

settle down at random on various spots of the surface of each, and illustrate our remarks by brief description. To attempt full details of the whole would swell this sketch to the dimensions of a volume. But our object will be gained by a rapid glance at some remarkable features of the subject.

On the less known coast near Cape Leveque, Captain Stokes observed dwellings as primitive as can be conceived, consisting of nothing more than a slight and rough roof of thatch, supported at the corners by four upright forked poles, between three and four feet high. Beneath this the native sat on the naked earth, with none of Nature's beauties shut out from his view; but sufficiently protected, according to his notions, from the rain, the sun, and the wind. Against this, indeed, little barrier was required. But even in Australia the habitations of man are seldom so rude as this. Further up towards Swan River, in the little outlying island of Bathurst, they are different from, and superior to, almost all other native dwellings in Australia. They resemble those singular erections which the mariner, as he navigates the stormy shores of the Terra del Fuego, may observe from the sea, appearing, in the distance, like the nests of huge birds built among precipitous places. Stout poles, from fourteen to sixteen feet in length, form the framework. These are planted in the ground, describing a circle, and brought together conically at the roof. A thick and close thatching of grass is woven between, and laid over the skeleton, and the whole, when completed, is substantial, warm, and wind and waterproof. In winter, fires are kindled in the interior; and at certain seasons the huts are deserted by their tenants, who prefer to ramble among the green solitudes of their shores, sleeping on soft couches of nature's own provision, and sheltered only by the leaves of some umbrageous tree. Indeed, many of the tribes of the naked savages make no attempt to erect for themselves habitations during any period of the year; but when the nights are cold, and the bitter winds compel them to seek warmth, they congregate in some spot where the sand is deep, and burying themselves in it, remain with their heads only aboveground. The traveller who should suddenly surprise their slumbers would imagine that he saw the trophies of some battle, until the native, rolling round in his sandy place of rest, gave token of life. Yet this neglect of the comforts which render life pleasant to the civilized man, does not proceed from incapability, as in the few places where the Australian and the white man have toiled in partnership, there exist, especially on the verdant banks of the Swan, neat, snug cottages, that would tempt any settler by their snug and picturesque appearance. These are the works of the aborigines.

On Depuch Island, a vast pile of reddish-coloured rocks, some distance westward of the Swan river, are groups of huts, inhabited only at the turtle season, and composed merely of a frame of boughs and twigs, with a loose matting of twisted grass merely thrown over it. Yet the simple builders of these simple habitations, little progress as they had made in useful industry, had made an advance in art which is rare among utterly savage races, and had covered the hard surface of the rocks with graven representations of birds, hearts, fishes, and scenes in life and nature which are eminently curious. Along the whole of these coasts, at some distance from the sea, the habitations are constructed for the most part of the branches of trees, bent at the top, and joined by a lashing of grass, and thatched with the same materials, or twigs and leaves. If we leave the outer rim of land that circles the unknown interior, and enter those tracts which have only once or twice been exposed to the traveller's eye, we shall discover specimens of domestic architecture equally curious and primitive, and equally illustrating the debased condition of the native race.

Deep in the level wilderness of the northern interior may be seen villages of irregular construction,—very primitive, but evidencing considerable care for comfort, and knowledge of the means by which it may be obtained. They were made of strong boughs, fixed in the ground so as to form a circle, meeting above in a common centre, and covered with a dense thatch of grass and leaves, as usual. Plastered over this, however, is a compact and

thick coating of a peculiar clay, which hardens in the sun, and is equally impervious to heat and rain. The habitations are from eight to ten feet in diameter, and about four feet and a half high, with openings not larger than to allow a man to creep in, in the posture of an animal. The various circumstances deserve remark. All these huts face the north-west, and each dwelling has by its side another of similar construction, but smaller size,—whether used for children or for storing provisions is not known. Probably they were employed for the latter purpose; but as the villages are only occupied during the rainy season, and were deserted when the only traveller that has visited these regions saw them, the truth could not then be ascertained.

In some parts it would seem that the huts are built every year, and deserted after one season's occupation; as the old ones are seen scattered over the district near those which have been more recently erected. The sight of an abandoned dwelling, whether the palace of a king or the hut of a savage, is full of suggestions. Perhaps the one is no more a relic of barbarism than the other. With civilized nations all is progress; one generation is ashamed to inhabit the structures erected by the last, and casts aside as useless the monuments of folly and superstitious ignorance. With barbarians it is different, and age after age they build the same houses, as they worship at the same altars, and put faith in the same powers, earthly or supernatural. Altogether, the dwellings of the aboriginal tribes of Australia are, in most instances, somewhat solidly constructed, and well adapted to secure their inmates that animal comfort which is so much loved by the savage. Where there are villages the huts are built in regular order, the back of one being at the back of the other, with the little huts running through in parallel lines. The whole appearance is curious and somewhat picturesque, although the same is wanting in those features which lead a charm to every oriental village.

From this brief glance at the domestic architecture of Australia, it will be at once perceived that the social condition of these tribes is far below that of the Indian Islanders. They are far behind the Malays and the Dyaks; but every year will leave them farther in the rear.

Transporting ourselves over to the banks of the Niger in Africa, whence we propose to extend our view over various parts of the continent, we find the dwelling-houses more various in their sizes, shape, and construction, while they are equally curious and primitive.

The first considerable village which meets the traveller's eye as he navigates the river towards its source, is Akasis, containing about 200 inhabitants. The huts are quadrangular, small and neat buildings, built of bamboo and roofed with palm leaves. They are usually divided into two compartments, with an entrance from one into the other. In one corner is placed a platform of flat boards, elevated on four large stones. During the rainy season fires are constantly kept burning on the floor in the centre. As we proceed further, the appearance of the hamlets varies much, now displaying one grade of civilization, now another, but differing among all the tribes. We see, next to Akasis, Kadi, which is supposed to be erected on an artificial bank of earth. The houses are shaped like English cottages, built of clay, and covered with a warm and heavy thatch,—the whole appearing in the distance like a number of haystacks on the shore of a river. Some of the houses enclose a small court, somewhat in the eastern fashion. Others are of a quadrangular form, and divided into two, placed at right angles, well built of mud, and roofed with a compact matting of dried palm-leaves, and a species of reed, that flourishes in the marshes on the river bank. The floor is raised 18 inches from the ground, and the solitary square aperture in the wall serves as door, window, and chimney. The roof descends in broad dipping eaves, which are supported by wooden pillars, curiously streaked with red and yellow colours, as the rest of the exterior is. Persons of consequence possess larger houses, with more numerous chambers.

These species of dwellings continue until the commencement of a certain district, when they change at once the flat or sloping roof, for those of a pointed shape, while the huts are

circular, and arranged in picturesque rows, at some distance from the water. They have oval apertures, and are dark and close. The verandah formed by the eaves is the principal place of enjoyment for the natives, who sit on finely wrought mats, the produce of that industry which is remarkable among these African tribes. The city of Iddah contains 2,000 huts, with a population of 9,000.

A general view of the domestic architecture in this—one of the most curious districts of Africa, shows that little else is sought for by the savage save shelter from the sun and rain. In the lower region the houses are invariably oblong, with gable ends, built of stakes, filled in with mud and thatched, generally occupying two, and sometimes three sides of a court, the other being inclosed—as we are told in the narrative of the last expedition—by a palisade with a gate, overhung by the graceful banana or cocoa tree. "Some of these are neat," say Messrs. Allen and Thompson, "but they are generally small and budded together, as if ground-rent were high." Above the Delta, and beginning at the boundary of a particular district, the huts are all circular and very small; but the owner is never stinted for room, as, instead of having one house with many chambers, he has many chambers, each forming a separate house. A circular wall is raised of clay, and the roof, constructed separately of the stout, light, and tapering ribs of the palm branch, with the thatch neatly woven, like a fringe, with grass wound about it from the bottom to the top, is then placed over the erection. Some have flat ceilings of the ribs of palm branches placed across, but most are open to the top of the high and conical roof. The floor is of mud, but sometimes hardened with broken pieces of earthenware. The clay for the walls is formed into roundish lumps, which are joined by being wetted and laid together. Sometimes they are coloured with indigo, and the part round the door is stamped in various patterns,—as circles, leaves, and crocodiles. The fastening is a bolt or rude padlock, but among these barbarians this is seldom required, partly because there is little to steal, but partly also because the people are honest, and respect the little property that belongs to their simple commonwealth.

In some districts the houses are formed of mere slopes of thatch, one laid against another, with the ends closed by planks, the whole supported by two or three forked poles in the centre. In Buddu, a town of the Mallam tribe, it is the custom to place an inverted pot, 2 feet deep, and made of black and polished ware, as the point of the circular conical roof, as a precaution, they say, against lightning. The Edeeyah savage, like his contemporary of Australia, is content with a coarse covering of thatch, supported on four pillars, and open to all the winds of heaven. Sheltered by this roof, and with a pillow consisting of a block of wood resting on two crossed sticks, the man is happy. "The advantage of this singular pillow," say the authors already quoted, "is that a loving couple can each put the arm round the other's neck by passing it under the sticks, as was shown us by two young girls." Even among this tribe, however, people of rank and title, as being more dainty and more valuable than common unepitheted humanity, have walls to their huts, and roofs of wattled palm leaves.

On Pirate Island, in the Bay of Amboises, the houses are similar to those along the lower course of the Niger, except that the clay side-walls are strengthened by wooden uprights planted in the ground and piercing the roof.

In the great Saharan desert, the house of the African is his tent. In Ethiopia, and beyond the countries watered by the Nile, with the regions fertilized by the White River, the African inhabits small round huts of clay, with conical thatched roofs, with various other forms, which, as we have already touched largely on our space, it must be enough to mention in the barest detail.

Although, as we have said, in the waste solitudes of the Sahara we find the roving tribes bearing about with them their canvas tenements, that shelter them in their rest by night, and trouble them little in their marches by day, yet at intervals, in the desert region, are towns of considerable extent. Of these, Ghat and Ghadames are the principal. The style of architecture is neat, and, in the latter,