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Wm. J. Tracy  
Pres. C. I. A. Amherst

**ABEOKUTA**  
**AND**  
**THE CAMAROONS MOUNTAINS.**

*An Exploration.*

BY

**RICHARD F. BURTON,**

VICE PRES. ANTHROP. SOC. OF LONDON; GOLD MEDALIST, GEOG. SOCS., PARIS AND LONDON;  
F.R.G.S. LONDON; M.A.S.; M.A.S. BOMBAY; M. ETHNO. S. LONDON.

*"Geography, though an earthly study, is a heavenly subject."—Burke.*

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

**VOL. I.**

**LONDON:**  
**TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.**  
**1863.**

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TO  
MY BEST FRIEND,  
MY WIFE,  
THESE PAGES ARE LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

Sic ego desertis possim bene vivere sylvia.  
Quo nulla humano sit via trita pede.  
Tu mihi curarum requies, in nocte vel atra  
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba loca.



## P R E F A C E,

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It is an explorer's duty to record as well as to receive impressions of what appears novel to him. Amongst the English, Robert Bruce and Mungo Park; Adanson and the Abbé Rochon amongst the French; and amongst the Germans, Humboldt, the 'Prince of Travelers,' were so mindful of this obligation, that they spent long years in polishing their journals; and they owe at least as much—if not more—of their enduring celebrity to their admirable descriptions as to the extent of their discoveries and the accuracy of their observations. Let us follow—however humbly—in their wake without repining. Such, however, is by no means the case with contemporaries: in these days every little leader of an expedition, forgetting that '*scribere est agere*,' finds a ready salve for sore vanity by writing as it were under protest, and by assuming the superiority of one who boasts that it is his peculiar province to do—not to write.

But, *quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt?* Abeokuta—Understone—the present capital of the Egba or Aku race, and without comparison the most important position in the broad lands which we know by the name of Yoruba, is, as might be expected, a '*trita via*.' Four volumes upon the subject have been alluded to in the following pages. Two of these are by the weaker sex; and the authoresses, who are not travellers, have produced neat little drawing-room sketches, all *coulour de rose*; the African as you see him upon the walls of the Royal Academy, now dressed up and *musqué*, now subjected to the old stock horrors—slave-driving, for instance—which he is made to endure with all the gestures of a Briton: it is, in fact, Ethiopia viewed through European eyes—Africa by the 'own artist' of the '*Illustrated News*.' The other two are in the missionary-African line; they, of course, run in a well-known groove. Without quoting the old saw, '*semper aliquid novi ex Africâ*,' there is still much to say upon the well-worn subject of Abeokuta. And the tale of an unenthusiastic traveller, who tells the truth as far as truth lies in him, cannot fail, even when treating of Yoruba, to convey some novel facts.

The land which for fifteen years has interested us by its rumoured progress—the reverend and learned author of '*Westward Ho!*' speaks of the blood-stained

hosts of Dahome being rolled back by 'Christian Abeokuta' at a time when there was about one convert, or 'professor,' to one thousand of the heathenry—and by the equally fanciful reports that it will supply our idle looms with cotton, has now entered into fresh and closer relations with the British empire. Lagos, distant about sixty miles from the head-quarters of the Egbas, has become an English colony, and will necessarily influence, for weal or for woe, all adjacent countries. It may extend its moral force throughout Yoruba, and become valuable, not only as a depôt of, and an outlet for, trade, but also, by aiding to abolish slave exportation, and by causing human sacrifice and petty wars to cease, it may save our country a considerable portion of the million sterling annually expended upon the West African 'coffin-squadron.' As yet, however, our steps have *not* been in the right direction. It will presently appear that we have petted our bantling Abeokuta, and that the spoiled child has waxed fat and kicked—as the proverb says—against the foreign pricks. We have aroused the ever wakeful suspicions of the barbarian, and he has not been slow in entering upon energetic measures: of this, however, more hereafter.

I have attempted to point out in these pages the simple measures—our West African policy has hitherto erred rather by commission than by omission—which,

in my humble opinion, will secure our influence upon the sea-board of Yoruba.

The Second Part of this work has been made a pendant to the First, and the reader will readily perceive the reason. The Camaroons Mountains, partially familiar to geographers for the last four hundred years, have remained, as far as exploration is concerned, virgin ground with a virgin flora, a virgin climate; in fact, virginal all. Captain John Adams (p. 178, 'Remarks on the Country extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo.' London: 1823) may be quoted to prove this: 'A few leagues to the southward of Del Rey there are some moderately high hills, called the high land of Camaroons, the altitudes of which have been much magnified by some travellers, who were probably deceived in consequence of the surrounding country being a few feet only above the level of the sea, which gave them, in their eyes, a degree of consequence they would not have merited had they been placed in an elevated country.' Of late, two stout-hearted attempts have been made to scale these glorious heights, but by force of circumstances neither of them proved successful. I could not but break a lance with a foe so formidable; and fate willed the trial not to end in failure.

It was hardly, however, the mere ambition of leaving my mark, to *faire époque* on Western Africa,

that impelled me to the task. The desire of adventure was subsidiary to higher views. I need not now here enlarge upon the movement lately set on foot in British India; suffice it to say, there will not be, we progressists fondly believe, a single European regiment stationed permanently, twenty years hence, on the plains. If it be found advisable in comparatively salubrious Hindostan to establish hill sanitarium, it becomes a necessity for the yellow-fever haunted coast of Western Africa. And I hope to make it evident that the Camaroons Mountains tract is admirably adapted, not only for a sanitarium, but for a convict station, where those expecting tickets of leave can undergo a fair trial, and where the incurables can be employed in expiating, by useful labour, the outrages which they have committed upon society. And, finally, a colony, selected from the 45,000 negroes, who, instead of loafing about Canada—a Canadian once told me that if anything could reconcile him to slavery it was the presence of these fugitives—might here do valuable work in lumber cutting, cacao growing, exporting the fibre and meal of the plaintain, and expressing cocoa-nut and palm oil.

In the conclusion to Vol. II., I have attempted to suggest the readiest and most efficient method of attaining a result so truly advisable.

The *personnel* of our 'international expedition,' as we called it, numbered six members, D. Calvo Atilano Iturburu, of Fernando Po; Messrs. Saker and Smith, of the 'Camaroons Mission;' M. Gustav Mann, Government botanist in West Africa; my factotum Selim Aga, and myself. We assumed the right, concessible only in a 'no man's land,' of christening the several peaks: the loftiest was honoured with the name of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and, from the highest Lady in the kingdom, we gradually descended to friends and relatives.

The brief and popular notices of the vegetation upon the Camaroons Mountains are exclusively the work of M. Mann. To the kindness of Sir William Hooker I owe the list of specimens collected during our visit to that interesting region; and Dr. Gray has obliged me with the names of the small animals that were stuffed by Selim Aga. These important additions are inserted in the Appendix, and I here record my gratitude for all favours received.

The daily thermometric observations were registered by M. Mann, and during his illness by Selim Aga under my inspection. Many of the bearings taken for the map, which was protracted by Mr. George, of the Royal Geographical Society, are the work of the Rev. A. Saker, whose energetic assistance was one of the main causes of our success. Without the aid of that



gentleman, and of Messrs. Johnson and Pinnock, of Victoria, our progress would indeed have been slow. Unfortunately we were badly provided with instruments; neither chronometer, anemometer, sympiesometer, nor mercurial barometer for correcting aneroids were in the camp: I had applied for them, but they had not arrived. As in the Hydrographic Office chart the main points visible from the sea have been laid down by a satisfactory triangulation, we confined ourselves to the prismatic compass; and I taped the road with a line supplied by Lieut. Stokes, R.N., H.M.S. 'Bloodhound.' A pathway up the mountains is now, we may say, permanently opened; Victoria Bay is within a few hours' sail of Fernando Po; and I may venture to promise that, if any questions of interest are forwarded to me from Europe, they shall be answered to the best of my power—life and health enduring—in the course of the next dry season.

I assume nothing on this occasion beyond the modest character of a reconnoitrer. A writer in the 'Times' has lately given to my last African explorations in Harar and the Lake Regions the title of *reconnaisances*. *C'est bien le mot*. I accept it as the best description of my scanty contributions towards the extension of geographical knowledge in the 'dark continent,' and accordingly it is prefixed to the Second Part of this work.

It may be satisfactory to my friends to know that, on this occasion, favoured by his own good fortune, or rather by the misfortunes of others, an Englishman was the first who, standing upon Victoria Mountain, gazed into the gigantic black chasm that yawned at his feet. And—here I speak for my companions—it is also pleasant to reflect that the name of Europeans will hereafter be respected in the region through which we travelled.

The Appendices are—

- 1st. A description of the Ambozes, or Camaroons Country, by M. J. Grazilhier, who in 1699 made a voyage to Old Calabar—extracted from Barbot.
- 2nd. The journal of the late Mr. Merrick, of the Camaroons Mission, who, as far as is known, first attempted to ascend the mountain: it is borrowed from the ‘Baptist Missionary Herald.’
- 3rd. Sir William Hooker’s list of the botanical specimens collected upon the Camaroons Mountains by M. Gustav Mann.
- 4th. Dr. Gray’s descriptions of the animals forwarded to the British Museum, at the end of the Camaroons explorations.
- 5th. Letters, official reports, and memorandum, on the high land of Camaroons, by the late

Mr. M'Gregor Laird and the Rev. A. Saker  
(reprinted from the Blue Book of 1857).

6th. Meteorological observations, by M. Gustav  
Mann and Selim Aga.

7th. Hypsometrical table.

With the firm expectation of seeing, *quam primum*, a  
sanitarium for the feverish denizens of Lagos, the  
Oil Rivers, and Fernando Po, established in this region  
of health and future plenty, and hoping that the  
public will honour my labours with its approval, I  
relieve the reader from the tedium of a longer preface.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

*Fernando Po*, 1863.



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# ABEOKUTA

AND

## THE CAMAROONS MOUNTAINS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### FROM LAGOS TO ABEOKUTA.

AFTER a flying survey of the 'Oil Rivers' in the amene delta of the lovely Niger, I found myself stranded at Fernando Po Island, Bight of Biafra, Gulf of Guinea, Western Intertropical Africa, and divided by the thinnest of party-walls from Anti-Paradise. Nothing to do, and no prospect of doing anything, which pleasant state of things endured (*ohimè!*) from Wednesday the 2nd to Wednesday the 9th of October, 1861—a long, long, a very long week.

On the day last mentioned the commodore and senior officer of the West African squadron compassionately offered me a lift to Lagos, the nearest point where certain necessaries—a 'cook-boy' and a *batterie de cuisine*, a carpenter, a diwan—the mention of this article nearly revolutionized the colonist

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part of the island of Fernando Po—and many other things were procurable. Before the next mail could arrive there would be ample time to reach Abeokuta, and after enforced rest, the prospect of such a visit was a joy. I had read much and heard more about the ‘Town under the Stone,’ and the glowing hues in which the subject had been depicted had conjured up in my mind a host of doubts that could be laid only by means of that accurate organ, the eye. A nautico-diplomatico-missionary visitation was, it had been rumoured, about to take place, so there remained only to go and ‘see the fun.’ May the reader find it as funny as I did!

About sunset-time of Thursday, H.M.S. ‘Arrogant,’ with, besides her usual equipage, a certain person on board, glided out of the little cove called Clarence, where she had anchored, past the Adelaide Islands, alias Islas de Santa Isabel; past Cockburn, popularly called Kokpo Cove, and more prettily Enseñada de Venus; past dwarf cliffs of red clay, with a tall, thick capping of tangled trees; past Coal Bay, alias Bahía de Carbon; past Point Bullen, alias Punta de los Frailes, with its *chevaux de frise* of tree trunks and its thick back-wall of blackish verdure; and finally heading W.N.W. out into the open, where we once more welcomed the bounding waves and the breathable atmosphere of old Neptune’s

domains. It may be here observed, that there are at present three known names for every part and portion of the island. The Portuguese and the older Iberian nomenclature having, as might be expected, fallen into complete oblivion, the English settlers naturally called things after their own fashion, neglecting the Bubi, or *indigènes*, who, as usual with barbarians, have a profusion of terminology for every feature that attracts the eye; whilst, in their turn, the Spaniards equally and naturally preferred Castilian to the 'harsh Runic' of their predecessors.

Fernando Po still haunted us with its presence next morning, though we had run upwards of one hundred miles: at times it may be distinctly seen from Corisco Island, distant some forty-five leagues. To us the only sign of its existence was a mysterious pile of slaty-blue nimbus looming on the horizon, based broadly upon the main, and towering and tapering high into the heavens. Such, doubtless, was the spectacle, *Tristaõ vaz Teyxeyra*, called by the king for honour 'O Tristaõ,' which terrified the crew whom stout-hearted Da Camera, surnamed Zargo, commanded.\* The days sped swiftly among the hospi-

\* O Capitão João Gonçalves da Camera, a gentleman of the household of the then Infante, and nicknamed Zargo, or the one-eyed—he lost the other at the siege of Tangiers; but others say that Zargo was the name of a Moor whom he made captive—was sent in 1418 by his lord, O Conquistador, the Virgin Prince Henry, son of Don John (first of the name, and second king)

table 'Arrogants.' On Monday the 14th we were rocking and swinging in the eternal roll of the Lagos roadstead, and on Tuesday the certain person, after kindly farewells, transferred himself on board H.M.S. 'Prometheus,' Commander Bedingfield, R.N.

The day after—it was nearly full moon—brought forth a phenomenon whereat I had reason to rejoice. All 'old hands' tell you that the sooner 'seasoning fever' introduces himself, the better. After long delay, he appears in the shape of a bilious remittent, which probably will see the last of you, and must, even, if merciful, leave you in a sad state of what is popularly called 'pull-down.' The attack came on at 8 A.M. Preceded by full head, dry skin, blue nails, cold finger tips, and other normal symptoms, it was succeeded by nausea, by a rigor that lasted barely thirty minutes, and by the pyretic stage, which after

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by Philippa, grandchild of Edward III. of England, to examine the West African coast. Returning to Porto Santo, he was informed by the settlers, whom he had previously left there under the first Donatorio, or Donec, Bartholomew Perestrello, or Palestrello, that it was '*fama publica*' that in one particular direction the sea was ever overhung with a thick impenetrable darkness, '*huma grande sombra*,' or as De Barros has it, '*hum nigrum tal e tam medonho e perpetuo que nenhum se atrevia a chegar a elle*,' denoting, according to the Jesuit Cordeyro, an abyss, and guarded by a perpetual smoke and strange noises, which seemed to issue from the mouth of hell. Zargo was encouraged to explore it by observing that the blackness in question disappeared during the changes of the moon. The crew, excepting the pilot, were so frightened that they repeatedly begged to be allowed to return. Queer times when explorers could be frightened by a fog! Zargo landed in Madeira 2nd July, 1419, the day of Santa Isabel.

an hour and a half passed off in a profuse perspiration. There is nothing unpleasant in these attacks; rather the contrary. The excitement of the nerves is like the intoxication produced by a plentiful supply of strong green tea; the brain becomes uncommonly active, peopled with a host of visions, and the imagination is raised almost to Parnassus. There are persons who rhyme under the inspiration of Musa Quartana, and M. Alexandre Dumas père, in the wildest of his romances, the '*Voyage au Caucase*,' declares that his artist's most dashing sketch was done with a pulse beating higher than a hundred. Of course, the patient pays for it when the fit passes off. The treatment adopted by Mr. Eales, surgeon of H.M.S. '*Prometheus*,' was simple, and so successful that I am induced to publish it for the benefit of future feverists.\*

\* During the first fit, 4 grains ext. colocynth, 4 ditto jalap, 4 ditto quinine, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  gr. tart. emetic—the latter to induce perspiration; followed by 6 gra. sulph. quinine and 6 gra. sulph. magnesia; and 4 gra. nit. potash and 6 gra. sulph. magnesia. On the next day 1 dr. Epsom salts and 2 gra. quinine, every three hours, which will probably settle the affair; at least it did in my case.

Of the following the faculty speak very favourably. It is the South African traveller,

*Dr. Livingstone's Remedy for African Fever.*

\* The medicines, which must be pure and unadulterated, are as follows:—Six or eight grains of resin of jalap, and the same amount of rhubarb, with four grains of calomel and four of quinine, made into pills with spirit of cadamome: the whole is a full dose for a man. On taking effect, quinine

At 8 A.M. on the morrow, the attack did not return—it is a favourable sign when it defers itself: it delayed twelve hours, and then appeared precisely in the same way, but not nearly so agreeably, pain in the temples being now a decided characteristic, and it continued till 12 noon, causing a sleepless night. Next day showed its effects in a surprising weakness and languor, which endured for a full week, making one feel much in the condition of a pony that has passed its third year in Sierra Leone. The vigorous treatment completely expelled the fiend: it did not show on the third day, which, with the fifth, the seventh, and the ninth, is held to be critical. Such attacks are by no means so dangerous as an English bronchitis or influenza, but the debility induced by them often leads to frequent relapses, and people will act up to the bad old nursery rule, ‘starve a fever and feed a cold.’ My experience in East Africa long ago untaught me that tenet, and I have ever since preferred to support exhausted nature with essence of

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(not the unbleached kind), in four-grain or larger doses, is given every two hours or so, till the ears ring or deafness ensues; this last is an essential part of the cure. The prescription, like some others of known value, is not strictly scientific, and the practice of giving quinine from the very commencement of the attack is not considered good. I was led into it by nervous anxiety to save my own children at Lake Ngami, in 1850, and have experienced its value so frequently since with Africans and Europeans, that I follow it, though opposed to the teachings of my superiors.’

meat, beef-tea, and, when such things are procurable, with champagne, brandy-cum-soda, and 'ye oldest hoc in ye cellar,' *non sine* tobacco if it can be enjoyed. The Anglo-Indian superstition touching recurrence at 'the springs' is here unknown, yet inveterate habit will make me careful to prepare for *luna piena* with a prophylactic—a fortnight of chin-chonized wine.

We were in the depth of the tornado season, and we were made to feel it. Hardly had we returned to the 'Prometheus' on the night of the 21st, than rain from the masses gathering in the north-east—here as in Fernando Po it is *the* quarter—began to fall in the usual sheets and columns. Then came a premonitory thunder-crash, single, and sounding as if the *fractus orbis* were falling in. These solitary outbreaks of violence are common on the coast, but they appear strange to Europeans. After a few moments, a flash of lightning filled the firmament with liquid blue fire, and a queer whizzing, like the shock of an aëriform mass, or the 'whistling Jack' of a Lancaster gun, was succeeded by the deafening booming report of a battery of Armstrongs, and detached noises like the upsetting of stone waggons by the thousand. The bolt or fluid had struck the fore-topmast; neglecting the vane, it had run down the conductor, which it ripped away from its bear-



ings—what would Sir S. H. think of this?—and passing along the wire forestay, had separated into two currents. One traversed the port nightheads, the other, following the starboard chain-cable into the locker, filled the deck with rust-dust, and gambolling playfully within three feet of the powder magazine, that contained some two tons, made the men on watch think that they saw smoke, and levant ‘in short metre.’ After taking this improper liberty, the storm-king hauled off, and we heard him in the distance grumbling like an old man-of-war’s man. A splinter from the foremast<sup>’</sup> made a very neat paper-knife for my wife.

The period between the 23rd and the 28th of October was passed—under the hospitable but not water-tight roof of my friend Mr. M’Coskry, then acting-governor of Lagos—in various preparations for travel, and in the enjoyment of Moslem society. ‘A small knot of us gathered to interchange pleasant communings, whilst grace gave a fresh intenseness of longing.’ Yet El Islam is under a cloud in these regions: the young and vigorous creed has still the proportions of a child. The number of converts has been stated at 2000; it can hardly exceed 800. The mosque is still a hut, the musical call of the Muezzin—how much more human and heart-stirring than the clang of the brazen-tongued

bell!\*

—is yet unheard, and the women of the Kafirs are allowed to display their bosoms in the market-place. There were, however, several of the Safe Faith† who had pilgrimaged to Meccah, and one man, a servant of the ‘Caboceer’ Kosoko, had resided a dozen years at El Medinah, and had returned to infidel Ekko, viâ Sawakin, Kordofan, Darfur, Wádái, Burnu, and Rabba. Many had also travelled over the northern line from Kano and Sokoo to Tarabulus or Tripoli. There were books amongst those Moslems, a Koran of Bombay lithography, and sundry *risálát* (treatises) of the Maliki school, to which they all belong. Their manuscripts are written in the curious semi-Cufic character, which is to them like what the Tondo-Mezzo-Gotico is to these sheets. The ‘Allamah,’ or most learned, was the Muallim Dáudá, who knew a little of the grammatical sciences, but who had not reached the height of interpreting the Koran.

As our journey was to be by water, few impediments were necessary—a collection of pots and pans, and supplies for the way. Only one servant was

\* Whilst the ignorant Moslem believes that bells drive away good spirits from the abodes of men, the equally ignorant Roman Catholic *habitant* of Canada holds himself safe from the devil only when within the sound of his *clocher*. Both cannot be in the right—perhaps neither is.

† The expression ‘saving faith,’ applied to El Islam, is apt to convey an erroneous idea: Moslems are wholly opposed to Christians in their notions touching salvation. With those, every man is sent into the world by a beneficent Deity to be blessed; with these, to be damned.



required, and he was found in the person of Selim Aga. A native of Tegullet, he had been carried when of tender years to Egypt, where he had found a patron in my old friend, the benevolent Mr. Robert Thurburn of Alexandria, now deceased. He had lived twelve and a half years in Europe—where he had forgotten his mother-tongue—chiefly at a Scotch school near Murtho, Aberdeenshire, and he returned to Africa in 1857 with that failure of failures, the Niger expedition. He proved himself perfection; a Figaro, but—un-Figaro-like—honest, civil, and unpresuming: he could cook, doctor, shave, ‘valet,’ garden, carpenter, shoot and stuff birds, collect spirit specimens—in fact, he took all the trouble of life off my hands. I at once made him my factotum, regretting to see such a man wasted upon the barbarism of Lagos. Some years hence, when we also shall have topographical engineers, and when exploration shall become a profession, not, as at present, an affair of mere amateurship, Selim Agas will be useful in cutting a path for the European pioneer through outer Asia and Central Africa.\*

After a fortnight all was ready for departure.

\* In 1860 Selim Aga proposed to recover the papers of the late M. Vogel, who is generally believed to have been killed by the Sultan of Wádái, a perilous land, which an older hand, Dr. Barth, prudently avoided. According to the travelling Arab servant, who in 1859 was sent by the Niger expedition at Bidda, the present capital of Nupe, M. Vogel travelled

The little party consisted of Commander Bedingfield,—who, with that condescension which characterizes every truly great man, had permitted me to form part of his suite or train — Mr. Eales, and myself. The dog Sancho must precede Mr. Williams, a ‘sassy,’ half-educated Egba interpreter to the Government at Lagos, who, in his quality of interpreter, went on in a canoe, preferring, *more Africano*, lying at full length to sitting upright, and who intrigued like a black Talleyrand throughout the week. Commander Bedingfield, who, and who only, believing in his own omniscience touching African affairs, had, as will appear, sundry affairs to settle, and was destined not to succeed in all and every of them. The second, Mr. Eales, added to the natural wish of sight-seeing, the *idée fixe* that unicorns abound in Northern Yoruba. He had heard of the animal from certain merchants resident at Lagos—one of

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from Bugharimi to a well-known well on the frontier of Wádái, a halting-place for pilgrims and trader caravans. He was there left by his servant, who had travelled with Dr. Barth, and he proceeded to the capital of Wádái. The Sultan hearing that the white man had gone at night to a neighbouring hill, with instruments for observing, forbade him strictly to repeat the operation. M. Vogel disobeyed the orders, and two men were sent to take off his head. His papers are said to be still in possession of Sidi Ali, religious chief of Kano, and there ought to be no difficulty in recovering them. Dr. Baikie, chief of the Niger expedition, proposed to do this himself. So Selim was thrown out, and Dr. Baikie has not yet done it.

them had promised to provide him with a specimen—and he had read of it in the matter-of-fact and highly imaginative pages of Mr. Bowen.\* The tales reported by this missionary-militant remind one of the Chinese tiger with nine human heads, the ‘intelligent creature of a thousand souls,’ the dog-headed rhinoceros with six horns, the five-headed crocodile, the bird with one eye, and the horse-like deer with leopard’s spots, white head, and red tail. We read in ‘Central Africa’ of the Alakere, a tribe three feet high, who surround their towns—as England is investing her ships—with iron walls. Beyond them, and eastward of the Niger, are the Alabiru, also clever smiths, and manufacturers of all the finest Sudan blades : having inflexible tails, about six inches long, before sitting down to work

\* ‘Central Africa,’ Charleston, U. S., 1857—about which work more presently. The Doko race of which Mr. Bowen speaks is probably a corruption of ‘Donko,’ the slave race from the north of Ashanti, well known on the Gold Coast : a people with a single gash between the eye and the upper lip, on both cheeks, were shown to me at Abeokuta under this name. Mr. Bowen describes them as coming from the Mandara region, and having four eyes. ‘Doko,’ in Eastern Africa, is applied to the pigmies called Kimo in Madagascar, and by the Mombas missionaries, Wabilikimo, i. e., men two cubits high. Wayangara, the mythical Christian city, two months’ journey east of Sokoto, or more generally described as lying east of Yoruba, is inhabited by white men, who are probably what the Hansa people call Bature Dudu, black-white men, a Grecian-faced race that cross the African continent, and report that after three months’ march they arrive within a fortnight of the Salt Sea. There is a native tradition that they inhabit the lands of Gengira, Darmút, and Sidama.

they with sharp sticks dig holes in the ground. Mr. Barnum may save himself the 100,000 dollars which, as the story runs, he has offered to a certain African traveller who told him how easy it would be to engraft a simian termination to the human frame. There is also the ashori-tree, a upas, under which plants will not grow, and which kills birds when flying too near. Of course the gorilla exists, and is called 'nákí.' The Yorubans declare that it tears asunder the fingers of captives, even as the Mpongwe of the Gaboon River make it pull the nails from the human victims' fingers and toes. The chimpanzee is certainly found in dense forests, and being four feet high, is feared by the people; as yet, however, we are so ignorant of the anthropoid apes that the nákí may be a new and more formidable species of troglodytes. There are subterranean races, humans, with four eyes, living south of Mandara; and, finally, the Alabiwo, men-unicorns, with a small goat-like horn projecting from the middle of the forehead. They are black, very intelligent, and when captured, becoming ashamed of what some men wear with such complacency, they hide the formation under a kerchief.

Yet after all the unicorn, like the great sea-serpent, has its advocates; and it is not a little curious that many African tribes have a distinct name for

it.\* However it may be, Mr. Eales left Abeokuta sans unicorn, and he has not yet, I believe, found it.

Three lines of road on the west of the Ogun River connect Abeokuta with the youngest of our colonies, Lagos. The shortest, *viâ* Ota and Agbameya, is laid down at sixty-five miles in length. It is rugged, and unfit for beasts of burden. Further west is the middle path, also swampy and comparatively useless. The westernmost is the best, and

\* Dr. Baikie, writing to the 'Athenæum,' from Bida Nupe, the Nyffe of Richard Lander, in Central Africa, January 15, 1862, concerning this 'romance of natural history,' declares that five years of experience have shaken his scepticism; and that whereas he once looked upon the unicorn as a myth, he now 'simply holds that its non-existence is not proven'—a giant's step on the path of faith. The horn, he has heard, is long, black, and straight, or nearly straight, and the hunters of the one-horned rhinoceros carefully distinguish between this and the equine monoceros. Finally, he supplies the following list of names by which the animal is called in various countries, from Lake Chad to the Gulf of Guinea:—

Bündiá-ru and Kamárami in Kanuri (Bornu).

Maríri . . . . . in Hausa.

Yílifú and Dákarkúlewnl . in Fulfulde, or Filáni.

Kárafitu . . . . . in Márgí.

Pánlíli . . . . . in Núpe.

Agába . . . . . in Bonu (where a skull is said to be).

Iwú . . . . . in Yoruba.

Tenesek . . . . . in A'zbentsi (Tawárek).

M D'Abbadie alludes to it in Kordofan under the name of A'nasa. Mr. Bowen's agbangrere was described as having the form of a sorrel horse with the feet of a cow, and with a single horn like that of an antelope. A horn was produced, 'black in colour, coarsely rugose' below and smooth towards the top;' possibly it was a kudu's. The unfortunate slayer is sure to die within a year.

can at times be travelled on horseback. All of these routes, however, are flooded during the rains, when the waters cut deep ruts in the hard clay. Even at this season the best is hardly passable, mud and morass forming the chief obstacles: it however opens in December, and remains so till March. It would be worth while to explore for some line to the east of the Ogun, which might reduce the land journey from sixty-five to forty-eight miles. All attempts at road-making, however, in the present state of independent Africa must fail; the people, assisted by their climate, would in a few months reduce the finest macadam to a mere bridle path—a long, deep cunette threading grassy banks. Moreover, the Abeokutans are by no means anxious for a more direct route, which they have been persuaded would soon deliver them into the hands of the great devourer. They have coquetted with us for years on this point; and although they must eventually yield to civilized pressure, they will defer the bad day as long as possible.

We therefore determined to take the usual line from Lagos to Abeokuta, across the Ikoradu Water, through the Agboi Creek, and thence up the Ogun River.

At 9.15 A.M. on Tuesday, the 29th October, 1861, we left our temporary homes in highest spirits, and were duly escorted to the beach by Mr. M'Coskry



and M. Maser, a most worthy member of what calls itself *The Church Missionary Society*. Our conveyances were the first and second gigs of H.M.S. 'Prometheus,' manned by Krumen, who, demoralized by an education at Sierra Leone, and by the overpay and the over-kindness of a fighting craft, proved the idlest and the unhandiest of their tribe. In the state of nature they will row forty miles without other refreshment but a 'snack,' eaten whilst lying upon their oars. Artificialized, they must halt, 'chop water,' and cook after every third hour; otherwise they will dawdle, give answers, or, with far-protruded lips, sulk. Our fellows once saw their captain standing alone on the river bank awaiting his breakfast, and yet they sat down to 'yam.' I could not pity him, it was his own doing. But one cannot wonder that no merchant vessel will employ a Kruboy who has been known to serve on board a man-of-war.

And so we rowed up the Osa, or Victoria Water, connecting the Ikoradu or Cradoo Lagoon with the sea, along the pestilent island of Lagos, which, probably founded by driftage, and finished with eddy-carried sand, rises a few feet above sea-level.\*

\* According to Captain John Adama, who, as has been said, wrote in 1823, Lagos Island is 'a foot only above the level of the lake at high water, which is so shallow that boats of only 10 or 15 tons burden can approach the town.' If his observations be correct, the island has risen and the channel has sunk.

Our course after leaving the beach lay westwards, through slack water, along the densely-wooded "Takpa's" Point, where, in 1851, El Re Kosoko's premier had erected *chevaux de frise* to prevent the landing of the assaulting Briton. On our right lay Lagos, which in this, its city end, showed a disorderly mass of hut and house with mud walls and lumber walls, barred casements and holes for windows, and huge sloping roofs of dry palm-leaf, inevitably capital tinder. Then came Fetish Point, where a growth of gigantic trees—the Egbas still, like the Canaanites of old, worship in the bush—notes that the land is 'holy ground.' Fetish Point has, like the trans-Temple Bar region, London, a government all its own, an *imperium in imperio*, not subject to the more aristocratic Lagos: the chief must never be a fetish or reverend man, and his state is kept up by the voluntary contributions of the river fishermen, who, at this moment, are in palaver, having refused to pay church rates. The unlovely channel was scummed over with a whitish froth, borne along by the strong embrace of the tide: the surface was broken by long walls of shrimp baskets, sharp, tapering cones of bamboo strips, attached to strongly-driven poles, and so placed that the animals, once inside the *camera di morte*, cannot escape by reason of the violent current. This is a conspicuous feature upon the smoother sur-



face of the lake beyond: the produce, sun-dried and packed, is a lucrative branch of native trade, and penetrates inland far north of Abeokuta. The old travellers remarked the quantity of shrimps produced in these streams, and gave their name, Camaroës—Anglicè, Camaroons—to a river, and to the magnificent mountain pile which will form the subject of future pages. As we emerged from the gut, conspicuous on our right hand, and boldly heading the body of Lagos, was the mediatized King Dosu-mo's 'palace,' a red-tiled and partially whitewashed barn, backed by trees of the noblest stature, and fronted by water perilously deep, from three to four fathoms, where gunboats have been known to trust themselves. In equally sunken soundings, and a little off the town, lay detached 'pontons,' or lumps of land, once mangrove-drifts, then sand-banks, and now clumps of bush: they are three, and presently they will be four. These are called the 'Sacrifice Islands,' from the executions common in the good old times: the victim to Oro—of whom more anon—was fastened to a rude cross, clubbed, and impaled. The latter operation seems to have been a favourite: the travellers of the last generation describe the 'horrid custom of impaling alive a young female,' and this annual sacrifice, which took place about the vernal equinox, was supposed to breed plenty in the

land.\* But Lagos has learned to hide her horrors. We no longer observe male dogs which, banished to the towns beyond, have ventured to revisit their homes, strangled as fetish against evil influences, 'split, trimmed like sheep, and hung up at the door of some great man, where rows of the putrid carcases of their canine brethren are often to be seen;' nor at the east end of the town do we find large trees covered with the heads of malefactors, 'the skulls nailed to the trunks and large limbs, and presenting a very appalling spectacle.'† On the left, and nearly opposite 'Sacrifice Islands,' lies Bruce's,‡ more modernly termed Picnic, Island, garden soil beautifully clad in the green ceiba, or bombax-tree, dotted with the rose-shaped yellow blossoms of the African mallow.

\* I afterwards saw at Benin city a young woman lashed to a scaffolding upon the summit of a tall blasted tree, and being devoured by the turkey-buzzards. The people declared it to be a 'fetish,' or charm for bringing rain.

† This will remind the reader of Richard Lander's celebrated description of the Tree of Death at Badagry; and, as will be seen, the custom has not yet died out of Yoruba.

‡ On the 25th November, 1851, a force of 260 men in 23 boats, commanded by Commander Forbes, H.M.S. 'Philomel,' entered the river to repress the disorders caused by the 'usurper Kosoko.' They were preceded by Mr. Beecroft, H.M. Consul for Fernando Po, carrying a flag of truce. About five thousand people manned the bush, and though a landing was effected and a few houses were fired, the expedition was 'whipped'—as it deserved, for not shelling or rocketing the town: two poor fellows were killed, and several were wounded. In January, 1852, the Commodore, Captain R. W. Bruce, revenged the affront, and his name has been perpetuated in 'Bruce's Island.'

Between this 'cay' and the mainland runs a narrow channel, crossed by a ferry-boat, and on its banks a yellow line of clay points out the terminus of the nearest western route to Abeokuta.

Presently we emerged from the river into the mirrory expanse of the Lake glistening in the bright sunshine. North-eastward lay a sea horizon fringed with dots, denoting tall groves distance-dwarfed and raised in the air by force of mirage; whilst some ten miles distant, Point Lambassa, fronted by its own islet, was poised between sea and sky. The lagoon is called in our maps the Cradoo Waters, doubtless a corruption of Ikoradu, a town near its banks, and readily visited by Europeans. Though unsurveyed, it is believed to be of considerable extent, and to connect the Benin with the Volta River:\* the formation, however, is simple; it is merely a general reservoir for the numerous streams, which rapidly pouring down from the mainland, and lacking watershed near the coast, here collect within two miles of the surf, and when swollen by the rains force a tumultuous passage into the Atlantic. According to some it is connected with the Ardrah Lake near Whydah, which they say can thus be made from Lagos by water: others declare that the continuity

\* If this surmise be correct there is an uninterrupted line of natural canalization between the Volta, the Niger, and the Bonny River, a distance of nearly 400 direct miles.

of its arm, the Osa,\* or Victoria Lagoon, is broken at Godemé, a place beyond Porto Novo. It is shallow, but intersected by channels, some of which are known to be eight fathoms deep: in a setting of mountain land it would be beautiful; its low shores and its clay-coloured water, however, render it tame and uninteresting. The bottom is alternately muddy and sandy. It produces oysters, differing from the mangrove species, before which every fresh African traveller stands with open mouth; and amongst the variety of its fishes, one locally called the mullet stands unrivalled.

We advanced steadily, hugging, as much as the shallows would allow, the right bank of the long 'flash,' or river-bay, where the amphibious vegetation was indented with covelets, upon whose dwarf precipices of red clay sprang another and already a less malarious growth. Presently we descried the marketplace of Ikoradu town, in the land of the Ijebu Remo.† This is a people with a chief, but without a king, bordered eastward by rivals and cognates, the Ijebu Ode, so called because their Awajáli, or monarch,

\* Mr. Bowen says that the lagoon, or lake, is called Ossa by the natives, Cradoo by the English. If I understand them aright, 'Osa' is the arm which joins the Lagos River, and extends westward to Badagry; 'Cradoo' is the lagoon itself.

† The former word is variously written, and most generally Jaboo or Jebu: the Germans prefer Dshebu.

resides at the city of Ode.\* In happier times the Ibadans of the interior made at Ikoradu their barter of gunpowder and similar necessities for ivory and palm-oil. They, however, no longer visit the coast: the war with Abeokuta prevents their taking the western road, and the eastern, that abuts at Ekpe, besides being indirect, lies through the lands of their enemies the Ijebu Ode, who have fraternized with Abeokuta. The market-place on the Lake shows a few ragged sheds at the bottom of a deep indentation bounded by projecting points, and looking like the estuary of a considerable stream—which, as will be seen, it is not. Opposite us was a tall and uniform forest of mangroves, in whose dark depths a line of lighter-tinged green, backed by a deeper hue than usual, was the only sign that a channel ran through it. Selim was the only one of the party who knew the way by experience, and with his aid we shot into the Agboi Creek at 11-20 A.M., after two hours of rowing. The entrance of this normal short cut must be set down at a distance somewhat shorter than that usually assigned to it, twelve miles—our Krumen assuredly did not exceed five knots an hour.

Before entering the Agboi Creek, a word or two

\* Ode lies some 30 miles south of Ibadan. From Lagos you sail 20 miles eastward upon the Ikoradu waters, and thence march 22 miles north.

concerning the land formation which we leave behind us. The coasts of the world have been divided into the rocky (exclusively or alternating), the coralline, and the alluvial. The two former are exemplified in Eastern Africa about the latitudes where we now are : Zanzibar is essentially coralline, the Ajan is stony. This portion of the West African coast is at present

‘ Neither sea  
Nor good dry land.’

Essentially alluvial, it is a false coast, a mass of continental islands fringing the continent, the gift of the rivers, hardly habitable now, but destined in the progress of time to become fitted by secular upheaval for human occupation. It wants only altitude. The material is the finer sand of an immense drift, whose coarser particles have been left, and will be met with inland. The presence of saline matter by no means affects the soil, which mainly requires clearing, and in parts much of the ground is as reclaimable as the alluvial flats of the Nile.

The Agboi Creek, I have said, is a short cut. It is a chord running directly from the north, whereas the Ogun River, our destination to-day, bends round in an arc from north-west to east, and eventually south-east. This narrow ditch is an excellent study of mangroves. The tree, whose only object in life seems to be emergence and escape from ‘ the



briny,' rises tall, feathery, white-bolled, overarching the wave, based upon a cone of aërial root and rootlet, infinitely intricate and cage-like, and steadied by dropping long suckers, which, taking the ground, rise for themselves in independent sprigs or shoots, whose cap of green leaves nods over the flow of the graveolent tide. I could not hear that the fruit is here used as an article of human diet; the trunk, however, makes excellent firewood, and the bark is used for tanning. Its complications of bole and branch are further complicated by huge lianas, chiefly cucurbitaceous, whose ropes, sometimes sixty feet long, are so fragile that, as we shoot the natural bridges of inclined or fallen trunks, a brush with the gig's awning-stanchions brings down the long length upon our heads. The colour of the ditch-water is that of cocoa-nibs and milk, whilst here and there tufted leaves, like enormous water-cresses, float down the stream. Animal life is scarce. At times a sandpiper starts with its wild twitter, a beautiful little blue marten (*Cypselus*) flutters over us, screaming hornbills (*Buceros*)—here their heads are worth half a dollar for charms—form a cross high in the air, or a pair of glorious purple-robed halcyons (*A. Senegalensis*) occupies a stump to peer curiously below, and presently to take a 'header,' like a handful of gems, into the clayey tide. Now a jumper fish springs up

and flashes in the sunbeams; then a monkey, with wonderful agility, falls as if shot from one bough to another; then a crab, with brightly painted claws, scuttles over the dull brown mud. We pass, however, numerous canoes ascending with empty and descending with filled oil puncheons, the master seated upon a box amidships, astern the mistress or mistresses squatting under a mat-awning, whilst the more than three-quarter-naked boatmen cease poling, doff their head-gear, whatever it may be, and salute us with word and gesture courteously, as if they had taken lessons of Madame Michaud, who teaches ladies from the country to curtsy at court.

The water-way became so narrow that the oars were presently stowed in and the straight-bladed paddles of the *Krumen*—poles would have been better—were called into requisition. After a little more than a mile we reached a fork of the creek, upon which are built the cocoa-dotted settlements; Agboi on the right, and to the left Oruba. The villages were Lagos on a reduced scale; roofs of dried palm-leaf and walls of African 'post and plaster,' swish supported by a framework, in small squares, of stout cocoa-rib wattling. The foundations, raised but a few feet above water-level, must become in the rainy season a bed of soppy treacle-like mire. Yet



these people, thus living in the midst of *mîasma*, are said not to suffer: they look fat and well, they have children at their desire, and they breed dogs, sheep and goats, pigs and poultry. They appear but little surprised at our appearance, merely looking up for a moment from their work, which they resume a minute afterwards. They are an industrious race: pottery is abundant, nets are hung everywhere, canoes are numerous; the men have studded the little creek with fish-traps—open-topped squares of bamboo splints, each with its trap-door up-current—the women ply the paddle—in every other part of Egba-land a disgrace to women—and both sexes show a serious turn of mind by striking the jaw-bone of a sheep upon a stake. Truly it is said that one half the world knows not how the other half lives.

As we advanced, taking the left, or western, division of the Agboi Creek, the outfall became heavy against us. It is no tidal stream, and the current runs some three knots an hour, sweeping the boats round at the acute angles. At times we tremble for the awning, and we always keep a sharp look out for the dangerous snags. Our visitors are not pleasant. The huge 'mangrove-fly,' supposed by the people to have eyes under the wings, draws blood when it can with its sharp stilet; the black mangrove-ant, showered down by the brushed foliage, as

unpleasant to man as it is fatal to cockroaches ; gad-flies, like the English horse-fly—they may be the tsetse, hitherto most ignorantly limited to the southern regions of intertropical Africa \*—and the microscopic but vicious sand-flies attack the ankles, and employ the Krumen in long diversions of scratching and slapping. *Pour comble de bonheur*, a jagged line of black nimbus, raising its bosom high above an ominous mass of lurid-white, cloudy substance, charges across the sky from the north-west, and warns us to prepare for an African shower.

Presently it came on. A fierce rattling of thunder, a red flicker of lightning, a volley of drops like shot from above, pitting the creek's face, bore down upon us with the speed of the wind, and ended with a cross between a douche and a shower-bath. The canvas awning, though at once tilted up, was wet through after the first five minutes, the waterproof struggled hard but in vain against the intruder, and the boat began to fill apace. We landed for facility of baling, and, saved by umbrellas from the distillings of the trees, we guarded against the dangers of cold fresh water with a liquid considered a panacea in these lands. The tornado passed off after half an

\* South African travellers have limited the insect's habitat to the Zambesi's banks. I supplied the British Museum with specimens brought from the vicinity of the equator, and I expect to find the animal throughout the low and bushy regions of intertropical Africa.

hour, but it departed under protest as it were, growling, and occasionally returning to bespatter us. The odour of the vegetation waxed faint and sickly. Briefly, we experienced many of the proverbial advantages of a 'short cut.'

Two or three miles more brought us to a change of scenery. The Agboi's stream, flowing swiftly, often jammed us against the well-wooded banks; the snags and sawyers became more frequent, and the creek broader and shallower. Our men were frequently obliged to dislodge the boat—it drew about thirteen inches—and, 'tumbling out,' to shove her by main force over the bars that connected the deeper waters, which were seldom more than four feet. Gradually the mangrove belt disappeared, giving way to wild bananas, dwarf flabellate palms (*P. spinosa?*), the calamus, with black prickly stem and long green lines like snakes, and various wild fruit trees, the African hog-plum (*Spondias Birrea*), and others that not inaptly simulated cherries. Contrasting with the deep, dark, dense foliage of the bush, the water-lily of virgin white—the nymphæa, which ancient Egypt borrowed from the Hindu and then allowed to die out—floated upon its cradle of emerald green, and, in embayed places, formed dwarf prairies that rose and fell as the paddles plunged into the water. Rushes and enormous grasses of the lightest leek tint in

places secured the soil and afforded a third shade of colour. After so much of *Rhizophoræ* and *Bru-guieræ*, the banks became to us sylvan glades, with avenues like those of the old French post road. They were crowned in places with trees whose towering stature would shame the giants of Bushy Park : upon them the most ambitious of schoolboys might look with despair, and from their topmost branches the birds gaze down with perfect safety at the levelled shot-gun. Here and there a curl of blueish smoke argued a fishing village in the bush. We had been told that the creek was two miles long, and after two hours and three-quarters of hard work, five or six miles in space, we began to wonder if these truly German *meile* were ever coming to an end. Presently, however, the sides widened farther out, the depth became less, we sighted, in front of us, a grove even larger than its neighbours, and then we emerged into the River Ogun, which event we duly inaugurated with a ceremony which I will classically describe as a libation to Bacchus.

The Ogun,\* or Abeokuta River, is said to rise in

\* There are three several meanings to this word, and the Egbas often drop the nasal terminating *n* which is pronounced by neighbouring peoples, e. g. *Ilori* for *Ilorin*. *Ögün* is the P.N. of the river, *Ógún* is a god—some writers, however, as Mr. Bowen, spell both these words *Ógún*, writing the river and the god the same, and making *Ögün* signify an army or battle—and *Ógún* is a charm, or medicine.

a latitudinal range of mountains whose northern watershed is to the Kwara.\* The source is supposed to be three thousand feet above sea level, and the upper part of the bed is rendered useless by rocks. Like other streams in this mythological land, a deity,† or rather a god, the younger brother of the divinity Shango, is attached to it. The Ogun fell into the hands of the Egbas, or Abeokutans, about 1852, and free communication with Lagos has added greatly to their influence and their development.

As yet, however, Yoruba has but little inland navigation. It is well fitted for tramways, hard wood being everywhere procurable and the land level. Until their day comes, the rivers should be utilized, and the first step ought to be a survey. The Oshun, in the Ijebu country, near Ekpe, extends, according to some authorities, within nine hours' march of Ibadan; others declare that it cannot be navigated by canoes; others, that the people have a superstition which permits boats to cross, but not to ascend or to descend it. West of the Ogun is the Ota Creek, and

\* I propose for the future to call the whole of the great artery of tropical Africa north of the equator by its classical name Niger, and Nun from the ocean to its confluence; the eastern fork, Binue, not Chadda, or Tsadda—a term based on the false theory that it flows out of Lake Chad or Tsad—and the western branch, Kwara.

† Similarly, Oya, the Niger, or more properly the Kwara, the Oshun, and the Obba, are the wives of Shango; concerning whom see Chapter IV.

beyond this the Yerewa, leading to the market-towns of Okeadon and Ado — a water-line as yet little known, but said to have thirty miles clear for canoes. Beyond this again, and more important still, is the Okpara, which enters the Lagoon between Porto Novo and Badagry.\*

Father Ogun, at the confluence of the Agboi Creek, is a goodly stream, little less than one hundred yards broad, deep, smooth, sluggish, and scarcely affected by the tide. Here it aspires to the honours of what the Africans call 'a ship made of iron, and moved by fire,' *i. e.*, a steamer—if possible flat-bottomed. We were all deceived in our expectations. We had pictured to ourselves—heaven knows why—a clear and rapid river running through a high and dry land, with tall and rocky marge. We found a broad, placid surface, milky with potters' clay, and low banks, whose last watermark showed a considerable fall, bearing walls of verdure broken by the tall white trunks of various unknown trees, with creeks, landing-places, and hollows, like bowers, between. Presently, however, we saw rises of reddish earth, here favourite sites for settlements. We passed two villages, Orichá and Isheri; the latter, which is con-

\* The Yerewa is called by the people 'Ado river,' and in our maps Jefferson river. The Okpara is better known as the Ajirá creek or Carr river, and is about fourteen miles east of Porto Novo.



siderable, was backed by plantains and fronted by canoes. We were told by a negro, habited in European toilette, that a better nighting-place lay close ahead, and we somewhat reluctantly left Isheri behind. It was, as suspicion suggested it would be, dark night before we passed the landing-place, and, guided by the sounds of song and drum, set foot within the next collection of huts—Igaon. Our day's journey had been eight hours, halts not included, and the distance covered must have been twenty-five to twenty-six miles.

It is hardly worth while to describe these places; straggling settlements, surrounded by bush on all sides except the river, which they overlook from banks more or less elevated, they compare favourably with many a fishing village in England, and are more comfortable than some manufacturing townlets in Lancashire. Igaon is subject to the *Alake* or chief of Abeokuta, and numbers perhaps two hundred souls. It is well known as being the terminus of river navigation in the 'dries;' beyond which travellers must journey through the wet and feverish bush.

Ascending a rugged clay bank, about one hundred and fifty feet high, we entered the village, and found entertainment at the house of Mr. Johnson, a Sierra Leone Egbanized Christian black, habited in white

man's clothing, excepting coat and shoes. He expressed in a little English his pleasure at seeing us, but his manner was at variance with his words. We presently discovered the reason of his expatriation to Igaon, which he explained to be for facility of buying palm-oil — half a dozen summonses were awaiting him at Lagos. However that may be, he made us comfortable in his verandah and upon the hut floor, where, after a copious feed—sitting in a boat is most appetizing work—we and Sancho, despite the tom-tom and the clammy cold, slept like the Seven Idlers of Ephesus, and Kitmir their dog. In the morning all was settled with a dollar; Mr. Johnson was satisfied, 'and so,' I hope, 'was Mrs. Johnson.'

The second day saw us afoot at 5 A.M., and after the initiatory preserved chocolate, called cocoa—most valuable of tins on these occasions—we found ourselves afloat at the end of another hour. A dense and dripping fog from the river almost concealed the water, and this was a never-failing feature of the morning, which during the day yielded to something worse. The irregularity of the seasons is not more conspicuous in Eastern than in Western Africa. The tornados and rains of the year should now cease, whereas the land still thirsts, and the storms are apparently setting in. Under cover of the mist, we



passed on the right hand the shallow Akisa Creek, which, joining the Ogun River at Isheri of the Ijebu Remo, islandizes the situation of Igaon. There we began to suffer from an annoyance that lasted till the end of the journey—numerous fishing-ropes of calamus and reeds stretching from bank to bank. Five or six lengths, joined with a shroud-knot, are secured to trees or posts on the bank, and are stayed with stout stakes about mid-stream. Exceedingly tough and strong, they serve to attach wicker cones, traps for fish; and at times some elderly and idle African Izaak Walton lashes his canoe to them, and squats upon his hunkers, with an umbrella hat on his head, peaceably bobbing for the smallest bite, like those, to me, inexplicable beings in punts who find excitement in hooking minnows upon the Thames. Where these ropes are thick, boats can be lifted over them with the oar, without catching the rudder: near the mouth of the Ogun they are small, and cause accidents. The other way is to shoot them, passing under either end—no convenient thing when the rush of the water is like a mill-race, and where there is often not quite room to row. At the present season the central sag is a foot under water; in the ‘dries,’ laden canoes will pass beneath it.

On this day and the next we enjoyed a fine opportunity of studying African river scenery, so impres-

sive at first, and, until the eye becomes accustomed to it, so greatly diversified. But presently it waxes palling and monotonous: it is the face of an Irish beauty—every feature faultless, too faultless, and the whole expressionless and inanimate. The trees were externally of three aspects,—the feathery, the densely foliated, and the creeper-clad. In the stream lay logs, snags above and below, and sawyers dancing upon the wavelet; here a vast trunk, like some dead plesiosaurus cumbered the bed, causing slack water to leeward; there stood a stub, upon which baby alligators stretched and sunned themselves; here a fallen tree, supported by the stream, had shot up fresh shoots, themselves trees—the very fishing-ropes had in places put forth *bourgeons*; there a green-robed patriarch was beginning to totter upon the water-mined bank that showed a cave beneath. The wild plantain, with wind-torn leaves, bent its purple flowers earthwards. The palms were of many kinds, the cocoa-nut, the palmetto, the wine-palm (*R. vinifera*), and chiefly the spiny flabellate species, which haunted the lower levels, whilst the others waved their tall plumed heads on the higher ground. The date and the *ronnier*, or *Palmyra nobilis*, were not yet seen; they are signs of an improvement in the climate. The ratan, however, grew everywhere. We detected, I thought, a real bamboo, which, however, must be

the timber, being weak, demands support. Many of these ceibas were intensely green and densely leaved; others were bare and twiggy; for here, as in other lands, the seasons affect what appear to be non-deciduous trees, and not a few bore what a European would hardly expect from so large a growth, a spangling of beautiful blossoms, white as the snow on Camaroons. The same may be said of the bigonia, locally called 'tulip-tree,'—Who would be prepared to see, pinned to those sombre, yew-like forms, flowers like tiger-lilies, and at a distance looking as if red-hot cinders had been scattered upon them? The lianas were especially eccentric, varying from the thickness of twine to cable; here straight, there arched; now twisted by the wind into cordage; then forming a 'true lover's knot,' dangling in the air, or rooted to earth; here they depended, from cords as fine as the chorda filum, or dead man's ropes, gourd-like over the voyager's head; there they strangled some Laocoon of the woods with a desperate gripe, 'the Scotchman hugging the Creole;' whilst the sarsaparilla vine clung tenderly to the trunk, as though she loved it. Towering and climbing herbaceous plants, formed by successive accretions, surrounded a mother stem with thick vegetable masses,—mysterious columns, so covered that the eye could not distinguish the support: these immense growths

hung their mantles of parasite, with ribs, folds, and flounces, from the shoulders to the feet of the tallest trees; their middle was adorned with the bright blossoms of sundry convolvuli, cucurbitaceæ, asclepiadæ, and the white-flowered chailletta; and they supplied the watery maze with arches and ogives, bowers, and fairy retreats, showing the arabesques and the delicate tracery of a natural Alhambra. The grotesques were somewhat like the tree-ferns of Fernando Po, finely pinnated, and flaunting angular tufts upon the summit of the thinnest stems, often thirty feet high. In one place a palm had raised itself upon the trunk of a dead tree, and showed every root to the air, as it drew sustenance from its support. In another, where the parent's head had been struck off by the lightning, the lateral branches, extending horizontally, had put forth a dozen fresh shoots at right angles. In a third, a giant with blasted top and thunder-rifted stem, had been hurled down by the breaking tornado, and pitched, branches forwards, upon the earth. Mr. Bowen asserts that in Egba-land he has never seen a tree that has suffered from the thunderbolt. I believe, however, accidents to be, as one might expect, of constant occurrence, and, moreover, that the palms are peculiarly liable.\* Almost every

\* At Sierra Leone there is the same belief touching the monkey-bread, or calabash.

large growth had its little family of orchids snugly nestling in its arms, and in not a few the topmost boughs were bearded like old goats or Israelites. Nor were flowers absent from the scene. The glorious nymphæa was there, and the lower bush was gemmed with the ipomæa, and a large white flower, said to be selenitic, and opening only to the moon.

The denizens of the bush were worthy of it. The red-grey polly (*P. erythacus*), the only parrot seen near the Ogun, sat higher than popinjay ever did, whistling what sounded at that distance a mellow note, and looking a distinct refusal to put the kettle on. She possibly divined our intentions: parrot-soup and monkey-fry are not to be despised. The wild bird is a far finer animal than the tame, but you must be careful to remove the skin. The gay crested touraco (*Corythix*), with its jay-like manners, beautiful and harsh-voiced as the Maids of Athens, aired its gorgeous coat in the sunbeams upon the tree-top; the goatsucker whirred, the ibis screamed amongst the branches, and the Malabar pheasant, or rather cuckoo, flitted into the darker shades. The lively little marten was surpassed only by the king-fisher; the yellow-billed blackbird sought something to fight; the Whydah finch (*Vidua Paradisiaca*) looked as pretty and behaved as shrewishly as her featherless sister ever could; and the oriole, all *rouge et noir*

in strata, lit up the shade like a touch of vermilion in the normal buoy that occupies the normal corner of a sea-piece. The nest of the latter bird (*Sylvia pensilis*) is a purse, which, swinging in the wind, is safe from the mischievous monkey: it may have suggested the idea of a hammock. The Guinea-fowl called 'come-and-eat-me' from the brake; rock-doves of great beauty cooed hoarsely on higher grounds; the bittern sprang frightened from the bank; and lower down, the savoury stripe-throated lapwing (*Vanellus strigillatus*, the 'kiki dodo' of the Gold Coast), with two yellow flaps of dark-lined skin springing from the base of the beak, walked the sand-banks in pairs, or rose loudly clattering in the air. On the larger river-islets we saw grisly turkey-buzzards sunning their expanded plumes, mixed with paddy-birds and Senegal crows (*C. leuconotus*), the latter impudently pursuing and pecking at them; whilst brown kites, the Indian chil (*F. chilla*), stood up to their thighs in the cool wave. Once, and once only, a flight of the fine cullum crane passed within shot over our heads; and often in the blue empyrean black speckles, like *muscae volitantes*, told us that all was not desert there. The water-elephant, as the hippopotamus is called upon the Niger, has long been killed out of the Ogun River, and its stream contains nothing but fish and fish-eaters.



About 8 A.M. we halted for an hour and a half to breakfast at Illagu. There is little of roughing in this style of travel. The fire was soon lighted, the teapot was boiled, the eggs and 'Europe mutton' were fried, the table, a gangway between two breakers; the chairs—boxes and canteen—were duly disposed; and after a somewhat long delay, such as may be excused at the beginning of a journey, when twenty minutes would merit chastisement at the end, a pleasant picnic was the result. The Krumen found a dessert for their meal of pork and biscuit in a species of cardamom—not quite our old friend, *Amomum granum Paradisi*—whose aromatic seeds they chewed with pleasure. A mishap, however, befel us at Illagu. After starting, we missed the dog Sancho, and we sent back a message requesting that he might be forwarded without delay to the nearest village. He was a most amiable animal; when tied up, he barked and howled most musically all the way, and when loose he insisted upon springing overboard, stopping the boat, and exciting different emotions amongst those in it. A St. Helena pointer—he pointed even at butterflies—and he was just recovering from an attack of mange. Of course we made on the way down all inquiries for so pleasant a companion, but we had to mourn his loss. 'The captain,' his master, was sorely discomfited.

We then resumed our way up the now nut-brown river, garnished with its various green and white boled trees—the current running against us  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 knots an hour. Though fanned by a gentle breath from the north, there was a decided sting in the sun, and an overkept leg of mutton in the third locker made us unjustly accuse Africa of unsavoury smells. At 11.30 A.M., the effeminate ‘pull-a-boys’ showing symptoms of fatigue, we put into the high right bank—the land becomes dry and gravelly, already showing fragments of quartz—beaconed by the little village of Baragu, whose appearance, however, was the reverse of novel. Under the circumstances, a little ‘gooseberry’ was perfectly justifiable, and we could hardly be so churlish as to refuse a few sips of trade ‘fire-water’ to our hosts, whose spreading palaver-tree—the local *bentang*—afforded us a seat in the cool shade rained down by its horizontal boughs. The people evinced an exemplary amount of gratitude, and a fondness for the material quite curious; even the small boys never balked at a wine-glassful. All seemed comfortable and in good condition; they had sheep and goats, ducks, fowls, and pigeons, whilst the fetish-house showed signs of fresh white-wash. The women consider elongated bosoms a charm, and even the men show flaccid mammary glands. This ‘bestial exposure of the sacred part of



woman's form,' as some term it, first disappears permanently amongst the Moslem converts from heathenry. The good-wives had little remarkable, save a plug of pipe-stem-shaped coral worn in the left nostril: it may serve the purpose of the Indian nose-ring. Many of them wore their hair upstanding in little tufts of wool, which coiffure, says a German traveller, 'made them look more like horned fiends than human beings.' Some of the tattoos were painfully ugly—lines of scars and dreadful knobs and marbles raised in altissimo rilievo by some encaustic process. Severe scalds were common; and one woman had her back adorned with what appeared to be an imitation in thickened skin of gouts and streamlets of blood. Many of the children were marked from head to foot with little gridirons of cuts, dyed dark blue by means of native antimony. They are all more or less exomphalous, yet they will grow up like their sires—remarkably sharp when under puberty,—that epoch, as amongst the Hindus, seeming to addle their brains. They are placed for discipline under some old and trusty hand, who compels them by force of stripes to industry; they amused themselves by remarking on the sly, 'Oibo akiti agba—The white man is an old ape.' The African will say of the European, 'He looks like folks,' and the answer will often be, 'No, he don't.' Thus we

observe, that whilst the Caucasian doubts the humanity of the Hamite, the latter repays the compliment in kind.

This race—the Egbado or Lower Egba—is distinctly negroid, without showing the characteristics of the full-blooded negro. The skin is of a dark dilute copper, sometimes black, whilst several of the chiefs are almost light coloured. When the eyelashes and brows are not plucked, the eye is fine; and those who hold, like Aurora Floyd, that ‘the glorious light of a pair of magnificent optics makes a divinity, a Circe,’ can here see the flattest contradiction to this opinion. The lips are not thick, but the gums are blue, and the teeth are by no means improved by the process of chewing. One cannot, however, but be struck by the contrast between the prognathous, chinless, retreating face, simulating the Simiadaë, and the admirable forms and figures of the people, who compare most favourably with those of the xanthous complexion. Their diet is poor, their climate poorer; calisthenics are unknown; they are not boxers or runners, like the people of Nupe; and even gymnastics, except tumbling, are little practised. What can then account for the beauty of their conformation?

For my part I must attribute it to the almost invariable custom which the savage man possesses,

and which his civilized brother abandons. Amongst ancient races, such as the Hebrew and the Persian, it was the rule of religion for the husband to separate from the wife during the period of gestation and lactation. A modified monogamy amongst the Greeks and Romans introduced abuses which the nations of the barren north, especially those of Europe, who cannot afford a plurality of wives, have perpetuated. On the coast and in the interior of Africa the instinctive law of nature is almost universally obeyed, and the people are necessarily polygamous. Speaking of Mandenga-land, Mungo Park says, 'Three years' nursing is not uncommon; and during this period the husband devotes his whole attention to his other wives.' In Hausa, as in Yoruba, the period of lactation extends to the third year.\* The West African and the Kafirs of the southern continent practise this abstinence, and prove in their persons the beneficial effects of it. Europeans, violating the order of the animal creation, lay to their souls the flattering unction that they are the largest and the strongest of races, forgetting that by conforming to this African custom they might become both larger and stronger. Besides, it would

\* In Northern Europe ablactation begins when the milk teeth appear, between the sixth and the twelfth month; near the Mediterranean, however, this is by no means the case.

necessitate polygyny\*—that is to say, a love of offspring warmer than the sexual feeling. The Mormons have tried it with success; and to the excellent letter of Mrs. Belinda Pratt† I must refer the reader for more information upon this momentous subject than could be conveyed in these pages.

On the Ogun River we had ample opportunities of forming judgment concerning

‘The naked negro panting on the Line.’

I have travelled amongst wild tribes from the North American Indians to the Bhils of Hindostan, but I never saw such an utter absence of what we conventionally term modesty as amongst these Egbas. The women will stand up and bathe publicly in the river, without a vestige of dress or shame; and the niggerlings are as much clad as the Promutians and the sons of the Coral Islands. Can this be innocence, as some think? or is it the mere absence of all ideas of propriety? I confess myself unable to decide.

Resuming our task, after twenty minutes’ halt,

\* When the late king, Eyo Honesty, of Old Calabar river, resolved to adopt the single-wife system, the chosen one determined on a certain occasion to act as if she had been an unit in the normal score. Mrs. W——, the wife of one of the Scotch Presbyterian missionaries was directed—when the husband laid his complaint before them—to call upon the queen, and to bring her majesty to a finer sense of her conjugal duties. The labour of love was, however, I believe in vain.

† Quoted *in extenso* in ‘The City of the Saints.’

we noticed a gradual change in the scenery. The bush thinned out, the trees shrank in size and showed boles rather brown than white, and the banks of clay and stone gained in size. The number of fishing-ropes denoted the vicinity of a village, and in shooting one of them the 'doctor' managed to be knocked overboard. At 1.10 P.M. we halted for an hour and a quarter to refect at Obba. The Krumen were sadly slow, loitering about munching ship-biscuit and lighting their clays before they thought of putting our yam-pot on the fire. At Obba signs of improvement were observed. The landing-place had earth steps and a kind of railing; the village interior showed neat fields of tania or koko (*C. esculenta*),\* and the remnant of a cotton gin and press—bearing, of course, the mark of Manchester—lay near one of the houses. The people, carrying fly whisks, assembled round us under the usual tree, and in the best of humours begged tobacco, and drank our tea with a relish, whilst the boys, for our especial delectation, threw somersets† in the air.

\* Some travellers, for instance, Dr. Vogel, of the first Niger expedition, write the word 'cocoa,' which renders the confusion of a vegetable with a shrub and a tree inevitable to the English reader. I shall therefore write the vegetable 'koko,' the shrub 'cacao,' and the tree 'cocoa.' Dr. Clarke, of Sierra Leone, mentions three kinds of koko: firstly, the West Indian, or English; secondly, 'country koko,' acrid, and affecting the throat; and thirdly, 'water koko,' said to be a poisonous root.

† An exercise known as Taketi, pronounced 'Tackety,' after the style

After leaving Obba the southern sky began to bank up, threatening a repetition of yesterday's tornado. Presently a stream of cold wind poured through the tepid air, reminding me of a phenomenon not a little to be feared upon the Zanzibar Seas and the Tanganyika Lake. But though thunder growled gruffly, and the well-known haze filled the atmosphere, and the warm sensation, attributed, I believe, to development of ozone, warned us of what might be, the only result was a dry storm, for whose obscurity we had reason to be thankful. The doctor exercised himself upon parrots, lapwings, and paddy birds; Commander Bedingfield shot a crocodile upon a tree stump—the favourite basking-place—and the Krumen lamented being unable to secure the prize. Its gall is here, as in most other parts of Africa, held to be a deadly poison; in some places a man with such medicine in his possession would be sure to lose his life. Dr. Clarke of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast administered it to a dog in soup and beef; the only effect, as might be expected, was emetism. There is probably something of fetish in

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of 'rickety.' When the white man hears in the streets Jo and Taketi, he will understand that the infant population are requesting him to dance and tumble for their delectation. It is said that an Egbalized Englishman, lately proceeding up the river, was seized by the Abeokutans, and compelled to 'Tackety' for their amusement, whilst they looked on and drank his rum.



the idea ; and similarly, the Hindus still firmly believe in the poisonous properties of diamond powder, apart from any mechanical action. In some of the river reaches there was hardly any tide, and we soon passed our first sand-bank, arguing increased shallowness in the bed. On the right bank the land became open and gravelly ; the left side, however, was still thickly wooded. At 4.15 P.M. we halted at Mabban, the place named for our nighting. It was a miserable village, surrounded by an almost impenetrable bush ; and the emaciated population, showing elephantiasis and scars of cutaneous disease, evidenced the unhealthiness of the situation. The chief was absent, but we easily obtained permission to occupy the fetish house, a square box seven feet by seven, open only towards the verandah, and garnished with pots and basins of crockery ware, with an altar, upon which stood three little wooden doll-gods, far more bestial than human, save that they wore proportional cables of beads upon their necks and wrists. Besides these Penates there were none but ourselves. In the adjoining quarters the absent chief's three wives—one light skinned, and by no means unattractive—slept together under a canopy of thick matting, hung by strings from the roof, and acting as mosquito bars. We managed to avoid Mabban on our return : the night passed there was one of sultry, sweltering heat ; dur-

ing day the subjects of King Beelzebub fed upon us, and after dark the Maringouins sang a doleful ditty, which was drowned only by the occasional yelping of negro babyhood. In the distance the long, loud cries of the Pataku, or bush-dog—a small species of hyæna, well known on the Gold Coast, but dangerous only to pigs and children—reminded me of the jackal, the coyote, and the Australian ‘native dog.’ It throws its voice out, at one minute appearing close by, then a mile off. The only ferocious animal hereabouts to be found is the leopard, which is as dangerous as his congener in Eastern Africa; and a man’s arm dangling from the hammock side is very likely to be taken off somewhere about the elbow. Our run that day had been six hours, say eighteen miles.

At 5.30 A.M. on Thursday, the 31st, we set out in a spitting rain, with a cold and heavy mist, which, attached to the river, drifted past us as we broke through it like thin cloud. On a sandspit we saw signs of native travellers in the shape of matted sheds, and we vainly inquired for the interpreter Williams, who had preceded us for his own purposes. There were also bundles of firewood, tabooed from the prigger by grass-crowned canes planted around them, thus forming a strong fetish. After an hour and a half we ran into a little creek on the left bank, and disembarked at Ojegu, a village differing from its neigh-



hours in no wise save that it was somewhat more uniform. It has, as usual in Africa, a bazar or market, where women squatted before baskets under a tree, and sold beads, thread, and similar utilities, besides various edibles, of which, at this hour, the favourite is ekko,\* answering in these lands to our tea and bread and butter.

The breakfast occupied us an hour and three-quarters, still showing that the party was not half in training, and we resumed rowing through sunshine tempered by sprinkling rain. We passed the mouth of the Iro River, a considerable influent from the west, and shortly afterwards, on the east, appeared the village of Molokokki, where the river banks were of rough sandstone. Beyond it are ledges of black rock, forming a projecting point, which by compression doubles the velocity of the stream. Lime was nowhere seen, nor does it, I am informed, exist in this part of Yoruba. Large canoes lumbered the river, some laden with ten bales of cotton. Making our mooring at Ajido, a knot of three hovels, we slept upon waterproofs under the bush shade. A little

\* Ekko—pronounced ekkau—is maize ground very fine, steeped in water till subacid, when the grosser particles are removed with the hand—they fatten poultry well—and the residue, boiled and eaten warm, resembles the Scottish oatmeal sowens. If kept till cold it hardens into a paste the consistency of blanc-mange; it becomes a cooling and nutritious diet, and plantain-leaved triangles of this article may be seen in every market throughout Yoruba. At Sierra Leone it is called aggidi.

beyond this place the stream bifurcates, forming in the centre a clump of grassy bush. Our way lay through the western branch, and its channel—the current ran swiftly—did not extend eighteen yards in width, till presently the two streams are anastomosed above the islet. Again, a tornado-like cloud worked up its way against the southerly wind, and once more it proved itself that blessing of all blessings, a dry storm. Passing the village of Okpuba, we remarked that the groves of trees, scattered upon banks some twenty feet high, would be charming if the underlying bush could be cleared. Presently cultivation showed itself, the tall tops of the maize waving gracefully in the wind. At 4.30 P.M., we sighted our terminus, the large village of Takpana—pronounced Tapanā, the Egbā *kp* and *gb* not being naturally articulable to English organs. Our day's row had been eight hours, but the Krumen were breaking down, and the distance was probably not more than twenty-two miles.

Ascending the bank, and walking through the first straggling village, where the turkey-buzzard is the only nightman, we found on the outskirts an uninhabited house in decent condition, and there we were installed by the civil old chief. He visited us repeatedly, gave us every assistance in the matters of wood and water, nor did he disdain to join us in a

social glass. The children, and not a few of the adults, spent the evening over a game known in Ashanti as 'worra,' in Sierra Leone 'wari,' in East Africa 'báo,' and here 'ayo.' It is played upon a rude kind of 'table,' a solid oblong board, with a little handle at one end, and down the length run two parallel rows of six little cups. The game is played by distributing counters, one by one, into each cup, beginning from the starting-place whence they were taken; and if a single counter be found, it is removed from the board. In the 'men' I at once recognized the *Guilandina Bonduc*, so well known in eastern medicine, and used for other purposes at Zanzibar and in India. The game, we presumed, was for love, gambling being prohibited by 'Ogboni law,' which all obey, or ought to obey. Night sped pleasantly in the new lodgings, which were comparatively free from mosquitoes and other vermin; perhaps, also, the last two *veilles* had made our skins proof against them. The list of small tenantry is somewhat extensive in these huts. There are flies and fleas, centipedes—ugly, but little feared—harmless spiders, not like the tarantula of Mendi city, west of Gallinas; large, black, and green scorpions, sometimes six inches long, and a yellow species, smaller, but fiercer. The ants are numerous and interesting; they would amply repay the labour of collection. There is ota, 'the

stinger,' who is particularly hostile to the bug-a-bug, or termes, and especially there is ijálu, 'the fighter that makes man go,'—in old Anglo-African called 'driver,' because an army of these little wretches, a riband of small red lines-men, flanked by a light infantry of black warriors, with bull-dog heads, easily clears the kitchen. On the Gold Coast there are horrible tales of the fatigued huntsman being set upon and murdered by them in his sleep; and in the case of a sick man such an event is greatly to be feared.\*

The next morning saw us *en route* at 4.45 A.M., through a fog that not a little interfered with the flying survey in which we were engaged. The open earth-banks of the river—here less than fifty yards broad—are well raised, showing tall Guinea grass and plots of cultivation, with a South African shrubbery, which not a little reminded my companion—a

\* 'The larger ants have been known to strip bare to the bone the carcase of a cow in a single night. And Mr. Abeon informed me, that he was once reduced to that state of debility by a severe attack of fever, as to be so wholly helpless, that the ants attacked him in the night, when lying in his bed; and that if, fortunately, one of his domestics had not awoke, they would have devoured him before morning, so incapable was he of calling for help or struggling with his assailants. At the time he related this anecdote to me, I was confined by indisposition in the very room where the circumstance occurred, and did not feel very comfortable at the prospect of being perhaps eaten alive.'—Capt. JOHN ADAMS, p. 68. After this, I need hardly point out to the collector of natural history the easiest way of cleaning a skeleton in Africa.

quondam member of the unfortunate Zambezi expedition—of that splendid but useless stream, which promised, with giant might of humbug, to supply, besides quinine,\* ‘cotton, indigo, and other raw material to any amount.’ I say unfortunate, for 5000*l.* per annum, a sum sufficient to defray with due economy the expenses of half a dozen expeditions, has been literally thrown away upon this remote corner of South-Eastern Africa. A vile bar—there is no worse on the coast—a shifting channel, shallow water, dangerous rocks, and a labyrinth of shoals and sandbanks, with numerous small islands, considerably detract from the chances that ‘this noble river is capable of being made a great highway for commerce, civilization, and Christianity.’ The very fact that it is only approachable through the possessions of another power, who has every right to impose any conceivable export and import duties, ought alone to have been considered sufficient obstacles. Add to this, the sparseness of the population, the villany of the natives, more especially the ‘faithful Makololo,’ and the absence of all conveyance, which, with the length of the marches, must prevent the transport of even ivory, except on the shoulders of slaves

\* Dr. Haran, of H.M.S. ‘Brisk,’ was kind enough to show me a fine specimen of a cinchona bark, procured at Madagascar. Dr. Livingstone, however, is supposed to have seen quinine for the first time at Kew Gardens.

destined for the coast markets, being remunerative. An unhappy and ill-judged mission has been the result of the labour of years; and, as all who knew the subject foresaw from the beginning, it came to a wretched and untimely end.\* Bishop and chaplain, missionaries and their wives and children, all perished miserably. Ships and boats have been lost—worse still, the blood of the natives has been shed by those who went to save them—and the unfortunate promoter of the scheme has suffered even more than he deserved, for want of moral courage to tell ‘the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.’† Cotton, sugar, and indigo flourish, it will be remembered, in Western Africa, at one-third of the distance which divides Liverpool from Kilimani; the quality is better, the country is more settled, and the people are far less unmanageable; yet it is my sincere belief—founded on facts which will appear in the course of this narrative—that years must elapse before even Western Africa can supply with cotton the mills of

\* On my return to England in the spring of 1859, the Rev. Mr. Monk, who afterwards took a prominent part in the Oxford and Cambridge Missions, honoured me by asking my opinion upon the subject, and I will appeal to that gentleman if all that was told him in reply did or did not come to pass.

† To make my meaning plainer, I must state my belief that the great South African explorer—whose geographical feats needed no missionary foil—has owned privately to friends that he never made a Kafir convert, and consequently that he could hardly have expected to make one.



England for one week of work in the twelve months. These may be new views—I am convinced that they are true views.

The River Ogun was shoaling rapidly. A bar connected diagonally every salient and re-entering angle, and frequent grounding now made the way tedious. We were doubtful as regards arrival: two days ago Mr. Johnson of Igaon told us that we should land on the morrow, and on this morning some named noon, others evening, as the time of our reaching the terminus. When asking the natives touching distances, we had but two replies: 'Too much far,' *i.e.* half the day; and 'Not so far,' *i.e.* something under. At 8 A.M. we halted for breakfast at Moroko, another thatch and mud village perched upon the sandstone bank, shaded by tall trees and surrounded by bush. The people were as usual most friendly; they assigned us a place in a large verandah, and they kept us company during the meal, after which all joined in a social glass of gin. To the children, however, raspberry vinegar was given as a substitute, the mothers also tasted it, and—it did not bite—a slight shade of disappointment might, methought, have been traced in the feminine and juvenile countenances. As we bade adieu dancing had begun, and we were followed out of the village with the song of farewell.

Proceeding with our journey at 10 A.M., we passed, on the right bank, sundry flourishing settlements. At Awoloko we saw women sitting at sale, men stowing puncheons of oil in canoes by sinking and baling out, cotton bales heaped up near the landing-place, and other signs of trade. The people flocked down to gaze, and the children clapped their hands. Beyond it lay Akolugo, on a tall bank, with a ledge of rock below, and a little further was a ferry, where crowds were crossing \*—amongst them we remarked a tall negress, musket-armed and clad in the simple costume of the Dahoman ‘Amazons,’ as they are ridiculously called. The shallowness of the stream caused us even more trouble than before, and the crew were frequently obliged to tumble out, which they did like cats, as if afraid of wetting their legs. Presently we saw white faces in a canoe that bore down upon us; they proved to be Messrs. Wilcoxon and Roper of the Church Mission Society, who had kindly ridden out to guide the party. A few strokes of the oars placed us at the landing-place, ‘Agbameya.’ This is the great ferry, the passage between the lands of the Egbas and the Egbados, or Lower

\* Ferries are profitable investments in these lands. My factotum, Selim Aga, tells me of one over the Niger, near Rabba, now reopened down the river by Masaba, *i.e.* Mohammed Saba, King of Nupe, who charges 1000 cowries there = 1*s.* 6*d.*, for each traveller in the caravan, 1000 cowries for each tusk, and sundry fees for horses and mules.



Egbas, and the terminus of the land-routes from Lagos and Badagry. It showed a market-place, canoes in numbers, a few mat sheds for shade, a dwarf grove of papaws (*C. papaya*), and the normal crowd of natives. Here we left the two gigs, with orders for their conveyance by the Krumen to Aro, the upper and higher landing-place, five or six miles distant from the lower port, Agbameya, and we took leave of water-travel for some days. Beyond Aro, rocks and rapids render Father Ogun impracticable even to canoes. Those who would cross it must take to their bosoms huge calabashes, which, like the earthen pots of the Indus, contain air enough to float two hundred to three hundred pounds. The ferryman, swimming alongside and pushing the floats, claims as his due two hundred cowries.

Our ascent of the Ogun River occupied us four days, from the 29th of October to the 1st of November inclusive, and during this time we made about sixty-four miles.\*

\* Our itinerary makes the distance from Lagos to the Agboi Creek 2 hours' row = 8 miles. From the creek to the Ogun River, 3 h. 25 m. = 7 miles. From the juncture to Igaon, 3 h. 15 m. = 9 miles. Total of first day, 26 miles.

From Igaon to Mabban, second day, 6 hours = 18 miles. \*

From Mabban to Takpana, third day, 8 hours = 22 miles.

From Takpana to Agbameya, 3 h. 30 m. = 9 miles. From Agbameya to Abeokuta, 6 miles. Total of fourth day, 15 miles.

Thus the grand total from Lagos to Abeokuta would be 81 miles, of

which 64 were upon the Ogun River, and the direct distance between the cities might be reduced to 48 miles. Mr. Bowen, however, makes the journey by river from Abeokuta to Lagos 90 miles.

Abeokuta has been laid down by Mr. Townsend in N. lat.  $7^{\circ} 8'$ , and E. long.  $3^{\circ} 20'$ ; the height is about 567 feet by barometer above sea level, whilst the mountains at the head of the Ogun River rise, it is believed, to 3000 feet.

## CHAPTER II.

### ENTRÉE INTO ABEOKUTA.

BEFORE entering the great metropolis upon so solemn an occasion, it was necessary to remove the soil of four days' travel. Houses there were none; so, claiming the protection of the tall maize, we 'cleaned ourselves,' literally, not sneeringly, and dressed as rapidly as possible. We found 'beasts awaiting us, wretched 'tattoos,' cat-hammed wretches, rats, which people here impudently call horses, all skin and bone, very like asses, ten hands high, with goose rump and hanging head, skeletons which a strong man could easily pull over, requiring, like the old Irish post-horse, a quarter of an hour's flogging before they can be got out of a walk, and ever ready, like Paddy on the rare occasions when he is not sober, to fight at a moment's notice. In the latter point the ponies of Yoruba may compare with those of Maharatta-land; their tempers are peculiarly

bad, as indeed one must expect from all low-bred animals, quadruped as well as biped.

Leaving Agbameya at burning noon, we rode through thick bush, here and there broken with patches of cultivation. The soil was sandy and sterile, here and there showing water-rolled pebbles of the drift period—doubtless nothing but eight months of tropical rain and the fiery heat of the sun prevent its being desert as Sindh. There were, however, fine crops of yam and chestnut-like koko. Here also, as in Unyamwezi, the people are fond of planting together several *semences*, especially beans, maize, and manioc: the land is carefully prepared with the hoe, and dwarf heaps, in whose summit a hole is drilled, receive the seed. This season's crop is the second; it was planted in August—the first being in March and April—and the harvest will be reserved for seed: when it fails a famine is often the result. The Yorubas have a tradition that maize comes from the East; it was possibly imported, together with millet, by the Phœnicians under Hanno (B.C. 600), who could not have grown wheat near the tropical seaboard. As everywhere in Africa, some of the fields are carefully kept, whilst the others are wretchedly weed-grown. Happily for the people, the rains, which this year have been scant, are now setting in. Amongst the shrubs the African mari-

gold was conspicuous, there was a pretty little blue flower said to close at 2 P.M., and there were a few odoriferous plants which made the bush not unpleasant. *En revanche*, we passed many a spot whose characteristic odour was that of a corpse. Perhaps in some cases it may have proceeded from death: the Egbas cast the bodies of slaves, poor strangers, and travellers into the bush, from superstition as well as from pure idleness. Generally, however, it came not from death, but from life: throughout this part of Africa there is a large black ant—the chhungu uvundo of Zanzibar—whose feter is overpowering. I remarked a large pod, which on pressure discharged a yellowish milk: the people rub this juice on the hair to expel its surplus population, and of the plant they make a fine fibre for fishing-lines.

The easily-made route was for the most part a mere bridle-path, kept in tolerable condition by the tramping of the market-people, and the rain must frequently take upon itself the privilege of forcing a way down the king's high road. A few sheds, where palm wine and native beer were vended by men and women stretched in the most negligent of positions under the warm shade, were the only signs of settlements, and we were disappointed in our hopes of finding the promised half-way house. The sun shone fiercely at first starting: it was soon tamed by heavy clouds,

which presently burst in a short shower, and the glare of the ground was greatly mitigated. All who met us addressed some civil word, and were respectful as Madeiriense : the vast variety and the complexity of their salutations will afterwards be alluded to. My nag snatched a leaf of maize, when an old woman in the field somewhat blatantly scolded it for stealing her property, which reminded me of Mungo Park's 'standard law of Africa : ' If an ass should break a single stem of corn, the farmer may seize the animal, and if not satisfied by the owner, he can kill and eat it, but not sell or work it.' This must be rather a severe penalty where donkey-flesh is a favourite food. After about six miles of bush and outlying farm, with a few little rivulets between, we crested a wave of clearer land, and sighted for the first time Abeokuta—Understone.

There are three natural divisions of country : the rainless, devoid of vegetation, and consequently termed desert ; the pastoral, covered like prairie-land with herbage and bush, but deficient in forest ; and the agricultural, clothed primally with continuous woods, and subsequently with second growths of bush and forest, or with savannahs, the results of old and yearly burnings. Of the latter description is this part of Egba-land : the bush, however, making allowance for the quantity and quality of tropical

vegetation, is much like what beautiful Goodwood must have been in the days of the Heptarchy, as yet unconverted into lawn and grove and bushy dell ; all of which will be done, and, until that still distant day, the land can hardly be said to be ready for civilization. The only sign of commencement is that the primeval forest has been extirpated immediately about the city, and has given place to the long crab-grass which now monopolizes the soil, and which presently must be taught to disappear before Bahama grass, or some similar and less exhausting growth.

‘ By secret charms our native land attracts,’

they say. This may be true or not : it is certain, however, that in strange countries there are secret influences that disenchant, that repel. I feel them here. The scene before me wants neither grandeur nor beauty ; there is a gorgeous growth around ; hill, water, forest, and homestead—the constituents of beauty in landscape—all are present ; yet, brooding over them all, darkening sun and sky, and clothing earth with sombre hues, is the sadness of a stranger-land. And it is a sadness which must endure. Those who tear themselves from Europe ever recognize the sensation in the comfortable seats which the New World affords them. They always think of what they call their ‘ home ;’ a word which has no meaning to their

children. Those who hold emigration to be England's first want, should, in common humanity, advocate the system which prevailed some century ago in the Western Hebrides, whence whole villages emigrated, to found, in a hemisphere beyond the Atlantic, settlements which in name and nature were the exact copies of their ancient homes.

The first aspect of Abeokuta was decidedly remarkable. The principal peculiarity was the fantastic breaking of the undulating plain by masses of grey granite—the rose-coloured is not easily seen—between twenty and thirty in number, sometimes rising two hundred and fifty to three hundred feet above the lower levels. White under the sun's glare, and cast in strange forms—knobs, pinnacles, walls, backbones, scarps, and logans—they towered over the patches of dark trees at their bases and the large brown villages, or rather towns, which separated them. There was a long dorsum, which nearly bisected the town from north to south, and which lay like a turtle's back between the scattered lines of habitations. The schorl, the sandstone formations, and the iron conglomerates were thrown into shade by these masses protruded from below. The country not a little reminded me of features which I have described in Eastern and Central Africa—Unyamwezi and the lands between the Nyanza Lake and Ugogo :



in the prairies of the great West, Independence Rock afforded a similar spectacle. In some places the habitations seemed as close packed as cells in a honeycomb; in others they were broken by bush, whose growth is encouraged because fire-engines are unknown. The ground was exceedingly complicated. Our guides pointed out to us the sites of the chief towns, Ake and Ikijá, Bagura and Owu, the Rock Olumo — ‘the builder,’ or capitolium — and other places which a few minutes afterwards were forgotten. A line of denser and more regular trees marks the course of the river, and blue distance, rolling here and there in long waves, broken by dwarf cones and subsiding into a mysteriously hazed horizon, formed a charming prospect after our confinement in the trough-like river.

Beyond the first sight of the town remained some two miles before reaching Ake, our intended quarters in the modern metropolis of Egba-land. Continuing our ride, I remarked another truly African custom which prevails from Kruland to the eastern coast, and which has the knack of puzzling new comers. The primeval forest has been cleared away around the town, yet there is not a vestige of cultivation; and if you ask for the farms, you are told that they are distant some five to twenty miles. The reason is that if placed within reach nothing could defend them

from the depredations of robbers and cattle. These circum-urban wastes might easily be purchased for cotton-growing. Before sinking good money, however, it would be advisable to perpend whether we could render valuable—even with the aid of coloured ‘professors’ and quadroon ‘emigration-agents’—what the Yorubas cannot.

Before reaching the Agbameya gate of Abeokuta, we had a something of excitement. The ‘doctor’ had descended from his Rosinante, and a battle royal was the result. My wretched tattoo rose with a scream high upon its hind spindles. Unwilling to be involved in the game of biting, pawing, and kicking, and not knowing the beasts to be unshod, I tried to dismount, hitched my foot in the stirrup, which did not open with a spring, and had the pleasure of hearing the sound of war over my back. The results were a few bruises, and the resolution of carrying for the future a stout stick, wherewith to belabour belligerents’ heads. A fall was a bad omen to begin with, but, as says good Edom o’ Gordon,

‘Thame luiks to freits, my master dear,  
‘Then freits will follow thame.’\*

Besides which it was a Friday, and it let me off cheap.

The celebrated defences of Abeokuta, which have

\* These lines were quoted by Mungo Park during his last walk with Sir Walter Scott, who exhorted him to turn back because his foot slipped.

played in Yoruba history the part of the wall of China and the lines of Torres Vedras, next appeared. They are seventeen to eighteen miles in circumference. To the northwards, however, in the direction of the hostile Ibadan, they are three in number, and the extreme circumference may be twenty miles—somewhat larger than Thebes of the hundred gates.\* The metropolis itself, measured by perambulator, was found to be four miles by two. Though Abeokuta is wholly on the left, they extend over the right bank of the Ogun River, and there take in a tract of cleared and level ground. To any but an ‘old African’—and such the familiar aspect of everything around makes me already hold myself—it is a marvel that man should be stopped by such an obstacle. I can only explain it upon the principle which, a score of years ago, rendered a regiment of cavalry impotent to face a drain four feet broad. The wall is hardened mud, good material, but only five to six feet high, without embrasure, and only here and there pierced with a round aperture by way of loophole. In some places it is ‘weather-boarded’ with palm-leaves, whose smoke would soon clear away the defenders. A hundred-pound bag of powder hung to a peg and provided with a slow match would blow a hole in it

\* From the Aro gate to Alabama, the longest diameter, the distance is said to be six miles.

big enough for a Cape waggon to pass through. It is approached by an equally efficient moat, a ditch perhaps five feet broad, wet with sundry rain puddles, half choked with bushes, and requiring a dozen fascines or dead bodies to make the passage perfectly comfortable. The larger entrances, exclusive of those leading to farms, are five in number; three to the north, viz., those of Abáka, Ibadan, Oshyelle; and two southerly, viz., the gates of Aro and Agbameya. Each is provided—for the benefit of warders, who take toll by day and who close the entrances and keep watch at night—with a hollow bastion, in no way differing from an old matted house, and here and there a rusty veteran of a carronade lies in the shade of its own shed. The town inside would burn like tinder. On a windy night five hundred men, taking the proper direction, and firing it skilfully, might do any amount of damage, and thoroughly demoralize its defenders. Against the attacks of Africans, with their instinctive horror of walls, it is safe; and the granite eminences, holes, caves, and forest clumps of the interior would render it more dangerous to assault in form, if defended by resolute men, than any barricade upon the Boulevard. It is doubtless the latter consideration that concentrated the Egbas round the Rock Olumo. Africans universally avoid, as the Tibetans seek, these vast masses

of mineral, which, attracting the sun's heat, and radiating it throughout the night, render their vicinity in torrid lands sultry and unwholesome.

Beyond the Agbameya gate lay another long tract of uncleared ground, with rises and falls, separated by dwarf ravines and, in some places, by flowing streams. My companions had ridden on out of respect for the sun ; my jaded beast could fight, but not canter, so I left the bridle loose, and it led me through elaborately crooked and intricate streets to its own manger. On the road were several market-places, large and small. These people, like the Mexicans, make their markets and fairs take the place of shops, and there is a great gathering on every fifth day, which ends the Egba week. The most remarkable is Shekpon, 'Do-the-bachelors-good;' so called from the facility with which Coelebs can eat, drink, and smoke without wife or servant. Methinks in these days, when we are so 'hard up' for nomenclature that the 'Army and Navy' must be turned into the 'Navy and Army,' I may venture to propose 'Do-the-bachelors-good' as a very neat name for the next new club. Beyond this place the path assumed the aspect of civilization; it was smooth, broad enough for small-wheeled carriages, and was drained on both sides by a ditch—easy here to recognize the European hand! On a wall of granite—the

south-western slope of the Ake Hill—I saw what I had read of, the minutest of local lions in a land where ‘pot-holes’ are by no means rare. These are two ‘eyes,’ contiguous hollows in the rock, about one foot in diameter, showing by their white gutters, like tear-streaks, that water issues from them. It never flows, however, save during and after the rains, and is probably collected in a fissure behind them.

Presently a most unmistakable church, the true English barn, pierced with tall windows and abutted by a steeple, which of course had a clock—a nearer approach showing the belfry to be of lumber and the church and steeple to be mud, roofed with thatch—provided with a schoolroom like the church, but without the steeple, and a bit of ‘green,’ scattered over with not unfamiliar trees, formed the startling termination to the ride. Entering *solus* the aspiring ‘compound’ of the Church Missionary Society, I found our consort the doctor, and he introduced me to the inmates, Dr. and Mrs. Harrison, who were occupying the house lately built and tenanted by the Rev. Mr. Townsend. A kind invitation was extended to myself. Commander Bedingfield found quarters in the neighbouring village of Eruwan, under the roof of Mr. Robert Wike, general merchant, of the firm of Southam, Wike, and Co., Manchester. We were thus all near one another, and, of more con-

sequence still, considering the immense importance of our undertaking—I say ‘our’ as the historical bellows-blower used ‘we’ in addressing his organist—we were all in the vicinity of the king who resents the conduct of those that take up their abode beyond the shadow of his wing.

After dinner, at the exile’s hour of 3 P.M., we set out, accompanied by Dr. Harrison, to stroll about, to collect fresh impressions, and to enjoy new sensations. Around us was the town or township of Ake, so called after the old and now destroyed capital of Egba-land. It is the head-quarter village of the collection now forming the metropolis, and it gives the title to the king—Al (from *li*, to have) Ake, pronounced by Europeans Alake, meaning lord of Ake : we were therefore justified in assuming it to be typical of an Abeokutan village.

Our first survey was of the mission compound, a large grassy oblong, garnished with umbrella-trees (a species of *ficus*), cut by paths and surrounded by an ample-gated mud wall, backing the various tenements and outhouses. The position is nearly due north of the Ake Hill, or Rock, and the site is somewhat higher than that of the other settlements. The houses are mostly lumber, with tall flying roofs of thatch, and remarkably badly built for health. Instead of being raised on piles or pillars, so as to



admit a free draught of air beneath, they are placed upon the damp ground—the subsoil is a tenacious clay, arresting the rain, which oozes through the valleys without forming springs—and they are wholly ignorant of an upper story. Even in Tuscany none but the poorest ever consent to sleep upon the *pian terreno*—what then must be the results in a land like this? Opposite Dr. Harrison's, and in the south-eastern corner, are the lodgings of the bachelor missionaries and the catechists, under command of the Rev. Mr. Wood. Behind these lie a dispensary and various offices. On the southern side is a shed intended for stabling. Amongst other things it contains one of the two brass six-pounders sent as a present to the Alake of Abeokuta by the home Government; the other is in the house or palace of Somoye, the Ibashorun.\* This gun is covered with a matting: the metal is in good order, but the carriages and wheels are so worm-eaten that they would break down during the first march. The neglect of these useless weapons has been made a subject of grievance against the Abeokutans; but what can be expected? When Sayyid Said, miscalled the 'Imam' of Maskat, lost his larger guns in an ill-fated attempt

\* The word is thus written by Mr. Bowen; Mr. Crowther prefers 'Obashorun,' and the vulgar generally use 'Bashorun.' It is difficult to define the functions of this dignitary, who is at once viceroy, premier, and commander-in-chief.



upon a coast tribe in Eastern Africa, they were shortly afterwards returned, with the message that their captors could not afford to keep weapons that 'ate so much powder.' A few swivels, the old 'bases,' East Indian jezails and zumbaraks, and, for guns of position, 'falconets,' or light four-pounders, might have been a welcome present, but what can these people do with brass six-pounders? They cannot even melt them down.

Besides which, guns are, like knives and scissors, unlucky presents. Almost invariably, throughout the length of India, wherever we have made a gift of cannon to a native prince, we have been compelled to recover it, *vi et armis*, from himself or from his successor.

Beyond the stables lies the printing-office, whence issues, once a fortnight, the local paper, partly English, partly Egba, and called 'Iwe Irohin,' 'The Book of News.' The subscription is two shillings per annum, and the editor is our host, Dr. Harrison, a man who, not undistinguished at Cambridge, has brought himself down to writing leaders 'adapted to the meanest intellect.' The superiority of a regular coinage over the local cowrie; the propriety of supplanting the hoe with the plough—such are the abstruse theses which now attract his facile pen. The printer's devils are black youths, some of them

Abeokutans, paid four dollars to five dollars per mensem. They handle their 'long primer' with some dexterity, and there is a handy little press, paper only being now wanted.

On the east and north sides of the compound are the native employés of the establishment,—Mr. Allen, one of the schoolmasters ; Mr. Wilhelm, a 'Christian visitor ;' and Miss Vincent, who has charge of all the little converted misses. The most interesting part of the mission grounds is the village of New Christians : it is called Wasimi, or Come-and-Rest, an 'Alabama' in Africa, and it clings to the eastern wall of the compound. As might be expected from that mortal energy which the Anglo-Saxon has so successfully distributed about the world, poor African Come-and-Rest is approached by all the preparations for severe and protracted toil, gins, saws, cotton-presses, and what not. 'Come-and-Rest' is in fact a would-be workhouse.

But again Anglo-Saxon impetus has failed in converting the haven of refuge into a workshop, and the African *vis inertia* has here also been successful. I never saw more than four men at work amongst the gins, and then half a dozen squatters were chatting with and staring at them, whilst a woman or two sat by with baskets of popped maize and boiled palm-kernels to recruit exhausted nature. In North America the

gin-house is the proper working place of 'old hands or very young ones, of breeding women, sucklers, and invalids;'—here it is of sturdy men. There are seven presses, but seldom more than one at a time is in use; half an hour is required to fill it by five men, plus a dozen who look at the workmen, and who in due time take a spell. They average per diem, in the seven presses, sixteen bales of 112—125 lbs. each, and they have never exceeded eighteen. In a long shed hard by are two parallel lines of circular gins, which, though known to tear the cotton fibre, were judged better for Africa, as requiring less toil than the heavy and complicated roller, or even the modified East Indian charkha. They cost in England three pounds, here about four pounds ten shillings; and perhaps half of the machinery lies upon the ground, all dirt, mud, and rust. Rusty it is landed from the steamer, rustier it is sent up in a canoe to Abeokuta, and there it lies upon the ground, rustiest, because the people will not work. I could mention a respectable body of gentlemen which has spent thousands of pounds sterling upon such vagaries, in the fond belief, though perhaps not wholly so, that the words of every glib-tongued negro are true, and that all those ingenious implements are whirring and working at Abeokuta as they would whirr and work at Manchester. A small

steam-engine might, indeed, do better; but fuel is dear, and then who, as the Kanuri say, would 'make his skin cold' with labour, when he can sit in the shade? Again, there are many who, like Mr. Leighton Wilson, decry introducing machinery into Africa, lest it should render the African lazy or lazier. I submit to the reader whether this be not a famous jump into the 'pit called Absurdum.'

There was nothing to see at Wasimi, nor could I observe that the lanes were cleaner, the houses better, or the people superior, except in the number of their rags, to their pagan neighbours. Judging from the variety of large mortars—the best are those made from the shea or butter-tree—indigo dyeing seemed to be the principal industry. A little beyond Wasimi lay the house of Mr. Robbins, an African from Sierra Leone, trading here as agent for the Manchester Cotton Association. The compound was approached, as the barbarian ever loves, by a tall and imposing gate, distinguishing the house of a prince from that of a pauper. The colours—red, blue, and yellow—were those of the Crystal Palace; the green, crimson, and black were not. I rather admired the hall, a long, low, massive *pièce*, whitewashed inside, with the heaviest square beams for ceiling, and a central row of dumpy columns, alternately flutings and facets, with bead-

ings between, wholly ignorant of base or capital, and painted black and dark green. Their object was to support the short, ponderous rafters of the roof. Timber in these lands is expensive, and can hardly be depended upon; besides, it can be divided into two varieties,—the over-soft and the unduly hard. The effect, however, has that resemblance to Egyptian which every effort of art emerging from the savage seems to assume, perhaps because in these lands it most closely resembles the aspect of outside nature, and thus is forced into the human brain. At any rate it is immeasurably superior to the Five Classical Orders done by the carpenter, in timber, at Halifax and throughout Canada.

We prolonged our walk northwards, through the aspiring township Eruwan, and there we saw another small lion, 'Orange Cottage, the beautiful residence of the Messrs. Crowther,' as the Pilgrim to his Grandmother's land is fain to call it. This edifice reminded me of third-rate training stables in some ultra-cockney part of England—say tailoring Leamington, and, as my companions were struck by the same thought, the comparison may be accepted as correct. It is roofed with zinc or iron; the walls are a composite of clay; the verandahs are supported by pillars of dry mud. It is partly painted, and wholly hideous, its ugliness being surpassed only by

its pretentiousness. We entered, and read a somewhat remarkable list of articles for sale or 'swop,' concluding with penknives, gentlemen's coats, jack-knives, mouth-harmoniums. The Rev. Mr. Crowther, senior, a man of whom all classes speak well, is now founding a new mission station at the mouth of the Nun, or Southern Niger.\* He was proposed for a bishopric in West Africa, and the measure was dropped, I believe, only because the white shepherds showed a settled determination to turn and rend a black pastor. But a man may be highly respectable as a Churchman, without being fit for the episcopate. His sons, however, have left Abeokuta, not wholly *volentes*, but perhaps, on the whole, not quite for the country's ill.

These, then, are my first impressions of Abeokuta. The streets are as narrow and irregular as those of Lagos, intersecting each other at every possible angle; and when broad and shady, one may be sure that they have been, or that they will be markets, which are found even under the eaves of 'the Palace.' The sun, the vulture, and the pig are the only scavengers. The houses are made of tamped mud—the sun-dried brick of Futa and Nupe is here unknown—

\* At the time the above was written I had not met Mr. Crowther, sen. Since then a personal acquaintance with him has by no means diminished the respect with which his widely spread reputation in West Africa had prepared me to regard him.

covered with tall, flying roofs of thatch, which burn with exemplary speed. At each angle there is a kobbi—a high, sharp gable—or elevation to throw off the heavy rain. The form of the building is the gloomy hollow square, totally unlike the circular huts of the Krumen and the Kafirs. It resembles the Utum of the Arabs, which, extending to Usagara and Unyanyembe, in Central Intertropical Africa, produced the ‘Tembe,’ and which, through the ‘Patio’ of Spain, found its way into remote Galway. There are courts within courts for the various subdivisions of the polygamous family, and here also sheep and goats are staked down. The sexes eat alone; every wife is a ‘free dealer;’ consequently there is little more unity than in a nunnery. In each patio there is usually some central erection intended as a store-house. Into these central courts the various doors, about four feet wide, open through a verandah or piazza, where, chimneys being unknown, the fire is built; and where the inmates sleep on mats spread under the piazza, or in the rooms, as the fancy takes them. Cooking is also performed in the open air, as the coarse earthen pots scattered over the surface prove. The rooms, which number from ten to twenty in a house, are windowless, and purposely dark, to keep out the sun’s glare; they vary from ten to fifteen feet in length, and from seven to eight in breadth. The



furniture is simple : rude cots and settees, earthen pots and coarse plates, grass bags for clothes and cowries, and almost invariably weapons, especially an old musket, and its leather cases for ammunition. The number of inhabitants may vary from ten to five hundred, and even more in the largest. There is generally but one single large outer door, with charms suspended over it : the reason for this paucity of entrances will appear when the ceremonies of an 'Oro Day' are alluded to. Finally, the tenements in Yoruba show by their absence of defence a safer state of society than the similar erections in Central Africa. These have flat roofs, well protected with clay against the firing of the assailant ; those would readily be burned.

Wending our way homewards in the shades of evening, we stopped at a house where we were refreshed with music proceeding from a something not unlike the mouth-harmoniums above advertised ; and that nothing might be wanting to the enjoyment of a somewhat touchy tympanum, there was what is politely termed 'singing.' My companions 'chaffed' me for my undisguised preference of a tom-tom and a squeaking reed which were sounding the requiem of some worthy hard by, and all explanations were in vain. Will the reader be as inaccessible ? The tom-tom and the squeaking reed,

unlike more pretentious instruments, recall no reminiscences, provoke no comparisons; they are in keeping with all around them; they are in the minor key; they offer no direct insult to taste. Malibran and Mario, Liszt and Paganini, would hardly be enjoyable in one of these Abeokutan cow-houses. What, then, must it be to hear one's own especial favourites, one's mementos of past enjoyment, hammered out into a sonata of a discordant, gingling, rattling, musical bellows, alias seraphine, or burlesqued by the dilettante's flute—that type of gentle dulness which waxes cross when it lags behind the accompaniments—or outraged with that *voce di gola*, that throaty English voice, which the fog, the habit of speaking with shut lips, and the practice of closing the larynx when producing gutturals, seem wholly to disconnect with the 'petto'? Besides which, there is melody in the tom-tom, as every East Indian will tell you. 'He who does not understand the palm-bird's note,' says the Yoruban proverb, 'complains of the noise it makes.' Mungo Park declares his belief that 'the elephant's tusk, hollowed out like a bugle, comes nearer to the human voice than any other artificial sound.' And yet, so thoroughly artificial is taste in music, I have seen a Highland regiment charmed with their bagpipes, and yet loud in their abuse of the East Indian 'nai.'

An equally edifying exercise was the perusal of an article in a paper terming itself the 'Manchester Examiner.' The writer, by characterizing the late Mr. Foote, one of the ablest of African *employés*, as 'a fussy and irritable official,' frustrated his purpose of stating a certain amount of truth\* by what Locke calls a 'compound ignorance' of the entire subject, which ignorance to those upon the spot was more amusing than any travesty. On the way homewards we met a 'big beggarman,' with bare head, European shirt and small-clothes, dirty and torn, and a begging bowl in fist, like an Asiatic Fakir. This person is no other than H.M. the Alake's brother. He became a Christian, and—some say—a semi-lunatic; others, who know something of his character, declare that he purposely goes in tatters, hoping that his brother will not molest him, and moreover will leave him a legacy.

After which we retired to find comforts that best prove the humanizing influence of the last-created sex, and we thought with the wise—

'Qu'on est heureux de trouver en voyage,  
Un bon souper, mais surtout un bon lit.'

But, before the sound rest which we have a right

\* I simply mean that the destruction of Porto Novo was an unfortunate performance, justified only by the traditional policy of the 'the coast.'

to expect, we must briefly analyze the small amount of 'reading up' which the last week has required.

The literature is not extensive. There are at present four small volumes upon the subject of Abeokuta, which it will be well to remember was not visited by Clapperton and Lander. Two of these were written by authoresses, one by a white author, and the other by a 'cullurd pussun.' *Place aux dames*—let us give precedence to the fair.

Miss Barber, of Brighton, who has never been in Africa, published some years ago a novelette bearing the striking title of 'Oshielle,' purporting to describe country ways in Yoruba, even as Mr. St. John did 'Village Life in Egypt.' The little volume was apparently intended to aid the 'Coral Fund.' This is a collection 'made up, as its name implies, of small donations.' Coral is a favourite article of commerce in these regions:—I plead guilty to having interpreted the title-page literally, understanding it as a fund to purchase coral, as ladies will buy blankets, for the poor benighted African, and probably others have done the same. 'Oshielle' is written in a friendly, kindly, and amiable spirit, overlaying the black with copious whitewash, and forming a sad contrast with reality. 'The beautiful earth is one vast flower-garden'—a ranker bush is rarely seen. 'The forsaking of aged parents, the

murder of infant children, and other such vices (?) of heathenism are unknown amongst Africans.' Oh, Miss Barber! These things in Africa are the rule, not the exception. Even in your favourite Abeokuta a man is annually sacrificed; and within the walls of Ikriku a victim is offered up to the Ogun every six years. Ikeredu contributes an annual murder;\* and how many more are slain I would rather not say. The mildness and humanity of the people are the theme of praise. Perhaps the worst part of the Egba's character is his horrible cruelty to inoffensive animals: he delights in torturing them, and, unlike the higher races, such as the Mongol and other pastorals, he lacks the qualifications for reclaiming them. He will ruin a horse's temper in a week, he gives pain for pleasure, and he takes a bestial delight in rendering wretched the beings of which other and nobler races make companions. In the work of a stranger one must expect a variety of contradictions. Thus the first chapter opens with 'Meroke,' the heroine, 'at home.' In the two initial sentences there is the usual contradiction to be expected from those who read and write Africa by books and not by eyesight. 'Even the wing of the crow, as he flies past, casts a perceptible shadow on the sunny ground.' And yet a few lines

\* This year was an exception, the victim having impiously levanted.

afterwards we read, 'There is no blue sky above; the atmosphere is filled with a soft, shining, veil-like haze.' But why bruise these pretty butterflies? Is it their fault that they are so brilliant and so ephemeral?

Miss Tucker, after a study of Eastern missions, in which she had peculiar advantages, put forth in 1853, without, however, previously visiting West Africa, 'Abbeokuta; or, Sunrise within the Tropics.' It is another neat little sketch—prettily stippled, *musqué*, *couleur de rose*, touched with the grace of a lady's hand, and no more like the original than is Hyperion to a satyr. Pity it is that clever people, reviewers, and others, write of places they never have seen: in that line there is but one successful book—Elphinstone's 'Cabul;' of failures there are a thousand, from Dr. Lord downwards. Some art appears, however, in this book. It opens, à la Alphabet James, with a scene in which two Christian cavaliers—one, Sir Henry Leake, R.N., t'other, the boy Ajai, *i. e.*, 'struggling for life,' and amongst celestials known as the Rev. Mr. Crowther—meet in the romantic shades of the Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, where, on Friday, the last day of October, 1851, the anagnorisis leads most classically up to the peripateteia. But there are necessarily errors in painting natural

objects, such as the artist made who, when sketching from a photograph, converted the Meccan pilgrim's '*hamail*,' his Koran, into an ignoble powder-flask. For instance, we read that Olumo the Builder, a mass of gneissoid granite, is a porphyritic rock. Again, that 'at one spot the intervening space forms a deep but low cavern, capable of giving shelter to a considerable number of persons.' There is no vestige of such cavern; the eaves of the rock—if I may so call them—project like roofs; and the little pauper colony now squatting there has supplied them with clay walls—an architecture very common at Abeokuta. Mr. Bowen, an eye-witness, rightly describes it as 'the shelving sides of an immense rock.' Again, 'Ogboni' is *not* 'a civil governor of each town.\*' The 'lady Tinabu' is *not* the 'sister of Akitoye.' The little volume, however, is popular at home: in 1858 it had reached the sixth edition—which suggests a reflection. Let me labour to draw these descriptions from the life, to paint black, black, to produce the most careful of sketches. They will be rough, and somewhat grotesque, because they are honest; they will disenchant, because they lack fictitious feeling and unreal romance. Consequently, will they ever see a reprint? I am sorry for, but

\* Mr. Bowen very properly writes the word Ogboni, but strangers cannot detect the *g*.



do not envy, the success of 'Sunrise within the Tropics.'

'Eternal summer gilds them yet,  
But all except their sun is set.'

Such false views of living societies, however skilfully drawn by the 'prettyfiers' of Africa, cannot conduce to any good.

I now proceed to my own sex, which may be treated with less of ceremony. The Rev. Mr. Bowen, or more probably his Charleston publishers, entitles his work 'Central Africa.' This custom has of late become far too common. A gentleman who lived for a few months at the little Portuguese island of Mozambique was compelled by the bookseller to call his two octavos 'Travels in Eastern Africa.' Another, who sailed down the Western Coast, and borrowed all his interior from volumes long ago published, appears before the public with the grandiloquent title, 'Six Years of a Traveller's Life in Western Africa.' Mungo Park, who did three times more than all three together, modestly chose 'Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa.' Mr. Bowen's 'Central Africa' describes a run of one hundred and seventy miles or so into a country long since explored by Clapperton, Lander, and a host of minor travellers.

Mr. Bowen appears to have been another Dr. Krapf,

who had high ideas of missionarizing Africa: the latter gentleman proposed a chain of stations stretching across the continent: the former more modestly contented himself with a weak regiment of six hundred men, and, possibly, martyrs. The expense was easily managed. Fifty cents per annum from each member of the Society would produce three hundred thousand dollars, which is enough. Landing on the coast in February, 1849, after a preliminary tour through Liberia and among the inland Golas—the ‘Gullah niggers’ of the Southern States—Mr. Bowen lost his coadjutor, Mr. Goodall, and sailed to Badagry, which he reached on the 5th August, 1850. His first view was to establish the ‘Central African Mission’ at Igboho, on the outskirts of the great continent. With two intervals of return to America in 1853 and 1856, he remained in Africa from 1849 to 1856. During those seven years he visited the Alake of Abeokuta, and—with difficulty, for the natives sensibly believe that every town which the white spy enters shall presently be destroyed\*—he inspected Bi Olorun Kpello, Awaye, Oke-Efo, Ilori, the Asehin,

\* We read of a white man, who, compelled to camp under a tree outside the Awaye gate of Yoruba, was visited by hundreds, and heard the women sing—

‘Oibo gun sidi Akpe.’

‘The white camped at the foot of the Akpe thorn.’

Which is truly an echo of Mungo Park’s well-known episode.

sovereign of Isehin, the Are of Ijaye, and the Alaketu of Iketu. The first station was founded in October, 1853, at Ijaye, one hundred and twenty miles from Lagos; another at Lagos, about two years afterwards; and a third at Ogbomosho, one hundred and seventy miles from Lagos. [N.B.—These are not my distances.] After leaving Africa, Mr. Bowen's travels in 'Central Africa' were printed in 1857 by the Southern Baptist Publication Society of Charleston; and in May, 1858, his 'Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruban Language'\* was accepted, and afterwards printed and published by the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, Washington.

This Central African traveller is quite a patriot, and withal, somewhat truculent. He had been a Texas Ranger in his youth. He played, it is said, a good 'shyooting-iron' in 1851 during the Dahoman attack upon Abeokuta—the reverend gentleman was at first rather pleased with his own militancy, but he afterwards regretted it. We can hardly, therefore, wonder that his style and sentiments savour much

\* The book, a thin folio, is favourably spoken of. Unfortunately it does not enter into the scholarship of a very difficult language, and thus only half teaches the learner. As might be expected from the *scrutudiorum*, there are grotesquenesses of style and orthography. Why, for instance, should we read, in 'Compound Consonants,' that *ḍi* is sounded like the English *j* in *jug*? Has the English *j* hurt Mr. Bowen's feelings, that he thus unceremoniously cuts it? and why trouble *i* with a diacritical dot when *sh* does quite as well?

of the arm of flesh. As regards his characteristic-ally New World vaunts, no harsher treatment is required than to quote in 1863 what was written by him in 1857. For instance, 'America' (i. e., the then United States) 'is more powerful in the control of mankind in general than any nation that ever has existed, or ever can exist, while the seas, continents, deserts, mountains, and rivers of the globe retain their present form'!! We read of America's 'victories in the name of the living God;' and we are not unprepared to be told that that nation is 'the appointed arbiter of earth.' Poor Europe is of course nowhere. Despotism is doomed to perish there; the king and queen, the lord and the landlord, the 'coach and six,' the servant in livery, the 'mediæval foggy in certain civilized countries,' shall equally become extinct, like the deinornis and the dodo. England is of course the vilest of nations. An expedition to the Niger—in which we always fail—would be very easy to Mr. Bowen's government. He predicted a sure 'whipping' to the Britishers when they first attacked Lagos; and, prophet-like, he exulted in the correctness of his prophecy, though he, as a white man, ran no little risk, and though the Britishers were shedding their blood for such as he. There are also ungenerous remarks touching English explorers—the elder and the younger Park,

Clapperton, and others, up to Messrs. Laird and Oldfield. All the honour given to poor Richard Lander for his noble discovery of the Nun, or Niger's direct mouth, is that he 'floated down the Niger from Yauri to the sea, but forgot to observe whether there was any real impediment to navigation by steamers'!!!

These are silly, *ad captandum vulgus*, stock sentiments, without which in those days an American's book could hardly appear in America; and thus they may admit of some palliation. But the reflections upon El Islam penetrate us with the profound dogmatic ignorance of the author. How well Mr. Bowen is fitted to teach or to convert the Moslem is evident from one word.\* He names a Fula Mussulman, Absalom—son of David—instead of Abd-el-Salam, and tells us with wondrous puerility in a foot-note that 'such names as David, Mary, &c., are common amongst Moslems.' Had Mr. Bowen ever read his Sale's Koran? It is evident to me that any Alufa or Mullah at Ilori or Hausa could have astonished the Texan with his knowledge of the Old Testament.

The Rev. John Newton—the 'old African blasphemer' reformed—mentions a significant phrase prevalent on the coast in his day. The white man,

\* P. 198.

after a certain length of residence, 'grew black,' not in complexion, but in disposition, and becoming perfect dupe to charms, necromancies, &c., put more trust in such things than the wiser sort of natives. Mr. Bowen shows the first symptom of the disease, which consists in attributing all European deaths by fever and dysentery to poison, and a perfect confidence in slow poison. The same mental malady is found amongst the old East Indians. I know a man who tells the tale of his having been poisoned some twenty years ago. But when the Asiatic and the African are determined to do the trick, they so administer their drug that there is 'no mistake;' and if they fail it is by an overdose, as an ounce of arsenic instead of a few grains. At Iketu, Mr. Bowen, after being warned of poison, received a bottle of milk from the king. His boy Sam had seen a Fula man pull a leaf out of the bottle, a portion of the contents of which were given to a dog. The animal shivered, returned them, and recovered. Upon re-administration next day the same symptoms recurred. Mr. Bowen then determined that if he had given the whole, not the half, dose to the dog, death would have resulted; and he 'drank no more milk in Iketu.'

Mr. Robert Campbell, a coloured man, and a 'professor,' we are told by his introducer, who does not say Professor of Philosophy or Political Economy, or

of what,\* seems to have visited Yoruba on an errand of '*industrie*,' in the French, not the English, sense. The introduction informs us that the writer, 'acting upon a commission, received from bodies' (fugitive negroes?) 'in the United States and Canada, visited the land of his forefathers' (who were certainly English) 'to investigate its condition.' He left Liverpool in June, 1859, touched at the usual mail stations on the West African coast, landed at Lagos, and went up to Abeokuta, where, under a new self-bestowed title, 'Commissioner of the Niger Valley Exploring Party,' he made with the Alake and the chiefs a treaty, to which I shall presently revert. Having extended his trip to Moslem Ilori, and the surrounding country, he returned to Lagos on the 10th April, and concludes the little volume which he wrote, or caused to be written, in this style: 'We landed at Liverpool on the 20th May, 1860, in good health, although we had been to — Africa.' 'Pilgrimage to my Motherland' contains one hundred pages, respectfully dedicated to certain friends of Africa, Messrs. Christy, Ashworth, and Ralston. It and its subject are 'heartily recommended' to the public by the introducer, the late Sir Culling E. Eardley, Bart.

\* I believe Mr. Campbell to have been a schoolmaster in Canada: of course due deference to the dark face forbids the philanthropist the use of the humbler title.



In this hearty recommendation I can by no means concur, for reasons which will be adduced at greater length in a future page. Suffice a few words here. We are explicitly told, and more than once, that ground amongst the Egbas is 'deemed common property, any individual enjoying the right of taking unoccupied land, as much as he can use, wherever and whenever he pleases.' This may be ignorance, and to a certain extent it is warranted by the incuriousness of Mr. Bowen, who asserted long before Mr. Campbell that 'there is no property in land, or rather that land in Yoruba is common property.' The corollary is that any number of Christian converts or colonies of Africo-Canadians can be permanently settled in the Egba country. I distinctly assert that the reverse is the fact, and that all such theories foisted on the public with a view to emigration are likely to do mere injury. The country is by no means a 'no-man's land,' and ignorance of this vital point would certainly lead to those agrarian wars with which New Zealand has scandalized the civilized world. There are two ideas incomprehensible to Europeans, but part and parcel of the African mind. The first, which here requires only enunciation, is that a slave-born man is a slave for ever. The second is the non-alienation of land. Whatever be the tenure of property in ground, it cannot permanently be given or

sold. A chief will, for a quit-rent, permit any stranger to cultivate unreclaimed commons, but the bargain is purely personal. If the original tenant die, the heir or successor is expected by another 'dash' to obtain renewal of the lease, and his refusal would justify, in the African mind, his ejection. On the other hand, if the chief attempt to raise his terms, the heir might insist upon not paying a sum higher than the original quit-rent, and amongst the more civilized tribes the voice of the people would be on his side. No resident in West Africa will ignore that what I have stated is the fact, and those who are unacquainted with the coast should beware of the fallacies of Messrs. Bowen and Campbell.

That the animosity of the coloured man should at times break out is not to be wondered at. The negro must be pitted against the white, that is part of the *métier* of the Métis, who is honoured by his mother's and despised by his father's side of the house. The Messieurs Crowther, we are informed, though full-blooded blacks, are treated with the utmost respect by all the Abeokutans—a curious comment upon this is the present expulsion of the junior members of the family. There is a tale told of the 'Professor' at Lagos, that on one occasion, when a European colony in Yoruba was spoken of, he swore with fury that 'no white man, if he could help it, should ever plant foot

in Western Africa.' By the money, then, of the white dupe, he would establish himself there, and, like the Sierra Leonites of Abeokuta, he would deny and drive out his benefactors.

Of course the book abounds in such errors as the following :—' Not unfrequently I heard the term 'agayen' (meaning simply canoe-man) reproachfully applied by the people of the interior towns to my interpreter.' The word is 'Igáen,' and it refers to the 'Ga'-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast,—'canoe-men,' as they are called in the English of Lagos. They are far from being despised in Yoruba; but in some places, as at Benin, every English-speaking black is supposed to be a Gold Coast man, and this has not tended to raise the reputation of the 'Igáen.' These unintentional blunders are excusable; there are others I have shown that are not so.

## CHAPTER III.

### PRESENTED AT COURT.

MUCH to do, and little time to spare.

The morning after arrival at Understone saw me on foot at 5 A.M.; an hour and a half, however, elapsed before the party was collected for a stroll to Aro. I need hardly say that they did not expect

‘The blooming pleasures that await without  
To bless the wildly devious morning walk.’

Aro, the terminus of the Ogun’s navigable portion, is the nearest port of Abeokuta, about five miles from the missionary compound at Ake and one and a half from the Badagry gate.

Starting in a south-westerly direction we struck into the European road, and passed the two eyes in the granite rock before described. The ‘Do-the-bachelors-good’ market led to another Church Missionary establishment, directed by Mr. King, a native catechist, with its long garner-like room used for peda-

goguery and place of worship. To-day being Saturn's day, the bell rang '*Boys and girls come to school! boys and girls come to school!*' The fine ears of the African vulgar attribute special words to every unusual or artificial sound. The horn and the tom-tom, for instance, express to them a great complication of ideas by onomatopoetic language; such as—rise to fight! sit down all! take hold, take hold!—which would hardly be appreciable to the coarser senses of the uneducated European. A long stretch down-hill led to the establishment of Mr. Champness, a respected Wesleyan missionary, who fortunately escaped the terrible Sierra Leone epidemic of 1858-59.

'The captain,' alleging a suspicious blister on the heel, lagged behind till he found a mount. The path was by no means bad; the gravelly soil allowed the water to run off on each side, and high-wheeled American 'trotting-wagons' would safely pass over it. The exceeding impurity of the place however at once struck us, and it was an impression which Time strengthened. The surface was a wave of rising ground, broken into steep ridges and deep hollows, through which streamlets flow—Yoruba is 'a land of waters'—and these again require bridges. Alongside of the road were rare fields and frequent patches of tangled bush. The fetid tiglium or croton-oil plant, and the wild senna, whose leaf is unfit for ex-

portation, the uncultivated indigo, the beautifully-blossomed mallows, the datura and other medicinal plants were backed by the tall Oro hedges, whose material is that cactus which the elephant loves, and which, in this part of Africa, is mainly used as a mordant for arrow-poison.

The people had already left their sleeping mats, and were loitering towards the little labours of the day. Mr. Campbell 'asserts, and appeals to every one who has visited this section of Africa to verify his assertion, that there is not a more industrious people [than the Egbas] upon the face of the earth!' Making due allowance for the Americanism that concludes the sentence—'the face of the earth' and 'the whole globe' are perfectly familiar to every denizen of the once United States—I must, however, so far differ as to declare that there is not one white man in Abeokuta who will endorse this dictum. It is true that all Egbas, from the lowest to the highest, must, like the Sultan of Stamboul, practise some handicraft; that the boys are trained to work, after their gentle fashion, and that the people, unlike their neighbours, are, for Africa, tolerable farmers; but an English navy, fed on beef and beer, will, it is said, work out 2·5 Frenchmen; he would certainly knock up a dozen Egbas. And how can it be otherwise in these malarious, fever-stricken, enervating,

effeminizing lands? Idleness is not 'the root of all evil,' the bane of society in the tropics; it is the condition imperatively imposed by a thermometer generally above 70° (Fah.), where labour is a curse, and where work, if it shortens man's days, must also shorten his life.

The people were tolerably well clothed, and, as usual at this hour, every one was working at the chew-stick, a bit of guava, or of some other soft wood. 'Dressy men' wore shogoto (African knicker-bockers), or loose cotton drawers, fastened above the hip, and extending, like those of the Madeiranese peasantry, to the knee. The body was covered with a cloth gracefully thrown like a plaid over the shoulder, generally the left, and a second 'pagne' was frequently wrapped, shawl-like, round the waist. The poor dispense with the shogoto and the shoulder-cloth, retaining nothing but the diggo, or loin-wrap. The women had three cloths—one on the shoulders, and the other round the body below the bosom, concealing the third, which is shorter and scantier. These attires were mostly dyed with indigo, but of different tints, the sky-blue being apparently the effect of wear. Those who cannot afford such toilette wear scrimp wrappers, which develop forms not altogether untempting. The men had caps of every colour, form, and material; travel-



lers and the ogboni, or elders, who are forbidden to use 'filá,' wore large hats of woven palm-leaf, like the Moors, the Mandengas, and the people of Zanzibar, who, more sensible than Europeans, carry their umbrella, not in hand, but upon head.

The women, who can rarely grow side ringlets to any length, confined their hair with a fillet of indigo-dyed cloth, and those who were in mourning walked about with naked scalps. All went barefoot, except those who rode. The flasher sort, however, had their feet, like their hands and arms, adorned with red or camwood,—the henna of this part of Africa. Some few male exceptions were dressed in Frankish costume, and formed a hideously respectable contrast to their semi-nude neighbours. The best looking were decidedly the Moslems, here called 'Imale,' probably a corruption of 'Muallim.' They were conspicuous for their decent dress—turbans, or Hauea head-dresses, gay calico calottes, like the kantop or ear-cap of India, with the large loose robe, or shirt, called Ewu, 'the Guinea-fowl,' from the handsome embroidery in spots, which often renders the article worth five pounds; and shalwars, or trousers, ample, but gathered in at the ankle. Some Moslems wore long side-locks, the 'corners of the beard,' as the Scripture has it, and which are still affected by the Jews of Bagdad. They carried

large double-edged swords, which, however, can hardly be drawn; and repining at their subject position, they are said to dislike white men. None, however, refused to return the Moslem salutation; and I heard one exclaim to the other, 'Báriki!' 'May it be fortunate to you!' a phrase usually addressed to one who sneezes. This is a custom still prevalent throughout Asia, and not wholly obsolete in Europe, where a '*Dieu vous bénisse!*' is required by an infirmity threatening, they believe, aneurism, hernia, hemorrhage, and similar amenities. I remarked that many of the pagans bore about in their hands bright iron chains, which are religious implements here, as at Benin. Almost every man had his oggo (oggau) club, or shillelagh. It is the knobkerry of the Kafirs, the Somal, and the Fijian Islanders, and it extends throughout the African interior. Here it is modified to a hockey-stick, about eighteen inches long, with a twist of strong iron wire round the neck, and nails along the line of percussion; sometimes it is distinguished by thongs of horny hide, brass or copper tacks, and other barbaric decorations.

There was a vast variety of tattoos and ornamentation, rendering them a serious difficulty to strangers. The skin patterns were of every variety, from the diminutive prick to the great gash and the large boil-like lumps. They affected various figures

—tortoises, alligators, and the favourite lizard, stars, concentric circles, lozenges, right lines, welts, gouts of gore, marble or button-like knots of flesh, and elevated scars, resembling scalds, which are opened for the introduction of fetish medicines, and to expel evil influences. In this country every tribe, sub-tribe, and even family, has its blazon,\* whose infinite diversifications may be compared with the lines and ordinaries of European heraldry—a volume would not suffice to explain all the marks in detail. The chief are as follows :—The distinguishing mark of the Egbas is a gridron of three cuts, or a multiplication of three upon each cheek. Free-born women have one, two, or three raised lines, thread-like scars from the wrist up the back of the arm, and down the dorsal regions, like long necklaces. They call this ‘entice my husband.’ The Yorubas draw perpendicular marks from the temples to the level of the chin, with slight lateral incisions, hardly perceptible, because allowed soon to heal. The Efons of Kakanda wear a blue patch, sometimes highly developed, from the cheek-bones to the ear. The Takpas of Nupe make one long cut from the upper whorl of the nostril, sweeping towards the ear. At Ijesha, a country lying east of Yoruba

\* ‘Ogubonna’s’ family, for instance, have three small squares of blue tattoo upon each cheek, combined with the three Egba cuts.

Proper, the tattoo is a long parallelogram of seven perpendicular and five transverse lines. Those called Brechi\* wear a flap of skin taken from the forehead, and overlapping eyebrows, nose, and eye-  
corners. This style of scalping kills many, but the survivors are greatly respected. I observed a thing novel to me; the areola in the women was not unfrequently tattooed a dull dark blue, the colouring matter being native antimony, found in Yoruba and on the Niger, and levigated with pepper and natron upon a stone. The *bijouterie* was coral, in necklaces and wristlets, heavy bangles, and anklets of copper, iron, tin, or brass, and various rings upon

\* Capt. John Adams (pp. 133, 134) well describes this people:—'A class of Heebos (the Ibo or Eboe, whose chief town is Abo, at the head of the Nigerian Delta), called Breeche, and whom many have very erroneously considered to be a distinct nation, masters of slave-ships have always had a strong aversion to purchase, because the impression made on their minds, by their degraded situation, was rendered more galling and permanent from the exalted rank which they occupied in their own country, and which was thought to have a very unfavourable influence on their shipmates and countrymen in misfortune.

'Breeche, in the Heebo language, signifies "gentleman," or the eldest son of one, and who is not allowed to perform, in his own country, any menial office. He inherits at his father's death all his slaves, and has the absolute control over the wives and children which he has left behind him. Before attaining the age of manhood his forehead is scarified, and the skin brought down from the hair to the eyebrows, so as to form a line of indurated skin from one temple to the other. This peculiar mark is distinctive of his rank, the ordinary mark of the Heebo being formed by numerous perpendicular incisions in each temple, as if the operation of cupping had been often performed.'

the thumb, the middle finger, and the toes. Most people carry beads of various sizes and colours, denoting their peculiar worship. Necklaces of large, many-coloured beads, with three bigger than the rest, show the devotees of Yemaya, goddess of brooks and streams. Pure white beads are worn by those who adore Obatala; black and white, alternating with red, by the worshippers of Shango—Vulcan, or Jupiter Tonans. Small white Indian cowries are the ornaments of idols, and as such are worn by their servants, especially by those who adore the god Burukú\* and the goddess Amanlu, who, like the Hindu Shiva and Bhawani, slay without weapons. The worshippers of Ifa, called ‘palm-nut priests,’ wear wristlets of palm-nuts strung on fibre. Brass bracelets, and all ornaments of the same colour, are symptoms of adoring the female river god Oshun. Snake worshippers, and, according to others, those who pray to the Ogun River, have an iron ring round the left wrist. Those who bear upon their foreheads a painted mark like the Hindoo Tilak (or the ashes which Roman Catholics daub on on Ash Wednesday) are the votaries of the aristocratic and expensive god Orishako.

The physical conformation of the Egbas is not very

\* Burukú causes fits, and kills by small-pox—distinctly an East Indian idea.

promising in an intellectual point. The cranium is small\*—as a European can find by putting on a native cap—wedge-formed, with compressed brow, almost always prognathous, hardly ever pyramidal or oval. There are some who hold prognathism—a peculiarity observable in almost all negro and negroid tribes—to be exaggerated by lactation unduly prolonged at an epoch when the bones are still plastic. But such suckling is still the custom in Southern Italy, without the hideous African development. The external auditory process projects in a ring of bone round the canal, seeming to bury or overlap the foramen more than in Europeans,† whilst the protrusion of the lower face and the receding of the chin give, when carried to excess, a truly bestial appearance. The skeleton is usually well put together in the upper part; in the lower, the hips are too narrow for beauty; the shin, probably from sitting at squat in youth, is convex, and the heel projects behind—a negro should therefore wear sandals, never patent leathers. The nose is sometimes hooked, but the nostrils are expanded and elevated at the alæ; in the plainer sort it is broad and squatting upon both

\* Some authors state that the gyri and sulci are shallow and infirm, but what may be their opportunities of autopsy I know not.

† Phrenologically speaking, I believe this denotes either great destructiveness, or power of abstaining from food, whereas the Egtas are remarkable for neither.



cheeks, with an absence of rigidity and of dividing apex in the cartilage. The cheek-bones are high, and the face is frequently lozenge-shaped. The blue eye, seen upon the Niger, is unknown. Here the sclerotica is rarely clear, except in women and children; usually it is bloodshot, from the relaxation of the minor blood-vessels, or of a pale dirty yellow, as from over-activity of the liver, or speckled with hazel spots. The iris is more frequently a dark or a light brown, with a sea-green shade, than black; and the brows and lashes are removed, like the beard and the axile pile. The lips are large; the circum-oral region tumid; there is an ugly blue-black ridge between the gums and the teeth; the former are frequently discoloured by snuff, and the latter, though set off by the blackness around, are neither whiter nor finer than those of Europeans generally.\* The hair is short, scant, crisply-curved, often growing from the scalp like peppercorns, and rather dull or reddish-brown than black. The heads of the men are trimmed in landscape or parterre fashion—indescribable. The prevailing style amongst the women is to plait it up

\* A man with a theory once accounted to me for the superiority of the negro's teeth, by his never drinking anything hotter than at blood heat. A pot of ekko (gruel) would rather have startled him; and generally, the semi-civilized African is as fond of heated aliments as the European. But the barbarian, having no dentist, takes more care of his teeth; hence the occasional difference.



into thin longitudinal ridges, like those of a musk melon, and to tie the residue in a small tight knot at the sinciput. The skin is generally rough, sometimes like shagreen; and in the poor the epidermis of the hand is as hard as the foot of the domestic fowl. It varies from a dark coffee colour to a *café au lait* light as a Mulatto's; I especially remarked this peculiarity in the chiefs and fetish men, whose hair also sometimes verged upon a dirty sand colour. There is not, however, any red race, as amongst the Fula. Albinism is sporadic and distinct, nor did I see at Abeokuta that modification of the xanthous temperament afterwards observed in the Brass River, and at Batanga.

The Abeokutan, when taken at his best, is tall and well made, 'black, but comely.' When not so, he is hideously chimpanzee-like. The male figure here, as all the world over, is notably superior, as amongst the lower mammals, to that of the female. The latter is a system of soft, curved, and rounded lines, graceful, but meaningless and monotonous. The former far excels it in variety of form and in nobility of make, in strength of bone and in suppleness of muscle and sinew. In these lands, where all figures are semi-nude, the exceeding difference between the sexes strikes the eye at once. There will be a score of fine male figures to one female, and there she is, as everywhere else, as inferior as is the Venus de' Medici to

the Apollo Belvidere. In Africa also, where the female figure lacks support, it is soon destroyed. The mammæ in women are naturally large; after the first child they become pendent and flaccid, and in old age they shrink to mere purses and lappets of skin. It is a curious fact that these withered crones will sometimes suckle children, and that the grandam is used as wet nurse.\* In some cases I remarked that, after the fashion of the true Amazons, one breast was well developed, whilst the other hardly appeared—probably for want of use.

Life in the open air, light clothing, and an abundance of dirty soap, compounded of palm-kernel oil boiled with ashes, prevent amongst the Egbas an over-development of the true African effluvium; yet it is there. The negro's skin—or rather the bulbs situated in the cellular web under the cutis—is a more active organ of depuration than the European's, importantly aiding the respiratory and other processes in eliminating effete matter from the blood. Dr. Stark proved that the white colour imbibes odours in the lowest, the black in the highest degree. The disorder—for such at times it is—is increased by

\* I can hardly, however, rely upon the case quoted by Dr. Clarke, of Sierra Leone (p. 118), viz., that the stimulus of suckling an orphan monkey caused a lacteal flow from the breasts of a virgin negress; yet there is no reason for disbelieving the possibility. Embrocations of virgin's milk are not uncommon in the Asiatic and the African pharmacopœia.

frequent anointings, foul food, and visceral disorders; and when to these is added want of cleanliness—the oily particles of the perspiration, so difficult to remove, remaining upon the skin, whilst the watery disappear\*—the effect becomes truly intolerable. Even amongst Europeans in the tropics, the transpiratory secretion often becomes acrid; and as the old Dutch traveller quaintly remarks, they can never expect health until their ‘bodies open’—in other words, till their pores act freely.

As we advanced we were plentifully greeted—more, however, by the women than the men, and most by the children—with the common word *Akabo*, i.e., *Aku abo*, used to a person returning from a journey. The answer is simply an indefinitely prolonged *o*, which serves on all and every occasion; if not returned it is a slight. Equals say to one another *Aku*,† meaning, properly, may you not die, thus showing the real African dread of death. The life-loving southern European would say, ‘Viva mille anni!’ All these people, from Benin to Dahome, when heard thus saluting at Sierra Leone, were called *Akoos*,

\* The *fanatici* for the Turkish bath, who contend that perspiration makes the ploughman cleaner than the prince, are apt to forget this part of the process.

† Also written ‘*Oku*’ and ‘*Aiku*,’ properly ‘*Ai-ku*,’ from *ai* ‘negative,’ and *ku* ‘to die.’ ‘*Aiku*’ is a noun, signifying ‘immortality,’ or, rather, ‘unquenchableness.’ ‘*Aku*’ is also a noun, signifying a salutation.

with as much correctness as if Englishmen were termed God-bless-yous.\* More modern writers have named them Hios,† or Eyeos, from Oyo (Auyan), the great capital of the Yoruban nation, about 2° (N. lat. 9°) N.N.E. of Abeokuta.‡ The best conventional name of the language, however, despite Mr. Koelle, is Yoruba; of the country's P.N. more anon.

All national salutations are tolerably ridiculous; the Englishman cannot laugh at the African except for his unreasonable ceremoniousness. As the old joke has it, 'How do you do?' can only be answered grammatically by 'Do what?' 'How do you find yourself?' by 'I never lost myself!' 'How do you feel?' by 'With my hands!' The Egbas, who are gifted with uncommon loquacity and spare time, have invented a variety of salutations and counter-salutations applicable to every possible occasion. For instance, Oji re, did you wake well? Akwaro, good morning! Akuasan, good day! Akwale, good even-

\* The inverted form of blessing would perhaps be more intelligible. The Somalis know our men as 'Godam,' and the Spaniards named their mustachios, from a favourite military oath, 'bigotes.'

† Captain John Adams (p. 92, &c.) gives a long notice of the Hios—he seems to have been hard on the letter *h*—and their king. He places the country between Hausa and Dahome, hardly believing that its army is 100,000 men, but declaring that its influence extends to the sea by way of Ardrah.

‡ The maps usually write it 'Eyeo.' It must not be confounded with Oyo, in Yoruba Proper, lying one degree N.N.E. (N. lat. 8°) of Abeokuta.

ing! Akware, to one tired. Akushe, to one at work. Akurin (from *rin*, to walk), to a traveller. Akule, to one in the house. Akwatijo, after a long absence. Akwalejo, to a stranger. Akurajo, to one in distress. Akujiko, to one sitting. Akudaro, to one standing. Akuta, to one selling. Wolebe (be careful!) to one met, and so forth. The servile *shashtanga* or prostration of the Hindus is also a universal custom. It is performed in different ways; the most general is, after depositing the burden, and clapping hands once, twice, or thrice, to go on all-fours, touch the ground with the belly and breast, the forehead and both sides of the face successively; kiss the earth, half rise up, then pass the left over the right fore-arm, and *vice versâ*, and finally, after again saluting mother Hertha, to stand erect. The inferior prostrates to the superior, the son to the mother, the younger to the elder brother, and I have been obliged to correct a Moslem boy of the evil practice of assuming a position in which man should address none but his Maker. The performance usually takes place once a day on first meeting, but meetings are so numerous that at least one hour out of the twenty-four must thus be spent by a man about town. Equals kneel, or rather squat, before one another, and snap the fingers in the peculiarly West African way, which seems to differ in every tribe.

As we advanced we saw unmistakable signs of idolatry. To many trees bits of pottery, snail shells—*Achatinæ* six inches long—were attached: a fence here consists of a few light sticks tied together with strings, from which these harmless articles were suspended. In places were pointed out to us a stalk of Indian corn with a yam or a gourd on the top. The idea is that, whoever touches these things, the disease or the misfortune of the placer will be transferred to him. There is the same superstition in Hindostan, and terrible tales of thus inoculating complaints are current amongst Europeans.\* There were broken pots full of fragments of crystallized quartz and iron conglomerate, which last is said to be a holy stone. A traveller piling a handful of sand upon his luggage leaves it under the protection of a medicine, or magic, which Mungo Park calls 'kwong.' A hatchet is placed in houses that have been lightning struck, and water is worshipped in small earthen pots, over which the women kneel and smite the palm of the hand with the fingers. We are reminded of Apuleius, who describes the traveller being delayed by 'an altar garlanded with flowers, or a cavern overshadowed with leaves, or an oak laden with horns, or a beech-

\* My friend Dr. Arnott, a surgeon in one of the East Indian regiments, showed me what appeared to be a true syphilitic sore, communicated to his horse, doubtless, by some native so afflicted.



preparation for Mr. Savage, a native merchant. Numbers of labourers were at work, for Africans, like Asiatics, are great at division of labour, which, indeed, they often so divide that the remainder is imperceptible. Some hoed a deep hole,—here as at Benin and in Sokoto, where they are scattered over the town, a standing nuisance,—which afterwards remains to be filled with rain and drainage, filth, offal, and sometimes with the corpse of a child or a slave. The effect of these pits upon the climate may easily be imagined. Another gang was working the clay, and converting it into the swish or dab required for the walls; whilst a third party was engaged in preparing grass thatch and palm leaves for the roof. When the actual building begins there will be one gang to carry clay balls to the scene of action, a second of labourers who fling the same balls into wall shape and pat them down, a third, boys and girls, who hand other balls from the ground or the scaffolding to the masons above, a trimmer to plumb and set things square with his wooden shovel, and finally thatchers to finish off. The shell is usually made in three horizontal layers, which must dry for a day or two in the sun and wind before receiving another addition; the builders, however, will await for the last touch the month of December, when the hard, dry breath of the harmattan will harden their work to the consistence of concrete.



This desert wind, which Captain Maury and his Ehrenberg bring from impossible places, is enjoyed like the Neapolitan scirocco by new comers, and is much feared by natives and old stagers. It is, therefore, supposed to be a giant, an African *Æolus*, who sits upon a mountain far in the interior, blowing dust and cold—the elements of discomfort—over the world.

Presently we arrived at the Aro, or the Badagry or the south-western gate. It is not unlike that of Agbameya, but, for valid reasons, it is, or rather it was, on a somewhat more extensive scale. Long quiet—lately broken—has, however, demoralized the people; ten years ago it was the same in Great Britain. The wall is hardly eight inches thick, there is no weather-thatch, the guard-house is almost in ruins, and the moat is a mere ditch. Victory has made the Egbas too secure.

But a truce to criticism. We are now upon classic ground, the local Marathon. Here was fought, on the 3rd of March, 1851, the great battle between the Dahomans and the Abeokutans. The quarrel was of old standing. Gezo, King of Idáhame, as the land of the Lord of Amazons is here called, had been defeated at Ado—a town nearly half-way between Badagry and Abeokuta—by the Ibashorun, or commander-in-chief, of Abeokuta; and he had lost,

besides the town, his stool, which in these regions means the throne. The Dahomans, holding themselves to be a military as well as a warlike nation—we have lately been lectured upon the distinction, which is no difference—and burning for revenge, determined to destroy Abeokuta, for which purpose they advanced with the full force of the empire.

Their plans were ill laid, and their boasted secrecy appears to have been a lamentable failure. Arrived at Ishagga, a small Egbado town fifteen to seventeen miles south-west of their destination, they were duped by special treaties, oaths, and sacrifices, and were persuaded to attack, not the north-western gate, which was the weakest, but the south-western, which had already been fortified. Their plans of a night surprise were also overruled by their treacherous allies, who persuaded them that midday would find the defenders either sleeping or working at their farms ; and finally, the Ishaggans pointed out a ford which wetted all the cartridges of their friends.

Baddahun or Glele,\* son of the late King Gezo of Baddahun Dahome, revenged this treachery, as he was expected to do. After patiently waiting ten years with annual threats against Abeokuta, which threw the people off their guard, he suddenly, in the spring

\* Baddahun, usually written Badohong, was his princely name ; Glele, or Gleti (the jawbone), is one of his strong names.

of 1862, fell upon Ishagga with a force not exceeding 6000 men — the town numbered about 3000 souls—massacred all he could not carry away, and departed, laden with prisoners, amongst whom were seventeen or eighteen Christian converts, and a Mr. Doherty of Sierra Leone, one of the Scripture readers of the Church Missionary Society.

The Rev. Mr. Bowen, missionary and quondam Texas ranger, who used, they say, a good rifle in the fight, thus describes the Dahoman attack of 1851 upon Abeokuta:—About noon, in the bright month of March, the Egbas, some 15,000 strong—these numbers must be taken *cum grano*—marched out of the Aro gate to meet the enemy. They then divided into three parties: the first proceeded to the ford on the Badagry road, the second, under Ogubonna, the bravest of the Baloguns, now deceased, crossed the river near the wall, and the third remained not far from the Aro gate. Meanwhile the Dahomans moved across the prairie with colours flying, in heavy columns, numbering 10,000 men\* and 6000 women. They also formed two divisions, one of which fell upon the Abeokutan force guarding the ford, whilst the other, under Gezo,† their king, charged furiously

\* Others say 8000 men and 4000 women, which is more likely.

† According to Mr. Freeman, a missionary, who has frequently visited Abome and Komasi, Gezo of Dahome was one of the greatest of African

upon Ogubonna, and drove him back upon the rocks and rapids of the Ogun River. Mr. Bowen sent the 3rd brigade to his support, when he rallied, and even made head against the enemy. The Abeokutans at the ford were also flung back by the Dahomans; they flocked, however, into the gate, and effectually checked the enemy, who, in this attack, were mainly ‘*Amazons.*’\* There had been some dispute between

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kings. He reigned some thirty-five years, and in 1858 died of fever. When Mr. Duncan—the Life-Guardsman—was sent to him as vice-consul, he was much pleased with the size of the person; but after a fortnight or so, he inquired of a friend why the King of England ‘did not send him a man with a head.’

\* Much nonsense is afloat touching these ‘*Amazons.*’ They are simply, like the Urdubegani of the Deccan and of other Asiatic courts, the slaves of the palace organized as royal property, and weaponed by the late King Gego—who feared treason from the men. Most of them are women taken in adultery or too shrewish to live with their husbands, who ‘dash’ them to the king, instead of killing them. Once, however, royal slaves they become vestals. They are bound, like the female priests of Grewhe, under penalty of death, to chastity and celibacy, and this naturally communicates a certain amount of ferocity to their minds—‘horrors’ are, with the eunuch, their succedaneum for love. Upon this subject I am tempted to quote a few lines from Captain John Adams (p. 74), who says of Dahome: ‘One of the conditions by which a female is admitted into the order of priesthood, is that of leading a life of celibacy, and renouncing the pleasures of the world; and but few are admitted to enter it at all; for during a residence of many months at Grewhe, one ceremony only of this kind was performed, at which I was present.

‘There is a striking similarity in the conditions imposed on those poor deluded African women who are admitted into the priesthood, and many of those nuns who in Catholic Europe are forced to take the veil; only the former are instruments in the hands of fraud and oppression, while

the male and female soldiery, and both laboured under considerable dissatisfaction: the latter had claimed the right to storm, which the former obtained, and were left to lose the day by their sulking rivalesses.

Then the women, fearing the taunts of the men, pressed hotly forwards, and many were killed close to

the others are too often the victims of domestic tyranny and ambition. But the lot of the savage African is far superior to that of the civilized European.' For the former, notwithstanding the restraints imposed on her, can enjoy the sweets of personal liberty, and has some scope for the play of her natural affections; whereas the latter is shut within the gloomy walls of a prison, where her short life is passed away in vain regret, and in the society of immolated beings who are as melancholy and desponding as herself.'

To which we may add, another advantage to the African woman, that her feelings, like those of barbarians and the uncivilized generally, are by no means so highly developed as amongst Europeans. A scanty diet, a life of toil, and the petty cares of domestic duties, blunt, if they do not destroy, the *besoin d'amour*. She is not even—

' Commanded

By such poor passion as the maid that milks,  
And does the meanest chares.'

Female soldiery, as a rule, is a failure; or rather, like female labour in all departments of industry, it produces a worse article at a cheaper rate. The Amazons, I believe, are no exception. They cannot be estimated at more than 2000, although many travellers—Dalziell, Cruickshanks, Winniett, Duncan, and Forbes—have raised the number to 4000, and even 6000. In the case of Messrs. Duncan and Forbes, the Amazons were marched round the palace yard, in at one and out at the other gate, like the commissariat cattle in Affghanistan. Captain John Adams (p. 93) mentions the same manœuvre on the part of the King of Hio (Yoruba), adding, 'This was a political stratagem that would hardly have been expected from an African savage.'

the gateway. Here, and here only, there was something like a stand-up hand-to-hand fight, muskets being clubbed for want of bayonets; the rest was all skirmishing. After six hours ensued a purely African scene. King Gezo's division rested upon the battlefield half-way between the Aro gate and the river, and Ogubonna's did the same. A resolute advance along the whole line, and a single charge by the one would have settled the fate of the other army—both preferred, however, to sleep upon the field. During the night King Gezo's division moved off, followed by the other Dahoman troops, carrying their wounded in orderly retreat. The Egbas, enraged by being attacked by women, pursued them hotly with discharges of musketry, galling their rear. At Ishagga the Dahomans faced about, fought for a while, and fled—the treacherous Ishaggans doing their best to destroy them.

Mr. Bowen estimates the Dahoman loss at 1200, others exaggerate it to 3000 killed and 1000 prisoners. Mr. Crowther, senior, counted 75 women and 5 men lying within a few yards between the river and the wall. As might be expected, the women suffered most; the flower of the army was believed to have perished. The Egbas' loss was comparatively trifling. The effect of the 'Battle of Aro' was to place in possession of the Egbas the Ogun River line



and direct communication with Lagos and the coast, the one thing needful to an African inland nation. The Dahomans have ever since been burning with rage, and loudly threatening revenge. Early in 1861 they collected another force—the number was set down at 22,000, which I would divide by three—and marched upon Abeokuta. On the road, however, small-pox broke out—it is said to have killed 8000 !—after which the remnant found their way home. The Abeokutans, before Gezo's attack, dreaded their foe ; and had, they say, resolved to burn their houses and bury themselves in the ruins rather than be taken alive. At present they despise him, and loudly boast of their power to ' whip ' him. Now, therefore, is their danger ; and if demoralized by relying upon English assistance rather than upon their own energies they may one day come to grief.

But Dahome, in its actual state, is to some extent a bugbear. The mighty warlike empire of which Bosman dimly heard, and even the strong military kingdom over which Gezo ruled, is now *en décadence*. Its very institutions must cause its decline : it lets its own blood, and, though the drops are few at a time, it cannot but suffer in the long run. The troops are poorly armed with trade muskets, ignorant of bayonets, and with short falchions of stuff like hoop-iron. The ' Amazons ' boast themselves invulnerable,



but readily retreat : an equal number of British charwomen, armed with the British broomstick, would—I lay, to speak Yorkishly—clear them off in very few hours.\* The male soldiery make, like the French, a noisy, fiery onslaught, but, repulsed with vigour, they do not readily return to the charge. Their wars are mere slave hunts; their object is to capture, not to kill, and surprises, not attacks, form their favourite strategy. The terrible reports current concerning Dahome and its ‘blood-stained despot’ may be traced to certain Europeans and Brazilians, whose interest it is to deter slave-emancipators from investigation. They have lately rumoured that the King of Dahome is resolved to capture an English officer to hold his stirrup. We hear occasionally of a white man being sent to Agbome, ‘rolled up like a cigar,’ and a certain M. Medeiros was, it is said, compelled, for punishment of his recusancy, to walk the way barefoot.† But these are slavers, who are thoroughly de-

\* It is, however, only fair to the Amazons to state, that Mr. Bowen, on the day after the battle, saw several hundreds of them lying dead on the field, where they had fought with great fury. Commander Forbes, on the other hand (vol. i., p. 81), says of the Dahoman army, ‘These soldiers, being yearly at war, have gained a fame that, if fairly tried, would soon be found wanting.’

† It is a dire insult to refuse the invitation of an African king to visit his capital. Captain John Adams (p. 63, &c.) tells how seven English seamen, cast ashore four or five miles from ‘Grewhe,’ were sent up ninety miles to the king at Agbome. One man, affecting lameness to escape the

spised by the king, and who, he knows, must eat any dirt to please him. It is, however, a fact that neither Baddahun nor Gezo, his father, ever put to death a white man. We have no good modern account of this interesting despotism. Commander Forbes is said to have copied from previous publications. There is no doubt that a man well conversant with Africa, and known to have friendly intentions—Mr. M'Coskry of Lagos, for instance—would find no difficulty in visiting and in returning safe from Dahome. I would gladly accompany him.\*

At the several gates of Abeokuta octroi or customs are raised. The two articles most taxed are cowries and corn—the latter taken in kind. Other sources of revenue are police dues, trade taxes on imports and exports, *corvée* or forced labour—the *begar* of India—

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journey, 'had his hands and feet tied together, and a pole introduced between them, and in this way they were going to Abomey; when, to avoid so painful an alternative, he found the use of his limbs, and marched along with his unfortunate companions.' They seem all to have been well treated at the capital. The king tried, by promises and threats, to persuade the man who had affected lameness to stay with him. But when the fellow answered that, '“if his shipmates went away without him he would destroy himself,” the king seemed to feel uneasy at this, and consulted one of his principal men, who advised him to permit the man to return with his companions, which was granted.'

\* This was written in 1861. At present (Feb. 1863) we hear that Commodore Wilmot, Captain Luce, and Dr. Haran have set out on a journey to Agbome, where I may venture to predict they will be received as honoured guests.

and, on emergency, an impost equivalent to five shillings on each household. It is by no means easy to ascertain the amount of Asiatic or African revenue ; the missionaries, however, set down that of Abeokuta at one per cent. These decidedly moderate proceeds belong not to the Alake, or king, but to the chiefs ; a system which the local paper, the 'Iwe Irohin,' thinks—with scanty popular good-will in consequence—should be altered. The change would possibly strengthen the hands of the monarch, who certainly requires support ; on the other hand, it would lengthen interregnums, which are already long enough. The late Mr. Consul Foote strongly advised the Abeokutans to place an impost upon imports, but to send out exports free of tax. They did not agree—nor can we wonder, as Lagos has since followed their example—on the same principle as England prefers the unjust income-tax to the just property-tax or capital-tax. For in Abeokuta, as in England, the law-giver would lose by doing justice to the law-receiver.

Beyond the Aro gate superstition again shows itself. The adit and the exit are by two parallel but separate paths. At Agbome one thoroughfare would be for royal, the other for public convenience ; here, however, one is used each month, and if an accident happens it is charged to the wrong path, much as in England the day's good or bad temper depends upon

putting the right or the left foot first out of bed. The grass waved tall and lush over the Dahoman clay; the expanse was broken by sundry graves, some thatched over like dwarf or 'fause houses,' others had a rude cross, to which articles of clothing were suspended, and an elephant's jawbone—the buried man's idol—hung over the huntsman, who, like the fisherman, must be buried outside the walls. These two crafts form separate guilds, which almost become castes, worship the god Ogun, and meet in separate Ogboni lodges.

About a mile and a half along the Badagry road—a mere pathway worn by market-people in the bush—placed us at Aro. It is the port and landing-place of Abeokuta in the rainy season; during the dry season, from the end of November to the middle of March, Agbameya is preferred. The outlying village already shows signs of civilization in a ferry, palm-oil puncheons, and cask-houses. Messrs. M'Coskry and Wike, and M. Bergmeyer and Scala, with Robbins, the agent, have depôts there, and they will probably be followed by others. A little above Aro we see the ridge of slabs and boulders which, stretching with breaks across the river, render its rapids un-navigable. The material of the obstruction is a gneiss, banded with thin lines of snowy quartz, and substratified, the strata being for the most part highly

tilted up. Portages are useless, for these rapids perpetually recur. The banks of the Ogun are here perpendicular, and composed of stiff clay; in Egypt, as in Asia, they would be sonorous with the sakiyah or Persian wheel; in this place they are silent.

After sitting for a few minutes in the house of a negro, who politely offered us a dram of trade rum, which was as politely declined, we found by the stinging sun that it was time to re-start, if we intended to reach Ake at 9 A.M. On the way we passed a young person in great distress. She had dropped her pot of black oil,\* worth at least four heads of cowries† equal to seven shillings—no small loss to the poor devil—and she was expressing her grief in the long, loud song which I remember in the Lake Regions of Central Africa. Tears rolled down her sable cheeks, yet in the intervals of sobbing it would flow on, that curious bawling cry which one unaccustomed would take to be the expression of lively joy. It is long before the European ear distinguishes between the sounds of mirth and the voice of woe proceeding from Asiatic

\* The palm-kernel oil, which is so fast becoming an important article of traffic, is of two kinds. The white oil is that expressed from the kernel after it has been cracked. The black oil is that which drips through the husk when toasted with the kernel inside. This is done to save labour. As yet no efficient crusher has been invented, consequently every kernel must be broken by manual labour. When machinery shall be invented, the trade will assume a new standing. It is now worth 50*l.* per ton.

† One head of cowries, = 1*s.* 9*d.*, here keeps a man for a week.

and African lips. Returning through 'Do-the-bachelors-good,' we found the market warm, as the Hindostanis say. At a distance we heard a murmur like that of a distant sea, and as we sighted the open sheds that form the bazar it swelled to a roar. The market opens from dawn till 9 P.M.; it is fullest, however, a little before sunset, and the more industrious light lamps, instead of going home with the darkness. The bazar is a great institution in Yoruba, and, indeed, throughout the Nigerian Valley. It is also a civilizing agent, and by giving occupation to the women—it is disreputable for them to work on the farms, but not to carry the produce for sale—it tends to repress disorders. Porters are a hardly-used race in this region: men carry 40 lbs. to 80 lbs. burden for weeks' journeys, and the women may be seen staggering, as if about to faint, under a bale of cotton 112 lbs. in weight. Men were tramping off towards the seat of war, sixty miles distant, laden with all manner of provisions, which they bore upon the head, not, like East Africans, upon the shoulder. The burden is fastened to a neat wicker-work cradle, flat, and garnished with side handles. I would suggest to bumpkins, who take hours in driving a recusant pig to market, the advisability of lashing it to a plank—should no better conveyance be procurable—and of carrying it upon the head. We are once more in the



land of caravans: they number hundreds or thousands, each man carrying his sleeping-mat, cotton-sheet, or wrapper, provision bag, and earthen pipkin, to warm the 'kitchen' for his maize or yam; and they are old, expert travellers. They make when starting the *nakl safar*, as the Arabs call the short, initiatory march, at Atade, on the Ibadan, and Awoyade, on the Badagry road.\*

Under the long rows of umbrella-trees sat a multitude of black women—selling appears to be their peculiar privilege—with scions of every age, from the big-eyed babe hardly a week old to the bold bare bairn aged ten. Cowries were placed near the goods, and, as in the Egyptian coffee-house, the buyer's honour is trusted. The principal articles were provisions for present consumption, hardware, dry goods, earthenware, and 'notions.' Of the former, we found ready-made soups, obbe or palaver sauce—so called because eaten in council—which, by the mixture of mulook-hiyah (*Corchorus olitorius*), reminds us of Egypt;†

\* So travellers from Badagry pass the first night at Mo, a place not far distant from the sea.

† It is almost as complicated as the Hindu's curry, though far inferior in delicacy of taste. The material is fish, flesh, and boiled fowl, with yam or koko, flavoured with onions or shalots, ground cocoa-nut, malaguetta and other peppers, red and green okros or occros (*Hibiscus esculentus*) in large quantities, and lastly, refined palm oil, which gives the *gowt*. In black man's palaver sauce they insert 'affitti' or 'ogiri,' a condiment about as aromatic as bad asafœtida.



ekko or mush; huge snail shells, here relished as much as in Sierra Leone; kankie or maize cakes, and fufu balls of levigated corn or boiled yam; grated cassava or 'wood flour,' as it is generally called—a favourite, because on journeys this farina can be mixed up with cold water and eaten without cooking—balls of beans ground on a stone, mixed with spices, and placed to fry in purified black oil; dried rats; pots of black and yellow palm oil, here far cleaner than in the Oil Rivers; shea or tree butter, which will become one of the most considerable of Africa's many products;\* sesamum oil; cereals of sorts, especially Indian and Guinea corn; eggs, terapins, and dried fish from Lagos, especially shrimps; Telfaria seeds;† pink kola nuts, displayed on a white napkin, neatly covering a basket; ground-nuts or pindar, the *pistache* of old French travellers, and now called *arachide*; tobacco of sorts, chiefly Brazilian; wet goods and drinkables, such as palm wine and *pitto, oli*, or native beer, and well-diluted rum,‡ which

\* Of this valuable nut more hereafter.

† They are oleaginous, and produced by a gourd one to two feet long, growing upon a climber.

‡ The 'pombo' of Eastern Africa. Maize is here macerated for three days, till germination takes place. It is then spread on leaves for fermentation, sun-dried on mats, and bruised. Mixed with cold water, in a pot, it is well stirred for two hours, and boiled for twenty-four hours; on the next day it is again boiled, and afterwards strained, cooled, and stored in calabashes.

is sold by men ; ‘ bullock milk for true ;’ \* fruits mostly relished by Europeans—okpaimbo, ‘ the white man’s palm,’ *i. e.*, pine-apples, bananas, papaws, oranges, known as the white ‘ man’s mango,’ † and water-melons, which are exceedingly poor ; condiments, pepper and bud pepper, ginger and other spices ; and various vegetables, sweet potatoes, kokos, okros (*Hibiscus esculentus*), sugar-cane and onions, especially the bulbless sort, called chives in England and violet onions in India. The hardware was represented by bracelets of brass, iron, ‡ tin, and copper ; § and ‘ Europe goods,’ knives and cutlasses, scissors and pins, needles, hoes and bill-hooks. The dry goods were raw silks, broadcloths, and velvets, of which the green are preferred ; country cloths of grass and various fibres, some composed of pieces not broader than a riband, and sewn together ; calico, shirtings, and cottons of sorts ; red, blue, and white tapes ; Hausa and other caps ; ropes and lines ; threads, especially red ; yarns and reels of cotton. The leather-work was excellent ; black and white, red and yellow, like that of Morocco ; and the people make good flasks and saddle-straps, saddles and embroidered cushions. The earthenware was not remarkable ; gourds and cala -

\* This is Anglo-Africa for cow’s milk.

† The mango seems to have been known here of old.

‡ Tolerable native iron is brought from the northern country.

§ Copper is said to be found in the mountains to the east of Abeokuta.

bashes, some of them neatly and prettily carved with the knife, serving for crockery, earthen bowls, and china cups, plates, and dishes. There was a vast variety of beads, sold singly or by the string, and native imitations composed of broken palm-kernels and jasper. The 'notions' were balls of dirty soap, snuff-boxes, gunpowder, and ammunition; chalk, found on the Ijaye road; tobacco, roll and leaf; snuff; balls of indigo and liquid dye; camwood pounded with water and moulded into lumps; horse and cow dung, here used for plastering floors and walls; little cones of native salt, nitre, or saltpetre; baskets of leaves, used as brown paper for wrapping; provisions and firewood, brought by the women six to eight miles from the bush; stationery of various sorts; brooms, baskets, raw cotton, and cowries, in any number. Briefly, it was a heterogeneous mass, whose combined aroma on a warm morning and an empty stomach, after eight miles of sunny walk, was as startling to the olfactories as the awful hubbub—chiefly feminine and infantine—of saluting and laughing, squabbling and cursing, hailing, and howling, was to the auditory nerves. Pure swearing is European, not Asiatic or African. They anathematize, however, idiomatically enough, as—'Oro (the devil) take you!' 'Egugun (king of ghosts) chop you!' 'May you die in the bush!' *i.e.*, remain unburied, whereas every man hopes to die in, or

rather on, his bed; 'May small-pox kill you!'<sup>\*</sup> reminding one of an English exclamation now working itself out. And as usual amongst barbarians, the mother and the female relatives are abused with an indecency which beggars description. We lost no time in making the best of our way out of the range of 'Do-the-bachelors-good.'

On the day of our arrival, Mr. Williams, a most forward specimen of the 'nigger,'—these people can be respectful until spoiled by Europeans, after which they are insufferable—had been sent to announce to H.M. the Alake, the great fact of Commander Bedingfield having arrived at Abeokuta, and to request an audience *au plutôt possible*. The king was pleased to reply that he would see us on the next day, Saturday, shortly after 10 A.M. The walk to Aro, therefore, led directly to a toilette for the levée.

But 10 A.M. sped, then 11, then 12. Various messages went and came; still the great man's dignity required us to wait, and 1 P.M. had struck before we were permitted to hope for the possibility of beholding him. Under these circumstances, had it been my 'palaver,' I should have deferred the visit till 3 P.M.,

<sup>\*</sup> There is also an independent expletive—'Small-pox!' ejaculated as if the speaker believed in the Sitla Devi, or the small-pox goddess of India. Yet the disease is rarely fatal in these parts, as on the sea-board west of and about Lagos.

and I should not have appeared before 5 P.M. I have no doubt that more civility would have been the result, and that the impression would have lasted longer. But this is to lecture omniscience. Armed with umbrellas—here they represent the ‘quality’—we walked over the few hundred yards that separate the palace from the mission compound of Ake. We were suddenly told that we had arrived; turned to the left into a ragged clay house, long and rambling, with a shallow verandah formed by posts supporting the eaves, under which female slaves, called—to magnify his importance—king’s wives, sat before articles for sale. The establishment was as mean-looking for Abeokuta as is St. James’s for London. Stooping to avoid injuring the coronal region, we crossed a hollow court-yard, in which there was nothing remarkable beyond a peculiarly neat pair of stocks, we entered through a second gate, an inner and a smaller court, and there we found a cluster of negroes seated at squat *sub divo* to receive us.

We naturally looked around for the presence-chamber, when we were motioned to bend double, and thus to insert ourselves under the long, low verandah that subtended the side of the inner court. Five hexagonal columns of ultra-Egyptian massiveness, and about four feet high, divided the house-wall behind the verandah into as many compartments.

Of these 'loose boxes' the two at either end were open, leading into the house; the three central were masked by a native cloth; in the middle was an old brocade bed-hanging—behind which we were told lay H.M., invisible—and lastly, was a curtain of scarlet velvet. The Awajali of Ijebu Ode is never allowed to see or to converse with strangers, except through his ministers; and that the cabinet may have it all their own way, when the monarch dies, all the *personnel* is carefully put to death. The whole space, including the columns, was 'beautifully black, like the rain-cloud,' as the Egbas say, with horse or cow-dung, mixed with some leaf which may be indigo. This is the gobar of India, and though it is unknown in Eastern, it has been observed in Western Africa.\* Happily we had brought our own chairs; the palace contains, I am told, but two, and we had time indeed to sit. The rest of the verandah was full of chiefs, 'niggers,'† and a few Moslems, a total of about one hundred and fifty, and all adult males. Never have I seen such villainous crania and countenances as amongst the seniors of Abeokuta. Their

\* 'A singular custom prevails here (Ardrah), that of anointing, occasionally, the interior walls of houses with fresh cow-dung; a useful practice, for it dries quickly, has by no means an unpleasant smell, and fills up crevices which would otherwise be tenanted by noxious and troublesome insects.'—(Captain John Adams, p. 81.)

† In these lands, 'nigger' always means a slave.



calvaria depressed in front, and projecting cocoa-nut-like behind, the absence of beards, the hideous lines and wrinkles that seamed and furrowed the external parchment, and the cold, unrelenting cruelty of their physiognomies in repose, suggested the idea of the eunuch torturers erst so common in Asia. One felt the same *frisson* at the sight as when looking upon the Gallic ladies who, in rainy weather, haunt the County Fire Office at the end of Regent Street, and one was sure that from pity or mercy it would be as well to address the wounded mandril. I afterwards observed the same amongst the elders of Benin, and I should not be surprised to find it at Agbome and Komasi. The atrocities which these ancients have witnessed, and the passion which they have acquired for horrors, must have set the mark of the beast upon their brows. There was not a vestige of splendour. The chiefs were bareheaded, naked to the waist, wholly unornamented, except with a few cheap beads, and clothed with a common native loin wrap, or a bit of unbleached 'domestics.' To retain wealth in such lands requires care and caution : an ostentatious man, however rich, will die poor.

We were beginning to wax impatient at this impertinent blending of misery and pretentiousness, when it was suggested that H.M.'s linguist, alias Mr. Wilhelm, the Church Missionary interpreter, had



not appeared—a fresh reason for standing upon ceremony. It is contrary to etiquette for an Alake to show himself too freely either to his people or to strangers: the King of Oyo, at the first interview, remains hidden behind the curtain, and the Alaketu or chief of Iketu is known by a hole in the wall. Mr. Wilhelm is one of the earliest Egba recaptives who left Sierra Leone for Abeokuta: he has remained faithful amongst the faithless, and whilst the others have relapsed into the wildest heathenry, he has become the senior ‘Christian visitor’—*il a passé caporal sur le champ de gloire*. To quiet us, I suppose, a very dirty table of plain deal was set opposite H.M.’s bed-hanging; presently it was invested with an unwashed native cloth, and, lastly, after a long delay, it was richly spread with two wash-hand basins. One was ‘blue mandarin,’ the other, French Faïence, coarser than majolica, true pot-house appointments, in each of which were two tumblers and two wine-glasses—the materials for a carouse—at midday in the tropics!—then came upon the *tapis* four bottles of maraschino, prepared for commerce; an ordinary high-shouldered, black gin-bottle, containing the normal mixture of vitriol, turpentine, and aqua pura; two large case-bottles of Brazilian rum, the offal of molasses, which, however, these people prefer to the Jamaica; and water in a ‘lustre jug,’ as the trade calls

it, a thing of obsolete make and colour, such as thirty years ago was common in English farm-houses.

All this splendour, however, did not so dazzle us as to make us forget that H.M. was treating us most slightly, and our murmurs were not spared. At length, the confidential young slave who had drawn the corks, and who bore a bunch of keys, European and country made, and large enough for half a dozen chatelaines, drew back the old brocade bed-hanging. Thereupon H.M. appeared, encaged, like Clapperton's portrait of the Bornuese Sultan; or, to choose a comparison nearer home, like a denizen of one of the larger dens in the Zoological Gardens. The shape and appearance of the apartment was exactly that of Mr. Punch, magnified perhaps a score of times; and it was a hole in the wall, under whose outside verandah we were sitting. The loose box was full of women and children, probably part of H.M.'s fine family. He is said to have twelve young and fifty old wives, but lately he has ceased to be a father, and is disposed, it is whispered, to resent any symptoms of impending paternity. One of the spouses sat before him, fanning him with a circle of hairy cowhide rudely set in a hairy handle, differing from the flag-shaped instrument of the further east. She wore a strand of red coral, and an indigo-dyed loin wrap, about which she was needlessly coquettish.

In the verandah, dangling over the Alake's head, were two Moslem charm-calabashes, covered apparently with many-coloured threads, white and red, light blue and dark blue, with hangings of written characts and talismans—their appearance was not familiar to me. The right arm of majesty reposed upon a long bolster covered with crimson silk velvet; and two mats, whose ends projected into the verandah, supported the portly person, which was disposed in a free and easy way upon the dexter side, with the limbs lazily drawn up. Upon the mat ends were placed a huge leathern cowrie purse, not unlike the old French *gibecière*; the royal stick, so enriched with beads that the material was invisible; an artful animal—done in cotton, with a harlequin suit of beads—intended for a dog, but resembling an armadillo; two chauris, or fly-flaps, of white oxtail—H.M. held a third, which rejoiced in a handle of beads—and a pair of unsheathed swords. One was a blade like the ancient falchion with which the Osmanli captured Rhodes, only it had a brass head of some beast, found possibly in heaven above, but certainly not on the earth below. The other was an antique Toledo, much worn down, but still bearing in distinct letters the noble Castilian motto, 'No me trajas sin razon;' on the other side, 'No me degaines sin honor.' Weapons of this kind often travel far: when the

18th Regiment, Bombay N. I., attacked and defeated the Beni Bu Ali Bedouins near Maskat, they found amongst the spoils, European swords, daggers, and gun-barrels, which had been handed down as heir-looms from generation to generation.

Such was the setting that enclosed the picture. The picture itself was as curious. Okukeno, Alake of Abeokuta, is said to be between sixty and seventy years old, and his contemporary, Ogubonna, had been a balogun, or high military officer, which implies an elderly man, during the Egba dispersion, some forty-five years ago. His head, partially shaven, and his beard, were grizzled; but judging from the plumpness of his arms, and the absence of wrinkles, Dr. Eales and I concluded that he was not much beyond fifty. He was a large and massive man, blind of one eye, which imprudently encountered a stone when attempting to arrest a faction fight; heavy featured, coarse, and unprepossessing. The loss of his upper teeth, except the canines, which recalled the Wild Boar of Ardennes' fangs, caused a disagreeable indentation of the upper lip; the lower incisors have been destroyed by snuff, and the tongue-tip habitually protruded in a manner the reverse of kingly. Altogether he suggested the idea of an old, very damaged and very rickety lion. His dress was a tall fez-like cap of crimson velvet, disfigured by a pendant fringe

of small blue porcelain beads round the upper third.\* A necklace of red coral—pink is little valued by these lovers of the gorgeous—and a double string of the same material round each wrist, were the regal ornaments. This fondness for coral seems to have been borrowed from Benin, where even in Bosman's day it was a decoration of state. His only body-cloth which appeared in view was a toga, of white watered silk, striped with broad crimson bands; and it sat upon him incongruously enough. His manner was as peculiar as his audience-chamber and his appearance. He seemed more than three parts asleep, and we could never decide whether the cause was old age, affectation of dignity, or the two greenish glasses of strong waters placed before him on a silver or silvered tray, now lead-coloured for want of plate-powder.

There are four tribes that have the right of giving what is called a king to the Egba nation, viz., Ake, Oshelle, Olewu, and Aguru. His Majesty of Abeokuta belongs to the first. His predecessor was that Shodeke of Ake who rose to power amongst his countrymen in time to 'consolidate the heterogeneous mass,' and to prevent the old blood-feuds breaking out afresh. Of the consolidator's virtues all have

\* Shodeke, concerning whom more anon, wore, we are told by Mr. T. B. Freeman, a scarlet cloth coat and a large blue tassel.

something to say. Europeans speak respectfully of him, and his people almost worship him, as the Egyptians do Mohammed Ali Pasha — no great advantage to his successor. Shodeke dying in 1845, his brother Someye, the Ibashorun, premier, or commander-in-chief, was made temporary ruler of Abeokuta. After his death there was a hard race between Okukeno and his coeval Ogubonna. The former, however, had raised himself to the rank of sagbwa, or dictator. Having followed for years the plough, or rather the hoe, and at times acted as basket-maker—the Egbas are essentially farmers, whilst the Ijebus are traders—he had acquired the art of seeming humble. He had also the reputation of being poor—the usual affectation amongst ambitious chiefs—whilst he was rich in land and slaves. Thus the ‘mild and amiable sagbua,’ as a writer very wrongly calls him, had the cunning to defeat his rival, and in 1854 he was invested with the title of Alake, an honour never conferred upon an Egba prince since the great dispersion of the people. But he is waxing old; his lieges are weary of him; there is a report that he has made too much money, and signs appear that his subjects will send him a quiet message to ‘go and sleep.’ \*

\* Which is the polite way of directing him to retire to his harem, and then and there to poison himself, unless he wishes a worse fate. This



The Alake is usually of calm and quiet demeanour, capable, however, of showing strong excitement, perfectly inveterate in vengeance, never forgetting and never forgiving, ever plotting and biding his time—an excellent thing in an African monarch. The following instance is given of his patience under injurious treatment: When the waggish savage Ogodippe, war chief of Ikijá—during the troubles at Lagos he sided with Akitoye against Kosoko, killed several Brazilian traders, and kidnapped a number of people—was reproved by the Alake, he arose, walked round him, and insulted him as anointed king was never insulted before, ending by asking if more was required. The Alake made no reply, but, *ultâ mente reponens*, stored up the injury for future discussion, and waits, like Saadi's derwaysh, till he gets the insulter into his power.

When the curtain was raised, we were severally introduced by the interpreter, Lagos Williams, and Commander Bedingfield shook hands with the Alake. Our 'mouf,' as the linguist is here called, then opened the 'palaver' with sundry set and

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constitutional proceeding is the Harikari, or 'happy release' of the Japanese, and in practice is not unknown in Europe. In Africa, hasty deposition is checked, however, by the custom of slaying openly, or secretly, the high officer called the 'king's father,' and other great chiefs, to meet him in Orun or Hades. Since the above was written the Alake died on the 1st September, 1862.



dreadfully sententious sentences; for example, that the Oibo, or white man, had come up from Lagos at the king's request; that *vivâ voce* was the best method of communication; that he hoped all would be well, and so forth.

In reply the Alake hung down his head, and affected to doze, which, to say the least, was not polite. No one had ever seen him so surly; many of the chiefs, therefore, had refused to attend, saying that the Alake must settle his own quarrels. The few then present attempted to encourage him by ejaculating certain words in an abrupt metallic tone, and one man, distinguished as a sycophant, sang out, 'Ai-ku, don't die!' \* in a strain which still haunts certain fibres of my brain. The curtain was presently let down, and those outside began a new set of outlandish noises. Some uttered blessings; others beat the left breast with the right hand; whilst others, by joining the palms and sharply drawing back the two smaller fingers of the left hand, produced a snapping, which in this land signifies approval. All this apparatus was, we were told, provoked by the solemn occasion of the great man taking snuff. The ceremony was punctually repeated whenever the king drank, and his glass was tasted preliminarily by

\* Mr. Hughes thought the word was 'Ekun' (a leopard), one of the king's strong names, but he was in error.

the confidential slave with the keys. The Egbas rob their rulers of as much of the reality, and leave them as much of the unreality of rule—the pomp and ceremony—as possible. This custom of concealing the king on such occasions appears to result from a compound idea. In some African places, as at Loango, the person of the ruler is so sacred that it is death to see him eat or drink. In other parts it is supposed that a man is most obnoxious to witchcraft when eating, drinking, and sleeping.

After an unconscionable time for digesting the last speech, there arose an old man, whose wrinkled face and dwindled stomach showed fully his sixty years. His dress was a white loin-cloth, a necklace of beads, and a leather talisman, like a ‘grigri bag,’ with two gold or brass rings sewn to its front. He was the Akpesi or Prince of Ikemta, one of the Abeokutan townships, the only other man of the same rank being the Apesi of Eruwan. The ‘king’s mouth,’ or, as he would be called further south, ‘ole parrot,’ is celebrated for eloquence and for a Sancho Panza-like knowledge of proverbs, and readiness in the use of them. He is therefore a useful man, but the whites declare that he is not to be trusted. He presently stood up, and without once referring to his master, delivered himself of a long speech, with frequent repetitions, the words ‘ki’ (signifying ‘salutation’)

and 'gi-di gi-di' ('very well') being the most ear-catching. At the peroration he expressed the gladness of the Alake to see and welcome us at the capital; as for himself, he rubbed his bony hands on his lean stomach to show the yearning of his own proper bowels towards us. After which he sat down with the air of a man who can afford to say Dixi.

Commander Bedingfield rejoined with many thanks and return salutations, at the same time insinuating a wish that the 'palaver' might 'come up'—in other words, to do something more than talkie-talkie.

The 'king's mouth' again arose, welcomed us with even more effusion than before, repeated a prodigious number of 'ki's' and 'gi-di gi-di's,' and concluding by hinting that this was the happiest day in Abeokuta's life—a day to drink, and chat, and make merry, leaving the future to take care of itself, though he owned that it—the future—was the properest time to work.

'The captain' accepted frankly and freely all offers of conviviality, but ventured to represent that as the morrow would be Sunday—a *dies non*—and as he could not afford to be long absent from his seat of government, H.M.S. 'Prometheus,' it might be as well to settle upon the next day but one for business purposes. Much, too, of the same kind.

The reply was again superlatively polite, agreeing to everything, except to fixing a day, which would to a certain extent be derogating.

Then the carousing began. My companions thought it their duty to imbibe some vile stuff in the shape of strong waters. I remembered Sir William Temple, who, when sent on a diplomatic mission to the Netherlands, kept a friend to make head against the Dutchmen in beer. They were then induced to swallow some of the 'king's sweet wine,' and by their looks it was apparent that they had not found it either Tokay or Lunel. All the bottles were opened with a perfect disregardlessness of expense, the Akpesi himself handing the tumblers of rum to the assembled crowd, each of whom sipped, and sent on. When any one passed the presence, he prostrated himself as ceremoniously as one kneels during presentation in London. After the drinking, we wanted to depart—I especially, who, after drawing out my sketch-book, had, at the request of those present, been obliged to put it out of sight. We were delayed, however, by the non-arrival of the king's 'dash,' or present; and when it came it proved to be a sheep, a goat, and a bag of cowries—the latter now worth about eighteen shillings.\* Three cases of excellent Hollands—far too good for such

\* In 1863 it has diminished to fifteen shillings.

mouths—were afterwards forwarded as a counter-gift, two to the chiefs, and one to the Christian converts.

After expressing gratitude for the king's liberality, we arose, shook hands, or rather squeezed palms, with the great man, whose temper seemed to have been mollified by his potations, and we left the hole—terribly hot it was—without delay.

The audience did not impress me favourably. Having heard much of progress and civilization at Abeokuta, I hardly expected to meet there the poorest reception on the West African coast. Presently I remembered that only twenty years ago the people of Egba had emerged from a low state of barbarism, and had become acquainted with the outer world through a few half-caste and European missionaries. Still my opinion is that their social state—which is about equal to that of the Bhils and Coolies of Guzerat—has been grossly misrepresented in England, and that they have been petted into believing themselves far superior to what they are.

The sulkiness of the old king, we afterwards heard, arose partly from a correspondence which had lately taken place. 'The captain,' in a letter which he addressed from the 'Prometheus,' Lagos, 3rd October, 1861, introduced the following effective words touching a 'gross insult offered to her Majesty's representative and to himself:—

‘ It seems to me that surely the Alake and chiefs cannot be aware of the purport of their letter.

‘ If they are so, I would ask them a question or two, and request they will answer me.

‘ Has England done anything for Abeokuta to entitle her representative to offer his advice without being insulted ?

‘ Is Abeokuta so strong that she will never more require the assistance of England, and that she can safely defy her power ?

‘ Does she consider it safe to pull the whiskers of a sleeping lion ?’

This style, of course, appeared to the writer peculiarly impressive, Oriental, likely to come home to the feelings of the Africans, whom he knew so well. It wanted, however, the first recommendation of style—intelligibility. The first two questions were queer enough. Abeokuta, like other barbarous kingdoms, believes herself to be the strongest and greatest nation in the world ; she may own that England has bigger canoes than she has, but she owns no belief in our superiority by land.\* The third was a perfect enigma—a conundrum would have been more intelligible. Lions love the liberty of desert sands ; they will not venture into the damp, dark forests of Guinea,† and—zoological gardens have not yet been introduced into Ake. So the simple Alake inquired what is a lion ? And some

\* I have repeatedly heard the same assertion from the lips of the cowardly Krumen.

† The king of beasts is found above Macarthy’s Island, in the Gambia River, and Lander mentions him in Barba and Upper Yoruba. Mr. Bowen ignores his existence east of the Ogun River.

Sierra Leone 'gentleman' had read in a book that it was the 'king of beasts.' 'But what are his whiskers?' It was suggested that he probably wore a beard. 'Then, what the dickens'—or something to the same purport—asked poor Okukeno, justly indignant at being taken for a low caste huntsman, 'have I to do with plucking the beast's beard?'

It is, I confess, intolerably presumptuous in me to offer suggestions to those who are so much better acquainted with the African than myself. But in a few words, when the object is to *embrouiller* an affair in this part of the world, there is nothing better than a letter. On the other hand, if a peaceful solution of the question at issue be required, a trusty messenger, or, better still, a personal interview, is the one thing needful. The only interpreters of letters will be either Sierra Leone men, or perhaps white confidants. The chances are that both are imperfectly acquainted with one of the two languages, and the certainty is that both will have their own ends to serve.

After leaving the presence, we visited another place between the Alake's palace and the Ogbone Lodge of Ake—the state prison. It was then unusually empty. The captives, mostly women and mere boys, sat under a verandah, with their ankles fast in the stocks, which are a pair of horse-shoe shaped iron



staples fitting closely round the limb, and with the points driven into a heavy wooden billet. Our object was to see an African Gasparini, an Egba, who, after having been sold four times for various crimes, had as often escaped, and returned to his own country. At midnight of Thursday last he had hid himself in the house of the agent Robbins, and after collecting his plunder in a blanket, he had sat down to supper with the effrontery of a London 'cracksman.' The master of the house came in, when his visitor seized his knife and stabbed two of the servants before he could fairly be secured. This time, men say, he may again escape; intercession will save the most notorious offender; and effectually I did not hear of his execution. The punishment for theft is here severe, as amongst the Moroccans; at first, the bastinado, then mutilation, and lastly death. In Africa the penalty of robbery ought to be heavier than that of murder, the former offence being frightfully prevalent, whilst the latter is comparatively rare. A few men hung for stealing even trifles would soon make an African settlement safe from all attempts upon property—always provided that the doom is certain, not 'problematical, as in the native states. At Abeokuta executions are seldom public, and they follow conviction somewhat too closely to please European ears. The work is usually done at night,

in the king's compound; a peculiar sound of the drum at the time, and next morning a fresh skull nailed to one of the trees opposite the palace, are the sole announcers of the event. 'Ilejo,' the present Calcraft, is said to strike the victim with a club, like the old Italian *ammazatore*, and the head is then severed from the body.

After the first 'palaver' was duly concluded, we returned to the house of Mr. Wike, and refreshed. Presently appeared a deputation sent by the Christian converts, and headed by another Williams—the name is here as common as in Wales—not an interpreter, but a Church Missionary schoolmaster. The several orders of this hierarchy are, beginning from the lowest, the Christian visitor; he goes about and flushes the game, which is then handed for training and reclaiming to the schoolmaster and the catechist—natives all. Above them begins the white rule of deacons and priests. This Williams had been acting secretary to the Alake, and in that capacity he had addressed to the acting governor of Lagos a letter full of low, puerile impertinence, which was naturally supposed to express the bile and venom of the breed. Mr. M'Coskry, by systematically denouncing slavery, and by taking more active measures, had incurred all the enmity of these recaptives. But Williams showed a tolerable reputation; he was not known

to feel any special grudge against the Acting Governor; he was a schoolmaster, and therefore could hardly be expected to write idiomatic English; and lastly, it was evident, even by his conversation, that a little learning had made him mad, like most of his compatriots, in the way of fine words. So when Williams showed due contrition, his error was set down to the score of ignorance, and he was dismissed with Lord M——'s 'short answer.'

Horses were brought to us for sale. I saw nothing at Abeokuta but the poorest ponies, twelve hands or so high, neatly enough made, but liable to disease, and uncommonly vicious. One, however, was a Borneo horse, with the high withers that characterize the breed, and the lowest price was set down at twenty-eight bags (about twenty-five pounds), in a country where money is worth four times as much as in Europe. The animal, moreover, was miserably thin, and the experienced determined that something must be wrong, or that it would not have been for sale. Good horses used to be brought down the country from Yoruba; since the war, however, the Ilorins and Ibadans, like Abbas Pasha of Egypt, have laid an embargo and a prohibitory duty upon exporting them. Even an Englishman would be compelled to obtain permission from the chief. The war has greatly raised the price of beasts; they are

in all about six hundred, and the best have been sent to the camp. Yet the warriors on both sides are ignorant of the simplest forms of cavalry, and this arm, if introduced, would soon decide the fortunes of the field.

Ponies formerly cost two bags, or thirty-six shillings. The same now sell for fifteen to twenty bags; even a colt of known name will fetch that price. A tolerable nag for a European may be bought for thirty bags; the sum rises to two hundred dollars where size is required—as in the Arab, a hand's height makes an enormous difference—and in fancy cases three hundred dollars would be asked. They are much valued, and require the greatest care in these hot, damp regions. Their food is Guinea corn and grass, cut and brought in by the boys; the head 'syce' selects the food, and bathes and grooms his beast. Every day, or every second day, it has a handful of kaón, an impure saltpetre—in Sierra Leone called lubi—and, by way of anthelmintic, a quantity of spices, recalling the celebrated East Indian nostrum, *battísí*. Before going to war the animal is prepared by drugs for a constipation which will last four days, and thus conceal the trail from the enemy. The trappings are rough and heavy, huge demi-piques of morocco leather, with shovel-shaped iron stirrups, sharp at the corners, and points project-

ing, by way of spur. The bridle has the cruel ring-bit of the Arab Bedouin, and twisted leather thongs, forming a whip at the end. Poitrail and crupper are not wanting, and a variety of ropes and tethers, charms and talismans, are bound round the neck. The animals, however, are not shod.

This evening, as on the previous, we heard loud shouts, broken by an occasional musket-shot, and accompanied by the usual tom-tom. A large crowd of *badauds* and *flaneurs* stood or squatted at the gate. They were celebrating the obsequies of the Akpena or messenger of Ijemma, a high official who had lately died, not without strong suspicions of poison. He had been engaged in a quarrel with his superior, the Ibashorum of his town. The people found business at a stand-still; they therefore sent to the less useful personage—the messenger—their compliments, and a humble request that he would ‘go to sleep.’ So to sleep he went. What a charming way of settling the ridiculous squabbles and the injurious jealousies of rival and hostile departments and *ministères*! Am I not justified in suggesting to the civilized peoples of the world so natty a mode of preventing private feeling from interfering, as it now so fatally often does, with public duty?

## CHAPTER IV.

## TOUCHING MATTERS RELIGIOUS AT ABEOKUTA.

THE rains had not yet ended, and the mornings were damp and misty, whilst a worse than English fog moved for hours after sunrise through the cloudy air. Captain Parry found the heat uncomfortable at 23° (Fah.) above zero ; the Abeokutans shuddered with cold when the mercury showed 65°.

On such a morning, accompanied by the boy Olufanobbi, alias Robert Fisher, Egba, Ogbone, Christian convert, and printer's devil in the Church Missionary establishment at the salary of four dollars per mensem, I sallied forth to inspect the father of the settlement, the Rock Olumo.

Our route lay to the west, with a little northing, along a rough road, and the town was at this hour one vast latrine. The perfume from the bush must not be described. The men, and even the women, again showed a wonderful absence of all that with us

goes by the name of decorum. As on the Gold Coast, the sable fair ones bathe publicly in *purissimis*.\* There is not a public woman in the town, which some, as forgotten Mandeville, say speaks well, and others badly, for private morality; and Mr. Bowen only met one bastard. As in Ashanti, here, even in the highest ranks, that form of the social evil known to civilization, especially trans-Atlantic, as the 'panel dodge,' is said to be sometimes practised. The wives of the highest chiefs will bring on intrigues with young men, and betray them to the husbands, who either get their money or sell them. In shaking hands, the emphatic gesture is to touch the lady's palm with the dexter index; but the amourist risks, if unlucky enough to displease, a seat upon the stool of repentance, and an *exposé* to public ridicule.

The wells lying by the paths were shallow pits; rain-water arrested by tenacious potters' clay a few feet below the surface. Where they are private property, women pay to the owner two to three cowries per potful, or one cent for fifty gallons. The water is good, but requires cooling; the bucket is half a calabash-gourd, lashed to strings, and requiring an hour to fill a large vessel. Time, however, is of little

\* When we first occupied the unhappy valley of the Indus, the Sindhian women used to bathe without dress at the wells: with Moslem decorum they were safe, but the Frank soon changed all that.



value in these regions, and the people love to gossip round their meeting-place, the well. I need hardly point out how unwholesome these sites are. Concealed water, and a hot, dry surface, must produce the most deadly miasma.\*

On the road we passed by the five great crafts of Abeokuta -- the blacksmith, the carpenter, the weaver, the dyer, and the potter. I turned in to inspect their several workshops, and to see their appliances, which merit description on account of their similarity to, or rather identity with, those in the distant centre, the east and the south. By a collection from the works of different travellers in the remotest parts of the dark Continent, it would methinks be easy to prove a close connection in ancient times between nations and peoples now ignoring one another's existence. Indeed, so exactly the same are many of the articles--the bellows, for instance--and so artificial, forbidding the idea of an instinctive invention, that one almost suspects a common centre to all the races amongst whom they are common.

\* Lagos kills a consul about every two years. The only way to remedy it would be to sleep for the first year on board a ship, or still better, a large hulk anchored off the town in mid-channel. At night the malarious vapour is condensed and concentrated by the chilliness of the ground, and is absorbed or rendered innocuous by passing over a sheet of water.

The blacksmith, who is also goldsmith, silversmith, copper-worker, and tinman, sits under an open shed of leaf-mats. His fire is of palm-nut husks—as good as charcoal. His bellows is that of ancient Egypt and Greece, and is described by every African traveller, from Mungo Park downwards; from Unyamwezi to the lands of the Ovampo. Two bags of rough goat-skin are secured in troughs cut out of a single piece of wood. The upper part of each skin has a handle, or stick, two feet long, so that it can be worked by one standing or sitting. There is an earthen pipe leading from the wooden pipe which projects from each trough, and the junction is not air-tight. The handles are raised alternately by the blower; consequently, when one ‘follis’ receives air, the other ejects it. The forge is, like that of the Gold Coast, a perpendicular screen of dried clay, through which the nozzles of the bellows pass, supplying a regular blast; the larger anvil is a stone, and the smaller a lump of iron. The craftsman has spindles for drilling, and rough files, with a better sort from Europe, which he keeps carefully wrapped up in greasy rag. His native hammers, pincers, and hooks are exceedingly artless tools. He makes little clay crucibles for melting hard metals; puts the material in without flux; buries it in the glowing husks, and casts it into bars by means of an oiled mould. He buys a kind of

carbonized iron from the interior, and he forges from it rude keys, chains and staples, swords and knives, sickles and hoes, inserted in large clumsy handles, and adzes and axes two inches wide, with the iron driven through the wooden handle as it should be, not the wood driven through the iron.\* The repairing of a 'long Dane,' or buccaneer gun, is about the measure of his knowledge; he has never learned to temper iron, and even when running leaden plugs for bullets, he loses half the material by not stirring a little grease with the melted metal, and removing the dross with his knife.

The carpenter is a century behind the blacksmith, probably because every man in these regions can use an axe without professional aid. He has an adze and splitting wedges, but neither hooks nor saws. He must hold the wood with hand or foot, and when making a plank, he must hack away the rest of the tree-trunk. His industry is confined to doors and shutters, bowls, and mortars for pounding grain.

Men in Abeokuta, as in ancient Egypt, weave, which the old Greek held to be an effeminate occupation; they are also the best, if not the only, needle-workers. The cotton, cleared of seed by an iron cylinder rolling

\* The European fashion is best adapted for heavy axe-blades in temperate climates. In the tropics the wood, alternately wetted and parched, shrinks, swells, and rots. I prefer, to all, a hollow iron handle, firmly riveted to the blade.

on a block of wood, and bow-whipped as in India, is spun into yarn-balls by means of the old distaff, and is sold every evening in the market. The weaver employs his mornings in winding off the portion which he will require for the day. The loom, standing under the usual open shed, differs little from the horizontal structure of Eastern and Central Africa. Like the bellows, the principle extends throughout the continent. It is perpendicular, as in ancient Egypt, where, however, both forms were used. A framework of sticks, about four feet high, with eighteen inches of extreme breadth, is planted in the ground. The twist for the warp is passed over the upper and under the lower connecting bar, and the thread for the weft or woof is shot between with a shuttle and a 'sley,' here called 'assá,' a reed used to beat the woof tight. It is a rude implement, and makes narrow strips of 'tree-wool' cloth, six inches or so wide, which, to form a garment, must be sewn together. Dyeing with indigo is done by women, much in the way described by Mungo Park amongst the Mandengas. It produces a beautiful tint, with a finer purple gloss than the Indian can show, and the people colour thread with every tinge, from the lightest blue to what closely approaches black. Freshly-pounded leaves—the dry are rarely used—are placed in an earthen pot till it is half full; it is

then filled with a lye prepared from the potash of various wood ashes. After soaking for some days, till fermentation throws up an iridescent scum—at this time is the chief danger of failure—it is ready for use. The cloth, wetted in cold water, and wrung out, is placed in it for two hours, sun-dried by hanging across a pole, beaten with a stick, washed in water to remove impurities, again wrung out, and returned to the pot. No mordant is used; the operation is repeated ten or twelve times during four days, when the dye becomes permanent.

The potter is also a woman. The earthenware is a very poor article, better than that of Lagos and Ikoradu, but far inferior to the produce of Wari. The reddish clay is brought from a place about two and a half miles to the north-east of the city. The wheel being unknown, it is fashioned by hand, and so neatly that strangers will hardly believe it. Being but half burned, it seldom lasts. This handicraft is depressed by the competition of the calabash-maker. The gourd, a congener to the pumpkin, varies in size from a snuff-box to a milk-churn. When the fruit ripens, a hole is made in the smaller end, and the air decays the pulp, leaving the hard rind intact. When a lid is wanted, the fruit is sliced off on a plane, one-third from the smaller end. It is then neatly cut and carved with a hand-knife, and this ‘ornamental en-

graving'\* is said to be a lucrative trade. The cost of a good article is about twenty-five strings, or one shilling. The manufacture of glass is unknown in Yoruba; it is, however, if native accounts are to be believed, at Nupe, and especially at Rabba, once the capital of that interesting region.

About half way I saw a mosque—an oblong hut, with blackened walls, and a thatched roof of mat and leaves; it fronted Meccah pretty correctly. The door was closed, and all my Arabic could not procure me admission, although a talib—a 'scholar,' who should have known better—was lying under the verandah, learning *memoriter* the last verslets of that beautiful and most edifying chapter, the Ya Sîn. A little beyond, we passed an Ogbone lodge, remarkable only for its painted and carved door, upon which distinct symbols of Phallic worship—not disguised as in Egypt by the sacred Tau—appeared in natural size. A little beyond was a large slab of gneiss, which bore upon its summit what appeared to be the trace of ichnites; a little inquiry proved them to be the work of man—the hollowness being formed by pounding and grinding.

After about a mile and a half of up and down, sand and boulder, midden and offal, we ascended a

\* I sent some to England, where their novelty and grotesqueness caused them to be greatly admired.

short steep pitch, and stood near and opposite the Rock Olumo. Surmounting an abrupt hill, with falls on all sides, it is a conspicuous landmark in the scenery. It has the honour of giving a name to the city clustering at its feet, Abe-okuta ‘(the town) Underneath the rock,’ by us called Understone. The Builder—for such is the meaning of its name—is some two hundred yards in length, divided about midway by a fissure that affords an easy ascent, and overhanging on all sides except the north, where a neighbouring tree acts as a natural ladder. Many have mounted to the summit, and, according to my informants, a cannon has been fired there. On another occasion, a small party climbed it with Commander Bedingfield, in jack-boots, *viâ* the tree. I confess that, with the view of keeping legs and ankles unbroken until after the ascent of the Camaroon Mountains, this feat did not appear advisable. It has been dedicated to Oro. No one objects, however, to strangers taking liberties there, although it has been tabooed to the people for fear of accidents. Cavern, as described in books, there is none. The projecting sides, however, form tall, deep ledges, beneath which people can find shelter; and under the eastern side dwarf walls of red clay have converted it into troglodyte abodes. Besides human bipeds, the swallows flock and nest there in numbers.



Walking round to the left side, which I should advise future travellers to avoid, I saw the point of view chosen as a frontispiece to 'Sunrise within the Tropics.' Either the amateur artist or his engraver has succeeded in making it as unlike reality as possible. The view, however, is quite in character with the book itself, essentially Anglo-African, and well fitted for the delectation of the Hall, once more appropriately known as Exeter Change. The right-hand foreground is adorned with the customary clump of typical palm-trees and aloes, and a group of natives, white men drawn black, most European in bearing and civilized in gesture, reminding us of our 'own artist' in the 'Illustrated News,' who, with praiseworthy catholicity of art, makes as little possible distinction between humanity in its opposite hemispheres. Below lies the town, neat, rural, pretty, white-walled and red-tiled, built with all the symmetry of Clapham, and backed by a glorious lake-like river with little green islets—and, doubtless, eel-pie houses;—whilst in the distance a fair expanse of rolling hills, green and blue, fills up the scene.

Let me describe what I saw and sketched. Beyond the barren mass of stern grey stone—filthily dirty—which afforded me a standing-place, there was a perpendicular drop of some fifty feet, disclosing part of the city below and in front. It was a grisly mass of

rusty thatching and dull red-clay wall, with narrow winding lanes and irregular open spaces, a ragged tree rising here and there. The only comparison which the scene suggested was that of a huge ant-hill scattered over with dead leaves and dwarf shrubs. On the left was a high tongue of land, with top sinking towards the foreground; it supports Bagura, one of the most populous townships; and here the houses that crowd one another prevent the ground from being seen. It is separated by a stony stream-bed, the usual fence in this part of Africa, from the neighbouring settlements, Ikereku and Ikijá, Iláwo and Ikporo. In the distance is a narrow line representing the Ogun River above the rapids, and the horizon is shut in by rising ground which appears barren and sterile. In the magnificence of its distances Abeokuta greatly resembles Washington, but there the similarity ends. The main peculiarity of the scene is the shape of the houses—large irregular squares, with huge thatches raised high at the angles to throw off the rain. There are but two which attract the eye by superiority of size, viz., those of the late Ogobonna, and of the waggish savage Ogodippe.

Olumo, however, is classic ground in these regions, the Arg, the Capitolium of the Egba race, the Rock against which the gates of Ibadan have not yet pre-

vailed. It was the *point de réunion* of the people of Egba, who, about 1820–1822, had been scattered to the winds by intestine tumults and the fury of their enemies.\* Some thirty-five or forty years ago, say in 1825, a few of the better sort, flying from their new masters, took refuge under ‘the Builder,’ where, it is said, they found robbers—probably their own countrymen—who had preceded them. As in classic Rome, the sanctuary was joined by other fugitives and villains. When the new-comers found themselves strong enough, they drove out the original bandits, and then laid the foundations of a city which, after Olumo, they called Abeokuta. It grew apace. In memory of their former settlements, they gave to the new seats the names of their ancient townships—Ake, for instance, was the old capital of Egba-land in the days when it was a province of Yoruba—and they conferred upon their military and civil chiefs titles familiar to their ears in olden times. They hung up their harps by the side of Olumo, and holding the soil to be hard and sterile, they sighed for a return to the lands flowing with milk and honey.†

Presently Abeokuta became a fenced city, and was

\* An account of the Egba dispersion will be given in a future page.

† Figurative. There are but few wild bees, and honey is unknown in this part of Africa.

girt with a moat and a clay wall, after the approved fashion of African fortification. Its population waxed numerous. Mr. T. B. Freeman, in 1842, estimated it to contain forty-five thousand souls. In 1858, Mr. Bowen gave it eighty thousand: more modern travellers have raised the number to one hundred thousand; and, looking at the extent and the thickness of the population, I should not wonder if, when the soldiers return from the Ibadan war, it was found to contain one hundred and fifty thousand souls, nearly equal to the entire population of redoubted Dahome. It contains the remnants of some one hundred and fifty townships—some say one hundred, but they diminish for fear of exaggeration, and others, too sanguine, raise it to two hundred and eighty-five—which all retain their own peculiar institutions. The constitution, in fact, is that of a federal republic under a perpetual president.\*

The Abeokutans still aspire to regain the lands of their forefathers, and they swear that they will come to their own again. I doubt the probability of their so doing. The weak outlying states of El Islam,

\* Mr. Senior, and probably others, opines touching 'plural government,' that 'the Greeks were the inventors of the system of dividing the sovereign power among a number of co-ordinate persons, whose combined assent was necessary to an act of supreme authority.' He would have found the principle and the practice in the remotest and most barbarous of African tribes.

Ilori, for instance—now the last ripple of the mighty wave urged southwards by an irresistible current—though at present unable to sweep away the barriers of Paganism, is strong enough to resist any encroachments. And the day will come when the Law of the Prophet shall rule throughout the lands, when Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto Allah, and shall thus rise to her highest point of civilization. Meanwhile, those who support Abeokuta are but shoring up a falling wall. The only thing they can say is that, like Turkey, she may take some time to fall: on the other hand, when the Moslems succeed to the land, they will find it rich in cotton and palm oil.

The sun having lost his strength, I proceeded, in company with Mr. Hughes, a thoroughly Yorubized Englishman, to ascend the rocks of Ake, the hill immediately behind the Church Missionary compound. The path led along the burial-ground and near a foul wet hole, whence the clay for building houses had been excavated. Ascending, we remarked an Oro-, or wild mango-tree,\* whose trunk had been gashed apparently for the purpose of letting out the turpentine. After losing our way in the thick grass—it should be kept clear for the benefit

\* It is not cultivated, and therefore little prized by natives: the flavour of turpentine is its characteristic.

of those who desire a breath of fresh air—we fell into sundry lanes bordered by the unwholesome tiglium, whose odour after sunset denotes its dangerous qualities. Passing through a blocked-up gap in a hedge, we entered a field of tobacco; the herb which Niwt named and which Thevet ought to have named—an analogy of Colon and Amerigo—grows wild in the streets of Lagos and Abeokuta: the people, however, prefer to import it from the Brazils. The land has usually been considered too worn out to support so exhausting a crop; in places, however, it flourishes. The people have learned to top the plants, and the American missionaries have taught them to cure it by hanging the leaves for a day or two in bunches to dry, and then piling up and sweating it for two or three days. It thus becomes tolerable smoking, with a little Cavendish or gold-leaf by way of ‘kitchen’ to its mildness, and the highest price is about 5*d.* per pound. The people, however, are not great smokers. Both sexes and all ages prefer a pinch of natronized snuff between the lower lip and the gums—in fact, where it can best excite the salivary glands. Pure snuff is also made, and though a little deficient in flavour, it is by no means despicable. The favourite snuff-box is a hollowed hard-shelled fruit called ‘agbar.’ Curious to say, these Africans have not learned the use

of smoking or eating datura, a poison which overruns the land, and I saw no bhang growing in the country.

Ascending a dwarf slope of koko field, we clambered up some rocks, and reached a place where Egugun, literally 'Bones,' is worshipped. The king of ghosts here receives sacrifice in honour of the manes of the ancestor in whose behalf the offering is made—it is in fact an African prayer for the dead. The place shows only a dwarf enclosure of red clay walls, whose roof is a gneiss boulder resembling Olumo. It was blackened with smoke, and as we perched there to rest we were curiously inspected from below by the meddlesome Christian populace of Wasimi.

We manifestly stood on holy ground. Many stones bore signs of medicine—yams, dabs of palm oil, broken calabashes, and cowries in strings. Above us rose the 'logan-stone,' the remains of an older world, now washed down into the deep Atlantic. Descending through a dense bush, where long sharp thorns and the chance of meeting a snake made us 'look alive,' and hopping from boulder to boulder, we presently entered the mysterious Oro grove: a little further north it would be called a 'Debbil-bush.' The Egbas, like the ancient Persians, and most of the modern pagans, combine a propensity for



worshipping in high places with fondness of the concealment which the shady forest affords. There was nothing to distinguish the place from a jungle camp—though I have little doubt that at no great distance we might find a skeleton or two with the fatal cord still unrotted around its neck. Three dwarf sheds, short smoke-stained mud walls with roofs of decaying palm-leaf, brown and bald, a grassy patch broken here and there by boulders and enclosed within a wall of bush verdure, capped by tall overhanging trees—this was all that met the eye. To fill in the picture, you must suppose the place restored and occupied by twenty or thirty ancients, villainous-looking as Spanish inquisitors in caricature, with countenances expressing the cold cruelty of the *castrato* and the bloodthirsty joy with which the cat plays with her prey; some sitting under the shade drinking pitto, palm-wine, and fire-water, others standing, staff in hand, chanting, gesticulating, and dealing out the words of wisdom, with, perhaps, the material for torture or human sacrifice lying bound on the sward at their feet. Such was the scene described to me by a gentleman who unwittingly had passed by the Oro grove when council had met, and who had bowed to its inmates.

Returning towards Eruwan, I was shown by Mr. Hughes a house from which he had saved an old

man. The building had caught fire by the carelessness of some women. The people however supposed it to be the work of Shango—god of thunder and lightning : had no European been there, or one without the pluck to break through the crowd and to harangue them with explanations, there would have been an Egba *de moins*. As we passed the Church Missionary compound there was a ‘pow-wow.’ A circle of converts, clad in quasi-European toggery, squatted upon the ground, and in the centre stood the speaker, who threw out his upper limbs and gesticulated, walking up and down like a Hindu preacher. At first I thought it was a young ‘camp meeting :’ presently the occasion was explained to me. The chiefs at the seat of war had sent to the city a message complaining that the Christians were not nearly so ready to fight, and *pro patriâ mori*, as they had promised, and as they ought to be. It was a curious contrast to the scenes that had passed during the day within the walls of the sacred building hard by—tidings of peace and goodwill to all men delivered in the morning ; in the evening, a summons to kidnap, plunder, and kill. Yet, ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, as the Romaic epitaph pathetically has it.

I now proceed to a short account of the Yoruban mythology as far as it is known—few of the people are conversant with its details—to books and to my

various informants. Like all these religions, if such they can be called, there is in it a vagueness and a variety of explanation which, despite the advantage of alphabets and of a far superior organization, appears strikingly in the worship of ancient Greece and Rome, and of modern India. The minor details are never to be trusted; the main points are better fixed in the public mind—before two days' residence in the city you hear of Shango and Oro, and after a week they have become 'household words.' The mythology of Yoruba is not far from being as extensive as that with which Assyria, Egypt, and India overspread the Indo-European world, and its gods are numerically strong, mustering from three hundred to four hundred. Like all other similar systems, it is a syncretism, the deities being collected from the various lands to which they were peculiar: thus Shiva, the Indian, is a local god, posterior to Brahma and Vishnu, the other members of the triad; thus Bacchus came from the banks of the Ganges or the Indus; and thus Osiris was imported from Egypt into Rome. As I have before said, touching things material, everywhere we see traces that Africa was once as closely united as Italy. It is, therefore, difficult to say how much of the Yoruban faith is original. The Romans penetrated through the northern desert, the Jews had a powerful kingdom

in Abyssinia, the Portuguese missionaries invested the eastern and the western coasts, and the Moslems have gradually been hemming in the heathenry. Such influences must have been strong upon the plastic and conforming mind of the polytheist, but the measure of their strength is not appreciable.

Long ago Dr. Vanderkemp asserted that the Kafirs of the Cape were 'pure atheists,' without the idea of the existence of a God. Mr. Casalis (p. 238) tells us that the Kafirs 'had entirely lost the idea of a Creator;' that 'it never entered their' (the Kafirs') 'heads that the earth and sky might be the work of an invisible being;' and that in their languages the word for world signified 'having always been—to exist in an incomprehensible manner.' Bishop Colenso ascribes to them a distinct traditional belief in the Supreme Being, whom they acknowledge under the twofold titles of Umkulumkulu—the Great Essence, and Umvelinquanze—the First Comer Out; but of him and his attributes they understand nothing, and neither worship nor invoke him.' Dr. Livingstone, with his usual peremptory and unsatisfactory way of laying down the law upon every question, affirms that 'the existence of a God and of a future state has always been admitted by all the Bechuanas.' A far better authority, Dr. Moffat ('Missionary Labours,' p. 245), remarks

concerning the Bachwanas (Bechuanas), whilst owning that they 'are acute reasoners and minute observers of men and manners,' that 'to tell them, the greatest of them, that there was a Creator, the Governør of the heavens and earth—of the fall of man, or the redemption of the world—the resurrection of the dead, and immortality beyond the grave—is to tell them what appeared to be more fabulous, extravagant, and ludicrous than their own vain stories about lions, hyænas, and jackals.'\* I can easily understand this. Perhaps the illustrious Humboldt, the greatest philosopher of our age, sympathized in their touching confession of ignorance concerning all things beyond man's actual reach. And it is undoubted that, by the force of their rationalism, these men, gifted with the 'docility of a child, but the reasoning powers of mature age,' were able to suggest to the Bishop of Natal that his misgivings touching the historical character of the books attributed to Moses were founded on fact. The same missionary (p. 257) declares that the Kafirs have no word in their language expressing the conception of a Deity: he found no altars, legends, or unknown gods, and his *soi-disant* converts would

\* This curious admission reminds me of the words of a certain preacher: 'Now, my brethren, Conscience is not, as some say, a geographical or a chronological accident,'—a fatal sentence, never to be forgotten, I am sure, by many of his hearers.

often declare to him that he had taught them the rudimental conception of a Deity. He believes, like the Jesuits in China—who accounted for Buddhism, the origin of their faith, as Satan's caricature of it—that it was the Devil who erased every vestige of religious impression from the heathen mind. Setting aside the great fact, that of all unsuccessful characters in history Sathanas is probably the greatest failure—in other words that 'the Devil is an Ass'—I must differ from him in holding atheism to be the natural condition of the savage and uninstructed mind, the night of spiritual existence, which disappears before the dawn of a belief in things unseen. A Creator is to creation what the cause of any event in life is to its effect: those familiar to the sequence will hardly credit its absence from the minds of others. And only the brain supersaturated with its own prejudices and impressions can force itself into explanations of the seeming mystery by referring it to diabolical and similar mythical agencies.

The Egbas have progressed more than one step beyond this savage atheism. With 'gods many and lords many,'\* and a considerable mixture of idolatry, they have a distinct name for a Creator. They

\* Mr. Bowen steps into the absurd, by enunciating the doctrine, that 'no man has ever believed in two gods.' He should have said, no free-born citizen of the Great Republic.



call him Olorun, an abbreviation of O li Orun—lord or owner of the sky or firmament. It might also be translated Lord of Ghostland; Oki Orun, ‘Hill Ghostland’ being, Anglicised, ‘Heaven,’ opposed to Orun Akpadi, which some translate ‘Crucible Hades,’ *i. e.*, Hell. Thus, the name of the town Bi Olorun Kpellu, ‘Si Deus nobiscum’ (quis contra nos?). He is also known as Eleda—the Creator, Olo-Dumare—the Ever-Righteous, Oluwa—the Lord, and Oga-Ogo—the Glorious High One. These, however, are palpable attributes of a vague being without personality and without objectivity: at best the name is used like the Hindu Pariah employs the word Bhagwan—Deity—whilst he worships some low incarnation which he considers infinitely inferior in dignity to a live Brahmin. I much doubt, also, whether the word conveys at all to their minds the *Ens Entium*, an existence disseverated from some natural object—sun or sea, rain or firmament.\* The use of the

\* Some writers (*e.g.* ‘Savage Life in Africa.’ Home and Foreign Review, July, 1862,) have objected that ‘it does not follow, because a savage calls God and sky by the same name, that therefore he necessarily confuses one with the other. Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins had one name for spirit, breath, and wind; but we cannot therefore conclude that they identified them. The foundation of reason is the power of using symbols, *i. e.*, of making one thing stand for another, which is known to be different from it.’ But this is a vicious analogy. The Hebrews, Greeks, and Latins were not savages: I only assert, that in the undeveloped human mind the confusion of name points to the confusion of sense—that the metaphysical idea is subordinate to the physical. Nezuhualcoyotl, the great



name, however, is clear and distinct. The Egbas say Olorun—not Orishako or Obatala—bless you! Olorun give you children, farms, cowries! and so forth. Olorun aku!—salutation to God!—is the highest expression of submission. Essentially simple, the prayer has nothing to do with the metaphysics of faith—confession of aboriginal sin, prayer for pardon, or thanksgiving for redemption. They talk of seeing Olorun after death, and are said not to be without the idea of a vague and obscure futurity, a continuation in which rewards and punishments will be distributed. In Orun and its several modifications it would not be difficult to discover a tripartite kingdom of the dead, corresponding with the Elysium, the Hades, and the Tartarus of ancient Europe. Only, as amongst the more polished Greeks and Romans, the future is held by them to be, from its exceeding uncertainty, and from the total absence of all judicial proof of its existence, much less important than the present. As has been remarked, the Egbas have long dwelt in the presence of a monotheistic people, the Moslems, and of late years they have had Christians amongst them. But even

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Mexican king, when weary of idols, raised a temple ‘al Dios no conocido, causa di los causas.’ If this be no priestly pious fraud, Mexico, like Athens, had the foot lifted for another step in advance when Christianity, the fourth and penultimate act of the great drama, appeared on the stage of life.

without these advantages the ease of an agricultural state, and the existence of a distinct priestly body, would tend to promote the study of that which comes, or is made to come, after the material world.

Similarly the East Africans near the Moslems of Zanzibar have their Mulungu; in the South-east, where the Portuguese are, their Murimo; and in Kongo, also colonized by Europeans, their Zambe and Nganna Riossu. Mungo Park also remarks of the negroes bordering upon Moslem Mandeng that ‘the belief of one God, and of a future state of reward and punishment, is entire and universal among them.’

To quote the same traveller, ‘The Africans represent the Deity indeed as the creator and preserver of all things; but, in general, they consider him a being so remote, and of so exalted a nature, that it is idle to imagine the feeble supplications of wretched mortals can reverse the decrees and change the purposes of unerring wisdom.’\* That the gods take but little interest, and exercise scant interference in human affairs, is an idea as old as Confucius and Epicurus—they meddle, indeed, so little that a future state must be hypothesised in account for their incursions. The Africans, like many other ancient peoples, seem to think that the Deity has retired

\* Did Mungo Park ever write this ‘Encyclopædist’ sentence?

from business, and has deputed his functions to inferior officers. Besides, as much of their religion is modified by and modelled upon their private life and the ceremonies of their courts, they hold the courtiers completely distinct from and somewhat independent of the king. They therefore use the name of, but do not pray to, Olorun; and holding him so far above and beyond mankind that he must be addressed through intermediate agencies, they satisfy the yearnings of their human nature by the adoration of subordinate beings. Thus the ancient Christians, whilst asserting that latria, altars, and sacrifice were due to God alone, sanctioned addresses to saints and martyrs, in order to be assisted by their prayers. Hence the worship of Orisha or idols.

The word Orisha is derived by some—Europeans will find the root of everything—from Asha, ‘customs’ or ‘religious ceremonies.’ It is also called Alaybawi—a mediator or intercessor. The saint system and prayers to the Virgin are the vestiges of this idea in Christianity; in El Islam the doctrine of Imams and Walis are fragments of the older creed set, like the Black Stone which was once white, in the corner of the modern faith. Of course the symbol is confounded with the thing symbolized; and the statue or picture, which the enlightened look upon as they

would a portrait or a memento, becomes amongst the vulgar an object of absolute worship.\*

There are three principal Orisha, which word, thus used, does not mean idols, but rather the *Di majorum gentium* of the Romans, and which appear to be deified heroes and ancestors. This triad consists of Obatala, Shango, and Ifa. It does not, like the Hindu Trinity, express a metaphysical idea of the Demiurgos in his great triune operations—creating, preserving, destroying; nor does it typify the family, as the Egyptian Osiris, Isis, and Horus; nor does it deify the elemental worlds, like the Romans, who personified them by Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. And it will be remarked that for the grace and beauty of Greek fable these Africans substitute a grotesqueness—the reflex of their own physical and moral peculiarities. It is to be hoped that those enthusiasts who declare that '*le dogme de la Trinité de Personnes, dans l'Unité de l'Etre, se trouve dans la conscience des peuples,*' will not find the idea in the Yoruban triad as they have in the 'three perpendicular lines of the Egyptians, the Chinese

\* From the Hindu to the Romanist, no educated man really adores the picture or image; and, I suspect, few uneducated men do otherwise than adore it. This should be a serious consideration with those who allow and contend for what Moses absolutely forbade—the bowing before graven images. The Iconoclasts of early Christianity, and the Apostle of El Islam, doubtless found the abuse of such ornaments greater than their use, and told the people to hold them in abomination.

word equivalent to Jehovah (!), the Tibetan Trabat, the savages of Cuba, the Tanga-tanga of the Peruvians, the Celtic druids, the Odin, Wilo, and We of the Scandinavians, and the book of Zohar.' A past, present, and future—a creation, preservation, and destruction—are easy mental sequences, starting up instinctively. Besides, the Indo-European race, to which the triad-belief belongs—as opposed to Semitic monotheism—shows, from the most ancient times, the closest connection of thought and derivation of language.

Obatala is derived from Oba ti nla, the King of Greatness, also called Orisha Klá, the great Orisha. Others deduce the word from 'Oba ti álá,' King of Whiteness or Purity, whence his worshippers always wear white garments. His other titles are Alamore, 'owner of the good clay,' and Orisha Kpokpo, or Idol of the Gate—a guardian and a Janus. In this view he is the first and greatest of created things; some, however, believe him to be an ancient king of Yoruba, and quote the name of his father. Thus Shodeke, as has been said, is in a fair way of becoming a demigod.\* He is sometimes represented as a warrior on horseback, holding a spear; at other times as an androgyne, which white men philosophize

\* 'The present Alake succeeded Shodeke, a man so venerated as to be ranked among the demigods.'—(Mr. Campbell, p. 40.)

about as representing the male and female energies of nature, whose god is Olorun or Eleda, the creator. Obatala's wife is Iyangba, or the receiving mother, and is denoted, like Isis and the Madonna, by a woman nursing a child.\* His sacred symbol is Okko, a ship—the vessel, according to the rationalists, in which the Yoruban people crossed the Niger: it is the Ark of that faith. Obatala created the first man, Okikishi—so called from Okiki, fame, or Obalofu, the lord of speech, equivalent to the Adam of the Hebrews; and the first woman was his wife Iye, or life, from 'ye,' to live; in sound and idea curiously resembling Hawwa or Eve. They came from heaven, an idea also found in the book of Genesis. No Hebrew or Moslem believes the garden of Eden to have been upon earth, but in the first or lowest of the Seven Heavens, which is an exact fac-simile of these sublunary scenes;† with them, therefore, the 'Fall' of man is literally a fall. Obalofu and Iye had many

\* Mr. Bowen says that 'Iyangba herself is Obatala. The two are one, or, in other words, Obatala is an androgyne, representing the productive energy of nature, or the generative principle, as distinguished from the creative power of God.' But this explanation appears extra Indo-European. On the other hand the Rev. Mr. Crowther calls Obbatalla 'the great goddess of Yoruba, supposed to be the framer of the human body in the womb.' The fact that this diety is male, female, and hermaphrodite, is a fair specimen of pagan vagueness.

† So the Spiritualists or Fetishists of the present day assert that everything on earth is but a copy, of which the antitype is to be found in the other.



children. Their first settlement was at Ife; they then successively removed to Ikose, Igboho (Lander's Bohoo), and Oyo or Eyeo.

The second great Orisha is called Shango—he is a well-known god.\* This demi-deity—at once Vulcan, Tubal Cain, Thor, and Jupiter Tonans—was born at Ife, and reigned at Ikoso, a town lately destroyed; others say that he is a Nupe god. He had a palace of brass, and kept 10,000 horses in his stables, showing him, by the analogy of Hercules, and Castor and Pollux, to have been originally a mere mortal. Like certain Hebrew worthies, he went alive to heaven, where he reigns in state, hunts, fishes, markets, and wars. The abstract Shango is the grandson of Aganju, the desert or firmament, a descendant from Okikishi: his father is Orungan, or midday, and his mother is Yemaya or Ijemoja, 'mother of fishes,' an unimportant river in Yoruba.† His elder brother is Dada, or nature—from 'da,' to create; his younger is the River Ogun; his friend and associate is Orishako, god of farms; his slave, Biri, or darkness; his wives are the Rivers Oya (Niger), Oshun, and Obba; and his priest is Magba, the Receiver—not a bad name. His worshippers carry a bag, because he was fond of predatory wars.

\* The worship of Shango, however, is not known in Great Benin.

† She is denoted by a little idol, with dull yellow skin, blue hair, white beads, and striped dress.



Practically, Shango is the deity of thunder, lightning,\* and fire : he is also called Jákuta, or the stone-thrower, and he favours the good, especially protecting hunters, fishermen, and warriors. Wherever lightning has struck, or an aërolite† has fallen, there Shango has been ; when a house is fired, or is struck by lightning, the priests and mob rush in to find the stone, and seize the opportunity of plundering ; besides which, they claim a general right to steal goats and chickens. Shango's symbol is a small wooden bat, called ' ose,' with a handle one foot long. He is consulted by throwing sixteen pierced cowries : if eight fall upwards and eight downwards, it is peace ; if all are upwards, it is also a good sign ; and, *vice versa*, if all fall with their teeth to the ground, it is war.

The last of the triad is Ifa, which appears to be not a person, but a myth, originating at the town of Ife.‡ He is the revealer of futurity, and the patron

\* The authoress of ' A Residence at Sierra Leone ' (p. 96) tells us, ' Many of the liberated Africans worship lightning,' and is told by a Christian convert, that an Aku man, who offered himself as a groom, ' no do for horseman, he worship de tunder.' Of course the man was a devotee of Shango.

† A Shango-stone was showed to me ; it was a bit of white quartz.

‡ There are probably two Ife. One is placed in our maps in the province of Kakanda, between Aku-land and the Niger. According to some, it has lately been destroyed : the spot is worthy of exploration. The mythical Ife was founded by Obalofu, and there worship (*alias* idolatry) is said to have originated. As the first place made by the Creator, it has become the market of ghostland—the dead there go to sell and buy.

of marriage and childbirth. His high priest—the head of the Babbalawo, or Fathers of Secrets—is said to live upon a mountain near Awaye, a gigantic cone of granite eight to ten miles in circumference, seen from the distance of several days' journey towering solitary above the landscape, and surmounted, it is said, by a palm-tree, bearing sixteen boughs, produced by the sixteen nuts planted by the sixteen founders of the Yoruban empire. His chief priest at Abeokuta is known as Obba Limore, King of the grove; and none but the secret-keeping sex is initiated into the mysteries. As the great oracle, Ifa supports a large family, who live gratis upon the offerings of the devotees—sheep and goats, fowls and pigeons.\* The priests are known by their bead necklaces, small strings twisted together, with ten large white and green beads, some inches apart. They officiate in white, and constantly use a fly-whisk. Their deity being called Bángá, God of Palm-nuts, they choose as his symbols those that are placental with four holes. The operation of casting lots is intricate, and is variously described by different observers: odd and even, and 'heads or tails,' appear to be the ruling principles.† Ifa

\* The place of the Mganga, or medicine-man of the South—the rain-maker or rain-stopper, like the *χαλαζοφύλακες*, and those who practised *aquælicium* in classical Europe—is supplied in Yoruba, as we might expect, from the comparative complexity of the system, by a great variety of priestly drones.

† The priest brings his nuts in a rhinoceros horn from the upper

proved unexpectedly—if not paid for the purpose—a friend to the white man at Abeokuta. When consulted whether missionaries should be admitted, he answered, ‘Yes.’ When it was further inquired whether a church might be founded at Igbeni, he replied in the affirmative. The pious of Understone refer his general correctness to the operation of evil spirits: on this occasion, however, as in many others, Satan seems to have amused himself with casting out sin.

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country. Holding the sixteen in his left hand, he takes them up at random—as we do at a ‘bean club’—in his right, and the operation is repeated till either two, called ‘ofu,’ or one, called ‘ossa,’ remains. The chosen nut is then rolled, with the middle finger, over the earth, or over a board whitened with the dust made by tree-worms. Finally, it is marked with certain lines, which, by deciding the value and the nature of sacrifice, procure success.

An old converted priest thus performed the ceremony in my presence. He counted sixteen nuts, freed them from dust, and placed them in a bowl on the ground, full of yam half boiled, crushed, and covered with some acrid vegetable infusion. His acolyte, a small boy, was then called, made to squat near the bowl, resting his body on the outer edge of the feet, which were turned inwards, and to take from the fetish-man two or three bones, seeds, and shells, some of which are of good, others of bad omen. Elevating them, he rested his hands upon his knees. The adept cast the nuts from one hand to the other, retaining some in the left, and while manipulating, dropped others into the bowl. He then stooped down, drew with the index and medius lines on the yam, inspected the nuts, and occasionally referred to the articles in the boy’s hand. Thus he was enabled to pronounce an opinion upon what was to happen.

I cannot flatter myself that the *modus operandi* has been made quite intelligible to the reader, for the best of reasons—I do not quite understand it myself. The system is far more simple in Dahome, and at some future time I may explain it.

Besides these three great Orishas, there are many *Di minorum gentium*, who are, even more palpably, men and women of note in their day—of whom only the principal will be noticed.

Ogun is the god of blacksmiths and armourers. He is also the patron of hunters and warriors, in which quality human sacrifices are offered to him. The victim is decapitated, the head is affixed to a tree, and the body is placed publicly before the symbol, a dwarf, spear-shaped, iron or copper, to which a chain is attached.

The sun and the moon are worshipped at Ife, ‘the Pantheon of Yoruba,’ where a brazen chair and brass images of these objects fell from heaven.

A peculiar worship in this country is Ori, which means the worshipper’s own head, seeming to involve the idea of luck or good fortune. Other parts of the body are worshipped; the foot, for instance, before proceeding on a journey—and most African travellers will sympathize with this sentiment. The symbol of Ori is half a calabash stuck with almonds, like a pudding, till the substance can hardly be seen, and hung about with long strings of the same shell. This is placed upon the ground, and duly adored. A similar emblem belongs to Dada, whom the missionaries translate Nature, but who is rather the god or genius of newly-born children. His sign is a cawl,

and he is worshipped as a calabash, provided with longer strings than those of Ori.

Odua or Odudua, the universe, or the goddess of earth and sky, is located at Ife.\* Oye is the Yoruban Æolus, the Harmattan, a giant, residing in a cave of the winds at Igbetti, one of the highest mountains in Yoruba, between Igboho and Ilori : during the dry season he rushes out and breathes cold over the land : in Hausa ice is not unknown.

The idol Oriskako—*i. e.*, Orisha Oko—patron of farms, has its head-quarters—*i. e.*, its priests and sacrifices—at Irawo, a town in Western Yoruba. Its symbol is a large iron bar, and its worship is very expensive. The people have a tradition that in the olden time a six-fingered giant dwelt at the Egba town of Igbehi. When summoned to swear by Oriskako, at Irawo, he waxed wroth, slew the priests, and carried off ten of the sacred bars, for which reason no native of Igbehi is allowed to enter Irawo.

The 'Orisha of children' is a truly hideous little image, carried about by women, in their waist-clothes, when one of twins dies or is destroyed :†

\* Mr. Crowther mentions that Odudua was situated in front of the Council House at Ake, and that sacrifices of beasts and fowls were made to it every five days, in order to obtain children, wealth, and peace.

† Twins, however, at Abeokuta are not necessarily killed, as in the Oil Rivers further south, or amongst the Kamskatkans, and many of the North American aborigines.

consequently these idols are of two sexes. The male, about a span and two fingers high, is in the rudest semblance of a man, mounted on a little circular pedestal, with a head like a Pongo's, a top-knot of hair, huge ears, prognathous jaws, projecting lips, and thin lozenge-shaped cuts on the forehead, and on each cheek three similar horizontal and three perpendicular. The body—but little longer than the head, or broader than the feet—is in the style of the coarsest Hindu idol: a kind of pent-roof descends from the waist, exposing the legs, which are much shorter than the forearm. The feminine figure is wholly nude, in equally symmetrical proportions, finished as certain statues outside the Pitti Palace at Florence, and with a bosom of the largest dimensions, showing the true African *beau-idéal*. These idols are both adorned with rings and bracelets of beads: they are hardly to be bought at Abeokuta: at Lagos, however, two men make them, at the rate of three shillings each. I sent a pair for the edification of those at home.

With all these beneficent deities, it would be curious if the Egbas neglected the worship of the bad god—the Guebre's Ahriman. Accordingly, we find they have a terrible evil entity, whom they call Eshu, the Rejected—from 'shu,' to cast out—and whom the missionaries identify with the Devil, who is palpably a



Semite. Eshu is probably some bad ghost, who has made a name amongst the million. Of the same kind is Akilasho. Eshu is also called Elegbára, the mighty and evil being, stronger than good: he is propitiated by small offerings; his symbol, erroneously called an altar, is a bit of stone—a rude conglomerate of pebbles set in clay, tinged with oxide—and upon this palm oil is poured. Vestiges of this ‘devil worship’\* are everywhere to be seen in the streets of Abeokuta. The Egbas have borrowed from the Moslem Fula the word Ibilisi, the Arab Iblis or Sathanas; amongst the latter, however, it is concrete and objective, not so with the former. Orun Akpadi represents the rude beginning of a future place of punishment; at present, however, it seems to convey to their minds the next world—a faint idea of continuation is familiar to most Africans, except to the most material tribes—where evil-doers will expiate the sins of this life.

We now proceed to a third class of deities, which distinctly shows the power of religion as a substitute for police or gendarmerie amongst a barbarous people. The two principal persons—if they can so be called—are Egugun and Oro.

\* Here, as in other parts of Africa, Christian Europeans, like Moslems, call all idols ‘devils,’ and foolishly believe that every image, tree, stone, charm, and amulet are objects of worship, pure and simple.



Egugun—literally meaning ‘Bones’—is supposed to be a dead man risen from the grave: he is called by Europeans the Aku Devil.\* He is not unknown at Lagos, but his powers are greater at Abeokuta and in the northern parts of Yoruba. He is the local Mumbo Jumbo, the Ndá and Kuhkwi of Southern Guinea, the Okuku of the Mpongwe, Bakele, and Shekani tribes, the Makoko of Batanga, the Lú of Bambarra, and the Simo of the Rio Nunez. ‘Egugun sha’au’—‘Egugun chop you!’—is the equivalent of our ‘Devil take you!’ I once met this ‘party’ in the streets. He was a tall fellow, without the drawn sword mentioned by Mr. Bowen, but otherwise most fantastically clad. His face was covered with a plaiting of net-work, like a mask, and his head with a hood, whose streamers of red scarlet crimson and dirty white hung down and mixed with the similar tatters and patches of his lower dress. To his back, between the shoulders, was suspended a German penny mirror, and his shoes, like moccassins, completely hid his feet. The latter members he is not supposed to possess; and the same was thought of Europeans before they were seen to remove their boots and stockings. Egugun replied with a curious

\* Europeans, as has been said, call all the native objects of worship ‘devils,’ indiscriminately. The practice is incorrect, but dates of old.

\* All the gods of the Gentiles are devils,’ says the Psalmist.

and studied grunting to our facetious salutations, and moved out of the way of the horses. It is said that if any one—even the king—touches him, the man must die. Adult males, and even the free-born boys, know Egugun to be a mortal; but if a woman swears falsely by him, or even says that he is not a tenant of the grave, she would lose her life. The missionaries have declared that ‘even Mohammedans and Christians are obliged to conceal their knowledge of the imposture under penalty of martyrdom’—but this, I think, is hardly probable. Egugun, then, is a ‘Raw bones and bloody head,’ apparently intended to keep slaves, women, and children in a state of due subjection: he is the whip and the cucking-stool apotheosised. In Southern Guinea the women have a counteracting institution called Njembe.

If Egugun represent the domestic, Oro personifies the public police; and it is explained as ‘the executive or vindictive power of civil government deified.’ The word properly means pain, torment, punishment. The derivation has naturally been sought in ‘Orun, the sun; in the Hebrew Aur; in the Ur of the Chaldees; in *οὐρανός*; in the Egyptian Pharaoh; in the Orotalt or Urrat-Ilat (fire-goddess) of the Pagan Arabs; in Aurora and Aurum, and, more remote still, in the Madagascan Auru, the Philippine Arao, and the Peruvian Uru;’ but apparently, by going

farther, philological vagary has fared worse. We will rest contented, then, with its primary meaning, 'punishment'—when a criminal is killed, he is 'given to Oro,' and thus the penalty assumes a Macchiavellian mystery—and we will conclude that it represents to the Egba what Nemesis did to the Greek and Roman.

Oro is a *vox et præterea nihil*, and an idea common to Yoruba; I afterwards found him flourishing at the city of Great Benin. Like Egugun, he is supposed not to be known to the women—as if that were possible!—and I have seen an Egbanized Englishman show terror on hearing his name mentioned in public. Mr. Bowen has been greatly blamed by the Abeokutans for revealing the great secret in print. Oro is supposed to haunt the woods, and when he appears it is for the purpose of striking terror. Nightly, about 7 or 8 P.M., the cry of 'Oro' (the voice of my father) resounds in the streets; at this savage tocsin the women must fly within doors, under the usual penalty, a violent death. It was not without trouble that the missionaries obtained permission for their female converts to attend service on Sunday evenings. Oro, however, does not visit the market-places, and he disappears before a party of men with lanterns. This African curfew is produced by a thin slip of wood, about one foot long by a few inches in breadth,

fastened to a stick by a long string, which allows it to ascend and descend, thereby raising and lowering the tone. I recommend this utensil—whose curious booming noise, as it sounds through the shades of night, is imposing enough—to Mr. Hume and the Spiritualists. It is as superior to the silk kerchief and the easy-tongs as the Thug's silken cord is to the foul fustian sleeve of the English garotter. The voice of Oro is accompanied by a terrible caterwauling, in imitation of wild beasts; and he appears to be everywhere—the fact is, he is stationed in all the different quarters of the city. As a *vox*, he curbs the irregularities which would be favoured by the darkness of night and the shading trees. He is certainly armed, and probably he consists of a strong party. A corpse whose throat has been cut, and whose shin-bones have been broken with fearful violence by this 'spirit,' may at times be seen.

I was not fortunate enough to witness an Oro day; the ceremonies, however, were lengthily explained to me. It takes place only on occasions of great palavers. The principal requisite is that no woman must be seen out of doors; and the object is obvious—to insure a decent silence during debate. We read in 'Appleton'\* that the old Mohawks always

\* 'Illustrated Handbook of American Travel.' New York: Appleton and Co.

avoided speaking whilst paddling across the Saratoga Lake. On one occasion an Englishwoman persuaded them to ferry her over, which they did with the promise that their custom should be respected. The strong-minded Britoness, when half way over, determined to 'show the savages the weakness of their superstition,' and to that effect uttered a loud cry. Nothing followed, and the chief was rallied upon the subject of his fears. 'The Great Spirit,' replied the Mohawk, with much truth, 'is merciful; he knows that a white woman cannot hold her tongue.' Now the Egbas have found in their simplicity the method of doing what the Eastern proverb declares to be impossible—of curbing a certain member of a certain sex.

When the town is 'given to Oro,' as the phrase is, criers go about shouting, 'Atolo! Atolo! Ozez! Ozez!' and striking clapperless unbrazed bells like extinguishers. The women rush within the house—the gates are apparently built for the purpose—and pass their hours in 'knagging' and quarrelling. The men and boys go abroad; in places the streets are desert as those of New York on Sundays, whilst others are crowded with dancers and tumblers, processions and stump orators—in fact, with all the material of a 'palaver.' The Ogbone lodges are filled with their members, who discuss the important

measure after the African fashion, every one freely giving his own opinion, however far-fetched or ridiculous. According to Mr. Campbell, severe whippings are then and there administered to those offending with the fair sex. Breakers of the seventh commandment, says Mr. Bowen, are obliged to run the gauntlet in the public square. After sunset the firing of guns—which are not allowed to be discharged during the hours of light—announces the conclusion of an Oro day, when the town returns to its normal occupations.

The Egbas have no such thing as demonolatry because they have no demons, or the genius which Christian philosophers opined to be evil spirits. The distinction between *diaboli* and *daimonii* is unknown to them; but they believe in certain entities which, unless propitiated, will do them evil. The missionaries Anglicise Egbiri by ‘ghost,’ and Emi by ‘spirit’—a manifest borrowing from the *Pneuma*, *Psychos*, *Soma*, that compose the European Ego.\* The hysteric sufferers known to the ancients as *daimonazomenoi* and *enthusiazomenoi*, who, under fits, were insensible, like the mesmeric subjects of the modern day, are common amongst

\* Like the Mbuiti of the Mpongwe, or Gaboons. The word ‘spirit’ is always used in these cases: nothing can be more incorrect than the secondary idea which it conveys, yet I am at pains to find a better. ‘Emi’ is synonymous with the Hebrew ‘Ruach’ (breath).



the Egbas, as indeed amongst all pure or nearly pure African races. Of course there is the true African belief in ghosts, who are supposed to desire men's deaths, and the deceased is a vindictive thing to be feared as long as remembered.\* Witchcraft is common. The white witch or witch-finder of the days of James I. is usually the fetish-man; and according to the Mosaic law, the witch or wizard is not suffered to live. Europeans often consider the crime fanciful, and waste a great deal of good pity upon victims to popular indignation. Setting aside the Mosaic order and the Twelve Tables, the witch, it must be remembered, believes in the power of her spells, and commits murder in her heart; her incantations too often take effect—like the predictions of Mdlle. le Normand—upon the silly superstitious souls around her; and not unfrequently she brings arsenic, or something equally material—as the homœopaths do calomel—to the aid of her spiritual powers.† On the other hand, witchcraft

\* The Basutos think that the ghosts of their ancestors are always endeavouring to draw them to themselves ('Casalis,' p. 249). M. du Chaillu (ch. xix.) very truly shows that no negro fears the ghost of his grandfather or his great-grandfather, proving, as has been well remarked, the shortness of thought which is characteristic of the African.

† In one of the silliest of modern effusions, the 'Night Side of Nature,' where black magic is traced to the power of the will, we read: 'It is extremely absurd to suppose that statutes were created to suppress a crime which never existed.' The crime did exist, and does exist, amongst the



has its good side, and is by no means the unmixed evil that some hold it to be. Where the dark places of the earth are full of cruelty, its vague terrors form a salutary check upon the violence of husbands and masters, rulers and criminals. It is the power, and the only power, of the weak.

Where witchcraft prevails, the talisman must be common. Here the grigri, as it is barbarously called, is the prophylactic of the Jews, the amulet of Christian Abyssinia and Syria, the cross and miraculous medal of Southern Europe. So horse-shoes in England and the West Indies neutralize evil influences; egg-shells hung in the chimney-corner make chickens flourish, and extracted teeth are thrown over the house, or are worn, to prevent toothache. A folio volume might be filled with these fooleries of faith, which serve for two objects—the attainment of good and the avoidance of harm in this life. I look upon them as the vestiges of that fetishism which is the first dawn of religion in the breast of the savage and the barbarian, and which cannot fail to crop out even from the enlightened surface of monotheism. Besides which, belief or superstition is, like happiness, most equally divided amongst men.

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ignorant and barbarous: the light of science, of course, is an efficient exorciser.

Those who balk at the possible will swallow the impossible, and those who deride the credos of others must make up for themselves faiths of their own, which appear quite as ridiculous to their neighbours. In the present state of human nature, faith appears a necessary evil, an inseparable weakness. Nor can we see any corrective of, or substitute for it until, after the convulsion which follows the present period of quiescence, a higher race—as the elephant is to the mastodon—succeeds the present.

Witchcraft also necessitates ordeals ; these, however, are not the *Judicia Dei*, as they were held to be in Europe. They rather correspond in action with the *Erinnyes* and the *Eumenides* of ancient Greece. The poisons and drugs are intelligent beings, which, entering the stomach that here represents man's heart in its sentimental sense, searches out his guilt and sin. At times, finding nothing of evil, it returns by emetism, and thus establishes the innocence of the accused ; at others, it discovers the material element of witch-power—the aorta has been shown as an irrefragable proof—and it kills the wizard by the mismanagement of a weapon intended for the destruction of others ; he is hoisted with his own petard ; he falls into the pit which he digged for his brother. Trial by poison ordeal, however, is not so fatally common as the sancy water and the poison

bean, which sweep away whole families and even villages on the coast and on the Oil Rivers; nor is it accompanied with the horrors that distinguish it at Badagry and ill-famed Dahome. The priest will squirt capsicum or bird-pepper juice into the eyes of the accused, and lachrymation proves guilt: this, however, appears rather in the light of a torture to make criminals confess. Certain Yoruban cities are said to have local ordeals, but little is known of them at Abeokuta.

Dreams, according to the Yorubans and to many of our fetishists, are not an irregular action, and partial activity of the brain, but so many revelations brought by the manes of the departed. They believe in a physical metamorphosis, which Europeans insist upon confounding with metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. The former is simple and purely natural; the latter is a complex and contradictory system, postulating the existence of what is proofless; an immortal nonentity called Spirit, created out of nothing—despite ‘*ex nihilo nihil fit*’—in a limited number for an unlimited number of human beings, and destined to end where it began, and whence its beginning was consequently uncalled for. But Europe cannot deride Asia in this particular. He who denies or demands proof that a soul or spirit exists, who considers ‘Mind’ to be the

working of the brain, and who holds 'Matter,' as it is popularly understood, sufficient for all human phenomena, is held in a holy horror. To me it appears that he rather honours the Omnipotent who can, out of so vile a body, produce effects which others must attribute to their mysterious 'dweller in the temple,' must in fact solve their difficulties by adding a supplement to the Book of Creation.

It is hard to say whence came the tales invented by the African to explain the inferiority of the black to the white man. Their universality induces me to think them an emanation from the Hamitic brain. Nothing so puzzles and perplexes the negro as to inform him that all nations were made of one flesh; it is an insult to his Common Sense which Time only can efface. The much-vexed Noachian flood is of course found for them in their legends of local inundations. As might be expected amongst a working people, there is already an idea of a week\*—a decimal week, like that of the Aztecs and Javans, containing five days. The terminal day of rest is called Ose, when water is brought for the deities in long processions, libations are poured out, and other religious ceremonies are performed. A month of four weeks, each consisting of five days, gives an equal number of units to each whole;\* with us the system is so com-

\* The Fulas, to mention no other African tribe, have not a regular week.

plicated that we cannot remember it without a school-boy rhyme—moreover, all the weeks are comprehended without fractions in the year.

It is a question whether the intercourse of more progressive creeds is or is not modifying the Yoruban mythology. The older hands declare that faith is gradually decaying, and that Oro is not nearly so powerful as in their day; and they vainly attempt to arouse the enthusiasm of the people by petty attempts at a persecution. Old age, however, is and always will be *laudator temporis acti se puero*: on the other hand, there are residents who assert that the idolatries are not diminishing, and that cannibalism and human sacrifices, which were once performed in public, are now practised under the rose. My time did not permit me to enter deeply into these troublesome questions. Mr. Crowther\* has accused the Egbas (his own tribe) of boiling and eating the bodies of certain Ijebu invaders, in order to terrify the enemy;† and declares that Ikumi, chief of the Ijebu, was guilty of a similar savagery. The missionary, however, like the antiquary, is always somewhat credulous on the subject of heathen malpractices. Concerning human sacrifice I have something in a future page.

\* 'Journal,' &c., p. 185.

† The same is told of a cannibal race in Eastern Africa.

There is nothing remarkable in the marriage rites of the Egbas. Betrothal takes place early, although the girl is rarely married before eighteen or twenty, and the dowry, amongst the middle classes, may be four dollars. The bride and bridegroom repair to Ife, or some other place of pilgrimage; pray, and sacrifice. At night the bridesmaids escort the bride to her new home, where a feast leads to the consummation of the marriage. If the groom be satisfied, he sends presents to the wife's family, especially to his mother-in-law, who is called the 'little mother,' in contradiction to the true parent. If he find reason to complain, he dismisses his bride, and sends, bitterly, a few broken cowries to her mamma.\* The marriages are not very prolific; 'fecundity diminishes in proportion as we advance from temperate regions to the poles and the equator.' All Africans—amongst whom there is a curious Malthusian instinct—possess anaphrodisiacs, and, finally, the prolonged lactation, by determining the vital current to the breast, prevents the women from becoming mothers. There are few ceremonies after birth: a name is presently given to the child, and, as amongst the Mpongwe of the Gaboon River, water is sprinkled upon it—a faint resemblance to the modern, not the ancient, baptism

\* This reminds one of the Hindostani slang 'tutelí kaurí,' or 'broken cowrie,' which in Africa becomes 'broken calabash.'

of the Christians. The son inherits all the father's wives save his own mother.

Polygamy is of course the foundation-stone of Yoruban society. I cannot remember a single African or Asiatic tribe—except the polyandrous—in which this is not the case, and the rule is equally applicable to the North American aborigines. Europe forms, and almost always has formed, the sole exception. To account for this fact perhaps a few lines may not be out of place.

The savage and the barbarian are polygamic because they are dependent for the necessaries and for the little comforts of their poor existence upon a plurality of women and the number of their children. Servants are unknown; slaves are rare. A single wife cannot perform all the offices required even in the simplest stage of society. Moreover, there is, in the different races or sub-species of mankind, as amongst the humbler animals, a greater or a lesser difference, bodily and mental, between the two sexes. In the gallinaceæ the male is far nobler than the female; in the equines the two are nearly equal; in the falconidæ the female is stronger and braver than the male. Thus, in the European and the Hindu,\*

\* The Hindu race, in early times, made an approximation to monogamy. The country was then almost civilized, and the population must have been dense. The Semitic family shows the same phenomenon. But when quoting the words of the Eastern poet—



the woman is quasi-equal with the man; in the African, the American, and the lower races of Asiatic, she is inferior and monogamous, whilst his propensities are polygamic.

Amongst the Jews there was at first no attempt at the vulgar limitations of the family. 'The care of the Mosaic, as of other Oriental legislation, was directed to the protection of the woman from harsh behaviour or capricious desertion, and to the fair treatment of the offspring without reference to the mutual affection of the parents. That the man who associated with a virgin incurred the charge of her protection, and that the mother, by the very act of maternity, assumed the lesser dignity of the wife, were the foundations of the domestic morals of the ancient world, the guiding principles of the social life.' \*

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' His wives may never be four,  
He will best consult his reason,  
Best secure his home from treason,  
Who takes one, and wants no more'—

they should be read rather as a grumble against the 'legalities and proprieties of society,' than as a theory which could be generally carried out. The Asiatic races that are inferior to the Arab and the Hindu, have never, I believe, adopted monogamy, although polyandry has been practised for centuries.

\* I have borrowed these sentences, and almost all the information contained in these paragraphs, from a Paper in the 'Edinburgh Review,' Jan., 1862. The reader will readily recognize the master-hand in that admirable article. It is amusing, however, to see in it what a poor halfpenny-worth there is of bread (monogamy) to an intolerable deal of

Samuel and the Patriarchs had two and more spouses, Solomon a countless harem, as became a king of kings, and Cato looked upon his wife merely as a machine for the manufacture of progeny. As society became more complex, a certain limitation became necessary. The customary laws of the Jews confined the high-priest to one wife, and apostolic injunction

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sack (polygamy). Whilst pages 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 are devoted to showing that polygamy was a Mosaic institution, unforbidden to the early Christians, and only rendered restrictive and penal—principally by the Church of Rome—in modern times, a single sentence informs us that the settlement of the question was left to old Roman laws, to German manners, and to ‘the silent but absolute operation of a religion, based on the sentiments with which no system of polygamy seems to be compatible—freedom and love.’

An eminent Moslem divine—El Siyuti, I think—wrote a Moslem treatise on what to avoid. Through some three hundred pages he indulges his reader with a full description of the most voluptuous practices of the East—a perfect worship of Bacchus and Venus. In the last he perorates, beginning—‘This much, O reader, have I recounted unto thee, so that thou mayest know the things forbidden unto thee,’ &c., &c.

With respect to the reviewer’s last assertion, viz., that Christianity is based upon freedom and love—I doubt that the monogamic sentiment was ever intended by it. And I doubt even more vehemently whether the mixture of sentiment and passion, which we know by that name, has not added to the miseries rather than conduced to the happiness of human life. In my humble opinion, it is not one of the least merits of polygamy that it abstracts from the parents an affection which it bestows upon the progeny. As no man, it is said, can serve God and Mammon, so no woman can equally love husband and children; even the same woman, at different periods of her existence, will prefer one to the detriment of the other. And whilst conjugal love contains the base alloy of sexual feeling, parental affection is of all the most pure and holy. The unselfish will find no difficulty in pointing out which to prefer.

continued the same to the Christian bishop, without, however, forbidding a plurality of wives to the laity or to the other officers of the Church. It is hard to believe that this want of express condemnation arose from mere expediency, from the danger of disruption of the Oriental home, and from the fear of its being an obstacle to the conversion of the wealthier classes. Those familiar with modes of thought in the East well know the horror and loathing with which the people generally look upon the one-wife system, their contempt for the bastard, and their inability to witness in their own society those scenes which the monogamic cities of Europe must tolerate for fear of even greater social evils to the family. The ordinary Hebrew was ordered to be contented with four wives, a practice perpetuated by the apostle of El Islam and the king to eighteen. Thus Josephus distinctly called polygamy 'the custom of his country.' Nor was it modified till the depression of the Jew's social position compelled him to follow the laws and customs of the nations amongst whom he was located. 'In the eleventh century Rabbi Gerson, in connection with other Jewish doctors in France and the north of Germany, prohibited marrying more than one wife under pain of excommunication, and this was afterwards accepted by most European congregations. Nevertheless, both in Italy and Germany there seems

to have existed the permission to take a second wife, when the first was hopelessly barren, and Papal dispensations to this effect are recorded to have been given in the dominions of the Holy See as late as the seventeenth century (*vide* “*Historia degli riti Hebraici*,” by Leo. Mutensis, 1657, cited by Selden in his “*Uxor Hebraica*”); while in Sicily, where the Saracenic traditions might still linger, the author of the “*Ebraismo della Sicilia*,” writing in 1748, attributes the rapid increase of the Jewish population to the enforced early marriages and the habitual practice of polygamy.\* (P. 20. By Giovanni de’

\* St. Augustine, Grotius, and other authorities, admit that polygamy is more natural than monogamy, yet they declare—and they are followed by Paley—that it would prevent increase of population. The contrary is the case. Hippocrates, Harvey, Willoughby, Forster, and the practice of the Mormons, show, that amongst all animals, mankind included, polygamy tends to population by increasing the births of female children. Dr. Johnson (‘*Life*,’ vol. iii., p. 71) says it is ‘not natural for a man and a woman to live together in the married state.’ Balzac explains this, by observing that, ‘physically and morally, man is man longer than woman is woman.’ Napoleon, the last of the three Avatars of intellect, declares, in the Code Civile, ‘*Le mariage ne dérive pas de la nature.*’

In the City of the Saints, I flattered myself it had been proved, that whereas monogamy equalizes the birth of the two sexes, polygamy produces more females, and polyandry more males. Hence came the deduction, that ‘Nature, our plastic mother, had prepared her children for all three systems.’ The ‘*British Quarterly Review*,’ of Jan. 1st, 1862, in an un-able article, thus reasons upon this adaptation principle:—‘If a man breaks a leg, nature instantly adopts extraordinary measures to insure its repair; but are we entitled to infer that she delights in fractured limbs?’ If this be argument, there can be no more said upon the subject. Polygamy and polyandry, amongst mankind, are the rule, not the exception. Broken

Giovanni : Inquisitor Reale della suprema Inquisizione di Sicilia.)

It is, as the reviewer well remarks, entirely gratuitous to suppose that, at the time of the advent of Christ, the general Jewish custom of polygamy had fallen into desuetude in consequence of the prohibition by Roman manners, if not by Roman laws. The reverse was the case; the rigid monogamy of the early Italians was disappearing in the presence of a less austere and a more sensuous life. 'The almost sacramental Sabine ceremony of the *confarreatio* (of which we still retain a relic in our "bride-cake") was rapidly becoming confined to the use of the Pagan priesthood; the wife was daily ceasing to regard her husband as *amicum, patrem, tutorem*; the dignity and privilege of the *materfamilias* had declined to the position of *uxor tantummodo*; the married Antony had openly espoused Cleopatra, and the *quotidiana repudia* of Mæcenas shocked only the stoic Seneca.' To this I will add that the old-bachelor system appeared in its entirety amongst the philosophers and wits, *teste* one Horatius Flaccus, who might have been a club-man of the present day.

During a missionary dinner at Abeokuta I was

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legs are the exception, not the rule. The comparison of the 'learned' reviewer is, therefore, applicable to monogamy, not to polygamy and polyandry.

somewhat startled by an account of their treatment of polygamic converts. Having accidentally mentioned that a Protestant bishop in South Africa had adopted to advantage the plan of not separating husband and wives, I was assured that in Yoruba the severe test of sincerity was always made a *sine quâ non* before baptism. This naturally induced an inquiry as to what became of the divorcees. 'We marry them,' said the Rev. Mr. Gollmer, 'to some bachelor converts.' This appeared to me the greatest insult to common sense, the exercise of a power to bind and to loose with a witness; a right to sanctify adultery pure and simple, to do evil that good may come of it,\* a proceeding which may make any marriage a no-marriage. But I was still more astonished to find, when quoting the opinion of Martin Luther, in the case of Philip of Hesse, that several reverend gentlemen had never heard of it, and most when the

\* Martin Luther allowed Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, for political reasons, to intermarry with a second wife, the first being still living. ('Memoirs of Luther,' translated by M. Michelet: 1836. See also 'Athenæum,' June 18, 1836.) The Reformer, who said, 'If Sarah refuses, take Hagar,' regarded, like all the early Christians, saints and sinners, marriage as a purely civil rite. He never hesitated, when the object of union was impeded, to grant letters of divorce, and he notably held that the polygamy practised under the Mosaic dispensation was lawful in modern times. 'For my part,' he declares, 'I confess that I cannot oppose the man who may wish to marry several wives, and that I do not think such plurality contrary to the Holy Scriptures.' This is true wisdom. Human liberty has been sufficiently abridged without imagining further curtailments.



Rev. Mr. Gollmer, who manifestly made acquaintance with it for the first time, opined that the said Martin Luther had so lately emerged from the darkness of Romanism, that on this point his inner vision was not strong enough to face the light.\*

The reverend gentleman's last objection struck me the more forcibly, as it is evident that to the Roman Catholic Church — which, when barely adolescent claimed, and still claims in her decrepitude, the right of precedence over the State—we owe, in modern times, the most curious limitation of human liberty ever forced upon mankind. Let us see what the reviewer says upon the subject. I will abridge his excellent sketch.

No council, during the first centuries of the Church, denounced polygamy as a sin, but the apostolic limitation of the bishop's household was soon applied to the whole ministry, and, in the West penalties were attached to the practice. The Manicheans and Gnostics condemned marriage in toto, because it is founded on concupiscence and propagates the work of the devil in confining human souls in bodies of matter: hence Mani called his elect or per-

\* The lax law makes the polygamic wife a legitimate wife, the missionary declares her illegitimate and not respectable; he degrades her in her own estimate, and he would drive her an outcast from her home. Can aught be more absurd, more wicked?



fect—the class above the hearers—men-virgins. This heresy was rebutted, but it seems to have found place in the minds of men. St. Jerome, who is accused by the Reformers of thinking too exclusively of ‘victuals and virginity,’ would not undertake to declare a polygamist in mortal sin (‘Epistle to Pammachius,’ where he writes ‘non damno polygamos’). St. Augustine (contra Faustum, lib. 22) is even more precise: ‘Quando mos erat plures habere uxores, crimen non erat; nunc propterea crimen est, quia mos non est.’\* Polygamy was forbidden throughout the empire by the imperial decrees of A.D. 393, but within thirty years the Emperor Valentinian restored the liberty of marriage, according to the several customs and religions of the inhabitants of the Roman world. Even in later days the Merovingian kings took as many wives simultaneously as suited their passions or their politics, and ‘Charlemagne, an eminently Christian emperor, paraded as large a harem as an Oriental sultan would have decorously concealed.’ Probably, in the presence of such disorders, that development of the doctrine and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church took place

\* This ‘mos’ is equivalent with the Moslems’ ‘Rasm:’ the importance attached to it is eminently Oriental, conservative opposed to progressive. One is tempted to quote St. Augustine against himself: ‘Vae tibi, flumini meris humani! Quis resistat tibi?’ (‘Conf.,’ i. 8.)

which ended in marriage being taken out of the category of personal contracts, and, according to the character of the participants, crowned as a sacrament or branded as a sin. In these latter days the claims of polygamy have been wholly neglected. A late work (*'La Régénération du Monde, opuscule dédié aux douze tribus d'Israël'*) by M. Joseph de Félicité, contains the following curious sentences:—*'Il est donc essentiel que les peuples'* (Jews and Moslems), *'sachant que la Polygamie, qui a été autorisée et pratiquée jusqu'au temps de Jésus-Christ, a été révoquée par lui'* (when? where?) *'et qu'elle est interdite par la Sainte Eglise suivant le décret du Concile de Trent XXIV<sup>me</sup> session: "Si quelqu'un dit qu'il est permis aux Chrétiens d'avoir plusieurs femmes, et que cela n'est défendu par aucune loi divine, qu'il soit anathème."'* But there is an older and a more terrible anathema upon him who takes away from or adds to a word of what was spoken, and, perhaps, even the Council of Trent will not be held guiltless.

It is, therefore, among the dissidents from the Church of Rome that we must look for assertions touching the lawfulness of polygamy. The advocates are of two classes. The first is of the Casuists—the German Reformers, for instance—who permit the practice in exceptional cases of individual tempera-

ment or state necessity, such as might be the subjects of especial dispensation in the Roman Church ; the second is of the Moralists, who, without regarding polygamy as an absolute good, still look on it as a preservative from the miseries and disgraces incident to the illicit intercourse of the sexes in countries where marriage is restricted and men are licentious.\* To this class belong the Saxon Lyserus (author of 'Polygamia Triumphatrix,' under the name of Theophilus Aletheus), Bishops Berkeley and Burnet—who concludes by saying that 'he can see nothing so strong against polygamy as to balance the great and visible imminent hazards that hang over so many thousands if it be not allowed'—the Rev. Mr. Madan, who, in his 'Thelyphthora,' would give to seduction all the responsibilities of marriage, and the 'oblique advocate,' poetic Cowper. In 1784, the argument was revived in Russia by the Comte de Rantzow, who asserted that Frederic of Sweden had lately proposed to the states of his kingdom—where bigamy is punished with extreme severity—to permit polygamy, and that the project had been accepted by the two

\* There is nothing more curious in the moral world than to watch the effects of restriction of marriage by increased luxury and expense in England, France, and other so-called civilized lands. Polygamy has been cast out except amongst the few who can afford to practise an illegal concubinage, and polyandry has now become the last resource of those unable or unwilling to marry.

Lower, but rejected by the two Upper Houses of the legislature.

To conclude ; I would assure these and other missionaries that had less objection been made to polygamy on their part, the heathen would have found far fewer obstacles to conversion. Those who hold it their duty to save souls, should seriously consider whether they are justified in placing such stumbling-blocks upon the path of improvement.

Funerals play almost as important a part as weddings in the economy of Yoruban society. The preliminary wake takes place in the verandah of the dead man's house, which, like the king's audience room, is hung with the richest cloths procurable. The ceremony itself reminds us of the old Scotch annalist's words : ' In years of plenty,' says Fletcher of Saltoun, ' many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days, and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together.' Women are there skilful in weeping and shrieking ' like mandrakes torn from the ground ;' the sound of the tom-tom is incessant ; at times an overloaded musket is discharged ; whilst the mob drinks to intoxication and dances to ' break the fear,' as the East Africans say. During the

orgies, a procession perambulates the town, numerous singers, dancers, and myriologists, or keeners, accompanying men who bear a board covered with a cloth to represent a corpse. The body, packed mummy-like in all the finery which was never exposed during lifetime,\* is buried at full length in the house where the deceased lived, and a stone is placed over the grave, or a painted tablet is affixed to the wall opposite the spot. Hunters and other castes are buried outside the city gates. The corpses of debtors and 'pawns,' or men pledged for debt, are tied up in mats, as on the Gold Coast, and are placed horizontally between stakes at a distance of four to five feet from the ground, where they must remain until redeemed by the nearest of kin. Infants are buried behind the housewalls, not in the piazza, because they are supposed to have been killed by evil influences. On the seventh night, the relations and friends of the departed issue from the city gates after dark, cast his arms and clothes on the way-side, thrice call upon his name, and adjure him not to let, haunt, or otherwise injure them. After thus propitiating the ghost, they return to the dead man's house, where a feast and a carousal end the ceremonies.

Human sacrifices for the dead, or 'customs,' so

\* Some authorities say that cowries are placed in the tomb as gold-dust is further west : others deny it.

common in many parts of Africa, are here comparatively rare ; when offered, it is with the idea of presenting to the departed what is most valuable to the living ;\* and, as has been observed, a modified apotheosis is common. In Roman Catholic countries the deceased, if not too severely handled by the devil's advocate, may after a century or so, and at an expense of 10,000*l.*, become a saint—at Abeokuta he has a chance of being raised to the godhead. The Cairene superstition of the dead refusing to leave the town, the bier whirling round and round, and the bearers being driven hither and thither, is not unknown : here, however, if the people are thrown against the wall of a man's house, it involves the latter in a witchcraft 'palaver,' which he must settle by fine or by the poison ordeal.

\* It must be remembered that human sacrifices prevailed amongst all the polished people of the old and new worlds ; in Greece they were common until the days of Solon, and the Romans abolished them only in A.C. 100.

## CHAPTER V.

THE USUAL SKETCH—GEOGRAPHICAL AND  
HISTORICAL.

THE country properly called Yoruba, or, by older writers, Yarribah, and Yahribah—imitations of the Hausa pronunciation—has larger limits than those usually assigned to it. Mr. Bowen, for instance, gives as its frontiers the lands of Nupe (Nufe, or Nyffe), Borghú, and the regions known as the Sudan, on the north; the Bight of Benin or Slave Coast, on the south—so far he is correct—on the east by Ibini, or Benin, and the Niger; and on the west by Mahi and Dahome, or, as it is here called, Idáhame. It is, however, abundantly evident that Benin and Dahome are integral parts of Yoruba, somewhat differing in language, but identical in manners, customs, and religion. I would accordingly make the Niger, in  $6^{\circ} 45'$  east long., and the Volta River, in east long.  $1^{\circ} 45'$ , its extreme



limits. Thus, instead of two hundred miles in breadth, the irregular parallelogram will be about three hundred and fifty, and its depth from north to south will be upwards of two hundred miles. The area will be seventy thousand instead of fifty thousand square miles. The population is set down at two millions, which may be safely doubled, thus giving about twenty-five souls to the square mile.

There is also a Yoruba Proper, which includes the two former kingdoms of Ife and Isehin. The southern limit lies about twenty miles beyond Abeokuta, or sixty miles from the sea, and thence it extends northwards to the frontiers of Borghú. The area is usually laid at thirty thousand square miles, and the population at eight hundred thousand souls; nor is this an over-estimate. In this part of Africa, though much of the country is desert, the cities\* are numerous, many of them are ten to twelve miles in circumference, they contain thousands of houses, and each holds from ten to threescore souls. There are also many smaller towns numbering from two thousand to fifteen thousand people. In this section of the country lies the ancient metropolis of Yoruba, Oyo (also called Katanga or Eyeo), whence the

\* Like the French Canadians, the people are gregarious, and prefer for safety to live in cities and towns. Their farms and fields show only small huts.

people were known as Hios and Eycos. The old capital, which is said to have been twenty miles in circumference, was destroyed by the Fulas and Hausas in 1825, when the king established himself at the tent-market 'Ago-ojja,' which is now known by its former name, Oyo. The next most considerable cities are Ibadan, now at war with Abeokuta; Ijaye, the hapless ally of the latter; and Ilori. Besides which there are ten minor cities, whose names do not require mention. Yoruba Proper is now well nigh Moslem.

Besides Yoruba Proper, and the kingdoms of Wari, Benin, and Dahome—the latter was, according to native tradition, a mere tributary province—the great Yoruba country contains seven independent territories, whose names are as follows:—

1. Iketu, in our maps Ketu, with a capital of the same name, is a small country lying between Agbome and the River Ogun, south of Yoruba Proper, and shut out from the sea. It has hitherto withstood the power of Dahome, and as the soil is poor, whilst timber and water are far from abundant, it is not much coveted by its neighbours. The extent is conjectured to be two thousand square miles, and the population one hundred thousand.\*

\* These conjectures are all borrowed from Mr. Bowen, who probably saw more of the country than any other white man.

2. Ekko,\* which the Portuguese called Lagos; the chief town is Aoni, or Awini, *i.e.*, descended from Ini or Bini—Benin. The limits are Egba-land to the north, the sea to the south, the Ijebu country on the east, and Badagry, now its dependency, on the west. Its area cannot be less than one thousand square miles, and its population eighty thousand.†

3. Egba, which, with Iketu, forms the headquarters of the so-called Aku nation. It is a small kingdom lying on both sides of the Ogun River, but principally on the left bank. It is bounded on the north by Yoruba Proper, south by Ekko, east by Ijebu, and west by Iketu. It also includes the fallen kingdom of Ota, lying between Badagry and Abeokuta. The capital of Egba-land is Abeokuta, and there are no other considerable cities. The area, including Ota, is about three thousand square miles, and the population may be assumed at two hundred thousand.‡

4. Ijebu, popularly called Jaboo, lies between Egba-land and Benin: it is bounded northwards by Yoruba Proper and Kakanda, southwards by the sea, or

\* According to the Ethiopic Directory, Ichoo is the name of the town of Lagos—a decided mistake.

† Mr. Bowen allows it 400 square miles, and 30,000 souls, but he does not include Badagry and other provinces.

‡ Mr. Bowen gives 100,000, but he estimates Abeokuta at 80,000 only.

more properly by the long lagoon called the Ikoradu, or Cradoo Waters. It is divided into two parts, the Ijebu Ode to the east, and westward the Ijebu Remo : the Awajali, or great king, however, resides at Ode. The land has been little visited by travellers : it is described as an undulating surface of bush and savannah. The area is set down at five thousand square miles, the population at two hundred thousand souls. The Ijebus, a warlike race, have ever been the most deadly enemies of the Egbas, who, in return, gave them the bad name of being the most barbarous of the Yoruban tribes.

5. Ijesha, whose capital is Ilesha, is a little-known province lying between Yoruba and Kakanda : its area is set down at two thousand square miles, and its population at two hundred thousand souls.

6. Kakanda,\* more properly called Effong or Effon, extends from Yoruba Proper to the Niger and the Kwara Rivers. This province is very little known, but the people are celebrated for working copper, of which they are supposed to have mines. In Kakanda is the celebrated Ife, ‘said,’ if we believe the maps, ‘to be the origin of idolatry.’ It is the spot where the Yoruba nation and all others arose—the Eden of these regions ; moreover, from it sprang the

\* Kakanda or Ibbodo, the capital of the Effon people, is a large city on the right bank of the Kwara River.

sea, and they show the source of the largest river known to them, namely, the Osa Lagoon, running between Lagos and Godomé. The Dahomans, who, like other Yorubans, thence derive their faith, call it Fe.

7. Ilori, which Richard Lander writes Alourie, a province and a city of that name, inhabited by Moslem Fulas and Gambari,\* a tribe of Hausa men, together with a few pagan Yorubas. The king is a Fula, and the chiefs are mostly Gambari and Kaniki.† About 1820 Ilori became independent of Yoruba Proper: it then proclaimed the Jihad, and assisted in the destruction of Oyo or Eyo. Of late years Ilori has suffered at the hands of Ibadan, but it has recovered since the latter people have been weakened by their wars with Abeokuta. About 1850, Masaba of Nupe, a half-caste Fula, made a coalition to attack Ilori and its chief Chítá, a relation of his own, whose daughter he had married. Two years afterwards, however, Masaba was driven out by his subjects, and Iláde, his capital, on the banks of the Niger, was burnt. The King of Sokoto then

\* The Gambari, of old called Cumbrie, are the men of Hausa—so termed from the Kambi—who live on the banks of the Niger above Busa.

† The Kaniki are the people of Burnu, and the latter word means a ship, the town having been built where Noah's ark first touched land. We have given the name of the city to the country. The Kaniki are descended from Barba, i.e. Dar Borghú.

sent him to reside at Ilori as a private citizen. Shortly afterwards he left it, and he now resides at Bidda, on the Kaduna, a tributary of the Niger.

Ilori, like Tinbuku and Sokoto, is one of the great marts of Central Africa. All manner of European goods are imported *viâ* the Desert from Tripoli and other Mediterranean ports, although an easy land journey of two hundred and fifty miles separates it from the Bight of Benin. The Niger River also runs at no great distance to the eastward of it. The exploitation of the whole Nigerian valley is in our hands if we choose to take the trouble.

The word Yoruba has, as might be expected, been identified by the ethnological sciolist with Europa. Sultan Mohammed Bello\* derives the name Yarba from Yarab, son of Kahtan, called Joktan by the Hebrew annalist, and enumerated by Moslem genealogists amongst the Arab el Ariba, or pure Arabs who preceded the Mutaarab, the Ishmaelitic et insidious and impure Egypto-Arab race. Mr. Bowen derives it from Goru, which in Fula means river, and *bah* or *ba*, great. He is sensible enough to place little confidence in his own philology; and, for the most part, *bah*, as in Joli-bah, and Bah-fing, is believed to be an African corruption of the Arabic *bahr*, a sea or large stream. The popular derivation

\* See Appendix to Denham and Clapperton's Travels.

of Yoruba is Ori Obba, or 'Head King'—with which, for want of a better, we must fain be satisfied.

With respect to the origin of the Yoruban race, some hold that it is an offshoot from Nupe, on the north of the Kwara, driven by a war across the Niger when the river was swollen; and thus the ship, Okko, became their emblem. They first founded Ife, and subsequently Igboho and Oyo.\* Another well-known tradition makes the Yoruban forefathers to have been created at Ife, or rather at the obscurely remembered mythical town of that name, four months' journey to the east. Another declares that they are descended from sixteen persons who were sent forth from the east to found a colony. Their leaders took with them a hen and a piece of cloth, containing a palm-nut in a few handfuls of mould. For a time they waded through water, till the earth, dissolved through the cloth, formed a bank in which the palm-nut grew to a tree with sixteen branches, whereupon the hen sprang upon the bank and dried the waters.† A third makes Iketu, Egba, Ijebu,

\* Igbo means a forest; Igboho, a noisy forest, a howling wilderness; Oyo is derived from *yo*, to escape, and points to the first city of refuge south of the Kwara.

† Missionaries naturally connect this ridiculous fable with the Mosiac Creation and the equally apocryphal Noachian flood dove and olive-branch. I extract the following from the Rev. Mr. Crowther's introductory remarks to the 'Grammar and Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language:' 'It is said by the Yorubans that fifteen persons were sent from a certain region; and that a



Ife, Ibini, and Yoruba six brothers by one mother. Yoruba, the Benjamin of the family, settled at Ife,

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sixteenth, whose name was Okambi (an only child), and who was afterwards made King of Yoruba, volunteered to accompany them. The person who sent them out presented Okambi with a small piece of black cloth, with something tied up in it; besides a fowl, Tetu, a servant (slave), and a trumpeter,—Okinkin was the name of the latter. On opening the gate of this unknown region, they observed a large expanse of water before them, through which they were obliged to wade. As they went on, the trumpeter reminded Okambi of the small piece of cloth, by sounding the trumpet according to the instructions of the person above mentioned. The cloth being opened, a palm-nut, which was deposited in it with some earth, fell into the water. The nut grew immediately into a tree, which had sixteen branches. As the travellers were fatigued by long wading through water they were glad of this unexpected relief, and soon climbed up and rested themselves on the branches. When they had recruited their strength, they prepared again for the journey; yet not without great perplexity, not knowing in what direction they should proceed. In this situation, a certain person, Okikisi, saw them from the region whence they set out, and reminded the trumpeter of his duty; on which he sounded again, and thus reminded Okambi of the small piece of black cloth, as before. On opening it some earth dropped into the water, and became a small bank; when the fowl, which was given to Okambi, flew upon it and scattered it, and wherever the earth touched the water, it immediately dried up. Okambi then descended from the palm-tree, allowing only his slave and his trumpeter to come down with him. The other persons begged that they might be allowed to come down; but he did not comply with their request until they had promised to pay him, at certain times, a tax of two hundred cowries each person.

‘ Thus originated the kingdom of Yoruba, which was afterwards called Ife; whence three brothers set out for a further discovery of better countries. At their departure they left a slave, named Adimu (which signifies ‘Holdfast’), to govern the country of Ife in their absence. The tradition of the three brothers explains the relationship of the three chieftains in the kingdom of Yoruba; namely, the chief Iketu, called Alaketu, and said to be the eldest; the second, or Alake, chief of the Egbas; and the King of

and after a time he reduced the others to the condition of his dependents and vassals, when he removed to Igboho and made it his capital. The great mother of the six tribes is still worshipped at Ife and Abeokuta as *Iyommodi* (contracted from *Iya ommo oddi*), the mother of the hunter's children. Naturally enough the Moslems identify the hunter with Nimrod, and his children with the Canaanites, who, driven to the west, peopled the Sudan—Yauri and its vicinity. It is remarkable that all these legends derive the population of Yoruba from the east; and—even the fables which natives tell concerning their origin most frequently show a modicum of truth—we are so far justified in believing that from early times a race of pagans, pushed forward by the stream of immigration from the lands nearer Arabia, occupied the thinly populated countries south of the Kwara.\*

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Yoruba, the youngest, who however in former days took tribute from the rest. There is a similar tradition concerning the chiefs of Allada (Ardrab), Ijashe (Porto Novo), and Dahome.

\* After the repulse of the Dahoman army in 1850, some of the prisoners were presented to Oni, the Chief of Ife, to the Alaketu, and to the King of Yoruba by the Abeokutans, in memory of their victory. He of Ife returned a polite symbolical letter which was construed by the missionaries as an invitation to come over into his country and to help his people.'

\* The early history of Yoruba is thus given by the Rev. Mr. Crowther: 'The Kings of Yoruba may be safely traced back to the time of Ajagbo, who reigned in Oyo (Katanga), and died at a great age. The time of his

We will now proceed to that province of the great Yoruban country which most interests us—Egba—

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reign cannot now be ascertained. He was succeeded by Abiodun, who also enjoyed a long and peaceful reign, and died an old man. The elders of Yoruba always refer to his rule as a time of peculiar felicity, and one which cannot again be expected for a long time. About this time the Felutas (Fulas) were known only as shepherds and herdsmen. They were permitted to feed their sheep and cattle wherever they liked, and generally lodged outside the town in tents.

‘After the death of Abiodun, Arogangan, his brother, succeeded him. Arogangan’s nephew, Afunja, born in Ilori, whose father was a brave warrior, was made Are-obbo (King’s Chief Warrior), and was placed in Ilori, the king thinking that Afunja would be satisfied with this high post of honour; but instead of this, Afunja used every artifice that he could think of to dethrone Arogangan, that he might possess the kingdom. The king being aware of his designs, under pretence of offence given to him by the people of Iwe-re, the town of Abiodun’s mother, sent Afunja to war against it, making sure that by this means he should remove Afunja out of the way; but the matter turned out the reverse. When Afunja got to Iwe-re, he told them that he was sent by Arogangan to fight against them. They were surprised at this declaration. Afunja was sent back, and an army sent to demand Arogangan, and to fight against Oyo in case of refusal to give him up. Oyo was besieged, and Arogangan, dreading the consequences of falling into the hands of his enemies, poisoned himself; upon which the army departed from Oyo. The beginning of his reign may be supposed to be about the year 1800. He reigned seven years’ [N.B.—This would place the beginning of the chronicle between 1720 and 1740].

‘Adebo succeeded his brother Arogangan. He was chosen by the Elders of Oyo, in preference to Afunja, who might now have been placed on the throne of Yoruba on account of his greatness of mind, but was refused because of his treachery. Adebo reigned only one hundred and twenty days. It is supposed that he was poisoned.

‘Maku, one of the royal family, a favourite of Afunja, succeeded Adebo; but it appears that the majority of the inhabitants of Oyo were not well pleased with him. There was war at Igboho; and Maku, accompanied by Okpelle, one of the king’s counsellors, took the command; but being unsuo-

land. According to its Aku population, it included at one time Dahome and the Popo, or races extend-

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cessful in the undertaking, he chose rather to die than return home; so he killed himself. He reigned only three months.

'After Maku's death it appears there was an interregnum of five years, during which period affairs were conducted by one Ojo, who was Obbasborun or privy counsellor. Majotu succeeded Maku, and reigned for some time well; but his son did a great deal of mischief, chiefly by kidnapping. The people complained bitterly against the prince; and at last required him to be given up for trial. Majotu felt very uneasy on account of his son's behaviour, and life became such a misery to him that he poisoned himself. It is not certain how long he reigned.

'It is not uncommon among the Yorubas, under some injury, vexation, or disappointment, to commit suicide, either by taking some poisonous draught, sticking themselves with a poisoned arrow, or cutting their throats or bellies with a sword or razor. Such are generally looked upon as acts of bravery.

'Amodo succeeded Majotu; about which time the country of Yoruba was in great confusion.

'Afunja, who was made chief warrior in the kingdom, took the opportunity of the unsettled state of affairs at the capital to ingratiate himself with the people of Ilori. He allowed them to make whatever use they liked of their plunder in battle; taking nothing from them, either for himself or for the king, and thus encouraged them to war. By this means, such slaves as were not satisfied deserted their masters and joined Afunja at Ilori; in doing which they were declared free and independent. The Felutas, who had hitherto contented themselves with a pastoral life, began now to distinguish themselves as great warriors; and as they gained a firm footing in the country they introduced their religion—that is, Mohammedanism. As Afunja could not get to the throne in any other way, he tried to make himself friendly with the people of the capital, and to get them into a quarrel with some principal head-men in Ilori, who, it appears, began to be too strong for him. But they of Ilori, being aware of his treacherous plans, caught him and burnt him publicly in Ilori, and exposed his ashes for many days. After this, the people of Ilori, being mostly Mohammedan, did not think it proper to be subject to a pagan king, but

ing from Badagry to the Volta River. At last the giant Lishabe—there were good and bad giants in those days—rebelled against a Yoruban tyrant, and vindicated the freedom of his country. This West African Kavi or Washington is now a god, and his farm, which it would be sacrilege to reclaim, is pointed out on the east of the Ogun River, a little below Abeokuta.

After their 'declaration of independence' the Egba race endured a succession of terrible calamities, which led to their dispersion. Though the worst must have happened almost within memory of man, there are many conflicting statements accounting for it. According to some—and this is the version recognized by the missionaries—the Egbas, after winning their independence, were long governed by a king of their own; but finally, growing weary of monarchy, they determined that every town should be ruled by its own chiefs. This led to mutual jealousies and dissensions; as might be expected, the

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became independent, and on this account the civil war broke out which has almost desolated the kingdom of Yoruba. Since this time, Ilori has become the rendezvous of the Mohammedan army.

\* The surviving princes who have a right to the throne of Yoruba in succession, are Atiba, Tella, Afunja the younger, and Ajibekun. Atiba is the present King of Yoruba. He removed the seat of government from Oyo to Aggo-oja, where he is now using every means in his power to subdue Ilori.

oligarchies become more tyrannical than despots, without possessing the virtues and the habits of freemen. About fifty years ago this bad blood, stimulated by the slave trade and by the machinations of the Yorubas and the Ijebus, resulted in civil and internecine wars. In the course of twenty-five years the numerous cities and towns which covered the land were all laid waste with the sole exception of Oba, which is yet standing, about ten miles south-west of Abeokuta. It is probable that five hundred thousand people perished by sword and famine. Many were sold to the slave ships, and the remnant of the tribe was scattered abroad. Others say that the wars began about a little pepper in the market-town of Akponi—which shows that the country was ripe for confusion. The people of Ife, Ikija, Ikesi, Owu, and Ijebu, all armed against one another; whilst Afunja, chief of Ilori; Alimi, a Fula of Sokoto; and Ali, chief of the Gambari people, attacked Yoruba in force. Thousands of plunderers were already at work; the sword and torch, famine, and the slave-ship completed the destruction. Others declare that about two generations ago the Egbas had a king who determined to rule them with absolute sway. He was quietly directed to ‘go sleep,’ but he had the audacity to refuse. Then the turbulent Egbas



arose, and in full durbar slew their anointed king, who claimed the right divine to do wrong. But the killing was murder in the eyes of Oro; punishment followed the regicidal act with no lame foot. The Fula Moslems of the Niger pressed upon Yoruba, Yoruba upon the Egbas. The latter having no head, and being, though not absolutely republican, a headstrong and unmanageable brood, began to fight among themselves, and to sell one another in all directions. According to Mr. T. B. Freeman, one of the earliest visitors to Abeokuta, a war had lasted nearly a century between the kings of Dahome and of Great Benin. The lands lying between the two rivals had suffered greatly; and even in the present day the line of country between Badagry and Abeokuta, which is one hundred miles long, does not contain more than five hundred souls. In those days the Egbas dwelt to the eastward\* of their present homes, but were driven out by their neighbours the Ijebu, who had sided with Benin. Under their chief, Ladmodi, the Egbas made head against the violence of the enemy, but he was at last slain and the tribe dispersed.

Without attempting to decide which account is true, it is evident that during the first quarter of

\* The Abeokutans, as will be seen, point out their old seats northwards, around the present Ibadan.



the present century there was a general dispersion of the Egbas. We know that about 1820-22 there was a great influx of Aku captives into Sierra Leone, and that they found their way east and west, to the United States,\* Gambia, Fernando Po, Hausa, Borneo, Central Africa, the Fezzan, Egypt, and even to Stamboul. It was a race worsted and spoiled, not, as is commonly asserted, by Europeans, but by its own folly and want of proper despotism.

In 1825, as has been recounted, the Rock Olumo gave to a remnant of the Egbas a rallying point. When their numbers were equal to the task, they founded, about 1826, the town Abeokuta, under the chief Shodeke, who, as the next in rank, had succeeded Ladmodi. The *novus homo* then attacked Ijebu, the old enemy, but after some successes he was defeated by a coalition near Ekpe. The Ijebu raised another force, and fell upon Shodeke. After a long campaign, however, they were compelled to retire, losing one-third of their host. Shodeke then warred with Ilori, and wrested from Yoruba Proper the little kingdom and city of Ota. He took Ado, the key of the Badagry line, which connected him

\* The Guinea niggers of the United States are the Fantis and Popos. The good niggers are from Yoruba, Nupe, Hausa, and the Sudan generally. The Bozals of Cuba are any wild blacks.

with the coast, and he made an alliance with Dahome. In 1838 he invited Europeans to settle in his capital; and he died honoured and revered in 1844.

The closer connection of Abeokuta with England dates from 1838-1839. In that year certain Christian Akus or Egbas of Sierra Leone, freighted with merchandize a small captured and condemned slaver—the class of vessel was ominous of what was fated to happen—and, with a white man for master and a crew of *emancipados*, sailed for Badagry. They were well received, and presently they returned with a cargo of palm oil. Two other confiscated ships followed suit, and a little trade was thus set up, originating the idea of returning to their old homes as Oibo, foreigners or civilized men. Between 1839 and 1842 some five hundred Yoruban recaptives determined to form a colony. About two hundred and sixty-five landed in three ships at Lagos, and suffered from the rapacity of the chiefs, reaching Abeokuta with difficulty. Between two hundred and three hundred entered *viâ* Badagry, where, by the influence of Yoe Wawu, the Popo ‘English chief,’\* they were better

\* Badagry, like Whydah, was divided in the old slaving days into different towns, French, English, Portuguese, &c., and each had its independent chief. In 1842 there was an English factory there, for buying palm oil. All the other commerce was in the hands of the slave traders. Kidnapping was common. The roads were unsafe to travel, and farming could be carried on only within a short distance of the towns.

received, and made for the interior in parties of fifty and sixty. Mr. T. B. Freeman, a coloured Wesleyan missionary from Cape Coast Castle, followed them for spiritual refreshment on the 11th December, 1842, visited Abeokuta, which he describes even then as double the size of Komasi, and reported his journey in the 'Missionary Register' for 1843. He and the other converts were hospitably and kindly treated by Shodeke the king, who allowed them to stand before him, not to prostrate themselves like his heathen subjects.

The movement was accelerated and intensified by the ill-fated Niger expedition, commanded by Captain Trotter, R.N., whose principal, if not sole success, was in persuading Obi, chief of Abo, the capital of the extensive Ibo (Eboe) country that occupies the lands lying about the head of the Delta, to sign the treaty for the suppression of the slave trade. Obi's example was followed by the Ata of Igarrah, who also claims the city of Kakanda. On the return of the expedition it was decided that a Mr. Townsend, one of the Church Missionary Society's catechists, should proceed to Yoruba, and select an eligible base for future operations. He embarked on the 14th November, 1842, on board a condemned slaver, which three negroes had purchased and freighted, for Badagry. There he met Mr. Free-

man, who, on his return from Abeokuta, gave a favourable description of Shodeke. Mr. Townsend, accompanied by two blacks, Andrew Wilhelm and John M'Cormack, proceeded to the capital, and after a satisfactory interview with the warrior-king, returned to Sierra Leone. Andrew Wilhelm was again sent to Abeokuta, whilst Mr. Townsend proceeded for ordination to England. It was then arranged that he should at once revisit Abeokuta in company with the Rev. Mr. Gollmer, who had been some years at Sierra Leone, and Mr. Crowther, who had lately been 'crowned a minister,' the first full-blooded negro who ever 'wagged his pow' in a Church of England pulpit, and who had preached his first sermon at Freetown in January, 1844.

The Rev. Mr. Townsend arrived at Sierra Leone in December, 1844, accompanied by Messrs. Gollmer and Crowther, with their wives and families, and sundry natives, catechists and interpreters, carpenters and labourers. He landed at Badagry in January, 1845; but Shodeke was dead, and the Ado war, which was then raging, delayed their advance: finally, it was decided that Messrs. Townsend and Crowther should proceed to Abeokuta, and that Mr. Gollmer should remain at Badagry. The quarrels of Akitoye and Kosoko detained the whole party seventeen weary

months on the coast, until M. Domingo Martinez\* —the well-known slave-dealer of Porto Novo and Whydah —effected a peace, and enabled the missionaries to proceed, despite the unwillingness of the Badagry people to part with them. Messrs. Townsend and Crowther, with their wives, left Badagry on the 27th July, 1846, and arriving safely at Abeokuta, were entertained by one Osho Ligregere, and were welcomed by Okokenu, the actual Alake.

Ake—the royal head-quarters, in which Shodeke had resided—was chosen for the first settlement. Three acres were granted by the king, a shed was erected, Mr. Townsend preached, Andrew Wilhelm translated, and the chiefs, Ogubonna, the Balogun, and Somoye, the Ibashorun, listened—curiously. The mission-house was built in December, 1846 ; in 1847, a church was opened ; and the end of that year saw four preaching sheds at Owu, Itoku, Ikijá, and Igbein, where Mr. Crowther settled himself, about two miles from Ake.

In 1848, Mr. Townsend—leaving behind him Mr. J. C. Müller, who died in 1850—returned to England, bearing a letter and a country cloth, offered by the Alake and his caboceers to Her Most Gracious Majesty. His departure was the signal for an attempt

\* Commander Forbes calls him, probably by a misprint, Domingo José Martins.

at persecution, which, probably, the converts had brought upon themselves.\* The conservative movement was directed by several chiefs, of whom Akigbogun — termed the ‘Pharaoh of Igbon’—distinguished himself. At the bottom of the affair, however, were the Ogboni lodges, who said that the converts were turning the world upside down; and certain Sierra Leone renegades, who had relapsed into heathenism and the slave export trade. The fetishmen, to whom the new faith was foolishness, also feared the loss of many goats and fowls. But the polytheist is a bad persecutor: there was a little shaking of roofs, flogging, pinioning, and prohibiting visits to the church or to white men. Enough was done to fill a chapter, headed Persecution; but all was of the mildest, none of the ‘curious juice,’ except from the back, was shed.

Meanwhile, the Earl of Chichester, President of the Church Missionary Society, was authorized to communicate with the Alake, acknowledging his present, and exhorting him to wean his people from illicit to lawful commerce. This letter, accompanied by a gift of English and Arabic Bibles, and a steel corn-mill, was conveyed by the Revs. Dr. Hinderer

\* The proceedings of new converts in the old haunts of idolatry may serve to throw no little light upon the causes of the great persecutions under Nero, and other ‘enemies of the Church.’



—who was sent to study the Hausa language—and J. Smith, to Abeokuta, in the spring of 1849. The Alake and the chiefs, highly gratified, proposed a sacrifice to the presents, which was rejected. The so-called persecution ended in 1849, when the continuance of the ‘sentimental squadron’ was determined on; and in the spring of the next year Mr. Townsend, who plays the part of the ‘great Eltchee’ in these lands, returned from England to Ake in March 1850. In the same year Mr. Hinderer, accompanied by Mr. Phillips, an interpreter, visited the towns of Igbara and Ishagga, and settled at Oshelle, about eight miles north-east of Ake.\* In January, 1851, Mr. Beecroft, H.M.’s Consul for the Bight of Biafra, after a journey to Agbome, proceeded to Abeokuta, and made a covenant with the chiefs to repress future persecution. The same year saw Badagry burnt down and destroyed in a cut-throat affair, and Lagos scotched by the British. In March the King Gezo, of Dahome, determining to renew the scenes of Okeadon—where, it is said, 20,000 Otas were seized and sold—attacked Abeokuta, and suffered shameful defeat; and in the autumn of the same

\* Since 1851, Mr. Hinderer, with an interval of sick leave to England, has been settled at Ibadan. The chiefs of Abeokuta opposed this measure strongly, and the country is now at war with Abeokuta: he naturally takes the side of his protégés, and differs totally from his colleagues in Egba-land upon the subject of the ‘mad dogs of Ibadan.’



the bell for the 'Western Times' in the streets of Exeter, the other, a missionary, holds in his hand the destinies of Abeokuta. Far from being a disparagement, it is highly honourable, according to English ideas, for a man so to raise himself above his caste; but how often '*honores mutant mores*,' and what a terribly bad politician from Indus to the Pole your reverend man mostly is!

The Sierra Leone settlers are numbered at 2000. They have the name of being prime disturbers of the public peace—especially those who have had the misfortune to visit England—and they are openly accused of relapsing into the lowest heathenism, and of slave-trading, under the specious pretext of redeeming captives. Of course they deny the charge, and if by any chance they speak the truth this time, they have been greatly maligned. But of them more in a future page.

The number of converts registered is about 1500, the communicants may amount to 800. The slave-trade, in its slow but sure reflux from the west to the east, has done this much of good. The Mombas Mission in Eastern Africa, where there are no re-captives, could, in the same number of years, boast of but one convert, and he had been a maniac. As might be expected, the stranger hears of shining lights amongst the Neo-christians of Abeokuta, such as John

radiant with pleasure, bright with youth and beauty. It is a crying sin and a shame to expose these tender beings to such rude, unworthy trials. But what words of mine would avail? I could only leave with them my wishes, my vain hopes that they may soon be restored to those homely decent lands, which no Englishwoman—if the power of ukase were mine—should ever be permitted to leave.

Seven deaths have occurred in this mission since 1846. Mr. and Mrs. Dennard, Messrs. Lord, Field, Paley, and Carter, and Mrs. Buhler, occupy 'God's Acre,' the fetid, grassy graveyard of Abeokuta. Besides which there are numerous native converts. Some years ago the average of European life on the coast of the Benin Bight was two years; and of 100 white children only one or two, even when removed to England, reached the age of ten. At Abeokuta this state of things seems in a fair way to be perpetuated. The least that could be done by the authorities at home would be to allow every missionary, male and female, a full year's furlough after every two years spent in the African interior.

As has been seen, the missionary holds a peculiar position in these lands. At home a carter, a blacksmith, or a cobbler, he comes out to Africa—I use his own expressions—'to found empires, and to create nations.' Whilst one Mr. T\*\*\*\*\* rings

the bell for the 'Western Times' in the streets of Exeter, the other, a missionary, holds in his hand the destinies of Abeokuta. Far from being a disparagement, it is highly honourable, according to English ideas, for a man so to raise himself above his caste; but how often '*honores mutant mores*,' and what a terribly bad politician from Indus to the Pole your reverend man mostly is!

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Baptist Dasalu, Martha Dasalu, Mat. Oluwalla, Mary Ije, and Susannah Kute. There is even a Christian *Balogun* or Caboceer, John Akirona, *i.e.* John the Great, and he is favourably spoken of as an independent and honest man. The neophytes are exposed to sore temptations. I have heard convert-women on the coast declare that their native catechists are holy men, that to offend with them is not the same as to sin with the laity; besides which, under such circumstances, it is not their—the weaker vessel's—'palaver.' In the more degraded stages of the Roman Catholic religion the penitent thinks the same of her confessor. Moreover, if I am rightly informed, convicts are preferred for conversion, which must naturally lead to 'breakings out.'

The schools contain 265 children, who are crammed with hymn-singing, reading, and other civilized arts. As an American missionary rightly observes, the English language is held to be a second revelation to mankind, and thus becomes a curse to the people. The natives should be induced to found, and to support their own schools; and, until they discover the value of education, it is perhaps better not to force their minds.

As for the adults—chiefs and commons—of Abeokuta generally, there is in their minds an ingrained idolatry, against which even the outburst of mis-

sionary spirit, in the days of Cary and his contemporaries, would prove futile. 'At least thirteen apostles,' as I heard a Scotchman say, 'would be required for the people Egba.' The power of the Ogboni is unlimited; it extends from Abeokuta to Sierra Leone, where the 'Akoo companies' form a complete *vehm gericht*, and no foreigner can expect to swim against such a tide. This may explain the later failures of our political relations with Abeokuta. And the Egba is stubborn, most suspicious and hard to change when he has once adopted an idea; it is to be feared that without main force—which we cannot apply—the Ogboni will succeed in defeating all our best intentions.

## CHAPTER VI.

### OUR SECOND VISIT TO THE KING.

THE morning of Monday saw me on foot betimes. At 6 A.M. I again ascended the Ake Hill, behind, or north of the Church Missionary compound, and proceeded to take, with prismatic compass, bearings of Abeokuta, which as yet has not been honoured with aught worthy the name of plan. My first thought was to measure by gun-sound, *secundum artem*, a base between Ake and Olumo. The timid English residents feared, however, lest his potent majesty the Alake might take umbrage at the shooting, and suspect sinister intentions.

The next motion was to meet the Akpesi or Prince of Eruwan, the second dignitary in the town, who had called on Commander Bedingfield previous to this day's interview, for the purpose of communicating ideas of his own. As at Komasi, and in Great Benin city, it is not 'etiquette' for subjects to visit

a stranger before the ceremony of presentation: **that** over, however, they call singly and in mass.

The Akpesi is a tall, thin, wrinkled senior, **very** plain, close-shaved, as usual, little ornamented, and poorly clad. He is one of the wise, who never bring forth their best clothes till after death. His discourse was sensible, and to the point. Amongst other things, he declared that Abeokuta did not want this, showing the backs of both hands placed side by side (hostility), nor this, one palm up and the other down (double-face or deceit), but rather this, and this only, both palms up (a sign of friendship). I took the opportunity of asking him if he could not procure me admission into one of the Ogboni lodges. He replied—a great man never says ‘No’—that it would require large fees. When the amount was demanded, he named twenty-two bags of cowries, two sheep, and two goats. As this did not seem to deter me he doubled the sheep and goats. The sum being acceded to he declared **that** there was much death to be seen in those places; and as this again failed, and he was driven into a corner, he requested me to ‘let it go’ at present, but **that** on some future occasion I should be satisfied. This was conclusive, but not satisfactory. It is astonishing how much Asiatics and Africans make of these mysteries, and how long it takes to fathom them. I was nearly five years in India before a Brahmin



could be induced to invest me with the thread of the Twice Born; and my attempts to discover the secret of the Jatawalla\* were all in vain. My plans of sketching the interior of an Ogboni lodge failed at Abeokuta, though Mr. Wilhelm, the catechist, did his best: a week was not sufficient. The last answer was, that their excellent friend Mr. Townsend had advised them never to admit a European. At Ikoradu, however, my friend Mr. M'Coskry and I, happening to pass an Ogboni lodge, which was full of men and elders, quietly walked in, and stepped round the building before the assembly, stupefied by the sudden appearance of white faces, dropping as it were from the skies, found presence of mind to protest.

Mr. Bowen translates Ogboni, 'a sort of freemasonry, a respectable, elderly man.' It is neither one nor the other. Any naked boy, running about the streets, may, when ten years old, if a free-born Egba, of good repute—*integer vitæ scelerisque purus*—rise to this dignity. Nor is it in any way connected with European freemasonry—a favourite comparison with the uninitiated. Freemasonry, properly consi-

\* The Jatawalla worships Shiva, and is so called from his jata, or huge mop of hair, which he twists in the shape of a turban. I have found the length, by careful measurement—passing my thumb-nail down it to detect plaiting, if possible—six feet and upwards. If there be any secret in this, what a fortune it would make, even compared with the 'incomparable oil, Macassar!'

dered, is a faith *per se*—holding the grand tenets—1st, Monotheism, or the belief in one God, without which no man can become even an ‘entered apprentice;’ and 2ndly, Brotherhood, or the mutual fellowship of man, in all conditions and circumstances of life. It is evident that neither of these sublime ideas are indigenous amongst the Egbas. The Alake is superior to the chief of the Ogboni, and the others follow in their several degrees. They are elected by the people, and, together with the war captains, they form a council, whose powers are said to be unlimited. They rule during the long interregnums, and at all times they manage the revenue and the taxes. In emergencies they are assisted by companies of old and young men, representing the masses. The Ogboni have proved a serious obstacle to the progress of El Islam and Christianity, by their strict surveillance over the juniors, and by the inquisition which they exercise in the inner affairs of life. Consequently, some missionaries object to converts belonging to it. I have already alluded to its political influence.

The Ogboni lodge, which thus resembles the Muanza of East Africa, the Purrah of the Susu Timni and Bulloms near Sierra Leone, and the Endowment House of the City of the Saints, is found in every town. Supported by the fees paid every

seventeenth day by the members of the lodge, it is a long, low building, only to be distinguished by the absence of loungers, fronted by a deep and shady verandah, with stumpy polygonal clay pillars and a single door, carefully closed. The panels are adorned with iron alto-relievos of ultra-Egyptian form; snakes, hawk-headed figures, and armed horsemen in full front, riding what are intended to be horses in profile; the whole coloured red, black, and yellow. The temples of Obatala are similarly decorated.\* A gentleman, who had an opportunity of overlooking the Ogboni lodge from the Ake church steeple, described it to me as a hollow building with three courts, of which the innermost, provided with a single door, was that reserved for the elders, the holy of holies, like the Kadasta Kadastan of the Abyssinians. He considered that the courts are intended for the different degrees. The stranger must, however, be careful what he believes concerning their mysteries. The Rev. Mr. Bowen asserts that the

\* The doors have distinct panels, upon which are seen a leopard, a fish, a serpent, and a land tortoise. The horseman is also common. Mr. Bowen remarks, that one of the carvings was 'a female figure, with one hand and one foot,' probably a half Obatala, or the female principle of Nature; 'and the monster was remarkable for having a queue of very long hair (which no negro can have), with a ball or globe at the end.' Opposite to this were the symbols of the Lampsacan god, or rather the Yoni Lingam, in juxtaposition. I differ from Mr. Bowen in the opinion that no negro can have long hair; the Fans of the Gaboon River, to mention no other tribe, often wear it falling upon their shoulders.

initiated are compelled to 'kneel down and drink a mixture of blood and water from a hole in the earth.' The Egbas deny this: moreover, they charge Mr. Bowen with attempting to worm out their secrets for the purpose of publication. As all are pledged to the deepest reticence, and as it would be fatal to reveal any mystery—if any there be—we are hardly likely to be troubled with over-information.

The Alake had summoned us to audience at the early hour of 10 A.M. We went punctually, and were met at the door by Beri, his Majesty's M.C., who informed us that his master was then unprepared, but would let us know when visible. We left the palace not unamused by this second attempt at, and success in, 'doing dignity,' and we sauntered about in the shade outside. Two of the trees showed a peculiar fruit. One had a brace of skulls with tenpenny nails through the forehead, and bits of brown skin, like dry fig-peel, still sticking in patches to the half-bleached bone. These had been women who, according to one account, had been executed for attempting to poison their master, a native Christian merchant; according to others they had been sold by the said Christian merchant for sacrifice. Another tree showed seven of these relics: one of them was almost mummified, and the lower jawbone was still attached by remnants of cartilage. His Majesty the Alake—who

had soon heard of our visit to the place—afterwards informed us that four of these belonged to Egbas who had been executed for kidnapping their friends and allies the Ijaye. The Tyburn trees were distinguished by the clothes, probably the attire of the dead, wrapped round the boles up to the branches. I amused myself with sketching the blossoms that grew on those boughs, and—the scene was quite Dantesque—I could not but wish that M. Doré had been there to borrow from it certain details.

Returning to Mr. Wike's house, we were shown a small collection of industrial specimens prepared by the Commercial Association of Abeokuta for the Great Exhibition of 1862. There was some poor *lif*, or palm-tree fibre, used as a sponge throughout Africa; specimens of the silk-cotton from the bombax; and *someye*, or native silk produced by a worm that feeds upon a fig-leaf. This article may some day become valuable. Beans were in great abundance, of several varieties — purple, the common kind, red-peckled, yellow (*Calavances*), white haricots, black, pink, whity-brown, and some large red, like our kidney-beans. I recognized, for the first time, the Njugu ya mawe (*Voilandzeia subterranea*) of East Africa, which is there regarded as the tiger-nut of the western regions. Besides which there was a soft, useful chalk dug up near the town, and farm-grown piper cubebs,

whose oil, like that of the ricinus, when not rancid, is much prized for sauces. I defer an account of the cotton to a future page.

At 11.15 A.M. we were again summoned to the palace, and, entering, we found all *in statu quo ante*, except that there was a greater gathering than before, and that the curtains relieving the majestic form of his Majesty were a fine green velvet and a striped silk. He receives, it is said, unofficial visitors far less formally, and the cooking in his verandah is not interrupted. The same old deal table and native body-cloth, the same jugs and basins, glasses and case-bottles, stood before the presence, and he was fanned by a young wife, who, perceiving the admiration excited by *ses appas*, veiled her bosom with a bit of velvet. Behind me sat a handsome young Alufa,\* or Moslem, who told me that he was an Arab, born at Burnu: he certainly spoke the purest Semitic. 'And how about the Jihad?' I inquired, in his vernacular. 'Give those guns and powder to us,' he replied, with a gleaming eye, 'and we will soon Islamize these dogs!' The Alake grunted out that he did not understand 'dat mouf,' and a sign to the Alufa caused him to rise and depart.

Commander Bedingfield opened the palaver by

\* 'Alpha' is the usual English way of writing the word, which I presume is a corruption of the Arabic *Árif*.



asking explanations concerning our being sent back from the 'palace.' Fault was thrown upon Beri, the M.C., and we had the grace to accept this apology for a designed impertinence. This time it was business 'and no mistake.' The Akpesi of Eruwan was the king's orator, and he spoke well, dividing his speech topically, touching upon all the interesting heads, quoting proverbs, monopolizing attention like a diner-out, and exciting us against his enemies. He began by saying, after the usual compliments—the Arabic *afiyah*, health, was repeatedly used, and the reply was *amin*, or amen—that he must be allowed to give us a detailed account of the events that had lately happened. On our consenting, he commenced a good two hours' speech, talking ten minutes at a time, and then resting whilst his words were interpreted to us by Lagos Williams, who, assuming all the tone of a Methodist preacher, spun out his words to the finest length, lest his African brethren might suspect him of 'skipping' or 'fudging.' The assembly was hushed, except when some chief vociferated 'silence!' or some sycophant drawled out 'don't die!' The 'mad dogs of Ibadan,' we were told, had repeatedly rejected the king's messengers, had bought ammunition at Lagos, had declared their intention of first shaving the forehead, then the back of the head, *i. e.*, of destroying, as a preliminary, Ijaye,



their neighbour, and afterwards Abeokuta; and they had threatened, in case of interference, to blacken every Englishman's face as cloth is dyed with indigo. 'These,' he said, pointing to six seniors squatting in the opposite verandah, three brown as Mulattos, and all the half-dozen naked to the waist, with the various appurtenances of chieftdom—cowrie-bags, chauris, gun-barrel walking-sticks, and huge broad-brimmed beavers, trimmed with half a foot of faded gilt lace—'these are the kings of cities which have fallen into the hands of the Yorubas,\* and which we will recover before we rest.' He scouted the report that the people of Ijaye had been sold off by their allies, the Egbas; the cry had been raised at Lagos by the Yorubas to excite the English against innocent Abeokuta; and in disproof of it he pointed in the direction where four men's heads had been taken off for kidnapping. He explained the notorious disappearance of the Ijayans by the fact that the Are, their king, had made sale the penalty of *fainéance* in war, and that the people, pressed by hunger, had been compelled to dispose of their slaves and children, their wives, and even themselves, for two bags, or about one pound sixteen shillings each. All of which was plausible, but not true. He then slipped into another subject, declared that Mr. Sam. Crowther, jun., should

\* Yoruba Proper, Ibadan, and Ilori, is here alluded to.

never again enter the gates of Abeokuta, protesting, as the cause of the people's wrath, that Europeanized Egba's spite against the Rev. Mr. Townsend, an excellent man, ever their friend, who kept five hundred kegs of powder ready for the defence of their city. Waxing aggrieved, he entered into a complaint touching the conduct of the acting governor of Lagos, who had written insulting letters to them, and the late Captain Jones, who, bribed with four hundred bags by the Ibadans, had not only broken his promise to bring up from Lagos, for the purpose of drilling the Abeokutans, a detachment of ten men from the West India regiment, but had also attempted to visit their very enemy—that scum of the country—who was sworn to dye white men black, as with indigo. He concluded with the apposite remark that all of public had now been said, and that what remained must be spoken in private. This was the gist of an harangue which did not cease till men began to yawn; many followed the example of the farmer-king and snored, a few rose to depart, and all appeared to be tired. Even the palaver soon wearies the cobweb brains of these Africans.

Commander Bedingfield saw his opportunity, and sensibly declared that as they had had their say he also must have his. As regards the war with Ibadan, it was their own affair, their loss

and not ours; we wanted not Abeokuta, but peace and plenty of cotton; and although we might aid her in defence, we should never abet her in offensive war. With respect to the man Crowther, he also was entitled to a fair hearing; and although the Alake had a right to banish a foreigner offending against the laws of the land, still allegations against a British subject holding property in the place should be substantiated before being acted upon. Captain Jones's letter to government—it had, by its entire truth, given great offence at Abeokuta to white men as well as to black—might contain a few expressions better omitted, still excusable in so young an officer; but no one wearing her Majesty's uniform was capable of receiving a bribe (as this was stated with indignation, the Akpesi rose and explained that the bribe had been given by the Ibadans to the Ijebus). Moreover, it is an European practice for a non-combatant to visit both armies in the field. An allusion was then made to a human sacrifice, whose object was good fortune in war against the enemy, offered up, on the 12th October, 1861, outside the Ijaye gate, with the permission of the Egbas, by the people of Ikesi and Ife, the town destroyed, it is said, by the Ibadans four or five years ago. An Ibadan prisoner, who had long been in chains, of which he showed marks, was led out, loaded with cowries, and made contented with

rum ; a crowd collected round him, sending messages to their departed friends, and begging the victim to remember their wants, children for the women and wives for the bachelors. The captive, at first, made some objections, but presently became in excellent humour, and sang his epicedium with a will. Mr. Stone, an American Baptist missionary, had heard what was to take place, but did not arrive in time. The man was duly decapitated, and the usual ceremonies followed the death, such as entreating the ghost not to be wrath with, or to haunt his slayers. This was the tale palmed upon us : it was a systematic falsehood. The Alake had become possessor of an Ife idol,\* and the chiefs had told him that a man should be offered to it for peace. The job was given to the Ife people because the idol was from their country, and the rite was performed outside the gate to throw dust in European eyes. 'The captain' reprobated all such proceedings, and concluded by informing the Alake that H.E. the acting governor of Lagos, who had offended them, had done so under orders, and that, as he was acknowledged by the home authorities, he must be treated with respect. Whereupon a form of written apology was

\* The Rev. Mr. Crowther informs us that all kinds of idols are to be had at Ife, and that celebrated gods are frequently purchased there by the people of other tribes.

passed to Mr. King, a coloured missionary sitting hard by.

But kidnapping and human sacrifice are still sore subjects with the West African. Presently we had a scene. The old Alake had ceased to doze, and gradually his one eye lighted up, he forgot to fan his under-arms, to swab his face, to snuff, and to drink. As he insisted upon breaking silence, many chiefs, turbulent and unvenerative as Africans ever are, left the assembly, audibly declaring that, as their king would speak, they washed their hands of the consequences. His Majesty began by telling us fiercely that he himself had written the letter to the acting governor of Lagos without the knowledge of his councillors, and that since the time of the Ado war, he had ever known him as a merchant and as an enemy. He then entered upon the subject of the war, his voice changed from a low sing-song recitative to a louder tone, he lashed himself into a rage—the listeners half applauding—and finally he rose upon his feet and bellowed like a rickety old bull. He was rather an effective figure; a tall, large, aged man, amply clad—only his left eye, the bright side, showing. He thumped his breast, and not being over-firm upon his legs, he leaned back so much that his wives were compelled to hold on his white-topped, blue-fringed, scarlet velvet cap. ‘Never,’ he ex-

claimed with violence, 'will my word be for peace as long as Ibadan holds the graves of our fathers, our homes, and our ancestral farms!' And he foamed at the mouth with the idea. Some of my companions thought the display natural. I was too much at home with African customs—the scene is by no means unfamiliar to Europe—to mistake the movement, but I judged from it that our mediation would not be highly acceptable. At last the Alake, who had gradually left his cage, sank back into it, the curtain fell amidst shouts of applause, and the assembly—warned by the cold gusts and the lively dust that a tornado was at hand—prepared to break up. We drank a little peppermint, and as we were told that the king would meet us outside, Mr. Eales and I left the palace. Commander Bedingfield, however, more sensibly sent in a message that he must shake hands with and be duly dismissed by the Alake, who, after some delay, returned smiling in fresh clean robes, and hobnobbed with his 'distinguished visitor.'

The palaver was well managed, and in one sense successful: it seemed to promise an early, though not a satisfactory, adjustment of a very complicated affair, which however was not fated to be. As the explanation throws light upon the customs and politics of this part of the world, I will enter upon it at some length.



The war between Abeokuta and Ibadan, which formed the subject of the late palaver, began 'twenty moons ago,' i.e. in May, 1859, and in 1863 it is far from settled.\* It is an old quarrel. As early as Richard Lander's day that mysterious race the Fulas† were driving the pure Yorubas southwards, and they in their turn were ousting the Egbas. As has been shown, the dispersion of the Egbas was mainly brought about by the Ijebus and the Ibadans, who, being warlike and quasi-Moslems, took possession of the rich farm lands north of comparatively barren Abeokuta, and have now made them their own. There has long, therefore, been bad blood. The origin of the last quarrel is stated to be that the Ibadans slew the wealthy mother-in-law of Murummi, Are or chief of Ijaye, who seized the murderers, and

\* The style of fighting will be described in a future chapter.

† 'Fula,' a word said to signify brown or yellow, has been traced back to the Psylli, or Psulloi, of the classical authors; and others make them descendants of the shepherd kings. They are known by a variety of names—Poul, Poulh, Peul, Pheul, Pholey, and Phoulah: in Hausa and Yoruba they are known as Filani and Falani; in Burnu as Filata or Fillatah; and their country is called Fuladú. The race is said to come from Masina, near Tinbuktú, and to have inhabited the three Fula countries which are derived from Phut, the grandson of Noah. About a century ago, their celebrated Shaykh Usman (*alias* Danfodio) built Sokoto in the woods of Ader, organized an empire, and marched under a white flag to the Jihad. He conquered Hausa, Kubbi, Yacri, Nupe, and Moslem Burnu, and became Amir el Muminin over followers that have now spread from the Senegal River to the Ibos, at the head of the Niger Delta,—an extent of country larger than Russia in Europe.



refused to give them up without ransom. Whereupon Ibadan marched against Ijaye, and the latter threw themselves into the arms of Abeokuta. On the other hand, it is generally believed that the Ijebu Remo and Dahome, those ever-watchful enemies of the Egbas, supported Ibadan. The quarrel has lately been complicated by the threats of Dahome, who is preparing his sacrifices: the arrangements usually begin in September and October, and the attack takes place in December and January. To make matters worse, the Mohammedans of Ilori, to the north of Ibadan, thinking, I suppose, that when Kafirs fall out Moslems come in, have promised aid and comfort to Abeokuta. The war has produced great scarcity, trebling the price of many articles in Yoruba, besides causing a serious deficiency in palm-oil and other products. It was generally supposed that both were weary of the affair, but that they would not cease without the intervention of a third party. Further experience, however, has proved the error of the supposition.

There was, moreover, a deeper cause of quarrel than old and obsolete animosities, and this was carefully kept concealed. To an African power, direct connection with the seaboard is a necessity. Dahome was unknown in the last century until she had conquered and absorbed the maritime kingdom of

Whydah. The Ashanti wars in the earlier part of the present century were waged against the Gold Coast races and ourselves with the same object; and at the present moment there are actual hostilities for the same end. The possession of a port gives two great advantages. The first is a power of exportation and importation without paying the heavy African transit dues. The second is the right to claim such transit dues from neighbours and nations dwelling inland. The African ever aspires to the condition of a middleman, when, Jew-like, he can live gratis and labourless by the sweat of another's brow. Such is the condition of the whole of this coast, a broken line of broker settlements, some numbering, like Grand Bonny, nine thousand souls, and such has from time immemorial been the condition of the shores of Eastern Africa. Abeokuta having obtained by means of the Ogun a direct communication with the sea, is determined to charge a heavy transit duty upon the produce of Ibadan and the inland kingdoms. And those who can find no other direct road will fight till they can obtain access to the ocean. This greed of gain—not the pious and patriotic aspiration to recover the lands of their forefathers—has sustained the Abeokutans in a four years' conflict with the Ibadans.\*

\* The missionaries, headed by Mr. Townsend, take an opposite view of the affair. According to them, the Ibadans seized Ido and Ilugun,

It remains to consider the causes of complaint brought by the Egbas against the Crowthers and Captain Jones—they are as instructive as the causes of the war. Mr. Sam. Crowther, like his brother Mr. Josiah, had made himself wonderfully unpopular at Abeokuta. He had refused to pay certain fines leviable on certain offences. His accusations against Mr. Townsend were the *cheval de bataille* of the Abeokutans. But as before, so here, the true cause of complaint lay much deeper. Mr. Sam., like his respected father who was proposed for a bishopric, had been witness to and an active hand in promoting a treaty, upon which the Alake, his chiefs, and his subjects, soon learned to look in its real light, and were seized with violent indignation.

I quote this instructive instrument *in extenso* below.\*

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stopped the trade road to Ijaye and Isehin, and drove the Abeokutans out of their farms. Her Majesty's Consul at Lagos, and the British merchants, sent deputations to Abeokuta and Ibadan, to prevent the war: at the former place it succeeded, at the latter it failed. My belief is, however, that the Abeokutans were, and are still, the aggressors.

#### \* TREATY.

THIS treaty, made between His Majesty Okukenu, Alake; Somoye, Ibashorun; Sokenu, Ogubonna, and Atambala, chiefs and baloguns of Abeokuta, on the first part; and Martin Robinson Delany, and Robert Campbell, of the Niger Valley exploring party, commissioners from the African race of the United States and the Canadas in America, on the second part, covenants—

ART. 1.—That the king and chiefs, on their part, agree to grant and

It speaks for itself: it is sublime in its impudence. If carried out it would create a system of *fueros* more

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assign unto the said commissioners, on behalf of the African race in America, the right and privilege of settling, in common with the Egba people, on any part of the territory belonging to Abbeokuta, not otherwise occupied.

ART. 2.—That all matters requiring legal investigation among the settlers be left to themselves, to be disposed of according to their own custom.

ART. 3.—That the commissioners, on their part, also agree that the settlers shall bring with them, as an equivalent for the privileges above accorded, intelligence, education, a knowledge of the arts and sciences, agriculture, and other mechanic and industrial occupations, which they shall put into immediate operation, by improving the lands, and in other useful vocations.

ART. 4.—That the laws of the Egba people shall be strictly respected by the settlers, and in all matters in which both parties are concerned, an equal number of commissioners, mutually agreed upon, shall be appointed, who shall have power to settle such matters. As a pledge of our faith, and the sincerity of our hearts, we each of us hereunto affix our hand and seal, this twenty-seventh day of December, Anno Domini One thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine.

His mark	x	OKUKENU, ALAKE.
His mark	x	SOMOYE, IBASHORUN.
His mark	x	SOKENU, BALOGUN.
His mark	x	OGUBONNA, BALOGUN.
His mark	x	ATAMBALA, BALOGUN.
His mark	x	OGUBEYE, ANABA.
His mark	x	NGTEBO BALOGUNOSO.
His mark	x	OGUDEMU, AGEOKO.

(Signed) M. R. DELANY.

(Signed) ROBERT CAMPBELL.

(Witness) SAMUEL CROWTHER, JUN.

(Attest) SAMUEL CROWTHER, SEN.

exceptional than any that Mexico has yet seen: it would found an *imperium in imperio*, bringing into the heart of the country a wholly irresponsible race. There is no possible guarantee for Art. 3. Whence is 'the intelligence' to come, and what may be its measure? Moreover, though signed by eight names, of whom half died before the end of 1861, it was never submitted to the greater chiefs and to the Ogboni lodges, or Upper and Lower Houses of the land, and it degrades the people because it places their freedom in the hands of a king and of a few chiefs. The reader has already seen that the Alake of Abeokuta is no autocrat.

That needy and greedy coloured fugitives from the western world should enter into such speculations is no wonder. That the late Sir Culling E. Eardley, Bart., of Bedwell Park, should 'heartily recommend' the scheme in a preface to Mr. Campbell's *brochure*, and call upon Manchester to second the movement, is, as I have already shown, the error of those who make Africa a no-man's land. Land quarrels caused the old Egba troubles, and nothing but agrarian wars could result in the haven of refuge opened to his brethren by the Pilgrim to his Motherland. What would Sir Culling E. Eardley have replied to a deputation of gipsies, who proposed to settle themselves as a free republic under the spare shades of Bedwell

Park? Yet that is what he advocates for Egba-land.\*

Meanwhile, the Alake and chiefs, far more acute than the English philanthrope, declare that, whilst perfectly ready to admit settlers subject to the British authorities at Lagos, and amenable to English law, they will have nothing to do with these irresponsible adventurers, who, in time, may become too strong for them. They have already tasted the sweets of a negro immigration from Sierra Leone, and they are by no means willing to see anything more of the Oibo dúdú, white-blacks, or trouser-white-men, as they call their guests. They therefore adopt the African, I may say the universal plan, of denying the transaction in toto. The Alake was half asleep when he affixed his mark; moreover, 'black and white' does not bind firm and fast in these lands. The chiefs assert with truth that they have no power to execute such instrument without the full permission of the Ogboni lodges. The people declare that they know nothing of the matter which most concerns them. And I venture to opine that, as a mere

\* With similar simplicity, Mr. Abraham Lincoln proposed shunting off his spare contrabands into the Republics of Central America, who, as might be expected, gratefully declined the boon, declaring, like the Abeokutans, that they are ready to receive emigrants of every colour, but not those who appear as an independent power.



act of justice, we should allow the Egbas to do what they like with their own.

Mr. Consul Foote had applied for a detachment of two hundred soldiers of the Second West India Regiment, to instruct the Egbas in military matters. The idea was not brilliant. These negro troops naturally despise 'niggers,' and are not willing to serve with them: the men, however, were forwarded to Lagos, were kept there till they became troublesome, and were sent back to head-quarters. Meanwhile, Capt. A. T. Jones, of the same corps—the son of a well-known military name—was a young officer of considerable talent and energy, of an ardent temperament, strong in body, but unfortunately in ill-health. He was directed to obtain 'military information touching the resources of the country, and the means the Abeokutans may have of carrying on offensive war.' Delayed by a fever caught on the Osa Lagoon during the affair at Porto Novo, he left his detachment of ten men at Lagos, reached Abeokuta on the 11th May, 1861, and was graciously received by the Alake. After stating his object, he was forwarded to the seat of war with an escort and introductions to the chiefs. On the 20th of May he arrived at Okomeji, the camp of observation, distant thirty miles from Abeokuta, and he visited its commander, the late Ogubonna, who, ten years before,



had repulsed the Dahoman attack. He then proceeded forty miles northwards to Ijaye, and on the 22nd of May he started for the front. The enemy, hearing from spies of the white man's arrival, resolved to waylay him: however, by hard riding, and by preceding his escort, Captain Jones entered the Egba lines that same evening. On the next day—operations were hurried by both parties, who were anxious for the fetish of the white man's presence—took place the battle of Ijaye. Captain Jones placed himself near the first rank of the Abeokutan army, about three hundred yards from the enemy, and watched the tactics of both parties. He withdrew only when his interpreter was wounded in the thigh by his side, a bullet grazed his own leg, and a third ball struck the tree against which he was leaning, a few inches above his head. When the action, which proved a drawn battle, ended, he retired to the Egba lines, and returned to Abeokuta on the 31st of May.

The report written by Captain Jones, after his return to Lagos, caused great umbrage at Abeokuta. The older missionaries were vexed to see the place 'shown up,' and declared that it had been malignantly described. The natives, influenced by one Turner, a coloured man, now living with the King of Ijebu, were loud in their complaints. They declared

that Captain Jones had appeared their friend, that he had made all manner of promises, and that he had deliberately broken them for the worst of purposes—all of which was of course false. Perhaps he was a little hot and hasty in his expressions touching the lukewarmness with which our offer of auxiliaries was received, and the ‘scorn and indifference’ manifested by the Abeokutans in neglecting certain useless pieces of artillery sent to them from England. But, on the whole, his report was perfectly truthful, and redounded greatly to the credit of this young and promising officer.

Captain Jones remained at Lagos for a few days, suffering from fever. He then set out *viâ* Ijebu for Ibadan, taking with him a servant, an interpreter named Thomas, and a messenger or mihmandar from King Dosumo. Falling ill on the way, he was advised to return, and at last he was carried in a hammock from the landing-place at Ijini, twenty miles down the Lagoon, to his canoe. The breeze being against him, he was delayed there for some time, and he breathed his last—Europeans say from congestion of the lungs, natives say from poison—on the Ikoradu Waters, within sight of Lagos, 7th July, 1861.

Monday’s evening was as gloomy as its morning; the tornado, after exhausting its electricity, poured down

a slow, steady rain, which effectually confined us to in-door amusements. The *séjour* was becoming *bien triste*. On Saturday the Ake converts and those of Abaka had a prayer-meeting for general purposes, for the success of Commander Bedingfield's mission. Sunday was of course a 'day of rest' (7 A.M., native service and school; 10·30 A.M., English service, followed by school; and 4·30 P.M., native service—such is 'rest'). On Monday afternoon there was a monthly prayer-meeting of all the churches and chapels for the forwarding of peace—a custom, I believe, originating with the Loodhianah Mission in Northern India; and on Tuesday, it being the 5th of the month, there will be a gathering for the benefit of the natives; ministers, schoolmasters, and native agents all meet, and the converts are expected to attend. It is evident that the Abeokuta mission cannot be accused of neglecting its duties.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE KING'S RETURN VISIT.

MATUTINÈ, I ascended the Ake church steeple, pulled out a board to enable me to catch a glimpse of the Ogboni lodge of Eruwan, and succeeded only in seeing that it had three courts, which confirmed the account of my informant. This day, Tuesday, the to us memorable 5th of November, was to become more memorable yet. His Majesty the Alake had overwhelmed Commander Bedingfield with the proffer of a return visit—an event rare in Abeokuta; moreover, his Majesty had the grace to be punctual to his time, 10 A.M.

The Egbas, it must be remembered, are a race of bushmen and farmers, clothiers and blacksmiths, compelled by their enemies to collect and centralize. They were naturally unwilling to elect a king till necessity drove, and then they did it with all manner of limitations. The Alake, I have said, possesses neither the state nor the power of the pettiest Indian

**Rajah.** The only king ever known in Yoruba was he of Oyo (Eyeo), the capital, who was described as living in regal state.

Negrotic Africa—not unlike her sisters Europe and Asia—has three distinctly marked forms of government. The first and strongest is a military despotism, like that of Ashanti, Dahome, Kongo, the Balonda people, the Kazembe and Urungu; Turkey, Persia, and the Great Mogul of the olden time, are their equivalents. In these the ruler owns no law but custom, which means right, and which cannot be transgressed even by the most powerful.\* The second is a kind of feudal monarchy, modified by the personal character of the king; oftentimes he is inferior in weight to his councillors and officers, and even a slave may refuse to obey him. Instances are, the Kafir races, Umyamwezi, Karagwah, Yoruba, and others, in which, like those of Maskat, Yemen, and most parts of Arabia, the regal power is sometimes almost obliterated. The last and lowest are rude republics, in which a kind of autonomy prevails: they are chiefly found amongst the Bedouin tribes, the hill people, and the jungle races of Asia and Africa.

To the second of this category belongs the government of Abeokuta, a weak constitutional monarchy,

\* So Darius (Dan. vi. 13—15), unable to change the 'custom' which he had established, could kill but not spare.

blighted by the checks and limits which were intended to prevent its luxuriance. The king commands in his own town, but nowhere else, like the magistrate of a Swiss canton—to which, indeed, the state of Abeokuta may fitly be compared—and his orders hardly extend within gunshot. His is a monarchy engrafted upon the old barbarous patriarchal rule. The chiefs and councillors, more formidable than the barons in King John's day, are bound, though they often refuse, to render suit and service to their suzerain. Ancient tradition is their statute law, which, amongst civilized people, sanctions the most arbitrary injustice, and which breeds a hundred tyrants instead of one. Their king is also fettered by the laws of the land, of which the Ogbonis are the conservators and exponents. He and his council may act in judicial proceedings, or the case may be carried before the Ogbonis in lodge assembled, or, if generally important, it may be decided by a 'monster meeting' of the lieges. No treaty or agreement is valid, unless ratified by all those who have a voice in it. No ordinance against witch torture or human sacrifice would be respected, unless the bill pass through the House of Lords, viz., the Bale,\* with the chiefs, civil and

\* The Bale of a town is its governor, subject only to the king. In each house there is a Bale or householder. Like the king, these Bales also have their associates or lieutenants.

military; the head fetishmen, who are the peers spiritual; the select elders, who are the law officers of the crown; and the House of Commons, or Ogboni lodges. A subject transgressing such law would put himself under the protection of a chief, and then, unless the popular voice be unanimous, he cannot be punished. 'An Englishman's house is his castle,' says the European proverb. 'Every man is king in his own house,' is the less moderate Yoruban saying. It will now be clear to the reader how much can be expected from civilized treaties and conventions with such barbarians.

After this long digression, return we to the Alake's visit.

'Shouts of applause ran rattling to the skies'

in most discordant music, whilst a braying of horns and a beating of tom-toms, giving notice of his Majesty's arrival, brought us all to the compound's gate. The procession was not imposing. First came the family-chair or stool; it was probably a common framework of bamboo, hidden by a cloth of coarse red serge. This 'venerable utensil' was accompanied by the Akpesis and other chiefs, who ominously seemed thus to pay more attention to it than to its master; so amongst Moslems the turban often fares better than the wearer. Succeeded a few lads carrying drawn knives and coarse swords; they



acted outlass boys or pages to the Alake. The great man himself appeared under an umbrella of huge dimensions, inferior only to the little tent under which the King of Ashanti walks in state: the material was a glaring pink silk, with a heavy red fringe, and it was bran new, as the paper lingering about the wires showed. During the visit it was placed outside, against the house-wall, and its accidental fall was followed by the sound of cudgelling, and the normal results. The Alake was habited in the larger fez, with its band of blue beads, and he tottered along with difficulty under a ponderous robe of scarlet velvet—in shape somewhat like the proctor's at Alma Mater—worn over an Ewu ágbadá or Guinea-fowl pattern of similar shape, but of less gorgeous hue. He propped himself on a beaded staff, some five feet long—canes and swords here do the duty of European cards and Asiatic signets\*—and he flirted a white fly-whisk, with beaded handle, but without the little bells. His pantaloons were of purple velvet, with a broad stripe of the veriest tinsel gold, and his carpet slippers were fringed round with black monkey's skin, reminding one of the 'pair, large enough for an elephant,' worn by that dread Nigerian potentate who declared all embarkation in a canoe to

\* Similarly, in the olden times of England, a stick called Irmin Sule or the Pillar of Irmin, and sacred to Thor, was used in musters.

be essentially unkingly. Never before was such an old 'Guy' seen. Being very fond of children, he led by the hand a son and heir; the boy was by no means plain, and was dressed somewhat after the fashion of his papa. Around them pressed a multitude of wives and slave girls, with bare heads, and hair dressed melon-wise, coral necklaces, and bosoms veiled with white cloths, over which, at the waist, were fastened sacques of black and variegated cotton velvets, girt with light-coloured kerchiefs. The harem was accompanied by the *hoi polloi*, cowrie-bag bearers and other officials of the household, armed with huge black whips of hippopotamus hide, decorated with brass tacks. The total might have been eighty souls, and they all crowded into one not large room. The atmosphere soon became that of a slave-ship.

After *com'liments*—to use the customary initial formula of diplomatic communication in these regions—which were acknowledged by the chief protruding his tongue, he sat down, handed his *chob* or stick of office to an attendant, placed the son between his knees, and became the central point of a female semicircle. The eldest wife, a gaunt old woman, standing bolt upright behind him, supported his upper regions with both hands upon his shoulders, and occasionally passed a yellow bandanna over his pearl-studded face and

neck. Two others, on his right and left, used cow-skin fans: when undue warmth troubled the great man's body, he raised his arms high in the air, threw off the wide sleeves, and directed the cooling draught to be applied where most wanted. The rest grouped themselves near the wall, in a crescent, open to the front. Commander Bedingfield sat down opposite the Alake, Mr. Eales on the right of his chief officer, whilst I took my place in the rear for the purpose of easier sketching. The chiefs ranged themselves round Mr. Wike's room, crowding on the chairs and sofas, and looking daggers if compelled to squat, as they do at home, upon the floor. The usual *afiyah* and *amin*—these words sounded like signs of 'a good time coming'—concluded, the palaver proceeded, the interlocutors being 'the captain,' through Lagos Williams, who, having lately been made an Ogboni, had become ultra-Egba; the Akpesi, and at times the Alake.

The subject of the human sacrifice was again brought upon the *tapis*. As has been said, when the Awajali of Ode dies, his servants are slain. Lately an attendant youth, seeing the royal personage likely to 'hop the twig,' endeavoured to make his escape in time. He was seized, however, and history is silent as to his fate.

I need hardly enlarge upon the national duty of

putting down with a strong hand such abominations as those of Abeokuta and Ode. The late Mr. M'Gregor Laird describes moral suasion in Africa as a twenty-four pounder, with British seamen behind it; and Mr. Consul Hutchinson equally happily defined an English official's moral force to be a moral farce without a gun-boat. When children require the stick, we apply it; when adults misbehave themselves, we put them in irons; and if Africa, Western or Eastern, requires the twenty-four pounder and the gun-boat, we ought not to withhold them from her.

England is passing from one phase of sentiment into another. Before the mutiny of the mild Hindu, all was ordered to be *suaviter in modo*, till the natives, our respectable 'fellow-subjects,' were petted and spoiled by over-indulgence. In those fiery times we found that the *fortiter in re*—measures which, a year before, would have provoked a national shudder—was necessary to our very existence. In the due admixture of both, the *narm* and the *garm*—as the people have it—the rough and the smooth, the bakhshish and the bastinado, lies the secret of preserving the health of the Asiatic and African body politic. The old trader was not so far wrong who advised his friends, when dealing with a 'black fellow,' to hold out one hand for shaking, and to keep the other ready for knocking down.

The Akpesi of Eruwan again explained—without a word of truth—that the human sacrifice in question was the work, not of Abeokutans, but solely of men from Ife and Ikisi. But Commander Bedingfield, who now knew the whole affair, simply replied that he was shocked at such an event; that it was a step in the wrong direction; that it would be a hard nut for the English people to crack, and that the Alake should not have allowed it.

A little lying on the part of the natives ensued, when it was broken off by the sudden irruption of Mr., Mrs., and Master Gollmer, and Messrs. Wilcoxon and Roper, of the Church Missionary Society. The first-mentioned did not fail to impress us carefully and intelligibly with a sense of the high honour conferred upon us by the presence of the Alake. All Windsor Castle in the house of a subject would hardly have produced an equal amount of congratulation. Master Gollmer was politely received by the young prince, who was about the size of a small French poodle; but the European juvenile, alarmed at the novelty of the scene, began to boo-hoo in a style which soon caused the precipitate retreat of the party. We resumed the palaver.

Many solemn promises of reform, not to be broken, as the phrase is, till the next opportunity, were voluntarily given to us. The Akpesi then

observed that it might be the wish of Englishmen not to behead criminals; that yesterday we had been looking at and 'writing' the skulls, and so forth.

This was easily settled. Legal executions are not yet objected to by the civilized people of England: *C'est incroyable, mais c'est vrai.*

The Akpesi then referred to the correspondence from Lagos, which he insisted had been far from courteous, and which he said had been answered in a similar spirit. The fact is, they did not say so, but they could not get over the charge of having pulled a beast's whiskers.

Commander Bedingfield suggested *bona verba*, remarking that *littera scripta manet*, and that civility, is a *sine quâ non* in official correspondence.

The Akpesi then uprose and spoke as he was wont—*submissè, temperatè, granditer*. He ran through a brief history of the white men who had visited Abeokuta, beginning with Mr. Townsend and ending with Messrs. Beecroft and Forbes. He then digressed into a little violence touching the Crowthers. Mr. Sam. Crowther, Sen.'s name was Ajai, 'struggling for life,' a native of the little village of Ishoggo (Oshogun), who had been taken prisoner in a Fula attack about 1821, and who had been rescued from a Portuguese slaver by H.M.S. 'Myrmidon,' Captain,

afterwards Sir Henry Leeke. Ajai was therefore still a subject of the Alake, but, from respect for the English, he had been allowed to wear pantaloons, and to call himself an Oibo dudu. Yet his son, Mr. Samuel Crowther, Jun., had proved himself a bitter enemy to his black brethren, or rather masters, by traducing their friend Mr. Townsend. Therefore he had better stay at Lagos; and if he came to Abeokuta, the people would certainly kill him.

The reply was, that the Alake could object for a good and sufficient reason to any one setting foot in his city, but that killing was not to be spoken of, as such an event might lead to serious complications.

‘Then,’ quoth the Akpesi, ‘he—Ajai’s son—shall not come back till Tow’sen’ returns.’

‘Presently,’ replied the captain, ‘we shall know if it be Mr. Townsend’s wish to revisit Abeokuta.’

The Alake, who awaking after a long doze, now wreathed his face with curious smiles, and took up the thread of discourse. His delivery was not pleasant; the loss of his incisors, and the length of his canines, rendered him almost unintelligible. His tongue protruded in a queer, paralytic way. He spoke so low as to be hardly audible, and at times he broke forth into a crone-like chuckle. He spoke with



the utmost deliberation, and when he stopped to be fanned and wiped, his *claqueurs* vociferated the usual cries. He also thought it necessary to go through the history of his white visitors, beginning, not as German savans with the inevitable Adam, but with the siege of Ado, when the acting governor of Lagos first became his enemy. It took place, I may observe, in 1840, or one year before Mr. M'Coskry came to the coast. He ended with Mr. Foote and the attack on Porto Novo. 'White men,' said the Alake, 'have stood before me in three forms—missionaries, war-men, and merchants. Missionaries are good men who 'teach book,' and who dissuade people from slavery and sacrifice, exhorting them to live in peace and quiet, but never meddling with their neighbours' business.(!) War-men are also good men; their trade is to fight, and yet they fight for order, not to gratify their own passions; they harm no one but enemies; they are heroes—they are giants. As for merchants, they come to get what they can; they care for nothing but cowries; they trade with a man, and his enemy—in fact,' said the Alake, raising his voice, 'they are liars and rascals.' N.B.—Two members of this unjustly abused body were sitting in the room, and one was looking uncommonly glum. 'As for the Oibo dudu'—the white-blacks, or Sierra Leonites—resumed the king, 'I must call them even worse

than the merchants.\* After this ebullition of feeling Okokenu ran over all the Ibadan war; how the Ibadans had intrigued with Lagos and with Fallun—King Dosumo's string-puller—how they had brought Dahome to war with him, and how they had slaughtered his Ijayan friends. Could he be at peace with

\* H.M. was not so far wrong. The following, which is an exact copy of a letter addressed to Dr. Harrison, will show what is going on at Abeokuta on the part of the Sierra Leone settlers:—

*' To the Editor of the Iwe Irohin.*

*' DEAR SIR,*

*' Lagos. Sept. 28th, 1861.*

*' Sorry you have not inserted the whole of our defence against such notorious falsehood of the W. African of the 26th May.*

*' But as you take upon yourselves to refute our defence. We therefore pray you most earnestly to proof the fact, who is this Sierra Leone Emigrants that thus denie, that he is not an emigrant from Sierra Leone, and in the next place to proof, which of the Sierra Leone Emigrants, has at any time claimed to be tried by native law, which is another error, which you must either proof or correct.*

*' We belief that whatever is inserted in any such paper for public perusal, must be true and nothing but the truth.*

*' We are not forced by the late Consul Foote to register our names as you imagine.*

*' With regard to a S. Woman who you said to be exacting five strings out of seven from a boy slave who was servant to a whiteman "Pray Messrs. Editors," It is in your place to report such one to H.B.M. Consul and to be punished, and if not, you can name such one, but not to charge the whole population with an offence committed by a single individual. It was in order to distinguish one man from another was the reason a name given to every man.*

*' We remain, dear Sir,*

*' Your Obedient Servants,*

*' THE SIERRA LEONE EMIGRANTS.*

*' P.S.—Pray to insert the whole of the above.'*

such people? Finally, he again warned us to write to England, that Agbome was engaged in the sacrifices preliminary to a commando. This may be true: \* that amiable people are mustered at the end of every wet season for the annual slave hunt; the king then inspects the force, makes all preparations and forms a camp always away from the place which he purposes to attack. The next step is a rapid raid, direction unknown.

Breakfast was being placed on the table, and at noon the palaver ceased, the king retiring in state under the salute of trade muskets, which, loaded like chambers, were fired from the hip. The next day was fixed for signing the reformed treaty. These people, I have said, will sign everything, but they have no idea of keeping anything.

In the evening, the chiefs, privily meeting Commander Bedingfield, consented to append more stringent clauses to the treaty concluded in 1852 by Commander Forbes, and left him well contented. He had expected another summons from the king, but,

\* It was true, but the attack was not directed against Abeokuta. Early in the ensuing spring King Baddahun, with six thousand warriors, fell upon Ishagga, which had treacherously attacked his father. The plans were well laid, and the place was surprised; only sixteen men defending themselves, the others flying to a bush a quarter of a mile from the town. The Dahomans slew some five hundred souls and carried off the church bell, the catechist Doherty, and seventeen or eighteen converts of both sexes, natives and Sierra Leonites. This is the fifth Egbado town destroyed during the Ibadan war, the others being Jigá, Mashaye, Shampa, and Igo.

fortunately for us, it did not come. The day ended with another fierce tornado, and a steamy heat, which fully accounts for the complexion of the European and the Europeaness at Abeokuta. Physiologists inform us that blue and green are not found in the human skin; I have now seen both—aye, and yellow-green, too.

This chapter will conclude with an account of the strategy and the military force of the Egbas. The admirable report of the late Captain Jones has been my principal authority.

War in Yoruba is carried on much as it was in India some two centuries ago. There is no regular army, but each chief has his armed retainers like the Highland clansmen, and these form the force. After an 'Oro-palaver,' which sometimes lasts three days, when the time and place of rendezvous are settled upon, the warriors march out, with the usual mob of sutlers carrying their beds and provisions upon their heads, and laden with arms and ammunition. They march better even than Spaniards or Portuguese, and they can easily get over forty miles in twenty-four hours. When the quarrel is not very popular, an edict threatens all who lag behind with the loss of their heads. Those who cannot afford horses, walk—after Nelson's saying, 'Let the man trudge it who has lost his budget.'

The warriors arm themselves. Their principal weapons are 'buccaneer guns,' called 'long Danes,' because first imported from the Gold Coast: these are large flint pieces in gaily-painted stocks, costing in England from seven to ten shillings each, and here seven to eight gallons of palm-oil = fourteen to sixteen shillings. Africans rarely, if ever, pay anything like a decent price for muskets. The process of firing is peculiar, the gun being either discharged from the hip, or held out at arm's length, with averted face, for good reason; the kick is that of an ass, and it would lay open even Deaf Burke's cheek. The state finds a coarse powder, mostly exported from Boston, more than three parts charcoal, and of this two hands' breadth is the usual charge; the bullets are bolts of bar-iron, cast and cut by the blacksmiths. Pistols are rarely worn; spears and bows and arrows are little used. Swords seem intended principally to hack and hew the wounded and dead. A few, especially Moslems, have straight, double-edged blades, with brass handles and leather scabbards, from which they are drawn with difficulty, and only Arabs use the scimitar or curved blade. Bowie knives have of late formed an article of importation, and are found handy. The only artillery consists of wall-pieces, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch bore, crammed with a handful of bolts or nails, fired from a

rest, and easily transported from place to place. Rockets are as yet unknown; these and case-shot would be found uncommonly serviceable.

Arrived at the field of action, the Egba army's proceedings explain the phrases 'going out to war, sitting down, and encamping before a town.' They select ground about three-quarters of an hour's march from the place to be attacked, generally choosing the bank of a stream. The first operation is to dig a scarpless, narrow ditch, facing towards the fields. The earth thrown out is mixed with water, and made into a swish parapet, which, besides wanting height and thickness, is weakened by round loopholes. A rain-thatch is then placed over it, and at certain points scaffoldings are prepared for sentinels and look-out men, only the chiefs having spy-glasses.

This part of the encampment being concluded, the warriors house themselves. The camp is laid out without streets, the rule being for the retainers to live pell-mell near their chief. The huts are built with four corner-posts, two forked poles support the ridge of the roof, which is composed of three large bars with smaller between, the whole being covered with grass or matting. These places are laid out generally in three rooms, the centre for reception, and the two sides for sleeping and storing.



Compounds are often attached, and in the rear, away from the enemy, they prepare fields of maize and beans. The siege may last for years, and commissariat there is none: women and camp-followers attend to hold bazars; provisions are sometimes sent from the town; and when 'provaunt' fails the warriors walk home.

There is no attempt at uniform. The soldiers wear shogoto—knickerbockers—or waist-cloths, and war jackets, striped blue, white, and red. The bullet-bag is neatly made of leather, far inferior, however, to Mandenga or Morocco work. The powder-flask is either a calabash or a skin bottle, the latter often having the hair outside. The accoutrements hang from the right shoulder to the left side. The chiefs are elaborately dressed, with teeth cowries and a multitude of talismans sewn upon their garments and accoutrements. Being thus somewhat conspicuous, they avoid the danger of discouraging their men by a rare prudence when under fire. Like the North American Indians, the Egbas ignore defensive armour: a few Wilkinson's coats of mail worn under the dress would soon turn the tide of battle.

The army, it will be observed, is wholly infantry, and the actions are settled by skirmishers and light troops. Though here and there a man fights on



horseback, it seems never to have occurred to these people to organize a troop; yet there are animals enough in the country to form an excellent light cavalry, and irregulars are much wanted. The temper of the beasts, however, would require them to be Rarefied or prepared for discipline by such treatment as was adopted in the Poonah Horse, Western India.

There is an attempt to divide the army into a resemblance of the civilized brigade and the regiment, under the several chiefs: moreover, the Egbas do not wholly ignore the use of the reserve. Both parties are perfectly well acquainted with each other's movements, many men having in both camps friends to whom they are bound by oath. It will sometimes happen that a chief refuses to go forth to war, pleading brotherhood with the enemy; and the reason is rarely disregarded.

Before an action begins, bribes are freely given to learn the strength of the enemy, his health, his spirit, and his number; all manner of false reports—now the intention of a retreat, then the advent of an auxiliary—fly about, like Crimean shaves, to little purpose. Ambushes are tried, and invariably fail. After this preliminary the hosts find themselves embattled opposite each other as unwillingly as in the præ-Napoleonic German wars, when it was the

general's great object to avoid the enemy. The chiefs tree themselves, and receive reports in the rear, not unlike a certain commander-in-chief in Crim-Tartary—most unlike him who never said *Ita*, but *Venite*, or his Chinese equivalent\* the great Wang. The action begins by ordering a corps from each brigade or division to the fore. Instead, however, of charging—bayonets are unknown—they spread out in open order, skirmishing till their ammunition is exhausted, and then retiring to ask for more in the rear. At times A. feigns a retreat, and B. advances, perhaps sufficiently to produce a hot fire, but never so far as to reach the enemy's walls, which he instinctively fears. If there be any danger of a hand-to-hand fight B. then retires, and A., in his turn, advances. No one dreams of outflanking more than of charging home, and the reserve sits quietly, as did the commissariat behind the sand-heaps at the 'Battle of Meeanee.' Even platoon firing is unknown. This kind of Champ de Mars work is kept up till sunset, when both hosts wend homewards to sup, dance, boast hugely, and claim the victory. A Sikh review in the olden days,

\* This general, after tying up his beard in two knots, would take a sabre in each hand, and filling up the rear of his men, so lustily belabour all who hung back, that the Chinese terrified rush never failed to secure the victory.

when the followers of Nanak Shah disdained to sponge their guns or to box their ammunition, was a bloody affair compared with a pitched battle in Yoruba; and a single civilized regiment would, I should say, scatter an army.

After ten thousand rounds the dead are counted by units, the wounded by tens. The 'battle of Ijaye' was fought by seventeen thousand men: of these, five were killed and fifty were hurt. From the weapons used we could hardly expect otherwise. In the campaigns of the first Napoleon a man's own weight in powder, and ten times his weight in lead, were consumed for each individual placed *hors de combat* by their ridiculous musket. In 1851 Brown Bess expended at the Cape three thousand two hundred rounds to each Kafir, and in the Crimea the French fired away five millions of small-arm cartridges without killing twenty-five thousand Russians. It is becoming the belief of military men that the use of arms of precision, cannon and rifles, assisted by skill and practice, will eventually settle the fate of campaigns—which remains to be seen. But at any rate a reliable weapon is an absolute necessity to the soldier. It might not be advisable to arm the Egbas with Enfield rifles, Prince's breech-loaders, and Colt's revolvers; still they might supply themselves with sound Tower muskets and bayonets,

with tolerable sabres for their horsemen, and with pikes for a select body, which, forming in column, would take that initiative in which all are so notably deficient. These people have a modicum of invention, and a total want of progressive power. It is as if a certain amount of knowledge is spontaneously evolved by them, and then ceases.

The Egba army fought at a considerable disadvantage at the time when Captain Jones was present. The commander-in-chief, His Highness Ogubonna, had won a certain prestige by his conduct in 1851 against Dahome. He was, however, a very old man, said to be seventy—equal to ninety in England, gross, effete, wholly addicted to women, and rarely in the habit of leaving his hut. Yet it is the deliberate opinion of Captain Jones that, with all its faults of commission and omission, Abeokuta is ‘capable of carrying on an offensive war against any neighbouring native power.’

The tactic to be used against this people is that which never yet failed in India; and the superiority of European weapons would at once give the victory to a civilized force. All our disasters in the East have been caused by abandoning the one true and easy system—an opening by a hot fire of artillery, round shot, howitzers, and rockets; a steady advance of infantry in masses, covered by sharpshooters; and,

finally, a rush of cavalry to cut down the fugitives and to render the rout complete.

It is at present our policy in these regions to maintain the strictest neutrality. We have hitherto been persuaded to side with the Abeokutans, thinking that they were engaged in a defensive when they were really waging an offensive war. The great variety of tribes to whom the broad lands of Yoruba belong are all willing, in their several degrees, to become our 'faithful friends and allies;' and we shall have no difficulty in keeping them so. The object of each is of course to monopolize our amity and assistance for the pure purpose of self-aggrandizement, and to the prejudice of its neighbours. Peace with us, however, would be its object when nothing is to be gained by war.

It will wholly conduce to proper relations with the interior when we have a sufficient armed force at Lagos. The Egbas, like the people of the West African coast generally, have persuaded themselves that the English are invincible at sea, and upon the seaboard, where their ships' guns can be brought to bear, but that they are no soldiers. This is the first lesson that should be taught them. Europeans are unnecessary, except as officers, and the Upper Yoruba country, with Hausa and Burnu, supplies an admirable material for native soldiers. The

province of Lagos will hold a very different standing in the country when provided, not, as proposed, with two hundred men, but with a weak troop of light irregular cavalry, a battery of field artillery, and a small regiment of four hundred infantry.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE DE OMNIBUS AND COTTON CHAPTER.

OF Egba society it cannot be said to be 'based upon slavery.' It has a variety of ranks. Omo bibi, a child born born, *i.e.*, twice born, the Hindu 'dwija,' is one whose parents are both free Egbas. The son of a free mother by a domestic slave is called omo ohi wabe. Omo odo, or 'the child of presence,' is a domestic, and eru a common slave. Either of the two, when manumitted after the master's death, is called eru edili, which is also the name of the progeny of a slave girl by a free father. Those pawned by others—a custom reminding us of the old Roman Nexum—are termed ofá, or wafa, apparently an Arabic derivative; one pawned by himself is faru so fá. Of the population, probably four-fifths are free,—a large proportion in this part of Africa.

There are, therefore, three great classes of Egbas. The first is the rich free man, the second the poor



free man, and, thirdly, the serf, colonus, or slave. If we reckon the fetish men as the fourth class, we obtain that quadruple division which prevailed amongst the old Egyptians, Hindus, Greeks, &c., and which, under the name of caste,\* has so often and so ignorantly been abused. The license of liberty to be observed amongst the Egbas probably results from their habits of domestic slavery. As was said of the citizens of Athens and Sparta, and in the later days of the Southern States of the American Union, the masters of slaves, if free themselves, are ever the freest of the free.†

\* Caste is one of the most enlightened inventions of the civilized East. It supplies an admirable system of police, acts as practical conservatism, and leads to high excellence in the crafts, arts, and sciences, by breeding generation after generation, till an instinctive superiority is acquired. The Englishman exclaims, 'What a shame it is, because my father is a tinker, that I am forbidden by the laws of the land to be prime minister;' and he objects to caste because it 'keeps the people down.' He forgets, however, that he is talking, not of petty European kingdoms of twenty or thirty millions, but of some two hundred millions of human beings, and that each caste is quite numerous enough to form by itself a first-class nation.

† The 'Iwe Irohin,' appearing October 1862, has the following sensible but curious article upon the subject of slavery: 'It is the boast of Englishmen of the present day that no one is a slave on British ground; and they have a right to be proud of it, for in 1834 they gave the large sum of twenty million pounds sterling as a compensation to the slave owners; but though there is no doubt that a land where every man is free is in a better state than where slavery exists to a large extent, yet we must remember that slavery is recognized throughout the Bible, not only in the patriarchal times and under the Mosaic law, but also very distinctly by St. Paul, who lays down the relative duties of masters and servants to the Churches of Ephesus and Colosse, and exhorts Timothy to teach the slaves at Ephesus

African slavery here, as elsewhere, results from four causes—famine, captivity in war, debt, and crime. Captives of course prefer the chain to the sword, and insolvents and felons would be imprisoned in Europe. The Egbas are, now, too much of a trading people to sell their brethren except for the best reasons. Whilst our cruisers cut down the branches of slave export, trade in cotton and oil—the ‘little palm-nut’ has been described as the ‘true emblem of peace in Africa’—fells the trunk and digs up the stumps of this *Shajrat el Zukkum*. But the development of commerce naturally increases the necessity for slave labour in a land where hired labour is expensive and uncertain, whilst the increased price of provisions greatly adds to the miseries of the servile.\* Thus the Abeokutans—who

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to count their own masters worthy of all honour, especially if their masters were Christians, 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; and sent back to his master, Philemon, Onesimus who had been converted under his ministry at Rome, St. Paul had fully acknowledged the right of Philemon to his servant, though he thought it convenient for him as a Christian to release him; and he insists upon the duty of Christian servants to obey their masters, though he wished them to obtain their freedom if they could, 1 Cor. vii. 21. The tendency of Christianity is no doubt to diminish slavery, but it does not do this by exciting the slaves to revolt or run away; on the contrary, it commands them to please their masters well in all things, but it exhorts masters, as it does all other Christians, to do to others as they would they should do to them.’

\* Upon the present state of things that results from cutting off all slave export, I shall have more to say at some future time when treating upon the Oil Rivers of West Africa.

are far from being disciples of Clarkson and Wilberforce, Acland and Buxton—took the earliest opportunity of enriching themselves at the expense of their allies the Ijayans. Of this unhappy tribe no less than twenty thousand have, it is said, disappeared. But the Egbas are fighting without pay or rations, consequently their friends form their commissariat. The enemies, of course, vend their captives, and even the Ijayans sell themselves for provisions, or are sold by their chiefs as a penalty for shirking the war. Kidnapping is severely punished by the Egbas, who, in April 1847, passed a law making the penalty death. Once it was so common that at Badagry and other places no poor man could sleep in peace. Lagos was then one of seventy exporting points on this ill-fated coast, extending three thousand six hundred miles, from Cape Verde to where the shores of the Camaroons deflect to the south. The traffic has naturally diminished. In 1825 the export was probably two hundred thousand; in 1839 Lord John Russell announced that the number of slaves annually introduced into America and the West Indies exceeded one hundred thousand; now it has diminished to a maximum of half the latter total, and north of the equator it is almost entirely confined to the Slave Coast, or the western half of the Benin Bight.

The Yorubas have a marked national character. Divided into a number of little states, or independent cantons, they are eminently clannish. An Egba will feel hurt if his people be not properly appreciated, and the 'Aku' race at Sierra Leone produces the most dangerous because the most intelligent recaptives. They have strong virtues and vices, and, by dwelling upon one side, to the neglect of the rest of the moral development, it would be easy to make them the best or the worst of men.\* They are kind and courteous, hospitable and not eminently dishonest, except in and around the cities. On the other hand, they are covetous, cruel, and wholly deficient in what the civilized man calls Conscience. With considerable shrewdness in business, they are as simple in some points as children. They believe that white men fabricate cowries, and an old farmer, seeing a cloud, will say to a missionary, 'Please let it rain for us!' There is the usual African want of invention; a plough, a saw, or an alphabet are equally beyond the limits of their organization. They are somewhat litigious, and there is a numerous judiciary, whilst private disputes are settled by a kind of *consiglio di famiglia*. Their cruelty is shown rather in their religion than in their laws.

\* As a case in point, compare Richard Lander's and the Rev. Mr. Bowen's estimates of the race.

Murder, treason, and arson, sometimes adultery and theft, are punished by death, the offender being beheaded or garotted with a rope. In Ilori the neck is broken with an iron mace. Minor offences are visited with the whip, fine, or imprisonment.

Men amongst the Egbas are farmers, tillers of ground, blacksmiths, wood-workers, carpenters, weavers, tailors, and barbers. Women do the housework and sell at market; between whiles they spin, wash, cook, draw water, dye cloth, and make soap and pottery. The Egba rises with the dawn, brushes his teeth, bathes at home or in the brook, and repairs to the jungle, which, as in India, is twice visited; if once only, the exception would be attributed to disordered health. The breakfast, or first of the three meals, is usually eaten round the pots of the market women. It is a light affair, of the hot diluted paste, or burgoo, here called ekko. The farmer then repairs to his fields, and the townsman to his business, whilst the gude-wife either busies herself at home or sits selling in the bazar. Dinner, from 10 A.M. to noon, is eaten either in the farms or the streets. The farm-wives and hill-wives bring in the material and the townswomen prepare it. It is something hot and simple, yam balls or Indian corn cakes, with a 'kitchen' of the highly-seasoned palaver sauce: the trash in which

Europeans delight, papaws and pineapples, plantains and oranges, are mostly left to the monkeys. Vegetables, farinaceous food, and meat, especially the two latter, are the general favourites. The rich will eat rats and snails, and the poor carrion, rather than condemn themselves to become vegetarians. Meat, however, as in Asia, is rarely cooked solid, hashes and stews being preferred to roast and boiled. Those of easy means pass the greater part of the day in dressing their hair, consulting Ifa, saluting friends, and visiting the Ogboni lodges. After dark they eat once more, sometimes in the streets, more generally in the house, and then gossip, play, if not gamble, see dances or dance themselves, smoke, snuff, drink palm-wine, maize-beer, and trade-rum, and retire to rest when they can do no more.

As regards the Yoruba language, spoken by the Egbas, Egbados, Ijebus, Iketus, and Otas, as well as by many of the people of Badagry and Lagos, and said to extend along the coast to New Calabar, and internally to the Niger, I know nothing of it except what the two grammars, Mr. Crowther's and Mr. Bowen's, teach.\* As many people have not read even these, I may still be able to offer something new to them. The language is decidedly difficult. In other coun-

\* Mr. Crowther's is copied too servilely from Murray, itself an Anglo-Latin modification.



opinion with the learned Bishop Vidal,\* who wrote his 'Introduction' before the Yoruba was classified, and before the alliteral languages of Southern Africa, of which the types are the Kongoese and the Zulu, were sufficiently studied. The bishop, by the absence of classified prefixes and modifications of the particles contained in the verb, judges Yoruba to be unconnected with the large family of Kafir tongues.† On the other hand, there is an artful system of prefixes and a purely conventional euphony, which, to say nothing of minor points, denotes a similarity of origin.

The Yoruba language is mostly one of intonation, and in many cases the accent and the articulation determine the sense of the words. This is trying to the dull ear of the northern race, and many are unable to master the difficulty; yet a stranger, with the organs of tune highly developed, finds little difficulty in separating the words, which do not, as in Popo and in English, run into one another. The sounds peculiar to the tongue are *pk* and *gb*, sounded almost like a single consonant, and, like Arabic, it wants the *v* and the *p*. There is neither passive voice nor

\* Introductory remarks to Mr. Crowther's Vocabulary of the Yoruban language.

† The peculiarity which the bishop notices in the adverbs, viz., that there is a distinct word to express the quality or degree of each substantive, is already found in Arabic adjectives, especially those of colour.



variation for number and person, nor indefinite article, in which the Greek and Latin are also deficient. It seems to be built upon a century of bilateral roots, and Mr. Bowen's vocabulary contains about twelve thousand vocables. The language is therefore sufficiently rich for the wants of a simple and barbarous race.

It is noted as a curious point that the Yoruban is wealthy in abstract terms, that it possesses distinct words for such far-fetched ideas as sin, guilt, honour, atonement, faith, mediation, repentance, pardon, adoption, salvation, perdition, justification, and sanctification. The same, however, according to the Rev. Mr. Walker, is true of the Mpongwe, or Gaboon dialect; and, indeed, we may expect it to be an invariable characteristic of these languages, which have a regular system of compounding words, equally intelligible, root and branch, to all speakers.

The Yoruban tongue has no poetry, like the Hausa, nor are words set to tunes as amongst the musical Fulas, except a few artless attempts like the corn-songs of the American negroes. But the African development of the language-power fills it with riddles and childish puzzles; moreover, it is rich in proverbs, the infant literature of the world. Bishop Vidal seems to have thought the Yorubas distinguished amongst the nations of the world by the

number and terseness of their proverbial sayings. So far from this being the case, there is hardly a tribe upon the West African coast which has not as many and as good. The same philologist also sees a high standard of morality in this popular code, if it can so be called, a vestige of the 'Universal Conscience bearing witness amongst men.' There is, according to him, no virtue, sin, nor human relation which is not enforced, described, or forbidden by some pithy dictum. As a rule, methinks, the most exalted views in proverbs and poetry evidence a rather low actuality. Thus the unwarlike delight in tales of slaughter, liars hold high theories touching truth, universal selfishness proclaims aloud mutual dependence, the most reckless of human life have a hundred reasons for not taking it, and no nation more despises the poor, or has more saws against a right to despise him, than the Yoruba. Moreover, all the world over, proverbs run in pairs, and pull both ways: for the most part one neutralizes, by contradiction, the other. Thus the Englishman bids him who would thrive to consult his wife, and warns him at the same time that women, being unreasonable as spaniels, are greatly improved by being beaten.

The Yoruba proverbs have been divided into three kinds, firstly, the *paranomasia*, play upon words, or, in simple English, pun; secondly, sprightly

descriptions of natural phenomena and visible objects; thirdly, moral truths and rules for conduct. The Bishop of Sierra Leone naturally saw in them a touching resemblance to the parallelism of Hebrew national poetry, and divided them into the gradational, the antithetic, the synthetic, and the introverted. But parallelism is natural to the Semitic mind, one of whose rudest but sublimest expressions is in the northern dialect called Hebrew. Every page of the 'Thousand and One Nights' will supply instances of it. The other more artful divisions may be found not only in Hebrew and the Yoruba, but in all the Asiatic languages with which I am acquainted.

Abeokuta lies in the zone of almost constant rain. The warmest months, which are also comparatively dry, are December, January, February, and early March. In January trees cast their leaves, and thus enjoy their annual repose. February is essentially a spring month, as the greenness of the country shows. At the end of that time the Harmattan wind will blow from the north and the north-east for two or three days, and perhaps bring on a few light showers. April and May are distinguished by tornados, thunderings, and the 'former rains,' which are now heavy and continuous, reaching a crisis when the sun attains the tropic of Cancer, whilst storms are frequent and severe, and Shango does con-

siderable damage. Here the heaviest downfalls are not when the sun is directly vertical, but when he is northing or southing. On this coast of Africa, however, the 'rainy monsoon' is not constant and persisting, as on the eastern shores of the continent, upon which Trade-winds from the South Atlantic directly impinge. Four inches at a time is severe, and twenty inches is the rare extreme. June is generally the wettest month in the year. About mid July and August there is mostly an intermission in the rains, but not so marked as in the Gaboon country and the coast south of the equator. This second dry season is cool and pleasant, broken only by a few showers. September is again pluviose: the 'latter rains,' however, are rarely heavy, but mostly short and sharp. From October to mid-November is the second tornado season, whose storms are more violent and dangerous than those of the first, and December recommences the dry season.

Thus there are four dry and eight wet months, the former corresponding with our winter, the latter with our spring, summer, and autumn. That, however, is the hot, and this the cool time of the year. The rainy is also the healthier season. From the days of Mungo Park, who attributed most of his misfortunes to the hot weather, the dry season has been assumed as the fittest for African travel,

and the idea has led to many a loss. In the West Indies, the rule is, that both dry and wet weather are healthy, whilst irregular rain and sunshine are feverish. Here, as in most parts of intertropical Africa, the worst months are those immediately before and after the rains, the middling is the dry season, the best is the wet, especially August and September. There is but one serious disadvantage to those explorers who are compelled to walk their journeys, the inundations will certainly cause swollen feet, a trivial evil, but which may arrest progress. Still there is less malaria, that mysterious agency which, like the pestilence walking in darkness, ever hides its origin from the world, and leaves us to grope for its origin in cosmical causes,—vegetation, geology, geographical position, and a rarefied atmosphere deficient in oxygen. Happily for us the old African treatment—‘A. B. caught fever, gave him calomel, bled him, blistered his feet, died on the third day’—is now obsolete : I would not, however, advise any white man to expose himself for more than two or three consecutive years to the climate of Western Intertropical Africa.

At Abeokuta the nights are not oppressive ; sometimes they are even chilly, with damp and heavy dews.\*

\* New comers are apt to expose themselves needlessly at night by sleeping in open rooms, and thus by checking perspiration, when the temperature

inland they are hotter and more trying. The heat of the day is between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M.: near the coast, however, there is a strong and regular sea breeze, charged with vapour, and blowing from the south, the west, or the south-west. The average of summer heat may be 80° Fah. in the shade. During our three weeks' stay we had three violent storms in five days, and a heavy fog every morning. The difference between the wet and the dry bulbs varies from 0° 2' Fah. in the rainy season to 25° Fah. during Harmattan winds.

We will conclude with the commerce and the productions of Abeokuta. I have shown that at present she aspires to become the great highway of transit between the Sudan—that is to say, the countries north of Guinea—and the coast; and that it is our object to give the unmaritime peoples direct communication with our markets on the seaboard.

For the twenty years previous to 1787, the whole import trade of Western Africa, Morocco included, with England, fell short of 72,000*l*. In 1810 it had increased to 535,577*l*. It may now safely be assumed

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changes after midnight, to awake with fever or dysentery. The only Spanish officer who has escaped fever at Fernando Po attributes his immunity to sleeping in a well-closed apartment. We read in '*La Médecine des Prophètes* (Traduit de l'Arabe par M. le Docteur Baron. Paris, 1860.): 'Le sommeil refoule les esprits à l'intérieur du corps, et alors l'extérieur se refroidit; aussi a-t-on besoin dans le sommeil de se couvrir davantage.'

at three millions sterling.\* And there is hardly any limit to its future development. Yoruba is a

\* The following is an extract of the Returns made to Parliament of the West African imports and exports :—

There was imported into the United Kingdom, in the year ended 31st December, 1861, from the Western Coast of Africa, produce of the value, in round numbers, of one and a half million sterling. This amount is exclusive of the imports from the British, French, and Spanish possessions on that coast.

Palm-oil is the chief article of commerce brought into this country from thence, the value of which, in 1860, was not less than 1,684,532*l*. The other articles, consisting chiefly of dye woods, cotton, ebony, and elephants' teeth, had a total value of only 92,000*l*.

The last made-up returns are given below, as well as the increase or decrease as compared with 1859 :—

		1860.	Increase.	Decrease.
		£	£	£
Barwood	.. ..	8,939	2,046	..
Camwood	.. ..	7,370	519	..
Copper ore	.. ..	648	..	515
Cotton	.. ..	6,094	405	..
Ebony	.. ..	3,797	1,184	..
Guano	.. ..	2,590	1,186	..
Gum animi	.. ..	222	..	531
„ copal	.. ..	865	..	727
Oil (palm)	.. ..	1,684,532	263,503	..
Orchil	.. ..	..	..	29
Teeth (elephants')	.. ..	35,672	..	6,203
Wax (bees')	.. ..	2,134	..	5,590
All other articles	.. ..	23,702	4,147	..
Total		1,776,565	272,990	13,602
			18,602	
Increase in 1860 over 1859			259,388	

The exports of British produce and manufactures were valued at 865,804*l*. for the year 1861, which is less by 85,491*l*. than for the preceding year.

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valuable and an unexploited field. Its products are cereals (maize and millet), vegetables (peas, beans, cassava, yams, and koko, onions and sweet potatoes), sugar-cane, ginger—in small quantities, and lately introduced—cubebs, and various oil seeds, bene or sesamum, telfaria, castor plant, ground nuts, cocoanuts, and physic nuts (*Corcos purgans*): coffee has been grown, but it has been allowed to die out.

By the subjoined table it will be seen that the largest shipments in 1860 were cotton goods, gunpowder, guns, spirits, and earthenware, and that with one exception all the articles exhibit increases over 1859 :—

			1860. £	Increase. £	Decrease. £
Apparel	..	..	24,158	6,582	..
Guns ..	..	..	61,613	22,230	..
Gunpowder	..	..	100,169	28,785	..
Beads ..	..	..	8,338	5,264	..
Brass manufactures	..	..	20,820	1,846	..
Cottons	..	..	464,661	138,216	..
Earthenware	..	..	23,227	11,418	..
Hardware	..	..	50,314	2,405	..
Iron and steel	..	..	25,147	4,442	..
Silk manufactures	..	..	14,421	6,429	..
Spirits (British)	..	..	15,695	12,078	..
Staves	..	..	56,538	..	1,909
Woollens	..	..	11,074	4,032	..
All other articles	..	..	75,120	13,450	..
Total	..	..	951,295	257,177	1,909
				1,909	
				255,268	

Of foreign and colonial produce and manufactures exported from this country to the Western Coast of Africa the value in 1860 was 194,139*l*. The principal articles were beads, cowries, silk manufactures, spirits, and tobacco.

Copper abounds in places. Indigo and coarse tobacco would flourish anywhere,\* and the minerals have not been explored. The present exports are palm-oil from the nut; now worth 11 heads per measure of 10 imperial gallons, and black oil from the kernel, worth 7 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  heads; ground-nut oil and shea butter or 'Niger grease,' which has been almost stopped by the war; indigo in balls of  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. each, worth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  strings; and lubi (natron), worth 1 head 10 strings per pound; a few hides; cotton; ivory, costing, when prime, 3 heads per lb.; country cloths sent to Bahia and up the coast, and Niger mats worth 2 heads 25 strings to 3 heads each. The minor imports are hardware, pottery, velvets, red caps, silks, beads, and coral, especially the red; trinkets, fancy looking-glasses, mostly German.† The chief objects are cowries from East Africa, and a few from England, manufactured roll tobacco from Brazil, and leaf tobacco from the Anglo-American States, either *via* England or direct; Manchester cottons, rum and spirits, arms and ammunition.

The four latter articles are a serious injury to the

\* The tobacco, like that of Africa generally, lacks strength and flavour: whether cultivation would improve it remains to be seen.

† The traveller's best outfit would be grey domestics, a few striped ditto, some silk velvets (red and green, with white stripe), a little coral, some fez or turbushes, a few umbrellas, and trifles like needles, scissors, and little looking-glasses.

country, and present a sad contrast between the West African coast, whose commerce is in the hands of Christian merchants, and the Eastern shores, which the Moslems and Hindu Banyans supply with foreign goods. On the shores of Zanzibar, until the Messrs. Oswald and other Hamburgers settled in the island of the same name, muskets and gunpowder—used almost entirely for slave-driving—were unknown except amongst the Beloch and Arab subjects and mercenaries of the local government. That house sold off, it is said, 13,000 guns in one year. The interior—Unyamwezi, and the regions about the Tanganyika Lake—is still in the hands of Arab traders, who never allow the natives to become possessed of civilized weapons, and who would incur eternal infamy if they sold ardent spirits to the people. I shall never cease to protest against the sale of rum, guns, and gunpowder, when an innocent trade of worked cottons, salt, and the minor luxuries of life would be equally profitable.\* It is

\* According to the 'Iwe Irobin' (Appendix, Oct. 1862), 'the chiefs of Abeokuta are beginning to feel the evils which are being inflicted on the town by rum-selling.' The obvious means of discouraging the importation would be to impose a duty of 5 per cent., gradually and by very slow degrees, raised to 50, and even to cent. per cent. on ardent spirits, and with great prudence to make the imposts on gunpowder so heavy as to be almost prohibitory. To effect such innovation, however, we must be free from the presence of rivals; upon the Gold Coast, for instance, and at Lagos, under present circumstances, hasty steps would lead to ruinous consequences.

my sincere belief that if the slave export trade were revived, with all its horrors, and that rum, guns, and gunpowder were things unknown, the country would greatly gain in happiness by the exchange.

Abeokuta, like Lagos, has been inundated with cowries, which, used in Europe for the arts, here become a coin.\* Formerly the small white Indian

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\* The following is the usual computation :—

40 cowries = 1 string (ojo), which varies, according to the market, from 1 *f.* to 1 *d.* The string of 50 cowries is called Adotta.

5 strings = 1 bunch.

10 bunches = 50 strings, or 2000 cowries 1 head (Egba or Egbawa) = \$ 1, whence probably the word 'head' was derived in former times, but now varying from 2*s.* to 1*s.* 5*d.*

10 heads, or 20,000 cowries = 1 bag (okkekan), now worth 18*s.*

20 heads = 1 oz. gold dust = £4.

Thus assuming the dollar to be at the old value 4*s.* 6*d.* (it has lately been reduced to 4*s.* 2*d.*)—

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		Bags.	Heads.	Strings.	Cowries.
One bag,	worth	18	0	contains	1	0	0	0
„ dollar	„	4	6	„	0	2	25	0
„ head	„	1	9½	„	0	1	0	0
„ shilling	„	1	0	„	0	0	27	31

The natives, as might be expected, have a number of names and minor subdivisions, even a single cowrie being made to buy snuff and similar small articles. The following are the names generally known:—

Ogonu (*i. e.* one hundred) = 2½ strings.

Igbio = 5 strings; in Portuguese, Gallinha; Anglice, 'bunch,' or smaller bundle.

Ojuluba (5 strings and 1) = 6 strings.

Enowo = 10 strings.

Egbefa = 30 strings.

Egbeta = 15 „

Egbejje = 35 „

Egbeni = 20 „

Egbejja = 40 „

Egbenu = 25 „

Egbisi = 45 „

After which comes the head = 50 strings.

shell, costing 60*l.* per ton at home, and 80*l.* on the African coast, was the currency, which extinguished the round trade or barter. Presently the Hamburg merchants settled at Zanzibar, where the *cyprea* can be collected for a mere trifle, made a speculation which succeeded ; the large, coarse, blue African, being much cheaper, arrived in shiploads, brought fifty per cent. to the importer, and supplanted the small Indian, which are now rare, and bought up by chiefs and fetish-men. At present there is a glut, and in every village you tread upon bits of cowries. Moreover, fewer are found, and therefore fewer are sent.

The ‘plump-breasted dove,’ as the Yorubas call it, is a vile currency, an intolerable burden. Lycurgus did not fetter the commerce of Sparta more effectually with his iron bars. Every shell must be pierced and strung upon grass or palm fibre, which takes no short time. At Dahome a hundred slaves will be engaged in this occupation, and a merchant at Lagos must employ eight or ten ‘cowrie-girls.’ The weight of each bag of 2000 blue Africans will be from 80 to 90 lbs., and of white Indians from 35 to 45 lbs., and yet it is barely worth one pound sterling. Mungo Park, when he opened a shop during his second journey at Sansanding, was obliged to employ three tellers to count his cash—25,756 cowries,

worth at Lagos 1*l.* 5*s.*\* Lieut. Forbes complains that to carry 50 dollars, he had to hire five women. A horse will cost 60,000 to 120,000, a sheep 4000 to 6000, and a fowl 200 to 250 of this barbarous small change.†

It is fully time to change the system. At Zanzibar and Maskat, the late Sayyid Said found no difficulty in so doing. He applied to the East Indian Government for some tons of pice or copper coins, and the improvement was readily adopted by his subjects. The experiment should be tried without delay at Lagos, and, if successful, it would probably soon extend into the interior.

At present the country has the nuisance of twelve different dollar-coinages in circulation, and when these different dollars have been got rid of there still remains the inconvenience of two currencies, English money and cowries, which, as has been seen, bear no fixed relative proportion. And the Abeokutans are little aware of their losses by the system of barter to which the retail purchaser is sometimes driven: it obliges them to pay one hundred per cent. above

\* At Sansanding, however, 3000 cowries were = 1 minkalli of gold = 12*s.* 6*d.*

† The only thing in its favour is that it teaches the children arithmetic. Mr. Crowther informs us that they begin by counting one by one, then by twos, and lastly by fives. It is a taunt to say '*O daju danu o o'mo esan messan*'—with all your cleverness, you do not know nine times nine.

the invoice price for English goods, which, if the currency were settled, could be profitably sold by the merchant at a maximum of fifty per cent.

Provisions are somewhat expensive at Abeokuta—the luxuries of life especially so. The price of maize or Indian corn,\* of which 15 to 25, and in the best lands 30 bushels, are produced by the acre, varies from 20 to 75 cents per bushel. At present the bushel of 60 to 70 lbs. costs from 2 heads 25 strings to 3 heads, and it has fetched 5 in times of scarcity. Guinea corn (*H. sorghum*) is rare, and sells at fancy prices; the measure is a calabash, containing about one gallon, and is usually worth double the price of maize. Rice and farinha, or cassava flour, are being introduced; the latter fetches 10 to 20 strings per basket, and makes tolerable tapioca. True arrow-root is as yet unknown. The indigenous yam† is

\* Maize, called muhindi, *i. e.* Indian or Hindostan corn, in East Africa, is here called yangan or agbado, *i. e.* agba odo, 'what is beaten in the mortar.' It is said to have been brought from the eastward, beyond the Niger, by a yellow monkey—the Oibo, or white man, according to the boya, is the 'old baboon,'—which tends to show that it is not a native of the land. We cannot however as yet answer the question whether maize and the arachis be African or purely American growths.

† Mr. Bowen mentions a Yoruban tradition, that yams were the primitive human food. The first man vainly attempted to eat it raw: he afterwards found one accidentally roasted before the fire—somewhat like Elia's genesis of the sucking pig—and succeeded better. Europeans, less sensible, eat the yam boiled, in which state it is detestable, though far superior to potato when roasted.



here the staff of life : a dozen costs from 1 head to 1 head 5 strings. Native beans, per basket of 40 lbs., fetch from 2 heads 25 strings to 3 heads. Sugar-cane is sold in bundles of 40 canes, four feet long, for from 40 strings to 1 head. Fruits, being despised, are cheap : there are grape-vines of several varieties, but all with produce equally dry and insipid : limes, papaws, and pineapples command 2 cowries each, oranges 10, and bananas 15 to 20 strings per bunch. Europeans use milk ; the negroes, more sensible, do not.\* Butter and ghi, the clarified butter of India, is here supplied by the butyraceous *ce* or shea butter.

Large and, for Africa, well-bred cattle are as common in the country as the buffalo—the ‘jackass cow’ of Sierra Leone—is rare. The common cow may be bought for 4 to 5 bags : the ox of course costs less. The price of beef varies from 5*d.* to 6*d.* per lb. The sheep—after the first hot season it becomes hairy, not woolly—is worth 7, and if full grown 20 heads. The goat, which, unlike that of the Oil Rivers, is here cheaper, averages from 6 to 15. The hogs are black and heavily built, and the professional hunters bring wild boars to market. Poultry is common, fetching 10 to 20 strings, and a fine fowl

\* It is considered heating and bilious, especially if drunk whilst the sun is hot. The Portuguese, on both coasts of Africa, carefully avoid it. I prefer tea *à la Russe*, with a small quantity of sugar, if procurable, and a slice of lemon instead of ‘bullock milk.’

may be had for 25. Guinea fowls are dearer and better, costing from 1 to 1½ heads: there is a wild species with a black silky tuft.

Horses are of fancy prices, and are never used for packs or *bât*: asses, mules, and camels, common in the regions north and south of the confluence, are as yet unknown. Ladies and children use a peculiar kind of palanquin—a chair fastened by woodwork to the carrying pole, and covered with an umbrella-like awning. Domestic slaves are always in the market: men, women, and girls fetch from 8 to 10 bags, but being preferred for exportation, are worth from 12 to 16 bags.

The coming exportation from this region will be the shea butter-nut, an indigenous *bassia*. However much the palm and palm-kernel oils may fall before the earth oils of America, shea butter will maintain its price, from 50*l.* to 52*l.* per ton of 2252 lbs.—about 5*l.* per ton more valuable than tallow. The tree, which is mentioned with enthusiasm by Mungo Park, grows in immense forests: there is one between Ilori and Bida, of nine days' march; and between Ilori and Sai there are plentiful scatters, here thick, there thin. It is a fine, large growth, producing an emerald-green plum, whose pulp is sweet and edible. For butter, the fruit is gathered in April or June, and smoke-dried in a

country oven; a cone of clay, with the smaller end downwards, containing the fire, and divided from the nut by a wall of pierced clay. It is subsequently reduced to powder in a mortar, but so carelessly that the husk is not removed: it is hand-washed and worked in three or four waters, and when it rises to the surface it is ladled off. It is then boiled in large country jars, and stored in smaller earthen pots, after which it will keep untainted for years. This 'Niger grease,' as Europeans call it, is beautifully white, hard, and subaromatic. Park prefers it, when fresh, to 'butter from the cow.' It is used by the people for all the purposes of cookery, and, as an unguent, it is considered invaluable for alleviating rheumatic pains. At Abeokuta, owing to the war, there is but little in the market. At Ilori it still commands a price of one shilling per pound—far too expensive for commerce. The opening of the Niger will bring this valuable vegetable butter in enormous quantities to our shores; and the varieties of butyraceous nuts are almost wholly unknown: there are several even upon the Niger, whilst the Gaboon River and the coast south of the equator abound in tallow-nuts, with which the people are acquainted, whilst we are not.

It remains to consider the subject of cotton-growing about Abeokuta, and throughout Yoruba generally.

The shrub is of various qualities, and, as in Africa generally, all are of tolerable staple. The 'black-seed' resembles the sea-island (*G. arboreum*), and the 'green-seed' (*G. herbaceum*) is the short staple or upland cotton of the Southern States of Anglo-America. Besides which, there are many hybrids, and all the varieties are grown in the same field. There is brown cotton, but not the red, long-stapled species, with small boll and leaf, which flourishes in Hausa. The best kind is called akashe, and is too expensive for exportation, a penny being the price of eight seeds. It is not uncommon, however, round Abeokuta, and it merits a trial in a *jardin d'essai*. The feel is as soft as silk, and the seed is white: the yarn shown to me was dyed grey. Nothing can be worse than Abeokutan manufactures, even those made from the finest cottons. The Egbas are as far from the jenny of James Hargreaves as from the power-loom. Their materials are still a distaff and spindle, exactly resembling the artless implements of India and East Africa. The bhaunri is a bit of wood, weighted with a lump of clay, and painted with the brightest colours.

Cotton must ever be an interesting subject to a country in which five millions of souls—about one-sixth of the population, and a number exceeding the total of Holland and Portugal—are or were interested

directly or indirectly ; which possesses 200,000,000*l.* of fixed and floating investments ; which, in 1860, produced an interest of 80,000,000*l.*\*—more than equal to the whole revenue of the empire ; which imported from one country alone 35,000,000*l.* per annum,† and manufactured to the value of 55,000,000*l.* ; which, in less than a century, has increased its operations three-hundred-fold—from 4,000,000 lbs. in 1767 to 1,200,000,000 lbs. in 1861 ; which, during the last fifty years, has consumed 20,000,000,000 lbs., equal to 750,000,000*l.*, or nearly the national debt ; and which for years has paid at least twopence per lb. over-price to the Southern States of America.‡

The wars of secession have brought two great rivals in the field, India and Africa. Despite the persevering efforts of adventurer and speculator to extract money from the pockets of the British capitalist, little can be expected from the former. The old Court of Directors spent lac after lac in improving the staple, and failed. After a few months the produce returned to the old stock as surely as the English bull-dog became a pariah and the English child a degenerate. It is a law of nature—mysterious, un-

\* 25,000,000*l.* consumed, and 55,000,000*l.* exported.

† England takes 85 per cent. from America, 8 from foreign, and 7 from British territory.

‡ And it is said landowners have often sold for 9*d.* what they have raised for 3*d.* per lb.

intelligible, yet not to be mistaken. Wherever—as in Mekran or Zanzibar—the American ‘domestics,’ which are all made of medium staple, met our cottons, in which medium staple was eked out with Indian or short staple, the former invariably beat the latter out of the market. Hindostan and the East certainly did miracles in the olden time, as the Dacca fabrics and the Mosul muslins prove. These textures, however, were, like the shawls of Kashmir, hand-woven, at an enormous expenditure of time and trouble, and it is folly to expect them to be imitated by the coarse appliances of machinery.

When Indian cotton is cried up for the English market, and is represented as likely to supersede American, either ignorance or deceit should be suspected. Mr. H. R. Cassels,\* a most competent observer, shall be placed in the witness-box. Leaving other presidencies to speak for themselves, that gentleman maintains that the experience of half a century of cotton cultivation in Bombay teaches that—

\* 1. Exotic cotton cannot be successfully cultivated on a large scale in the Bombay Presidency, except in a limited portion of its southern districts.

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\* ‘Cotton; an Account of its Culture in the Bombay Presidency, prepared from Government Records, and other authentic sources, in accordance with a resolution of the Government of India.’ (London: Smith, Elder, and Co.)



‘ 2. Indian cotton may be improved in clearness, and somewhat reduced in cost, but the general characteristic of the staple will not be materially altered.

‘ 3. In so far as this quality of cotton is serviceable to the manufacturers of England, India can compete with America ; but if a finer description be required, India cannot adequately supply it.

‘ 4. Unless, therefore, such alterations in machinery can be devised as may render the manufacturer indifferent to length and fineness of staple (and of the probability of this others must judge), India is not likely to replace the United States.\*

‘ 5. It seems evident, then, that Indian cotton must continue to hold a subordinate place in European markets, and that there is a point at which its competition with other growths entirely ceases.’

Here, then, is the whole truth. From such cold comfort as this let the political statistician turn to Africa.

I will not delay to prove that, whereas India yields short staple, medium staple and long staple are indigenous in Africa. It is also evident that the cultivation can be developed in a short space of time. Cotton culture began under the orders of Mohammed Ali in 1818 : the first exportation was in 1823, and in 1855, besides five or six millions of lbs. worked in the country, it exported 56,874,300 lbs. ‘The United States of America exported, we know, eight bales in 1784, and it was doubted at Liverpool that so much could be produced in the country : in 1850,

\* It has been contended that an improvement of machinery will make short staple do the work of medium staple. This, if true, only shifts the difficulty ; the same amount of alteration in machinery will make medium staple do the work of long staple.



or within the assumed time of a man's life, America grew 550 millions out of the 1000 millions of lbs. which the world affords. Algeria is another case in point, proving the adaptability of Africa for cotton-growing, and Natal will be.\*

Africa can produce the 'tree wool' which England so greatly requires : she has, however, two grand drawbacks. The first is the inadequacy of regular labour, the second is the want of roads, tramways, and canals, and the expensiveness of freight.

The first is a most serious difficulty. It is clear that, without slaves or quasi-slaves, like the Hindu ryot and the Egyptian fellah under Mohammed Ali, cotton has not yet anywhere been cultivated in any considerable quantities, or with any great success. There are certain stages of the growth when a war, a strike, or anything that removes the labourer, is fatal to the year's harvest. Africa, as will be seen by the example of Abeokuta, cannot depend upon herself; she must look elsewhere. We have, though tardily, recognized the fact that nothing can be more suicidal than the emigration of Kulis (coolies) from a land which, instead of being over-stocked, really

\* Natal has all the constituents of climate which render the coast of Georgia so famous for cotton-growing : it is not too constantly hot for seaboard or upland, and its current is a fac-simile of the Gulf Stream.

suffers from a paucity of population. From Southern China, however, we can draw supplies of hands almost *ad libitum*. At present the best fields yield about one-fourth of the average of the United States, and the prosperity of the crop will depend upon careful manuring and selection of seed. I have every confidence in the eventual triumph of free *versus* slave labour, but it is hard to say how, at present, any extensive movement of the kind can be organized, at any rate for the use of Africa.

Transport and freight remain to be considered. There is a difficulty about road-making in Africa which appears strange to the English reader; yet it is not a little real. The habits of the natives, and the power of the climate, would reduce in a few months the best macadam to the condition of a bridle-path. Beasts of burden are wanting; carts have to be invented; the country is unfit for canalization, and tramways are long before its civilization. Finally, freight from the coast is one penny per pound by steamer, and three-farthings by sailing ship—equal, in fact, to the Indian, and double the American.

As might be expected, the attempts to develop African cotton have hitherto been desultory in the extreme. We have tried the ridiculous Zambezi, and the Spaniards have talked of Fernando Po.\*

\* Early in 1862 I sent, kindly assisted by D. Pellon, four samples of

Abeokuta has had a fair trial, and hitherto has failed with an almost total failure. In the immediate neighbourhood of the city, where farm land lies, there is little grown, and that little is brought to market in baskets and blies by the women. The country to the north, especially about Ilori, supplies the best and the largest quantities. Planted after the harvest in July, the shrub lasts, they say, for several years, and not being lopped, attains a height of ten feet. Abeokuta entered the lists with every prospect of success. She was presented with machinery, agents were sent to her, she doubled her produce every year, and the Manchester Association published their expectations for 1859-1860 at 20,000 bales (112 lbs. to 125 lbs. each). But the war with Ibadan broke out, the yield fell to 3447 small bales, and between 1st October and 1st January of the present year (1861) only 500 bales reached Lagos. This, too, in despite of famine prices in Lancashire and elsewhere. The prime cost at

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cotton, growing almost wild about Clarence, to the African Association at Liverpool. They were described as follows:—

1. *Gossipium vitifolium*, good colour, uneven, staple equal to middling Orleans, considered worth 13½d. to 14d.
2.       "       "       good staple, rather yellow, very clean; value the same.
3. *Gossipium tricuspidatum*, dull colour, uneven staple, mixed with short; clean, worth 12½d.
4.       "       "       colour too yellow, good strong staple, equal to Egyptian; when clean worth 16½d.

Abeokuta was 3*d.* to 3½*d.* per lb., and 3*s.* 6*d.* for packing each bale. Ready for exportation, the bale was worth twenty-eight head of cowries = 9·60 dollars = 2*l.* 4*s.* ; it has, however, risen to 2*l.* 12*s.* in very scarce times. But peace in America will restore the balance of the English market, and reduce inferior cottons to a maximum and minimum of 6¾*d.* and 2*d.*, whilst the best qualities will range between 9*d.* and 5*d.* Under these circumstances, what would become of cotton culture in Africa?

I presume that the benefits of the cotton famine more than counterbalance to capitalists its disadvantages, otherwise they would not sit still calling upon Hercules. It is from them that enterprise must originate. At present it is confined to trusting a few hundreds of pounds sterling to any black face with a glib tongue that promises to procure the article cheap. Combination is wanted, and, still more, before Europeans expend time and money in Africa, a distinct pledge that, for so many years, their produce will command a certain price in the market, which is of course impossible. At present, to tell a plain, unvarnished truth, we are convinced that if Manchester could once more buy all her cotton from the Southern States of America at one penny a bale cheaper than she could obtain it from English territory she would do so.

The conclusion which I draw from my brief visit to Yoruba is, that it can produce cotton, and that, for the present at least, it will not. The public is respectfully advised not so readily to believe those who find for it cotton districts in every corner of Africa. The Niger River and Valley offer, perhaps, the best of all sites, and are of all the most neglected. This part of the subject however must, for the best of reasons, be reserved for future consideration.

END OF VOL. I.