the weapon, if obtainable, is washed

with water, which is drunk by the sufferer, and he will recover.

In 1907, when at Amar, I made a life-size figure-target to

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represent a man firing, and set it up in the barrack-square to give

the men practice in aiming before transferring it to the range.

The next day I was begged to take it away, for some of the women

had seen it and feared a miscarriage, and I was assured that if it

were left there no births would occur that year amongst the police

women. I was also asked to keep the face quite clear of any lines

or spots, for if there were any tribal marks on it, those men having

scarifications resembling them would die if the target were pierced,

this, I could understand, being sympathetic magic, but the com-

plaint of the women seemed to be carrying the idea of the evil-eye

rather far. However, I removed it as requested, and I painted

the face white, so that they might shoot in comfort, for the fact

that I did not understand their reasoning was no excuse for laugh-

ing at it. Still, there are certain times when one has to object.

At Jemaan Daroro, for instance, on one occasion, I found that the

Mada(i)ki had not obeyed my order to go to his district, and on

asking the reason, I was told that the stars had not been propi-

tious. I told him that although he might be quite right to consult

them when going on his own business, he must leave the time to

me when on my business, and that I should be responsible as to

its suitability. The work was important, and he did it without

any mishap, and I was relieved, for had an accident occurred my

astronomical powers might have been doubted.

The name of an individual is never hidden, for such a course

would not help him to escape the evil-wisher who catches his soul

or takes his liver, and does not work his ill by simply calling his

name, nor can he do it by obtaining locks of hair or nail-parings

of his intended victim.

Formerly no woman of any age could eat a dog or a fowl, for

they were supposed to belong in some way to the mysteries of

witchcraft in which women have no part, and also the tichiak

would prevent it, but there is no longer any restriction of any

kind imposed upon old women with regard to any food. This is

probably because they have grown out of their fears and fancies,

and would not regard any rules of the kind, which were no doubt

invented by the men so as to ensure that there should always be

plenty of these particular delicacies for themselves.

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In 1904, when coming up the Kaduna, I bought a young turtle,

which I handed to the cook, an Ijo boy, for the purpose of having

it converted into soup. He flatly refused to kill it, saying that it

was his brother, and took it away to the stern of the barge ; there

he talked to it for a long time, finally asking me to let it go, and

offering to pay the price. Unfortunately, I had not commenced

the study of anthropology at the time, and beyond being amused,

I took no further interest, but I let the animal go, as the boy

seemed so anxious, and I did not much relish the idea of eating

anything which had been petted. I wonder if it was a totem !

I was told that all male Kagoro eat with spoons, except in the

case of a medicine, but this is extremely doubtful, even when the

people are at home, and it certainly does not apply at other times,

for I have had chiefs with me, and they had no spoons then. The

use of such articles is said to be forbidden, except to men, so

that the father may not hear his women-folk and young children

eating their meals, the latter taking their food with the right

hand — possibly an idea learned from the Mohammedans, and

strictly observed by them because other things of a different

nature are done with the left. The spoons are made of wood, or

from calabashes specially grown with a long neck and a ball at

the end so that when cut in two, lengthwise, they form a pair of

spoons. I found a double wooden spoon at Jigya, but cannot

imagine what it could have been used for, and there were also some

made of brass, obtained from the Hausawa.

There is no particular magic in a name amongst the Kagoro

and other head-hunting tribes, and even dead people are spoken

of as in life, though they would not be abused lest the ghosts

should hear and punish. A Kagoro woman will call her husband,

even the first one, by his name, after she has been married a

couple of days, though a Filani or Hausa may never do so ; in

fact, amongst the latter people such a thing is an offence, and

there is a song, apparently a prayer, which goes Allah, na tuba,

na faddi sunan rnijjina, " O God, I repent, I have spoken the

name of my husband Kagoro husbands will also name their

wives, parents their children, and men themselves, whereas with

the Filani, and I think the Hausawa also, the eldest child is never

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known by its real name, but by some nickname bestowed upon it

at the same time. Thus the wife of one of the Court Messengers

was known as Yar Jekada ("Daughter of the Tax Collector"),

though her real name, almost forgotten, even by the woman

herself, was Ashetu.

Again, children may be named after special events ; for

instance, several girls are called 44 Wife of the Whiteman,"

on account of their having been born when a European was

in the vicinity. They may also have names of animals,

possibly because it is suspected that the ghost of one has

become the soul of the child, or simply because one of the

species was caught on its birthday; compare our own custom

of christening children born on Christmas Day, Noel, and even

Melbourne, Tasma, &c, after the names of towns where the

interesting event took place.

Kagoro wives do not mind their husbands seeing them suckling

their children, but many Filani and Hausawa do not allow this,

at any rate with their firstborn, on account of the sense of shame

which they are supposed to feel, and so far is this carried in some

cases, that the mother will not allow her eldest child to be near

her when her husband is present, although she may really be

very fond of it.

Some of the slave names amongst these people are rather

interesting, being composed of a whole sentence (like our 44 Praise

God Barebones"), or even of two sentences, the latter being

spoken by the person addressed thus, 44 The King of Slaves,"

and the person named replies, 44 is God." 44 There is no one who

can do it" — 44 except God." Again, 44 Ask God" — 44 and you

will obtain it." 44 You hoped that I should become destitute"

— 44 God willed that I should be fortunate"; but the whole of

the sentence is rarely said, the first couple of words sufficing in

each case, the rest being understood.

Women and children are not allowed near the sacred grove

under penalty of death by stoning, nor can they ever speak of

ghosts; even their own relatives would kill them lest their

impiety should bring disaster upon the whole family. By this

means the husbands manage to keep their wives in subjection,

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and the husbands are in turn overawed by the priests through the

fear of false accusations. It is a strange fact that almost every-

where the women are much more influenced by religion than men,

and it is usually through the wives that the priests exercise their

power over the people. One of the causes is no doubt due to

the more emotional nature of women, another may be that

they are usually less educated and less worldly-wise when adult,

for they have not had the same advantages in training their

faculties as their men-folk have had, although they may be

quite as clever naturally, or even much more so. It is often

put forward as an argument that a man's brain weighs much

more than a womaifs, but some have pointed out that, allowing

for the size of the body, the proportion of grey matter to muscle

and bone is about equal in both sexes. I rather think that a

good deal is due to the fact that the mother has much more

connection with the birth of children than has the father, and

the wonder of the creation of a new living being is more forcibly

brought home to her. Thus she is more ready to accept a

religion which will explain any of the emotions she feels at

such a time, and this is more likely to be the case, in that

her life, being less exciting than that of her husband, gives her

more time to think over and brood upon such matters. Not that

a native woman has time to sit down with nothing else to do, but

that her work takes her less out of herself, and seldom requires

the concentration of her brain on her tasks to the same extent as

do fighting, hunting, or many of the other pursuits specially

allocated to, or seized by, the stronger sex. One result is that

the greater the direct domination of the priests over the women,

and the indirect influence over the men, the greater the ignorance

and superstition, and the greater the cruelty inflicted upon those

who object to this domination, for any tendency to lessen the

powers of the priesthood is naturally put down by them

immediately if possible.

It is often said by some that the African in his native state is

lazy, while others hold the reverse, and sayings such as " he is as

lazy as a black," and " they worked like niggers," illustrate both

views. Probably both are right, for the native will not work

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unless there is a great necessity, but when he has put his

shoulder to the wheel he does it with all his might. But

there must be a necessity, either hunger or else superior force

must be present to make him toil ; there is no working for the

love of it, there is no such thing as the dignity of labour, and

even the phrase, " working like a nigger " has probably come from

" working like a slave."

In 1901 I returned from Prahsu, where I had been in command

of a detachment, to Kumasi to do duty as an ordinary company

officer again, and naturally I found there less office work and

more drill to do. Personally, I did not mind the change, but my

servants did, for my position was naturally reflected on them, and

they sadly asked me why I was a "big man 1 ' in Prahsu, and

only a "small boy" in Kumasi. "There is no difference," I

said. " I have exactly the same rank whether I am in Kumasi

or out of it. What makes you think I have come down in

the world?" "Oh no, Massa," they replied, "it cannot be.

At Prahsu you were an important person, you were always

sitting down, but here you are always running about."

It must not be thought that the women do all the work, even

in these primitive communities, for if the tasks be reckoned up it

will be seen that each sex has an almost equal amount. The

men do not toil as regularly or continuously as do the women,

but while they are at it they undoubtedly have to expend more

energy, for they do all the hard work. Certainly they have

chosen, if not the wiser, at any rate the more enjoyable part,

for hunting animals gives more pleasure than searching for

firewood, fighting enemies more excitement than nursing a

baby.

However, the division of labour must always be on much the

same lines in primitive societies, for the male's superior strength

and health enable and entitle him to choose his tasks, and although

female warriors have been known they have in the end been con-

quered by those of the stronger sex. Men clear the ground for

the farms because women are not strong enough, they hunt

because women are not able to do so, they fight their enemies to

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prevent them carrying off their wives and children, and it is at

this time, I suppose, that the division of labour takes place. The

male is watching his enemy, and his attention must not be dis-

tracted lest he be surprised, so the household duties naturally fall

to the female, and when he does return he is too tired to collect

firewood for fuel and perform other simple duties, so she must do

them. Again, it is in her interest to save him as much as possible

so that he may be fresh for the next encounter, for if he is defeated

she also is lost. A man trained in the same way as a woman

might be very useful to have about the house in a highly civilised

country, but he would be a poor protector in a savage land.

Hunting is a natural training for war, and as such, and

because it is fatiguing and takes the hunter away from the home,

it falls to the man's share. Nature prevents women competing,

for they would not always be able to fight or hunt, and so the

whole community would suffer at some time or other if dependent

on them, and they would either have to bear no children so as to

be free in their movements, or else be forced to take their offspring

with them, and so be an easy prey to a swift enemy, and quite

useless as huntresses. However, this is hardly the place to enlarge

upon such a subject, so all that need be said further is that labour

seems to become sharply defined into men's tasks, or those con-

cerned with the protection of the home, and women's tasks, or

those performed actually in the home itself, and as the latter are

not dangerous they are looked down upon as " women's work." And

this is true not only of members of primitive societies but even of

the most advanced people, who ought to know better, for neither

kind can be performed alone because each is dependent on the other.

When taking an oath, the person swearing holds in his hand

some ash, and says that if he has done whatever he is accused of

having done, or if he breaks his word, may his body become as

white as the ash. Or else he takes a head of corn and says that if

he swears falsely may the next grain of corn that he eats kill him.

However long afterwards he may live, false swearing will be said

to be the cause of his death whenever that does eventually take

place. But this will not be sufficient in serious cases, perhaps,

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and then the poisonous pith of a certain tree is pounded and

soaked in water, and this mixture is given in a calabash to the

accused, who will drink water alone first, and then the infusion of

sap, as it is called. After he has drunk it he is made to walk

around the empty calabash, this making him vomit if he is truth-

ful, but it has no such effect if not, and in this case he will die

that day. Sometimes he is allowed to have his throat tickled

with a feather, and even then when he vomits he may be con-

sidered innocent by the Kagoro, but amongst the Ninzam and

Ayu he would be judged guilty and would be punished, perhaps

even killed, all the same.

In most of these particular head-hunting countries, a powerful

man would have a fowl to drink the sap as his deputy, and I was

informed that Awudu, the chief of Ungual Kaura, had thus

proved his innocence of the murder of his wife to the entire satis-

faction of the people of his town. They apparently accepted the

acquittal, although several of them had seen him beat in her head

with a wooden stool. Unfortunately for him, I had rather more

faith in the accounts of witnesses to the murder than in his pro-

testations of the evidence of the gods, or ghosts, whichever it was,

in his favour, and so his successful issue from the ordeal did not

avail him much. I was told that if salt is mixed with the sap the

infusion becomes very poisonous, otherwise not, so the priest

administering it has a little under his finger-nails. And I fancy

from questions, that he gives the one whom he wishes to be

thought guilty the drink last of all, but before doing so he takes

care that the salt — enough for his purpose now the contents are

greatly reduced — is first mixed with the sap, and so the drink is

sufficiently poisonous to produce the desired result. Before

making too much of an outcry against such customs it is well to

remember that trial by ordeal has not been abolished so very long

ago in England, and in one of the tests it was quite impossible

for the accused to escape, for on being thrown into water he sank

if innocent, and was drowned ; whereas if guilty the water, being

holy, refused to receive him, and as he floated he was taken out

and executed.

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Festivals are held at any time when beer is available, and

always at death, puberty, and marriage, though apparently not

at birth in the ordinary course of events. Every now and then

there is a three days 66 drunk," and at such times it is best to give

the towns a wide berth, for all the people are intoxicated, and

quite irresponsible and uncontrolled. I am not quite sure if these

orgies have anything to do with their religion, but it is quite pro-

bable that they have, and they may be something like the annual

devil-drivings and other 66 customs " in Cape Coast Castle. My

great-uncle, writing there in 1844, says that during such a time the

people were in a state of intoxication and frenzy. The fetish-man

walked in front, sprinkling water on the people, some of whom

were firing muskets, others beating drums or blowing horns ; many

were covered with the skin of beasts, or wore caps of the most

fantastic shapes, and all appeared to be anxious to make the

greatest possible noise. Next came a troop of females, dancing

and muttering as they went. Concerning a " custom " made by the

natives on the finishing of the harvest and the beginning of their

new year, he says that the first day was dedicated to eating, and

the second, the great day, to drinking, and with but few excep-

tions all, old and young, male and female, were in a state of in-

toxication ; some whose friends had died during the past year were

walking about the streets and visiting the houses of their friends,

making bitter lamentations. One old woman, after proclaiming

the departed one's kindness to her, turned herself round, and,

with outstretched arms, addressed the spirit, and implored him to

come back again. Others were dancing, some had painted their

faces ; many carried branches of evergreen in their hands ; many

wore a stripe of yellow ribbon about their heads or waists, and

many were reeling about in the maddest enthusiasm at the sound

of the drum.

Of the annual " custom " of driving the evil spirit " Abonsam "

out of the town, he says that as soon as the eight o'clock gun had

been fired in the fort the people began firing muskets in their

houses, turning all their furniture out of doors, beating about in

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every corner of the rooms with sticks, &c, and screaming as loudly

as possible, in order to frighten the devil. He being driven out

of the houses as they imagined they sallied forth into the streets,

throwing lighted torches about, shouting, screaming, beating

sticks together, rattling old pans, and making the greatest

possible noise in order to drive him out of the town into the

sea.

This custom is preceded by four weeks of dead silence, during

which time no gun is allowed to be fired, no drum to be beaten,

and no palaver to be made between man and man. If during

these weeks two natives were to disagree and make a noise in the

town, they would be immediately taken before the chief and fined

heavily ; or if a dog or pig, sheep or goat, were found at large in

the street it might be killed or taken by any one, the former

owner not being allowed to demand any compensation. This

silence is designed to deceive Abonsam, so that, being off his

guard, he may be taken by surprise and frightened out of the

place. Even if any one died during the period of silence, his

relatives were not allowed to weep until the four weeks had been

completed.

All males are circumcised amongst the Kagoro, but not the

females, and this practice extends to the other tailed head-hunters,

but not to the Gannawarri and other natives of the Bauchi plateau.

It is done when the boy is about eight or nine, apparently, and has

not been in any sense copied from the Mohammedans, so the

Kagoro say, but is an old custom ; if so, this is a difference between

them and the people who occupy the site of their supposed origin ;

but the fact that Mohammedans have the practice will help to

keep it up. It makes no difference to marriage so far as fertility

is concerned, but women would probably object to marry a man

who had not been through the rite, which is supposed to separate

the person from sickness, and I suppose the same repulsion exists

to-day among Jewesses. In many tribes the females are also

operated upon, notably during the Bundu ceremonies in Sierra

Leone amongst the Mendi, but I have not met with it in the

Nassarawa district. Because of the accounts in the Bible we are

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accustomed to imagine its being always done on the eighth day of

a boy's life, but it is probable that the Jews themselves shortened

the period to that time, for the Hebrew word for " father-in-law,"

according to Dr. Driver, is derived from an Arabic root

signifying " to circumcise," and this would indicate that in

primitive times the rite among the Hebrews was a preliminary

not of christening but of marriage, being performed therefore

much later in life.

The next ceremony is that of initiation, and this again applies

only to the males. When youths are to be initiated, at about the

age of ten, they are assembled early on a certain morning in the

house of the chief priest, amidst drumming and blowing of horns

and other music, each candidate being smeared all over with

grease after having been shaved clean. The grown men present,

who have been drinking akann to work them up into the proper

religious frame of mind, then beat the youths with switches until

they are tired, this being, I suppose, a test of endurance. Then

the chief priest addresses the candidates, giving them certain

information, and telling them to keep away from women until the

ceremonies have been completed ; and after having been given

switches to beat or drive away any females who may come near

them, they are taken to the sacred grove by the men, all of whom

indulge in akann, but do not give the candidates any — this being

perhaps a test of self-control.

The boys then go away to the place provided for dancing,

generally in front of the chiefs compound, and dance all night,

and next day there is more dancing, but no more beating, and

again the men show the boys how delicious is the akann by drink-

ing it themselves in front of them. This goes on for seven days,

and after that the candidates return to their own homes, but must

not speak to a female for another seven days. Except for the

grease and the shaving, there is no special preparation of the

body, and no particular dress is worn, nor any disguises, nor are

their names changed. It is said that there are no grades of initia-

tion, but apparently no male is considered to have become a man

in all respects until he has been circumcised and initiated, and has

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taken a head, the stages of development to full manhood being

circumcision, initiation, scarification, success in head-hunting,

marriage, and the shaving of the head, though this order is

apparently not universally observed.

The only time when females are allowed to enter into religious

rites seems to be at Moroa funerals, when a laughing woman leads

a mare around ; but in some parts of West Africa they play a

very important part, sometimes learning a special language of

their own which is unknown to the men. Mr. Martin, writing

from Badagri in 1846, says there were some hundreds of people,

chiefly females, in the town consecrated in an especial manner to

their gods. After having spent some months of confinement in

houses connected with the idol temples, during which time they

were initiated into all the mysteries, and were taught to speak a

language peculiar to themselves, they were regarded as sacred

persons, and their names were changed. Their heads were in a

peculiar manner sacred, and should any one strike them on the

head the offence was considered very great and generally unpardon-

able. A case of this kind came to his notice where a man and his

wife had been quarrelling, the woman being one of the sacred per-

sons, and the man had struck her on the head. She immediately

fell down, and uttered their peculiar scream, which quickly gathered

a number of her own class around her, and they repeated the cry

till it had gone around the town and set them all in motion.

They continued all the night dancing and screaming, and the

next evening the man was taken and bound and placed in the

midst of them, they dancing around him in fiendish triumph.

Nothing would satisfy them but money, and if that was not forth-

coming in such cases they would destroy the man's house and

everything he had, and ruin his family. Such was their influence

that no one, not even a chief, dared to oppose them, for all the

people stood in fear of them, and these people frequently endea-

voured to raise quarrels in the town so that they might possess

themselves of the property of others. The females, though

married, were generally abandoned prostitutes, their husbands

not daring to punish them lest they should be involved in trouble.

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Regular farms are laid out by every Kagoro householder, the

men usually doing the digging, and the women the sowing by

poking the toes of one foot into the newly-turned ground, and

thus making a hole for the seeds, and then dragging the other

foot along the ground, and so closing it up again. The imple-

ments used by the men are an iron hoe with a very long shaft of

the same material, and a hoe-shovel with a larger iron blade and

shaft of the same shape, and a wooden handle affixed to it, which

curves round and ends opposite the middle of the blade. These

are made by the foreign blacksmith before each harvest, the ore

being obtained from the Jaba through Kajji country, and are

used afterwards as money in payment of tribute, and as presents

at death and other festivals. There is, apparently, some tabu

connected with them after the digging of a grave, for they will

not be taken into the house again until after the final feast

is over.

No domestic animals are employed in agricultural work, but

goats 1 droppings from the goat houses are collected and mixed

with ashes for use as manure. Land is allowed to lie fallow

(I believe three years), and there is a certain amount of rotation

of crops. When the grain is ripening, strings may be tied right

across the fields to posts erected at each end, and these are

vibrated by a watchman on a raised platform, or in a tree, to

keep off birds and monkeys ; or if no string be available, he will

shout at intervals. There are no scare-crows, but charms con-

sisting of leaves tied on sticks, are placed at the corners of fields

to prevent theft, and it is interesting to note that some authorities

consider these to be the origin of the Tar-baby stories, examples

of which are to be found in the immortal Brer Rabbit collection,

and in a book published last year by myself and my wife, Fables

and Fairy Tales, or Uncle Remus in Hausaland,

A man is free to farm anywhere on unoccupied ground, but he

must first obtain the consent of the ghosts, and the chief priest may

graciously consent to cut the first sod if the beer be sufficiently

plentiful and good. The man establishes his right to the ground

by tilling it, and it will remain his until he allows it to go out of

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cultivation. A fowl is killed when the corn is ripening, a hole is

dug in the centre of the farm, and the blood of the fowl and the

leaves of certain trees are put into it, but the flesh is eaten when

the corn is ready for harvesting. Fires are then lighted in the

houses, and the smoke having killed off the insects, the corn is

stored in the granary. These insects are very destructive, and are

called by the Hausawa Kukichi, a condensed form of Ku hi chi^

mu, mua chi (" You have refused to eat, we, we shall eat "), show-

ing how absurd it is to store up food when you can eat it all at

once ! " Eat, drink and be merry " appeals strongly to the

native comprehension.

After the corn has been stored in the granary, another fowl is

killed, and the blood is smeared on the outside, the flesh being

eaten by the men — and the old women if they are quick enough.

The blood has the same effect as the beer, it appeases the appetites

of the ghosts, who will then allow the people to live in peace —

until, of course, they are thirsty again. At least, that is the

explanation which the Kagoro give, but it is quite possible that it

is the survival of a form of human sacrifice, for we know that in

some parts of the world offerings were made to the Earth-goddess,

the flesh of the person selected being torn from his bones, the

priest burying half of it in a hole in the earth behind his back,

while each householder carried off a piece of flesh to bury in his

own field ; and in others a head had to be shown to the fields to

make them bring forth a good harvest. The first- mentioned

people now sacrifice cattle instead of human beings, and those of

another tribe are known to have substituted fowls, and so the

process I have suggested in an earlier chapter is not impossible of

fulfilment. Still, I do not wish to accuse my people of anything

that I cannot prove, for after all the poor pagans have enough to

answer for as it is, according to our rules of conduct.

The Kagoro and other head-hunters have no conjuring tricks

that I could hear of, but I have seen snake-charming amongst the

Hausawa; a woman in Lokoja who pretended to swallow the

reptile being the best whom I can remember. A conjurer came to

Jemaan Daroro and performed two simple tricks, assisted by a

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youth, the two singing all the time and ringing bells to distract

the attention. One trick consisted in making water drip out of

a gourd, or remain in it, at word of command, this being done by

having a gourd with a very narrow neck, and a hole in the bottom

which could be stopped with the thumb, and by lifting the

thumb or pressing it down when the gourd was reversed, the

water naturally flowed or stopped. The only other trick in their

repertoire consisted in the man's pretending to draw a needle and

cotton through the youth, who had donned a magic belt for the

occasion. The belt I found on inspection had several loose

strands of thread concealed in it, and the operator really pulled

one end out in front when pretending to stick the thread through

the youth's stomach, and pulled out another behind as if it had

come right through the body, and when he drew this to and fro,

it looked as if it were right through, but it really ran inside the

belt for half its circumference. He took about an hour to do

these two tricks, and I thought the whole performance painfully

slow, but I daresay the bell-ringing and singing pleased most

of his audience, for a noise is always welcome.

On another occasion, a man appeared from Zaria way with a

magic hoe-shovel with a curved handle as described before, though

about ten times the ordinary size, and with a hollow blade, this

hoe-shovel having the magic power of running away with men, and

to my surprise many Europeans were deceived by it. After a couple

of times I thought I saw the secret, and offered to pick half-a-

dozen soldiers and keep the hoe still, but the conjurer would not

allow it, and so I am certain this explanation is correct. The

hoe-shovel is placed on the ground, handle upwards, and some six

or seven men are told off to hold it, there being always two or

three of the conjurer's own followers among the number. The

conjurer then stands in front and begins saying magic words,

gradually working himself and his audience into a state of excite-

ment, and shouting louder and louder, and after a little time the

hoe-shovel begins to move, soon jumping up in the air, the holders

falling over one another in their efforts to hold it. There is no

doubt that the confederates start the motion, and as soon as that

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is done the excitement of the others, increased by the voice of the

conjurer, does the rest. It is, in fact, on the same principle as

table-turning, only much more crude. Poor man ! I fear my

challenge must have ruined his trade in Jemaan Daroro, for he

left next day, and I was greatly disappointed as I wanted to see

him do the trick again. I took some photographs at the time,

but they were failures, as were about three-quarters of the others,

films being undependable in that climate.

Formerly, there were but few salutations, sons and wives

ignoring or abusing their parents and husbands as the fancy

took them, unless in fear of physical punishment ; and even now

there is no bowing, though some have learned the prostration on

the ground from the people of Kaffanchan who often come to

Jemaan Daroro. Others, again, try to salute a European like a

soldier, the action generally looking as if they were brushing away

perspiration from their noble brows, or wiping their noses, though

this is much preferable to the customs of some other tribes.

" Every man is a chief in his own house, and there is no need to

recognise any one else,'' 1 so the Kagoro say, and they have a repu-

tation for being surly and boorish, but I think that a good deal of

it is due to fear, for I have always found the women and children,

at any rate, quite polite, and when Kaka, the Agwam of Fada

Kagoro, went with me to Keffi (and every one thought he had

been killed, as he had been away for seven days), he was met on

his return by all the people of his town with drumming, and

blowing, and other demonstrations of welcome. Of course, there

were certain men who regarded me with no favourable eye, and

it could hardly be wondered at, considering that some of their

relatives had lost their lives when fighting against us ; and under

similar circumstances (but happening in the contrary way), I

should not have felt particularly well disposed towards them.

But if the head-hunters are chary with polite greetings, the

same cannot be said of the Hausawa. I believe amongst the

Masai spitting at each other is the rule, the intensity of the

friendship being measured by the amount of spittle bestowed on

the other's naked body. Fortunately the Hausawa do not indulge

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in this luxury, they are more concerned with words than with

deeds, and they will squat opposite one another, touch each

other's hands and their own breasts three times, and then go

through whole strings of salutations, even should they meet each

other several times a day, commencing in a loud voice, and

gradually dropping off into an almost undistinguishable grunt

or two like this : —

Hail

How are you to-day ?

Thanks be to God

Hail

Are you tired ?

Hail

What is the news ?

Hail

Hail

•

Urn

O

i

Urn

O

Hail to you too

Quite well, thank you

Praise be to God

Hail

I am not

Hail

There is none but what is good

Urn

Urn

0

Urn

Hail

O

Urn

O

no

CHAPTER XVI

A MUTINY

THE little experience in the Ninzam and Ayu districts gave

weight to my next application for a patrol, and about a

fortnight later I had the satisfaction of knowing that one

had been sanctioned at last. On the 18th April, therefore, our

noble force, consisting of the Waft' subaltern and his detachment

of 25 men, about 30 carriers, and myself, left Jemaan Daroro, and

camped at Akwa, the Keffi contingent of some 80 men and as

many carriers under the O.C. (as the officer commanding is

called) intending to meet us farther to the south-east in Mada

country on the following day. A doctor was also coming from

Keffi, and as there was now heavy rain each day his services

would probably be more in request for cases of illness than for

those of wounding. We arrived at Akwa, where I had had

temporary grass shelters erected, about mid-day, and all of us

were very much pleased that the patrol had really begun at last,

but the fates had willed that we were to be disappointed after all,

for about tea-time a runner arrived with the news that there had

been a mutiny of a WafF detachment at Abuja, and that the Kefti

men had had to go there ; the patrol had therefore been cancelled,

and we were to return to Jemaa at once !

Our personal feelings of disgust can be better imagined than

described, and, politically, the news was most unfortunate, for the

tribes whom I had threatened with punishment would now think

that the whole thing had been merely a " bluff " to frighten them,

and would be all the harder to control afterwards. Various

rumours, too, began to come through from Abuja, some to the

effect that the soldiers had killed all their officers, others that

they had killed one and taken the others prisoner — and there

were other variations. Luckily the outbreak proved to be not so

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serious a one as was at first feared, and it was quelled very

quickly by a mere show of force from Zungeru.

Mutinies are not always so easily settled though, and when

they do happen they are exceedingly unpleasant and much more

dangerous than ordinary fights, and, also, though some one always

has to be blamed in these matters, no one can obtain any

credit. I was in one in 1901 in Kumasi, while attached to the

West African Regiment, and I do not want a similar experience.

I had been invalided to England after having been wounded in

South Africa, and though, perhaps, I could not have walked

well enough for work on the Veldt, I could travel quite well in

a hammock, and so I had been fortunate enough to be accepted

as a Special Service Officer in Ashanti. The chance came at a

lucky moment too, for my own (the 1st Australian) Regiment

was due to leave South Africa for home, and had I not come to

Ashanti my active service would have been over.

Probably most of my readers will remember that in 1900 the

Ashanti besieged the Governor of the Gold Coast and his wife in

Kumasi, and that, although they had managed to escape, it was

only on the arrival of the expedition under Sir James Willcocks

that the garrison was relieved. And as this was not our first war

with the Ashanti, though it was rather remarkable as being the

first occasion on which black troops were employed without a

stiffening of whites — mainly owing to the fact that all the available

regiments were in South Africa or China — it may be as well to go

back a little to consider what led to the trouble with the natives

and what was the cause of the mutiny of our own troops later.

The Ashanti have always been a cruel and warlike race, noted

as much for their bravery as for their numerous and bloody

sacrifices, and our troops have not been invariably victorious in

their conflicts with them ; in fact, in the early days the natives

usually had the best of the deal. Sacrifices were very frequent,

hundreds of captives being butchered in a single day, perhaps,

and the Ashanti became the terror of the surrounding district.

But as our position on the Gold Coast improved, we were able by

degrees to drive them farther and farther inland, and to confine

them within their own boundaries, and so to set free the conquered

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tribes who had begun to look to Englishmen to save them from

annihilation.

It would appear that the Ashanti first came into contact with

Europeans more or less through accident, or, at any rate, on

account of a side-issue. Early last century three rival chiefs of

Asin, the country between the Coast and Ashanti, quarrelled

because of a theft from a grave (a considerable amount of treasure

being buried with the corpses of rich men in those days) which

had been committed by a follower of one of them. The case was

heard by the chief of Ashanti, Osai Tutu Kwamina, and though

Amu, the chief of the parties wronged, was willing to abide by

the decision, his rivals, Chebu and Apute, were not, and having

failed in law they proceeded to the test of battle. After several

vain attempts on the part of Osai to make peace, his messengers

were massacred, Chebu and Apute and the actual murderers

taking refuge in Fanti country. Osai then sent a messenger to

the Fanti chief with the request that he should be allowed to send

a force through his country to capture the culprits, but the Fanti

people not only refused his just request, but foolishly espoused

the cause of the refugees, with the result that they themselves

were attacked and defeated. Within a short time the Ashanti

had utterly subdued them, and being now full of the spirit of

conquest, they began advancing towards the Coast.

The fugitive chiefs, Chebu and Apute, then took refuge in

Annamabu, where a British fort had been built, but the Governor

of Cape Coast Castle at the time (1806), being not altogether

inclined to protect them, proposed making overtures to the

Ashanti, who shortly afterwards seized the Dutch fort of Koro-

mantin. The Annamabu people would not hear of this, but Mr.

White, the officer then in charge of the fort, managed to get a

message through to the Ashanti commander there, offering to

negotiate between him and the Annamabu chief. The offer was,

however, rejected, and the Ashanti attacked the town, and

though, it is said, they had had originally no intention of

fighting with the white men, they were naturally soon involved

with them when they came close to the fort, and a great struggle

took place. So well did the enemy fight that the Europeans at

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length sent a flag of truce to them, and soon afterwards made

peace by arresting and handing over the murderers, or rather one

of them, for the other had managed to escape.

The Ashanti, after having concluded a treaty of friendship

with the British, retired to their own country, and later on the

Fanti, now freed from the fear of their conquerors, began to play

up again and pay back old scores. Partly on account of tribal

hatred, partly for the sake of plunder, they attacked Elmina,

Accra, and other States, and since the Ashanti at that time

trad 3d with Accra, they determined to interfere, the result being

that the Fanti were taught another severe lesson. Unfortunately

the British policy was never very definite nor consistent, and,

instead of remaining neutral, the officers then in charge were

inclined to encourage the Fanti, with the ultimate result that

in 1816 they were themselves blockaded in Cape Coast Castle,

and had to pay the Ashanti a considerable sum to raise the siege.

In the following year Bow ditch and others concluded a treaty

with the Ashanti chief in Kumasi, and a Resident was installed

there.

Friendly relations existed for some years, but the newly-

appointed Governor of the West African Settlements, Sir Charles

McCarthy, and the new chief of Ashanti came to loggerheads in

1823 over the murder of a native sergeant of the Royal African

Corps — though it is probable that the Fanti were the real

culprits — and there was some fighting with varying success on

each side. Early in the following year Sir Charles himself took

the field, and through greatly under-estimating the courage and

numbers of the enemy, he was utterly defeated at Essamako, nine

of the twelve Europeans with the little force being killed, and

the other three seriously wounded, Sir Charles's skull being after-

wards decorated with gold and used as a drinking-cup, so it

is said.

In 1826, however, the defeat was avenged, and there was no

serious fighting until Lord Wolseley's expedition in 1873-74,

which destroyed Kumasi. There were other expeditions in 1863

and 1896, but no actual hostilities took place on these occasions,

and the next and last conflict was in 1900.

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Ashanti Men

One of the peace palavers after the Expedition of 1900. Note the gorgeous umbrellas

and the typical chairs and stools.

Ashanti Houses

My party entering Esumeja. The Ashanti house consists of four oblong buildings

:ed in the shape of a cross. They differ very much from the buildings of the

isa, Yoruba, and the Head-hunter. See p. 142.

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The payment of an indemnity had been imposed as one of the

articles of the treaty of peace in 1874, but no very special anxiety

to comply with the conditions had been noted on the part of the

chiefs, and the Government had been unable to enforce them.

Demands had also been made by the Governor for the delivery of

the Golden Stool which, much more than the actual person of the

chief, represented the sovereignty — in much the same sense as we

now speak of the Crown instead of the King — and these also had

been ignored. The Governor visited Kumasi in March 1900 and

made fresh demands, and, knowing that we were at war with the

Boers, and being told by their fetish-men that the time was ripe

to rid themselves of our control, and that they could easily capture

the Governor and hold him as a hostage for the restoration of

Prempeh (deposed from the Stool of Kumasi in 1896), the Ashanti

revolted and besieged the fort on the 25th of April. The Governor

and Lady Hodgson, together with most of the garrison, escaped on

the 22nd June, but the remainder were not relieved until the 15th

of July following, after a gallant defence.

The Ashanti fought most valiantly, and the casualties on both

sides were very heavy, but the excellent plan of campaign thought

out by Sir James Willcocks, and the discipline of the British

column, told at last, and in the end the Ashanti were utterly

defeated.

However, to return to the mutiny. The actual fighting ended

in the November of 1900, and the troops brought from the other

colonies (Northern and Southern Nigeria, Lagos, Sierra Leone,

and even from the East Coast of Africa) began to look forward to

being sent back again, and to dream of their homes and their

dusky " mammies." Unfortunately, it was found impossible to

let them return as quickly as had been originally expected, for

it was not considered safe to leave Ashanti without a large

garrison so soon after the war, and the local troops were quite

unable to furnish the required numbers. The Nigerian Waffs

were ordered back first, since fighting w r as then going on in that

country, but as all was peaceful in Sierra Leone, there seemed

to be no hurry in regard to the troops from that part of the

Continent.

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One of the best bodies of men in the relief column, as far

as the fighting was concerned, was the West African Regiment,

which, although but very recently entered in the Army List, was

quite a veteran corps. It had been raised in Freetown, in 1898,

by Colonel Woodgate (killed at Spion Kop) to assist in quelling

the Hut-Tax Rebellion in the interior of Sierra Leone, and within

a week or two of its formation it began sending up drafts to the

front. That outbreak was not settled until the following year,

and a few months afterwards, Colonel Burroughs brought the

regiment to Ashanti. The men thus had but little of the

" barrack-square " (which is most essential to good discipline,

however much it may tend to kill individuality), and some of

the officers were new to them, so that they were not, perhaps,

as much in hand as would have been the case had they had the

chance to learn the drudgery properly before going on active

service. Again, a number of tribes were represented in the ranks

— Mendi, Timmini, Susu, Lokko, Limba, Fulah, &c, and there

were even a few men from Senegal and Dahomey, so there was no

common bond between them such as there would have been had

they all been of the same nation — a bond which is now supplied

by their esprit de corps. While the fighting lasted they were

splendid ; there was no doubt about their bravery — nor about that

of their colonel — but when the excitement had subsided, they

wanted to get back to Freetown, which was very "sweet'" to

them, although perhaps distasteful to many of their European

officers.

They had been told, when proceeding to Ashanti in the

previous May, that they would probably be back in about three

months' time, and after they had been kept nine months, and still

saw but little chance of returning, they began to grow restive —

it is a fatal error to mislead a native, however blameless one's

intention may be. There were other causes too ; the pay accounts

had somehow become muddled, and arrears were not forthcoming :

the uniforms were ragged, the equipment (said to have been

second-hand to start with) was mostly string and wire ; and worst

of all, the bayonets could not be fixed on to the carbines !

The blame for this state of affairs has been fastened on to

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different people at different times ; but it seems to me that no

one individual was particularly responsible, for no one really had

any opportunity to improve matters. The real cause of the whole

mutiny was probably the men's knowledge that they had been

deceived — though that point would seem much less important than

the other reasons to a European — and nothing one could say

tended to make them think otherwise. We were white men, we

knew everything, we had used them to fight for us against the

Ashanti as long as we wanted them, we had not paid them what

we had promised (a deduction — quite a legitimate one too, though

they refused to see it — had been made from their " chop-money "

because rations had been supplied in kind), we had not let them

return when we said we would, and we were probably going to

keep them there for ever, until they died. It was of no use our

saying anything to the contrary, if it was not true let us send

them back. That was their argument, and it seemed rather hope-

less to combat it, since we could not let them go.

The new Governor arrived in March 1901 for the purpose of

settling the payment of the Ashanti indemnity and other matters,

and, when inspecting the West African Regiment, he told the

men that two companies would return to Sierra Leone at once, but

that the others would not follow until they could be relieved.

This was absolutely the last straw, and on the morning of the

19th, when the Governor was leaving Kumasi, hardly enough men

could be found in the camp of the Wars (as they were called, from

West African Regiment) to form a guard of honour.

The Governor, of course, postponed his departure, and five of

us were sent post haste to try to get the deserters back, only two

of the party belonged to the regiment, the other three, including

myself, being Special Service Officers. We travelled all night, and

nearly caught them up at Kwissa, but they departed at once and

got ahead again/ However, two more companies of the regiment

were stationed there, and we paraded them to warn them not to

follow the bad example of the others, but they immediately

shouted out that the deserters were their brothers, and started

marching off to join them. We tried to stop some of them, but

we were fired at (bullets have an angry "ping-buzz" at such

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close quarters), and, as it was absolutely impossible for five men

to do anything against over 200, we desisted. Just afterwards a

message from the Governor — which had unfortunately been delayed

in transmission — was handed to us, ordering us to accompany the

deserters, and not to use threats nor force, so we therefore started

off again, and came up with the whole four companies at Fesu.

I remember, when approaching a turning in the road, hearing a

tremendous cracking ahead, and I thought that we were being

fired at again. But on proceeding farther I found that the sounds

were made by burning bamboos, and I admit that I was greatly

relieved.

The men, we heard from our orderlies, had elected as

" colonel 11 Private Morlai Mandingo, a very brave man who had

been wounded three times, if I remember rightly. And he, rising

to the dignity of his rank, had thrown away his carbine, and was

using his side-arm — a sword-bayonet — as an officer's sword, while

instead of a red fez he wore a cloth cap. Each company had its

captain and " one-star " captains (lieutenants, who wore only one

then), and there were orderly buglers and others detailed for

duty daily.

And so much authority did these " officers " possess that on

one occasion a couple of privates were flogged for having dirty

rifles on parade, and it was rather amusing to find that such a

fault was punished with so much greater severity by them than

would have been the case had one of us tried the men. There was

thus a certain amount of discipline preserved, but this really

showed that the state of things was very serious indeed, for it

became apparent how much in earnest the men were, though when

a question was asked afterwards in Parliament, this served as an

excuse to treat the whole affair with ridicule. The men had 100

rounds of ammunition each, and they had been given a week's

rations of rice a day or two before they deserted, but the latter

was beginning to run out, and we saw trouble ahead, the Native,

like Nature, abhorring a vacuum. Luckily, however, another

message from the Governor arrived, ordering us to pay out ration-

money at the usual rate of 3d. per day, and this move prevented a

general raiding of the tow^ns passed through.

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Four of us were fairly popular with the men, but the other

officer had had to stay behind in consequence of a notice posted

upon the road that the men would "dismiss him ourself " if he

came any farther (it was bad luck on him, for he really liked

them), and if we had been able to think things over calmly, we

should have been compelled to smile, for we were actually paying

the men to defy our authority, so long as they did it quietly. I

had " doctored " a few of the men while in command of a detach-

ment at Prahsu, and was called in by the mutineers to do the same

for some of them, and our own orderlies were on quite good terms

with their comrades although they gave us a hint when to expect

the next move. But in spite of the half-friendly attitude of the

main body of the men, the leaders would have nothing to do with

us, and remembering the experience at Kwissa, we had to make up

our minds to " wait and see," though it was not good for one's

nerves.

So it went on, the mutineers suddenly marching off, and we

hurriedly collecting what carriers they had not taken from us, and

following as fast as we could, until after over a week of it we reached

Cape Coast Castle, where the men, ahead as usual, were met on arrival

by the late Captain Watson, who guided them to quarters in

the town. The men, to his surprise, followed him without question,

but they had no quarrel with him, of course, it being confined to

the Governor, and the senior officers of their own regiment, who

had, as they thought, wilfully deceived them. Colonel Burroughs

with the rest of the regiment (part of the two companies under

orders to leave for Sierra Leone not having deserted) soon after-

wards arrived, and with the Governor and us went to the men to

try to persuade them to give up their arms. But this they, of

course, refused to do, and we were given a fairly plain hint to

quit.

The next day the Governor had a parley with them outside

the fort, they having been told to come down and be prepared to

go on board a steamer which had come in the day before, but on

hearing that they would have to give up their arms first they

refused to do so. " Very well," said we, " we shall go without

you," and we made a pretence of going off, and in fact Colonel

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Burroughs and some others did get off to the ship. This, how-

ever, brought more than we bargained for, for the mutineers

rushed the surf-boats and took the paddles, marching back with

them in triumph to their quarters, and leaving a guard to see

that we did not go away. This step also prevented the colonel

from returning, for no ordinary ship's boat can live in the Coast

surf, and in his absence Lieut.-Colonel Henstock became the

senior officer, and he proved to be the right man in the right

place.

It was useless now to deny the seriousness of the position, and

had his ruse not been successful, we might have had trouble with

the Cape Coast natives also, for directly these half-civilised people

saw that we were in difficulties they began to revile us, although

they had fattened on us for so long. But even then some of the

mutineers showed up well, for several of these people were

unpleasantly surprised at receiving punishment instead of

applause from the soldiers for abusing their officers. How-

ever, there was no doubt that something decisive had to be

done, and immediately, and this is what happened. The

mutineers were invited to come next morning for a further

parley, and were told that the captain of the ship had refused

to take them armed, but those who gave up their carbines

would be given £5 each out of their arrears of pay at once,

and would go on board the steamer. At the same time we

did not neglect to make what preparations we could in case of

trouble; an old Maxim gun was patched up (it might have fired

a dozen shots perhaps), and mounted on the wall of the fort to

overlook the place where the mutineers would be formed up, the

Europeans in Cape Coast were invited to come inside the fort,

and, a steamer from Nigeria having arrived, some officers on

board were warned to be ready if called upon.

Next morning the "loyalists 1 ' were formed up under my

command against the wall of the fort, being placed so as to

be under the Maxim and opposite to the church, while a

detachment of the Hausa Constabulary was posted on our

right, at right angles to us, and we waited developments.

Soon after the appointed time, down marched the mutineers,

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and formed up opposite to us on being told to halt in front

of the church, i.e. in the most favourable position for our fire.

They came waving a white flag in front of them, and we were at

first very much relieved to think that the trouble was over, but

we were soon undeceived.

The " loyalists," the Hausas, and the mutineers formed three

sides of a hollow square, and, on its completion, by the arrival of

the last-named, Lieut.-Colonel Henstock roared out " Shoulder

arms, order arms, ground arms,' 1 thinking to catch the deserters

on the hop — especially as they would see us going through the

movements. But no, only a few men grounded their arms, some

refused to move at all, some wavered, then those who had placed

their carbines on the ground recovered them — and there was a

horrid pause !

" I will give you one minute,"" shouted Colonel Hemstock,

alive to the danger. "There are some good men here, but

there are some bad also. Those who ground arms will get

£5" (we had the money ready in sight of all by the gate of

the fort), "and will go aboard at once ... A quarter of a

minute gone," continued he, so that the men would have no

chance of talking together, " one-half — three-quarters — one

minute — ground arms," and about half the men did so.

Immediately Captain Watson and our colour-sergeant gallantly

ran forward and seized Morlai Mandingo (who was in front of

" his command"), and rushed him into the fort, and meantime we

went over to speak to men whom we knew only required some

encouragement to give in, and soon there was a stream of

repentants going into the fort. But all was not over yet, for

some 100 refused to submit, and marched off, their plan being to

go by land to Sierra Leone, being captured later, however, by a

gunboat with a loss of, if I remember rightly, over thirty in

killed and wounded. Still, we had practically five-sixths of the

men back again, and off' we sailed that night to Sierra Leone,

arriving there on the 3rd April.

But there was a gruesome duty to be done first. Private

Morlai Mandingo was tried by court-martial, and condemned to

be shot, and, after the Governor had confirmed the sentence, it

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was carried out against the walls of the fort, the prisoner being

tied to a ladder. As junior member of the court-martial I had

to give my opinion first, and I can remember even now the

impression it made upon me. It is a horrible responsibility to

have to decide whether a human being is to live or not !

However, such things have to be done if any discipline is to

be preserved, and the sooner they are over the better; mutiny

while on active service is, of course, one of the gravest offences.

That is the only occasion on which I have seen a man shot,

though I have had to witness, and even to take part in, several

hangings since, but I have never been able to get used to such

scenes, which always make me feel sick. And if other people

were affected in the same way (and I suppose they would be),

public executions would have a much greater deterrent effect

than those carried out in the gaol, for at present there is

always a certain amount of sympathy with persons being done

to death in private. There would be, of course, some people

who would enjoy spectacles like this — there will always be such

ghouls in the world — but the general public would, I think, be

much more stirred and impressed. Still, I would not advocate

public executions, for they were no doubt abolished with very

good cause; all I hope is that I shall not have to see any

more.

It may be imagined how we relished the ship's quiet and rest

after the preceding fortnight. There was more disagreeable

work at Sierra Leone afterwards in trying some of the

mutineers, but it was recognised that the circumstances had

been exceptional, and that the men's hardships had been great,

and so only a few of the worst of the offenders were punished,

even in their cases the sentences being very light. I doubt if the

regiment is any the worse for the mutiny : no one can wonder at

natives becoming restive under such conditions, and it is hardly

likely that a similar trouble will occur again, for they have since

had a good deal of experience of the barrack square — also there

are white troops now stationed in Freetown. Most West African

natives are good soldiers, and these are certainly no exception to

the rule. I acted as adjutant of the regiment for a short time

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afterwards, and the better I knew them the better I liked

them.

Perhaps it was right to treat the whole affair as a glorious

farce ; probably it was a joke to people at home to think that the

native rank and file had taken charge of their European officers.

But it was grim earnest to those who were in it !

CHAPTER XVII

COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND CHILD-BIRTH

AT some period in the history of every society, the family and

the nation were one and the same thing, and this can be

easily understood if we imagine a man and his wife pene-

trating alone into a new and uninhabited district, and there

raising up a family — or several families, if there be more than one

wife. We see such a condition of things related in the case of

Adam and Eve ; the Moroa ancestor, it will be remembered, was

Eniluchwi, who took his wife to Ungual Tagamma, and became

the father of all the Moroas, and almost every tribe has a similar

tradition. Now, as the family grew in numbers, so also did the

influence of its founder, the husband's position as father gradually

becoming that of chief as well, and later on, probably the leader-

ship in religious ceremonies was centred in him.

The idea of consanguinity may be based upon kinship through

the father alone, through the mother alone, or partly through

both parents concurrently. One is at first surprised to find that

the second of these systems is to be found, but where a woman is

allowed or compelled to have several husbands, it becomes quite

impossible to reckon kinship through the father, whereas there

can never be any doubt about the descent from the mother, for

that is apparent to all. This is known as matriarchy ; patriarchy

being, of course, the system of tracing kinship through the male

parent. And as a study of these subjects may help towards a

better understanding of the totally different conditions existing

amongst native peoples, it will be worth while to consider what

was the origin of the differences in these systems, and, in fact,

what was the origin of marriage.

It was at one time thought by many writers that in the

earliest times the relations of the sexes were not controlled in

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any way, and that communal marriage, or even promiscuity, was

allowed. But it is now more usual to admit that there were always

some restraints, and that in consequence of these arose group-

marriage (some deny even this primitive form), which represents

the first attempt to regulate the relations ; the essential features

being that males and females belonging to the same group

were not permitted to intermarry, but would have to take

partners from another group. If the whole clan consisted of

only one group, this would be exogamy, but if, as was more usual,

it was composed of several groups, the members might be allowed

to take partners from groups in other clans, or they might be

compelled to choose them from other groups of their own clan,

this last case being what is called endogamy. In theory, all the

males of one group had a right to all the females of the other,

but there was always some trace of individual claim of priority at

any rate, though it cannot be said that there was the slightest idea

that one man and one woman ought to hold together, but still

there would be some preference shown by both sexes. The custom

of lending a wife to a guest is said to have come from this system.

Now, when a woman has several husbands, no child can know

who is his father, and no husband can possibly tell who is his own

offspring. In fact, he does not consider the point at all, his

mother's children and his mother's daughter's children being

regarded as his nearest kindred, as with the Ashanti and others,

for he knows them to be of the same blood as himself, i.e. he

traces his relationship through his mother. In this case the

woman who bears the children may be the head of the household,

for there is no doubt about her being their parent ; so a girl on

becoming a mother either starts a new establishment of her own,

the husbands being only secondary in importance, or else she

remains in that of her mother, this being an example of the rudest

form of polyandry. But it is not necessary that a wife should have

more than one husband to enable or compel her to remain in her

mother's household. The husband might be, in some cases, more

like a mere guest, his visits being made more or less surreptitiously,

so as to avoid being seen by her mother, brothers, and others, and

taking place at night only, the husband not being allowed to take

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the wife away to his own house until she has borne a child — if even

then. The story of Cupid and Psyche is said to be founded on

this custom, says Mr. Hartland in Primitive Paternity, the breach

of which resulted in separation, but afterwards in open and

permanent union.

While the wife lives with her mother, her earnings will pro-

bably be taken by her parents, but once the husband has been

allowed to remove her to his own house, she pays them over to

him. It may be worth noticing that the word for marriage has in

one language been found to signify " to slip by night into the

house," thus clearly indicating the prevalence of this system ; and

there is evidence of it even amongst the Kagoro. In many cases

the visits of the bridegroom began before marriage, though they

may sometimes have been innocent, as we find exemplified in

Romeo and Juliet. In others the lover perhaps did not even

enter the ghTs apartment before she was his wife.

With some tribes the husband never has the right to take his

wife away, being forced instead to enter her family, but even then

there are cases when he is allowed to build a separate dwelling for

himself and her, thus indicating the beginnings of a conception of

father-right. Again (as with the Bassa-Komo) all the men may

have to live in one part of their village, all the women in another,

the husband visiting his wife, or the wife her husband, as occasion

permits.

Under this early form of matriarchy the authority over the

children is vested in the head of the mother's family, generally

the eldest male, perhaps her brother, and the gulf fixed between

him and the husband may be so wide that one is liable to the

other in the blood feud, and even the children may join with their

uncles against their father. On the contrary, when a husband has

entered his wife's family he may have to fight against his own

blood relations in a quarrel between the two families. Of course

under the patriarchal system a wife might have to side with her

husband against her father ; but, as she would not fight against

either, the harm done would be nothing like so great as in the

cases mentioned above, where perhaps a son and father might

engage in a death struggle.

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There is another form, indicating a slight advance in the

notions of paternity, existing in many places, where a woman can

be the wife of several brothers at a time, but of brothers only,

there being thus a limitation to the choice of individuals on the

part of the female, though there would not necessarily be any

reduction in numbers; this, however, would probably follow. As

these husbands would be connected both by blood and interest,

they would appropriate her issue and regard them as members of

their own (collective) family, and not as belonging to that of the

mother. Then, again, the woman might be the wife of the eldest

brother only, or of both father and son ; or fathers and sons,

uncles and nephews, or other relatives might hold their wives in

common, though outside the family they were chaste. Thus Julius

Caesar says that the Britons had a species of marriage which

appears to partake both of polyandry and polygyny, for every ten

or twelve men (usually, if not always, relatives) held their wives

in common, the children born of each mother being regarded as

having been begotten by the husband who first married her when

a virgin. The Irish were, apparently, quite as lax even at a much

later date.

A development of this form is shown in the case of the 'Mbres

about Lake Chad and others, where the joint husbands have to

be brothers and the joint wives sisters.

But amongst brothers the eldest would in all probability be

the first one to marry, and the first child, at any rate, of the

family joint- wife would possibly be known to be his. In fact, we

read that amongst the Kulus of the Punjab the eldest brother is

deemed the father of the first-born son, the next of the second,

and so on, and so strongly has this been upheld that these pre-

sumptions are now absolute in law, even though the facts are quite

opposed to them. With another tribe, where each has a separate

wife, if one brother be impotent, another brother — or perhaps a

stranger — might be appointed to raise up issue for him.

Thus a definite conception of fatherhood and sonship would

arise, and the father would naturally be inclined to look with

much greater favour (it could hardly be called affection then) on

the children whom he knew to be his own, than upon those who

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he had reason to believe had been begotten by some one else. It is

quite possible that the desire for this relationship of father and

son, when once aroused, developed so quickly that it soon became

powerful enough to abolish polyandry altogether, for 'a man would

come to allow no share to another in his wife, but would keep her

strictly for himself, so that he might be quite certain that all her

children were his. This became the custom and then the law, for

we know that customs when firmly established are sooner or later

incorporated in the law-books. Thus in one of the Hindu Vedas

a husband is supposed to announce that he will no longer allow

his wives to be approached by other men, since he has been in-

formed that a son belongs to him who has begotten him in the

world of Yama. (Mayne, A Treatise on Hindu Laws and Usages.)

Descent now began to be traced through males, and, strange

to say, the connection through females was quite ignored, for

when a woman married she left her own family altogether and

entered that of her husband, the family consisting exclusively of

male members, the wives being but mere appendages to their

husbands. We can still see some trace of this in our own case,

the change of our women's names on marriage being a survival ;

but we trace descent through both our parents to a great extent,

even titles coming in some cases from either the male or female

line, and coats of arms are often commingled.

Once children had come to be recognised as belonging to the

father, he naturally began to value them, the sons to defend

his property and to help in the work, the daughters to help also,

and later on to be sold to other men for wives. And as one wife

could produce only a certain number of children, and more and

more were urgently wanted, the man began to take other wives so

as to have two or more families growing up at the same time.

But how did he procure his wives, and how did he protect and

restrain them when he had procured them ?

We have seen that in the case of many tribes the husband

went to live with his wife in her mother's house, and that the

children belonged to her. But it would one day happen that a

man of rather more independent ideas than his brethren would

refuse to submit to this, and would manage to get her away to

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his own house. Now, if he were a popular or a powerful man (and

his strength of character would probably give him a good deal of

influence), he would have many sympathisers, and if his wife's

clan were but a small one he would be able to keep her in peace

and safety. And it has been found that even now there is a

survival of this in Sumatra, where it is the custom in several

tribes, on a marriage taking place, to decide the question of the

residence of the married pair by calculating the relative strength

of the respective clans, the wife going to the husband or the

husband to the wife according as his or her clan is the more

powerful, the resulting children belonging to the clan in which

they were born and brought up. (Primitive Paternity.)

But matters were not always settled so easily nor so peace-

fully. Marriage by capture was in many cases the usual mode

of obtaining a partner, and it still exists coupled with exogamy

in certain localities, either in real earnest {e.g. Central India), or

in a symbolic form as amongst the Hausawa, where the bride,

veiled and screaming, is carried off by her husband's people

although she may have been anything but chaste beforehand.

Or the respective friends of the bride and bridegroom may have

a sham fight or a tug-o'-war, the latter winning as a matter of

course, and the bride then being given up. Even with us to-day

(in Church of England marriages at any rate) the friends of the

bridegroom are placed on one side of the church and those of the

bride on the other, the bridegroom and his groomsmen, and the

bride with her bridesmaids separating themselves from them.

Also, after the father (or person acting for him) has " given the

bride away," he retires and leaves her with her husband, and the

newly-wedded pair go alone to the altar, thus showing the forma-

tion of a new household.

But it must have often been very inconvenient for men,

especially old ones, to have to fight for their brides, and besides,

as the number of the husbands allowed to one woman grew less,

the more distinct became the notion of property of each man in

his wife. Hence arose the system of giving something, in return

for the sole protection and disposal of her, and of the children

whom she bore, and who belonged to the owner of their mother,

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so, concurrently with marriage by capture, we find marriage by

purchase, the girls being sold by their parents to become the

absolute property of their husbands. But the husband did not

always obtain possession of her at once ; the longer the parents

could retain their daughter in their possession the larger were the

presents they could exact from the bridegroom. Sometimes he

would have to live with her for a time in her mother's house even

after he had paid for her, perhaps until she had borne him

a child.

The wishes of the girl herself were seldom consulted. I have

come across many instances in Nigeria of what was practically a

sale, even by Mohammedans, of young girls to old men (with

the natural result that they are unfaithful), and amongst many

pagans the conditions are even worse, cruelty often being used to

the girls to make them consent, especially in Australia.

It is somewhat difficult to understand such treatment by a

parent of his own daughter until we remember that he has been

well paid for her, so if he did not force her to fulfil the contract

he would have to return the " bride-price " as it is usually called ;

and this custom is still in force in many countries, of course.

With the Hausas, for instance, if a man induces another man's

wife to desert her husband and live with him, he may keep her as

his wife provided he pays her injured husband an amount equal

to that which was paid to the woman's father in the first instance.

But with those tribes who developed more in civilisation, the

idea of taking money for a daughter became repulsive, and,

though the bride-price was still exacted from the bridegroom,

it was given to the girl herself, either for her own particular use,

or as a joint provision for the newly constituted family, thus

becoming her dower. An extra present was often given to her

by the husband, and in many cases a further present was exacted

on the birth of children. Sometimes the bride-price is paid

partly in kind, the suitor serving the bride's father for a fixed

term (as in the case of Jacob for Rachel), on the termination of

which and the payment of a proportionate fee the bride enters

her husband's family, the children born before this perhaps

belonging to her mother's family, And if the husband cannot

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pay the bride-price he may have to remain in the wife's family

for ever, or the heads of his kindred may be made security for it,

or else some of his children may be handed over — if not already

belonging to the wife's mother's family. Usually, however, the

children follow the wife, and so if the husband pays up in full he

gets his children by her, but it may happen that he takes only

the boys, the girls going to his mother-in-law.

As has been said, the bride-price became the dower, repre-

sented at present by the marriage settlement. At first, as the

wife was the absolute property of her husband, everything she

had passed with her into his possession. But gradually presents

from her own people, perhaps from her husband, other than as

bride-price, and others, began to be looked upon as hers ab-

solutely. This corresponds to the dot of France and other

Continental nations, and is a contribution, generally by the wife's

family or the wife herself, to assist the husband in bearing the

expenses of the new household. But only the revenue belonged

to the husband, the corpus being inalienable by him.

It was only towards the end of the last century that English

husbands were prevented by the " Married Women's Property

Act 11 from taking their wives 1 possessions, and the women were

enabled to keep a hold on their own, so we must not be too hasty

in judging native tribes who are backward in this and other

respects. The Mohammedan laws of dower are now observed by

the Filani, Hausawa, and others in Nigeria, and this is neither

dower nor dot since it is the wife's own property absolutely, and

is not given by the husband nor by the parents as a contribu-

tion towards household expenses, but is offered in consideration

of marriage, corresponding in some degree to our marriage

settlement.

And now, having given an outline of the evolution of marriage,

let us proceed to examine the customs amongst the Kagoro.

The Kagoro and Moroa girls marry later than the Kajji,

whose brides can hardly average ten years of age. There is, how-

ever, no age limit, for no one knows the number of years he or

she has lived, and even seasons are not noted for the purpose of

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reckoning ages, though the seed time, harvest, &c, are known,

for much depends on them, and in any case there is not much

difficulty in obtaining such elementary knowledge when rainy and

dry seasons are sharply defined.

The reason for the early age of brides is, of course, the desire

to profit as much and as often as possible by their marriages, as

will be explained later. Girls are nearly always chaste before

marriage, and even afterwards according to their ideas, and the

girdle of string (ivy an) worn by girls is in most cases a true sign

of virginity. Of course, as I was informed, " there is a thief in

every town," but the exceptions to the rule must be rare. When a

man goes to propose — or his father or guardian for him if he be a

minor — he probably ornaments himself by painting his face, and

wearing a long iron chain, if he has one, round his neck, and he

takes a sum of cowries, from four thousand to ten thousand, the

amount depending upon his station and circumstances and those

of the girl's family, and gives them to the prospective father-in-

law. His suit is often supported by friends, and if it be accepted

he adds a hoe, a goat, a dog, and the flesh of another goat which

is then eaten. He is then supposed to be betrothed, and can

claim his wife at once if she be a divorcee, but he must wait until

the next wet season if she be a virgin.

The only conditions necessary on the part of the bridegroom

are that he must be able to pay the bride-price (or rather his

father for him), and that he is adult. It is said by some that he

must have taken a head, as mentioned before, but that is pro-

bably not correct.

Though the girl has apparently no right of choice, she has

some right of veto — though I doubt if she would have the chance

of exercising it if not already married — but the father's fee must

be paid before she is supposed to know that she is being sought.

No doubt she does know in most cases, but sometimes it may

happen that the father will accept presents secretly from several

suitors, and after he has spent the money simply tell them that

his daughter or ward will not marry them. The Kagoro being

blessed with but little property, the father probably cannot, or at

any rate will not repay the money, so the only remedy the unsuc-

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cessful suitors have in most cases is to try and capture him when

out hunting or farming, and keep him prisoner until he has paid ;

or perhaps they would have sold him as a slave in earlier times.

If, however, the father stays at home he is comparatively safe, for

poisoned arrows are fairly efficacious for keeping unwelcome

visitors at a distance. Sooner or later his friends will prevail

upon him to settle the quarrel, or he may be induced to appear

before a court of elders.

However, when a suitor has been accepted, and has paid up in

full, a great amount of guinea-corn beer {akann) is prepared by

his people, which on the wedding-day is taken to the house of the

bride's father, where the feasting and dancing are held. It seems

strange that the bridegroom's family should supply the dkann ;

probably it is part of the bride- price. The festivities then com-

mence (merely drunkenness and dancing, I understand, nothing

otherwise objectionable takes place), and may be continued for

any number of days up to ten, but seldom for more than three —

in fact until the akann gives out — and both the bridegroom and

bride partake of it.

The mother-in-law is said to give the bridegroom a bowl of

beans or some porridge (tuk), but no food is provided for any of

the guests, for they go home to their meals, returning again for the

akann ; it is extraordinary how people, even civilised folk, like

free beer. There seems to be no avoidance of the mother-in-law,

as is the case with so many tribes, where the bridegroom is not

only forbidden to speak to her, but must even take to flight should

he by chance meet her. This is a survival from the time

when the husband first visited his wife in secret at her mother's

house, and so it is the mother only and not the father who is tabu,

though sometimes the prohibition includes several of the wife's

relatives. Thus arises our joke — always so popular on the music-

hall stage — about mothers-in-law being in the way. The joke is

becoming unintelligible to most of us, and may some day die out,

though the genius required for making witty remarks about

drunken husbands, wives with twins, and bloaters will never go

unrecognised, for England has few other topics so excruciatingly

amusing.

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Marriages of virgins should take place only during the wet

season, after seed time is over, say between June and August. We

know that with ourselves "in the spring a young man's fancy

lightly turns to thoughts of love," and that in Brittany many

marriages take place on the eve of Lent. On the first day of the

dancing, the bride is taken to the bridegroom's house by her

mother, who is given two thousand cowries, or a hoe, perhaps for

her trouble, and by his female relatives, and is allowed to stay

and engage in conversation for a little while. She is then taken

back to her mother's house, but in the evening the bridegroom

follows, and sleeps with her, and the next day she again visits him.

Some say that she is now allowed to stay altogether, others that

she does not remain until the seventh day, but in any case she is

soon given up by her people and enters her husband's family, the

time probably depending on the promptness of the payment of

her price, though she is not quite removed from the tutelage of

her father.

At the end of the millet farming, the bride is given a tail, and

she hangs leaves in front, these being the insignia of marriage,

her girdle of string having been previously removed by her

mother. The husband then kills a dog, and eats the head, liver,

entrails, and legs, those who have helped him in his suit are given

the throat, and the girl's father has the remainder, she herself

having nothing, apparently. The reason for giving the throat to

the friends is that they used theirs — i.e. talked — in his service,

and this extraordinary example of symbolism seemed to me too

unlikely to be true, but at the same time I think they are far too

unimaginative to make up such a story on the spur of the

moment, though there is no doubt that the native mind will

invent a reason for everything if given time. The marriage is now

complete, and the last scarification — the lines on the forehead —

is performed. As has been said before, a Kagoro girl cannot lose

her marriage lines, nor can she hide them from view. Probably, if

the wife be well behaved and satisfactory, the father and mother

will receive further presents from the husband, whose interest it is

to keep in with them.

Widows and divorcees may re-marry at any time of the year,

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and the procedure is much the same, except for the fact that the

wife may at once live with her husband. But in the very rare case

of an unmarried girl conceiving, she would be taken to the lover's

house by an old man of her family, and the lover would be forced

to marry her. In this case there is no bride-price — though a fine

or damages would be exacted if possible — and no dancing and

drinking takes place.

The first wife is the chief, and she looks after the others. She

can, apparently, punish them for disobedience by slapping or

in other ways, and they are not allowed to retaliate. But when

considering all these rules it must be remembered that if the

offender refuses to pay the penalty he or she can but rarely be

forced to do so, for a man would defend himself with his arms,

and a woman would run off to her father. A Kagoro or Kajji

husband's lot is not a happy one.

In earliest times, concurrently with the looseness of the mar-

riage tie there was naturally greater facility for breaking it.

With many peoples, it is not even now necessary for the bride to

be a virgin, the prospective husband sometimes even requiring a

proof of fertility in the woman before she became his wife (as is

said to be the case now in the Black Country where girls have

" love-children and he would not always mind who was respon-

sible for the proof since the child would be his if he owned the

mother. It is no disgrace in a Yoruba girl, I believe, to be

unchaste before her betrothal, and the chief of Jemaan Daroro

told me that there was not a virgin in his town over the age

of ten — I should have said even less. The Cow-Filani are

very strict, but their sisters of the towns are rather liable to

lapses, though they seem to take place more after marriage than

before.

The primitive Arabs have been shown by Professor Robertson

Smith to have been matrilineal, a husband being not much more

than a temporary lover who would go or be sent away at any time,

the wife keeping any child of the union. Then there grew up a

temporary marriage (mutaa) even now recognised by Shia Mahom-

medans — though not by Sunnis — which was a compact of union for

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a fixed term, becoming dissolved at the expiry of the period

named.

In Bengal to-day a husband may have to execute a deed

stipulating never to scold his wife, nor even disagree with her,

the penalty in each case being a divorce.

We have seen how the power of the husband over his wife

gradually grew to the exclusion of that of her kindred, and as the

notion of property in the wife developed, the husband's power of

divorce became greater and greater, and that of the wife less and

less. The most unfair laws nowadays are probably those of the

Mohammedans, for the husband can divorce his wife without any

ceremony, and for no cause, the only check being that he will

have to pay her her dower — which he probably still owes. On

the other hand, the Mohammedan wife can also have an agree-

ment giving her the power to divorce herself if the husband is

unkind to her. Even with us the sexes are not treated in exactly

the same way, the idea being (as is, no doubt, the case) that a

husband is more injured by the infidelity of his wife than the wife

by the misconduct of her husband, though the offence is usually

regarded as a civil one.

The seduction of another man's wife, though at first a matter

of little concern to any except the woman herself, gradually came

to be regarded as an injury to the husband, who had bought her

for his own pleasure alone. The offence does not consist in the

immorality, but in the damaging of the property of another, for a

husband can lend his wife if he likes and no harm is done, though

by strict Mohammedan law adulterers can be sentenced to death

by a Kadi. As we have seen, the Hausawa and others will take a

money payment, but with highly civilised nations this is rarely the

case, " the unwritten law " regarding the killing of the wife and

her paramour with a lenient eye. We in England have something

corresponding to the Hausa notion, accepting damages, and divorc-

ing the wife and letting her go off with her new lover — a proceed-

ing which the French, for instance, cannot understand — but in

India the male offender is liable to imprisonment under the Indian

Penal Code. Civilised nations, however, do not take things as

calmly as some peoples, who are said to consider it bad form to show

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even reluctance to the seduction of their wives though they may go

off with their seducers, the latter, perhaps, in turn leaving their

own wives, the deserted husbands taking them in exchange.

There are other causes for divorce, however, besides infidelity ;

thus barrenness, cruelty, and incompatibility of temper are good

grounds in the highest as well as in the lowest stages and where a

bride-price has been paid it can possibly be recovered.

When a Kagoro girl is once married, she will seldom leave her

husband of her own free will except on account of cruelty, im-

potence, or because of having borne an abnormal child. If she

does leave him, and the husband wants her back, he will take

another dog to his father-in-law, and ask him to persuade her to

return to him, and this is usually done. But in some cases,

although the woman herself may be quite ready to go back, her

father may not be willing to allow her to do so unless the husband

gives more presents, and in fact, he may induce her to leave while

actually living with her husband so that he can exact some.

When the woman has come to her father's house, the latter has

full power over her again, and he may give her to another man in

return for a new bride-price, and refuse her to her proper husband.

In this case the latter has no further power over his late wife,

for such an act on the part of her father acts as a divorce, and he

is supposed to bear his supplanter no malice, though he may try

to persuade her to return to him again. If all his arguments fail

with her, he may try to take her by force, or he may give her

father a still larger present than the new one has done, and so get

her back again legally.

As I have said, rival husbands are supposed to feel no ani-

mosity, but there is a belief, and probably a well-grounded one,

that if they meet during a raid or hunting expedition, one of

them (usually, if not always, the supplanter) " will be hurt by an

arrow and die." As every man has his special marks on his

arrows, and the shaft which kills the rival is unmarked, the death

is put down to magic ; but is it not possible that on such occasions

the ex-husband conveniently forgets to mark his arrow? This, of

course, applies only when one has taken the wife of another

Kagoro, for there is no bad luck involved even in the forcible

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seizing and keeping the wife of a man of another tribe ; on the

contrary it is quite proper, and all the best people do it.

In addition to the presents to the father of the girl at the time

a man wishes to have her as his wife, a further gift, or " child-

price, 1 '' as it might be called, must be made to him on the birth

of each child, otherwise the grandfather owns them, and this

obtains in the Torres Straits also. I called a meeting of the

chiefs in 1909, and told them that as these frequent payments

were a source of a good many of the quarrels, on my return the

father would receive a present only on his daughter's marriage,

and that he would have to return it if the woman ran away

by his advice. The child-price would also be abolished, but the

husband would have to give a present to his wife on each occasion.

The chiefs readily accepted the idea at the time — though as I did

not return, I cannot say whether any change has been made — for

they saw that although they might lose as fathers, they would gain

as lovers (and even the oldest men are continually seeking new

wives), and that the woman's father would no longer wish her to

leave her husband, while she herself was given an incentive to stay.

Three different accounts were given me by the Kagoro of what

is done with the umbilicus of a newly born child, one being that

the part was burnt, the ashes mixed with grease, and rubbed on

the child's head to harden it ; another that the ashes were ground

and eaten with yam ; and the third, that the cord was planted at

the roots of yams to secure a good harvest next year. The Kagoro

have but few yams, and these have been imported, so the first

would seem to be the correct version ; but with the Moroa, the

third is probably the right one. In England, says Mr. Hartland,

witches were once supposed to steal children before baptism, and

to boil their bodies, part of the resulting jelly being eaten, the

remainder being used as an unguent for rubbing on their bodies,

and this was the orthodox method of acquiring magical powers.

The second account may, therefore, be true of the Kagoro.

If a child is still-born, cold water is thrown on the face, and

shovels, hoes, &c, are beaten in the vicinity — to make it hear, so

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they say, but there may be some notion of the magical properties

of the iron — and if there are no signs of life in half-an-hour or so,

the child is given up for dead, and the body is buried.

Kagoro women will nurse their children for a couple of years,

Moroa mothers twice that time, but as they live apart from their

husbands meanwhile, there are no hard and fast rules. Children

are carried on their mothers' backs, and if it be only for a little

while they can hang on without any artificial assistance, but if

to go on a journey, a child is put into a sail-shaped carrier

made of leather or string, one end being tied around the mother's

neck, and the other around her waist, so that the child's neck is

inside the covering, a leg protruding on each side. A Kagoro

mother does not put her child's head in a bag, but she gets most

of its body there. The Hausa child is supported by a cloth.

If a child be an idiot, or unable to move about, it may be

thrown into the water, " but not killed," so they say, though it

comes to very much the same thing so far as the ordinary person

can see. This usually happens when the child is between the ages

of one and four, but in some cases it may be given a much longer

time in the hope that it will recover and become a normal being.

u It is evidently a snake, and not a human being," so I was told,

" and if, after you have thrown him into the water, you go away,

and then come back silently and hide yourself, you will see the

child lengthen out until it becomes a snake." This custom of

infanticide was prevalent in Jemaan Daroro, and in the sur-

rounding districts also. Matchu, a Filani blacksmith, who

supplied the information, told me that his grandfather, Shobin,

took an idiot boy to the river side, and made him sit with his face

to the stream. He and the boy's father gave the boy some hanu,

or native broth, and while he was eating it they stole away and

climbed a tree overlooking the river. Soon afterwards the boy

glanced round, and, seeing no one, he began to grow until he was as

tall as a tree, turning at the same time into a snake. Shobin and

the father were terrified and ran away, the former tearing his leg

against a log during the flight, the mark, which he had to

the day of his death, being, of course, an indisputable proof of the

story. It is possible that once on some former occasion when a

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child was thrown in, a crocodile or some other monster leapt up

and caught him, thus terrifying the onlookers, and giving rise to

this myth, which really reversed the natural order. And yet, of

course, the child would become part of the crocodile after having

been digested, so perhaps, after all, the myth is correct, and

merely accelerates the physiological processes.

If a Moroa gives birth to an idiotic or deformed baby,

medicines are tried, even up to the age of ten years if

necessary. The mother will nurse it for some time, and if

it does not become normal may leave it with the father, and

marry some one else ; and she will never return to the house

while the child is alive lest its evil influence should prevent

her having normal issue, but she may come back after its

death. When the father is convinced that it is useless to

expect any improvement he calls in a Kagoro or Attakka

priest, who will throw it into the river Kaduna, but he

himself has to hide, for the child turns into a pillar of fire

and smoke, and would consume him if present. The Kagoro and

Attakka have much stronger "medicine" than the Moroa, so

they do the drowning themselves, and it is just possible, judging

from this and from the fact that the time of probation is so

long amongst the Moroa, that the Kagoro taught them the

custom.

Even in the changing of a human being into a pillar of fire

and smoke we have a parallel in English folk-lore, for we find in

The Science of Fairy Tales that Cranmere Pool, on Dartmoor,

was once a penal settlement for refractory spirits, and that many

of the former inhabitants of the parish were thought to be there

expiating their ghostly pranks, the spirit of one old farmer

being so obstreperous that seven clergymen were required to

secure him, and only then did they do so by transforming him

into a colt, which was given to a servant boy with instructions to

take it to Cranmere Pool, and slip off the halter without looking

round. The boy did look, of course, and beheld the colt in the

form of a ball of fire plunge into the water, and the boy lost his

eyesight in consequence. We know what we think of the Moroa

myth ; I wonder what they would think of ours !

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CHAPTER XVII

FOOD AND DRINK

AS I have said before, the amount of filth that the European

takes into his system in West Africa is accountable for

more sickness than the mosquito, but the quantity of dirt

which Europeans eat and drink is easily surpassed by that which

finds its way into the insides of the natives, some of whom seem

to revel in it. Perhaps it is necessary to their digestion, as is,

I believe, the case with dogs, but whether necessary or not, they

certainly get it.

The principal articles of food in the Jemaan Daroro district,

so far as cereals are concerned, are maize, millet, guinea-corn,

and a grain called by the Hausawa atcha, which makes a dish like

ground rice. There are two kinds of beans, the seeds of one

variety being mixed with red earth when being sown, though

I could not ascertain for what reason, and of other vegetables

there are yams, though these are scarce, sweet potatoes, okroes,

manihots, tomatoes (a small wild variety resembling berries),

and onions.

Ground-nuts and other nuts make good soup, and palm-oil is

always a welcome addition to a dish, even Europeans revelling in

" palm-oil chop," which looks like an Irish stew mixed with red

furniture polish, chop here meaning food, and not a cutlet ;

while kola-nuts are being introduced, though they are still very

scarce.

Of fruits there are the paw-paw, the banana, and the edible

parts of the fan-palm, which taste something like mangoes, and a

few limes. Pineapples are not found, though they are to be bought

in Lokoja, and in fact, fruit is very scarce in Northern Nigeria

generally, even limes and bananas being unprocurable in many

districts. Pepper is grown and sold, salt is bought from traders,

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FOOD AND DRINK

or else guinea-corn or other stalks are burnt to produce a saline

condiment ; and honey, black and watery, is obtained from wild

or domesticated bees.

Of meats there are the small rat and mouse, and the bat, all

of which are said to be very good in soup ; beef, stolen from the

Filani should any be about and not particularly watchful ; the

red kob and other species, though I have never seen any myself

in the Kagoro district, the last having been killed some time

ago, I should imagine ; and lastly, the goat, the sheep, and the

dog, the latter a very favourite and ceremonial food. The

guinea-fowl and francolin do not seem to be eaten though

they are found in the district, but the fowl is kept for

sacrifices and for feasts. There are several kinds of fish in

the rivers, the best eating being what the Hausawa caU

tarwada, sl comical-looking creature with long whiskers.

Flour, water, and sometimes a bitter herb, may be cooked and

made into a kind of weak soup, and this may be drunk at any

time, though it is generally prepared in the morning. For lunch,

flour and cold water usually suffice — a cold comfort on a wet

day, but very appetising when on the march in a hot sun,

apparently. After sunset, flour is cooked into a kind of pud-

ding or porridge, and is eaten with meat and soup, and any oil

and spices which may be obtainable.

The morning and evening meals are the only ones which are

cooked, and the former are often not hot, especially when on

the march, the remains of the previous night's repast being

polished off to save trouble. But, needless to say, the people

will eat at all and any times when there is something to be got ;

their appetites never fail them. Cooked meat is carried when

going on a journey, and some dry flour to be mixed with water,

and as these and other things are put in a bag together, the mess

produced is one which many a pet dog in England would turn up

his nose at — and I should not blame him. I have tasted many of

their soups, but I never did more than taste them, for they all

seemed very bitter ; the meat I never attempted — even Hausawa

will eat flesh absolutely rotten, often not even troubling to

cook it.

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FOOD AND DRINK

The head-hunting tribes in the Nassarawa province do not

keep cattle, but some of the people over the Bauchi border do,

even though they do not milk them, and this rather surprises one,

f or the land gives very good pasturage. When the people happen

to be quiet, the Filani graze on the lands, and always have a good

sale for their butter and milk, all the natives seeming to be

staunch advocates of the sour milk cure, and when this is mixed

with flour and water the absolute pinnacle of gourmandism is

reached.

A white earth is sometimes eaten as a charm to secure easy

child-birth, but there seems to be nothing else in this way used as

food, except for the ash mentioned above.

In times of great famine the roots of a small plant are pounded

up and cooked with ashes and water, or oil if available, and there

are a few other articles used at such times, though despised when

the ordinary food-stuffs are obtainable. I am not sure if the head-

hunters eat worms, but I suppose they do. Sir Harry Johnston

says that in Liberia some women eat the lice out of each other's

heads, that delicacy being the perquisite for doing duty as barber.

I do not know if the same holds good in Northern Nigeria, but I

should not be surprised to find that it does amongst Yoruba

people, for they will eat anything.

By the way, that reminds me that one day, when having the

rest-house repaired, I went up to see how the work was progressing,

being accompanied by Ajai, the Yoruba Court Messenger whom

I have mentioned before. I was talking to the Mada(i)ki, who

was in charge of the work, when suddenly Ajai made a dart at a

large stone, rolled it over, and began cramming things into his

mouth with evident satisfaction. I looked, and to my horror

saw that he was eating live insects like cockroaches, and, turning

to the Mada(i)ki, expressed my opinion of Ajai in no polite

terms. " These Yorubawa," said the great man, with a gesture

of supreme disgust, " would eat anything ; / should not eat those

cockroaches unless they were cooked. "

All these tribes are very good agriculturists, the Moroa being

perhaps the best, and they raise a good deal of guinea-corn and

millet every year, but unfortunately they make most of it into

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beer — or as they call it, dkann — so that from June to October

they are usually in a state of semi-starvation, and have nothing to

eat but some bitter roots and what they can buy or steal. It is,

as far as these peoples are concerned (and I am referring only to

them), a pity that the importation of liquor is prohibited, for they

will drink, whatever we do, and if they had the chance to obtain

gin (which would be much less harmful than dkann in the opinion

of the Committee of Inquiry into the Liquor Trade in Southern

Nigeria) they might be able to keep their grain for food, the want

of which is the greatest incentive to robbing their neighbour's

supplies. I do not say that it is better for a native to get drunk

than not to get drunk, though I am strongly of opinion that one

" tot " of whisky or gin after sunset is beneficial to a European in

the tropics. I only say that since these pagans will get themselves

into a glorious state of hilarity on every possible occasion, it is

better that they should be able to do so by buying a special

liquor than by using up their food-stuffs, and thus be forced to

depend on robbery for their livelihood, especially if that special

liquor is less harmful in its effects on their systems. And as far

as the importation of strong drinks into Northern Nigeria is con-

cerned, a good deal is smuggled over the border all along the

boundary line, and even up the Niger, as I know myself from

experience at Lokoja ; and it seems rather absurd that, since there

are profits, the traders should reap them instead of the Govern-

ment, especially as a good deal of the stuff would not be used for

consumption at all, but for currency as in Southern Nigeria. But

when the liquor is consumed the object is not necessarily evil, for

Sir Harry Johnston says that the use of trade-gin in the interior

of Liberia, as in other parts of West Africa, seems to be much

more medicinal than anything else.

The Mohammedans as a whole would be against the introduc-

tion of liquor, in theory at any rate, but all are not alike, for

though very strict in many parts, in others their influence in this

respect seems to be negligible. The Sa(r)rikin Jemaa thought

himself very strict, and was always lecturing his son, the Mada(i)ki,

who was often drunk, but even he seemed to have a good many

colds which could be cured only by frequent doses of whisky.

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I soon got tired of being his doctor, and after about the tenth

time sent him a couple of pills instead, and these I suppose cured

him — at least he had no more of those peculiar colds. Jemaan

Daroro was a very drunken and immoral place, and I fear that

the principal cause was the fact that carriers employed by

Europeans were passing through continually with too much

money to spend. That, I think, is the worst aspect of our

administration ; we overpay all the natives so greatly that they

always have plenty to spend on vice, and since there is a demand,

and at a high price, a supply is soon found.

Every compound has its own storehouses, some of which are

built inside the houses, some outside, and the wife in charge of

each house looks after the food supplies of her own particular

progeny. Cooking is done by the women in the courtyard between

the houses, which is always in the shape of an irregular circle, the

doors of each house opening towards the centre.

Men and women eat their food separately. In the case of the

former, four or more sit round a calabash or two (one containing

the porridge, the other the soup or meat), and each man dips in

one hand and scoops out a handful in turn ; they say that they

use spoons, or in their absence the right hand only, for this pur-

pose, but both statements are only partially true, if indeed there

is any rule in the matter at all, for I have seen them act other-

wise. The women are less sociable, or, rather, are more strictly

controlled, for after having given the men their food they retire

into their houses, and each woman eats with her own daughters

and young sons if she has any, otherwise alone.

The blood of slaughtered beasts is caught in a calabash, and

is then cooked with the fat from the region of the stomach,

and eaten hot. The Hausawa let theirs get cold, and sell it

in the markets cut into cubes like loaf-sugar — and a filthy sweet-

meat it looks. But after all, sausages of pig's blood are eaten

in England ! The head-hunting tribes have no markets, the

nearest approach to anything of the kind being an exchange bv

traders who are usually under the protection of the chief at first,

if of any one ; they sleep in his compound, or in a special house

allotted to them by him, and may barter some of their wares in

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his compound before their departure next day. When the district

has become quite pacified, or the traders have become friendly

with other members of the tribe, they have greater freedom, both

in their business and in their place of residence and length of

sojourn, and as a desire for strange articles usually springs up

very quickly in the human breast, the traders are made welcome.

Still, there are exceptions, for even friendly and quiet tribes may

misbehave occasionally — two Jemaan Daroro men being murdered

after I had arrested the chief of Ambel, it will be remembered —

or conservatives like the Kagoro may refuse to develop new tastes,

and in those cases even the ubiquitous Hausa does not make much

headway. In England, too, the foreign merchants were once the

special care of the king, and a good deal of the special law and

speedy method of justice applicable to them can still be traced in

our legal system, for the English king protected them from his

subjects in order that he himself might plunder them all the more

successfully.

And the mention of England has made me remember how

delicious the fresh bread and butter taste in this country, especially

after the sodden loaves and rancid grease (the Hausawa are right

in calling the local butter by this name) of West Africa. The

beef also is good, very good, perhaps the best in the world ; but I

have never yet tasted a saddle of mutton that could equal those

of my own country, Australia.

Honey, water, and millet flour is a favourite drink, its Hausa

name of buza being rather suggestive, and palm-wine is drunk to

some extent, but the best appreciated liquor, and the one which

is the most important ceremonially, is a beer made from guinea-

corn, called akann by the Kagoro and pito by us.

The method of making the first is as follows. Water and

honey are boiled up together, and are then left to cool, after

which flour is added, and the mixture is well stirred. When

this has been done the liquor is poured off into pots which are

closed with small calabashes or other articles, and mud is

plastered over the points of contact, to make the whole air-

tight. The pots are then placed near the fire, and after having

been warmed for two or three days the liquor will be ready for

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drinking. Palm -wine is, of course, obtained from one or other

of the palm trees in the vicinity, and for this an incision is made

near the top of the tree, and a pot with a narrow neck is placed

underneath, the stream being guided to it by a short, hollow stick

of bamboo. The Kagoro say that if the pots be closed up the

wine can be kept for a month, but I have never known any

native to keep it for more than a day, and I do not think that

any head-hunter in this part would be able to set such an example

of abstinence. When freshly drawn, palm-wine is very refreshing,

reminding me of Chile beer, though without being so sweet or so

hot as that beverage, but when it is stale it is rather bitter and

sour, and leaves anything but a pleasant taste in the mouth

afterwards.

Akann is prepared by soaking guinea-corn in water for a

couple of days ; after that it is poured into pots which are closed

up with leaves of a tree resembling the banana, and left from five

to six days, and, when thoroughly dry, it is ground and put by.

When the feast is some three days off, water is filtered through

the flour into pots, where it is boiled for two days, and, after

having been left to cool for a night, it is ready for drinking, heated

stones being perhaps dipped into the liquid to make it ferment.

I do not think any offerings are made of ordinary food — beer,

flesh, and blood being the only delicacies favoured by the spirits

apparently, but the Hausas always spit out some of the kola-nut

on to the ground as an offering. This probably corresponds

to European practices, for in Germany up to the end of the

eighteenth century some of the porridge from the table was

thrown into the fire, and some into running water, some was

buried in the earth, and some smeared on leaves and put on the

chimney-top for the winds. Relics of this ancient sacrifice can be

found in Scandinavia to-day according to Professor Tylor ; French-

women throw away a spoonful of milk or bouillon, and German

topers say that heel-taps are a devil's offering. Possibly our

custom of leaving something on the plate "for manners" has

a similar origin.

There seem to be no restrictions on the amount or the kind

of food eaten by adults or children, or by males and females,

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except with regard to fowls and dogs ; each person seems to eat

as much as he can get, whenever he can get it.

The Hausawa introduced the tobacco, as the name shows (taba

in both languages), but now a little is grown by the Kagoro

themselves and by other head-hunters, and I saw quite extensive

fields of it on the Kamerun boundary to the south of the Muri

province in 1907.

The Kagoro and even the Jemaan Daroro people smoke it

with ash of atcha, or with potash, not only to make it go further,

but to improve its flavour, though the smoke from potash would

be extremely unpleasant, I should think. Pipes are made of wood

or metal, the former being carved by themselves ; but the latter

are bought from blacksmiths, and are very ill-balanced and

unsatisfactory to all appearances. All pipes are passed from

mouth to mouth. Some of the Jaba wooden pipes are a yard

in length, and have two wooden legs, a couple of inches long,

below the bowl, to rest on the ground. A greater quantity of

tobacco is said to be smoked at beer-feasts than at other times,

but I could not hear of any peculiar rites, though women are not

supposed to smoke.

Tobacco is also snuffed as a remedy for headache, and coils

of the fragrant weed are used to cure other ills and grievances,

for they are one of the various forms of currency in the district —

and money is a wonderful medicine.

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CHAPTER XIX

MUSIC AND DANCING

I HEARD only one Kagoro song — this particular ditty came

originally from the Attakka, I believe — it being sung by a

youth who walked past my tent accompanying himself on a

reed auto-harp. The words, as usual, referred to events which one

expects in a problem-play. These auto-harps are common in the

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eastern part of Northern Nigeria. I have seen them at A mar

(Muri) as well as in Jemaan Daroro. They are made of stiff

reeds some eighteen inches in length, placed side by side, and

fixed in position by being plaited with smaller strips of the same

material. From each reed three strips are cut, but only partially,

in order to leave them still adhering at each end, and these strips

form the strings. They are separated from the reeds by a bridge

at each end, and may be bound around with finer strips, these

resembling the bass wires of a piano, while by sliding separate

rings of the same material up and down, the strings could be

tuned. The plaiting is carried right round to the back of the

auto-harp so as to make a kind of stiff bag, and this, which forms

the sounding-board, is filled with seeds, the player shaking the

instrument to make them rattle while he is twanging the strings.

A skilful musician can get quite a pretty melody out of it, but I

could not manage to do so, although I could play an ordinary

auto-harp.

The Kagoro, and many others also, make flutes from guinea-

corn stalks, the notes being pure and liquid in some cases. I

heard only one tune in Fad a Kagoro, and it was played in thirds

and fifths, but whether by one or two musicians I cannot say, for

I did not see them. I should think, however, that there must

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have been two, for on all the other occasions I have heard these

flutes only one note has been played at a time.

At Mersa, a Kajji town, I saw (and heard) a dance on three

occasions, two being for my own benefit, and one for that of a

chief whom I had just appointed. One Sunday morning two of

us were encamped in the town, and while drowsing in our tents

(I always believe in taking it easy on that day if possible, else

one is stale all the week) we heard sounds like those of an organ

in the distance, and, between sleeping and waking, the mosquito

curtain became a wall paper, and I imagined myself in some beauti-

ful country village on a summer's morning, listening dreamily to a

voluntary being played in a church next door. ... I think that

I must have settled down for another sleep, when I was rudely

brought back to West Africa by a Bature, ba, ka tashi yau ba ?

(" O Whiteman, are you not going to get up to-day ? "), and I

saw at my side the black face of my boy with anxiety written all

over it — not on account of my health, be it understood, but

because he wished to get his work done. That, of course, dis-

pelled the illusion, and I had to get up, for I always try to be

punctual, even on Sundays within limits, for after all one must

consider the dependents to some extent ; they have no chance

of working satisfactorily for an unpunctual master.

I found out afterwards that there was a funeral a couple of

miles off, and as the concluding ceremonies had then taken place,

I had missed a chance of seeing them, but when I visited the

place again, I ordered the chief to have a special performance for

my benefit, and this, of course, he did.

The band first arrived and placed themselves in a circle, the

instruments being a big drum, a small one, and several curved

horns of the antelope from two to three feet long, each having a

hole in one side near the point, converting it into the mouth-

piece, and some eight to twelve inches of hollow gourd fastened

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MUSIC AND DANCING

to the other end to lengthen it. The big drum resembled those

used by us, though it was only about one-quarter the size, but

the smaller one may have a skin large enough to be beaten on

one side only, the body coming almost to a point underneath —

resembling a true kettledrum, in fact — or else it may be a tom-

tom with sides straight or curved like an hour-glass. The latter

is furnished with strings connecting the two rounds of parchment,

pressure on which will alter the note, and these drums are, there-

fore, particularly useful for signalling purposes.

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A few of the players performed solos on their horns, and got

sounds resembling those of a violin out of them, so close were the

intervals, though a French horn would, on the whole, represent

the tone better. While playing, a soloist would go through the

most extraordinary contortions, turning himself almost inside out

in his anxiety to reach the right note, so after about a quarter of

an hour most of them were bathed in perspiration. Music is

evidently a serious business with them, and not to be lightly

undertaken. After standing in a circle for some time, the band

goes through a few simple evolutions, the big drummer advancing

towards the centre and then marching around a few times, being

followed by the side-drummer and horn-players in turn, and all

halt in front of the person especially honoured, and kneel to

receive his reward. They never forget that part, and quite

rightly too.

There were no words to this Kajji music, but soon the people

began to be excited by the wild harmonies, and joined in,

marching round and round the band, taking three steps forward,

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and then one backwards. The older men and women danced

singly, and though the men simply walked sedately, it was

amusing to see the contrast between them and their partners

of the weaker sex, who took quite a pride in their movements,

balancing themselves with their hands out while stepping back-

wards and forwards, and enjoying themselves to the utmost. A

specially good dancer may perform a pas seul, and one, in doing

so, became so much excited that she rushed to where I was sitting

and tried to put her arms around me, greatly to the amusement

of the onlookers. She almost took me by surprise, and I only

escaped by putting up my feet, and by waving my stick at her.

And lest this should seem ungallant, let me say I did not relish

the idea of having clean ducks ruined by a mixture of perspira-

tion and red earth with which she had made herself beautiful for

the occasion. However, a dip into my bag of " tenths " (nickel

coins, ten to a penny) satisfied her, and she was as gay as ever

a minute afterwards, threatening others with like favours (or

penalties) unless bought off with similar bribes.

Young people dance in twos and threes, or even in fours, one

walking close behind the other, and catching hold under the arms

of the person in front, and all keeping exact time. Mothers may

dance singly and carry their babies behind on their backs or on

their shoulders while doing so, and most of the women wag their

tongues from side to side and squeal while dancing, this sound,

which is also used as an alarm on account of its piercing qualities,

being known to the Hausawa as Kururua.

The dance, like the music, is also a solemn performance, and

though the people get worked up after a while, the exercise is not

violent nor joyous, and there seems to be no pleasure in either as

we would regard it. Still, many do become excited, and no

doubt there is some underlying motive which is not apparent

to the ordinary observer, probably connected with religion, the

notes and steps having a special significance understood only by

the natives themselves. The fact that the music and dancing also

form part of the funeral rites lends weight to this supposition,

and it should not be a strange one to us, for dancing has long

been known as a religious rite. It is, therefore, rather amusing

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MUSIC AND DANCING

to hear clergymen denouncing it, though, of course, in many cases

the present form bears but little resemblance to the old, where

(except in the case of the Jews, who were naked before the golden

calf) the sexes danced apart.

Dancing has been known from early antiquity. The Bible

mentions it repeatedly, for the Jews indulged in it when they

emerged from the Red Sea, and also when they made the golden

calf. The young maids of Shiloh were thus occupied in the fields

when surprised and carried off by the youths of the tribe of

Benjamin, and David 44 danced before the Lord with all his

might." In fact, we are told in the last Psalm to praise God

44 with timbrel and dance," and we sing that still. In all these

cases the dance was an expression of praise and thanksgiving, and

there are modern instances of its use for religious purposes, the

Danse Macabre, or Dance of Death, being, according to Professor

Tylor, a kind of pious pantomime of death performed in churches

during the fifteenth century. The reason for the name was that

the rite of the Mass for the Dead was distinguished by the reading

of the portion in Book II. of the Maccabees, which refers to the

prayer of the people that the sins of those who had been slain

among them might be blotted out. Every year, in the parish

church of Musgrave, in Westmorland, there is a dance which is

performed by twelve young maidens, chosen by the vicar, who are

adorned with garlands of flowers. Led by a band, they dance to

the church, where they hang their garlands, which are to be left

there till the following year, and, after prayers and lessons, more

dancing is indulged in, even in the church itself. And such scenes

are frequently seen in continental cities, the ballet performed

in the Seville Cathedral, during the Corpus Christi festival, by

boys, dressed in ancient costumes, being perhaps the most

notable.

Sometimes there is a medicinal virtue in the ceremony, for

in Southern India and Ceylon the devil-dancers work themselves

into paroxysms so as to obtain the inspiration necessary to cure

their patients, and others practise divination and give oracles

while in this condition. A Highland shepherd of Strathspey is

related to have had such healing powers, he having cured his own

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mistress by dancing a reel with her, and afterwards many of the

humbler patients by whom he was continually besieged, and,

scorning to belittle his powers in any way, he, with the usual

Scotch forethought, managed to die a rich man.

I am not quite sure under what category the Bori dancing of

the Hausas should come, the meaning given to bori in Canon

Robinson's Dictionary being " an evil spirit, 1 ' " a demon," or " a

delirious person." But it may mean rather the rites and cere-

monies of a certain sect or society, the members of which — the

Masubori, as they are called — simulate the behaviour of insane

persons, and the condition of frenzy into which they are thrown.

I think myself that " hallucination " is a satisfactory equivalent.

Bori dancing is said by Dr. Alexander to have originated in

the Hausa States, at some time previous to the introduction of

Islam. At first it was a treatment for the insane, but later on,

it was degraded into the teaching and practice of an objection-

able form of dancing, though the origin was still apparent, since

the actions of the dance simulated different forms of insanity.

One of his informants told him that Bori first appeared in a

small village at the foot of a hill near to Bebeji, on the Zaria-

Kano road, but another held that it was started in Jega, a town

near Kano, on the Sokoto road. At any rate Gorje, the present

head of all the Masubori (the Sa(r)rikin Bori) now lives at Jega,

and all the Bori heads, on appointment as such, go there also.

The following are the different kinds or divisions of Bori,

each simulating some kind of insanity, and every Maibori

(" actor " or " dancer," or " person possessed "), who may be

either a male or a female, in most cases will profess one or

more : —

(1) Bori Dan Sa{r)riki (" Hallucination of being a Prince ").

The principal actor does not dance, but remains seated, crying

because his supposed father has not given him a present, or a

dash " (from the Dutch dasje, " a small piece of cloth "), as the

expression is. The other Masubori salute him as a son of a chief,

stand when he stands, and pay him the other usual marks of

respect.

(2) Bori Sa(r)rihin Rafi (" Hallucination of being Head of

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the River," i.e. Chief of the Fishermen, Boatmen, &c). He

pretends to be spearing fish all the time. We know of anglers

even in England — well, perhaps there is no connection.

(3) Bori Dan Ga(l)ladima ("Hallucination of being a Prince"").

He is the highest judge of the sect, appeals being brought to him

from the Court of the Wanzami. If he agrees with the decision

of the latter, he remains seated ; if not, he jumps up and falls

down three times, and then he gives his decision. These first

three are the highest in the order, and are treated by other

members of the sect as if they were really what they pretended

to be.

(4) Bori Wanzami (" Hallucination of being a Barber "). He

does not dance, but pretends to be sharpening his knife or razor,

and to be shaving the head of the Dan Ga(l)ladima. He is the

Alkalin-bori ("Judge of the sect," the word "Alkalin" being

really al kadi na), and is consulted by the members, all of whom

respect his decisions.

(5) Bori Kure ("Hallucination of being a Hyena"). He

goes on all-fours, and pretends to be looking for goats — which,

with the dogs, are the natural prey of that beast.

(6) Bori Mallam Alhaji ("Hallucination of being a Learned

Man and a Pilgrim "). He is present at all marriages within the

sect. He pretends to be old and shaky, and to be counting his

beads with the right hand, and to be looking at a book supposed

to be held in his left, coughing weakly all the time.

(7) Bori Bebe ("Hallucination of being a Deaf Mute"). He

sits alone, with tears running down his cheeks, but makes no

sound.

(8) Bori Sa(r)rikin Filani (" Hallucination of being a Chief of

the Filani w ). He goes round with his staff counting his imagi-

nary heads of cattle, and then presents himself to the Dan

Ga(l)ladima.

(9) Bori Gwari (" Hallucination of being a Gwari Man ")

He wanders about, carrying a load of rubbish on his back, after

the manner of the members of this pagan tribe, whose country is

to the south-west of Zaria.

(10) Bori Sa(r)rikin Bakka (" Hallucination of being a Chief

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of the Bow,' 1 i.e. a Principal Huntsman). He moves about as if

stalking and shooting game.

(11) Bori Tsuguna ( u Hallucination of Squatting"). He lies

on the ground, according to Dr. Alexander. It may be that he

imagines himself to be a dog or a monkey, both of which are

known as " squatters," probably the former, considering the next

division. Thus a proverb goes, 44 The squatting is not finished if

you buy a monkey when you sell your dog," i.e. the matter is not

to be settled in that way.

(12) Bori Birri ("Hallucination of being a Monkey'"). He

climbs trees like this animal.

(13) Bori Aradu. It is rather difficult to render Bori by

" hallucination " here, so perhaps I am wrong. I rather think,

though, that some word is understood, and that the person

imagines himself either to cause the thunderstorm (Aradu) or

to be the spirit of it, for he gets into the possessed state only

during a storm.

(14) Bori Kaikai. This might also be explained in a similar

way, kaikai meaning " the itch." The person is always scratching

his body.

(15) and (16) The Bori Kuruma and the Bori Inna both

pretend that they are afflicted, the former with deafness, the

latter with some other defect, perhaps stuttering.

(17) Bori Mai Jan Chikki (" Hallucination of being the

drawer along of the Stomach "). He crawls with his belly on

the ground, like a snake.

(18) Bori Mai Jan Rua (" Hallucination of having red Water,"

or else, 66 of bringing up water "). He behaves as if he had fever,

and is covered with a black cloth, which is flapped to and fro to

fan him. Under this treatment his stomach gradually swells, and

eventually he vomits and then recovers.

(19) Bori Kuturu ("Hallucination of being a Leper"). He

sits like a leprotic beggar, and hides his legs, pretending that

they have been amputated at the knee-joint. His fingers are also

contracted like those of a leper, and he holds his cap in one hand,

begging for money.

(20) Bori Janjare or Janzirri. I am not quite sure of the

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meaning of this. Canon Robinson gives the meaning of janzirri

as " an evil spirit. 11 I rather think that the word is a corruption

of hanzi?Ti, "a hog, 11 especially considering the habits of this

animal. Dr. Alexander says that this is the worst form of Bori,

and is almost akin to insanity. If not forcibly prevented, the

person possessed will rush round looking for all kinds of filth, and

eating it, also rubbing the body with it, though an onion pushed

into the mouth at once is said to be an effectual cure. Perhaps

it ought to be noted that some of the ingredients of the medicine

for small-pox are very nauseating, at any rate in Jemaan Daroro,

and that many people will rub dirt on their bodies to make them-

selves repulsive — especially women when afraid of capture — so the

idea is not so horrible to the Hausa as it is to us.

(21) Bori Bardi ("Hallucination of being an important

person, 11 perhaps from the word meaning " cavalry 11 ). He is

always in the forefront of the dancers.

After the conquest of the Hausa States by the Mohammedan

Filani, at the beginning of last century, Bori was forbidden in

the large cities. But though any one practising it was severely

flogged for a first offence, and perhaps put to death for a second,

it still flourished in the smaller towns and villages. Later on, it

was recognised and tolerated even in the cities, for a special tax

on the Masubori was levied annually, the amount ranging from

5000 to 200,000 cowries for each town, the value of the cowrie

varying from 4000 to one shilling in Ilorin to about one quarter

of that number in Bornu. It is not quite certain who reaped

the benefit of this tax, but probably it was divided amongst the

chiefs and headmen, and was more in the nature of a bribe

to ignore the practices than a properly authorised source of

revenue. After our occupation, it developed a more legal

form, but serious steps are now being taken to abolish the per-

formances.

It is amongst the Hausa, Nupe, and Egbirra people that Bori

is held most in favour. There is another kind also, called

Kwaga, amongst the Kanuri of Bornu, which seems to be purely

a state of hysteria in some cases, of fever or other sickness

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due to exposure in others, the attack being described as com-

mencing with a fit of shivering, after which the skin becomes

hot, especially in the case of one who has sat under a tree, or near

to water, where a bad spirit lives. A case illustrating this came

to Dr. Alexander's notice, a soldier's wife being admitted to

hospital with a temperature of 103\*6°. The woman's eyes were

staring, and she pretended at first to be unable to speak,

although quite conscious of what was said to her. The fit

passed away very quickly after her admission, and her tempera-

ture yielded to the usual quinine treatment for malaria, so the

case was diagnosed as such. I was asked to see a Hausa woman

in Jemaan Daroro, who was so badly possessed with Bori that

she could not be brought out of her fit. I threatened her with

imprisonment, for she was shrieking and disturbing the peace

generally, and there was an immediate improvement, so I have

no doubt that in the Hausa form also hysteria plays a great part.

At the same time, I am far from saying that the whole thing is a

pretence, in fact I am sure it is not so.

Bori seems to have originated as a treatment for insanity, as

has been mentioned before, the idea being that those who were

really insane would be thereby less likely to commit acts of

violence. It must be remembered that lunatics are never shut

up amongst these pagan peoples, being regarded as people

specially set apart by the gods. Extended study may determine

the relationship between Bori proper and epileptic fits. Later

on the treatment was adopted by a class called Karua (consisting

of males and females who would amongst us be called " very

fast") in order to attract more attention. And later still, young

children, generally girls, who were not thriving, or who were

criminally or morbidly inclined, were subjected to the influence,

being supposed to be possessed of some evil spirit which had to

be exorcised. To be accused of Bori, therefore, is not necessarily

a disgrace, though many men have objected to their wives

practising it. Any one of any age may learn it on payment of

the usual fees, so the right to initiation is not hereditary, i.e. there

is no strictly observed caste of Masubori.

The initiation, or treatment, may be carried out at the house

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of the District Head of the sect— the Ajenge— or even at that of

the patient, except among the Nupe tribe. In addition to the

tuition fee, the amount of which varies according to the circum-

stances of the candidate, the following are necessary : — A house

for the sole use of the initiate and tutor, a shelter for the Maigoge

(one of the musicians, as explained later), a large new jar, four

fowls (a white cock and hen, a red cock, and a black hen), money

for the Uwar Tuo (literally, " mother of porridge ") who supplies

the food, three grass mats — one each for the candidate, the

Maigoge^ and the Uwar Tuo — one large ram, one small black

he-goat, one white cloth, and one black cloth.

Some days are auspicious, others not apparently, and so a

consultation takes place between the Ajenge and the Maigoge in

order to fix the date (always a Friday) on which to commence

the treatment. When this has been done, the Ajenge goes alone

into the bush, and collects the necessary herbs and bark, the

number of ingredients varying from forty-eight to one hundred

and two, depending upon the season of the year and the part of

the country. The Ajenge returns the same day, and keeps the

material collected in his house for three days, after which it is

put out in the sun. Then the bark is stripped off the wood, and

put on one side, the remainder being put into a new pot together

with pepper of two kinds, and onions, and on this water is poured

and left for two days. The water is then poured off, boiled,

mixed with millet flour, and made into a pap, which is put back

into the pot and stirred up with the medicines there. After two

days more the treatment will begin.

The bark, which had been placed on one side, is pounded up

in a mortar, and by a process of fanning is divided into fine and

coarse. The former is given by the Ajenge to any Masubori who

may be present, to be kept by them for curing any one possessed

by Bori, the powder being placed on hot coal, when the fumes will

cause the patient to sneeze, and so recover. The coarse powder is

mixed with atcha, and made into a firm porridge.

All is now ready, and the candidate enters the house, clothed

in white — the hairy parts of the body being shaved in a man, the

hair being teased out in a woman — and accompanied by a couple

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of selected tutors, or perhaps by only one. The firm porridge is

emptied out on to a part of the floor, and every morning the

candidate kneels and eats it, without using the hands, and so

acquires the power of being able to fall without hurting himself.

No reliable account could be obtained of what happened in

the house, nor of the ceremonies performed there, but there is

always music outside, the Maigoge and the Maikiddan Kwaria

playing until tired, and carrying on again when rested.

The longest period of initiation is forty days with all the

tribes, but the shortest time varies, being twenty -five days

amongst the Egbirra, ten amongst the Hausawa, and as low

as six amongst the Nupe ; but in the case of the last named, the

treatment takes place in the bush. When it is complete, the

candidate is taken to the bush, if not already there, followed

by a crowd of fully qualified Masubori, and is led to a selected

tamarind tree, the trunk of which has been wrapped around with

the black and white cloths before referred to, which become later

the property of the tutor. The small black goat is killed near

the tree, the meat is cooked and eaten, and playing and dancing

go on all the time round the tree from right to left. Then the

initiate is carried home, arms held up in the air, on the shoulders

of a Maibori, who receives a reward for his trouble, and more

dancing takes place near some big tree, a baobab if possible, and

the ceremony is complete. After that, the initiate's friends are

informed as to the particular kind, and the number of degrees

conferred. The dancing round the tamarind and baobab trees

may be for the object of propitiating the evil spirits which dwell

there, all Masubori being afraid of them.

Every subdivision has its Sa(r)rikin Bori, who may be a man

or a woman, elected by the members. When the Masubori wish

to elect a head they give a present to the chief of the town in

which they live, and he formally nominates the person whose

name was given to him at the time. The Sa(r)riMn Bori is

responsible for the behaviour of the members under his charge,

the collection of taxes due from them, &c., but he is again under

the Head of the District, the Ajenge, who also may be male or

female. This person collects the necessary bark and leaves of

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trees for medicines, and arranges for and receives tuition fees,

which are his sole perquisite. He carries a staff', which is stuck

in the ground when a performance is taking place, in order to

keep off any antagonistic spirits.

For the foregoing, I am mainly indebted to the report in The

Supplement to the Northern Nigeria Gazette, for August 1910, and

in parts I have quoted it almost verbatim, rearranging the matter,

however, and adding a good many explanations where considered

necessary. I have been present at the dance on a number of

occasions, in places as wide apart as Amar in Muri and Konta-

gora, and in all I have seen the same performances were enacted.

The Masubori squat round in a ring, the spectators standing

outside. The Maigoge (literally, "the doer of rubbing"), or

fiddler, leads the music, playing on an instrument resembling

what is popularly known as a Chinese violin, of very primitive

construction. There may be one or more of these, and also men

playing on other instruments, the chief of which is the Maikwaria

(" the doer of the calabash "), who plays with two short sticks

on an upturned gourd placed upon the ground. Lastly, there is

the Dan Ma'aba ("little flatterer," i.e. herald), who makes the

necessary announcements, and, as he picks up his living as best

he can, he is certain to be complimentary. Every chief has one

or more, and some have dwarfs, who correspond in some degree to

the jester of ancient England.

The master of ceremonies is the Uban Mufane, who takes

all the offerings, handing them afterwards to the Magajia

(" Heiress,"" or " Princess "), who gives two-fifths to the musicians,

and the remainder to the dancers. Another duty of the Magajia

is to see that none of the female dancers expose the person.

Some of the dancers go round and round in a circle until they

have worked themselves up into a condition of hypnotic-like

unconsciousness, with eyes fixed and staring. Others accomplish

the same desirable feat sitting down. Suddenly one will begin

squealing or roaring, jump up in the air and come down flat on

the buttocks, which have probably been padded for the occasion

by tying on extra clothes round the waist and between the

legs. The buttocks strike the ground with violence, the women

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especially being usually heavy for their height; but the dancer

is not content with this, she also beats various parts of her body

on the ground, and eventually passes into a state of momentary

insensibility, after which the normal condition is regained.

All deny that they feel any pain when thus ill-treating them-

selves, but many become greatly exhausted in the process, one

means of reviving them being by pressing backward each uplifted

arm some three times in succession, though this appears to be

mostly a formal act. Another is to pour kola-nuts or cowrie

shells into the mouth of the performer, who does not really

swallow them, but spits them out to be collected and taken to the

Uban Mufane. A mat is spread out in front of him or of the

musicians, or both, and the onlookers are usually very generous

in their rewards, the gifts being poured into the dancer's mouth

when kneeling down in front of a likely donor (the fit does not

seem to affect their judgment in this respect), or by throwing

them on to the mats, or anywhere within the ring. The dance

goes on until all are exhausted, or the gifts run out, and then

comes the division of the spoil.

There are many tunes, each form having its special air, ac-

cording to Dr. Alexander, but the following seems the principal

one, as I have heard it on every occasion. Our notation prevents

my giving it exactly, the " D " being as much Db as DCf, and the

" B " as much Bb as here written ; and another thing which makes

the air difficult to write is the fact that the native violinists are

not particularly exact in their stopping.

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There is a dance for women only amongst the Hausa, and

though they pretend to fall down, I doubt if there is any con-

nection between it and Bori. I have seen it only twice, viz. at

Jemaan Daroro, and at a town three miles off, called Dangoma,

during the feast of Ramadan, so the dance may have a Moham-

medan origin.

Women in groups of four stand round in a circle, the musi-

cians — drummers only in this case — standing or sitting outside.

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One woman out of every group advances, and waltzes twice round

the circle, then returning to her companions and throwing herself

backwards, but being prevented from actually touching the ground

by the others, one of whom catches an arm on each side, the third

the head, the dancer keeping her body quite stiff. Some of the

women fling themselves back with violence when excited, but they

are seldom allowed to fall right down, although they seem to like

going as far as possible. After the first has had her turn, the

second does likewise, and when all have finished they begin again ;

and the dance continues for hours at a time, there being plenty

of other women waiting to take the place of any falling out

through fatigue.

As an exercise, too, dancing is not to be despised, as any one

who is out of form or has had much experience of village hall

floors will know. The soldiers of Crete and Sparta went into

battle dancing, and a few years ago our Admiralty (following the

example of the United States authorities at West Point) included

dancing in the curriculum at the Dartmouth Naval College, not

with the idea of giving the cadets pleasure, of course, but for the

purpose of improving their carriage and their health, many of

the movements being really gymnastics in a pleasant disguise.

Possibly the hammock-dancing of Sierra Leone should be in-

cluded in this class, the performer swinging himself on a ham-

mock between two poles some forty feet in height, and turning

himself over and over, or balancing his body like Blondin. He

has to be worked into a state resembling hysteria before he will

commence his performance.

The dance may portray incidents in history — we have a

pageant taking place even at this moment — or it may be em-

ployed to represent special events, such as a battle. Takai is a

much more sedate game, and is played by both sexes, the males

being armed with short sticks. Half go in one direction round

the circle, half the other, and each pair of players, as they

meet each other, either hit each other's sticks (three times,

if I remember rightly) if they be men, or clap hands if they be

women. I am not sure what the origin of the game is, nor

what is its signification ; I saw it only once, some six years

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ago, at a town between Zungeru and Zaria, and I had no time

just then to stay and make inquiries. It is probable that it

represents a battle, particularly as the word takaichi means

" hatred 11 ; or again, the name may come from taka, 66 to beat

down," though the former seems to be the more likely derivation.

At any rate, the facts that the men are armed while the women

are not, and that the parties coming in opposite directions attack

each other, are suggestive of some such origin for the game.

Then again, dancing, perhaps combined with singing, may be

employed as a means of specially honouring an important person,

as in the case of Jephtha's daughter, and later with Saul and

David, the mention of David's ten thousands on that occasion

being the cause of all the subsequent trouble between them.

The best known instance in British West Africa is perhaps that

of the Ashanti chiefs, who dance by themselves, and in silence,

only before the Governor or some other high official. There was

also the instance of the Kajji performance to honour me, and it is

just possible that the Toff chief performed his gymnastics for a

similar reason. In Ilorin it was performed by two Yoruba

women after the installation of the Baloguns or subordinate

chiefs.

But it is usually indulged in as a sign of joy and gladness,

and in that signification it is most familiar to us, though there is

not any baser meaning amongst Europeans, except in particular

forms, such as the " Can-Can." With native tribes, however,

there is no doubt that such an idea is often the raison d^etre, not

only in Biblical times, as in the case of "the children of the

wicked " in the days of Job, and Salome, but even to-day, and I

saw one at Randa, a Ninzam town, the meaning of which was too

evident to be mistaken, the fact being worth mentioning because

lascivious dances are seldom performed by men, especially when

alone. Two men had small drums, the rest, standing in a circle,

held short sticks in their right hands, and after singing the

refrain several times, all shivered backwards and forwards in a

violent manner. They then walked around the circle a couple

of times, afterwards resuming their places, and singing and acting

as before. Strangely enough, the words of one of the two tunes

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had no very apparent connection with the actions, they having

been learnt from the Mada, who had evidently got them from the

Hausawa, though the airs may have been local. The translations

were, "Our town is full of young girls, the youths will have

pleasure, ,, and " Search for the whiskered one, ignore the saluta-

tion." What this latter means, I do not quite know, and the

performers could not explain, but I think that it signifies that

girls prefer young men to old, for the Hausawa (from whom the

words have come) have another song, "I do not like a hairy

person, the hairs prick me."

Another Hausa song and dance I noted in Jemaan Daroro, in

this case the women being the sole performers ; and one I heard

in Prahsu (Fanti) had obscene words sung to a hymn tune,

which seems rather an unnecessary insult to our missionaries.

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There are some songs not accompanied by dances, of course,

many of them being very pretty, the serenade to the chiefs taking

my fancy particularly, though it might have been played on an

instrument with rather a sweeter tone than an algaita, which

sounds like something between a clarionet and the bagpipes,

though with only a single note at a time.

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One salutation, or song of praise, I heard in the Ankwoi

country as we marched, the verse — a string of compliments to the

great men of the party — being sung by one man, the rest joining

in the chorus with an " O " or an " Urn, 1 ' or repeating the last

few words in a lower key.

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Two other salutations are very general and are played all

over Hausaland on long brass trumpets shaped like coach-horns,

which may be in different keys. The words to the first are

Ga shi, Ga shi (" See him. See him and to the second Ka sauka

lafia, Ka sauka Iqfia (" May you alight in health, May you alight

in health," i.e. arrive safely).

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And there was another song which I heard in Lokoja, sung by

a boy from Cape Coast Castle, to which place I believe the air

belongs. It, like most of the repertoire, goes on ad libitum and

ad nauseam. I do not know how it ends, I never heard it end

naturally.

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There are other instruments, the syrinx for instance, and

flutes of different shapes, which are much too numerous to be

described here. The xylophone is found in many parts of West

Africa, though not amongst the head-hunters, and the guitar in

various forms is common, particularly amongst the Hausas.

The most primitive music can be reduced to rhythm alone,

according to Dr. Deniker, and so the earliest instruments were

objects used simply to beat time, the present representatives

being triangles, cymbals, castanets, and bones. The drum was a

stage further, though it might be only a cloak of opossum skin

stretched between the thighs, as in Australia. Drums of different

keys were then introduced, some — kettle-drums — being still used

in our orchestras, while others give a succession of notes by being

compressed, as we have seen. The xylophone is also a percussion

instrument, and so is the sansa, a kind of musical box played

with the fingers by some negroes.

Of wind instruments the most ancient is probably the flute,

or the shepherd's pipe, it being the most easily made, and no

doubt the clarionet developed from it, while the introduction of

brass gave the musician a wider range in his choice of the sounds

with which to gladden the heart of man.

The bow was the first stringed instrument, the negroes of

Angola playing on it even now, according to Deniker, by means

of a sliding ring, and some forms of the Hausa guitar are merely

a bow fixed to a sounding-board of gourd and parchment. The

reason for this is easily seen when we remember that the Arabs

twanged their bow-strings to accompany their war songs when

marching to battle. Professor Ridgeway shows that both the

harp of Northern Europe and the conventional lyre of Greece

were evolved from the shooting- bow, which was bent up, the

place of the string being taken by a wooden cross-piece from

which the new strings were stretched, and later on, a sounding-

board was found in the back of the tortoise, and in other countries

in a gourd. From a round gourd, or the round end of an oblong

gourd, came the banjo, brought to America by West African

slaves, while from the oval gourd came the mandolin, both of

which are merely shooting-bows with resonators. And the same

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authority explains the passage in 2 Samuel i. 17, by stating that

David taught the children of Judah the use of a musical instru-

ment, not of a shooting-bow, with which they must have been

long acquainted, his opinion being supported by the statement

of the prophet Micah that David was an inventor of musical

instruments.

But even the most uncivilised peoples have composite instru-

ments, such as the gora of the Bushmen, and the process of

combination has kept pace with the improvement in the instru-

ments themselves, so that we can nowadays, by simple movement

of the fingers, perform on strings (as in the piano), or on a wind

instrument (the organ), or latest of all, in the case of piano-

players, we can use wind to play upon strings by percussion.

I used to wonder why all the native songs are in the minor key !

They are usually sad, and have a haunting note in the melody.

It is almost impossible to represent the exact sounds on a piano,

because many of the chords are not recognised by European ears.

I have made a better attempt at rendering them on the instru-

ment itself than in the score, for, although vague chords can be

played, they cannot be written with any satisfaction so far as I

know, the scale, which differs from ours, being determined by

their instruments. The British soldier loves to sing songs of the

"Break the news to Mother " order, and seems to delight in the

most harrowing details of misfortune and death ; so perhaps the

native's predilection for the minor key is not so very extra-

ordinary after all. I myself can understand it now, for when

I had fever once I composed a " Dead March," my only worry

being that I could not have it written out and played at my

funeral should it take place then. It did not, however, and the

March, which I have called <c Dis-Mal-Aria," will be in time after

all ; and perhaps I had better write down the reasons for the

name lest they be lost to the world, and so much deep thought

on my part wasted. Dismal Aria and Malaria will be plain

enough to most, but (and here is where the appalling genius

comes in) Mai Aria would be a Frenchman's description of the

tune, and Dis-Malaria (being a negative) signifies that there will

be no fever hereafter if it has done its worst on earth.

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MUSIC AND DANCING

The argument is as follows : —

The first movement pictures an official in the throes of

malarial fever (mf\ and after a repeated dose of it (the fever,

not the tune), he passes peacefully (pp) away. The second move-

ment represents the delight of the next man in order of seniority

— he is getting on in years (Forte) — who, by becoming sharp (the

other was rather a flat), gets himself into the vacancy thus left

further up the scale (in the treble). But the promotion proves

to be too fast and furious iff), for, although he does not exactly

lose his head (Da Capo), he also falls a victim to the ever-recurring

malarial fever (mf again) ; and once more there is a vacancy in

the higher places, caused not by " Crossing the Bars," but by

leaving them empty.

However bright one feels oneself, it is impossible to play

tunes in that spirit on the native wind-instruments, on account

of the position of the holes. I had a band at Amar composed of a

policeman, who played the algaita, and six boys who banged the

various drums and cymbals, the latter being made out of empty

cartridge-cases by the local blacksmith. I taught them u Home,

Sweet Home," " Auld Lang Syne," 44 The British Grenadiers,"

and 66 Ninety-Five," by whistling the tunes, or playing them over

and over again until they had grasped them, on a wheezy travelling

harmonium, which I had borrowed from one of the black clerks

(who are always strong on hymns), but the effect of the minor

key was rather strange, especially as some of the notes could not

be played at all, and so I had to improvise substitutes. Never-

theless, the marching improved wonderfully, and the band were as

proud of themselves as are any regimental musicians in London.

The natives have good memories and a wonderful instinct of

rhythm, and had I had time, I should have had quite a famous

orchestra in the end ; but, alas, time brought me to the end of

my tour, as space has to the end of this chapter.

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DIS-MAL-ARIA

PP Dead slow.

MUSIC AND DANCING

fee:

m

Forte.

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1 1-

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trrtz

2 3

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CHAPTER XX

A PUNITIVE PATROL

THE recall of the patrol had most unfortunate consequences, as

I had anticipated, and by the end of June over a dozen

Ninzam towns were fighting each other, the casualties being

seven killed and forty-two wounded, according to the report of

the District Headman, and to complicate matters still more the

Waiwai people farther to the south had taken courage, and were

busy collecting heads too.

Owing to the massacre of an Assistant-Resident and his escort

in the Zaria province a little while before, the narrow escape of

another in Bauchi, and my little experience in Ninzam, orders had

been sent to Political Officers that they were not to take any risks

which it was possible to avoid, and it also began to dawn on

headquarters that all was not well in the Pagan Belt ; so when I

again applied for troops a Punitive Patrol was granted.

There are several grades of these. First there is the escort of

eleven men which a Political Officer may take on demand from the

officer commanding the detachment, and this was the usual pro-

cedure. If a greater number is required, the consent of the

Governor must be previously obtained (except when the circum-

stances are very urgent) and a military officer is detailed to com-

mand those of his men who form the escort, as was the case when

we went to the Toff country. The next class is the Patrol, and

this may be for purposes of " peaceful penetration," which usually

ends in fighting, or it may be necessary for the arrest of some

important chief or powerful criminal. All these are in theory for

peaceful purposes, and, except in the pagan countries, there will not

be much excitement ; but last come the Punitive Patrol and the

Expedition, both of which, being intended to fight, are composed

of more men, and are more liberally supplied with ammunition.

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A Punitive Patrol was sanctioned at last, as I have said, and

the new officer commanding at Jemaan Daroro and I went to

Akwa on the 17th July, where we met the Keffi contingent —

really met them this time. Its strength was two Europeans,

eighty native rank and file, and some hundred carriers and others,

while we from Jemaa numbered the same as the similar party the

previous April, except that I had some fifty chiefs and followers

with me.

Owing to the rivers being in flood the marches were very slow,

for we had to wade through the shallow streams, and cross many

of the bigger ones by means of suspension bridges made of " tie-

tie." It was quite a gymnastic feat for us Whitemen to get over

some of them, but the poor carriers with their loads had a very

much harder task, and in fact a few were so much frightened that

they were unable to do so unaided, and as not more than about

three could be on the bridge at the same time on account of the rock-

ing, our progress was exceedingly slow. However on the 19th we

reached Zambur, where shelters had been erected for us by three

friendly Ninzam chiefs, one of whom was the father of the wife

whom Awudu had murdered, and so was on our side, of course.

And, on arrival, I sent word to the surrounding rebels to come in

at once and submit, or expect immediate punishment.

It might be as well to state before going further what the pro-

cedure is on these occasions, for, though war is always cruel, we

err, if at all, on the side of leniency. Even when on a Punitive

Patrol every opportunity is given to the offenders to repent in

time, arms being employed only in the last resort, and sometimes,

even after the last ultimatum has been refused and the force has

been formed up for attack, an extra message is sent, saying how

soon we shall advance. The people are always warned to get

their women and children out of the way, in case they have not

already done so, and, if punishment has to be inflicted, it is

finished as soon as possible.

It is rather sad to think that it should be necessary at all, but

in a dangerous country stern measures must be taken, for were no

notice taken of an attack — or even an affront — to one European,

the next one would probablv be murdered, and there could be no

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control whatever maintained over people whose respect is given

only to those who can enforce it. Again, it would never do to let

every one off scot free directly they gave in, for they might

invariably give trouble when the Resident was alone, and always

give in and escape punishment on the appearance of a patrol ; a

criminal in England does not go unpunished because he gives

himself up when escape is out of the question. Nor would it do

to promise that there would be no penalty, and yet to inflict one

on their submission, for that would put an end to all confidence

in the representatives of the Government. The only fair way is to

impose a general fine on the people of the town concerned, and special

penalties on the principal culprits, with the warning that unless

the conditions are complied with by such and such an hour force

will be resorted to, and this is what usually happens in such cases.

Of course it would not do to lay down conditions impossible

of fulfilment by the particular people concerned, but the Political

Officer (who orders everything prior to the actual hostilities) will

know the capacity of the town, and after all we are not naturally

unjust. We still have the same feelings of pity as our fathers

and brothers at home ; we do not necessarily develop into wild

beasts because we live in a dangerous country, though one would

think so sometimes to read the papers. Perhaps, on the whole,

we have a good deal more true sympathy with the natives, for we

know them as they really are, whereas many of the arm-chair

philanthropists gather their information from Uncle Tom's Cabin,

or from reports of the proceedings after the Indian Mutiny. I

have heard men laugh at the idea of some miserable prisoner

having been a dangerous chief ; but an armed savage, free, excited,

and in command of an armed horde which has been worked up to

fever heat, is a very different-looking person to a cowed convict

whose spirit has been broken. Those men might not have been

so ready to smile had they seen him in his natural character, and

in his own country. No doubt a trussed Englishman is not a very

terrible spectacle to the cannibals who are about to eat him,

though when free and armed he was not exactly an enemy who

could be despised.

No reply having come to my messages, we attacked three

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towns on the following day, and had a little fighting, but there

was not much resistance, and, beyond securing some food (which

was set off' as part payment of a fine), the day was not very

eventful.

On the 20th we did the same thing in a different direction,

and the following day went to Ungual Kaura, Fada Wate, and

Ungual Maitozo to look up my old friends there. Alas, they

had not the manners to wait for us, and we received no warm

welcome such as we had been led to expect, but we destroyed the

houses as a punishment. As I have said before, I had to hang the

chief of Ungual Kaura, and his brother gave out that because I

had taken his (the chiefs) head he would have mine. I sent to

him to say that I was bringing it for him, though upon my own

shoulders for convenience 1 sake, so it was exceedingly impolite of

him to be out when I called. He came to Jemaan Daroro after-

wards to repent, and I installed him as the new chief ; for West

Africa is a country where bygones are allowed to be bygones, and

he was the next heir to the position, and the best man available

for it.

There was one man whom I was very anxious to catch, namely,

the lame Mada(i)ki of Fada Wate who had stabbed the carrier, and,

hearing that he was hiding on the farm some five miles away, we

started off about 3.30 next morning to surprise him . Unfortunately

the rear of our party lost its way, and took the wrong road, and

we were thereby delayed so long that it was daylight before we

arrived, and the birds were of course flown. A house was pointed

out to us as his hiding-place, and we charged up, the O. C. in his

shirt sleeves cheering his men on, his boy following close up with

his sword, I with a walking-stick (I did manage to hit a man with

it once), the doctor with his umbrella, and the subaltern with a

golf-stick — quite an awe-inspiring party — and were fearfully

disgusted at finding the place empty. When we looked around

and saw each other we burst out laughing, though before that

the excitement had prevented our seeing anything incongruous

in our appearance. We managed to get some of the missing

man's property, though, and entered it as part of the fine, and we

heard afterwards that we had been within five yards of a hole in

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which he was hiding at the time. He was killed in action last

year.

The chief of Amar, one of the biggest of the Ninzam towns,

had been friendly in March, but had meanwhile gone over to the

other side, and so we had to pay him a visit too. It was rather

hard luck on him, for he was forced into it to a certain extent,

and we were not too severe on Amar ; but he was evidently not

beloved by his gods, for he came out against us, and, as luck

would have it, he was wounded in the foot, thus, on the whole,

doing rather badly.

On the 24th we went to Randa, another Ninzam town, where

shelters had been erected for us, and, having had a pretty hard

week, we determined to rest on the next day, Sunday, when I

managed to get the song given elsewhere. Here I heard that the

Waiwai, a tribe living on two big hills near Randa, had attacked a

Ninzam town after we had been there, and, although I myself was

quite entitled to punish the people for their misbehaviour, I was

not going to allow any one else to do so — in fact their payment of

tribute implies an obligation on our part to protect them against

others — so I determined to visit these gentry.

The Waiwai are an offshoot of the Mada tribe, being head-

hunters and, of course, slavers. They had never been visited by

any one before, and were rather sceptical of the Whiteman's power

to enter their towns, so I thought that their conquest would be an

excellent lesson to the surrounding tribes who were terrorised by

them. Again, as if to make certain that we should come, an

impertinent message was sent to us, asking why we did not fight

them as well as the Ninzam, and saying that if we did come they

would provide a suitable reception. I knew that all the surrounding

towns would hear of this, and there was now no help for it, though

I cannot say that we were much disappointed at the turn events

had taken, for I had several scores to pay off against the tribe.

On the 26th, therefore, we left about 5.30 a.m., and reached

the first village, Ungual Ancho, at 8.10. Passing through this,

which was empty, we advanced towards a steep and narrow path

leading to the next village, and we were about half way up when,

suddenlv, the familiar sound of c< thith, thith " was heard, and

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arrows began falling around us, coming from a hill just opposite

the path. The O. C. sent the advance guard on at a run, and

they, mounting the rise, were able to fire over our heads, and

dislodge the assailants. Then, leaving a section to watch the

place until the carriers and rear-guard had passed, we pushed

forward and were soon engaged in front. However, the resistance

soon eased off, and by 10 o'clock we were able to have breakfast.

That finished, we split into two parties, the O. C. and the

doctor going along the top of the hills, and the Jemaa subaltern

and myself (the two fat ones of the party) taking the lower

ground. The upper column was soon engaged, and, after about

ten minutes, its bugler sounded the " assembly " several times in

succession, so I brought up the Maxim, the other section covering

our passage from below. We had to pass close to high grass on

the way, and, seeing it waving, we knew that a little surprise

party was waiting for us there ; so we managed to find a higher

path to the left, thus out-ambushing the ambush, and, when

above the patch, poured in several volleys, the yells telling us that

our suspicions had been correct. If they had only kept still, we

might have gone straight on, and been " scuppered ,1 beautifully,

for we were in a hurry to press forward, as the upper column was

evidently in difficulties.

Our way was now clear, and we soon rejoined our comrades,

who we found had been attacked by this very party (but on

their left flank and rear) at the same time as a larger body

was disputing their advance from the front. The rout of the

ambush and the arrival of the Maxim soon put matters on a

different footing, and, after a while, the opposition melted away,

and we got into a more open spot, whence we could see Waiwais

running in all directions towards the Mada country to the south.

The next village we came to was built on the lower side of

one of the hills, and we found many natural caves formed by big

boulders of rock. Some of these were inhabited, and one or two

men had somewhat unpleasant surprises on entering them, but

the resistance was really over, and as darkness was coming on,

and also the rain, we started on our march back to Randa,

having had a long and tiring day.

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About two hundred men from this place had come with us,

wearing strips of bark round their foreheads to show that they

were friend! ies, and the stock captured was handed over to them

to take back to our camp. We had hardly started when a

tornado came down, and our journey home was anything but

pleasant. As we got near the town a lot of Randa men managed

to run away with their charges, and this disgusted us very much,

considering that our fight that day would probably do the people

of Randa more good than those of any other town, for the

Waiwai had always terrorised them. However, even that was

not so bad as our experience at Zambur and Fada Wate,

where we found that some of the carriers had killed and

hidden many of the sheep and goats en route, and were

sneaking back to eat them after dark. A European will get

a lot of disappointments if he looks for gratitude in a native ;

there is no past for a black man, there is no future, the

present is the only time he is interested in. After all, why should

he bother? He is much happier thus, and even those whom

we protect would prefer our room to our company, forgetting

that did we go they would be as much a prey to the stronger

tribes as they were before our arrival.

I had managed to save a woman who ran out of a cave just

under where I was standing, recognising just in time that she was

a woman by the baby on her back, and I sent her to the people

to say that they had received their lesson, and would have to

come to Jemaa to submit formally on my return, and that if

they did so we should thenceforward be friends instead of

enemies. I am glad to say that most of them did so, and,

although it is too much to hope that they will drop all their

quaint habits straight away, there is no doubt that, as a great

deal of their self-esteem was shattered, and their evil influence

abolished, they will think twice in future about inciting other

tribes to resist. So long as the Waiwai were untouched they

tried to persuade the Ninzam to fight, they raided surrounding

peoples as they pleased, and other tribes, seeing them so

happy (in a head -hunting sense), naturally tried to follow their

example.

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This is always a problem in such a country as Northern Nigeria ;

the Government cannot lay down a rule that the limit of control

will extend so far and no farther, for the tribes inside the

boundary will always want to know why they are forced to

obey when those in the next hills are left alone (not under-

standing the " imaginary line drawn from A to B,"" &c), and so

the boundary has to be constantly extended. Again, these tribes

are nearly always deadly enemies, and to prevent one under our

protection fighting another not so blessed, while still leaving the

people open to the attacks of their old foes, would be the height

of injustice. A wild tribe will often attack one paying tribute

simply because of this very fact (do not wild birds kill a tame

one?); and if by taking their tribute we assume the suzerainty

over them, it is only our duty to give them something in return,

namely, protection. And apart from the question of justice, it is

wise on account of policy, for natives soon realise the difference

between a good and a bad bargain.

We rested on the following day, and on the 28th went to

Ankirra, where the Mada(i)ki of Jemaan Daroro, the District

Headman, had been stoned a month or two before, and, after

staying a couple of days without having any trouble, we went

on to Giddan Sa(r)rikin Ambel.

On our way we passed Tare, the people retreating as we

advanced, though there was some resistance, and later on an

attack was made on a small escort sent back with a mail-

runner. We had not sufficient time to return then, but a

note was made of it for future reference, and the town was

subdued last year, though whether finally or not I cannot say, for

it has given trouble every year since our arrival.

It is a common mistake to think that when a tribe has

once been beaten it will cause no more trouble, and I have seen

glowing reports (written, usually, just as a Resident is going

home) of the peaceful time in store for the district after a

successful expedition. I think that so long as the wild pagan

is as warlike as he is, and so long as we repress his little failings,

whether looting, enslaving, head-hunting, or what not, there will

always be a possibility of trouble, and any weakness on our part

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will sooner or later convert the possibility into fact. The

difficulty is, that a Political Officer is expected to report that

all within his jurisdiction is satisfactory, and will remain thus

for ever and ever, amen. If he cannot, he will be blamed for not

having made it so ; if he does report favourably, and there is

trouble later, he will probably be on leave, and so his successor

will be blamed for it — and that is much more satisfactory. I

have known a tribe described as thoroughly dependable, even

when they had refused to pay tribute for some time. But this

is a dangerous subject, and to turn away from local affairs to

safer channels, I might ask how many times the Ashanti have

been reported as certain to be absolutely friendly in future ? The

treaties between us and them always seem to have contained some

beautiful sentiment of perpetual peace, and the illusions have

invariably been rudely shattered.

The late chief's house at Ambel easily held the whole of our

little force, about 250 all told, and the zaures made quite good

mess-rooms. From here we made two excursions, one to Arom,

which was unsatisfactory, as we found the town deserted, the

other to Ayashi, which did not prove quite so profitless.

Ayashi is a collection of villages built on a spur of the

" Bauchi Highlands," which we ascended when going to Toff.

The people are cannibals and head-hunters belonging to the Nadu

tribe, and they pierce both lips and the septum of the nose for

the reception of bone, wood, or other ornaments. They had pre-

viously been " thoroughly subdued w (sic) on several occasions, and

had remained quite friendly until the patrol was out of sight, but

in each case they had then resumed their little failings as of yore.

They are said by a former Resident who visited them to be

Phallic worshippers, but I was unable to find out anything definite

myself. He also noted that directly they had given in, the people

came to him with many complaints to settle, hoping no doubt

that he would give a ruling contrary to that of their own chief in

cases already decided against them. I have noticed this myself,

too, but I am always very careful in such circumstances, for it is

impossible to know the real rights and wrongs according to the

people's own laws in so short a time. Another request is for a

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charm to ensure childbirth, and as there is no reason to believe

that these natives are particularly sterile, I suspect the charm is

rather to ensure the birth of a child out of the ordinary than of

any one at all, the Whiteman's charm being naturally more mighty

than those of their own medicine men.

On the 2nd August we attacked the place in two parties, and

had rather an exciting day, for the people had caves which they

had built up to form quite comfortable dwellings with very narrow

mouths, which were up on top in some cases. The cover they

afforded was excellent, and we would be shot at without knowing

whence the arrows were coming. The only way to enter some of

the caves was by dropping down feet first, not a particularly safe

or pleasant proceeding, for the defenders had time to get off

several arrows and escape before the intruder's eyes could become

accustomed to the dim light. However, not very much harm was

done on either side, and as I could see that to subdue the place

would take at least a week, we came away again, having managed

to capture enough goats to pay off most of the outstanding

indemnity they owed ; and I also brought away a couple of Ayu

heads (now in the Cambridge Museum) from one of the little

temples. These were small round huts with skulls of men and

animals (of which the noses were stuffed with leaves) stuck in the

mud of the walls, the whole being then whitewashed. One of

the temples had one comparatively thick pillar on each side of

the door, but most of them were simply glorified huts with the

usual conical grass roofs, though on a smaller scale.

On the 4th of August we shifted our camp to Gwade, an Ayu

village, and next day we visited Aro, a Kibbo town a little way up

the Bauchi hills. We had passed through it during the preceding

November, and here again the tribute was overdue, so I had then

warned the chief to take it in to Jemaan Daroro, but this, as soon

as our backs were turned, he had refused to do, and had subse-

quently driven one of my messengers out of the town. On our

way we met a deputation coming to meet us to say that all the

tribute and the fine would be paid on the following day ; but as I

knew that the people had been watching us, and had made up

their minds to submit only when they saw us coming, and that

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there would be a similar message on the morrow, I determined

that they should not get oft" quite so easily as they thought they

would. I therefore sent them back to the town with an order

that all must be ready on our arrival, and that we were following.

Of course, it was not ready, and we had some trouble in getting it,

but as the rain was coming down hard we were not sorry for the

necessary delay, as we were able to wait under shelters. There

were some amusing incidents, too, which made the time pass away

quickly, and before long all was complete.

As soon as they had handed over the full amount, all the

people disappeared, and we began to expect trouble, and soon

there were shouts from one flank of " Zuma, Zuma, 11 and sure

enough clouds of bees were flying towards us. Luckily they were

stupid — with the rain, I suppose — and did not sting us, otherwise

we should have had rather a bad time. They are, as I have said

elsewhere, frequently used in defence of a town. I had not in-

tended burning the place, but this act decided me to do so, both

as a punishment, and also to keep off the insects, for there was a

chance that they might become lively; and under cover of the

smoke we left the town and returned to camp. Next day the

chief and his headmen visited us and promised to give no more

trouble, and I hope that they will keep their word, though I doubt

it considering their past record.

From here we returned to Jemaan Daroro, and had a day at

Tafa and Jigya, Kagoro towns which had always been trouble-

some. Most of the Kagoro had unfortunately found it incon-

venient to be in when we called, so we did not have very much

excitement, and after half-an-hour or so it was all over. We

slept in a zareba, however, for the Kagoro had attacked at night

on a previous occasion, and next day we returned to Jemaan

Daroro.

The O. C. and the doctor left for Keffi on the 11th, and the

Punitive Patrol was over, and then came the office work of writing

reports, sending in accounts, &c., which took all my time for the

next fortnight, most of the work being done in bed owing to a

poisoned leg, and an attack of blackwater fever.

I have generally kept clear of names in this book, for the law

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of libel has been reduced to such a fine art nowadays (and the

damages are, apparently, twenty times as great as in cases of

divorce), that one might be ruined even though on the whole he

was praising a man. But I do not think I need be afraid to say

that the officer commanding the patrol (an ex-member of the

West Australian Police, by the way) was one of the pluckiest men

who have served in Northern Nigeria — and that is saying a good

deal. The Medical Officer, though he nearly died of pneumonia

through the exposure, never thought of sparing himself, and as

for the Jemaa subaltern I think it would be impossible for any

one to have aught but praise for such a good fellow as he was.

Unfortunately, both of us had had our knees poisoned at Aro

with palm-spikes, and were laid up for some weeks afterwards at

Jemaan Daroro, his being the worse of the two.

The conditions under which we worked were very bad, and in

some ways the travelling proved worse than the fighting, though

the hills were not like those of the " Bauchi Highlands." It was

at the height of the rains, and every river was flooded, and

though in some parts tie-tie bridges had been made by friendly

natives, as I have stated, in the hostile country there were not

even these, and we had to improvise rafts or else swim on gourds.

Some of the rafts were strange-looking craft, tents filled with

dry grass, palm-oil dishes, logs, anything ; and when each deep

river meant four or five hours'\* delay in the rain (and it can rain

in July), we almost began to wish we had been born frogs rather

than human beings.

However, rivers do not flow everywhere, and there were usually

amusing incidents to take one out of oneself ; besides, the native

is always ready to laugh, and he expects to be encouraged to do

so ; so the time went by, and the difficulties were overcome with

much less distress to mind or body than we sometimes expected.

The two of us from Jemaa were rather heavy, and the soldiers

would yell with delight at our un-Blondin-like efforts to preserve

our balance while sitting on a raft shaped like a truss of hay, and

flush with the water-line, or our hanging on to a man's hair while

being carried on his shoulders. We all agreed excellently, and

that was a very important factor, for we were wet through more

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than half the time. The official approval of the operations was

some return for what we had gone through, for we were told that

" most excellent work had been done during the patrol under

the most trying circumstances," but I think that we might have

been given a medal.

I had had a good many of the chief's followers with me, the

headmen of the districts passed through, guides and messengers,

and also some to take charge of the captured stock. The District

Headman of Ninzam (the chief of Sanga) and several of the others

died from exposure, and nearly all our horses were lame, so the

hardships of the patrol can be imagined. The present chief of

Sanga is the old man's nephew, he who was reported as killed in

the previous March by the people of Ungual Maitozo. He had

managed to escape, though hit with an arrow, and had been sent

home by a safe route by the chief of Amar, who was then friendly

to us.

The soldiers are good fellows, and when properly led they can

accomplish almost anything. Their officers on this occasion

suited them perfectly, and in saying this I do not include myself,

of course, for I was merely a supernumerary when once the fight-

ing had commenced. Natives are usually younger in mind than

we are, they are fonder of play, and a little laxity while off

parade prevents a good deal of punishment later on in their

case. One expects the soldiers to be courageous, and they are,

but the fact that the carriers are also brave strikes me even more

forcibly, for they cannot hit back. It is one thing to fight a man

with a superior weapon in your hand to the one he has ; it is

quite another when you are not only unarmed but are handi-

capped with a load. I have sometimes equipped them with the

soldiers' 1 machettes to give them a chance if in difficulties, but

even when defenceless they are splendid.

It is, of course, very unusual for a patrol to be sent out in the

rains. Most of the expeditions take place about January, when

the weather is beautiful, the grass has been burnt down, and the

food is plentiful; but as the Ninzam district was in a state of

anarchy, and the Waiwai, Ayashi, and Kagoro also wanted

punishing, we had no choice but to undertake operations at once.

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There are other disadvantages besides the bad weather overhead,

for when the grass is high a bow and arrow is almost as good as

a rifle, and the constant immersions in streams and scarcity of

food soon tell on the Europeans.

Perhaps airships will before long play an important part in

warfare, though, judging by what I saw at the Hendon Avia-

tion Tests last May, great improvements are still required —

improvements, however, which will certainly be made. The cost

of an aeroplane would be very much less than the upkeep of a

single company for only one year, while it would be invaluable

against hill savages. And an air squadron would be a humane

institution, for the terror caused by the appearance of such

vessels would probably make any bloodshed unnecessary. No

one wants to kill these poor wretched pagans, but if the tribes will

murder or raid each other for slaves, and if, instead of stopping

when ordered to do so, they attack the would-be arbitrator, what

else can be done ? If a large force is taken, one has the feeling

that it is rather unfair to give the other side no chance of victory,

yet if the escort be too small it can do no good, so political

reasons make it absolutely necessary to swamp the opposition at

once if possible, otherwise there will be much more fighting, and,

of course, much greater loss of life in the end. Besides, if we are

to stay there, if we are to have any authority at all, punishment

must follow the crime immediately. A boy at school who does

something wrong is not called to account at the end of the term,

but will probably have an unpleasant interview with the " Head "

before twenty-four hours are over.

It seems rather unfair that no medals are given for these

" small shows," especially considering that men in St. Helena

received the Boer ribbon, and militia officers who were embodied

even in England were granted honorary rank in the army, while

naval officers and men received the Somali medal for simply land-

ing the troops. Again, many of the native soldiers on the Ninzam

patrol had been on active service over a dozen times and yet

remained undecorated. And this injustice is not confined to West

Africa. Would it not be possible to have an Active Service

Bronze Star to be awarded in every case where no special medal

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has been sanctioned to those taking part in such operations (there

is a precedent in Ashanti), the ribbon either to be of a special

pattern, or to be that of the general service medal of the

particular country concerned ? At present in the Army List,

and when in uniform, the man who served in St. Helena may seem

a much greater warrior than the one who has seen half-a-dozen

small fights against savages, while as I have said before, a

messenger-boy is often more liberally decorated than a Crimean

veteran. And that is not fair, for after all, a war medal is

supposed to indicate active service, and conversely, active service

should be rewarded with a medal. The conditions could be, say,

(1) that the patrol had been officially sanctioned, (2) that the

grantee had had leave to be present, or had necessarily been

present, and (3) that fighting had actually taken place. And

the grant should be made even to troops who had been defeated,

so long as they had done well, for the fighting in that case would

probably have been much more severe than if they had been

victorious.

We fought seven tribes altogether in the July and August,

and none of us regrets our experience ; at the same time all of us,

both white and black, would have been pleased at the grant of a

" ribbon."

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CHAPTER XXI

OCCUPATIONS

THE commonest form of basket in the northern head-hunting

towns is in the shape of a calabash, the weaving being of the

simplest form. Some of the southern towns add a handle to

theirs, and there is another kind used for carrying water or honey

which is made waterproof by being daubed with mud. Goat-

skins form bags for grain, but most of the sacks are made of

straw. Jemaan Daroro is noted for the excellence of its grass

sleeping-mats, which are well made, artistically coloured, and

pliable.

No pottery is made in most of the Kagoro towns, the Attakka

supplying their requirements in this respect. It is possible that

the want of a suitable clay was the original reason of this, but

there is certainly a prohibition against it now, for Attakka

women who have married Kagoro men are not allowed to make

pots at home, but must go to their own country for the purpose,

being at liberty to return, however, after having done so. It is

said that ill-luck will overtake the Kagoro if they ever permit the

manufacture of pottery in their own country. The pots are quite

plain and burnt black, there being no decoration or varnish.

There are several methods of pot-making amongst the Hausawa,

but in none of them is a wheel employed, so far as I know. I saw

one method at Jemaan Daroro, the potter being Salifu, Sa(r)rikin

Ginni ("Chief of the Building "), the same term being used for a

house-builder. Clay of a light yellow colour was obtained near a

stream close to Arusua, a neighbouring village, whence it was cut

with a hoe and put into a straw waterproof covering, and brought

to the house in Jemaan Daroro. Then a certain kind of mud

was taken from another stream, the Rafin Gwalliki, and after

having been dried in the sun, it was kneaded and mixed with the

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clay. Water was then poured on this mixture, and it was left

thus for a day.

Early next morning, dry dust was sprinkled on the floor, and

the clay was kneaded up in a lump and pressed together. It was

then picked up, and dust was sprinkled on it also, so that it

should not stick to anything, and after that it was again kneaded,

and made into the shape of a large pancake, or pat of butter,

some twelve inches in diameter and one inch or more in thickness.

The next stage was to spread it over an inverted pot, which the

Hausawa call " the donkey-of-building," and to mould it with the

palm and a piece of wood shaped like a " Scotch hand " into the

form of a dome. After having been wetted and smoothed, it was

placed aside, while the potter repeated the process on other pots.

After some four hours, the dome was removed and turned

upside down, and the potter then placed the fingers of his left

hand inside the rim, and steadied the pot, while he beat the rim

in from the outside with the Scotch hand until the pot had

assumed the shape of a bowl. The edge was then trimmed with

a sharpened stick, or knife, and after that, a roll of clay was

prepared, about one foot in length and some one and a half inches

in diameter, which was placed around the opening, thus thickening

the neck, and making the hole smaller. The operator then took

a small piece of soft leather, and having wetted it, placed it

astride the roll of clay. He seized this with his left hand, and

went round and round the pot backwards, steadying it with his

right until the roll of clay had been squeezed up into a bell-

shaped neck.

This ended the pot-making proper, the next step being the

decoration, and for this a small piece of string — about three

inches long — was then rolled slantwise around the shoulder of the

pot, the pressure leaving a corresponding pattern. Sometimes

extra rolls of clay may be placed around the body of the pot for

strength, and perhaps to keep the spirit in, and so prevent the pot

from breaking on its own account, and one I saw had three pairs

of small cones. Salifu told me that the cones represented breasts,

and were to show that the pot was a female, and as there are

similar decorations on pots in the Cambridge Ethnological

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Museum, this must be correct. These cones and the extra rolls

are not made on the body of the ordinary pot or tukunia, but

only on those pots which are to be used for oil (telle, &c), the

reason given being that the telle, being stronger, and probably

remaining in the house, lasts a long time, and so if the owner

becomes tired of it he can change it for another, as a man can his

wife. But the tukunta, being always taken to the stream, is not

changed, for it will not last long enough to make its owner tire of

it, but it, like the male, " will remain in the family until it dies."

This may or may not be the true explanation.

The pot was left for some sixteen hours (i.e. until next

morning), and was then baked for two days in a fire, after

which it was, of course, black. Salifu said that another way

of making the tukunia and the telle is by moulding the clay

into a hole in the ground, and then shaping the upper part as

he did, but that the high water-jars (tulu) are made in ribbons.

\*As both baskets and pots are used to hold food-stuffs, perhaps

I should also say a word on the preparation of flour. The millet

or other stalks are first pounded by women with wooden pestles

in mortars of the same material, so as to separate the grain from

the stalks. This is then winnowed in a flat, shallow basket, being

simply thrown up in the air and caught again. After this the

grain is sprinkled on the higher end of a large, flat stone inclined

towards the ground, where a calabash is placed. The grinder sits

behind the higher end, and rubs downwards with a smaller flat

stone, and by the time the grain has reached the calabash it has

become flour.

Notices are sent round to all males when hunting-parties are

to be formed, and they are, as mentioned before, practically

identical with war contingents, except for the fact that the

chief seems to have more power when on a hunt than in an

organised expedition. As there has probably been a scarcity of

flesh during the year, a hunt is a serious thing, and the ghosts

are consulted by a three days' beer-drinking, as before a war.

There are practically no large animals now in the Kagoro

country, so the rat and field-mouse are the only "game," and

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Jest this should appear more strange than true, I quote an

anecdote told in A Voice from the Congo. " Armed with my \*577

express rifle," says Mr. Ward, " I was hurrying towards a distant

valley, where I had been informed there were elephants to be

found. On my way I met a party of six or eight men armed with

flint-lock guns, and amply provided with powder - flasks and

wallets containing missiles. I was impressed by their warlike

appearance. ' Where are you going in such a hurry ? , said

they. ' After elephants, 1 I replied. 6 And you — where are you

all going ? ' 6 Oh, we are going to the valley below to shoot

rats ! ' "

Most of the grass is burnt off during November and December,

and these animals can no longer conceal themselves, fire appar-

ently being employed more for the purpose of clearing the

ground than for driving the quarry. Sometimes, patches of

grass, perhaps twelve to fifteen feet high, are left, and these

are trampled down, so that the inhabitants will be driven out

into the open where the men are advancing in line, with their

arrows fitted and bows stretched. I have twice seen hunting

parties, but no " game," so I do not know if the men are good

shots or not. I should think they must be, though, for 4< hunger

maketh a good marksman," and unless they could hit a target

when they got the chance, it would hardly be worth while looking

for it.

Each party keeps to the limits of the land of its own town

when hunting singly, but usually men of several villages join

together, so as to be able to beat a larger expanse of country.

There is, I understand, no elaborate code of game laws, each

man getting what he can, where he can, when he can. The

hunts will last from early morning until sunset, and some men

will be away every day from November to March. The harvest

is over (October-November), the houses have been re-roofed at

the same time, i.e. before the grass is burnt off, and there will be

no more planting until April or May, so there is nothing else to

do but to " kill something."

There is only one permanent blacksmith living amongst the

Kagoro, a Hausa-Filani from Dangoma, who lives in the capital,

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the southern towns getting what they want from Jemaan Daroro ;

the Moroa, too, have only one, but the Kajji boast several.

Sometimes travelling smiths visit these tribes just before the wet

season, when there will be a demand for hoes, and stay until it is

over. It was not altogether through Matchu's own choice that

he lived in Fada Kagoro ; he had been plotting for the chief-

tainship of Dangoma. I had to banish him somewhere, and as

just then the Kagoro chiefs were asking for a blacksmith, and

were prepared to guarantee his safety, Matchups fate was fixed.

He told me that he made all his arrows of a similar pattern,

so that every one who buys from him has the same kind of

missile. All the people, however, do not patronise their home

industries, but go to Jemaan Daroro, Zangon Katab, or to a

Moroa town for them, so that there are several patterns. In

addition to this, there is no doubt that some private marks are

made on the shaft, or perhaps on the head ; at any rate, every one

knows his own arrow, and this is important, because all game

belongs to him who first hits it. Even if the wound be slight,

and the beast be despatched by another hunter, the carcase will

belong to the owner of the first arrow if it be still sticking in the

body, for it is held that the animal must die eventually owing to

the poison. It sometimes happens, therefore, that one man will

pluck out the arrows of another so that there may be no proof of

ownership, and this leads to quarrels and fights between the

various partisans, especially if the disputants be of different

towns, and so fierce have these miniature battles become at

times that men have been wounded in them, and even killed.

If there be no means of deciding to whom the animal belongs

(say if it has escaped, has got rid of the arrows, and is killed by

other men who did not see it wounded), the claimants will be

required to go through an ordeal, or it will be divided amongst

the whole party. The owner of the carcase takes it to his own

house, where it is eaten by the family and relatives, the whole

being consumed straight off. He is not compelled to give away

any of the flesh, though he may ask the priest to the feast, and

perhaps even the agwam, for, as with us, a man may try to

purchase popularity in high quarters if trying for any office.

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The poisoned meat does not seem to be dangerous, and is readily

eaten without much ill effect, I was told ; in fact, it must be, or

else the hunting would be in vain. Arrows are not necessarily

poisoned for the shooting of rats and mice, though, for such small

animals would be easily caught if wounded.

I have not seen any game-stalking, so I do not know if the

Kagoro dress up to represent their quarry, though I think not.

The Nadu to the south do, however, and have a wooden helmet

with horns, to which a hide can be attached to conceal the body

of the hunter. Pits were dug for animals in the old days, but

not now, and there are snares for birds, I am told. Dogs and

horses are not used, but with the Gannawarri and Kibbo most

of the members of the hunt are mounted, and they drive each

year in a very large circle which constantly decreases, everything

in sight being slaughtered and eaten. This procedure soon

exhausts the game in the country, and since the Kagoro district

was once full of animals, there can be but little doubt that the

people there did the same kind of thing formerly.

The weapons are the same as for war, the arrows all have a

similarly shaped head (there is no special distinction for different

sized animals, though some arrow-heads are much smaller than

others, and would be preferable for rats), and they have only one

point. Weapons are made to kill, or at any rate to disable the

victims, so that the flesh may be secured ; the skins are only a

secondary consideration, though generally useful as clothing. It is

no reproach from a huntsman's point of view to wound and not

capture an animal, but the relatives, who would thus miss a feast,

might have an unpleasant word or two to say in the matter.

So far as I know, there is no fishing with a baited hook, but

I am not certain whether small cast-nets are used or not. Fish

traps are made of cane, the idea of their construction being the

same as in our " lobster pots," but those of the Kagoro are much

longer in proportion to the breadth. Only men take part in

hunting and fishing.

The head-hunters have no dangerous sports, so far as I know,

but the Filani have, and one feat, that of jumping on to the

horns of a bull, I have never been tired of watching. "Bull-

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fighting is a survival of barbarism, the existence of which is

fervently deplored by all but its devotees, [for] the bull is

doomed from the moment of its entrance into the arena,"

writes a contributor in the Encyclopaedia B?itannica, and he

goes on pompously to say "that a brief description of bull-

fighting should be here given, must not be accepted in any

way as a token of approval or admiration. ^ The description

given is that of a Spanish bull-fight, and although the writer

admits that in Portugal and South America the picador es (or

caballeros) are not cruel so far as the horses are concerned — for

thev are expert riders provided with good horses, and it is

considered a disgrace if they do not save their horses from

injury — he omits to mention that the bull is not killed, and

that the only animal in danger of injury or death is the man.

In fact, in Portugal, horses are not used at all in more than

one-half of the fights, for, being highly trained, they are very

expensive, and the caballeros must be rich men to afford

them.

The worst accounts usually come from Spain, but before

condemning the Spaniards unheard, we should try to understand

their views to some extent. At any rate, students of anthro-

pology ought to make an attempt, for Europeans who are unable

to comprehend the customs of Europe will hardly make much

headway in divining native modes of thought.

Mr. Calvert {Impressions of Spain), trying to account for

the different views prevailing in Spain and England, says that

the Spaniard grows up to the sport as our Elizabethan ancestors

grew to bull-baiting — even, in fact, as the present generation of

Englishmen grows to pugilism (we are liable to forget our own

failings), and, long habit having familiarised the Spaniard with

bloody details, his experienced eyes follow each trick and turn of

the contest with the enthusiasm of a champion watching an athletic

display. Danger gives to the contest a dignity which is absent

from pheasant-shooting, and which formed no excuse for the

vogue to which bear-baiting and cock-fighting once attained in

this country. The banderillero inflicts no more pain on the bull

than the humane angler deals out to the wily trout, and the

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activity and daring with which he addresses himself to his task

is superb. These feats must be fraught with infinite danger, and

the agility with which the performers acquit themselves cannot

be witnessed without a tremor of amazement and admiration.

One may lecture, write, and preach, he says, against the

barbarity of bull- fighting ; but so long as Spain can breed men

of such amazing nerve, skill, and dexterity, that they can success-

fully defy death and mutilation to provide their countrymen with

such lurid sport, so long will bull-fighting continue to flourish in

Spain. Mr. Hutton (Cities of Spain) is even more emphatic in

his denunciation of the hypocrisy with which Englishmen — and

even more Americans — decry this dangerous sport, while delight-

ing in the coursing of helpless rabbits with dogs, and in the

shooting of tame birds which are bred as pets only to be killed

for the owner's amusement later. He should have mentioned,

though, that it is only a very few amongst Englishmen rich

enough to have the choice, who would prefer this sort of thing

to big game shooting — which is dangerous enough to suit any-

body — or even to polo, football, or motor-racing, all of which are

always risky to some extent.

One would think from the article in the Encyclopaedia that

there had never been any cruel sport in England, even in the

past, much less in the present, an illusion which the following

description of the Bull-running at Tutbury, taken from Archce-

logia, may help to dispel. The bull, we are told, was formerly

provided by the Prior of Tutbury, later, namely in 1773, by the

Earl (sic) of Devonshire. As soon as his horns were cut off, his

ears cropt, his tail cut by the stumple, so as to make him the

more difficult to hold, all his body smeared over with soap, and

his nose blown full of beaten pepper — in short, being made as

mad as it was possible for him to be — he was turned forth to

be caught, if possible, by the minstrels. I think I am right in

saying that not even in Spain — let alone in Portugal or Nigeria

— has a bull been so cruelly mutilated. Nor did the cruelty

end here, for, if the wretched animal was caught before sunset,

he was brought to the baylifPs house in Tutbury, and there

collared and roapt, and so brought to the bull-ring in the High

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Street, and there bated (I am retaining the old spelling) with dogs,

and afterwards killed and eaten. Truly a gentle and refined sport !

There was probably not much danger to the minstrels in this,

but there were sometimes even milder risks to be run, for on

occasions of rendezvous and public meetings of merriment in a

village the landlord of the alehouse would give a " tup 11 (so they

called a ram), or a pig, well soaped, with the tail and the horns

and the ears respectively cut off. The writer goes on to say

that though some authorities traced the introduction of the bull-

running to John of Gaunt (who was Lord of Castile), he himself

thought it much older and of purely local origin, being connected

with the tenure of the lands by the earl. Since our own bull-

baiting was much more cruel and less dangerous than that in

vogue even in Spain, we hardly seem to have a right to deplore

the depraved tastes of its devotees and to deny it any "token

of approval or admiration ! "

So many writers have described in detail the various aspects

of the bull-fighting — the play on horseback and on foot, pole-

jumping, sitting on a chair, and the other feats — that an account

of them would be out of place here ; but, strange to say, none

have mentioned the bull-catching, which seems to me the most

dangerous of all, and as I have seen it in both Portugal and

Northern Nigeria a description may have some anthropological

value.

In Portugal the bull is loose, the horns being cased in leather

and bandaged, and a number of " catchers " enter the arena and

attempt to capture him. I do not know if there is a special name

in Portuguese or Filani for these people ; I have used the word

" catchers " as best describing their functions. After a time one of

them will stand in front of the bull, legs close together, arms

extended, and will call and insult the animal until it charges and

tosses him, the man as he is tossed grasping the bull by the neck.

Once he has got on to the bull's head he must maintain himself

until the other catchers can hold the animal and enable the man

to extricate himself, otherwise he would almost certainly be gored.

I should imagine — though I have no authority for saying so — that

only bulls with very long and wide horns can be thus caught, for

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if they were short and pointing towards the front, the danger of

impalement would be very much greater, and also there would

hardly be room for the man's body to hang down between them.

I saw this done twice at Lisbon, and on the second occasion one

of the men was rather badly hurt.

In Northern Nigeria the horns are not protected in any way,

but the bull is not loose. The performers are usually Filani, a

cattle-keeping people of partly Berber descent, and it is possible

that both they and the Portuguese learned the game from the

people of North Africa. Two men hold a rope tied to a hind foot,

and one, the catcher, holds another rope fastened to the neck or

to the horns. The animal, after having been maddened by tug-

ging at the rope, drumming, and shouting, is allowed to dash

about, being brought up at will by a pull on one rope or the other.

After a time the catcher begins shortening his rope, and in conse-

quence advancing towards the bull, care being taken that the hind

rope is quite taut so that no sudden rush can be made, and when

close up the bull tries to gore, and the man is tossed exactly as in

Portugal, holding on in a similar fashion until extricated. Some-

times the man will even get astride the animal's neck, using the

horns like parallel bars. But as the horns are not protected in

these games there is always a great risk, and on two of the five

occasions on which I have seen this feat the principal performer

came to grief.

In Northern Nigeria this is the only form of the sport ; horses

are never used, the performers are not armed in any way, and the

bull is not injured. In Portugal exactly similar conditions pre-

vail so far as the catching is concerned, except for the ropes tied

to the animal, and even in the regular bull-fighting horses are not

always employed, but when they are they are very seldom injured

owing to their speed and the dexterity of their riders. The per-

formers on foot are armed with short darts which do not pierce

the flesh more than an inch or two, and the local organisation

corresponding to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to

Animals insists that only a certain number of darts may be used.

Each bull is played only from fifteen to twenty minutes at the

most, and the period is often much less, for there were ten bulls

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Bull Baiting

The man in front of the bull is awaiting a favourable opportunity to spring

on to its neck. The man in the forefront on the left is carrying a stick

thrust through pieces of dried meat which he has just bought.

The Biter Bit

The toreador fell, and the bull gored him.

[The above are drawn from actual photographs taken in the market at

Jemaan Daroro, but which would not bear reproduction.]

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fought in a period of two hours' actual play when I saw it, but

this, I was told, gave less time to each bull than is usually the

case. After the bull has been captured or symbolically killed it

is then driven out of the ring by tame bulls so that its hurts can

be attended to ; it is never really put to death.

Most of the bull-fighting in Spain is, I understand, very cruel,

though as I have seen it only in cinematograph pictures and on

postcards I cannot pretend to know for certain. The cruelty is,

at any rate, not universal, for a strange game takes place at Nova,

in Galicia, four times a year, according to another English writer,

who says that, on certain occasions, a street serves the purpose of

an impromptu ring, the two ends being blocked by tribunes filled

with spectators, and the balconies of the houses on both sides over-

flow with ladies and gentlemen. The men rush at the bull — which

is practically a tame one from the neighbouring hills — and try to

aggravate it, and when at length they have succeeded it plunges

at them, and they have to turn their backs and flee before it in a

crowd, falling at last in a heap, one on top of another, those who

come last and fall on top getting their clothes rent by the horns

of the bull, to the immense gratification of the spectators. So far

from any cruelty to the animal here, the game ends in the bull

becoming the matador, and the men play the part usually assigned

to him.

A somewhat similar entertainment is provided on festival days

by the people of many towns in the south of France, sometimes

no less than five bulls being let loose at the same time, and the

people in the M ring " seem to have a very poor chance as the

animals' horns are not protected in any way. There is certainly

no cruelty to the bull in Northern Nigeria, nor in either of the

cases just mentioned ; nor is there any to the horses, for none are

employed, the only danger being that run by the men, so surely

this kind of bull-fighting ought to be given rank as a true sport.

The horse is not used in war or in hunting by the tailed head-

hunters, the Kagoro and Kajji possessing but few, though the

Moroa and Attakka have a fair number brought from Zaria.

They are about thirteen to fourteen hands high, and are rather

weak, though sometimes fairly fast. The bridle is made of leather

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which may be ornamented with brass; there is no bit, but a

toothed half-hoop of iron passes behind the animal's jaw to join

a similar half-hoop above the nose, so that it can be tightened by

a pull on a rope on the left side which forms the rein. The saddle,

if any, is a goat-skin tied on to the back, but some of the pagans

in the district make a cut in the skin over the backbone about

a foot long, and open it out, so that the flesh swells up and forms

a pad, which, after a time, seems to become callous. There are

no mules or donkeys amongst the head-hunters, but the Hausa

traders make use of the latter in great numbers.

The dog is used as an article of food, and always forms part of

the marriage gift. It is a poor specimen — I fancy, only one breed ;

they all look the same — but since it is a cur it makes a good

watch-dog and it also acts as a scavenger. The noise these

animals make in some towns is almost unbearable ; one can hardly

call it barking — though that word may describe the booming

"boo-wooV of the bigger breeds — the miserable sounds of the

curs are best described as " vauking."

No animals or birds are used for game fights, but a fowl can

act as deputy for a human being in an ordeal. A fact which first

struck me as being very strange, but which on second thoughts

appeared quite natural, was that animals understood only the

local languages. In Amar (Muri province) in 1906, I bought

a cow from some Filani people, but I could get no milk from her,

although she had a calf at the time, the excuse given by my

servants, all Hausa boys, being that " the cow could only talk

Filani,"" and would not give them her milk because she did not

understand them. I, of course, thought that the real reason was

laziness, but on getting a Filani girl from the barracks, found that

the animal was quite tractable, and would give milk in plenty, and

as the other servants caught and held the cow, their work was not

much reduced. This would not be enough by itself to prove any-

thing, for the Filani girl naturally knew much more about the

management of cattle than the Hausa boys did, but I noticed in

1909 that dogs and horses procured in Moroa were quite at a loss

when told to " Come here " or " Gee up " or " Whoa," and when

we think of it, if English pets were addressed in an unknown

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tongue they would not comprehend, so there seems to be no doubt

about the matter. After all, if the people themselves did not

understand a foreigner's language, it is hardly likely that their

animals would !

I do not know whether slave-dealing ought to be called an

occupation or not, but it is certainly a very profitable profession

to many of the experts in it. While I was in Lokoja during

1904-5, the police captured a good many culprits, but they were

not more than a very small percentage of those engaged in the

trade. One test I had was to find out if the children knew the

language of the adults professing to be their parents, and, as t this

test was often successful, a school was formed somewhere in the

Bassa province where children brought down from the interior

(usually from countries in the Benue region) were taught the new

tongues, and told how cruel we were to any children whom we

took from their purchasers, being in reality slave-dealers our-

selves. This was an argument which the children readily under-

stood, for did they not know that every strong people enslaved a

conquered tribe ? So it was extremely hard to get any evidence

against slavers even when caught, a difficult task considering that

the native quarter of Lokoja was a veritable hot-bed of them.

A good deal has been heard of the cruelty of slavery, though

many of the writers imagine that the institution cannot exist

without raids on villages for the purpose of keeping up the supply

of human animals. The raids certainly are cruel, and we have

almost stopped them in Northern Nigeria, but it is very difficult

to know how to act when cases occur of mothers selling their

children for a couple of bags of guinea-corn, as actually happened

amongst the Bashima of Muri during their famine of seven years

ago. The restoration of children to their parents would mean

that they would be again sold, to leave them with their buyers

did not seem right, so a Freed Slaves 1 Home was established for

the reception of these little orphans. A certain amount of

discipline was necessary, of course, and in addition, efforts were

made to teach the children some trade, and give them some

education. The result was that our kindly intentions were mis-

construed, wilfully, no doubt, in many cases, and that we were

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represented as being rather worse than the slave-buyers them-

selves, since we did not even pay for the slaves we took and

forced to work, and that we taught them our language in Zungeru

just as the slavers had taught theirs in Bassa. Our justice, too, was

open to question, for did we not imprison native traders although

they had behaved rather better than we had done ? There were also

difficulties in the way of discipline, for on several occasions children

were prevailed upon by interested outsiders to run away, and as

iron fences had to be erected, and the home when removed to

Zungeru was almost opposite the gaol, invidious comparisons were

drawn.

It therefore became the custom to give the children the choice

of their future disposal, that they should be sent to their parents,

to the Home, or that they should remain with their buyers, and in

most of the cases which came to my notice, the last alternative

was chosen. A record was made, however, of the names of the

child and the owner, a copy being sent to headquarters, so that

the latter, now guardian, might be asked to produce the child at

any time, and the little slave was told that if the owner was ever

guilty of cruelty, or if he wanted to get rid of him, the child need

only complain to the nearest Whiteman to secure his freedom.

And I think that this policy has worked very well, for it is very

much against a trader's interest to treat a child badly, both because

he will get less work under such conditions (even an ill-treated horse

will not be satisfactory), and there will be always the chance of

the child running away if afraid to remain. No doubt in time we

shall stamp it out, but where the parents are in collusion with

the traders, and the children are terrified of the Whiteman, we

have to work under great difficulties.

Under Mohammedan law a slave can work for his freedom by

requiring his master to allow him so much time to himself, and

cruelty, especially to female slaves, is often punished by the manu-

mission of the slave by order of the native courts. In a great

number of cases, however, the slave does not wish to free himself,

for many high offices are open to him, though we are now putting

an end to this practice because the proper successors were thus

often deprived of their rights. Still the Filani raids were very

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cruel, and some of the pagan customs are worse. One of the most

obnoxious kinds of slavery is that of pawning, but I do not know

of any instances in Northern Nigeria which equal the custom at

Akra described before. We are trying to stamp out pawning

as well as slave dealing, and in fact it is looked upon as the same

offence, but we cannot accomplish impossibilities, and we have to

make haste slowly, for violent changes are apt to produce violent

revolutions. However, the public may rest quite satisfied that

the Government is doing its best, and a very good best too.

It will surprise many to hear that slavery had any good points,

but the Chevalier des Marchais, a French traveller, who visited

Cape Mesurado in 1724-25, wrote to the effect that certain tribes of

the Grain Coast, which had been much addicted to human sacri-

fices, stopped them when they found that their victims were

marketable commodities which could be sold to the foreigners with

profit. We also read in Liberia (whence the foregoing statement

is taken) that a Captain Snelgrave, who was engaged in the supply

of slaves to the West Indies, apparently suggested, like many

other writers during that century, that the slave trade was really

a preservative of human life, since it offered an inducement to the

savage conquerors to spare the lives of their prisoners, in order to

sell them into a Christian captivity wherein they might " enjoy all

the Church privileges." But even Benin, the City of Blood, did

not kill so many people as the slave raiders did, and instead of

preserving life, it may be that slavery made it so cheap as to give

rise to " orgies of blood."

It is rather strange that the liberty-loving Liberians, and

others who owe their present position to our philanthropy, should

so abuse it as to be guilty of the very crimes from which they

themselves were protected, but the charge is made by Sir Harry

Johnston, and I give the references (Liberia^ pp. 1079 and 1080),

so that there may be no mistake. " It is clear," he says, 66 that a

considerable traffic in slaves still goes on between Western Liberia

and the civilised blacks of Sierra Leone, who take over the war

captives of the Buzi and Mandingo tribes as labourers and

domestic servants at a price of about £4> each. . . . Undoubtedly

the system of apprentices does not differ markedly from a legalised

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slave-buying. The Liberian planter, we will say, goes inland, and

is offered boy and girl or adult slaves by some native chief. He

pays perhaps from £% to £2 value in trade goods for each human

being, and to satisfy his own conscience calls them apprentices."

Still he thinks that on the whole they are better treated than they

were when in the interior. I wonder — well, never mind, but if so

(and the writer ought to know Liberia if any one does) cela

donne furieusement a penser.

I employed a little ruse at Amar which indirectly stopped a

good deal of the traffic down the Benue, and while I was there the

police captured a good many slavers. I slept for several nights in

the Government barge near one bank of the river, but in the open,

so that I could be easily seen, and on the other side was a small

canoe, with a police patrol hidden amongst the bushes. Any

slavers coming down at night — the best time to pass a Govern-

ment station — naturally tried to avoid me, and to sneak along

the bank on the other side, and they just as naturally fell into the

welcoming arms of the patrol. An official has to play many parts

during his life in West Africa ; one would almost imagine that

Shakespeare (or Bacon ?) had been there.

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CHAPTER XXII

MODES OF TRAVELLING

ONE of the things which struck me most when a new-comer

to West Africa, was the number of different ways of

travelling. Not that the methods do not exist elsewhere,

for they do, but that the man who is on trek has to get over

the ground in many various ways in a short space of time. There

are thirteen principal modes, and most of these are capable of

subdivision and sometimes of combination, and in case attention

has not been directed to this subject before, I give a list : —

On Land — Walking. Shanks's Pony never had any fascination

for me, though I have no objection to seeing others enjoy themselves

in this way, and am quite ready to believe them if they say that

it does them good. Even on level ground I find it very uninter-

esting, and when the paths are narrow — as they generally are —

and full of rain-water or stones, and the march commences before

daylight, I have often wondered if I really liked being in West

Africa; and when the path went up hill and got worse, I was

quite sure that I did not. However, there is a harrowing story

of the trials and tribulations of a trek in an earlier chapter, so I

must not go further into the subject now. The subdivisions of

this section would be running and limping, both equally unplea-

sant. I saw an amusing cartoon in an illustrated paper a

couple of years ago, in which a lame and weary member of the

Territorials (of course, they are always the butt of patriotic

caricaturists) is depicted as asking how far it was to some place

or other where the camp was. " Well," replied his informant,

" as the crow flies, it is about nine miles. ,, 44 Never mind "W

'e flies," said the weary plodder, for all "book-soldiers" speak

execrable English, " 'ow far is it as the beggar 'ops ? " One often

asks himself how far off is the next town 44 as a man limps."

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By the way, that makes me think of the word limp in another

sense. Why is it that many men who spend most of their

time in hot countries feel the heat here in England more than

many Londoners ? I know that this is so in many cases, my own

amongst them, and it is most embarrassing for a traveller who has

treated his friends to tales about lands of breathless heat to find

himself feeling quite limp when the thermometer registers under

90° in the shade ! I have played lawn-tennis on an asphalte court

in Australia, and I have marched in South Africa, on days when

the shade records approached those of the sun in London in an

ordinary summer, and yet I did not feel so uncomfortable there

as I have here when the thermometer was more than 20° lower.

Before I knew New York or London, I used to be greatly amused

at the thought of people being prostrated during a " heat wave,"

when the temperature was never above a point which would be

ridiculous for an Australian summer, but I can understand

it now.

No doubt a great deal is due to the fact that everything in

England is arranged with regard to rain and fogs. In an Austra-

lian railway compartment the seat- coverings are of leather (or there

may be no cushions at all, the seats being of wicker work), and

six large windows and two long ventilators admit the air ; in Eng-

land most of the seats are covered with a red, hot-looking material

(though some can be turned over to present a blue leather surface),

and there is only one miserable aperture on each side which can

be opened. Here, the houses are apparently built with the

natural object of allowing none of the heat from the fires to

escape ; in West Africa everything opens wide to the breezes. In

London any one turning out in a white helmet and duck suit

would be mobbed, in West Africa they are almost universal —

though, strangely enough, not in the southern parts of Australia.

Possibly the fact that the natives wore so much white made shy

Englishmen more ready to discard the conventional attire while

on the coast, and to teach the coloured gentlemen instead how to

revel in the delights of the frock coat and top hat. Again, heat

in England comes almost as a shock, for no one is prepared for

even a sunny day, much less a hot one, whereas in lands more

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blessed by Helios, one looks forward to more brilliant, if more

torrid, weather, and he is prepared accordingly.

Being carried. — This may be either on a man's neck or on

his back, and neither is particularly comfortable. It often

happened that I was ahead of my horse or hammock, and arrived

at a narrow and shallow stream or slough, and not wishing to get

wet, nor to have the bother of undressing, I commandeered some

luckless carrier or other. The Yoruba messenger of mine, Ajai, used

to rather like the job, and as he was as strong as a horse, and had

feet about as large as snow-shoes, I felt quite safe — but there zvere

accidents at times. If you ride on the man's back you can get a good

grip on his shoulders (you should not fasten your arms round his

neck), but if sitting on his neck you have to catch hold of his hair.

This is a precarious hold at any time, but it is particularly annoy-

ing to find that the man is a Mohammedan and has shaved it off,

for the ears are not always quite as steady as handles, and to grip

his nose might mean confusing him !

You may also be carried on the man's head, though this is

not pleasant to anticipate, for it happens only to corpses who are

rolled up in stiff mats, and are " toted " by one or two men, or

to newborn children, who are wrapped up in a cloth or in leaves,

placed in a calabash, and brought along by the wretched mother.

I have never yet seen a man carrying a child on the road, and

this is a little strange, for fathers are usually very good to their

children when in their own houses. No doubt the arrangement

by which the women stagger along under heavy loads, while the

men sometimes even ride unconcernedly by them, is due to the

old necessity for the males to be prepared to defend their wives

and possessions at any moment. But the sight now is not

altogether pleasing to the European eye. I know one newly

arrived Resident who, when he saw a woman with a load walk-

ing beside a man without one, made the latter take it. The

natives did not understand it, neither the wife nor the husband,

and no doubt directly the knight-errant had passed she took it

again. At Prahsu I remember seeing the mail-runners come in

on several occasions — four women, each laden with a bag, and the

husband with a stick to drive them on.

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The Brama Kwatta (Ilorin Province) in flood. Waterproof field-boots are very

useful on these occasions. With ordinary boots the traveller has to lift his legs

up high on the horse's neck, and thus runs a greater risk of falling into the water.

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Hammocklng. — One may either lie down or sit up in a

hammock, there being a slight difference in the shape of the

" vehicle,"" according to whether it is required for use on long

treks or only in cantonments. Personally I rather preferred the

big hammock even to horseback, for I could start at any time in

the morning and finish my sleep en route if necessary. I could

read while going along, and even have some refreshment handy —

though I always took care to have a book and a meal in my

saddle-bags also. An air-pillow is quite a good institution in a

hammock, for it weighs very little, and adds greatly to the

comfort of travelling. Care must be taken to see that the

head end of the hammock is higher than the other, and that

the cross-sticks are wide enough to give plenty of room for the

traveller to turn over. If the hammock-boys are used to the

business they will not keep step; if they do the jolting will

be awful, for the hammock will swing in rhythm ; while if the

steps be broken it will remain very much steadier. The reason

was brought home to me in a practical way, when travelling thus,

why the military text-books lay down that regiments must break

step when marching over bridges — especially suspension-bridges.

It is impossible for even two men to pass together over some of

the tie-tie bridges on account of the rocking.

Hammocks are not used in Northern Nigeria, except in a

couple of provinces where the tsetse-fly prevents horses living,

or when on patrols for the transport of the wounded, but in the

Coast colonies they are much in request. It is a funny sight to

see a regiment marching out with the European officers and non-

commissioned officers in hammocks ; and funnier still to see it

coming back. I remember that in 1901 we used to go from

Wilberforce to be inspected on the parade-ground behind the

(then) West India barracks on Tower Hill, and, after performing

wonderfully intricate movements (which would not have been of

the slightest use in the bush) we were marched off home in great

style. The hammocks were not allowed on the parade-ground,

but had to hide outside, and directly we had passed the gates one

officer or European non-commissioned officer after the other would

drop into his hammock with a sigh of relief, and be wafted back

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to barracks to the strains of the regimental band. That was a

touch of real West Africa, and perhaps we entered more into the

native mode of thought then than at any other time, for other

people were working all around while we were lazing, and the music

after the fatiguing drill made us dreamily imagine, and almost

hope for, a time when this might go on for ever. Sometimes

there would be a nasty awakening, for one of the bearers might

dream too, and stumble, and then there would be a disagree-

able mixture of man and hammock, which was made none the

more pleasant because of the remarks of the bystanders, for crowds

can collect as quickly in Freetown as in London. But usually

the lotus-eating ceased only on arrival at the regiments private

parade, and after dismissal one could start dreaming again.

When not tired, the hammock-boys will often break into song

— while on the march in the bush, of course, not when with a

regiment in Freetown — and it is interesting to listen to the

different notes and intervals, some of the airs being very

pretty. I used to encourage them to sing as much as

possible, for I like to see them happy, which is the same

in their case as being natural ; but one thing I cannot stand

is to hear a native whistling, because it is not natural to

him.

Riding. — The horse, the camel, the donkey, and the ox are

used for riding in West Africa, but it has hitherto been found

impossible to train the elephant in the way he should go

(according to European ideas), and this seems a pity, as he

might be very useful in bringing heavy timber from the interior

to the waterside, timber which is at present valueless through

lack of transport. The horse is used a good deal in Northern

Nigeria, and is supposed to have been brought by the Hausas,

though they do not ride to anything like the extent that the

Filani do. They are small animals, becoming bigger as one

goes farther and farther into the interior. They are fairly

tractable, strong, and swift under our treatment, but their backs

are usually in a horrible mess when owned by natives, owing to

the stiff wooden Hausa (or Filani ?) saddles or the operations of

the pagans, and sometimes their mouths also.

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The camel is found only in the more sandy country, and I

have not seen nor even heard of one nearer to the coast than

Ghirku, some forty miles south of Zaria. Having heard that

they are most unpleasant animals to ride, I was not anxious to

try, but I am sorry now, as it is generally as well to do all that

can be done when in a place, not only because one may never

return to have another chance, but also because it brings

a stranger more into touch with the local conditions, and all

these things help him to better understand the natives of the

place. For often during the hearing of a case in court, a strong

point is made of some particular act or omission, and really the

whole decision should rest upon it, although if the European has

no first-hand knowledge of the conditions under which it should

be carried out he may not be at all impressed with its importance.

The donkeys are very small, but fairly strong, for they can

carry the loads of two men. Personally I think they are a perfect

nuisance, and although described by some authorities as an

anachronism and an anomaly I very much prefer carriers, though

when passing through an unpopulated country it may be much

easier to feed animals than men, so sometimes it would be an

advantage to have donkeys. However, the carriers travel very

much faster, and in a hostile country they would be able to

defend themselves to some extent, many of the carriers being

ex-soldiers or police, whereas the donkeys are not only a source

of weakness to the caravan, but an actual danger in that they

incite an attack.

The ox is not very much ridden, even in Northern Nigeria,

though I have seen such steeds, and they are common amongst

the Beriberi people, I am told. Cattle will not live in many of

the districts in which even horses will exist, though the boundary

lines are fairly close, any difference at all being due, probably, to

the fact that horses can always be housed and well looked after,

whereas it would be quite impossible to provide shelter for herds

of cattle.

RicJcsha-driving. — Rickshas are to be seen in some of the can-

tonments, and are there much preferable to hammocks, and, in

fact, one man in Northern Nigeria used to travel long distances in

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them. He is now dead, poor fellow, but I do not mean to say that

there was any connection between the events — that one was the

cause, the other the effect.

Driving. — The roads, except in cantonments, are seldom good

enough to allow of driving, and even where they are well made it

is probable that horses will not be available. Occasionally one

may see light buggies, but on the whole they are very rare. I

made a four-wheeled cart out of strong boxes at Amar in 1907,

the wheels being of the size of large plates, and solid, and I tried

to train my pony to draw it, a man marching in front, one on each

side, and two at the back hanging on to a rope tied to the axle.

I used to invite the other Europeans to go for a drive with me,

but never succeeded in persuading any of them to risk it, and,

although justly hurt at the time, I cannot now blame them, for

although I never voluntarily let the ,pony go beyond a walk,

whenever I had to do so there was a regrettable incident. We

know, of course, that the origin of carts was a branch of a tree

strapped to each side of the horse, and my cart must have been a

student of anthropology, for it returned as often as possible to its

primitive form, the pony "going to bush" with a broken shaft

hanging on to each side. I tied kerosene tins to him at first to

accustom him to the noise behind, but I must regretfully admit

that the training was not very successful. Even my own ardour

was cooled after about the tenth collision with trees, and, there

being no available wood to make more wheels, what was left of

the cart was used as a rubbish- box. Driving was quite a harmless

form of amusement (to others) while it lasted; and although I

never managed to get more than a few hundred yards in any one

day — there was seldom time between the repairs for more than a

single trip daily — my fame travelled far and wide, though I was,

perhaps, regarded more in the light of a Juju than of a Jehu.

Motoring. — Although fairly successful in Southern Nigeria,

according to the Annual Reports (I have not heard the passen-

gers 1 version, which may possibly be very different), motor lorries

are not yet in much request in Northern Nigeria, and in neither

country have we advanced to the taxi-cab stage. An attempt was

made to run motors along the good roads near Zungeru, and I

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believe they often went for even more than a mile at a time, but

this tropical climate does not seem to suit them, and I venture to

doubt if they will ever pay well enough to cover the necessary

expenses. Still, there is no harm in trying them, and it is never

safe to say what will or will not be of use in a new country until

there have been exhaustive tests under as favourable conditions

as circumstances will allow, tests carried out by persons who are

capable and also anxious for the success of the experiments.

Railway Travelling. — The railway is the great juju in North

Nigeria at present, and any one speaking disrespectfully of it

would be liable to all sorts of pains and penalties ; in fact, such an

awful thing is not thought of. Probably it will be one of the

least comfortable of the modes of travelling, if the tramway from

Wushishi to Zungeru be any criterion, but it is perhaps not quite

fair to compare them. The officers there used to travel in a truck

with a roof and open sides protected by wire gauze (to keep off

the sparks from the engine), which was disrespectfully called the

" meat safe." Unfortunately, the meat was not always safe, for

sparks used to get in somehow and burn holes in clothes, as I once

found to my cost.

The great public enthusiasm of the higher officials over the

completion of the railway has always been accompanied by a

private suspicion, in the case of the more humble individuals, that

the allowance of personal baggage now taken by carriers at

Government expense will be reduced, and that the officials will be

made to pay more for their transport than they do at present.

Still, that is a personal matter, and not of very great importance,

and there is no doubt that for imperial and commercial reasons,

which I have given in The Niger and the West Sudan, the line

was badly wanted, and the wonderful rate of progress made shows

that the hearts of those superintending the construction were in

their work. The idea of the line was due to Sir Frederick Lugard,

although it is often wrongly attributed to another Governor who

spent but little time in the country, and he must be pleased with

its fruition. It is always pleasant to be able to chronicle British

success, and the fact that the rate of building by us has on this

occasion, and on others, far eclipsed the best that other Powers

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were capable of is something to be proud of. And in the "us" I

do not include myself, for I had nothing to do with it, unfor-

tunately. Perhaps, in spite of the defeats in athletics, there is life

in the old Lion yet.

I have mentioned that the original conveyance consisted

simply of a pair of shafts, and it may be of interest to briefly

trace the development of our smaller carriages. And, first, we

must remember that although most uncivilised peoples are un-

acquainted with any form of vehicle, the absence of one does not

necessarily indicate a low level of culture, for there are many

peoples fairly well advanced, such as the Filani, whose special

circumstances do not permit the use of wheeled transit.

The earliest vehicle, says Dr. Deniker, resembled that seen

amongst the prairie Indians of to-day, viz. two branches attached

to the sides of a horse so that they form inclined planes, the

driver sitting on the baggage, which is bound to the trunks

behind the horse. It is supposed that one day one of the

branches or poles broke, and that there was consequently greater

ease in draught and an increase in speed, and soon separate poles

were placed horizontally upon the ground, being loosely attached

to the inclined poles (which now became shafts), and as soon as

cross-pieces had been affixed to the horizontal poles we got the

sledge, the sole means of locomotion even to-day in Russian

forests.

But in some countries there were further developments, for

the advantage of long rollers was discovered, and these are often

used now when moving heavy articles for a short distance. But

the disadvantage of these was the time lost in having to rearrange

the rollers at short intervals, and so permanent rollers were fixed

to the vehicle, as can be seen in our present steam-rollers. These

rollers were very heavy, however, and steps were taken to lighten

them, and it soon became apparent that slices from the outside

edges did quite as well as the whole rollers, and so we got wheels.

Some vehicles had only one (the wheelbarrow), most had two —

and we see many nowadays, descendants, perhaps, of the old

chariots. Others had three, represented to-day by the tricycle

and tri-car, though many more had four, known to Europe as

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early' as the bronze age, it is said, while we have even heard of

the " fifth wheel of a coach." A fifth wheel (except when kept

in reserve) is not regarded as an improvement, so we evidently

imagine that we have reached the limit, except as regards railway

carriages. The next steps were to do away with the jarring, and

great improvements were made by having the wheels higher, by

the introduction of springs, and later still by the invention of

pneumatic tyres. The reduction of friction, too, had to be

considered, better workmanship and the fitting of ball-bearings

accomplishing a great deal in this way, and with these improve-

ments and the higher wheels came an increase in the speeds

attainable.

One wonders what the next changes will be in our smaller

carriages, for of course there are many developments still ahead

of us. It is probable that the improvements will be more in the

way of making use of lighter building materials, further reduction

of the friction, and the employment of superior motive power,

than in the shape of the vehicle, or in the addition of wheels. In

fact, the bicycle (which is almost equal to a double wheelbarrow)

and the mono-rail seem to indicate that we shall have fewer wheels

instead of more if there is to be any change at all in this respect.

On the Water — Swimming. It is not at all pleasant in the

early morning to come upon a deep river and find that there

are no canoes to be had for love or money ; in fact I might

go even further and say that the idea of a plunge into the cold

unknown before the sun is up is extremely unpleasant, and it

is even worse in the rain. But there is often no help for it, and

sooner or later one has to peel off his clothes and go in, and

when — as usually happens on an ordinary march — many of the

natives of the caravan are women, it is exceedingly embarrassing,

and the natural hesitation at disrobing is made all the greater.

However, the natives will probably take no notice unless their

attention is specially attracted, and I have usually managed to

get across without creating any great excitement. But I

remember when travelling to Zaria once with a man, nicknamed

on account of the magnificent proportions of his lower chest,

Maitumbi ( 4< the owner of the stomach that his arrival at the

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waterside was eagerly awaited by the whole party, and the

"plomp" he made when he slipped into the water was greeted

with loud and frantic applause. One of the carriers who, as luck

would have it, was swimming with my luncheon-basket on his

head, turned around to look, and became so overcome with

excitement that he opened his mouth to cheer, promptly got it

full of water, and let the load go to the bottom ! And the filthy

mixture of mud, biscuit, sugar, and other dainties exposed to

view, when the basket was fished up an hour or so later, quite

cured any remains of an appetite that I had — it was pot pourri

in many senses.

There are many ways of swimming these streams, and a

European seldom tries to cross unaided, for after a few months

in the tropics his heart will not stand much violent exercise,

especially in the water, and as the currents are usually very

swift and strong in the wet season he would not have much chance

were his strength to give out. In the big rivers, too, there are

crocodiles, so the larger the party and the more noise that is

made the better for one's safety.

The people living on the river banks are usually adepts at

ferrying and swimming, as is natural, for they make their living

out of the water. And no doubt the right of taking the fees is

held in many cases by particular families, though there may be

a special appointment of Sa(r)rikbi Rafi (" Chief of the Stream,"

not $a(r)rihin Rua y a mythical beast also called Dodo\ at the

disposition of the chief of the town or district. These men

usually have watertight gourds tied to each end of a short string,

forming a dumb-bell-shaped apparatus, and one can straddle the

string and get across by treading the water and, perhaps, by

paddling with the hands as well, or he may be pulled over by one

of the watermen swimming alongside of him. Or, again, he may

dispense with the gourds, and simply hold on to the waterman's

shoulder or loin-cloth.

"Transport by water has undergone more important trans-

formations than vehicular transport," says Dr. Deniker. " From

the air-filled leather bottle on which, after the manner of the

ancient Assyrians, rivers are still crossed in Turkestan and Persia,

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to elegant sailing yachts; from the primitive reed rafts of the

Egyptians and the natives of Chinese Turkestan to the great

ocean liners, there are numberless intermediate forms. " I do not

think that any one watching the gourds in Northern Nigeria

would at once connect them with, say, the Campania, or the

"dug-outs" with the Dreadnought, though he might by a brain-

wave think of them, and wish he could exchange the prototypes

for their descendants.

By Raft. — Those who object to the pleasures of swimming

may make a raft, but it does not necessarily follow that they will

keep dry, for there is always a possibility of a slip between the

two banks, and it is seldom that a European can board his raft

direct from the shore. Some men try to float across in their tin

baths, but this is seldom satisfactory, as they usually convert

what is meant as a hip-bath into a plunge. On the Ninzam

patrol we used tents, and large wooden dishes, about six feet

in length, made to hold palm-oil — perhaps, though, these ought

to be classed with canoes. A tent is converted in the following

manner : — A hole is dug in the ground, about three feet by three

feet, and one foot or eighteen inches deep. The outer fly, which

must have no holes, is then spread in this (double if the tent be

large), and grass, as long and as dry as possible, is packed into it

so as to preserve the shape of the whole. The ends of the fly are

then folded over as far as they will go, and tied with the tent

ropes, the whole forming a square block which is then removed

and placed in the water. If the grass be long and dry, the block

will be quite three-parts out of water, for there will be plenty of

air space, and the sides will be kept apart ; but short and wet

grass is not very satisfactory, for it is heavier and less stable.

This raft is usually pushed across by men swimming alongside,

but I found it much better to tie a couple of loose strings to one

corner, and to give these to two of the swimmers to hold in their

mouths, and pull in that way, there being by this means a steady

tension instead of a series of jerks. It is a safer way, too, for the

swimmers, not being steady in the water, are apt to push more

violently than they intend to at times, and, as the passenger

is squatting on the top of the bundle, and the centre of gravity

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is high out of the water, the equilibrium is anything but stable.

Another advantage is that, whereas pushing tends to make the

raft go round and round, the strings will keep it right end first.

If there be no tent, and no bath, perhaps logs can be used, or

some other material ; at any rate some one or other of the local

natives will know what to do, even if there is no experienced

European in the party. I think one great advantage of travelling

in these new countries is that a man is continually thrown on his

own resources, and no doubt the thought that one has overcome

difficulties is one of the greatest charms of West Africa — diffi-

culties which would appear enormous if one read of them in the

average story-book, though not really so bad when properly

tackled. These checks are an awful nuisance when one is in a

hurry, but otherwise the ridiculous incidents which are certain to

occur usually smooth over a great deal of the hardship ; there is

always something to laugh at if one be on the lookout for

amusement.

By Canoe. — However, in some places there are canoes to be

had ; in fact, they are almost always available on the big rivers

when unfordable, and it is only in inland districts that one would

like to be a fish at times. The canoes are of various sizes, though

as each is usually hollowed out of a single tree — and is therefore

called a "dug-out" — the main idea of the construction is the

same. Mats are often placed tent-wise over the after-part of the

larger-sized canoes as a shelter, and these are transferred to

the shore to act as bedrooms at night.

Cooking on board a narrow wooden canoe sounds dangerous,

but it is made possible by sprinkling sand on the bottom of the

vessel, and lighting the fire on this, three stones holding the pots

in place. Three stones are always used (except where the native

blacksmiths have copied our iron stands), never four; at least I

have never seen four, and I suppose this is because they are much

easier to arrange, for the level of the pot can be regulated by

altering the position of only one out of three stones, while if there

are four, two, or perhaps even three, must be moved. That no

number greater than three is thought proper or necessary is

shown by the riddle, Uku, uku, gamma ga(r)ri, "Three, three,

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A Kajji Joint-Family Residence

The house of the Chief of Mersa and his family. Note the stool with a handle, and the granary

with a circular entrance for fowls to the right of the photograph. See p. 132.

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complete the town," the answer to which is murufu, a (i cooking-

place." The mode of propulsion is usually poling in shallow

water, paddling in deep; and when proceeding up-stream the

canoe-men usually hug the shore, but when coming down, the

middle of the river is preferred in order to get the full benefit of

the current.

Canoes are often damaged, of course, and the rough iron

rivets used in repairing them look anything but satisfactory to

the European eye ; but when the splits are only sewn with fibre

the repairs seem even more unsafe, yet both these modes must

answer well on the whole, or some other would have been invented.

Some of the canoes will hold horses as well as men. I came from

Mozum to Lokoja once with a horse and about thirty natives on

board, and yet there was plenty of room for me in the sheltered

part. The usual way of getting a horse over a river where there

is no ferry is to make him swim, a waterman swimming in front

or else sitting in a canoe. In the latter case care must be taken

that the horse is down-stream from the canoe, else he may be

swept under it and drowned. Horses are usually much afraid of

water, and are, I believe, easily drowned, but as I never lost any

in that way I cannot state this as a fact on my own authority.

Two of Maitumbi's animals were drowned in the Kaduna when

on the trek mentioned before, but they were ahead, and I do

not know the circumstances.

By Barge or Punt. — This may be only a ferry, attached to a

wire, and square in shape, or it may be more like a canoe run to

fat, and intended for travelling on the river, where it is poled along.

This is very pleasant when there is plenty of room, and a man

alone in a barge is usually quite comfortable. But when over-

crowded it is very much the other way, for not only is there but

little room for the Europeans, but the different sets of servants

are usually quarrelling, and I suppose eighty per cent, of the

quarrels between white men on the coast are the result of some

act of a servant of one or other of them.

Barges are not much used below Lokoja, nor are they often

seen in any of the main streams during the rains; but in the dry

season they are the usual mode of transport on the rivers, as they

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draw only a few inches. They are supposed to do about twenty

miles against stream, and double that when coming down with it.

By Swine. — I do not mean that the passengers are "road-

hogs,'" nor even water-hogs; this is a native corruption of the name

Szvan, which was given to the first two' steam barges in Northern

Nigeria, and it has proved so appropriate that it now applies even

to beautiful new vessels (to quote the style of the Annual Report)

called Za?~ia, &c. They are single stern-wheelers, the boilers being

fore and the engines aft, and steam-pipes run back in some at the

height of one's head, in others level with his knees, so that the

wretched passenger is usually burnt a few times somewhere or

other during a long journey. There is a half-deck above, and as

it is almost on a level with the smoke-stack one can have quite

a good time at small expense catching the sparks that fly.

Very often the passenger does this involuntarily, or rather his

clothes do.

A larger development is the double stern-wheeler, the apo-

theosis of which is, I suppose, the Corona, the Governor's yacht, a

three-decker, and hardly ever used, or able to be used, until lately.

This boat is extremely comfortable when running, but some of

the smaller ones are not, as there are no cabins, and when several

Europeans are travelling together and each has his baggage on

the tiny deck the scene of confusion is lamentable. " The upper

deck is provided for the recreation and comfort of the passen-

gers,," according to the official General Standing Orders, but one is

rather inclined to wonder where the comfort comes in when these

boats are overcrowded, as they usually are, the only space between

the travellers being occupied by mosquitoes. I think there must

be some doubts in the marine mind also about this, for in the

Annual Report for 1908 the river transport is described as being

somewhat unsatisfactory. There is no doubt about the recrea-

tion ; one has to be a gymnast to get about at all.

By Steamer. — Last is the steamer, and though I am informed on

credible authority that quite two out of three small cargo boats

can get to Baro, the railway port on the Niger, a good many

manage to decorate the rocks at various intervals. The passenger

steamers are now too large to come past Burutu, and as the old

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oil-tanks are being gradually replaced by new boats of a superior

class, the passenger from West Africa has on the whole nothing

to complain about if he travels in one of Elder-Dempster's best

vessels. Certainly it is a very welcome sight at the end of a long

tour, and the relief at being able to rest in peace, and to know

that there will be plenty of clean food ready at the proper time

without any worry on one's own part, is almost too great to be

described.

These are the principal modes of travelling in Northern

Nigeria ; there may be aeroplanes before long, but at present the

only airy flights one can indulge in are those of fancy, and they

are much too complicated to be described in detail, especially

when they are the result of fever.

The native in charge of every stern-wheeled boat, whether a

swine (I mean the boat) or not, is always called " Captain," and it

is perhaps interesting to note how large a number of the white

officials have this rank. A great many of them have had previous

military service, and the experience has naturally been of great

utility to them afterwards, but why should thev all have stuck

at the grade of captain ? There is sometimes a little jealousy

between subalterns of the regulars and captains of the auxiliary

forces, even in West Africa, though this is usually confined to

new arrivals, and I remember once hearing a very junior officer,

w T ho had never before been out of England, very badly sat upon.

" What wonderful titles men have got out here, ,, said the

budding general, although he ought to have known better, con-

sidering that he himself had been advanced to the local rank of

lieutenant, pro tern., " I wonder that they are allowed to call them-

selves c Captain ' when they do not belong to the army. I should

call them ' Hedge-row Captains. 1 "

" They call themselves by the rank which they held on active

service." was the reply, " and since a soldier's real work is fighting

in hostile country, and not merely drilling on a peaceful parade-

ground, I do not think they will worry much over the opinion of

a 6 Cease-fire Subaltern' like yourself! "

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CHAPTER XXIII

HAUSA FOLKLORE

I SUPPOSE no book on any part of West Africa would be

complete without some reference to the folklore of the

country, and this is especially the case with Northern Nigeria

and the Gold Coast, where the Hausawa, or as we call them, the

Hausas, are found. During my last tour I collected about 150

new tales, and I could have quadrupled the number with ease had

I not had so much other work to do.

Whether these people are indigenous, or whether they are

a mixture of Berbers and local Negroes, or (as I think) of Berbers,

Arabs, and Negroes from the south-west of Egypt, need not be

argued here, for I have already written on the subject in The

Niger and the West Sudan, but some points are worth noting.

Their original country is what is now Northern Nigeria, and it

consisted at one time of seven States, the Hausa Bokkoi (" Hausa

Seven where the true tongue was spoken, to which seven others,

the Banza Bokkoi (" False Seven were afterwards added. About

one-third of the vocabulary of this language is composed of

Arabic words, but the origin of the rest is still in doubt, though

there seems to be some connection between the Hausa and the

Coptic grammars. About a.d. 1000 the Hausa States were

conquered by an alien race, probably of mixed origin, and coming

from the east, the new-comers bringing the horse with them, and

these people ruled the country until they in turn were subdued

by the Filani in the early part of last century.

The Hausas have not the finely chiselled features of the Filani

nor yet the very thick lips and flat noses of the Coast Negro ; they

are rather short and stumpy, and have woolly hair. They are

good agriculturists, and, as a people, are more inclined for peace

than for war, though individually, they are fine fighters when

mo

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properly led. They are also the traders par excellence of West

Africa, always extending their sphere of operations, and are noted

for their success in being able to drive hard bargains.

They are very fond of tales and proverbs, and almost every

well-known animal or bird, and nearly every trade or profession,

is represented in the folklore of the people ; and as many animals

can change themselves into human beings, according to their ideas,

it is not surprising to find that they are supposed to follow the

same pursuits. I hope to publish a book later which will give

a fairly complete idea of the tales, but in a single chapter one

can only point out some of the general characteristics, and I will

confine these remarks to tales about animals. By the way, the

name should be spelt Hausa, and pronounced How-za, not

Houssa, which is the French rendering.

The spider (gizzo) is the king of cunning and craftiness, and,

after each tale, the narrator excuses himself for the untruths that

he has necessarily told, by saying that they have been told in the

name of this insect. The spider is nicknamed Maiwayo^ the crafty

one, and at various times he is shown as outwitting the different

animals and even man, though he does not seem quite the equal

of an old woman. Many of his victims pay him out in the end,

but he usually escapes because of his having procured a charm for

popularity from a Mohammedan mallam, or learned man, in the

following way : —

The Mallam, the Spider, and the Hyena

This is about a certain Learned Man and his Horse. He

started from Zaria to go to the city of Kano, but, being tired,

he dismounted and rested at the foot of a tamarind tree. Soon

afterwards the Hyena came along, and, seeing the Mallam, said,

" O Learned One, there is an Animal over yonder which has died ;

will you not lend me your Horse so that I may get there quickly ? "

And the Learned Man said, " Certainly, get on his back, O

Hyena." Then the Hyena said, " Many thanks, but let me first

take off the saddle and leave it here."

When she had taken it off, she led the Horse away, and, when

she had led him to her den, she killed him and her Cubs ate him.

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The Learned Man waited and waited, but there was no sign

of the Hyena nor of the Horse, and he sat there at a loss what

to do. Just then the Spider came along, and said, " O Learned

Man, what are you doing here ? " He said, " I am at a loss what

to do ; I have lost my Horse which I was to have ridden to Kano."

Then the Spider said, <e But here is a saddle, how is it you have

no Horse to ride ? " The Mallam replied, " The Hyena came and

led away the Horse to her den." Then the Spider said, u Look

here, I am going to bring the Hyena to you at once ; I shall

girth on the saddle, I shall put on the bridle, and you shall

mount her and go to the city of Kano. If I do this for you

will you give me a charm for popularity in return ? " And the

Mallam gave the required promise.

Then the Spider got up and went to the Hyena's den, and

called out, " Hyena, you are wasting a splendid opportunity ;

there is a free feed to be had quite near here, yet you are at

home doing nothing ! " Then the Hyena replied, " Is it true,

O Spider ; has some Animal really died there ? Let us go to

the place with all speed." So she came out of her den, and

they went off together in the forest.

Soon they came upon the saddle-cloth which the Hyena had

flung off on the road, and the Spider said, " O Hyena, if I take

this saddle-cloth, and put it on your back and ride you, we shall

go much more quickly, for I am but a poor traveller. " So the

Hyena said, " Take it, O Spider, and put it on, by all means.' 1

So the Spider took it and put it on her, and mounted. After

going on a little way, they came upon the saddle also, and the

Spider said, " O Hyena, your back is very sharp, I had better

girth the saddle on so that I may feel more comfortable while

riding; I cannot go quickly like this." So she said, "Take it

and put it on, by all means." So he put it on, and mounted

again. Then he went and got the bridle also, and said, " O

Hyena, if you have this on you, and if you were about to fall

through the slipperiness of the ground, I could pull it and you

would not fall." So the Hyena said, " Take it, and put it on too."

So he put the bridle on her and mounted. And as they were

going along, the Spider got the spurs, and said, " Let me put

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these on, so that if I touch you we shall go more quickly. 1 ' And

when he had put on the spurs and had mounted the Hyena

again, he kept digging the spurs into her stomach, and making

her run, until he had brought her to the Learned Man.

Then the Spider said, " O Learned Man, mount, here is the

Hyena, I have brought her to you." So the Mallam made a charm

for popularity [by writing out a verse of the Koran, and encasing

it in a piece of soft leather], and gave it to the Spider, and then

he mounted the Hyena, and went off towards Kano. As he was

moving off, the Spider called out, " When you get to Kano, do

not tie up the Hyena with a hide hobble, put a chain on her."

Then the Learned Man said to the Hyena, " Stop, the Spider is

saying something behind us." But the Hyena said, " I heard ; he

said that when you have reached Kano you must tie me with a

hide hobble, you must not chain me up, for if you put a chain on

me I should die, and you would have nothing to ride." So he

spurred her, and they ran off.

When he had come to Kano he dismounted, and tied her up

with a hide hobble, so when night came the Hyena ate the hide,

and got free. Then she drank the water set ready for the

inmates of the house, and ate all the fowls that she could find,

and then she seized a goat and ran off with it to the forest, and

succeeded in finding her way home to her cubs.

When she had refreshed herself, she went out to look for the

Spider, but he had been given a charm for popularity, so every

Animal she inquired of wished to save him from her anger, and

said, " I have not seen the Spider." She searched for him until

she became tired with traversing the forest, but she did not see

him, and after a time an internal sickness griped her, and she

died in the forest. That was the reason why the Spider became

popular ; every tale is ascribed to the Spider.

The spider had not much cause to be proud of his victory

over the hyena perhaps, for she is known as a silly beast, quite

the buffoon of the animal world, but he soon had another

adventure on his hands.

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The Spider, the Fish, and the Lion

This is about the Spicier. It was a time of famine, there had

been hunger in the land for a long time, and there was nothing

for him to eat; but some small Red-Breasted Birds used to

pluck the berries from a tree in the centre of a very deep lake

which no one could enter, and they used to give him a few. One

day when the Birds had come back, the Spider persuaded one

of them to let him ride on his wing, and they went to the lake

together. When the Spider was about to pluck the berries the

Birds stopped him, and tried to deceive him, saying, " We always

sleep in the tree, and in the morning find that the berries have

ripened."

Now when they had gone to sleep, the Bird who was carrying

the Spider slipped her wing from under him, and she flew off

and left him helpless, so that when he moved he fell into the

lake. He sank in the water until he came to the house of the

Water-Dwellers, and they made him so welcome that they began

quarrelling over him, each claiming him as a relative. Then one

of the disputants said, " Mix some locust fruit, and make it very

hot, and if he is a relative of ours he will drink it however hot it

may be ; if he is not, then he will let it cool." When they had

prepared it, the Spider said, " Take it into the sun [to make it

hotter, apparently forgetting he was under water], and keep on

stirring it," and he drank it all up. Then the Water-Dwellers

said, " He is our brother," and they brought him to the house of

a Fish who had just laid 100 eggs, and installed him there, but

the Spider said to the Fish's young ones, " If you hear a sound

like 4 pus,' you will know that I am hiccoughing."

When they had gone he took the eggs, and put them on the

fire, and when he broke them and they made a " pus," the young

Fish said, "The guest is hiccoughing." Then the older Fish

rebuked them for saying so, but the Spider called out, " Do

not scold them, I am their father," and he ate up the eggs all

but one.

After two days, he said he must return home, and many of the

Water- Dwellers said they would escort him [a mark of honour

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as mentioned before], the Frog being the most important of them.

So they started travelling, and soon afterwards the Fish which

owned the eggs and had been left behind, entered the house

where the Spider had been lodging, and saw that he had eaten

the eggs. Then they called out, " Bring back the stranger, he

has eaten the eggs." But the Spider heard first, and said, " Hurry,

hurry, the rain is coming," and, when he had come to the

bank, he told the Fish escorting him to get inside his basket

and he would carry them. The Frog was going to enter, but the

Spider prevented him, but the Fish all got inside, and the Spider

tied up the mouth of the basket tightly, and then he lighted

a fire and put one of the Fish on it to grill.

Now it happened that just then the Lion arrived, and came up

behind the Spider and stood there. But the Spider did not see

him, and as soon as the first Fish was cooked he took it off the

fire to make room for the next, and threw it behind him, and the

Lion took it. This happened each time, and when all had been

cooked the Spider looked around, expecting to see his pile of Fish,

and found that the Lion had eaten every one. Then the Spider

was furious, but, being always cunning, he addressed the Lion

with the usual salutation, " O Great One, Elder Brother of the

Forest, did you see the feast that I provided for you ? " And the

Lion replied that he had, and they went off together, apparently

the best of friends.

As they were walking along, a Partridge flew out just in front

of them, and the Spider said that she was trying to avoid paying

her barber [for tattooing her]. Then the Lion said, "Was it

you who made those marks on her?" and the Spider said

" Yes."

A little farther on a Guinea-Fowl rose up, and the Spider said

that she too was trying to cheat him. Then the Lion asked if

the Spider had made her marks for her also, and, on being told

that that was the case, he said that he should like some. Then

the Spider said, " It will be very difficult to tattoo you, O Strong

One, unless proper preparations are made ; first, it will be neces-

sary to kill a Buffalo, and to flay it, and to make a rope of the

hide." So the Lion captured a Buffalo, and gave the body to

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the Spider, who cut its throat, and skinned it, and made a rope

of the hide. Then he asked the Lion to go into the forest and find

a tree so strong that however hard it was pushed it could not be

bent. So the Lion shook trees in every direction, and he broke

them all, until at last he found a Kiria which he could not bend,

and the Spider tied him to it. Then he said to the Lion, " Now,

see if you can move, and wherever the lashings are loose show

me," and where the Spider saw any movement he tied the rope all

the tighter. Then he put his knife in the fire, and when he had

made it red-hot he slashed the Lion's body in all directions, say-

ing, after each stroke, " That is for the fish you stole from me,"

and when he had cut the Lion until he was tired he went off home.

Soon afterwards the White- Ant appeared, and said to the Lion,

" If one makes day for you (does you a good turn) will you make

night for him (repay it with a bad one) ? " And, when the Lion

had said that he would not do such a thing, the White- Ant ate

through the hide in all directions, and freed the Lion. But the

latter trod on him and ate him, and the White- Ant said, " Alas !

that is what I feared."

Then the Lion went to an Old Woman, and asked her advice

as to how he could pay the Spider back ; and she said, " Well, if

I do you a good turn do not repay me with a bad one." And

when he had promised she took the Lion to her house, and made

an evil-smelling soup with which she smeared the whole of the

Lion's body, with the exception of his eyes, and she took him and

put him in a corner, and all the house smelt of the soup. Then

she went to the Spider's house, and said, " Who has killed the

Lion ? he is rotting." And the Spider said, " I have a deadly

poison ; when I shot him I knew he would die ; " and he con-

tinued boasting of how he had hunted and killed the Lion until

they arrived at the Old Woman's house. But when the Spider

had come close and had touched the Lion, the latter seized him

and threw him against the wall, and killed him, and then the Lion

said that he had avenged himself.

This story is more complete than most, and shows how the

spider deceived the lion, and was in turn trapped, a variant

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making the jackal a victim. There is a ' resemblance in this to

our story of " The Lion and the Mouse."

The goat, the sheep, the jackal, and the donkey are regarded

as wise animals, while the dog and the monkey are rather foolish,

though usually too clever for the hyena, which is the butt of all

the animals.

The Hyena, the Sheep, and the Monkey

There was once a Sheep who, with her two Lambs, set out on

her travels, and the three journeyed on and on, until, as night

approached, they found themselves at the house of the Hyena.

The Hyena made food for them, and they ate it, and when they

had finished the Hyena gave them a hut to sleep in, and she and

her seven Cubs shut them in lest they should run away. During

the night the Sheep dug a hole, and made a tunnel under the wall

[this is often done by the Hyenas in order to reach Goats and

Sheep shut up in a hut], and she and her two Lambs escaped.

They ran on to the brink of the river, and there they obtained

three gourds, one large, the other two small. Then they made

three holes in the earth, and the Sheep put the gourds in the

holes, and she and her Lambs ran on again.

In the morning the Hyena arose and looked in the hut where

the Sheep had slept, but saw that she was too late, so she galloped

after them, and there on the brink of the river she saw the three

white gourds [which she mistook for the heads of the Sheep and

her Lambs]. " Oh, there they are," she said ; " they have not gone

far," and she sprang on to them. But the earth gave way and she

fell into the river.

Just then the Monkey came up to drink, and the Hyena said,

" O Monkey, will you not let me catch hold of your tail that I may

pull myself out ? " But the Monkey replied, " Oh no, if one does

you a good turn you will repay him with an evil one." But she

swore that she would not do such a thing, and so the Monkev

stretched out his tail, and she seized it, and pulled herself out of

the water. When she had done this the Monkey said, " Now let

me go " ; but the Hyena said, " Will you not let me have a bite off

it ? " and she bit off half, and even then she refused to let him go.

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As they went along they came upon the Jackal, the Wise-Man

of the Forest, the Learned One, the Scholar, and they asked him

to judge between them. Then the Jackal told the Hyena to

release the Monkey first, but she said that he would escape if she

did so, but after a while she was persuaded and let him go. Then

the Jackal rushed into his hole, calling out to the Monkey to

climb into the tree above, and so they left the Hyena sitting there

alone.

Perhaps a part of the cleverness of the donkeys is due to the

fact that some of them are really girls, corresponding in some

respects to the swan-maidens of other countries.

The Donkey-Girl

There was once a certain Woman who was very anxious for

Children, but she had not had any, and one day, seeing a Donkey,

she prayed to God to give her a Child even if it were only a

Donkey. On her return home she found that she had conceived,

and she afterwards brought forth her Offspring, a Donkey, The

Donkey was always tied up near the house until it grew big, and

then it was allowed to go into the bush by itself [as is the custom

by day, returning to the owner at night]. When it went to the

forest it used to throw off the Donkey skin and enter the water

and wash, and after that it would put on the skin again and

return home, and be tied up as before.

One day it went to the forest to feed, and a Hunter saw it

throw off the skin, and enter the water, as a young Maiden, more

beautiful than any he had ever seen. Then the Hunter ran to

the King, and said, " So and So's Child is not a Donkey at all,

but a Human Being." And the King sent a Messenger to the

GhTs Father to ask him for the Donkey in marriage. The

Parents said, " How can the King marry a Donkey ? " but the

King replied that he wanted to do so, and they said, therefore,

that they would give him it, and the Donkey was brought to the

King's house and tied up there.

Next morning, the King unloosed it, and sent it out to feed,

telling the Hunter that if the Girl should enter the water and he

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could steal the Donkey skin, he should be given a Horse [a form

of currency and a ceremonial present] as a reward. Now the

Hunter had made friends with a Hawk, and he said to it, " O

Hawk, if this Girl enters the water, and you manage to steal her

skin, I will give you three Fowls ; " so when the Girl had gone

into the water and had taken off her Donkey skin the Hawk

swooped down and took it. When the Girl came out and found

that her skin had disappeared, she ran home to her mothers

house and hid, but her Parents gave her a Woman's clothing, and

took her to the King's house, and the King made her his Wife.

There are several tales of human beings marrying with insects

or animals, but there is usually deceit on the part of the latter,

and these unions usually end in a sad way, but in one tale the

spider is admitted to be the best husband of all, though the

reasons do not seem very satisfactory to us.

Dodo, the Spider, and his Wives

A Spider had two wives, and one day he went and made up

two bundles of wood, and he brought them and gave each Wife

one. Then he asked them if there were any Man who would do

better than he had [because he had done their work for them],

and as they said that there was, he told them to take him to the

house of the Man who was better than he was. So they started

out, and having bought white cloth, they came to the house of

Dodo [a mythical monster ; in this case he is a land spirit, for he

cannot enter the river, but he is usually a water god, possibly

originating from the crocodile]. They said to Dodo's Mother

that they had brought a Bride for the " Man of Men," and then

they left the Spider there, wrapped in the white clothes like a bride

[the face being also veiled], and went home.

Soon afterwards, Dodo came home singing, and wondering how

he was going to wash the dirt from his body, and, when the

Spider heard him, he got up and ran away. When Dodo had

arrived, his Mother told him that a Bride had been brought for

him, and Dodo asked where she was. Then he looked in the

clothes, but saw no bride, and he followed the Spider's footsteps.

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Meanwhile, the Spider had overtaken some Farmers, and they

asked him what was making him run away. He replied that it

was Dodo, and then they said, " Pooh, sit down here, and if he

comes we will hide you amongst the roots of the tomatoes." But

Dodo was coming on, and when the Farmers saw him, they asked

the Spider who it was that was coming. " That is the Dodo who

is chasing me," he replied, and then they said, 66 Get up, and run

away, we cannot hide you from him," and they also ran away.

The Spider arose, and ran on again, and came upon some

Harvesters, and they also asked what he was running away from,

and, when he told them, they said he could hide in a furrow.

But when they saw Dodo coming, they too told him to fly, and so

he ran on again until he reached a river, and he crossed it just as

Dodo arrived on the bank. Then the Spider stood his ground

and laughed at Dodo, for he could not cross the river,, and so he

got safely back to his house while Dodo had to retrace his steps.

Then the Spider seized one of his Wives, and took her to

Dodo for him to marry her, but he ate her instead. Then the

Spider asked the other Wife if there was any better man than he,

and she said, " Oh no, you are better than any man."

I cannot call to mind any stories which ascribe to the dog the

task of helping a human being in trouble, but the horse is

mentioned in such a connection in several tales. The speed of the

animal is naturally the useful characteristic in this connection,

but the horse is made to show also a certain amount of intelligence,

and in this story a mare acts like a Fairy Godmother.

Salifu and the Wonderful Mare

The King of a certain city had ten Sons, and sickness seized

hold upon him, and he knew that he was going to die. So he

summoned his ten Sons to his bed-side, and said to them, " Come

to-morrow, and I will advise you how to live a happy life on

earth."

Next morning, the Sons came, and he summoned the Eldest

first, and said to him, " You see that I am about to die ; you know

my old Mare ; when I am dead that Mare will be your portion."

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But the Eldest Son said, " I refuse ; there is much property ; I shall

not be content with the Mare."

Then the Father summoned the Second Son, and made the

same proposition to him, but he also refused, and so did all the

Others down to the Ninth with a like result. But the Tenth,

Salifu, said, " 1 agree, Father, and I thank you." He then went

out, and all the Others arose and went also. Salifu went off to

collect grass for his Father's horses, and before he had returned his

Father was dead. Then there were lamentations, and after that

the property was collected ready for distribution.

Everything was arranged in ten lots, Slaves, Cattle, Horses,

Donkeys and everything, and then the Eldest Son was told to take

his lot, the Second to take his, and so on to the Ninth Son. But

Salifu refused to take his portion, and said that the old Mare was

enough for him, and that he did not want anything else. Then

his Mother began to abuse him for not taking the lot [apparently

the distribution was not on the Mohammedan system — otherwise

her share would have been greater by his refusal — but on a system

something like that of the Hindu, where a mother shares with her

sons], but he refused to be persuaded. So the Other Brothers

said, u Very well," and they divided the tenth lot, and Every One

went away. Salifu took away his Mare, and soon afterwards she

conceived, and bore a Foal, a wonderful male Charger. Then the

King of another City heard the news and said that he wanted to

buy the Foal, and he gave 100 Slaves for it.

Then Salifu's Brothers said that their Father had played them

a trick, since the Mare could bring forth a Foal worth 100 Slaves,

and they determined to kill Salifu and seize his possessions. So

they said to him that he must go to a certain tree and pick kola-

nuts for them. Now the tree was in the midst of a lake, so the

Boy knew that he could not get near it, and he began crying.

Then the Mare said, " What are you crying for ? " He replied,

" My Brothers summoned me, and told me that I must go and

bring them kola-nuts from the lake." Then the Mare said, " Is

that all ? Leave off crying ; since you did not cause your Father

any grief you will not have any. Now, go into your Father's

room and bring me a handkerchief." When he had brought it,

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she spread it in front of him, and a Crow and a Frog came out of

it. Then the Mare said to them, " Go to the lake and get the

kola-nuts." So they went ; the Crow flew up above and plucked

off the nuts, and when they fell into the water the Frog caught

them. Then they emerged from the lake, and the Crow took the

nuts to the Boy, and he gave them to his Brothers. Then they

said, " There is no one who can beat this Boy ; go home again," so

he went home.

But soon afterwards the Brothers were gathered together

again, and sent for Salifu, and when he had come they said, " We

are giving our Servants food ; go home and they will bring it to

you, and when you have eaten it give them back the calabashes. 1 '

Then Salifu returned home, and began crying, and the Mare

asked him what he was crying for ; and, when she had been told,

she said, " Go into your father's room and bring that handker-

chief." So he entered, and brought it, and, when the Mare had

spread it in front of him, Slipperiness came out, and Small Pieces

of Wood, and they went to the road, the Slipperiness placing

itself in the middle of the path, the Wood doing the same. Four

Youths had been detailed to bring the meat and grain, and one to

carry the soup [all eaten together, the whole being enough for,

perhaps, eight men], and when they had reached the road to the

house, the first one stumbled, for the Slipperiness had caught

him, and when he fell down the Wood broke his legs. All fell

down and broke their legs, and the food was wasted in the

forest.

Then again the Brothers summoned Salifu to come, and they

said, " Go home, for guinea-corn, millet, atcha, and rice will be

sent to you all mixed together, and you must separate them by

to-morrow morning." Then he went home and began crying,

and the Mare asked him what he was sad about now ; and, when

she had been told, she once more had the handkerchief brought.

Then she spread it as before, and said, " All You who are inside

come forth, there is work for you to do," and immediately a great

multitude of Ants appeared, and separated the grain, and Salifu

sent it back in different calabashes to his Brothers.

Soon afterwards the Brothers said, " There is a certain Girl

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among the rebels, the King's Daughter, go and bring her here."

Then Salifu began crying again, and told the Mare what he had

been set to do, and she said, " Here is my Foal, bring sour milk

in a large gourd, put some millet into it also, and mix them [a

very great delicacy, as mentioned before], and let him drink it."

When the Foal had drunk, the Mare said, "Now saddle him, mount,

and go off'." Salifu said that he did not know the way, but the

Mare said that the Foal knew it, so off they started. They

travelled all day and all night, and, by the next morning, they

had reached the town. Then the Foal said, "Let us find a place

where we can hide in this long grass ; when the Women come out

to draw water we will seize the Girl we want."

So they went and hid until noon, when a crowd of Young

Girls came out of the city to go to the waterside. Four of the

Girls were holding a cloth like a canopy over the King's Daughter,

and she walked along between them. Then the Foal rushed out

of the grass, and the Boy seized the Girl, and lifted her on to his

saddle, and they galloped off as the alarm was sounded. But

Salifu returned safely to his house, and brought the Girl to his

Brothers, and she said, " Oh indeed, did you not seize me for

yourself? who is it who made you do it for him?" Then the

Brothers said to her, " Go into the house ! " But the Girl said,

" Oh no, I am a King's Daughter, I will not enter unless a Ram

is killed in my honour." So a Ram was brought, and she told

them to kill it, and, when it had been divided up, she took the

skin and beat it with her hands, and the skin arose and became

a Ram again. Then she said to the King, 66 Now you also let me

treat you likewise," and the King agreed, and she killed him.

Then she said to the Brothers, M You also will I kill unless you

make Salifu King ; " and so they agreed, and she made him King

and took him to the King's palace, and she said, " To-day you are

King, Salifu ; he who refuses to follow you, kill him. They

refused to do what your Father told them, but you obeyed, and

so you are now best off."

Birds seem usually more intelligent than animals, and there

is a tale of the battle between them in which the latter are badly

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worsted, but sometimes they come off' only second best. They,

too, help man at times, though at others he must beware of them,

since they are always stealing his grains and fruits. The follow-

ing story shows a bird to much better advantage than the human

beings concerned. Does it refer to a process of substitution ?

The Greedy Woman and the Good Bird

There was a certain Old Woman once who had a Daughter.

There was also a man who had a Bull which he wanted to sell,

but he said that his Bull was not to be bought for money, but

that Whoever bought it, on the date when payment became due,

must be buried alive. Then the Old Woman said that she would

take the Bull on these terms, and the Owner said, " Very well,

you have a Daughter ; when the date comes you must give her to

me so that I may bury her alive, 1 ' and the Old Woman agreed,

and she took the Bull.

When the day came the " Burier-alive " came, and said, " Old

Woman, the day has come ; give me your Daughter that I may

bury her alive ; " and he went off and began digging a grave.

Then he returned, and took the Girl, and made her walk in front

of him. When they had gone some distance, the Old Woman,

in order to delay the evil hour, called out, " O Burier-alive, the

Girl has some jewels, will you not allow her to fetch them ?" So

he said, " Bring them to her," and she brought them. When

they had gone on again the Old Woman called out, " What about

her clothes ? " and he said, " Bring them," and so she brought

them also.

After a while they came near to the grave, and the Old

Woman was crying that Fate was against her, and saying, " Had

I only known that it would come to this I would not have acted

so ; it is Greed which kills the Dog, not Hunger." Just then a

Red Bird flew up, and said, "What are you crying for, Old

Woman ? " And she replied, " Alas, because of my greed my

Daughter is to be buried alive ! " Then the Bird said, " Old

Woman, leave off crying. I will dry your tears for you, but if

I do you a good turn you must not return me a bad one."

Then the Old Woman called out, "O Burier-alive, my

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Daughter has silken cords for her neck, will you not allow her

to fetch them?" And he said "Bring them." But the Red

Bird took them, and tied them around her neck, and became

a Girl, while the Girl turned into a Red Bird, and flew up and

returned to the Old Woman. Then the Burier-alive made the

Red Bird walk in front — he did not know it was a Bird — and

made it lie down in the hole, and began mixing earth to plaster

it over the grave. But the Bird flew away when he was not

looking, and so the Burier-alive made his clay for nothing, for

he did not know that she had flown away. Then the Bird

returned to the Old Woman, and said, 6i You must fight against

Greed; it is a thing to be avoided, and if you are patient it will

disappear."

Most excellent advice, which is recommended to all the

Hausas and other natives of the country ; but, after all, they

are not so bad ; it is wonderful sometimes to see what hardships

they will put up with. They are fine fellows when unspoilt, and

their good humour and cheerfulness under adverse circumstances

are an excellent antidote to the European who is working up for

a fit of the blues. And in spite of the blackwater, I hope that

it is with them, as also with my readers, not a case of 64 Good-

bye," but only of u Au Revoir."

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MAP OF NORTHERN NIGERIA FOR " THE TAILED HEAD-HUNTERS OF NIGERIA."

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