

MARY KINGSLEY

## TRAVELS IN WEST AFRICA

### INTRODUCTION

Relateth the various causes which impelled the author to embark upon the voyage.

It was in 1893 that, for the first time in my life, I found myself in possession of five or six months which were not heavily forestalled, and feeling like a boy with a new half-crown, I lay about in my mind, as Mr. Bunyan would say, as to what to do with them. "Go and learn your tropics," said Science. Where on earth am I to go? I wondered, for tropics are tropics wherever found, so I got down an atlas and saw that either South America or West Africa must be my destination, for the Malayan region was too far off and too expensive. Then I got Wallace's *Geographical Distribution* and after reading that master's article on the Ethiopian region I hardened my heart and closed with West Africa. I did this the more readily because while I knew nothing of the practical condition of it, I knew a good deal both by tradition and report of South East America, and remembered that Yellow Jack was endemic, and that a certain naturalist, my superior physically and mentally, had come very near getting starved to death in the depressing society of an expedition slowly perishing of want and miscellaneous fevers up the Parana.

My ignorance regarding West Africa was soon removed. And although the vast cavity in my mind that it occupied is not even yet half filled up, there is a great deal of very curious information in its place. I use the word curious advisedly, for I think many seemed to translate my request for practical hints and advice into an advertisement that "Rubbish may be shot here." This same information is in a state of great confusion still, although I have made heroic efforts to codify it. I find, however, that it can almost all be got in under the following different headings, namely and to wit:—

- The dangers of West Africa.
- The disagreeables of West Africa.
- The diseases of West Africa.
- The things you must take to West Africa.
- The things you find most handy in West Africa.
- The worst possible things you can do in West Africa

I inquired of all my friends as a beginning what they knew of West Africa. The majority knew nothing. A percentage said, "Oh, you can't possibly go there; that's where Sierra Leone is, the white man's grave, you know." If these were pressed further, one occasionally found that they had had relations who had gone out there after having been "sad trials," but, on consideration of their having left not only West Africa, but this world, were now forgiven and forgotten.

I next turned my attention to cross-examining the doctors. "Deadliest spot on earth," they said cheerfully, and showed me maps of the geographical distribution of disease. Now I do not say that a country looks inviting when it is coloured in Scheele's green or a bilious yellow, but these colours may arise from lack of artistic gift in the cartographer. There is no mistaking what he means by black, however, and black you'll find they colour West Africa from above Sierra Leone to below the Congo. "I wouldn't go there if I were you," said my medical friends, "you'll catch something; but if

you must go, and you're as obstinate as a mule, just bring me——" and then followed a list of commissions from here to New York, any one of which—but I only found that out afterwards.

All my informants referred me to the missionaries. "There were," they said, in an airy way, "lots of them down there, and had been for many years." So to missionary literature I addressed myself with great ardour; alas! only to find that these good people wrote their reports not to tell you how the country they resided in was, but how it was getting on towards being what it ought to be, and how necessary it was that their readers should subscribe more freely, and not get any foolishness into their heads about obtaining an inadequate supply of souls for their money. I also found fearful confirmation of my medical friends' statements about its unhealthiness, and various details of the distribution of cotton shirts over which I did not linger.

From the missionaries it was, however, that I got my first idea about the social condition of West Africa. I gathered that there existed there, firstly the native human beings—the raw material, as it were—and that these were led either to good or bad respectively by the missionary and the trader. There were also the Government representatives, whose chief business it was to strengthen and consolidate the missionary's work, a function they carried on but indifferently well. But as for those traders! well, I put them down under the dangers of West Africa at once. Subsequently I came across the good old Coast yarn of how, when a trader from that region went thence, it goes without saying where, the Fallen Angel without a moment's hesitation vacated the infernal throne (Milton) in his favour. This, I beg to note, is the marine form of the legend. When it occurs terrestrially the trader becomes a Liverpool mate. But of course no one need believe it either way—it is not a missionary's story.

Naturally, while my higher intelligence was taken up with attending to these statements, my mind got set on going, and I had to go. Fortunately I could number

among my acquaintances one individual who had lived on the Coast for seven years. Not, it is true, on that part of it which I was bound for. Still his advice was pre-eminently worth attention, because, in spite of his long residence in the deadliest spot of the region, he was still in fair going order. I told him I intended going to West Africa, and he said, "When you have made up your mind to go to West Africa the very best thing you can do is to get it unmade again and go to Scotland instead; but if your intelligence is not strong enough to do so, abstain from exposing yourself to the direct rays of the sun, take 4 grains of quinine every day for a fortnight before you reach the Rivers, and get some introductions to the Wesleyans; they are the only people on the Coast who have got a hearse with feathers."

My attention was next turned to getting ready things to take with me. Having opened upon myself the sluice gates of advice, I rapidly became distracted. My friends and their friends alike seemed to labour under the delusion that I intended to charter a steamer and was a person of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. This not being the case, the only thing to do was to gratefully listen and let things drift.

Not only do the things you have got to take, but the things you have got to take them in, present a fine series of problems to the young traveller. Crowds of witnesses testified to the forms of baggage holders they had found invaluable, and these, it is unnecessary to say, were all different in form and material.

With all this *embarras de choix* I was too distracted to buy anything new in the way of baggage except a long waterproof sack neatly closed at the top with a bar and handle. Into this I put blankets, boots, books, in fact anything that would not go into my portmanteau or black bag. From the first I was haunted by a conviction that its bottom would come out, but it never did, and in spite of the fact that it had ideas of its own about the arrangement of its contents, it served me well throughout my voyage.

It was the beginning of August '93 when I first left England for "the Coast." Preparations of quinine with postage partially paid arrived up to the last moment, and a friend hastily sent two newspaper clippings, one entitled "A Week in a Palm-oil Tub," which was supposed to describe the sort of accommodation, companions, and fauna likely to be met with on a steamer going to West Africa, and on which I was to spend seven to *The Graphic* contributor's one; the other from *The Daily Telegraph*, reviewing a French book of "Phrases in common use" in Dahomey. The opening sentence in the latter was, "Help, I am drowning." Then came the inquiry, "If a man is not a thief?" and then another cry, "The boat is upset." "Get up, you lazy scamps," is the next exclamation, followed almost immediately by the question, "Why has not this man been buried?" "It is fetish that has killed him, and he must lie here exposed with nothing on him until only the bones remain," is the cheerful answer. This sounded discouraging to a person whose occupation would necessitate going about considerably in boats, and whose fixed desire was to study fetish. So with a feeling of foreboding gloom I left London for Liverpool—none the more cheerful for the matter-of-fact manner in which the steamboat agents had informed me that they did not issue return tickets by the West African lines of steamers. I will not go into the details of that voyage here, much as I am given to discursiveness. They are more amusing than instructive, for on my first voyage out I did not know the Coast, and the Coast did not know me, and we mutually terrified each other. I fully expected to get killed by the local nobility and gentry; they thought I was connected with the World's Women's Temperance Association, and collecting shocking details for subsequent magic-lantern lectures on the liquor traffic; so fearful misunderstandings arose, but we gradually educated each other, and I had the best of the affair; for all I had got to teach them was that I was only a beetle and fetish hunter, and so forth, while they had to teach me a new world,

and a very fascinating course of study I found it. And whatever the Coast may have to say against me—for my continual desire for hair-pins, and other pins, my intolerable habit of getting into water, the abominations full of ants, that I brought into their houses, or things emitting at unexpectedly short notice vivid and awful stench—they cannot but say that I was a diligent pupil, who honestly tried to learn the lessons they taught me so kindly, though some of those lessons were hard to a person who had never previously been even in a tame bit of tropics, and whose life for many years had been an entirely domestic one in a University town.

One by one I took my old ideas derived from books and thoughts based on imperfect knowledge and weighed them against the real life around me, and found them either worthless or wanting. The greatest recantation I had to make I made humbly before I had been three months on the Coast in 1893. It was of my idea of the traders. What I had expected to find them was a very different thing to what I did find them; and of their kindness to me I can never sufficiently speak, for on that voyage I was utterly out of touch with the governmental circles, and utterly dependent on the traders, and the most useful lesson of all the lessons I learnt on the West Coast in 1893 was that I could trust them. Had I not learnt this very thoroughly I could never have gone out again and carried out the voyage I give you a sketch of in this book.

Thanks to "the Agent," I have visited places I could never otherwise have seen; and to the respect and affection in which he is held by the native, I owe it that I have done so in safety. When I have arrived off his factory in a steamer or canoe unexpected, unannounced, or turned up equally unannounced out of the bush in a dilapidated state, he has always received me with that gracious hospitality which must have given him, under Coast conditions, very real trouble and inconvenience—things he could have so readily found logical excuses against entailing upon himself for the sake of an individual whom he had never

seen before—whom he most likely would never see again—and whom it was no earthly profit to him to see then. He has bestowed himself—Allah only knows where—on his small trading vessels so that I might have his one cabin. He has fished me out of sea and fresh water with boat-hooks; he has continually given me good advice, which if I had only followed would have enabled me to keep out of water and any other sort of affliction; and although he holds the meanest opinion of my intellect for going to such a place as West Africa for beetles, fishes and fetish, he has given me the greatest assistance in my work. The value of that work I pray you withhold judgment on, until I lay it before you in some ten volumes or so mostly in Latin. All I know that is true regarding West African facts, I owe to the traders; the errors are my own.

To Dr. Günther, of the British Museum, I am deeply grateful for the kindness and interest he has always shown regarding all the specimens of natural history that I have been able to lay before him; the majority of which must have had very old tales to tell him. Yet his courtesy and attention gave me the thing a worker in any work most wants—the sense that the work was worth doing—and sent me back to work again with the knowledge that if these things interested a man like him, it was a more than sufficient reason for me to go on collecting them. To Mr. W. H. F. Kirby I am much indebted for his working out my small collection of certain Orders of insects; and to Mr. Thomas S. Forshaw, for the great help he has afforded me in revising my notes.

It is impossible for me even to catalogue my debts of gratitude still outstanding to the West Coast. Chiefly am I indebted to Mr. C. G. Hudson, whose kindness and influence enabled me to go up the Ogowé and to see as much of Congo Français as I have seen, and his efforts to take care of me were most ably seconded by Mr. Fildes. The French officials in "Congo Français" never hindered me, and always treated me with the greatest kindness. You may say there was no reason why they should not, for there is nothing in this fine colony of

France that they need be ashamed of any one seeing; but I find it is customary for travellers to say the French officials throw obstacles in the way of any one visiting their possessions, so I merely beg to state this was decidedly not my experience; although my deplorable ignorance of French prevented me from explaining my humble intentions to them.

The Rev. Dr. Nassau and Mr. R. E. Dennett have enabled me, by placing at my disposal the rich funds of their knowledge of native life and idea, to amplify any deductions from my own observation. Mr. Dennett's work I have not dealt with in this work because it refers to tribes I was not amongst on this journey, but to a tribe I made the acquaintance with in my '93 voyage—the Fjort. Dr. Nassau's observations I have referred to. Herr von Lucke, Vice-governor of Cameroon, I am indebted to for not only allowing me, but for assisting me by every means in his power, to go up Cameroons Peak, and to the Governor of Cameroon, Herr von Puttkamer, for his constant help and kindness. Indeed so great has been the willingness to help me of all these gentlemen, that it is a wonder to me, when I think of it, that their efforts did not project me right across the continent and out at Zanzibar. That this brilliant affair did not come off is owing to my own lack of enterprise; for I did not want to go across the continent, and I do not hanker after Zanzibar, but only to go puddling about obscure districts in West Africa after raw fetish and fresh-water fishes.

I owe my ability to have profited by the kindness of these gentlemen on land, to a gentleman of the sea—Captain Murray. He was captain of the vessel I went out on in 1893, and he saw then that my mind was full of errors that must be eradicated if I was going to deal with the Coast successfully; and so he eradicated those errors and replaced them with sound knowledge from his own stores collected during an acquaintance with the West Coast of over thirty years. The education he has given me has been of the greatest value to me, and

I sincerely hope to make many more voyages under him, for I well know he has still much to teach and I to learn.

Last, but not least, I must chronicle my debts to the ladies. First to those two courteous Portuguese ladies, Donna Anna de Sousa Coutinho e Chichorro and her sister Donna Maria de Sousa Coutinho, who did so much for me in Kacongong in 1893, and have remained, I am proud to say, my firm friends ever since. Lady MacDonald and Miss Mary Slessor I speak of in this book, but only faintly sketch the pleasure and help they have afforded me; nor have I fully expressed my gratitude for the kindness of Madame Jacot of Lembarene, or Madame Forget of Talagouga. Then there are a whole list of nuns belonging to the Roman Catholic Missions on the South West Coast, ever cheery and charming companions; and Frau Plehn, whom it was a continual pleasure to see in Cameroons, and discourse with once again on things that seemed so far off then—art, science, and literature; and Mrs. H. Duggan, of Cameroons too, who used, whenever I came into that port to rescue me from fearful states of starvation for toilet necessities, and lend a sympathetic and intelligent ear to the “awful sufferings” I had gone through, until Cameroons became to me a thing to look forward to.

When in the Canaries in 1892, I used to smile, I regretfully own, at the conversation of a gentleman from the Gold Coast who was up there recruiting after a bad fever. His conversation consisted largely of anecdotes of friends of his, and nine times in ten he used to say, “He's dead now.” Alas! my own conversation may be smiled at now for the same cause. Many of my friends mentioned even in this very recent account of the Coast “are dead now.” Most of those I learnt to know in 1893; chief among these is my old friend Captain Boler, of Bonny, from whom I first learnt a certain power of comprehending the African and his form of thought.

I have great reason to be grateful to the Africans

themselves—to cultured men and women among them like Charles Owoo, Mbo, Sanga Glass, Jane Harrington and her sister at Gaboon, and to the bush natives; but of my experience with them I give further details, so I need not dwell on them here.

I apologise to the general reader for giving so much detail on matters that really only affect myself, and I know that the indebtedness which all African travellers have to the white residents in Africa is a matter usually very lightly touched on. No doubt my voyage would seem a grander thing if I omitted mention of the help I received, but—well, there was a German gentleman once who evolved a camel out of his inner consciousness. It was a wonderful thing; still, you know, it was not a good camel, only a thing which people personally unacquainted with camels could believe in. Now I am ambitious to make a picture, if I make one at all, that people who do know the original can believe in—even if they criticise its points—and so I give you details a more showy artist would omit.

## CHAPTER I

### LIVERPOOL TO SIERRA LEONE AND THE GOLD COAST

Setting forth how the voyager departs from England in a stout vessel and in good company, and reaches in due course the Island of the Grand Canary, and then the Port of Sierra Leone: to which is added some account of this latter place and the comeliness of its women. Wherein also some description of Cape Coast and Accra is given, to which are added divers observations on supplies to be obtained there.

THE West Coast of Africa is like the Arctic regions in one particular, and that is that when you have once visited it you want to go back there again; and, now I come to think of it, there is another particular in which it is like them, and that is that the chances you have of returning from it at all are small, for it is a *Belle Dame sans merci*.

I succumbed to the charm of the Coast as soon as I left Sierra Leone on my first voyage out, and I saw more than enough during that voyage to make me recognise that there was any amount of work for me worth doing down there. So I warned the Coast I was coming back again and the Coast did not believe me; and on my return to it a second time displayed a genuine surprise, and formed an even higher opinion of my folly than it had formed on our first acquaintance, which is saying a good deal.

During this voyage in 1893, I had been to Old Calabar, and its Governor, Sir Claude MacDonald, had heard me expatiating on the absorbing interest of the

Antarctic drift, and the importance of the collection of fresh-water fishes and so on. So when Lady MacDonald heroically decided to go out to him in Calabar, they most kindly asked me if I would join her, and make my time fit hers for starting on my second journey. This I most willingly did. But I fear that very sweet and gracious lady suffered a great deal of apprehension at the prospect of spending a month on board ship with a person so devoted to science as to go down the West Coast in its pursuit. During the earlier days of our voyage she would attract my attention to all sorts of marine objects overboard, so as to amuse me. I used to look at them, and think it would be the death of me if I had to work like this, explaining meanwhile aloud that "they were very interesting, but Haeckel had done them, and I was out after fresh-water fishes from a river north of the Congo this time," fearing all the while that she felt me unenthusiastic for not flying over into the ocean to secure the specimens.

However, my scientific qualities, whatever they may amount to, did not blind this lady long to the fact of my being after all a very ordinary individual, and she told me so—not in these crude words, indeed, but nicely and kindly—whereupon, in a burst of gratitude to her for understanding me, I appointed myself her honorary aide-camp on the spot, and her sincere admirer I shall remain for ever, fully recognising that her courage in going to the Coast was far greater than my own, for she had more to lose had fever claimed her, and she was in those days by no means under the spell of Africa. But this is anticipating.

It was on the 23rd of December, 1894, that we left Liverpool in the *Batanga*, commanded by my old friend Captain Murray, under whose care I had made my first voyage. On the 30th we sighted the Peak of Teneriffe early in the afternoon. It displayed itself, as usual, as an entirely celestial phenomenon. A great many people miss seeing it. Suffering under the delusion that El Pico is a terrestrial affair, they look in vain somewhere about the level of their own eyes, which are striving to penetrate

the dense masses of mist that usually enshroud its slopes by day, and then a friend comes along, and gaily points out to the newcomer the glittering white triangle somewhere near the zenith. On some days the Peak stands out clear from ocean to summit, looking every inch and more of its 12,080 ft.; and this is said by the Canary fishermen to be a certain sign of rain, or fine weather, or a gale of wind; but whenever and however it may be seen, soft and dream-like in the sunshine, or melodramatic and bizarre in the moonlight, it is one of the most beautiful things the eye of man may see.

Soon after sighting Teneriffe, Lançarote showed, and then the Grand Canary. Teneriffe is perhaps the most beautiful, but it is hard to judge between it and Grand Canary as seen from the sea. The superb cone this afternoon stood out a deep purple against a serpent-green sky, separated from the brilliant blue ocean by a girdle of pink and gold cumulus, while Grand Canary and Lançarote looked as if they were formed from fantastic-shaped sunset cloud-banks that by some spell had been solidified. The general colour of the mountains of Grand Canary, which rise peak after peak until they culminate in the Pico de las Nieves, some 6,000 feet high, is a yellowish red, and the air which lies among their rocky crevices and swathes their softer sides is a lovely lustrous blue.

Just before the sudden dark came down, and when the sun was taking a curve out of the horizon of sea, all the clouds gathered round the three islands, leaving the sky a pure amethyst pink, and as a good-night to them the sun outlined them with rims of shining gold, and made the snow-clad Peak of Teneriffe blaze with star-white light. In a few minutes came the dusk, and as we neared Grand Canary, out of its cloud-bank gleamed the red flash of the lighthouse on the Isleta, and in a few more minutes, along the sea level, sparkled the five miles of irregularly distributed lights of Puerto de la Luz and the city of Las Palmas.

We reached Sierra Leone at 9 A.M. on the 7th of January, and as the place is hardly so much in touch with



the general public as the Canaries are<sup>1</sup> I may perhaps venture to go more into details regarding it. The harbour is formed by the long low strip of land to the north called the Bullam shore, and to the south by the peninsula terminating in Cape Sierra Leone, a sandy promontory at the end of which is situated a lighthouse of irregular habits. Low hills covered with tropical forest growth rise from the sandy shores of the Cape, and along its face are three creeks or bays, deep inlets showing through their narrow entrances smooth beaches of yellow sand, fenced inland by the forest of cotton-woods and palms, with here and there an elephantine baobab.

The first of these bays is called Pirate Bay, the next English Bay, and the third Kru Bay. The wooded hills of the Cape rise after passing Kru Bay, and become spurs of the mountain, 2,500 feet in height, which is the Sierra Leone itself. There are, however, several mountains here besides the Sierra Leone, the most conspicuous of them being the peak known as Sugar Loaf, and when seen from the sea they are very lovely, for their form is noble, and a wealth of tropical vegetation covers them, which, unbroken in its continuity, but endless in its variety, seems to sweep over their sides down to the shore like a sea, breaking here and there into a surf of flowers.

It is the general opinion, indeed, of those who ought to know that Sierra Leone appears at its best when seen from the sea, particularly when you are leaving the harbour homeward bound; and that here its charms, artistic, moral, and residential, end. But, from the experience I have gained of it, I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the best places for getting luncheon in that I have ever happened on, and that a more pleasant and varied way of spending an afternoon than going about its capital, Free Town, with a certain Irish purser,

<sup>1</sup> Sierra Leone has been known since the voyage of Hanno of Carthage in the sixth century B.C., but it has not got into general literature to any great extent since Pliny. The only later classic who has noticed it is Milton, who in a very suitable portion of *Paradise Lost* says of Notus and Afer, "black with thunderous clouds from Sierra Lona." Our occupation of it dates from 1787.

who is as well known as he is respected among the leviathan old negro ladies, it would be hard to find. Still it must be admitted it *is* rather hot.

Free Town its capital is situated on the northern base of the mountain, and extends along the sea-front with most business-like wharves, quays, and warehouses. Viewed from the harbour, "The Liverpool of West Africa,"<sup>1</sup> as it is called, looks as if it were built of gray stone, which it is not. When you get ashore, you will find that most of the stores and houses—the majority of which, it may be remarked, are in a state of acute dilapidation—are of painted wood, with corrugated iron roofs. Here and there, though, you will see a thatched house, its thatch covered with creeping plants, and inhabited by colonies of creeping insects.

Some of the stores and churches are, it is true, built of stone, but this does not look like stone at a distance, being red in colour—unhewn blocks of the red stone of the locality. In the crannies of these buildings trailing plants covered with pretty mauve or yellow flowers take root, and everywhere, along the tops of the walls, and in the cracks of the houses, are ferns and flowering plants. They must get a good deal of their nourishment from the rich, thick air, which seems composed of 85 per cent. of warm water, and the remainder of the odours of Frangipani, orange flowers, magnolias, oleanders, and roses, combined with others that demonstrate that the inhabitants do not regard sanitary matters with the smallest degree of interest.

There is one central street, and the others are neatly planned out at right angles to it. None of them are in any way paved or metalled. They are covered in much prettier fashion, and in a way more suitable for naked feet, by green Bahama grass, save and except those which are so nearly perpendicular that they have got every bit of earth and grass cleared off them down to the red bed-rock, by the heavy rain of the wet season.

In every direction natives are walking at a brisk pace,

<sup>1</sup> Lagos also likes to bear this flattering appellation, and has now-a-days more right to the title.



their naked feet making no sound on the springy turf of the streets, carrying on their heads huge burdens which are usually crowned by the hat of the bearer, a large limpet-shaped affair made of palm leaves. While some carry these enormous bundles, others bear logs or planks of wood, blocks of building stone, vessels containing palm-oil, baskets of vegetables, or tin tea-trays on which are folded shawls. As the great majority of the native inhabitants of Sierra Leone pay no attention whatever to where they are going, either in this world or the next, the confusion and noise are out of all proportion to the size of the town; and when, as frequently happens, a section of actively perambulating burden-bearers charge recklessly into a sedentary section, the members of which have dismounted their loads and squatted themselves down beside them, right in the middle of the fair way, to have a friendly yell with some acquaintances, the row becomes terrific.

In among these crowds of country people walk stately Mohammedans, Mandingoes, Akers, and Fulahs of the Arabised tribes of the Western Soudan. These are lithe, well-made men, and walk with a peculiarly fine, elastic carriage. Their graceful garb consists of a long white loose-sleeved shirt, over which they wear either a long black mohair or silk gown, or a deep bright blue affair, not altogether unlike a University gown, only with more stuff in it and more folds. They are undoubtedly the gentlemen of the Sierra Leone native population, and they are becoming an increasing faction in the town, by no means to the pleasure of the Christians.

But to the casual visitor at Sierra Leone the Moham-  
medan is a mere passing sensation. You neither feel a burning desire to laugh with, or at him, as in the case of the country folks, nor do you wish to punch his head, and split his coat up his back—things you yearn to do to that perfect flower of Sierra Leone culture, who yells your bald name across the street at you, condescendingly informs you that you can go and get letters that are waiting for you, while he smokes his cigar and lolls

in the shade, or in some similar way displays his second-hand rubbishy white culture—a culture far lower and less dignified than that of either the stately Mandingo or the bush chief. I do not think that the Sierra Leone dandy really means half as much insolence as he shows; but the truth is he feels too insecure of his own real position, in spite of all the “side” he puts on, and so he dare not be courteous like the Mandingo or the bush Fan.

It is the costume of the people in Free Town and its harbour that will first attract the attention of the newcomer, notwithstanding the fact that the noise, the smell, and the heat are simultaneously making desperate bids for that favour. The ordinary man in the street wears anything he may have been able to acquire, anyhow, and he does not fasten it on securely. I fancy it must be capillary attraction, or some other partially-understood force, that takes part in the matter. It is certainly neither braces nor buttons. There are, of course, some articles which from their very structure are fairly secure, such as an umbrella with the stick and ribs removed, or a shirt. This last-mentioned treasure, which usually becomes the property of the ordinary man from a female relative or admirer taking in white men’s washing, is always worn flowing free, and has such a charm in itself that the happy possessor cares little what he continues his costume with—trousers, loin cloth, red flannel petticoat, or rice-bag drawers, being, as he would put it, “all same for one” to him.

The ladies are divided into three classes; the young girl you address as “tee-tee”; the young person as “seester”; the more mature charmer as “mammy”; but I do not advise you to employ these terms when you are on your first visit, because you might get misunderstood. For, you see, by addressing a mammy as seester, she might think either that you were unconscious of her dignity as a married lady—a matter she would soon put you right on—or that you were flirting, which of course was totally foreign to your intention, and would make you uncomfortable. My advice is that you rigidly

stick to missus or mammy. I have seen this done most successfully.

The ladies are almost as varied in their costume as the gentlemen, but always neater and cleaner; and mighty picturesque they are too, and occasionally very pretty. A market-woman with her jolly brown face and laughing brown eyes—eyes all the softer for a touch of antimony—her ample form clothed in a lively print overall, made with a yoke at the shoulders, and a full long flounce which is gathered on to the yoke under the arms and falls fully to the feet; with her head done up in a yellow or red handkerchief, and her snowy white teeth gleaming through her vast smiles, is a mighty pleasant thing to see, and to talk to. But, Allah! the circumference of them!

The stone-built, white-washed market buildings of Free Town have a creditably clean and tidy appearance considering the climate, and the quantity and variety of things exposed for sale—things one wants the pen of a Rabelais to catalogue. Here are all manner of fruits, some which are familiar to you in England; others that soon become so to you in Africa. You take them as a matter of course if you are outward bound, but on your call homeward (if you make it) you will look on them as a blessing and a curiosity. For lower down, particularly in “the Rivers,” these things are rarely to be had, and never in such perfection as here; and to see again lettuces, yellow oranges, and tomatoes bigger than marbles is a sensation and a joy.

One of the chief features of Free Town are the jack crows. Some writers say they are peculiar to Sierra Leone, others that they are not, but both unite in calling them *Picathartes gymnocephalus*. To the white people who live in daily contact with them they are turkey-buzzards; to the natives, Yubu. Anyhow they are evil-looking fowl, and no ornament to the roof-ridges they choose to sit on. The native Christians ought to put a row of spikes along the top of their cathedral to keep them off; the beauty of that edifice is very far from great, and it cannot carry off the effect produced by the row of

these noisome birds as they sit along its summit, with their wings arranged at all manner of different angles in an “all gone” way. One bird perhaps will have one straight out in front, and the other casually disposed at right-angles, another both straight out in front, and others again with both hanging hopelessly down, but none with them neatly and tidily folded up, as decent birds' wings should be. They all give the impression of having been extremely drunk the previous evening, and of having subsequently fallen into some sticky abomination—into blood for choice. Being the scavengers of Free Town, however, they are respected by the local authorities and preserved; and the natives tell me you never see either a young or a dead one. The latter is a thing you would not expect, for half of them look as if they could not live through the afternoon. They also told me that when you got close to them, they had a “'trong, 'trong 'niff; 'niff too much.” I did not try, but I am quite willing to believe this statement.

The other animals most in evidence in the streets are, first and foremost, goats and sheep. I have to lump them together, for it is exceedingly difficult to tell one from the other. All along the Coast the empirical rule is that sheep carry their tails down, and goats carry their tails up; fortunately you need not worry much anyway, for they both “taste rather like the nothing that the world was made of,” as Frau Buchholtz says, and own in addition a fibrous texture, and a certain twang. Small cinnamon-coloured cattle are to be got here, but horses there are practically none. Now and again some one who does not see why a horse should not live here as well as at Accra or Lagos imports one, but it always shortly dies. Some say it is because the natives who get their living by hammock-carrying poison them, others say the *tsetse* fly finishes them off; and others, and these I believe are right, say that entozoa are the cause. Small, lean, lank, yellow dogs with very erect ears lead an awful existence, afflicted by many things, but beyond all others by the goats, who, rearing their families in the grassy streets, choose to think the dogs

intend attacking them. Last, but not least, there is the pig—a rich source of practice to the local lawyer.

Cape Coast Castle and then Accra were the next places of general interest at which we stopped. The former looks well from the roadstead, and as if it had very recently been white-washed. It is surrounded by low, heavily-forested hills, which rise almost from the seashore, and the fine mass of its old castle does not display its dilapidation at a distance. Moreover, the three stone forts of Victoria, William, and Macarthy, situated on separate hills commanding the town, add to the general appearance of permanent substantialness so different from the usual ramshackledom of West Coast settlements. Even when you go ashore and have had time to recover your senses, scattered by the surf experience, you find this substantialness a true one, not a mere visual delusion produced by painted wood as the seeming substantialness of Sierra Leone turns out to be when you get to close quarters with it. It causes one some mental effort to grasp the fact that Cape Coast has been in European hands for centuries, but it requires a most unmodern power of credence to realise this of any other settlement on the whole western seaboard until you have the pleasure of seeing the beautiful city of San Paul de Loanda, far away down south, past the Congo.

My experience of Cape Coast on this occasion was one of the hottest, but one of the pleasantest I have ever been through on the Gold Coast. The former attribute was due to the climate, the latter to my kind friends, Mr. Batty, and Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Kemp. I was taken round the grand stone-built houses with their high stone-walled yards and sculpture-decorated gateways, built by the merchants of the last century and of the century before, and through the great rambling stone castle with its water-tanks cut in the solid rock beneath it, and its commodious accommodation for slaves awaiting shipment, now almost as obsolete as the guns it mounts, but not quite so, for these cool and rooiny chambers serve to house the native constabulary and their extensive families.



CAPE COAST.

fire would soon be aflame, the nozzle is put into a cylinder made of clay. This cylinder is made sufficiently large at the end, into which the nozzle of the bellows goes, for the air to have full play round the latter.

The Fan bellows only differ from those of the other iron-working West Coast tribes in having the channels from the two chambers in one piece of wood all the way. His forge is the same as the other forges, a round cavity scooped in the ground; his fuel also is charcoal. His other smith's tool consists of a pointed piece of iron, with which he works out the patterns he puts at the handle-  
end of his ~~...~~

I must now speak briefly on the most important article with which the Fan deals, namely ivory. His methods of collecting this are several, and many a wild story the handles of your table knives could tell you, if their ivory has passed through Fan hands. For ivory is everywhere an evil thing before which the quest for gold sinks into a parlour game; and when its charms seize such a tribe as the Fans, "conclusions pass their careers." A very common way of collecting a tooth is to kill the person who owns one. Therefore in order to prevent this catastrophe happening to you yourself, when you have one, it is held advisable, unless you are a powerful person in your own village, to bury or sink the said tooth and say nothing about it until the trader comes into your district or you get a chance of smuggling it quietly down to him. Some of these private ivories are kept for years and years before they reach the trader's hands. And quite a third of the ivory you see coming on board a vessel to go to Europe is dark from this keeping: some teeth a lovely brown like a well-coloured meerschaut, others quite black, and gnawed by that strange little creature—much heard of, and abused, yet little known in ivory ports—the ivory rat.

Ivory, however, that is obtained by murder is private ivory. The public ivory trade among the Fans is carried on in a way more in accordance with European ideas of a legitimate trade. The greater part of this ivory is obtained from dead elephants. There are in this region

certain places where the elephants are said to go to die. A locality in one district pointed out to me as such a place, was a great swamp in the forest. A swamp that evidently was deep in the middle, for from out its dark waters no swamp plant, or tree grew, and evidently its shores sloped suddenly, for the band of swamp plants round its edge was narrow. It is just possible that during the rainy season when most of the surrounding country would be under water, elephants might stray into this natural trap and get drowned, and on the drying up of the waters be discovered, and the fact being known, be regularly sought for by the natives cognisant of this. I inquired carefully whether these places where the elephants came to die always had water in them, but they said no, and in one district spoke of a valley or round-shaped depression in among the mountains. But natives were naturally disinclined to take a stranger to these ivory mines, and a white person who has caught—as any one who has been in touch must catch—ivory fever, is naturally equally disinclined to give localities.

A certain percentage of ivory collected by the Fans is from live elephants, but I am bound to admit that their method of hunting elephants is disgracefully unsportsmanlike. A herd of elephants is discovered by rubber hunters or by depredations on plantations, and the whole village, men, women, children, babies and dogs turn out into the forest and stalk the monsters into a suitable ravine, taking care not to scare them. When they have gradually edged the elephants on into a suitable place, they fell trees and wreath them very roughly together with bush rope, all round an immense enclosure, still taking care not to scare the elephants into a rush. This fence is quite inadequate to stop any elephant in itself, but it is made effective by being smeared with certain things, the smell whereof the elephants detest so much that when they wander up to it, they turn back disgusted. I need hardly remark that this preparation is made by the witch doctors and its constituents a secret of theirs, and I was only able to find out some of them. Then poisoned plantains are placed within the enclosure, and the

elephants eat these and grow drowsier and drowsier ; if the water supply within the enclosure is a pool it is poisoned, but if it is a running stream this cannot be done. During this time the crowd of men and women spend their days round the enclosure, ready to turn back any elephant who may attempt to break out, going to and fro to the village for their food. Their nights they spend in little bough shelters by the enclosure, watching more vigilantly than by day, as the elephants are more active at night, it being their usual feeding time. During the whole time the witch doctor is hard at work making incantations and charms, with a view to finding out the proper time to attack the elephants. In my opinion, his decision fundamentally depends on his knowledge of the state of poisoning the animals are in, but his version is that he gets his information from the forest spirits. When, however, he has settled the day, the best hunters steal into the enclosure and take up safe positions in trees, and the outer crowd set light to the ready-built fires, and make the greatest uproar possible, and fire upon the staggering, terrified elephants as they attempt to break out. The hunters in the trees fire down on them as they rush past, the fatal point at the back of the skull being well exposed to them.

When the animals are nearly exhausted, those men who do not possess guns dash into the enclosure, and the men who do, reload and join them, and the work is then completed. One elephant hunt I chanced upon at the final stage had taken two months' preparation, and although the plan sounds safe enough, there is really a good deal of danger left in it with all the drugging and ju-ju. There were eight elephants killed that day, but three burst through everything, sending energetic spectators flying, and squashing two men and a baby as flat as botanical specimens.

The subsequent proceedings were impressive. The whole of the people gorged themselves on the meat for days, and great chunks of it were smoked over the fires in all directions. A certain portion of the flesh of the hind leg was taken by the witch doctor for ju-ju, and

was supposed to be put away by him, with certain suitable incantations in the recesses of the forest ; his idea being apparently either to give rise to more elephants, or to induce the forest spirits to bring more elephants into the district.

Dr. Nassau tells me that the manner in which the ivory gained by one of these hunts is divided is as follows :—"The witch doctor, the chiefs, and the family on whose ground the enclosure is built, and especially the household whose women first discovered the animals, decide in council as to the division of the tusks and the share of the flesh to be given to the crowd of outsiders. The next day the tusks are removed and each family represented in the assemblage cuts up and distributes the flesh." In the hunt I saw finished, the elephants had not been discovered, as in the case Dr. Nassau above speaks of, in a plantation by women, but by a party of rubber hunters in the forest some four or five miles from any village, and the ivory that would have been allotted to the plantation holder in the former case, went in this case to the young rubber hunters.

Such are the pursuits, sports and pastimes of my friends the Fans. I have been considerably chaffed both by whites and blacks about my partiality for this tribe, but as I like Africans in my way—not *à la* Sierra Leone—and these Africans have more of the qualities I like than any other tribe I have met, it is but natural that I should prefer them. They are brave and so you can respect them, which is an essential element in a friendly feeling. They are on the whole a fine race, particularly those in the mountain districts of the Sierra del Cristal, where one continually sees magnificent specimens of human beings, both male and female. Their colour is light bronze, many of the men have beards, and albinos are rare among them. The average height in the mountain districts is five feet six to five feet eight, the difference in stature between men and women not being great. Their countenances are very bright and expressive, and if once you have been among them, you can never mistake a Fan. ~~But it~~

scandalous gossip against the character of a naphtha launch in the river. "Stuff!" said he furiously; "she's all right, and she'd go from June to January if those blithering fools would let her alone." Of course I apolo-

The religious ideas of the Negroes, *i.e.* the West Africans in the district from the Gambia to the Cameroon region, say roughly to the Rio del Rey (for the Bakwiri appear to have more of the Bantu form of idea than the negro, although physically they seem nearer the latter), differ very considerably from the religious ideas of the Bantu South-West Coast tribes. The Bantu is vague on religious subjects; he gives one accustomed to the Negro the impression that he once had the same set of ideas, but has forgotten half of them, and those that he possesses have not got that hold on him that the corresponding or super-imposed Christian ideas have over the true Negro; although he is quite as keen on the subject of witchcraft, and his witchcraft differs far less from the witchcraft of the Negro than his religious ideas do.

(The god, in the sense we use the word, is in essence the same in all of the Bantu tribes I have met with on the Coast: a non-interfering and therefore a negligible quantity.) He varies his name: Anzambi, Anyambi, Nyambi, Nzambi, Anzam, Nyam, Ukuku, Suku, and Nzam, but a better investigation shows that Nzam of the Fans is practically identical with Suku south of the Congo in the Bihe country, and so on.

(They regard their god as the creator of man, plants, animals, and the earth, and they hold that having made them, he takes no further interest in the affair.) But not so the crowd of spirits with which the universe is peopled, they take only too much interest and the Bantu wishes they would not and is perpetually saying so in his prayers, a large percentage whereof amounts to "Go away, we don't want you." "Come not into this house, this village, or its plantations." He knows from experience that the spirits pay little heed to these objurgations,

and as they are the people who must be attended to, he develops a cult whereby they may be managed, used, and understood. This cult is what we call witchcraft.

As I am not here writing a complete work on Fetish I will leave Nzam on one side, and turn to the inferior spirits. These are almost all malevolent; sometimes they can be coaxed into having creditable feelings, like generosity and gratitude, but you can never trust them. No, not even if you are yourself a well-established medicine man. Indeed they are particularly dangerous to medicine men, just as lions are to lion tamers, and many a professional gentleman in the full bloom of his practice, gets eaten up by his own particular familiar which he has to keep in his own inside whenever he has not sent it off into other people's.

I am indebted to the Reverend Doctor Nassau for a great quantity of valuable information regarding Bantu religious ideas—information which no one is so competent to give as he, for no one else knows the West Coast Bantu tribes with the same thoroughness and sympathy. He has lived among them since 1851, and is perfectly conversant with their languages and culture, and he brings to bear upon the study of them a singularly clear, powerful, and highly-educated intelligence.

I shall therefore carefully ticket the information I have derived from him, so that it may not be mixed with my own. I may be wrong in my deductions, but Dr. Nassau's are above suspicion.

(He says the origin of these spirits is vague—some of them come into existence by the authority of Anzam (by which you will understand, please, the same god I have quoted above as having many names), others are self-existent—many are distinctly the souls of departed human beings, "which in the future which is all around them" retain their human wants and feelings, and the Doctor assures me he has heard dying people with their last breath threatening to return as spirits to revenge themselves upon their living enemies.) He could not tell me if there was any duration set upon the existence as spirits of these human souls, but two Congo Français



natives, of different tribes, Benga and Igalwa, told me that when a family had quite died out, after a time its spirits died too. Some, but by no means all, of these spirits of human origin, as is the case among the Negro Effiks, undergo reincarnation. The Doctor told me he once knew a man whose plantations were devastated by an elephant. He advised that the beast should be shot, but the man said he dare not because the spirit of his dead father had passed into the elephant.

Their number is infinite and their powers as varied as human imagination can make them; classifying them is therefore a difficult work, but Doctor Nassau thinks this may be done fairly completely into:—

① Human disembodied spirits—*Manu*.

② Vague beings, well described by our word ghosts: *Abambo*.

③ Beings something like dryads, who resent intrusion into their territory, on to their rock, past their promontory, or tree. When passing the residence of one of these beings, the traveller must go by silently, or with some cabalistic invocation, with bowed or bared head, and deposit some symbol of an offering or tribute even if it be only a pebble. You occasionally come across great trees that have fallen across a path that have quite little heaps of pebbles, small shells, &c., upon them deposited by previous passers-by. This class is called *Ombwiri*.

④ Beings who are the agents in causing sickness, and either aid or hinder human plans—*Mionde*.

⑤ There seems to be, the Doctor says, another class of spirits somewhat akin to the ancient Lares and Penates, who especially belong to the household, and descend by inheritance with the family. In their honour are secretly kept a bundle of finger, or other bones, nail-clippings, eyes, brains, skulls, particularly the lower jaws, called in M'pongwe *oginga*, accumulated from deceased members of successive generations.

Dr. Nassau says "secretly," and he refers to this custom being existent in non-cannibal tribes. I saw bundles of this character among the cannibal Fans, and

among the non-cannibal Adooma, openly hanging up in the thatch of the sleeping apartment.

⑥ He also says there may be a sixth class, which may, however only be a function of any of the other classes—namely, those that enter into any animal body, generally a leopard. Sometimes the spirits of living human beings do this, and the animal is then guided by human intelligence, and will exercise its strength for the purposes of its temporary human possessor. In other cases it is a non-human soul that enters into the animal, as in the case of Ukuku.

Spirits are not easily classified by their functions because those of different class may be employed in identical undertakings. Thus one witch doctor may have, I find, particular influence over one class of spirit and another over another class; yet they will both engage to do identical work. But in spite of this I do not see how you can classify spirits otherwise than by their functions; you cannot weigh and measure them, and it is only a few that show themselves in corporeal form.

There are characteristics that all the authorities seem agreed on, and one is that individual spirits in the same class vary in power: some are strong of their sort, some weak. \*

They are all to a certain extent limited in the nature of their power; there is no one spirit that can do all things; their efficiency only runs in certain lines of action and all of them are capable of being influenced, and made subservient to human wishes, by proper incantations. This latter characteristic is of course to human advantage, but it has its disadvantages, for you can never really trust a spirit, even if you have paid a considerable sum to a most distinguished medicine man to get a powerful one put up in a ju-ju, or monde,<sup>1</sup> as it is called in several tribes.

The method of making these charms is much the same among Bantu and Negroes. I have elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> This article has different names in different tribes; thus it is called a bian among the Fan, a tarwiz, gree-gree, &c., on other parts of the Coast.



described the Gold Coast method, so here confine myself to the Bantu. This similarity of procedure naturally arises from the same underlying idea existing in the two races.

You call in the medicine man, the "oganga," as he is commonly called in Congo Français tribes. After a variety of ceremonies and processes, the spirit is induced to localise itself in some object subject to the will of the possessor. The things most frequently used are



MAKING A CHARM IN THE UPPER OGOVÉ REGION.

antelopes' horns, the large snail-shells, and large nutshells, according to Doctor Nassau. Among the Faa I found the most frequent charm-case was in the shape of a little sausage, made very neatly of pineapple fibre, the contents being the residence of the spirit or power, and the outside coloured red to flatter and please him—for spirits always like red because it is like blood.

The substance put inside charms is all manner of

nastiness, usually on the sea coast having a high percentage of fowl dung.

The nature of the substance depends on the spirit it is intended to be attractive to—attractive enough to induce it to leave its present abode and come and reside in the charm.

In addition to this attractive substance I find there are other materials inserted which have relation towards the work the spirit will be wanted to do for its owner. For example, charms made either to influence a person to be well disposed towards the owner, or the still larger class made with intent to work evil on other human beings against whom the owner has a grudge, must have in them some portion of the person to be dealt with—his hair, blood, nail-parings, &c.—or, failing that, his or her most intimate belonging, something that has got his smell in—a piece of his old waist-cloth for example.

This ability to obtain power over people by means of their blood, hair, nails, &c., is universally diffused; you will find it down in Devon, and away in far Cathay, and the Chinese, I am told, have in some parts of their empire little ovens to burn their nail- and hair-clippings in. The fear of these latter belongings falling into the hands of evilly-disposed persons is ever present to the West Africans. The Igalwa and other tribes will allow no one but a trusted friend to do their hair, and bits of nails and hair are carefully burnt or thrown away into a river; and blood, even that from a small cut or a fit of nose-bleeding, is most carefully covered up and stamped out if it has fallen on the earth. The underlying idea regarding blood is of course the old one that the blood is the life.

The life in Africa means a spirit, hence the liberated blood is the liberated spirit, and liberated spirits are always whipping into people who do not want them.

Charms are made for every occupation and desire in life—loving, hating, buying, selling, fishing, planting, travelling, hunting, &c., and although they are usually in the form of things filled with a mixture in which the

spirit nestles, yet there are other kinds; for example, a great love charm is made of the water the lover has washed in, and this, mingled with the drink of the loved one, is held to soften the hardest heart.

Some kinds of charms, such as those to prevent your getting drowned, shot, seen by elephants, &c., are worn on a bracelet or necklace. A new-born child starts with a health-knot tied round the wrist, neck, or loins, and throughout the rest of its life its collection of charms goes on increasing. This collection does not, however, attain inconvenient dimensions, owing to the failure of some of the charms to work.

That is the worst of charms and prayers. The thing you wish of them may, and frequently does, happen in a strikingly direct way, but other times it does not. In Africa this is held to arise from the bad character of the spirits; their gross ingratitude and fickleness. You may have taken every care of a spirit for years, given it food and other offerings that you wanted for yourself, wrapped it up in your cloth on chilly nights and gone cold, put it in the only dry spot in the canoe, and so on, and yet after all this, the wretched thing will be capable of being got at by your rival or enemy and lured away, leaving you only the case it once lived in.

Finding, we will say, that you have been upset and half-drowned, and your canoe-load of goods lost three times in a week, that your paddles are always breaking, and the amount of snags in the river and so on is abnormal, you judge that your canoe-charm has stopped. Then you go to the medicine man who supplied you with it and complain. He says it was a perfectly good charm when he sold it you and he never had any complaints before, but he will investigate the affair; when he has done so, he either says the spirit has been lured away from the home he prepared for it by incantations and presents from other people, or that he finds the spirit is dead; it has been killed by a more powerful spirit of its class, which is in the pay of some enemy of yours. In all cases the little thing you kept the spirit in is no use now, and only fit to sell to a white man as "a big

curio!" and the sooner you let him have sufficient money to procure you a fresh and still more powerful spirit—necessarily more expensive—the safer it will be for you, particularly as your misfortunes distinctly point to some one being desirous of your death. You of course grumble, but seeing the thing in his light you pay up, and the medicine man goes busily to work with incantations, dances, looking into mirrors or basins of still water, and concoctions of messes to make you a new protecting charm.

Human eye-balls, particularly of white men, I have already said are a great charm. Dr. Nassau says he has known graves rifled for them. This, I fancy, is to secure the "man that lives in your eyes" for the service of the village, and naturally the white man, being regarded as a superior being, would be of high value if enlisted into its service. A similar idea of the possibility of gaining possession of the spirit of a dead man obtains among the Negroes, and the heads of important chiefs in the Calabar districts are usually cut off from the body on burial and kept secretly for fear the head, and thereby the spirit, of the dead chief, should be stolen from the town. If it were stolen it would be not only a great advantage to its new possessor, but a great danger to the chief's old town, because he would know all the peculiar ju-ju relating to it. For each town has a peculiar one, kept exceedingly secret, in addition to the general ju-jus, and this secret one would then be in the hands of the new owners of the spirit. It is for similar reasons that brave General MacCarthy's head was treasured by the Ashantees, and so on.

Charms are not all worn upon the body, some go to the plantations, and are hung there, ensuring an unhappy and swift end for the thief who comes stealing. Some are hung round the bows of the canoe, others over the doorway of the house, to prevent evil spirits from coming in—a sort of tame watch-dog spirits.

The entrances to the long street-shaped villages are frequently closed with a fence of saplings and this sapling fence you will see hung with fetish charms to prevent

evil spirits from entering the village and sometimes in addition to charms you will see the fence wreathed with leaves and flowers. Bells are frequently hung on these fences, but I do not fancy ever for fetish reasons. At Ndorko, on the Rembwé, there were many guards against spirit visitors, but the bell, which was carefully hung so that you could not pass through the gateway without ringing it, was a guard against thieves and human enemies only.

Frequently a sapling is tied horizontally near the ground across the entrance. Dr. Nassau could not tell me why, but says it must never be trodden on. When the smallpox, a dire pestilence in these regions, is raging, or when there is war, these gateways are sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices, and for these sacrifices and for the payments of heavy blood fines, &c., goats and sheep are kept. They are rarely eaten for ordinary purposes, and these West Coast Africans have all a perfect horror of the idea of drinking milk, holding this custom to be a filthy habit, and saying so in unmitigated language.

The villagers eat the meat of the sacrifice, that having nothing to do with the sacrifice to the spirits, which is the blood, for the blood is the life.<sup>1</sup>

Beside the few spirits that the Bantu regards himself as having got under control in his charms, he has to worship the uncontrolled army of the air. This he does by sacrifice and incantation.

The sacrifice is the usual killing of something valuable as an offering to the spirits. The value of the offering in these S.W. Coast regions has certainly a regular relationship to the value of the favour required of the spirits. Some favours are worth a dish of plantains, some a fowl, some a goat and some a human being, though human sacrifice is very rare in Congo Français, the killing of people being nine times in ten a witchcraft palaver.

Dr. Nassau, however, says that "the intention of the

<sup>1</sup> Care must be taken not to confuse with sacrifices (propitiations of spirits) the killing of men and animals as offerings to the souls of deceased persons.

giver ennobles the gift," the spirit being supposed, in some vague way, to be gratified by the recognition of itself, and even sometimes pleased with the homage of the mere simulacrum of a gift. I believe the only class of spirits that have this convenient idea are the Imbwiri; thus the stones heaped by passers-by on the foot of some great tree, or rock, or the leaf cast from a passing canoe towards a promontory on the river, &c., although intrinsically valueless and useless to the Imbwiri nevertheless gratify him. It is a sort of bow or taking off one's hat to him. Some gifts, the Doctor says, are supposed to be actually utilised by the spirit.

In some part of the long single street of most villages there is built a low hut in which charms are hung, and by which grows a consecrated plant, a lily, a euphorbia, or a fig. In some tribes a rudely carved figure, generally female, is set up as an idol before which offerings are laid. I saw at Egaja two figures about 2 feet 6 inches high, in the house placed at my disposal. They were left in it during my occupation, save that the rolls of cloth (their power) which were round their necks, were removed by the owner chief; of the significance of these rolls I will speak elsewhere.

Incantations may be divided into two classes, supplications analogous to our idea of prayers, and certain cabalistic words and phrases. The supplications are addresses to the higher spirits. Some are made even to Anzam himself, but the spirit of the new moon is that most commonly addressed to keep the lower spirits from molesting.

Dr. Nassau gave me many instances out of the wealth of his knowledge. One night when he was stopping at a village, he saw standing out in the open street a venerable chief who addressed the spirits of the air and begged them, "Come ye not into my town;" he then recounted his good deeds, praising himself as good, just, honest, kind to his neighbours, and so on. I must remark that this man had not been in touch with Europeans, so his ideal of goodness was the native one—which you will find everywhere among the most remote West Coast

natives. He urged these things as a reason why no evil should befall him, and closed with an impassioned appeal to the spirits to stay away. At another time, in another village, when a man's son had been wounded and a bleeding artery which the Doctor had closed had broken out again and the hæmorrhage seemed likely to prove fatal, the father rushed out into the street wildly gesticulating towards the sky, saying, "Go away, go away, go away, ye spirits, why do you come to kill my son?" In another case a woman rushed into the street, alternately objurgating and pleading with the spirits, who, she said, were vexing her child which had convulsions. "Observe," said the Doctor in his impressive way, "these were distinctly prayers, appeals for mercy, agonising protests, but there was no praise, no love, no thanks, no confession of sin." I said, considering the underlying idea, I did not see how that could be, thinking of the thing as they did, and the Doctor and I had one of our little disagreements. I shall always feel grateful to him for his great toleration of me, but I am sure this arose from his feeling that I saw there was an underlying idea in the minds of the people he loved well enough to lay down his life for in the hope of benefiting and ennobling them, and that I did not, as many do, set them down as idiotic brutes, glorying in an aimless cruelty that would be a disgrace to a devil.

Regarding the cabalistic words and phrases, things which had long given me great trouble to get any comprehension of, the Doctor gave me great help. He says some of these phrases and words are coined by the person himself, others are archaisms handed down from ancestors and believed to possess an efficacy, though their actual meaning is forgotten. He says they are used at any time as defence from evil, when a person is startled, sneezes, or stumbles. Among these I think I ought to class that peculiar form of friendly farewell or greeting which the Doctor poetically calls a "blown blessing" and the natives Ibata. I thought the three times it was given to me that it was just spitting on the hand. Practically it is so, but the Doctor says the

spitting is accidental, a by-product I suppose. The method consists in taking the right hand in both yours, turning it palm upwards, bending your head low over it, and saying with great energy and a violent propulsion of the breath, Ibata.

Idols are comparatively rare in Congo Français, but where they are used the people have the same idea about them as the true Negroes have, namely, that they are things which spirits reside in, or haunt, but not in their corporeal nature adorable. The resident spirit in them and in the charms and plants, which are also regarded as residences of spirits, has to be placated with offerings of food and other sacrifices. You will see in the Fetish huts above mentioned dishes of plantain and fish left till they rot. Dr. Nassau says the life or essence of the food only is eaten by the spirit, the form of the vegetable or flesh being left to be removed when its life is gone out.

(In cases of emergency a fowl with its blood is laid at the door of the Fetish hut, or when pestilence is expected, or an attack by enemies, or a great man or woman is very ill, goats and sheep are sacrificed and the blood put in the Fetish hut as well as on the gateways of the village.) These sacrifices among the Fan are made with a very peculiar-shaped knife, a fine specimen of which I secured by the kindness of Captain Davies; it is shaped like the head of a hornbill and is quite unlike the knives in common use among the tribes, which are either long, leaf-shaped blades sharpened along both edges, or broad, trowel-shaped, almost triangular daggers. All Fan knives are fine weapons, superior to the knives of all other Coast tribes I have met with, but the sacrifice knife is distinctly peculiar. I found to my great interest the same superstition in Congo Français that I met with first in the Oil Rivers. Its meaning I am unable to fully account for, but I believe it to be a form of sacrifice. In Calabar each individual has a certain forbidden thing or things. These things are either forms of food, or the method of eating. In Calabar this prohibition is called Ibet, and when, in con-

sequence of the influence of white culture, a man gives up his Ibet, he is regarded by good sound jujuists as leading an irregular and dissipated life, and even the unintentional breaking of the Ibet is regarded as very dangerous. Special days are set apart by each individual; on these days he eats only the smallest quantity and plainest quality of food. No one must eat with him, nor any dog, fowl, &c., feed off the crumbs, nor any one watch him while eating. I suspect on this day the Ibet is eaten, but I have not verified this, only getting, from an untrustworthy source, a statement that supported it.

Dr. Nassau told me that among Congo Français tribes certain rites are performed for children during infancy or youth, in which a prohibition is laid upon the child as regards the eating of some particular article of food, or the doing of certain acts. "It is difficult," he said, "to get the exact object of the 'Orunda.' Certainly the prohibited article is not in itself evil, for others but the inhibited individual may eat or do with it as they please. Most of the natives blindly follow the custom of their ancestors without being able to give any *raison d'être*, but again, from those best able to give a reason, you learn the prohibited article is a sacrifice ordained for the child by its parents and the magic doctor as a gift to the governing spirit of its life. The thing prohibited becomes removed from the child's common use, and is made sacred to the spirit. Any use of it by the child or man would therefore be a sin, which would bring down the spirit's wrath in the form of sickness or other evil, which can be atoned for only by expensive ceremonies or gifts to the magic doctor who intercedes for the offender."

Anything may be an Orunda or Ibet provided only that it is connected with food; I have been able to find no definite ground for the selection of it. The Doctor said, for example, that "once when on a boat journey, and camped in the forest for the noon-day meal, the crew of four had no meat. They needed it. I had a chicken but ate only a portion, and gave the rest to the crew. Three

men ate it with their manioc meal, the fourth would not touch it. It was his Orunda." "On another journey," said the Doctor, "instead of all my crew leaving me respectfully alone in the canoe to have my lunch and going ashore to have theirs, one of them stayed behind in the canoe, and I found his Orunda was only to eat over water when on a journey by water." "At another place, a chief at whose village we once anchored in a small steamer when a glass of rum was given him, had a piece of cloth held up before his mouth that the people might not see him drink, which was his Orunda."

I know some ethnologists will think this last case should be classed under another head, but I think the Doctor is right. He is well aware of the existence of the other class of prohibitions regarding chiefs and I have seen plenty of chiefs myself up the Rembwé who have no objection to take their drinks *coram publico*, and I have no doubt this was only an individual Orunda of this particular Rembwé chief.

Great care is requisite in these matters, because a man may do or abstain from doing one and the same thing for divers reasons.