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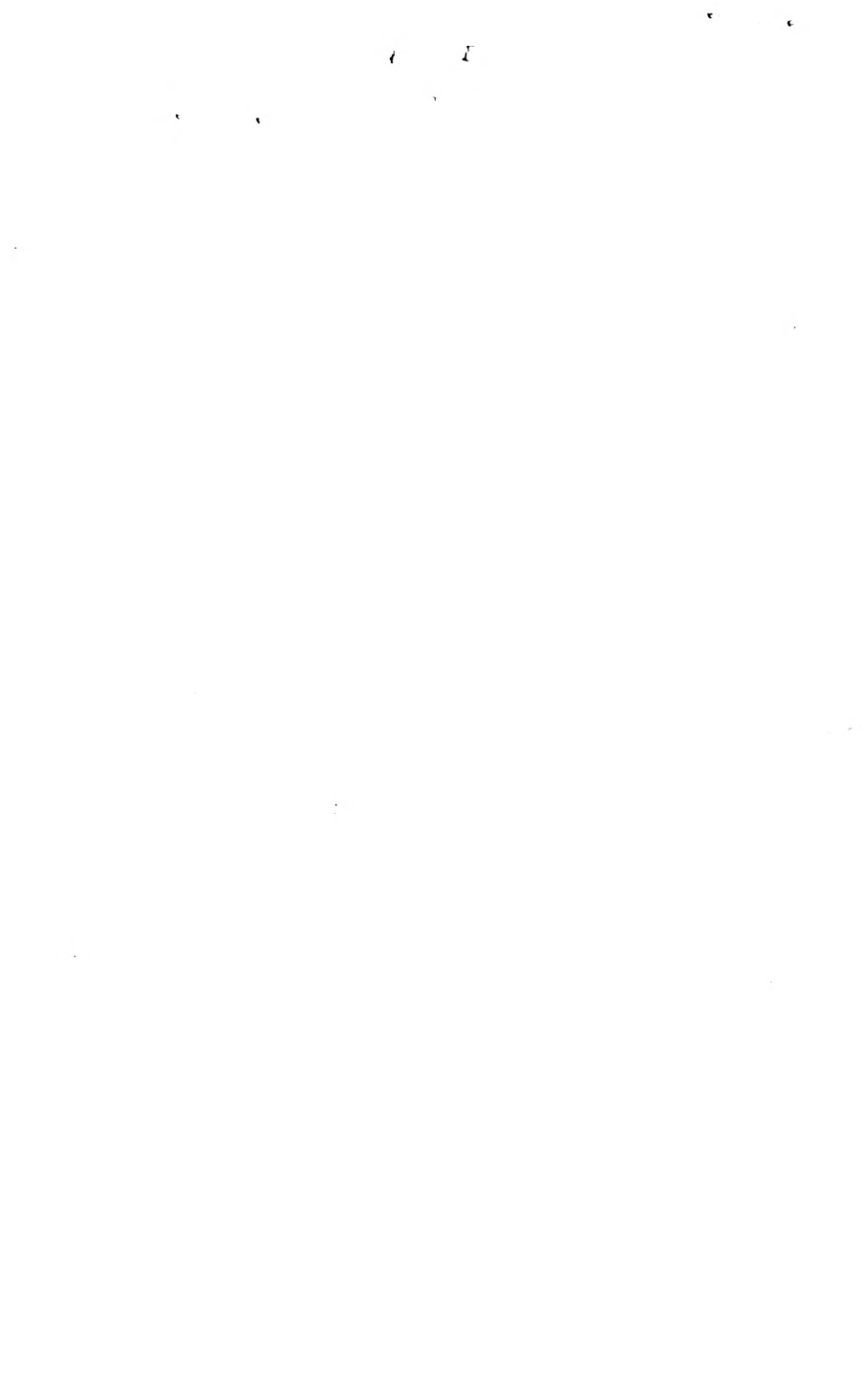
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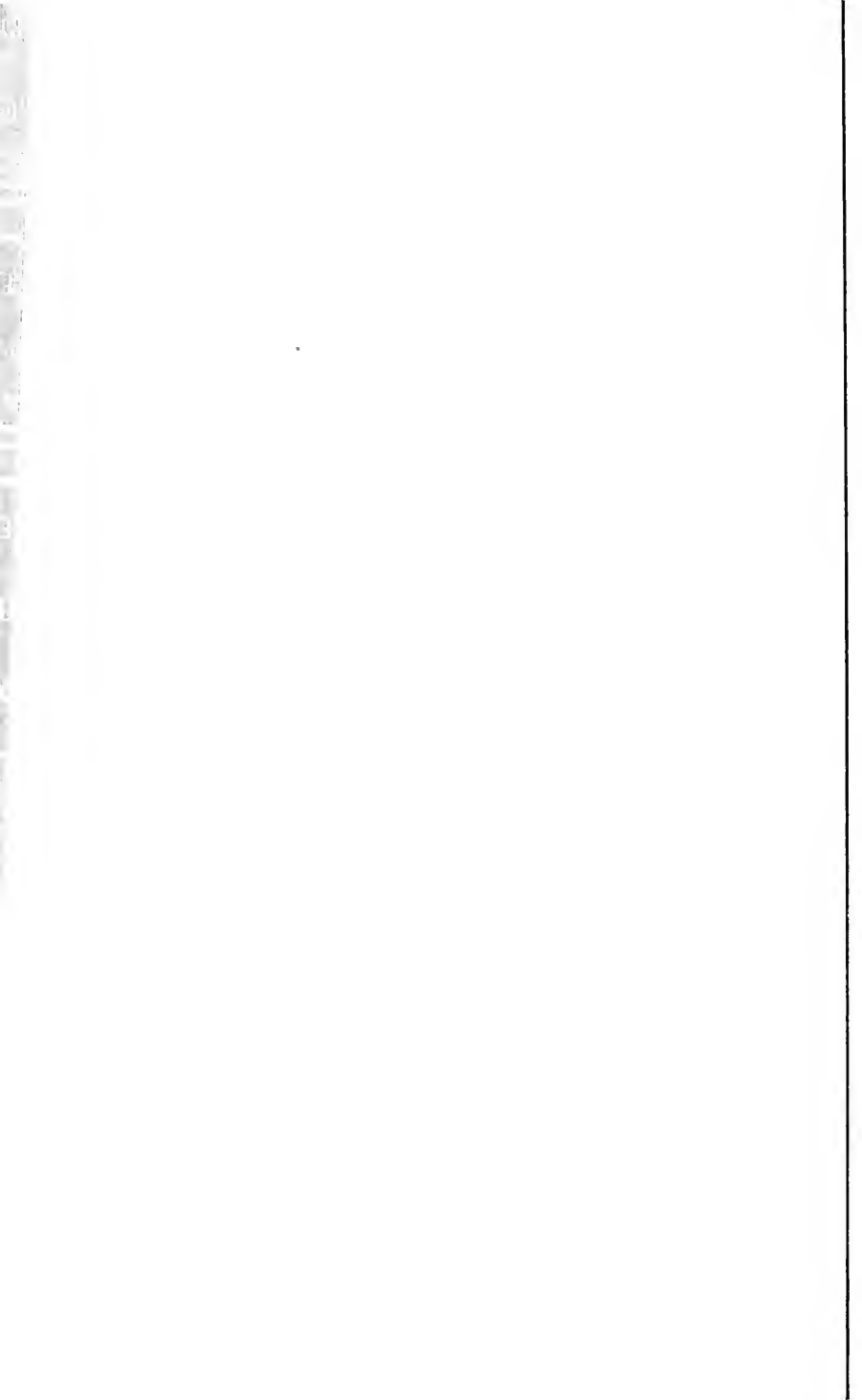
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John E. V. Swann, March 1874

DAHOMEY AS IT IS;

BEING A

NARRATIVE OF EIGHT MONTHS' RESIDENCE
IN THAT COUNTRY,

WITH A

FULL ACCOUNT OF THE NOTORIOUS ANNUAL CUSTOMS,
AND THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS
OF THE FFONS;

ALSO AN

APPENDIX ON ASHANTEE,

AND A

Glossary of Dahoman Words and Titles.

By J. A. SKERTCHILY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, FROM SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON :
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1874.

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TO
ANDREW SWANZY, ESQ.,

THROUGH WHOSE MUNIFICENCE HE WAS ENABLED TO VISIT
WEST AFRICA,

This Volume is Inscribed

AS A MARK OF ESTEEM

BY HIS SINCERE WELL-WISHER,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

IN the early part of 1871 I left England with the object of making zoological collections on the West Coast of Africa. My first station was at Assinee, and from thence I went to Cape Coast Castle and Accra, calling at all the intermediate towns. At Assinee I was prevented from penetrating far into the interior by reason of the hostility of the Ashantees, and palavers with the neighbouring petty kings. At Accra, again, the Krobo people were up in arms, so that the splendid collecting ground of Aquipim was closed against me. I therefore determined to proceed to Whydah and work up the fauna of that district, intending afterwards to return to Aquipim as soon as an opportunity presented itself.

In consequence of my detention by the King of Dahomey, however, I was unable to follow up my

design, but was condemned to be the recipient of savage honours and to sit an unwilling spectator of the notorious Annual Customs of the country ; my feelings being grievously harassed by the thought that I had discovered one of the richest localities in Western Africa, while the polite imprisonment, as it were, to which I was subjected, entirely precluded my making any collection save the meagre one to be obtained in the spacious courtyards of my residence.

Hence my entomological labours resulted in almost *nil*, in spite of repeated and earnest solicitations to Gelelé for permission to collect in the environs of Abomey at least. I endeavoured to console myself with the thought that I should be able to get a thorough knowledge of the Dahoman people, but I would much rather have remained ignorant of the Ffons and have added a trifle to zoological knowledge than have been enabled to produce this volume.

When I arrived at Whydah, I had not the remotest intention of visiting the king, since I was well aware that the interior of the country was so effectually

“tabooed” to Europeans, that many persons had passed half their lives on the coast, and had never had an opportunity of making a journey into the interior other than in the immediate precincts of the town in which they resided.

It appears, however, that some guns had been landed for the king, and Quinun was informed that I was competent to instruct him in their usage.

With that sycophancy, so highly developed in all savages when they imagine they can obtain any benefit from its practice, he sent an extensive escort to conduct me from the beach to Whydah, and on my arrival assured me that if I would instruct him in the use of the guns, and would go up to the capital and explain them to the king, I should be well treated and *be back again at Whydah in eight days.*

The first part of his promise was more than fulfilled, for I never experienced greater hospitality at the hands of any man, civilised or savage, than I did from Gelelé; but with regard to the second, the *eight days* were prolonged to *eight months.*

Beguiled by this offer to explore a comparatively

unknown country, I consented to make the journey to Abomey ; and on arrival there, Gelelé conceived a strong and unaccountable regard towards me, and with a savage's utter disregard of consequences insisted upon my remaining his guest during the succeeding Customs. This would have been all very well had I been allowed to do a little collecting in the intervals between the ceremonies ; but Gelelé said that " he loved me so strong that he could not allow me to go into the bush for fear of accident, and that people had been there and had spoilt his name in England, so he must show me everything, so that I might write a book about it." Resistance was hopeless. Hence I was obliged to waste eight months, an idle spectator of a savage pageant.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to give the reader a full and concise account of the Annual Customs, and at the same time to subdue as much as possible their wearisome monotony. I have also treated of the manners, religion, and everyday life of the Ffons. Their name as a nation is perhaps the best known of any West African tribe, and the most exaggerated accounts have been published concerning them.

For example, in a recent periodical it was stated in good faith that the king of Dahomey had just invented a new court costume composed of the "labels off medicine bottles." *Ex uno disce omnes!*

I have also attempted to show the vast difference existing between the negro and the Semiticised negroid, and to paint a true picture of the negro as he is, and not as he is often represented to be. This may not meet with the approbation of many Exeter Hall philanthropists, but most of those gentlemen have obtained their knowledge from some interested "man and brother." Generally speaking, the so-called "negroes" who are held up as shining lights are *white men with a dash of the tar-brush.*

The civilisation and education of the negro is all very well, but let us have a thorough understanding of the being upon whom we are about to experiment, before launching out into extravagant theories.

At the present moment we are learning by bitter experience that our Fantee *allies!* the very negroes whose civilisation has been the theme of many an enthusiast, are not worth the flints in their muskets to

defend themselves, whereas the *negro* (?) Ashantees are brave, determined enemies.

It is to be hoped that at the conclusion of the campaign the eyes of our countrymen will be opened to the fallacy of attempting to make "silk purses from sows' ears."

In conclusion, I would tender my very hearty thanks for the hospitable receptions I everywhere met with from the European residents on the West Coast, trusting to have the pleasure of again meeting them ere long.

J. A. S.

LONDON, *January*, 1874.

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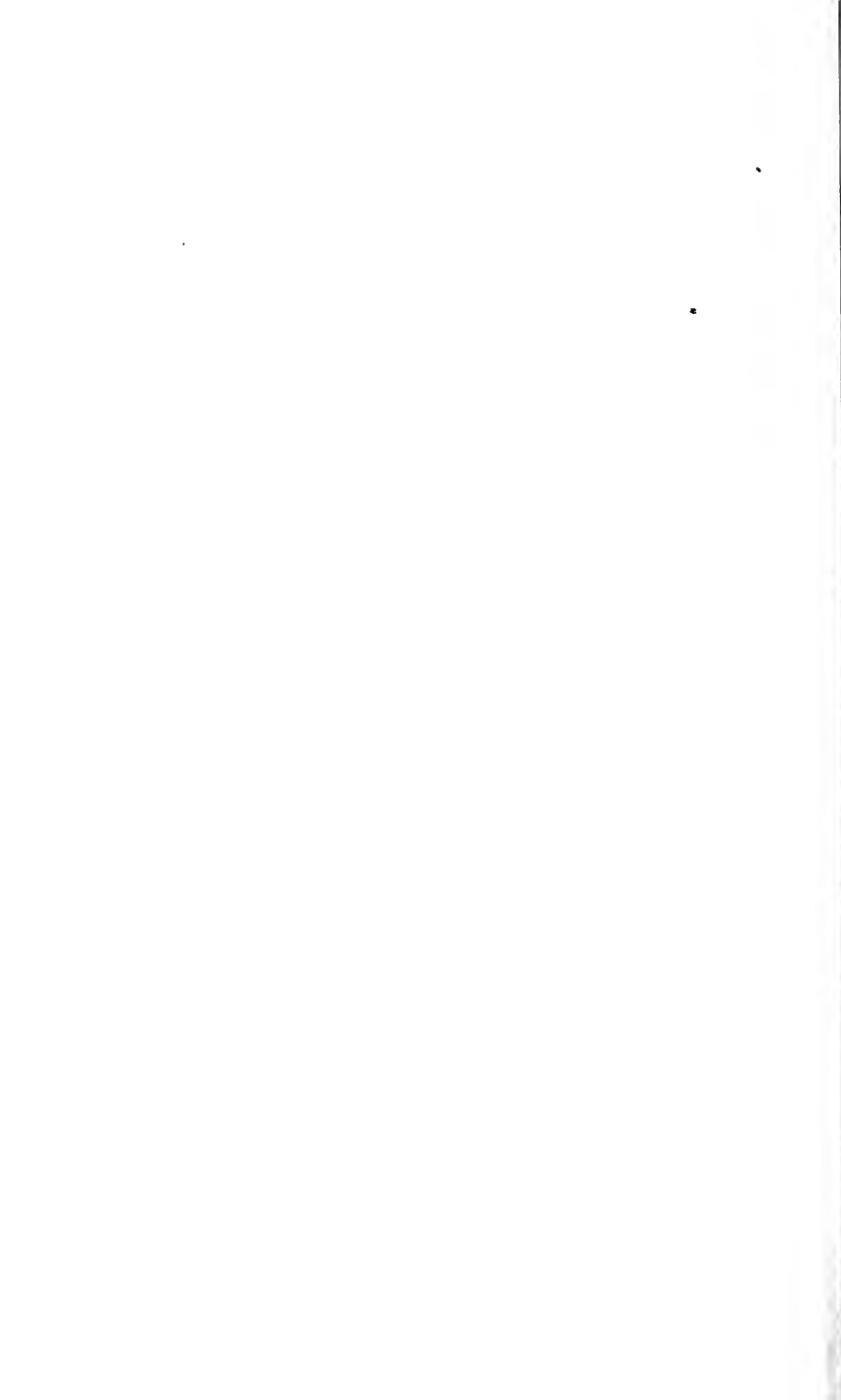
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DAHOMEY AS IT IS.

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL IN DAHOMEY.

Arrival at Whydah—Its appearance—Exciting landing—Walk to Whydah—The custom house—Zumbogi—Entrance to Whydah—Visit to Quinun—Policemen—Punishment of soldiers—Ceremony of entering a vessel—Musical instruments.

Six o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, July 19th, 1871, found the little brig *Bryn-y-mor* slowly creeping along abreast of that clump of cotton-trees, so well known to traders frequenting the "Bights," which is somewhat erroneously called *Mount Pulloy*.

The horizon was still clouded with the haze that ever accompanies the land breeze, and borne on its gentle breath came the earthy, mildewy smell of the decomposing vegetable matter in the lagoons which run parallel to the coast for miles; while the hollow roar of the surf beating with relentless fury upon the sandy shore warned us that we should in all probability be detained on board for that day at least.

As the sun rose higher in the heavens, and by his genial beams dispersed the mists, we discovered the same flat, monotonous coast which had wearied us for days past since leaving Accra. A long, unchanging line of olive green, broken here and there by a solitary palm or cotton-tree rising above the general level and

occasionally relieved by a rift, destitute of vegetation, was all that could be seen from the offing; though, as we occasionally drew nearer the shore, a long strip of bright yellow sand seemed to rise out of the bosom of the dark grey sea, while a sudden streak of gleaming, dazzling white foam, and a dull, hollow booming sound marked out the place of rupture of some huge billow.

As we gently sailed along, favoured by the current, Captain Williams was on the alert to catch the first glimpse of the shipping in Whydah roads, the great Liverpool of the notorious Kingdom of Dahomey, where we expected to anchor about ten o'clock.

As the morning drew on, the land-breeze, ever fickle, gradually died away, and we fully expected to be obliged to let go our anchor ere arriving at our destination; hence we anxiously took cross bearings of the more conspicuous trees on the beach to ascertain if we were moving east or west. At length the white gable of Messrs. Swanzy's office on the beach, rising as it were out of nothing, induced us to hold on a little longer in hopes of being able to "fetch" our anchorage.

Nor were we doomed to disappointment; for the breeze freshened a little and our sails again bellied out, while the moving landscape on our beam and the arrow-headed ripple from our bows showed us that we were still going ahead.

The factories and oil sheds on Whydah beach now appeared, and two or three patches of fog, somewhat darker than the rest, which had attracted our attention for some time, now resolved themselves into a number of ships, lying, or rather rolling, at anchor.

Up went our ensign and house-flag, and our glasses were at once put in requisition to pick out the "Astarte," our consort, under whose stern we intended to bring up.

Soon we were off the old slave barracoons, about two miles to the westward of Whydah, once kept under constant surveillance by Her Majesty's cruisers, but now transformed into powder stores for a French house.

At length the "Astarte's" taut masts and man-o'-war-looking yards were descried, and soon her white house flag fluttered to the truck followed by her ensign, which was immediately dipped in welcoming recognition of our vessel.

Scarcely had our cable rattled out at the hawse hole, than the fitful breeze died away, and the signal "Send for your letters," hoisted at our peak, hung listless and drooping.

A surf-boat, called here a "canoe," soon came alongside, and the "bo's'n," after the usual "Mornin', cap'n," told us that the "sea too full" for us to go ashore; and the dripping condition of himself and his men fully testified that the sea was at any rate "full enough" to run over him and his canoc.

After writing our letters, and giving the bo's'n and his noisy crew a "dash" or present of rum, they took their departure, and we anxiously watched their passage through the surf.

As they neared the first or outer line of breakers, they alternately appeared and disappeared, as they were carried up and down on the heavy swell. At length we missed them, and a row of darkies running along the beach and making frantic gestures with their arms, showed us that the canoc was going in through the surf. We soon had the pleasure of seeing the paddles thrown on to the beach, as the boat, carried along by the inner breaker, was borne high up on the sloping beach.

For the following eight days we were detained on board in consequence of the heavy surf on the beach, which effectually "tabooed" our landing. The weather was cold, wet, and cheerless in the extreme, reminding one of a London November more than an African July. The ship appeared to have discovered the secret of perpetual motion, for she pitched and rolled, curvetted and "bucked," until we expected her to try a revolution on her own axis as a finale to her terpsichorean exploits.

Every morning we saw to our disgust the ensign flying on Messrs. Swanzy's office, which was the signal for a bad surf unsafe for landing. Leaving us endeavouring to drive away ennui by fruitless attempts at dredging and fishing, I will attempt a

description of the beach town of Whydah, as viewed from the shipping.

A long ridge of sand, capped with a straggling line of buildings, with only a few trees to relieve the monotony, is not a very imposing picture to present of the principal port of a kingdom.

At the eastern end is the whitewashed iron clerks' office of Messrs. Swanzy's house, backed up by the brown thatched roofs of the storehouses, and a flagstaff in rear. Between this and the next factory is another flagstaff, whose topmast slopes at a considerable angle from the perpendicular, and at the foot a mob of salt gatherers are pursuing their vocation. A few more thatched sheds succeed, and then our eye rests upon a spot where there is at least some attempt at the picturesque. It is the office of one of the French houses with a red-tiled roof, the front yard surrounded by a whitewashed wall, and the gate hung from blackened posts. Within the yard are several palm-trees, whose feathery heads of vivid green form an agreeable contrast to the dingy brown roofs of the stores, and high over all floats the gaudy tricolor. We might have guessed at the nationality without the aid of the flag, for go where you will, no sooner does the Frenchman set his foot in a country, than he surrounds himself with evidences of his taste for the beautiful, either by planting trees round his house or store, by the cultivation of a garden, or in the general arrangement of his dwelling, betokening an ever present idea of something beyond the mere necessities of the case, that shall testify to the owner's appreciation of the accessories of civilisation. Compare it with the dwelling of an Englishman—substantial, comfortable, adapted to all the exigences of trade it always is; but when once a shelter for himself and goods is erected, how seldom does he ever attempt anything beyond.

Brown-roofed stores again succeed this oasis, some breaking the sameness by presenting their gables to the sea. The whole line extends about three quarters of a mile along the beach, and a more desolate, wretched-looking place can scarcely be imagined.

Even seen in bright sunshine it is dreary, but when viewed through drizzling rain, against a background of leaden-coloured sky, the prospect is cheerless in the extreme.

At length the weather changed and we prepared to land. Captain Williams and I took our places in the bow of the boat sent alongside, and we were soon on our way to the beach. The canoe-men kept stroke by singing extempore songs, often at the expense of the passengers, occasionally breaking the monotony by a hissing through their teeth "à la stablemen," as they dipped their paddles into the water. Sometimes a canoe-man, anxious to show his prowess, would catch up some of the water on the blade of his paddle, and send it far astern by a stroke of his vigorous arm.

On nearing the outer breaker the swell visibly increased, and hill and dale of greenish water rapidly succeeded each other. The bo's'n, who steered, stood up in the stern sheets, and with anxious eye watched each roller as it came on, the boat being kept stationary by back strokes of the paddles, thus allowing each swell to run under us. After a little delay, his experienced eye detected a roller somewhat less formidable than the rest, and we prepared to go in upon it. As we rose upon its back the canoe was urged forward by vigorous strokes, and the canoe-men were kept up to their work by the excited shouts of the bo's'n, who, with his long steering-oar, kept the boat end on. Soon the roller, now piled up into an almost vertical wall of water, begins to curl its briny head. Now is the exciting time; if not far enough on the roller we shall be deluged by the succeeding one, and if too far on this, we shall be tossed about like a cork on its foamy fragments; or, if lucky enough to escape a capsizing, we are sure of a thorough wetting, and its inevitable consequence in this climate—an attack of fever.

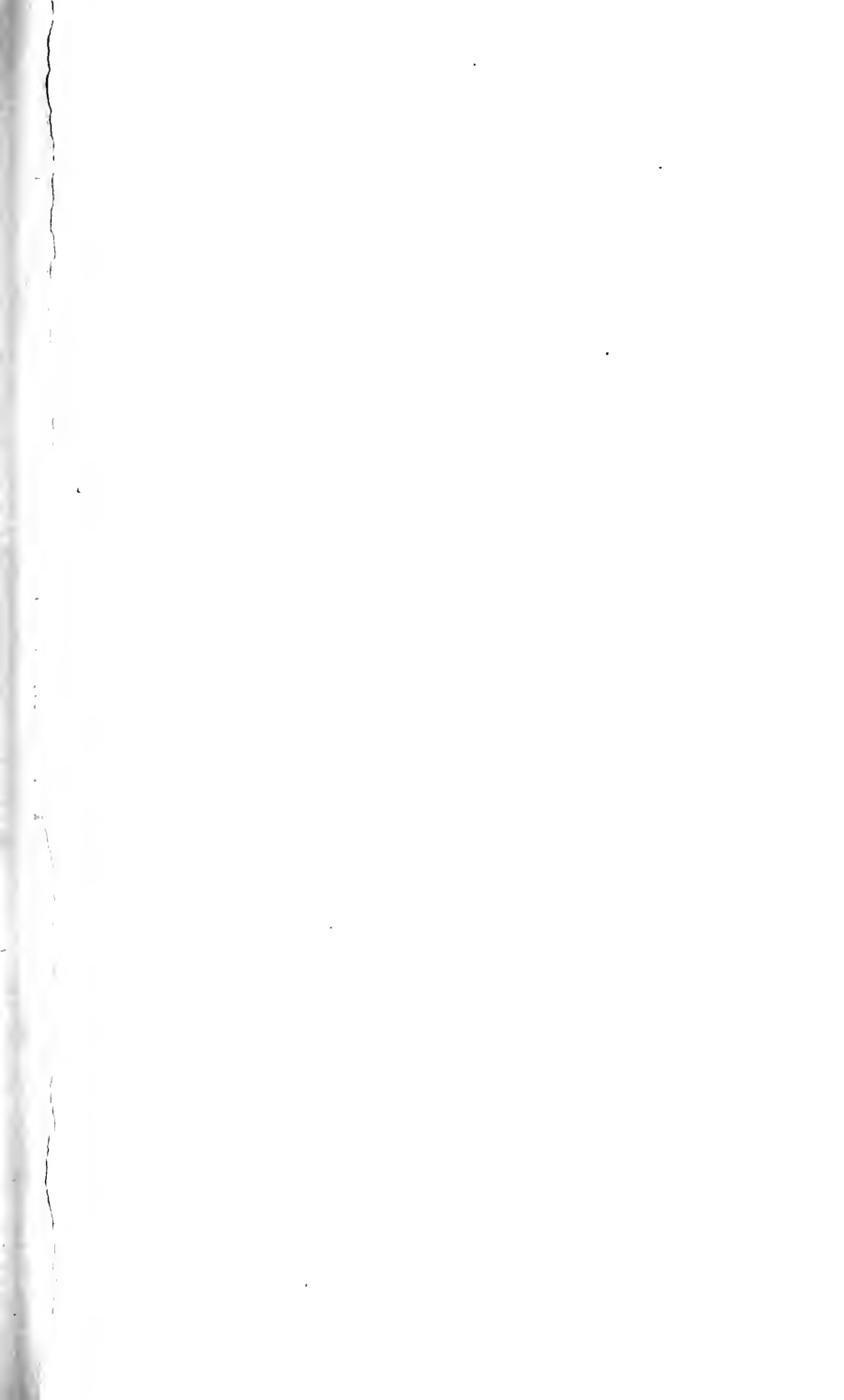
The watery hill upon whose back we rode seemed suddenly to shine out first into violet, then into green, and finally into snowy white foam, as it tumbled over with maddening fury. With a crash and roar deafening us for an instant, we found ourselves

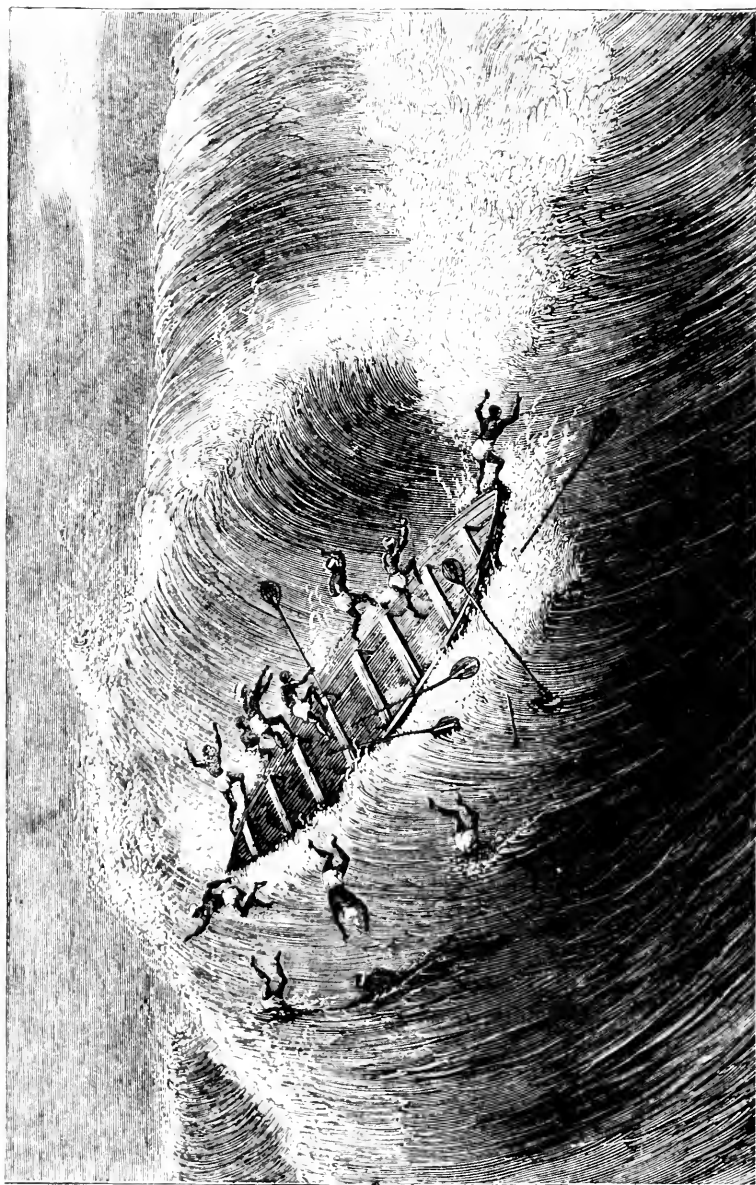
precipitated as it were from its summit, and for an instant scarcely knew whether we were *on* or *under* the foam, which, seething like a boiling cauldron, leapt over the sides of the boat as if eager to secure its prey. Fate, however, was propitious, and although we were hurried along by an avalanche of hissing water, our trusty bo's'n, amidst shouts and frantic gestures to his sable crew, managed to keep our boat more or less stern on.

This outer breaker owes its formidable size to a bar of sand which extends parallel to the beach, and shifts its position from time to time. In fine weather it acts as a breakwater, but when the surf is heavy it causes an immense breaker to accumulate upon it.

Within the outer line of surf is a lane of comparatively still water, across which the spent breakers continually send moving terraces of seething water; the detritus, as it were, of the aqueous escarpment of the open sea. Along this lane boats can paddle without risk of capsizing; but should the unfortunate boatman be overturned in passing over the outer wall of surf, he has to run the gauntlet between turbulent billows on the one hand, and voracious sharks on the other. These latter monsters instinctively cruise up and down within the outer breaker; and oftentimes a death yell, heard clearly above the roar of the surf, is the requiem of an ill-starred canoe-man, who, despite the charms he carried in his hair, has been snapped up by one of these tigers of the deep.

In the slave-trading times the sharks were well fed. The boats were crowded with the unfortunate captives heavily manacled, and capsizees were frequent. The slaves being unable to swim, loaded as they were, became an easy prey, for the boatmen never attempted a rescue, but returned at once to the beach for a fresh cargo. So daring did the sharks become that they would frequently, as they do occasionally even now, bite off pieces of the paddles, and swim in the boat's wake, looking out with their small, green, blood-thirsty eyes, for a meal of human flesh.





A CAPSIZING OFF WHYDAH.

After crossing this belt of death, we had to surmount two other breakers, and looking out for a "smooth," were borne along at railway speed by the rushing downpour of the innermost one. As we passed through it, we stood up in the boat ready to jump into the arms of the beachmen who crowded down to assist us to land.

With a shock, as if every timber in the boat were broken, the bow struck the sand; the beachmen seized and carried us beyond the reach of the succeeding wave, which tossed the lightened boat several feet higher up the steep beach, to the imminent peril of the legs of the canoe-men, and at last we found ourselves safe, and comparatively dry, in the kingdom of Dahomey.

The prospect on landing is not more inviting than when seen from the offing. The beach is a mere bank of sand, about twenty feet high, and where not saturated by the water, is so loose that we sink over our boots at every step. A walk of a few miles on such a road would knock up any European. The summit is covered with various salsolaceous plants, with flowers of pink and yellow dotted here and there, and a few stunted bushes are scattered at intervals.

The beach-town consists almost exclusively of the store-houses of the various merchants, and the dwelling-houses of the king's custom-house officers and fishermen. No white man is permitted to sleep on the beach, except upon very special occasions, their property being committed to the charge of the king's people for the night.

The king's agent, Quinun, had sent down an escort for me for several days past, but as the sea still continued high they had concluded that I would not land on that day, and had gone back to the upper town. As walking was out of the question, I impressed a dozen men to carry my luggage, and, mounting on the shoulders of two of the strongest, proceeded in that dignified position to Whydah, much after the fashion of Sindbad the Sailor.

A walk of a few hundred yards over loose sand brought us to

the level of the lagoon, at this time of the year about 500 yards wide from dry land to dry land, but on the coast side for nearly 200 yards the water is only a few inches deep, with a bottom of slimy black mud. On passing this marsh the water suddenly deepens to about three feet, although in the *dry* season it exceeds seven, as it derives its waters from the reedy lakes about Porto Seguro, which extend northwards, and are fed by the rains which fall there after they have ceased near Whydah. Numerous low aits, haunted by numbers of alligators, and covered with tall reeds, are dotted here and there. The lagoon abounds in fish and oysters, the empty shells of which are seen heaped up on every side preparatory to their being burnt to procure lime for whitewash. Salt is collected, but is too dirty for European use, although considerable quantities are carried into the interior.

To the east a large war-gate extended across the lagoon, leaving only a narrow passage about four feet wide in the centre. It was constructed of poles stuck into the bottom and latticed together with bamboo. Every boat passing through this gate has to pay a bottle of rum as toll. The central passage is closed after sundown by a bar and lock of native workmanship.

My passage across the deepest part of the lagoon was made on the head of a stalwart fellow, whilst four others held my legs above the water so that I reclined as it were on the heads and arms of the waders. No enviable position—for the least slip on the slimy bottom, and we should all have had a bath in its Stygian waters.

Arrived at the north side of the lagoon we passed by the ✓ custom house or *Denun*, which is situated at the gates of every important town in the country. This one is known as *Ge-sin-nun*, *i.e.* salt-water-side mouth or gate. It is a dirty hovel of bamboos and mats thatched with grass, and surrounded with the débris of the meals of many a day past. A motley group of porters, fishermen, salt-gatherers, and idlers of both sexes were lying in every possible attitude of laziness, the women having, exposed for sale, pinches of salt, eatables, or firewood. All were talking and

passing remarks in what Captain Burton very happily terms "Billingsgate." Conspicuous among this wretched-looking throng by reason of his extra coating of dirt was the king's toll collector. The duties of this officer are to collect toll from boats passing along the lagoon, and upon goods on transit to the beach. He has also to examine the "passports" of all strangers leaving Whydah, to see if any more are leaving than are denoted by the permit, which generally consists of a stick with a notch on it for every person. It is carried by one man, and another bears a corresponding number of stones tied up in a rag. ✓

Although the lagoon swarms with alligators above and below the ferry, they appear to shun what would appear to be their best hunting-ground, for accidents are comparatively unfrequent. Across the narrow path beyond *Ge-sin-nun*, a kind of arch of bamboo was erected, from the centre of which an unfortunate cock was dangling, and shedding perfume on the breeze. This, with a bunch or two of feathers, is *fetiché* to detect the passing under of any evil person who may have a design against the Government. Beyond this hamlet, a low swampy district extends for about two miles, the road being kept clear of the grass and reeds which, taller than ourselves, shut in the view on either side. The oozy soil, a black alluvium, exhaled a foetid odour as it was stirred up by the feet of the men. Numerous black and white spotted kingfishers were poisoning themselves over the patches of water, occasionally dropping like stones on to some fish or batrachian, but not always with a successful issue, for I noticed one miss its aim three times in succession.

On an oasis in this swamp the half-way village of *Zumbogi* is situated, consisting of about a hundred huts, each with its protecting devil or saint, whichever be the more appropriate title. In the centre of the hamlet, in an open space, is a shed with a conical roof of thatch. Under this primitive shelter is a fetiché-god, made of red clay or *swish*, as it is called on the Gold Coast, fashioned into something like a squat human figure with a huge gaping mouth, having cowries stuck ✓

in for teeth, and necklaces of the Sayan, a shrub whose efficacy is marvellous,—if we are to believe the priests. A leaf or two strung round the neck will ensure the lucky wearer from execution, and if fixed to a gun will prevent its bursting. It is generally called by Europeans “Thunder bush,” as it is extensively used in the ceremonials attendant upon the worship of *Kherjosoh*, the thunder god. The image is a woman’s fetiche, and if she is childless, she smears it with palm oil and ground maize mingled with the blood of a fowl. A small quantity is placed in a little earthen saucer set before the image for the *akrasu*, or vulture, supposed to be the familiar of all the deities. This offering is a certain cure for barrenness; and I suppose the woman has twins the next day.

The head fetiche priest came out and saluted by snapping fingers with us three times, after which, he filiped his little fingers and thumbs together a like number of times. He was accompanied by his *kwe-ho-sonu*, or umbrella bearer. The possession of this article always denotes rank in Dahomey, and many are very splendid affairs, though the present one was a shabby structure of blue baft and white cotton, with plenty of holes about it, no doubt to assist the ventilation. This tent in miniature was brought out, and we were honoured with a seat on a wooden stool, much resembling those in vogue on the Gold Coast, but higher. His wives then brought water “to cool our hearts,” after which rum and liqueurs, of most villanous decoction, and palm wine, were handed about.

It is the custom for the host to taste of everything in the preseneo of his guest, before offering it to him, as a guarantee that there is no poison in the food. The guest, if a white man, is only expected to touch the liquid with his lips, after which he passes it to one of his servants, who, nothing loth, swills it off at a single gulp, always on bended knees. Right glad was I to avail myself of this custom, and may he be held up to everlasting infamy who decrees its abolition. The priest was suffering from a violent influenza, and had the vilest set of teeth I ever saw,

which, coupled with the fact of his chewing tobacco, rendered the flavour of his lips anything but a savoury addition.

After a tedious adieu, which consisted in my receiving a blessing from the priest and more snapping of fingers, I proceeded on my way. Scarcely was I out of the presence of this religious functionary than one of his servants came up and asked me if I would give his master a "dash." I peremptorily declined, resolving to commence to undermine this universal practice of levying black-mail upon every traveller, by a refusal from the beginning. Would that I had been able to carry out my purpose to the end!

Beyond Zumbogi there is another swamp similar to that already described, but the reeds are interspersed with clumps of bracken and fern that reminded me very forcibly of some I had seen growing in the parks in far-off England.

A mile of this unwholesome fever-breeding flat brings us to the end of the swamp, and we emerge on to a sandy tract, the sides of which are hedged in with bushes covered with many-hued flowers. After about a mile we enter the celebrated district of Gongi, and soon arrive at a dwarf ficus known to all traders as the "Captain's Tree," where the ceremony of "entering" a ship is performed.

Whydah, as seen from the Captain's Tree, is a picturesque town, the various factories peeping through the trees, some with red-tiled roofs, pleasantly relieving the sombre green of the cotton trees. The district around is under cultivation, the crops being chiefly yams and maize, each field being divided from its neighbours by a narrow footpath, not unfrequently edged with prickly pears, and none without its fetiche pot to ensure a prolific crop. Truly famine should be unknown in a land where every field is under the especial protection of a deity!

The promise of a pretty town, however, is by no means realised on a nearer approach. The road, twenty feet wide at the tree, gradually narrows and slopes towards the town. Soon travelling becomes difficult as the surface becomes worn into deep ruts by

the rains, and my carriers twist and turn in all directions to select the levellest spots. Close to the town the road is a mere ditch, the banks of which are strewn with maize stalks, rotten fruit, and filth of all descriptions; amidst which pigs, fowls, and children revel unmolested. This is the main entrance to Whydah, and leads to the *Ajudo-akhi-men* or Ajudo market. Here crowds of women were squatting on small square stools of bamboo, made by placing short pieces of the stalk alternately one over the other, and fastening the corners with a peg. These ladies were protected from the sun by a light thatch, much resembling an English stall, under which they displayed their various wares for sale.

All were shouting and vociferating at the top of their voices the praises of their goods, while scores of naked urchins kept running round us to look at the "new white man."

Opposite the market is the old Brazilian fort, now used as a dwelling-house by one of the De Souza family, while to the right is a kraal containing a herd of oxen belonging to that personage. On the left stands the whitewashed factory of Messrs. F. & A. Swanzy, within whose hospitable walls we were soon comfortably installed under the care of Mr. C. Courtenay, agent, *pro tem.*, for Mr. Lyall, then absent in England.

The view from the windows of the factory extends over the district of Gongi, rendered memorable in the history of Dahomey, for it was here that in Agajah's reign, so many battles were fought between the Dahomans and the old Whydahs. A few plantations of yams are visible, but for the most part nothing but a waving sea of grass is to be seen, among whose stems deadly malaria lurks, armed with fever and dysentery, ready to pounce on its victim. To the left a thicket of oil palms, in the distance, enshrouds the country seat of Antonio De Souza, while a similar clump shuts in the view on the right. The masts of the shipping rolling at anchor are visible above the trees round Zumbogi, of which nothing can be seen save a faint blue curl of smoke from the wood fires, while the hollow roar of the surf is ever present, as though singing a funeral dirge over the fallen glories of old Whydah.

After a bath, here not a luxury, but a necessity, if health is a consideration, dinner was served up, and we had scarcely concluded our repast ere a messenger arrived from Quinun, the king's agent, to say that he wished to see me. Mr. Courtenay and I went to his house, a few yards distant, and immediately adjoining Messrs. Swanzy's premises.

Opposite the gate was a shed, beneath which were clay models of an alligator, a leopard, a man and a bird, all objects of worship to Quinun, and no doubt contributing largely to his success. The man was daubed with red clay and blood, which was also abundantly sprinkled about the temple, and acted as an adhesive plaster to a quantity of feathers. This temple stood hard by a deep pit, formed by the excavation of the clay used to build the house, which lay exposed and unprotected by any railing. The edge was overgrown by treacherous shrubs, so that a stranger who came along in the dark might easily topple over. I subsequently discovered many such pitfalls, not only in Whydah, but also in every town in the country. Having passed this polytheistic Cerberus we were ushered into a courtyard, where, seated upon chairs under an earth-daubed verandah, we awaited the appearance of the Caboceer, who, being the agent of the king in all matters with white people, had amassed a considerable fortune, besides possessing almost regal sway in Whydah.

There were abundant evidences of the owner's mimicry of European customs. A candle in a stable lantern stood upon a rude table, and on the opposite side of the shed a sofa of native manufacture was placed. In each corner of the roof an Arabic charm was suspended—a sentence or two from the Koran, illuminated in blue and crimson upon goat-skin. Opposite us, in a corner, were several umbrellas, and above them an American clock—not going—truly a prophetic emblem of the utter insignificance of the value of time with the Dahoman. The walls were decorated with gaudy-coloured German prints, vile even for *them*—and last, but by no means least, was a yellow, sun-spoilt photograph of Quinun in his war paint. Presently a slave brought a

calabash from which he took decanters of claret, rum, and liqueurs which, together with tumblers, he placed on the table before us. Soon the Caboceer made his appearance, dressed in a loose robe of cotton, in pattern very similar to bedticking. He was a stout, muscular man, about forty years of age, with a round, bullet head, enormous mouth, small, bloodshot eyes, and no neck worth mentioning. His hair was shaved save a single tuft on the left side, and a few hairs formed an apology for a beard. His voice resembled the *shouting* of a man afflicted with asthma, being hoarse and husky in the extreme. He was by no means an unpleasant fellow, notwithstanding his somewhat rough exterior, and welcomed me in Portuguese with great cordiality. The introductory water was brought, and the usual salutation gone through, after which liquor was poured out with lavish extravagance by Quinum, who chinked our glasses and drank our healths in loud "vivas."

He enquired after the health of the Queen, the Emperor of the French, the King of Prussia, and other potentates, with all of whom he seemed to imagine I was on the most intimate terms. King William of Gaboon also made similar enquiries when I paid him a visit in 1870.

He talked on various subjects for nearly two hours, keeping our glasses constantly filled and supplying us with cigars, and concluded by saying that the King was very anxious for me to go to Abomey to talk over various matters which he could not do with a "trade" man. He said that I should be back again to Whydah in eight days. I demurred: for knowing the little value placed upon time by all savage nations, I was unwilling to put myself in the power of the King; since however interesting a stay at his capital might be, it would totally prevent the prosecution of natural history, for which purpose I had visited the country. He, however, assured me that I should have full permission to collect any objects I might wish, and that if I desired I should be back again in Whydah in eight days. How he fulfilled his promise will be seen hereafter.

After a loving-cup Quinun summoned a slave with a lantern, and accompanied Mr. Courtenay and myself part of the way home, that being a national method of showing the greatest respect to a guest.

As we entered the factory I was struck by the chirruping of the frogs in the swamp, which could be heard most distinctly at this distance. Round a tree within the yard numerous bats were wheeling a mazy circle, ever and again darting out upon some luckless moth, the wings of which were apparently rejected, as I saw them fluttering to the ground upon several occasions.

The streets are silent and deserted soon after nightfall, and those who do venture out are preceded by a slave carrying a lantern. The King's police exercise a peculiar mode of surveillance. They are always in pairs, and proceed at sundown to their respective posts, where they spread their mats and light a small fire. On passing them they start up with a suddenness enough to scare any one, and flash their torches in the faces of the intruders, who, if unknown, are subjected to examination.

They are all under the orders of an officer called the *Kah-woh*, ✓ who is a caboceer, and visits his myrmidons at uncertain hours, and woe to the unlucky wight who is caught napping! He is at once bound and chastised on the spot by the patrol, who use their sticks upon the back of their unfortunate brother without mercy. Who knows how soon he may be the recipient of the same bounty! These policemen are, as a rule, stationed in every principal street, and are supported, like most of the officers of state in the country, by their wives and slaves, who are presented to them by the King.

We passed a quiet night, undisturbed by mosquitoes, and were aroused at daybreak by a hubbub beneath the windows of the factory. On looking out to ascertain the origin of the disturbance we found a company of soldiers assembled, who were making preparations for a journey to Abomey. They were amusing themselves by dancing, singing, talking, and catching their comrades' *acari*. Each carried a miniature stool depending from his haver-

sack, and at every opportunity it was placed on the ground, and the owner squatted upon it. It appeared that certain of them had been guilty of some misdemeanour, for several were bound hand and foot, and placed in rows before a small shed, under which some of the chiefs were seated. They strongly reminded me of trussed fowls in a poulterer's shop. As each man's turn came on he was placed before the judge in a prostrate attitude, his head being bowed to the dust. The *pros* and *cons* of the case were entered into by all the bystanders, and as sentence was passed upon each a hand-clapping of applause went through the audience. Presently a man came along bearing a bundle of peeled rods, a few of which he placed near each of the condemned men. When all were tried, a number of athletic fellows were selected, and the prisoners were *trussed* by having their wrists tied together and placed over their knees, beneath which a short stick was passed. Thus fixed they were helpless, with the skin of the back stretched to the utmost, truly a very admirable position for the reception of the corrective. A man with a rod in his hand then stationed himself on either side of each culprit. Blows were then administered alternately by each, the poor wretch yelling out at each stroke. After a few strokes the flesh assumed a gray colour, and presently the blood was drawn. Still the punishment continued until the backs of the wretches were like pieces of raw beef, the blood trickling down to the ground. On the completion of the sentence, which was not a certain number of strokes, but a certain number of rods to be broken over each man's back, the wretched being was turned on his back, and in that lacerated condition dragged along the sand. The yells were fearful, and many fainted under the cruel ordeal. I afterwards found that these men had been guilty of stealing some of the King's palm oil.

As the ceremony of "entering" our vessel was to be performed this morning, I availed myself of the circumstance to witness it. It is necessary that one of the firm to whom the ship is consigned be present, but as custom permits the appointment of any respectable individual to that office *pro tem.*, the Rev. P. W. Bernasko,

a native Wesleyan missionary, was delegated to represent us on the auspicious occasion. Notice of the arrival of the vessel had been given to the Avogan, or governor of the town, immediately her anchor was dropped, and our detention on board had absorbed the four or five days' delay which, according to etiquette, must intervene between the notice and the ceremony, the value of time being totally ignored. About ten o'clock in the morning the Reverend made his appearance—a short, stumpy, grey-headed, old man: of whom more hereafter. After a glass of brandy, swallowed with the gusto of a connoisseur, he proceeded to the rendezvous, and Captain Williams and I followed. A table covered with a glaring Bandana stood in the shadow of the tree, and upon it were several bottles of rum, gin, and liqueurs, the "heart-cooling" water being also conspicuous. A crowd had already collected, amongst which the itinerant vendors of eatables were driving a brisk trade, while numerous urchins flocked round us and criticised our every motion; and one anxious to display his civilization made a charity-school bow, and concluded with "maunin, sah,"—his whole stock of English. Presently the noise of drums and horns was heard approaching, and soon a company of soldiers came into view. They were dressed in short tunics of striped cotton, with wide arm-holes like waistcoats, fitting loosely to the neck, and confined round the middle by a cartridge-belt of black goat-skin, with ornaments of cowries, beads, &c., upon it. All wore short drawers reaching to the knees, the lower parts being formed of gaudy-coloured material. No soldier, male or female, is allowed to appear in uniform without these *janghirs*, the royal family alone excepted. One regiment, however, as will be hereafter mentioned, wear long white cotton drawers, *one leg* of which is cut off half-way down the thigh. Shoes or hats there were none, but all carried a haversack containing bullets, flints, gun rags, and other necessaries, and from the side of this bag hung the private fetiche charms of the owner. All wore beads round their necks, some being content with two or three only, while others had a full necklace.

The arms were Tower flint muskets, which were brandished about like clubs as the soldiers danced along the road, performing every gymnastic exercise that could be imagined. Some would catch hold of their gun by the butt and muzzle and leap over it, bringing the weapon up behind the back, after which they would extend the gun vertically and pirouette on one foot. Others would throw their weapon several feet into the air, but woe to the unlucky soldier who fails to catch it in its descent! Fine and imprisonment are his portion. The standard of the company was borne by a young fellow who rushed about with it as if demented, waving it in our faces and extolling its beauty. It was a square of white calico, with a rude device representing a blue soldier firing a red musket.

The band followed, the instruments being horns, drums, gong-gongs, and rattles. The horns on this occasion were young bullocks' horns, more rarely small serivellos or young elephants' tusks, with a hole near the small end, and "played" by means of the left hand, which opens or closes the mouth more or less. I never saw the two-noted bugle, as mentioned by Burton. The music was something like the singing of a young tenor-voiced jackass. Other horns will be mentioned on the occasions on which they were first seen. The drums were of several kinds. Some were mere hollowed tree trunks, shaped something like an Enfield cartridge, the wide end being covered with a goat-skin kept stretched by means of leather thongs. This drum is carried on the head of a man who walks in front of the musician, who operates on the goat-skin by means of crooked sticks. When not carried, the drum is placed between two crossed sticks, the lower end resting on the ground while the performer sits astride of his instrument. Another drum, much smaller than the former, is shaped something like an egg-glass, being formed of two calabashes fixed back to back. The goat-skin head is fastened by thongs from the open end, and the instrument is carried under the left arm, which, by compressing or relaxing the thongs, causes the drum to give out various notes. This is

also played with a crooked stick. Both these drums are sometimes played with a stick and the hand, and at other times by the hand alone. The notes are very flat and unmusical.

The gong-gong, or *panigan*, consists of two gauntlet-shaped bells of different sizes, the one being soldered to the other at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, and the whole fixed to a wooden or iron handle, often carved into the resemblance of a man's fist. They are played by an iron rod about a foot long. There are also single and multiple gong-gongs, each having a particular part assigned to it, but they all give out a flat, dead sound, not unlike the harmony that might be produced in a kitchen if the scullery-maids were to commence playing on the saucepan handles with the pokers. The notes are generally pitched to an interval of a fifth, and the instrument is played in various ways, according to circumstances. If a *panigan-hun-to*, or gong-gong herald, is proclaiming an edict of the king, he commences with ting-ting-ting-ting—ting, tang—ting, tang, the tones being like those of a church clock striking the quarters. When playing a tune, the lower and higher notes are usually struck alternately, but sometimes a kind of tune is played—not on a single instrument, but by the performers on each gong-gong striking the note of his instrument when required by the tune, in the same manner as is done by our bell-ringers. The gong-gong heralds play a conspicuous part in the court of Dahomey.

The rattles are decauter-shaped gourds, containing stones or cowries, covered with a netting, having one of the vertebræ of a python or other large snake attached to each knot. The gourd is held in the left hand, neck downwards, and shaken in time to the tune; while, alternately with the shakings, the right hand taps the neck with a small wooden battledore. Occasionally two rattles are played by the same performer, but these are only used in what may be termed the choruses, and are then held bottle downwards. Burton is mistaken with regard to the singers, for vocal and instrumental music are always separated in

Dahomey, unless the single player on the gong-gong who gives the time can be considered to be an accompanist.

After this digression we will get back to the ceremony. Behind the band came the caboceer, or captain, of the company, the rule being "juniors first." This officer was dressed similarly to the men, but in addition had a short dagger with a silver hilt, suspended from his left shoulder, and a Scotch glengarry of green cloth, with some device embroidered upon it. Round his neck he wore several strings of beads, from which several yards of plaited white cotton, something like twine, hung down his back, the emblem of rank as an officer. He danced and whirled round like his company, and after snapping fingers and saying "maumin" to the Reverend, squatted down on his hams to the right, with his company around him. His umbrella, a tawdry affair of white calico with red heads and blue swords on each alternate lappet, was held over his head, the stick resting on the ground.

Several other companies with their bands followed, each distinguished by its particular flag, and something peculiar in the regimental dress. The celebrated English, or blue, company were known by caps of white cotton, with a blue dragon on one side; and another corps had white caps, with blue or red trefoils sewn on. Some of the civilians belonging to the troops carried axes, made more for show than use. These were iron blades a few inches long, oblong in shape, and stuck into a handle, but instead of projecting at right angles they formed an acute angle with the shaft, something like a hoe. Some were content with sticks, with knobs or branches projecting at the required angle, many being ornamented with iron rings or nails stuck into the head in a spiral or other fanciful pattern. Others carried swords like billhooks, with blades terminating in circles, and ornamented with indented figures; and all—swords, sticks, and guns—were scrupulously clean and bright.

The company of *Chuydatoh*, the second in command, formed by far the most picturesque group. They were armed with bows

made of pliant wood, and curved suddenly towards the top, where they were strengthened by iron rings. The arrows were contained in black leather quivers slung over the shoulder.

The "*place*" of the Avogan, who is very old, was taken by one of his dependants, and his company closed the procession itself, although more than a hundred of the rabble followed and executed various dances on their own account.

When all had arrived, each danced three times round the open space before the tree, from right to left, and then halting before his Reverence, commenced their salute. Their guns, sticks, billhooks, and daggers were raised to a level with their shoulders, and then each cried out, "*Wul-leh! wul-leh! wul-leh! oo-o-eh!*" raising their guns to the full extent of their arms, with a yell impossible to describe. Then lowering them to the ground with a grunt, they completed the Dahoman military salute.

The water being tasted, the Avogan, through the medium of his deputy, prepared to drink the king's health. The grog was poured out, part spilt on the ground, and the toasters standing up, while everybody else was down on their marrow-bones, smothering themselves with dust, the fiery fluid was swallowed, and the glass turned bottom up, to show there were no heel-taps, which would be a gross insult to his Majesty. During this ceremony guns were fired and the praises of the King shouted out. The health of the Captain was then proposed, followed by that of the head of the firm, after which all the caboccers were toasted in turn, each sipping the liquid and then pouring it down the throat of one of his kneeling soldiers, who meekly rubbed his skull in the dirt. This ended, another procession was formed, juniors first being again the order, and, last of all, the representative of the house in a hammock carried by two men. This troupe perambulated the town to the music of the various bands, admired by the populace, and upon arrival at the fort of the nation to which the vessel belonged (in our case the English fort), the usual three marches round were performed, and the head men were regaled with more rum and liqueurs within the fort,

the caboccers being by no means so abstemious in private as in public. Samples of the goods on board the vessel were then given to the Avogan, who despatched a messenger to Abomey with the "stick" of the firm wrapped in white cloth to acquaint his Majesty of the arrival of the ship. Each firm, and each person of importance, has a stick carved into some fanciful device, which, when delivered by a messenger, acts in lieu of a visiting card, and as a guarantee of the genuineness of the message. The customs dues were then set aside for the king, but they did not depend upon the tonnage of the vessel or amount of goods landed, but upon *the number of masts* to the vessel. A three-masted lugger would therefore pay heavier dues than a brig of 300 tons.

More dances, gun firing, and snapping fingers brought the ceremony to a conclusion, which, with very little difference, has been the same, and performed under the same tree, ever since the Dahomans had intercourse with Europeans.

CHAPTER II.

AN EXCURSION NEAR WHYDAH.

Visit to Quinun's plantation—Dahoman hammocks and hammock travelling—Vultures—Procession—Pipes—Dahoman equestrians—Zomaihiemen—Cowrie currency—The French fort—Belgravia—French mission—Legend of Foli's bombax—A swearing-place—Quinun's farm—The miraculous berry—Manufacture of palm-oil—John Beecham, alias Prince Bah—Pleasant quarters.

IN the morning I was requested by Quinun to accompany him to his plantation to witness the trial of some new mortars he had received for the king. As my natural history apparatus had not yet arrived, and collecting was out of the question, I determined to go, as the journey would give me an insight into part of the surrounding country, with regard to the zoological specimens it might produce. About seven o'clock in the morning a hammock arrived for my use. This is the usual mode of conveyance throughout the coast. In the present case it consisted of strips of various coloured native cloth, sewn into an oblong-shaped hammock, the threads at the sides being knotted into a fringe, while those at the ends formed the clews. The clews were looped over pegs fixed about three feet from the extremities of a fourteen-foot bamboo stalk (*Raphia vinifera*). In Dahomey, the hammock is carried by a man at each end, who protects his head with a roll of cloth, plaited grass, or other soft material. Considerable practice is required to enable a hammock-man to become an expert in his art. Only the bull-necked ever attain anything like proficiency, but good men will travel at the rate of four miles per hour, and will perform a journey of thirty miles per diem.

Four men are appointed to each hammock, two carrying it at a time, while the others walk alongside, relieving the bearers at short intervals by grasping the clews at either end and putting them on their shoulders, while the pole men hold the bamboo stalk above their head at arm's length. Each pair of pole-men change places at intervals of about a quarter of an hour. On the top of the pole an awning is spread, generally of gaily-coloured cloth, and the occupant is fully employed in preventing the tall grass and twigs that stretch across the narrow paths outside the towns, from either tearing the awning or giving him stinging switches across the face.

On the Gold Coast the hammock has short transverse boards fixed across the pole near the ends, and four men support the ends of these on their heads. The mode of travelling is very tedious, especially with bad hammock-men, as the jolting, although highly conducive to promote the intermingling of the viands in the stomach, is at the same time very suggestive of sea-sickness. Occasionally the pole will slip off the head of one of the carriers, letting the unfortunate passenger come into violent collision with the ground, which generally results in a reminder that he possesses a small of the back and an occiput, besides causing him to give vent to some very strong adjectives and wishes that the bearers might be summarily consigned to a warmer and a deeper clime.

If any caboccer is allowed to fall, severe punishment is inflicted upon the delinquent; while if the king were permitted to touch the earth with his sacred person, a few heads at least would be struck off.

Embarking in this "bumping car," we started for the caboccer's plantation, tilting the awning on the sunny side "*à la mode.*" Arrived at Quinun's house claret was served out, and after a few minutes' delay we went on to the rendezvous of the procession, without which no great man can stir abroad.

Our way led through narrow streets, the stench of which was unbearable even at that early hour, owing to the rubbish from each

house being thrown into the middle of the road, or rather alley ; while a slimy green liquid oozing from a kind of gutter from the walls of the various houses caused the atmosphere to become redolent of anything but perfume. Scarcely any of the paths were level, being worn into ruts by the rain, while on the heaps of garbage decomposing in the sun, numerous turkey buzzards were regaling themselves. These birds are held sacred by the natives, and are so fat and lazy as barely to get out of the way to allow any one to pass. There appears to be more than one species ; one, called *Akrasu* by the natives, is the *Percnopter niger* of naturalists ; while another, the *Akhaon* of the Whydahs, is probably *Vultur auricularis*. Any injury done to these birds by a native is visited with punishment upon the offender, besides bringing down the sure and certain vengeance of the god *Legba*, to whom the bird is sacred. Although held in such reverence by the people, I have shot them frequently, even in the towns, and was never remonstrated with for so doing.

As we jogged along the hammock-men kept up a monotonous chant, extemporised for the occasion, and doubtless many of the jokes they indulged in were at our expense. Happy is the man who does not "savvey their mouth" upon such occasions. Every acquaintance they met was greeted with "*oko dhu*," while we ourselves were often saluted with a "*maunin, sah*," given in true S'a Leone twang. When we arrived at Quinun's stores, we found about a hundred of his servants assembled, ready to conduct their master to his plantation. After snapping fingers and "watering" with Quinun, we formed into a procession, the post of honour in the rear being given to myself. First, a band of drummers, horn-blowers, and gong-gong men, each playing a tune on his own account, enlivened the road with martial music. Then followed a magistrate, bearing a crooked stick as an emblem of his authority. He was followed by a boy slave carrying his tobacco-pouch and pipe, another of the many insignia of his rank. These pipes (*azoquah*) are always of native manufacture, made by the Amazons, who formerly enjoyed the monopoly. The bowl is of

clay, generally of a reddish yellow, but sometimes black, owing to the presence of manganese. In shape it often resembles the ordinary clay pipe of civilisation, but sometimes it is carved into the form of a bird, fish, canoe, or man. The tube is formed of a saltwood stick, about eighteen inches long, peeled white, and rudely carved, and often stained blue-black with indigo. When not in use the pipe is placed in a case of wood, something like two golf-sticks placed side by side, with a sliding lid. The tobacco-pouch is made of tanned goat-skin, dyed in various colours, and large enough to pass muster for a carpet-bag. It is divided into several pockets for tobacco, "*azoh*," of which there is rarely more than an ounce, if any; and tinder, "*dekyeh*," made of finely scraped decaying palm-tree wood, which burns with a smell like musty linen, and a few gun-flints. The steel, of native manufacture, is an oblong piece of iron, hardened by being plunged red-hot into cold water, and attached to the pouch by a long leathern thong, which secures the bag when it is wrapped round the pipe-case. If a pipe-light is required, a pinch of dekyeh is held beneath the flint by the thumb and finger of the left hand, and the steel is struck against it by the right, to the danger of the knuckles of the inexperienced tyro. When a spark is obtained, the smouldering tinder is thrust into the pipe bowl above the tobacco, which, by-the-by, is generally American leaf. Thousands of short clays are annually sold by the merchants, as both sexes smoke, the old women seeming to prefer a filthy black bowl with a stem about an inch long, so that the smoke is inhaled by the nostrils as well as the mouth.

After the knight of the pipe, a company of soldiers straggled along, dancing, shouting, and throwing their guns into the air. Next followed Quinun, who was dressed in a striped calico tunic, confined to the waist by a blue and white cricket belt. He wore about a dozen necklaces of various kinds of beads, including the coral string, worn only by the nobles. Round his forearm he had several silver and iron armlets, and carried a scimitar-shaped sword. His head was decorated with a broad-brimmed felt hat,

much too large for him, with a long streamer of scarlet ribbon flying from it. He was mounted sideways on a brown horse, covered with a leather saddle-cloth stuffed with dried grass. The horse was led by a halter of grass rope, Dahoman etiquette not permitting a pace quicker than a walk. Few ride cross-legged, and all are supported on the off-side by an attendant, the rider generally hugging him round the neck, while the groom clasps his master round the waist—truly, a dignified arrangement. Saddles and bridles are unknown, and there are always sufficient attendants about the rider to carry him, horse and all. Beside the caboocer, his umbrella-bearer carried a tawdry affair formed of pink cotton, about the size of the top of a loo-table.

After Quinun, a band, playing quite as well as the one in front, preceded my hammock, and the usual tag-rag and bob-tail brought up the rear.

Our way lay through a small market on the north-west side of the town, called *Zo-mai-hie-men*, which means “market without fire.” This name was given it by the “Chacha,” one of the principal chiefs, of whom more anon, who kept a store of gunpowder in a swish building in the neighbourhood, and would not, in consequence, allow any grass to be burnt, or any fires to be lighted within a given radius. This is only a small accessory of the *Zóbeme*, the principal market, and is established for the convenience of the residents in the north-west of the town. On the south side of the road, the long swish wall surrounding one of the houses of the Chacha is utilised as a screen from wind and sun. Here groups of vendors, chiefly women, squabble in full chorus. The stock in trade of each person is but small, and in this market there are no booths, but each seller squats on a diminutive stool behind her collection. The principal wares are raw or cooked provisions, generally displayed in calabashes; beads, a few pieces of the commonest cotton cloth, water, and firewood. Most of the business is transacted between three and four in the afternoon, when swarms of the female dependants of all classes meet to haggle over their bargains and cheat each other—if they can.

Sufficient food for a native's meal can be procured ready cooked for about three pence. The value of money, however, has suffered considerable diminution during the last twenty years. The medium of exchange among the natives is the cowrie (*Cypræa*) which is imported into the country by the European merchants from Zanzibar. These are strung on twisted grass stems in strings, and fifty strings make one "head." At the present time fifty cowries make a string in Whydah, only forty-six in Alladah and Abomey, while the cowries given by the king, which are strung by the Amazons, average only about forty to a string. Four heads of cowries are equal to a dollar (4s. 6d.) in Whydah, and three heads in the interior. At Whydah, therefore, a head is worth 1s. 1½d., and a string about a farthing; but in every shop there are to be seen plenty of *two-cowrie* lots, over which the shopkeeper and customer will have as wordy an argument, and consume as much tobacco, as over any of the more expensive one-head articles. Not that the vendors seem at all anxious to dispose of their goods, for they all appear apathetic and placid as they sit hour after hour, looking very much as the descendants of the witches in Macbeth might be supposed to do if trying their hands at commercial pursuits. Notwithstanding the noisy excitement among the buyers, the price of the articles is seldom abated a single cowrie; but, on the other hand, if "white face" wishes to purchase any article, two or three hundred per cent. is immediately elapped on.

To the north of this market is the French fort, now transformed into the factory of M. Regis, of Marseilles, and by all means the best looking and most comfortable building in the town,—which is nothing more than what is to be expected under such masters. The old fort was destroyed in 1728, during the revolt of the Whydahs under Fosu, in Agajah's reign. They were protected by the Governor, M. Williams, whose treachery afterwards caused his death.

The site of the fort was formerly called *Pelloo*. It is not advantageously chosen, as there is more malaria about this

district than anywhere else in the town; besides which, it is screened from the sea breeze by reason of its low situation, and is, in consequence, very much hotter than the other forts.

It is rather an extensive establishment, the swish wall, about fourteen feet high and four feet thick, with bastions at the angles, enclosing a space of about *ten acres*. The bastion on the town side—*i.e.*, to the north-east—is fortified with a few guns, most of which are fixtures in the swish and honeycombed to perfection. The wall is protected by a ditch some twenty feet wide and twelve feet deep, but it is choked with weeds and brushwood,—that appearing, indeed, to be the rule in the town. The old draw-bridge is disabled, and the ditch filled up to effect an entrance to the fort. Over the gateway is a marble tablet, informing whom it may concern that the fort was restored by M. Regis in 1842. In the south-west bastion is a tall flagstaff, from which the tricolor floats on Sundays, and by means of which telegraphic communication is kept up with any French vessel that may be lying in the roads. The main building faces the sea, and has a fine terrace in front, constructed over the oil-sheds. It is roofed with red tiles, a wise precaution against the frequent fires, and forms a conspicuous and picturesque object on entering the town from the westward. Behind the fort is the district known as the *Avanjigo*, or French Town, inhabited by the descendants of the French slaves and mulattoes, who now number about 600 souls, and enjoy a very unenviable reputation for dishonesty and treachery.

Leaving the French fort on the right hand, we come to the district of *Zo mai hiemen kpota*,—*i.e.*, “fire come not to market-hill.” This is a kind of Belgravia to Whydah, for here many of the rich Brazilian and Portuguese merchants have built country residences. Zomai House, the residence of Sr. Antonio De Souza, nephew of the Chacha, is built after the European style, but strangely mingled with Dahoman architecture. Beyond is the unfinished mansion of Sr. F. J. Medeiros, truly a handsome building, with a lofty colonnade, all built of swish and plaster.

It has a fine garden, as yet in embryo, and is surrounded with a dry ditch. As we passed by we saw several of the workmen, all slaves, some heavily ironed, sleepily moving about in a listless manner, which, together with their fine condition, proclaimed that service under their master was by no means a hard one.

Nearly opposite is the establishment of the French Mission, the gable end of the building being ornamented by a black cross. There are only two priests, and they are at present in very bad odour, owing to a report that one of the scholars had died through the effect of chastisement inflicted upon him by one of the fathers. A few scholars are instructed, but as they please themselves whether they attend or stay away from school, the progress in education is anything but encouraging.

Near the country seat of M. Medeiros are two huge Bombax trees, which are shown to the stranger as monuments of the eternal invincibility of the Dahoman kingdom. The tallest of the two has the following legend attached to it.

The old Whydahs, after being expelled from their country by Agajah, made several attempts to regain their homes, as their priests taught them that their kings, to be successful in any undertaking, must be crowned at Savi, the old capital of the Whydahs, about six miles to the N.N.E. of Whydah. One of the bravest of the Dahoman generals, the brother-in-law to the king, was Shampo. Tegbwesun, Agajah's successor, became jealous of his fame, and determined to get rid of him. Shampo's sister, who was one of the Amazonian chieftains, becoming cognizant of the king's intention, gave warning to her brother, who acting upon the suggestion, fled to Popo, where the Whydahs were encamped, and offered to command their army. His proposal was immediately accepted, and the Whydahs made several brave attempts to regain their territory under his command.

In 1763 the Whydahs again attacked the Dahomans, under the command of Foli (the "Affurey" of Dalziel's History), who was the son of Shampo, then considerably advanced in years.

At first the Whydahs were successful, and repulsed the Daho-

mans, under their Avogan, or viceroy, with considerable loss. Baddely, the second in command, a brave officer, attempted to rally the troops, but was at length compelled to fall back upon the shelter of the guns of the French fort. The Governor, being alarmed for his own safety, instead of supporting the Dahomans, fired blank cartridges only against the Whydahs, who had already burnt part of the precincts. The object of so doing was to curry favour with the Whydahs in case they were victorious. The Whydahs succeeded in effecting an entrance into the town, and compelled the Dahomans to fly to the bush to the S.E. There is a report that as the Whydahs were passing the English fort one of the soldiers observed through an open window the Governor's mistress, a mulattress who was very fair. Upon this he discharged his musket at her, killing her on the spot. The Governor, M. Goodson, who had hitherto kept strictly neutral, immediately levelled the guns of the fort upon the invaders, and the Portuguese seeing the firing followed suit, fearing some treachery. Meanwhile the sub-viceroy had rallied the troops and attacked the Whydahs during the confusion with such success, that two out of thirty-two officers alone escaped. Foli, utterly undone with the unexpected disaster, blew out his brains under one of these trees, which in memory of the event is still called *Foli-hun*—i.e., Foli's tree; and one of the market days, when the principal market is held in *Zo-mai*, is called *Foli-hun-glo*.

Tegbwesun was overwhelming in his thanks to the Governor, to whose timely aid he attributed the discomfiture of his enemies, and he is still called the king's friend, and styled *Ajanjan*.

The immediate neighbourhood of Whydah is an undulating plain, covered with long grass, which is burnt before the rains in February. But little of the ground in the vicinity of Whydah is cultivated, the market being principally supplied from Savi.

A march of about twenty minutes brought us to the *Adan-gbno-ten*, a place where the caboceers, when leaving the town, take the oath of allegiance to the king, and swear that the errand

they are upon is not injurious to the sovereign. This is merely a *joji*, or gallows, with a fetiche of some kind or other hung from the cross-pole, as on the north side of the lagoon. Behind the *joji* is a rude hovel, with a conical roof, beneath which is a huge squat image. These *adan-gbno-ten* are placed on every road leading from the principal towns, and no officer is permitted to pass by without taking the oath.

The ceremony is by no means impressive. When the advanced guard had arrived at the *joji* they commenced a dismal chant, and on the *caboeer* coming up he dismounted, and throwing himself on his knees, bent his head to the earth, so that a patch of the red soil adhered to his forehead, after which he took up a little of the earth in his fingers and threw it on his head; and, lastly, performed a kind of washing of the arms and neck with the sandy soil. Another prostration and a yelling out of *Borl, ah borl, borl!* which is a form of prayer for the king, and we again started.

During this time I had been on the look-out to discover the guns, as I had been told that they would be carried in the procession. At length I saw an unfortunate who carried a parcel swathed in matting, and resembling in shape a gigantic tip-cat. As he staggered from side to side under the weight of his bundle, I concluded that he was the bearer of one of the guns, which was disguised by matting, so as to deceive any inquisitive stranger as to the contents of the parcel. As the gun weighed at least 150 lbs. I by no means envied the carrier. This fact of the guns being shrouded from the gaze of the vulgar was the first example of the national secrecy in connection with the king's business; for although the guns were taken to Abomey by my own escort, the bearers themselves did not know what was the nature of the weighty burden they carried.

We soon after arrived at Quinun's oil plantation, where the bulk of the escort was to remain. The *caboeer* has here built a small house, at which he delights to entertain the Europeans of Whydah at a picnic. The house is surrounded by groves of the

palm-oil tree (*Eleis Guineensis*), the trunks of which are often decorated with tufts of a lovely fern with fronds eight feet long drooping gracefully to the earth, their vivid emerald green contrasting refreshingly with the sombre brown of the tree-trunks upon which they exist. Numerous convolvulaceous plants entwined their arms around and above the tree tops, occasionally giving a dead trunk the appearance of being clothed with luxuriant foliage, while their showy pink and pale brown striped yellow flowers formed a gay accompaniment to their dark green leaves.

Here, too, were numerous bushes of the *Sisnah*, the *Sambala* of the Gold Coast, where it is known to Europeans as the "miraculous berry." It is something like a currant-bush, with a reddish yellow fruit enclosing a large black stone. Its effects are *said* to be marvellous. If vinegar be given to a man who has tasted some of the berries, he will, according to native report, drink it like water and not perceive the difference; while a few taken early in the morning will impart a peculiar flavour to all the food eaten during the remainder of the day. Although its effects are considerably exaggerated, it will impart a nauseous sweetness to water, the effect of which remains for a considerable time upon the palate.

Around the house were scattered a number of huts, the dwellings of the nut-gatherers, who manufacture the palm-oil on the premises. The process of obtaining the oil is as follows. When the nuts are ripe they are about the size of a walnut, of an orange colour, and full of oil. They are gathered and thrown into troughs made by marking off a small area, generally about six feet square, beating the earth smooth with wooden mattocks, and raising a wall of swish about eighteen inches high round the floor thus prepared. When the pit is about one-third full the kernels are extracted from the husk, and a workman, or workwoman, getting into it, slaps the husks with her huge flat feet, as though practising a nigger break-down. This process is continued until the oil and husks are mingled and smashed into

a kind of pudding, when the mass is put into vessels containing water and a fire lighted beneath. The oil separating from the husks rises to the top, and is skimmed off into earthen chatties containing about five gallons. The husk is used for tinder and manure, and not unfrequently is twisted up to form lamp wicks. The oil thus obtained is sometimes again clarified and used for cooking purposes: but the bulk is sold to Europeans and is used in the manufacture of soap, candles, railway grease, and "Dutch butter at one shilling per lb."

We were here joined by the interpreter living at the English fort, John Beecham, who earns a precarious livelihood by interpreting for the English. This fellow is a curiosity in his way. Short, stout, with a head like a Dutch cheese, and no neck to speak of, his shoulders appear on a level with his ears, a very common characteristic of the Dahomans, and indeed of all negro races. He was dressed in the European fashion and wore shoes, here one of the principal distinctions of a "white" man; for by law any person, though black as ebony, who wears shoes is held to be a "white" man. He speaks tolerably good English, having been educated by the Wesleyan missionaries at Cape Coast Castle. He was taken in early youth from the Mahi, or Makhi, a small tribe to the north, and with five others "dashed" to the Wesleyans at Cape Coast to be educated, on the condition that one at least should be returned to Whydah to act as interpreter to the King.

On arriving at the mission he gave out that he was a "Prince Bah," a very common stratagem of negro slaves, but his want of blue blood was soon detected. On his return to Abomey with two Mahi girls, the sole survivors of the "dash," he attempted to elope with the latter and set up for himself on the Gold Coast. He was, however, detected in his scheme, and consigned to the tender mercies of the *Meu*, who alone has charge of "white" criminals. He was imprisoned for some days, and, according to his own account, underwent the greatest agony. He was fed on dry beans and stale cankie (a mess of boiled maize), and forced to sleep on the bare earth, where he suffered excruciating torture

from the Iwe worm, a parasitic grub that infests mud floors and insinuates itself beneath the skin of persons lying exposed to its attacks. This incarceration, combined with a natural timidity, has rendered him a most chicken-hearted fellow, whom subsequent experience proved to be the most arrant coward to be met with in the country. If requested to do anything his fears represented to be anyway connected with danger, however remote, he would turn green with fright, and invent some paltry excuse for not complying. Burton accuses him of fortifying himself with Dutch courage; but ten months' acquaintance with him proved that he seldom, if ever, touched any liquors. Let future travellers beware of John Beecham if they require any special service. He was continually giving me the benefit of his religious instruction, and would lie on his mat and read his Bible aloud for hours, and shutting it up would *lie* for hours longer, if his vivid fancy raised any ghost of danger to his princely person.

We then proceeded about a mile beyond the plantation, where a shed had been erected to prove the efficacy of the guns. After firing them a few times, in which the ball flew wide of the mark or passed through the wattling of the shed without leaving any trace, the caboceer declared himself satisfied, and we returned to the plantation. Here we were regaled with tea served up in showy cups and saucers, and a kind of twist bread made by Quinun's head cook, who had been instructed in the art by one of the servants at the French fort. During the refreshment we were entertained by a dance, after which we returned to Whydah by the same road as we took on our way to the plantation. The afternoon was spent in doing the lions of Whydah, to which a future chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER III.

THE WHYDAH LIONS.

Boundaries of Dahomey—Its physical geography—Climate—Tornadoes—Mosquitoes—Harmattan—“The smokes”—The “Doctor”—Heavy surf—Quittah fetichism—Geology of Dahomey—Pluvial epoch—Population—Disparity of the sexes—Gre-whé and early history of Whydah—Its divisions—English fort—Gothic house—Wesleyan mission—Bats—The Avogan’s palace—Fearful punishment—The snake temple—“Fire and water”—A wandering deity—Whydah market—Heterogeneous collection—Portuguese fort—Mistaken ideas of missionaries with respect to savage races—Brazilian fort—The De Souza family—The Chacha—Immortality—Sr. Medeiros—The future of Whydah.

It may, perhaps, be not out of place here to give a short account of the physical geography of Dahomey, as by that means a clearer understanding of the general character of the country will be obtained than by separate descriptions of individual places.

The Kingdom of Dahomey is generally understood to include the country between the River Volta in Long. $0^{\circ} 56''$ East, on the West, and Badagary in Long. $2^{\circ} 53''$ East, on the East, and to extend northwards to the Kong Mountains, in about 8 deg. North Latitude. It therefore has, according to this estimate, an area of about 15,000 square miles. The actual coast line, however, extends only from Mount Pulloy, a few miles to the west of Whydah, to Godomé, about ten miles to the eastward of that port. The boundaries are very vague, and the jurisdiction of the King is but nominal anywhere except in the district immediately surrounding the capital, so that the extent of country over which the King possesses actual authority may be roughly estimated at 4,000 square miles.

The climate is in general healthy, and, near the coast, not too hot, the average temperature being about 80 deg. F., while on the Gambia it is about 100 deg. F. This is owing to the exposure of the Bights to the cooling influence of the sea breeze. The season may be divided into four quarters—viz., the *summer*, the *rains*, the *autumn*, and the *harmattan*. The summer generally commences in March, when the heat is greater than at any other season, the maximum being attained about two o'clock in the afternoon. This is the season for dysentery and the unpleasant sensation known as prickly heat. The prevailing winds in March in the morning are easterly, and during the day south-westerly, while in April westerly and south-westerly winds blow throughout the day and night. The heat at night is intense, the perspiration reeking from every pore; the thermometer being often up to 96 deg. F.

In May the first rains commence, the season always being marked out by violent storms known as *tornadoes*, a corruption of the Portuguese *travado*, a thunderstorm. At this season the atmosphere contains a maximum of ozone. The occurrence of a tornado is always heralded by certain premonitory symptoms. The weather immediately preceding is generally very hot; but as the storm brews a cold wind springs up, bringing with it a peculiar hazy appearance of the atmosphere. Soon a solitary white cloud is observed high up in the heavens, which gradually extends in an easterly direction, and at the same time assumes the form of an arch stretching over a fourth part of the horizon and shrouding it in a gloom like a funeral pall. The breeze has by this time given way to an unearthly calm, while all nature seems hushed in anticipation of some impending catastrophe. The silence is oppressive; not a leaf moves, and the insect world itself is awed into perfect stillness. Even the clamour of the market-women is subdued with the continued sensation of apprehension and reverence for the strife of the elements.

Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning rends the sky, followed by a stupendous crash as if the heavens were destroyed. A rushing

sound succeeds, and in a moment the fierce breath of the tornado is upon us, sweeping everything before it, unroofing houses, tearing up trees, and whirling slates and tiles from the roofs of the more substantially-erected houses. Oftentimes the flimsy structures of bamboo erected in the bush are carried away entire, and the whole atmosphere becomes filled with ruin. Huge rain drops follow, which, after pausing for a time as if to gather strength, descend in a furious deluge, resembling a vast sheet rather than a succession of drops of water. The gullies in the streets are soon impetuous torrents, bringing down quantities of the red soil. This heavy rain lasts about a quarter of an hour, and is followed by a gradually diminishing shower, until in about an hour from the first flash, the sun is again shining, and a dark cloud far away to leeward and a few distant mutterings of thunder are the only aerial signs of the tempest.

After the tornado the air is most refreshingly cool and exhilarating, the thermometer not unfrequently falling fifteen degrees during its continuance. Should a vessel be unfortunately taken unprepared by one of these violent whirlwinds, her masts must inevitably go by the board or she will be capsized.

In June, there is a short interval of fine weather, followed by the latter rains in July and August. The temperature in these months is at its lowest, averaging 65 degrees Fahrenheit. As a rule more rain falls at new and full moon, when more than 18½ inches have been recorded in twenty-four hours.

In August, terrific thunderstorms occur, the effects of which are often very destructive. The Whydahs put themselves under the protection of *Kheryosoh*, the lightning god, by making presents to the fetiche priests. Mosquitoes and sand-flies abound in this season, so tormenting to the sleeper as to put him into a high fever ere the morning, while the new comer is especially selected as a victim. At Badagary, the natives frequently bury themselves in the sand, and even then their blood-thirsty tormentors will find them out. Tobacco smoke, and green wood burning with a smoke thick enough to choke any other creature, only appear to

give an additional whet to their appetite. I have been told that a mixture of tar and oil smeared over the body will prevent their onset; but, ugh! the remedy is as bad as the disease. There appears to be only one preventive, and that is a sure one—don't go where they exist.

In September the unhealthy autumnal season sets in, the exodus of the rain being accompanied by a series of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms, as at the change of the monsoons in the East Indies. Vegetation is now in full swing, fruits and grain are gathered, the harvest often yielding a hundred fold to the rude cultivation, and a few leaves wither and fall to the ground. Decomposition is likewise rife; and stimulated by heat and moisture, malaria is developed in profusion, the fruitful parent of fever. Guinea worm is also troublesome, and in countries where it is endemic, goitre commences.

November generally goes out with the commencement of the Harmattan, which usually lasts about three months. The term is said to be derived from the Fantee *aharaman*, to blow, and *tu*, grease; because at this season the air is so dry and parching that the natives preserve the skin from cracking by copious applications of grease, generally the commonest of European pomades, odoriferous with the vilest patchouli. The Harmattan is called *Yeou*, and is supposed to be a deity who is allowed to visit the world at certain seasons. He has a keeper, *Yeouhuntoh*, who, before releasing his charge, oils his body to protect it from the *Yeou*, and then opens the gate of the cave within which the Dahoman *Æolus* is confined. This wind blows along the whole northern shores of the gulf of Guinea, being strongest on the western coast, and gradually diminishing in intensity as we approach the head of the Gulf. Its approach is generally foretold by a thick fog, which often extends ten miles out to sea, and is known to European residents on the coast as the "smokes." The smokes are not, however, dull brown like a London fog, but pure white, the sun sometimes appearing at mid-day with a white light like that of the full moon. The dry parched breath of the Harmattan

coming from the north-east licks up every trace of moisture. The leaves of the trees droop, and drying up become crisp, thereby being prevented from breeding malaria by their putrefaction. All young plants are dried up; the long grass withers and becomes converted into hay, and is then fired by the natives to ensure a fresh crop in the following rains. Even evergreens suffer from the effect of the moisture-devouring wind, their leaves becoming flaccid and easily reduced to dust by the fingers. The earth cracks, and doors and furniture split and open out, warping into grotesque shapes. The effect upon the system is unpleasant; the skin chaps, and the face has the feeling of being drawn up. The lips are parched and the skin peels off them, while an intolerable thirst can scarcely be allayed by the most copious potations of iced claret. The Harmattan usually blows for two or three days at a time, and is succeeded by an interval of perhaps a week of winds from the south or west. The Harmattan is a cold, dry wind, and its season is justly considered to be the healthiest on the coast. Fevers are of rare occurrence, all malignant diseases abate, small-pox quickly heals, and gout and rheumatism disappear. In the intermediate days between the Harmattan the weather is usually hot, with a strong wind blowing from the south-west. The dry sensation disappears, and if a person is subject to fever it will make its appearance, but in a very mild form. People are seen walking about with their clothes wrapped closely around them to protect themselves from the chilling effect of the wind, and children suffer from severe colds. The Europeans often call the Harmattan the "Doctor," from its beneficial results; for sometimes a person, who appears to be at death's door before it commences, will immediately revive under its exhilarating influence.

The sea-breeze usually commences about ten o'clock in the morning, beginning at south-east and gradually veering to south-west, from which quarter it blows during nine months in the year. In the dry summer season it is often a stiff gale about sundown.

The current along the coast sets to the south-east, but often after a heavy tornado it will run to the westward for two or three days, during which time vessels bound to windward take advantage of its favourable influence to aid them against the prevalent westerly winds.

The surf always beats furiously along the whole coast, but during the prevalence of the rains it is terrific. The dull booming roar is carried inland for many miles by the sea-breeze, and communication between the vessels and the shore is sometimes cut off for days together. Of course, should a vessel be so unfortunate as to get within its influence she is speedily reduced to splinters. On such occasions she becomes the property of the King, the hapless sailors being scarcely allowed to take their clothing: Not unfrequently the priests assemble on the beach to sacrifice, or "make fetiche" as it is called, in order that the gods may be induced to send a vessel ashore. This reminds one of the prayer taught by the wrecker to his children, "God bless father and mother, and send a ship ashore before morning." Captain Haynes of the "Astarte" once observed the priest at Quittah, making fetiche to bring his vessel ashore, and he was engaged in his mysterious rites for a whole day and night. His efforts, however, were not crowned with success, for I had the pleasure of returning to England in that vessel, although we were dismasted in a severe tornado off that very town, perhaps sent by the fetiche priest out of spite for not obliging him by the sacrifice of the vessel.

The Geology of Dahomey is not very interesting. The narrow strip of land between the lagoon and the sea owes its origin to the immense quantities of corals, which building upwards from the bed of the ocean, ultimately brought their structure within the reach of the breakers, where being constantly exposed to the fury of the surf, and choked with sand and the deposits from the rivers, it ultimately became rescued from the sea. The surface sand is bright yellow, very porous, and varying in depth from six to fourteen feet, beneath which the coral begins to make its

appearance. Northwards from the lagoon the sand covers a substratum of black argillaceous earth mixed with a clay, which is used for building purposes in Whydah, but only by the poorer classes, as the red swish is very much "stronger." Beyond Whydah the sand overlies a viscid clay, stained of a deep red colour with oxide of iron from the hills beyond Abomey.

No part of Whydah is more than forty feet above the sea level. From Whydah the land rises with a gentle slope, and a series of steps to Akpweh, where it attains an elevation of about 420 feet, beyond which place it suddenly drops to 130 feet, forming the Aglimé swamp. From Aglimé it rises to Abomey, which has an altitude of about 1100 feet. Abomey stands on an eminence, as on every side there is a steep escarpment except towards the sea. Beyond Abomey the land again rises to the Mahi hills. Between the hills and the sea the whole country bears abundant evidence of a pluvial epoch. The whole country is composed of the detritus of the hills washed down by heavy rains which have scored out and filled up valleys in their course to the sea. Not a stone is to be found between Abomey and the sea, and pebbles and gravel first make their appearance at Kana. North of Abomey, at the foot of the escarpment, is a *talus* of gravel some forty feet thick, evidently caused by the obstruction of the harder rocks upon which Abomey is built.

The Mahi hills may be considered to be the outpost of the Kong mountains, and are of igneous origin. The hills forming the outskirts of the Kong range are just visible from the edge of the table-land upon which Abomey is situated. They are the birthplaces of numerous streams running to the eastward to form the immense swamp known as Denham Water, which affords a communication between the interior and the British Colony of Lagos.

The principal rock-masses are chiefly composed of various traps and metamorphic rocks, with patches of rock, probably of Silurian and Devonian age, scattered at intervals. The trap rocks are found disrupted between other formations, and are chiefly

felspathic in character, of a grey tint, interspersed with which are masses of diorite readily distinguished by its browner colour from the felstone. Porphyrite is found plentifully, giving sombre tints to the rocks where it occurs. The metamorphic rocks are chiefly granite and gneiss, the lines of foliation in the latter exhibiting remarkable flexures.

The quartzose rocks are as a rule more clearly stratified than the schistose, and occasionally have laminae of mica between the planes of bedding.

Interspersed with these metamorphic rocks we sometimes find a peculiar stratified sandstone, more or less conglomeratic in character. The black variety is very soft and useless, but the white spotted kind is extensively used for building purposes. These sandstones are often deeply stained by oxide of iron.

Superimposed upon these formations we often find a capping of clay, interbedded with which are immense lava-beds with masses of tufa scattered here and there among them. These all bear abundant evidences of the effect of the disintegration of a pluvial epoch, and, indeed, the greater part of the kingdom of Dahomey appears to be nothing more than the washing down of these rocks by heavy rain.

The lowland is the home of the oil palm (*Eleis Guineensis*), whose products form the principal trade of the country, now that the odious slave trade is suppressed.

The population of the country is extremely difficult to estimate. Many of the larger towns are built in the midst of large forests at a distance from the main road; so that it is quite possible to be within half a mile of a place of considerable importance, while nothing but a few miserable huts and the Denun or custom house is visible. Burton considers 150,000 as about the number, but adding the population of the towns lying to the northward of Abomey, of whose existence he was ignorant, to that of those between Abomey and the sea, I should think that Commodore Wilmot's estimate of 180,000 is nearer the truth. Of these, 130,000 are women and children under twelve years of

age. But little of the country is under cultivation, so that the population is considerably short of the number the land is capable of supporting, even under the rudest system of agriculture.

Whydah itself is about two miles from the sea as the crow flies, the intervening space being the Gonji of Dahoman history. As in all West African towns, distance lends enchantment to the view, for Whydah, in *propria persona*, and as seen from the yards of the shipping in the roads, is very different.

The native name is Gre-whé, or the Garden-house, and Whydah is a corruption of Hue-dah (said to mean salt-water town), the name of a kingdom formerly existing here, of which Savi was the capital. The Portuguese name is Ajuda, while the Brazilians generally call the place Ayuda. Its history is somewhat eventful. The earliest accounts declare it to have been a tributary to the king of Savi, who, for some neglect in paying the taxes imposed upon them, made war upon the Whydahs and annexed their town to his kingdom, at that time one of the most flourishing of the many petty states in the neighbourhood.

The natives are described by Snelgrave as being such dexterous thieves, that it was impossible to guard against their attacks, notwithstanding an edict of their own which declared the thief taken in the act to become the property of his captor. It is said that the Whydahs were the most formidable of the coast tribes, and could bring an army of 200,000 men into the field,—an account which may be believed, if desired. The capital was called Xavier or Savi, and contained 50,000 inhabitants and several forts, the very ruins of which are now destroyed.

In 1725, Agajah, the fourth king of the present dynasty, resolved to open a road to the sea, to share in the lucrative profits of the slave trade.

Hoofon, the king of Savi at that time, was an indolent young man, who, placing implicit confidence in the protection of his fétiche, allowed his kingdom to fall an easy prey into the hands of the Dahoman monarch. Hue-dah was called by Agajah, Gre-whé or Gle-whé—Garden-house, meaning that it should supply

food—*i.e.*, necessaries to the capital of the kingdom. The conqueror duly celebrated the event by the decapitation of hundreds of prisoners, who were sent to Hades to work for the deceased monarchs of Dahomey.

Like all towns in the country the houses are scattered, and all have enclosed courtyards of considerable area. This fact must be borne in mind in estimating the population of Dahoman towns, as the inhabitants are by no means commensurable with the area covered by their dwellings. Whydah has lost much of its beauty since the suppression of the slave trade. The principal houses are falling to ruins, their swish walls wasting before the heavy rains, and the whole town bears a squalid, used-up aspect.

The population may be estimated at 10,000, but during the celebration of the annual customs the number would be reduced to 6000 at most. Of these 8000 are slaves, or dependent upon the caboccers and merchants in the place, and perhaps fifty, at the outside, *profess* Christianity.

All large towns in Dahomey are subdivided into parishes or quarters, each having its own caboccer and possessing certain privileges, the whole being under the governorship of one superior captain.

The divisions of Whydah are as follow :—

Sogbaji or Hic-glensi, the English town ; having no governor.

Dukomen, the Portuguese town ; under Tokfoh.

Agudo Chacha, the Brazilian town ; under Nodofreh.

Ahwanjigo, the French town ; under the Avogan.

Zobemi, the market town ; under Quimm.

The first four have forts belonging to their respective nations, and the traders reside in all cases either in the fort or near it, each nationality keeping within the jurisdiction of its own town. The inhabitants of the various quarters are often the descendants of the slaves held by the governors of the forts, and the merchants residing in any *town* are at liberty to impress into their service for the time being any resident of their quarter. For instance, should occasion arise for a number of men to roll oil to the beach,

the caboceer of the town is communicated with, and he at once provides the required number of hands.

As an account of the various quarters may be interesting, I propose to describe the Whydah Lions seriatim, starting with the English town.

The English fort, or Fort William, stands on the north side of the town, and is celebrated in Dahoman history as the scene of several important events. It was originally built by Captain Wiburne for the Royal African Company about 1650. It is a wretched structure, but still capable of defence against the natives. The enceinte is an oblong, enclosing an area of about eight acres, surrounded by a moat twenty feet deep, but completely choked with weeds and brushwood. The angles are defended by round bastions some twenty feet high, the south-west one being surmounted by a flagstaff from which the red ensign is displayed on Sundays by Messrs. Swanzy's agent, who is now in possession. A few cannon, admirably honeycombed, are *mounted* on the bastions by being stuck in the swish, while others are lying with gaping touchholes on the side of the ditch.

The principal building, which faces the south, has not so respectable an appearance as an English barn. It has lately been whitewashed to shroud its decaying walls from too close observers, and is covered with a thatched roof, the ridge of which is gracefully bending towards the centre. It is about two hundred feet long, with swish walls nearly four feet thick, and has a guard-house in the centre, merely a covered gateway with earthen settles on either side. Opposite the entrance the first governor planted a garden, the only vestiges of which at the present day are the two brick pillars, terribly out of the perpendicular, which supported the gates. Within this enclosure were interred the remains of Governor Abson, whose daughter by a mulatto wife was seized by order of Agajah, and taken to Abomey after her father's death. The drawbridge has departed with the garden, and entrance is now gained to the fort over the filled-up ditch. Two or three guns lying on the ground at the entrance are occasionally used to

fire salutes, but are useless for warfare, as if loaded with ball they would be certain death to the artillerymen who had daring enough to fire them off.

The interior consists of stores on the ground floor, and a residence above for the governor and officers. The dining hall is about sixty feet long and twenty-five feet wide, with bare white-washed walls and prison-looking windows, which are closed at night with wooden shutters. The ceiling is rapidly transporting itself to the floor, while the latter is evidently craving for a nearer relationship with the earth, the beams having bent and given way in several places, to the no small danger of the adventurous person who treads upon them. All the rooms are close, dark, gloomy little dens, while the balcony and staircase are but traps to catch the unwary. Within the courtyard is a well, sixty feet deep, supplying brackish, dysentery-communicating water; while numerous huts and outhouses are inhabited by the servants of the firm, amongst which that of John Beecham figures conspicuously to the right. Besides these huts there are a ruined cooking-house, a dilapidated schoolroom and a bathing-house. In the centre, under the shade of several umbrella-trees, are two bronze guns, the touchholes, as usual, being large enough to admit the fist.

These huts are all on the south side of the compound, which is divided into two unequal parts by a low swish wall running from east to west. North of the wall, under a conical thatched roof, is a fetiche figure, a representative of the god Dohen, who calls ships to Whydah. The god is a villanous imitation of a human figure seated on a low stool, with hands on knees, and covered with feathers and filth of every description.

To the right of this shrine is the dilapidated abode of the god Ajaruma, who is supposed to preside over the destinies of white men. This deity is worshipped under the form of a wooden post stuck up on end, the top being smeared with a red composition and swathed in white cotton cloth. To the disgrace of the English these two deities are worshipped within the fort to this day,

and rum, goats and fowls are offered as propitiation for any offences committed.

To the extreme right is the grave-yard, formerly known as the Hog-yard, which Burton says derived its name from the fact of white men being buried there. I myself cannot discover the connection. Here are buried any Englishmen who die either in the town or on board the shipping in the roads. It contains the graves of Captain Wiburne, the founder; Mr. W. Smith, an agent of the "Company;" Mr. James, or, as he is to this day known by the Whydahs, Huze-Huze, who has certain sacrifices made to him during the Whydah carnival at Christmas time; and several captains of various merchant vessels who have died at this place. A few crosses are placed at the heads of the graves, but the whole place is covered with weeds, and bears an aspect of utter desolation. The fort, in short, is a disgrace to the English nation, and gives but a poor idea of the character of Englishmen when comparison is made with the French or Portuguese stations.

The fort had been given up by Government for many years, the Wesleyan missionaries occupying it for a short time afterwards.

To the east of the fort is a pretentious establishment, now a ruin, and known to European residents as "Gothic House." It belonged to a mulatto merchant of Cape Coast Castle, named Hutton, who in 1857 was drowned in crossing Lagos bar; and afterwards was occupied by a Portuguese half-caste, named Juan, who was poisoned at Badagary. Since then the property has passed into the hands of the Crown, although at the present time it is inhabited by a Cape Coast tailor. Nearly opposite the gate of the English fort is the extensive establishment of Ignatio de Souza, a son of the Chacha, who is supposed to have been poisoned by the fetiche people, in consequence of having given information to a man-of-war of the loading of a slave-ship. As such an offence is high treason, the property of the aggressor becomes confiscated to the Crown. The valuables are removed by a corps of soldiers, called the Don-pwe—a sort of state spies, and the

house "broken." It afterwards passed into the hands of the African Company, but is now deserted and in ruins.

To the left of this establishment is the house of the Wesleyan mission, the darkest blot in Whydah. The Wesleyans established themselves at Whydah in 1843, the Rev. T. B. Freeman, Bishop of the Gold Coast, and Mr. Dawson being the pioneers. In 1854 the Rev. Peter W. Bernasko and the Rev. Mr. Laing were removed from the Gold Coast to Whydah, and began a mixed traffic in religion and palm-oil. King Gézu, the then reigning monarch, objected to the two professions being combined in one individual, but the present king on his accession looked with a more favourable eye upon the mission. In 1863 Mr. Laing was removed to Annamaboe, and Mr. Bernasko remained in sole charge. The king sent several boys and girls to be educated at the mission, and at one time there were about sixty scholars, including the children who were given to the English visitors at the court.

His reverence, however, was fond of spiritual things in more than one sense; for he took to imbibing rum and other unholy liquids. Things went from bad to worse, until he had repeatedly to be carried from the pulpit in a disgusting state of intoxication. News soon flies in Dahomey, and the king hearing of the misconduct of his reverence, prohibited him from making any more converts. He said that "If white man's religion make men drunk, it be no good," and he would have no more of it. Such a disgraceful affair was only calculated to bring religion into bad odour. At the present time affairs are still worse. Religion is utterly neglected, and the reverend fills up his time by visiting the various factories at meal times, and sponging as much liquor from each as he can. His wife is a hardworking woman, who strives to make both ends meet by performing the office of laundress for the English. Bernasko's son has been partly educated in England, but he is as worthless as his father, having been detected in pilfering. The remainder of the family, about twelve in number, chiefly girls, are idling their time

doing nothing, but the eldest girls are encouraged *by their father* to prostitute themselves to every white man in the place.

Such is the state of mission labour at Whydah—the most notorious brothel on the coast—and the missionary held up to the execration of all persons, white and black. As might be expected, the Bernaskos are ever ready to trump up any idle tale to malign the character of the Europeans at Whydah.

To the north of the English fort is an open square, within which a small market is held. It is distinguished by the deep pits from which the swish has been taken to erect the houses in the vicinity, while a long shed is the “barracks” of the Blue Company of warriors, when they have occasion to reside at Whydah. Since this is a Government building, the neighbourhood is called Jegbeh, after the name of the palace of the present king.

On the far side of this square are several huge cotton-trees, amongst which is the celebrated “Tree of Bats;” although no one tree can appropriately receive this appellation, since there are several cotton-trees in Whydah which are the constant resort of bats. The species is nearly three feet across the expanded wings, and the body is as large as that of a small chicken. They hang in clusters from the branches of the trees, frequently two or three deep, and when a greater number than usual attach themselves to a branch, their weight will often break off the limb, although as thick as a man’s leg. The trees they frequent are entirely stript of leaves, although in the day-time they appear to an observer at a distance to be covered with grey foliage, owing to the immense number of bats upon them. The head of the species bears a considerable resemblance to that of a fox, and the whole build of the animal denotes considerable strength. The bats roost all day upon the trees, rarely flying about unless disturbed by a snake, and about sunset commence a series of mazy wheelings round the trees. At this time they utter a sharp chirrup, something like the squeak of a rat, but very much higher in pitch, so high, indeed, that I have frequently come

across individuals whose acoustic powers had not sufficient range to permit of their hearing the note, and on more than one occasion I have said to Beecham, "What a noise those bats are making;" upon which he has observed to me, "Bats have no mouths for talking," he being perfectly unconscious of their vocal powers.

To the right of the district of Jegbeh is the residence of the Avogan, the Viceroy of Whydah. The title means "the white man's captain;" *Avo*, or *Fero*, white man, and *gan*, captain. The name has been variously spelled by the old authors, and the common mistake has also been made of supposing it to be a personal appellation. Every person of rank in Dahomey is known by his title, his proper name being dropped upon his accepting office, and one of the greatest insults that can be offered to a Dahoman chief is to ask him what his own name is. Indeed, if any person were to mention the king's princely name of Ak-po-toh Boda-hunh,* he would be heavily fined, if not imprisoned for life. I was told of this name by the Prince Hahansu, who also gave me the names of all the Kings of Dahomey.

The present Avogan is a very old man, who was raised to the office of viceroy in the beginning of the reign of Gézu, the father of the present monarch. On account of great age, which I have invariably found is respected by all classes in Dahomey, he is exempt from following the army, and when travelling is permitted to ride in a hammock, a privilege accorded to no other Dahoman subject. He is a tall, gaunt old fellow, ever ready to lie and cheat, if he can thereby gain anything for himself, while his ingenuity in fabricating excuses for the detention of any person who may fall into his hands, is proverbial. He is the supreme judge at Whydah, and possesses unlimited powers of imprisoning, fining, and flogging; but if any crime worthy of death is committed within his jurisdiction, he is obliged to send the prisoner, under escort, to the king, who reserves to himself the right of passing capital punishment. Unless the traveller can

* This is a fetiche name, and I could not ascertain its meaning.

put on a devil-may-care air, the Avogan can delay him in the prosecution of his business, until the victim is glad to "dash" the great man a piece of silk, or a case of liqueurs, for permission to "ask permission to visit the interior." If, however, no attention is paid to the greedy old hypocrite, it will be found that he has really no power to aid the visitor. Quinun is the person to whom to look, and a small present made to him at first, will do more towards forwarding the traveller's interests than a shipload dashed to the Avogan.

This worthy representative of the majesty of the king resides in a huge encinte to the east of the English fort. Like all palaces in the country, it is divided into several principal courts. The one to the westward is known as "Oh-on-gajeh," and is the usual place of abode of the Amazon gangs of oil-carriers, and is, in consequence, looked upon with awe by the Whydahs. On the north is the "Gan-hori," where there is a jail capable of accommodating just as many prisoners as the Avogan thinks fit to commit to durance vile. And vile it is, too, for the place is often so closely packed as not to allow all the prisoners to lie down at one time; and there being no *habeas corpus* act in Dahomey, when once immured there is very little chance of getting out.

The principal, and original, entrance to the palace is on the north-eastern side, and is known as the "Bwendemen," a name very frequently bestowed upon the principal gate of a palace. Within this courtyard are the private apartments of the Avogan and those of his body-guard, some four hundred in number, at the highest computation. Here, too, are the stores for the Government, such as muskets, powder, cloth, rum, &c., which are deposited here prior to their removal to Abomey.

Besides these buildings, there is also a private devotional chapel, containing a very interesting assortment of fetiche humbug, such as clay images, skulls of various animals, and the defunct blood-and-feather-smearred remains of fowls and other saered relies.

Southward is the dreaded "Agauli," where all cases are tried

and punishments awarded. This is the largest division of the palace, and contains numerous stores for oil, palm-kernels, and other produce, while others are choked full of broken stools, umbrellas, and all the shattered *débris* of a Dahoman interior. Just within the doorway is the prison appointed for the reception of persons convicted of stealing palm-kernels. The unlucky wight is condemned to imprisonment during the viceroy's pleasure, or until he is ransomed by his friends, and is fed during his incarceration upon palm-kernels alone, the result of which diet, I was assured by Beecham, is that "he busts."

The reception-hall is a thatched barn, reached by a circuitous journey through a perfect labyrinth of courts and passages, all tending to impress one with a sense of the vast area of the palace, and is situated just beyond the sheds to the right, so that a hole knocked through the wall would bring the stranger into the presence in about a dozen steps. This, however, will not do for Dahoman grandeur; the shortest method of doing everything is always avoided (except in the matter of soliciting presents), and if the stranger on entering any house is conducted through courtyard after courtyard, he may rest assured that his journey will end in the very next court from the one he started from.

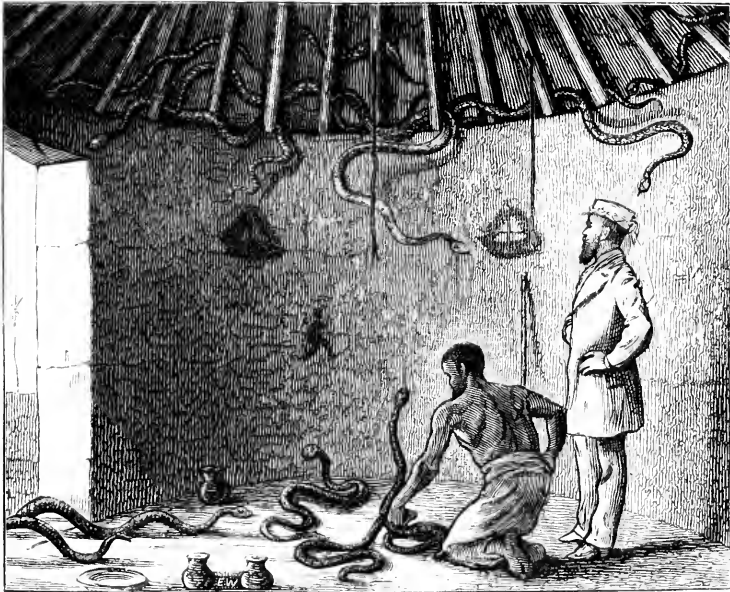
The Avogan is a great advocate of his own dignity, and invariably keeps his visitor waiting in some miserable shed while he puts the finishing touches upon his toilet, aided by the Madame Rachel of the palace. It is a hint worth remembering that I now throw out, viz., to appear highly indignant at waiting a single moment, if you wish to be heard within a reasonable time. Beecham was continually quoting the proverb, "When in Rome do as the Romans do," but I found that even the Romans could be taught a lesson in the value of time by my getting into a towering passion when told to wait. The Avogan has a great dislike to be hurried, but when he does condescend to appear he is the very Beau Nash of Dahoman politeness, and apologises by the most ample lies for detaining his illustrious visitor. He

rarely appears in public, his "place" being taken by one of his slaves.

Opposite Agauli, hidden from profane eyes by a thick grove of fig-trees, which form but a mere undergrowth when compared with several tall bombaxes in their midst, is the far-famed snake house, or "*Danh-hweh*," as it is usually called. The name is derived from *Danh*, a snake, and *Hweh*, a residence. It is sometimes called *Fodun-hweh*, i.e., the fetiche house; and, again, "*Danhgbwe-hweh*," or the big snake (python) house. I was much disappointed at this renowned fetiche, for instead of a respectable temple, I found nothing but a circular swish hut, with a conical roof; in fact, an enlarged model of the parian inkstand to be seen in every toy-shop. There was a narrow doorway on the eastern side leading to the interior, the floor of which was raised a foot above the street. The walls and floor were whitewashed, and there were a few rude attempts at reliefs in swish. From the roof there depended several pieces of coloured cotton yarn, and several small pots containing water were distributed about the floor. The roof was raised above the circular walls by short projecting pieces of bamboo; and, coiled up on the top of the wall, or twining round the rafters, were twenty-two pythons. The creatures were the ordinary brown and pale yellow reptiles, whose greatest length is about eight feet. They were the sacred *Danhgbwes*, whose power was relied upon to save the kingdom from the conquering armies of Agajah. It was the tutelary saint of Whydah, and when that kingdom was conquered, was introduced into the Dahoman Pantheon.

So recent as the late king's reign, if a native had the misfortune to accidentally (for no one would have the temerity to purposely) kill a *Danhgbwe*, he was at once sacrificed, and his wives and property confiscated to the church. At the present time, the defaulter has to undergo a foretaste of the sufferings of his portion hereafter. A meeting of all the fetichists in the neighbourhood is convened, and a hut of sticks, thatched with long dry grass, is erected in the open space before the Snake-house.

Within this structure the victim is seated, his clothes and body being well daubed with palm-oil mixed with the fat of the murdered deity. At a given signal the hut is fired, and as the materials are dry as tinder, the whole edifice is at once in a blaze, while the clothes of the victim of this salamandrine rite are soon on fire. The poor wretch rushes out of the blazing hut and makes for the nearest water with all speed, but



THE SNAKE TEMPLE.

the “*Danhgwice - no*,” snake mothers, or “*Danh - si*,” snake wives, *i.e.*, fetiche priests, are prepared with sticks, pellets of swish, dung, and other missiles, to mercilessly belabour the luckless offender the whole of the distance. Few are able to run the gauntlet, but are literally clubbed to death by the furious priests. *Ægrescit melendo!* No wonder the people stand in awe of a creature, the killing of which entails so fearful a punishment.

The doorway being always open, the snakes frequently make excursions after nightfall. Should an unfortunate person of either sex meet the strolling deity, he is obliged to prostrate himself before it, and then, taking it tenderly in his arms, carry it to the priests. Of course he is rewarded by these gentlemen for taking care of the god, says the reader. No such thing! He is *fined* for meeting the snake, and imprisoned until it is paid to the uttermost cowrie.

Ordinary snakes may be killed with impunity, but beware of meddling with the Danhgbwe! A great palaver would certainly be the result of any white man meddling with the sacred reptile, and a fine will be rigorously imposed upon the offender. The Danhgbweno are usually engaged in instructing the neophytes in the mysteries of their faith, and in feeding their deities upon fowls. The priests are recruited in a singular manner. Should a child be touched by a snake on one of its nocturnal peregrinations, the priests immediately demand the child from its parents, who have to impoverish themselves to pay for its support in the various ceremonials appertaining to the worship. After a certain lengthy instruction, the neophyte is allowed to practise priestcraft for himself. A full account of the Ophiolatry of the Dahomans will be given in the chapter devoted to their religion.

South-west of the Boa temple is the "*Zobeme*," or marketplace, one of the "lions of Whydah," according to Forbes. It covers an area of about fourteen acres, and is divided into several principal sections by cross streets. Each section is exclusively apportioned to the sale of one class of articles, such as pottery, hardware, fetiche charms, oil, and so forth. The market shops are low booths, about ten feet by six, raised upon banks of clay beaten hard, and are thatched with palm-leaves, and the floor is usually smeared with cow-dung. Each shop stands upon its own "islet," as they may be called, for in the rains the footpaths are not unfrequently six inches deep in water. The vendor squats at the side of her booth, a black clay pipe stuck between her lips,

and not unfrequently a babe at her breast. The medium of exchange is the cowrie, although large purchases may be paid for in coin.

In the pottery department there were black, fragile, porous water-jars exposed for sale, together with the curious little saucer-like bowls used in the fetiche, and also for lamps. The hardware was represented by a few knives, scissors, needles, pins, hatchets, &c., of European manufacture; bracelets of iron, brass, or lead; silver ornaments, such as rings, necklaces, &c. Rude hoes and knives of native manufacture were to be had in abundance, and not a few blacksmiths prided themselves upon the finish of their articles.

Numerous huts were devoted to the sale of cooked provisions, such as eggs, fried fish from the lagoons, smoked shrimps (often alive with maggots), baked ground nuts, or *pindar*; *dakoh* (a mixture of ground Indian corn and palm-oil baked in an open pot), yams, sweet potatoes, Palaver sauce, and cankie. Others were vendors of ready-cooked meat. These generally affected a conical extinguisher-shaped hut, and squatted on a low stool behind a circular table, with a broad rim and a depression in the centre. Set out to the best advantage on the rim were joints of roast and boiled pork, goat, fowls, ducks, &c., &c. Of these for two cowries about a mouthful could be purchased, the butcher dexterously carving Vauxhall slices from the joint with a knife having a blade curved like the letter J; and slapping the morsel on a plantain leaf, he sprinkled some pounded chillies upon it, and handed it to his customer with all the airs of a London street stall-keeper. The fetiche department was a heterogeneous collection of all the "notions" under the sun. Feathers stuck in clay pellets, cowries smeared with blood, fetiche rope, jars striped red and white to contain offerings to the gods, beads singly or by the string, some being of European and others of native manufacture, composed of pieces of broken palm-kernels threaded on cotton. Medicine, too, had its department. Herbs for the cure of all diseases; ditto for the manufacture of charms, while not a few

sold a white powder of calcined mica "to keep the devil from the eyes."

One department was exclusively devoted to the sale of native produce, such as farhina, or grated cassava, invaluable to travellers, for mixed with water it can be eaten without cooking, on being merely kneaded into a ball; pots of oil, some for cooking purposes, others for illumination; maize, Guinea corn, picked and in the cob, yams, sweet potatoes, bananas, plantains, baked and raw; Kola nuts, generally in little heaps, each worth a fraction of a penny; oranges, limes, pine-apples, guavas, and spices of all kinds; ginger, pepper, okros (*Hibiscus*), sugar-cane, onions, tomatoes, and papaws. Here and there were to be seen water-melons and snails.

Should the market-woman—for the people in the markets are nearly all women and children—feel inclined for a drink, the hotel is already open. Bottles of liquors—pleasing to the eye, fiery to the palate, and poisonous to the body; Brazilian caxaça, palm wine, either by the bottle or teaspoonful.

The drapery department was well stocked. Country cloths, either of cotton woven in narrow strips and sewn side by side, or of twisted grass, dyed in various colours; prints, the more gaudy the pattern the more saleable; grass hats, tapes of all colours, fringes, ribbons, thread and cotton, bundles of cotton yarn, and other articles in native use.

The leather work is justly praised by all writers, for many of the designs are very tastefully executed. The skins, mostly of goats, are dyed bright red, blue, yellow, black, and white, and are extremely pliable. The principal articles are tobacco pouches and fetiche medicine bags, cushions and saddle-cloths; shoes and sandals are unknown. A few leather quivers are to be picked up, and also the black cartridge-boxes in use by the musketeers.

Other articles in the market were bundles of firewood, jars of water, soap, gunpowder; pinches of salt, dirty in the extreme; camwood, pounded fine for dyeing purposes; indigo; whitewash;

tobacco, roll and leaf; pipes; snuff; plantain leaves for wrapping up articles; mats, bedsteads, baskets, and raw cotton.

Marketing is in full sway about 4 P.M., when a scene that baffles description is to be witnessed. Here an old beldame, with shrivelled breasts hanging down to her waist, will be haggling with a child four years old for a farthing's-worth of fetiche. Oaths fly in every direction, and the chastity of the mothers of the parties is invariably alluded to in terms by no means fit for ears polite. The small-pox is invoked upon the head of one, and another is stigmatised as being fit to be eaten by the devil. Yells, howls, squabbles, and curses are heard on every hand, mingled with the screams of multitudinous infants, and the melodious voices of pigs, goats, and fowls. This hubbub is supplemented by the itinerant criers, who proclaim the praises of the king in anything but musical tones. Imagine this scene with the thermometer at 90°, and the buyers and sellers reeking with perspiration, which, combined with the odours of the *afiti* soup and stinking fish, constitute an aroma anything but conducive to appetite.

The market is presided over by an officer, who exacts a toll from every vendor, and the safety of the articles exposed for sale is guarded by the native police. As an instance of the value of food, &c., at Whydah, I may state that a fowl is worth half a dollar (2s. 3d.), yams about fourpence each, eggs are fifty a shilling, and sheep about four dollars each. Cankie may be obtained in sufficient quantity for a day's supply for a penny, and green vegetables are about the same price as in England.

Eastward of this Babel is the Portuguese fort, situated near the Badagary road. It is a square compound, with bastions at the angles, surrounded by a ditch, which is, as usual, filled up with vegetation. On the south bastion is a battery of five guns, rusted of course, and from the tall flagstaff the blue and white ensign of Portugal floats lazily in the breeze.

The dungeon-like gateway is pierced through the centre of the main building, and is surmounted by a wooden shield, bearing the Portuguese arms. The walls are whitewashed, and the win-

dows filled with jealousies. Within the enclosure is the residence of the governor, whose power is *nil*, and whose pay is much about the same. He is mainly supported by the voluntary contributions of the Brazilian merchants of the town, and so well qualified for his post that he was ignorant of the use of his government seal when called upon to legalize a document!

Opposite the gateway is a small chapel, distinguished from the surrounding structures by a small wooden cross at the eastern gable. The building has no pretensions to architectural beauty, being merely a whitewashed swish barn, with thatched roof and a miniature belfry, containing two small brass bells. The residence of the clergy immediately adjoins the chapel, and, unlike the generality of buildings inhabited by the whites, has only a ground floor.

The first missionaries were sent from Toulon in 1861. They were three in number—viz., Messrs. les Abbés F. Borghero, a Genoese; and François Fernandez, a native of Galicia, in Spain. The third, Louis Eddé, who sailed from France in connection with the mission, died of fever at Sierra Leone. On arriving at Whydah, the object of their mission was submitted to the king, who graciously permitted them to reside within the Portuguese fort. The *converts* are about twenty in number, all children, who are supposed to attend a school; but, as they are under no compulsion, the greater part kick up their heels in the sand in preference to learning the mysteries of the “Yewe-noh” (God-men), as the missionaries are called. The mission is not at present on very good terms with the government, chiefly on account of the priests making the usual mistake of trying to get the thick end of the wedge in first.

Some missionaries unfortunately appear to think that “the heathen,” as they are pleased to term that part of the human family who have not embraced Christianity, are mere brutes, without reasoning powers, and who will at once allow their time-honoured religious theories to be supplanted by those of a true faith. In too many cases have I seen the most lamentable

results ensue from the appointment of an uneducated person to the missionary stations abroad. To such a person failure is almost certain. He goes out to a *benighted* race, often better fitted to instruct him in the etiquette of association with his fellow-beings than to receive an education at his hands, and in a dictatorial spirit demands the total overthrow of the national Pantheon. As a natural sequence quarrels and bloodshed ensue. Lucky for such a pseudo-missionary is the fact that as a rule he is imperfectly acquainted with the language; otherwise there are in every savage community plenty of shrewd individuals who would totally upset any argument that could be brought to bear upon the fallacy of the native faith by such ignorant instructors; as the case is, they fall back upon their illiterateness as an excuse for their failure. Well would it be for missionary enterprise if these pseudo-teachers were struck off the list, and in their place more men of the John Williams type introduced among its ranks. One unqualified teacher in a district will do far more towards confirming the native in his erroneous belief than the example of a score of traders who are not professed "God-men." The conversion of the savage must be obtained by slow degrees, not by a cataclysm of Christianity. First show him the advantages of civilisation, teach him to add to his creature comforts, and *then* improve his religion. If the people who advocate the dogmatic theory would but place themselves in the position of the Pagan, they would at once see how ridiculous must they appear. Suppose, for instance, that a black man endowed with superior intelligence, or at any rate possessing a knowledge, however attained, far advanced beyond our own, and who surrounded himself with luxuries undreamed of by the richest in the land, were to arrive on our shores, and after mastering a smattering of the language were to enter St. Paul's Cathedral, in the middle of Divine service, and commence an argument with priests and congregation upon the fallacy of our religion and the validity of his own belief in some incomprehensible Deity,—what would be the result? Why, he would be accounted a madman, a fanatic,

ridiculed by all the papers, and most likely committed to prison as a public nuisance. Nevertheless, when the same thing is done in a savage country, some people wonder at the unpromising result of missionary labour. If, however, the same person were to quietly enter into a discussion with our theological savans, he would attain his end without creating a state of anarchy and religious "*furor*" among the people. Does not the necessity of the missionary being a man of superior education and reasoning powers become at once manifest? Fortunately the people at home are becoming alive to the fact, and a new race of missionaries is springing up who are specially trained for their profession.

Success *must* attend their labours, and the sooner they supplant those pseudo-teachers to whom I have alluded the sooner will the scandal that attaches to the missions presided over by such persons be removed. Sad is the fact, but none the less true, that in many instances the native has grasped the sum total of the instruction that the missionary has been able to impart to him; and then commencing to argue certain theological points with his teacher, has found that he could totally upset any theorem brought before him. What is the result? The shrewd native thinks that it must be a poor religion that cannot stand the test of the investigations of a recent convert, and his thoughts at once revert to his own priests' mystical knowledge that is incomprehensible to the vulgar. He at once concludes that his old belief is the better one, and returns to his former idolatry, the small modicum of instruction that has been imparted to him only qualifying him to become a greater rogue than before. Truly "the last state of that man is worse than the first."

That many such missionaries conscientiously believe they are doing a labour of love is very true, but the error of the system is not the less glaring.

These statements may appear exaggerated, but it must be remembered that we too often only hear one side of the case in

England, and few persons abroad care to inquire into the state of affairs. The result of several years' experience has led me to the foregoing conclusions, and a reference to any unbiassed resident at any missionary post will bear me out in my remarks. Remember, I by no means condemn missionary enterprise, but the system or no system as at present carried out of admitting almost any volunteer into their ranks. There are men whom I have met who have gone the right way to work, and the results have been highly gratifying, but I have *invariably* found that the most successful have ever been the *better-educated* men. These remarks also, do not apply to missionaries among civilized nations such as the Hindoos or Chinese, where the necessity for educated teachers has ever been apparent, but among such people as the Mpongwes, the Kanakas, and the Ffons.

To return to the subject. The Portuguese fort was set on fire by lightning in 1863, and as the priests and the fetichemen had previously had a warm dispute about their respective tenets, the fetichemen immediately gave out that Kheviosoh, the Lightning God, disgusted at the heretical conduct of the padres, had avenged his insulted dignity by setting their fort on fire. Notwithstanding the ill-success of the missionaries, I always found the padres very pleasant companions, and I regret that I cannot give a better account of their labours.

Behind the chapel there is a school-room, and last, but by no means least, a small but well-kept garden.

On the western side of the market, nearly in the centre of the south side of the town, is the Brazilian fort, now the residence of the notorious De Souza family. This covers nearly as much ground as the whole of the other forts put together. It stands to the south of the High Street of Whydah, and is the one first seen on entering the town. It is the least desirable of all the forts as a residence, being merely an interminable series of courtyards and mud hovels. The principal building faces the sea, and is built in the usual barn style of architecture, which contrasts very unfavourably with the stone erections along the Gold Coast. The

fort occupies the northern side of an open triangular "square," known to the Whydahs as the "*Uhon-nukon*," or "yard in front of the gate," on the south side of which is the *Ajudo-akhi-men*, through whose jabbering alley we entered the town. This open space is also the frequent scene of the vigorous inflictions of the rod which are awarded to those soldiers who have misconducted themselves, and also to the servants of the various factories who have been detected in pilfering. To the left of the cavernous gateway is a celebrated fetiche. By report, a shot was fired from a vessel in the roads at the western gable of the fort, by order of Commander Hill, R.N., the Governor of the Gold Coast in 1845. As the distance was thought to be too great for any gun to carry without supernatural aid, the priests at once gave out that their *Kheviosoh* had taken charge of the missile, and conveyed it to the spot it now occupies. It is hidden from profane eyes by a circular hedge of the "*Sayan*," or "*Thunder shrub*," and prickly pear. This fort is in the occupation of various members of the De Souza family, a brief epitome of whose history will be needful. In 1810, Francisco Felles De Souza, a small farmer of Brazil, left Rio Janeiro for the coast of Guinea, then in its prime as a slave producing country. He first settled near Little Popo, about twenty miles westward of Whydah, and when he had risen to a certain amount of prosperity he called it *Ajudo*, as also did he afterwards name other settlements of his foundation. The word is taken from the Portuguese, "*Deos me ajudò*,"—God helped me—the nomenclature being identical with that practised by the Hebrew patriarchs. He afterwards was raised to the dignity (?) of Governor of the Portuguese fort at Whydah, whither he had removed the greater part of his property.

After a residence in Whydah of about ten years, in 1845 he was invested with the office of agent between the king and the whites, who, at that time, were principally Portuguese and Spaniards, and received the title of *Chacha*, ranking next the *Avogan*. This office was one of considerable importance, as the holder could levy any octroi or toll he chose upon any articles

exposed for sale, and indeed he had power to refuse the admission of any article into the kingdom. The inevitable result of such a state of affairs was that no trade could be done until the Chacha had been handsomely "dashed;" and this, combined with the profits of the "*De*," or customs dues, soon transformed the *ci-devant* peasant into a millionaire. He appears to have been hospitable and courteous to strangers, and although, as a slave dealer, the English were his bitterest enemies, he treated Mr. Duncan with the greatest kindness. He set his face against the revolting cruelties practised by the court and the fetiche priests, and did far more towards elevating the social status of the Whydahs, than any man either before or since. He died at a great age in 1849, leaving more than one hundred children, and was buried within the precincts of the fort. Forbes gives an account of several human beings who were sacrificed by his sons to appease his manes, but this is an erroneous statement; the facts being that the king slew several people to carry the news of the Chacha's death to the monarch's deceased ancestors.

After the old Chacha's death, he was succeeded by one of his younger sons, Isidore, who held the office for two years, and was succeeded by his brother Antonio "Kwaku," or Antonio "*Wednesday*," so-called from the day of his birth. This man was the very counterpart of his father. A libertine, drunkard, fanatic, and a rogue, his audacity knew no bounds. He had his own body guard and amazons, remnants of which corps still exist. The king was building the palace of Coomassie at the time, and sacrificed several slaves upon the occasion, the blood of the poor wretches being mingled with the swish of the walls. Kwaku, not to be outdone by the monarch, built a house and mixed the swish with rum instead of blood, that liquid being more expensive than the blood of a few slaves. At length his presumption was carried too far. He insisted upon the king, Gézu, becoming a convert to Roman Catholicism. This was too much for the proud conqueror, who found means to destroy the bigot, and installed his half-brother Ignatio in his place.

He built the house opposite the English fort, and was supposed to have been poisoned, as previously mentioned. He was succeeded by another brother, Francisco Chico, who is the present representative of the family. He is about fifty years of age, tall and very dark, with a mulatto cast of features. His hair and beard are quite white, and he is now too feeble to move about. He has built a private residence to the north of the Brazilian fort and has given up that mud pile to his nephew, Antonio Francisco, the son of Kwaku, who is a large merchant doing a considerable trade with Bahia.

All the family are Caboccers, and possess considerable influence, especially with regard to Portuguese or Brazilian affairs. The Chacha is very much liked by all classes, and the old man is anxious to retain the good wishes of the European residents. The king still has a high opinion of the Chacha, who has received frequent marks of favour from the royal hand.

The family number about eighty, and are at once distinguished from the Whydahs by their tawny skins and semi-civilised dress. The ladies of the house wear loose robes of cotton, beneath which the white chemise, edged with lace or other "cunning work," appears, leaving the upper part of the back and breast exposed. They smear themselves with scented pomatum, and are the heaviest swells of the country in the matter of coiffure. All smoke, drink, and take snuff. Their feet are protected by the narrow-pointed wooden shoes imported from Bahia, and their heads are usually swathed in black or coloured silk skull-cap-like turbans, in the folds of which the short clay pipe is inserted.

A condition of affairs prevails in the family calculated to rival that of the Peruvian monarchs. As there are no peers to whom these ladies can be married, they accept temporary husbands from their favourites, while half-brothers and sisters intermarry, the result of which is the degeneracy of the race. The favours of these yellow belles are easily obtained by any *white* man; but for a *black* man, however wealthy, to look at them would be an insult hardly to be wiped out without bloodshed. At the present

time there are about twenty adults who are all fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters to each other.

Near the French factory is the residence of Sr. F. J. Medeiros, of slave-dealing notoriety. This is by far the prettiest house in Whydah, the approach to it leading through an avenue of roses, oranges, cashew-nuts, and other trees. This gentleman is, according to report, a Brazilian, and formerly exported more slaves than any other private person on the coast. He is generous and hospitable in the extreme, his house being open to all comers, to whom a cordial welcome is ever extended. He is building an extensive country house to the north-west, which, if completed, will be the finest building between Sierra Leone and Lagos.

The only remaining factory is that of Sr. Ignatio de Souza Magallaes, a Porto Novo and Badagary merchant. This is situated at the south-east of the Brazilian fort, and contains nothing worth mentioning except several fine monkeys and a red-tiled dwelling-house, which has a pretty effect when seen from Gonji.

Now that the slave-trade is stopped, Whydah is tottering to her fall. Families once wealthy have had their incomes grievously curtailed, and are now miserable hucksters of palm-oil. In the houses are to be seen displays of the most extravagant, reckless squandering of money in the golden days now gone for ever. Furniture of the most costly description, even to bedsteads inlaid with gold, musical boxes, silks, arms, and curiosities—all purchased at exorbitant prices. These, contrasted with the present too palpable poverty of the successors of the traders in human flesh, are but one of the many evidences of the decline of prosperity in the town. Not that hospitality is thereby lessened, but the most *récherché* dinners now given by the *élite* of Whydah are mere shadows of the orgies of former times, when eating, drinking, dancing, and love-making formed the principal occupation of a Whydah gentleman in the intervals between the departure of the slavers. Where the *ci-devant* millionaires made thousands, they now make tens, and houses built in the days of

prosperity to accommodate hundreds of personal slaves are now permitted to fall into decay, the dry thatch of the barn-like sheds only lending additional fuel to the many conflagrations that in the dry season frequently unroof half the town at one fire.

Much, however, might be done towards bringing about a happy change; for if the now dormant energies of the people could once be turned into the many channels open for the employment of the natural resources of the country as a means of acquiring their former wealth, I doubt not that the now deserted halls of Whydah might again resound with the merry laugh, as in the "good old times," and that the notorious slave depôt might acquire an equal reputation as the place of export of cotton, india-rubber, and palm-oil.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY TO THE CAPITAL.

Start for Abomey—Quinun's message—Joe—Midnight travelling—The "big tree"—My hammock-men—A corduroy bridge—Agbana Water—Savi—The Nynsin swamp—An unfaithful deity—Palmyra palms—Toli Water—Toli—Dahoman houses—Leopards—Finches—Lovely flora—Azohweh—Agriculture—Pleasures of travel—Telegraphic despatch—Butterflies—Alladah—Our passport—History of Alladah—Origin of the Dahoman kingdom—Daho's treachery—Bulfinche Lambe—Reception at Alladah—The Singbo—Skulls of two criminals—Dahoman salutations—"Our hearts are cooled"—Tree of bats—Fetiche town.

Soon after six in the evening of July 30th Quinun sent his "stick" with his "compliments" to inform me that the hammock-men would be ready to convey me to Abomey about eight o'clock, and that if I would send my traps round to his house he would assign to each porter his load. He also sent as "*serang*" a gaunt, cadaverous-looking fellow named John, who spoke a jargon which, because containing more English than Fantee and Yoruban, was put down at once as the perfection of Johnson. He, however, proved a very trustworthy fellow, except when overpowered by "canna" or Brazilian caxaça. At the time Captains Langdon, Tresize, Taverner and Williams, all belonging to English vessels in the roads, were at the factory, and they one and all tried to dissuade me from going into the power of the king, of whose treachery and ferocity they seemed to have a wholesome respect. As I was anxious to enter upon a new field of research in natural history, and considering that they knew but little of the country except from report, I thought I had nothing to fear; and the result proved my suppositions to be correct; for the

study of the Dahoman has been to give such an account of his country as to deter the "trade man" from making any attempt at the investigation of the interior.

I soon after had the satisfaction of seeing the guns and my boxes carried off under the charge of Amoosu-ndompèh, a junior "magistrate" of Whydah, of whom more hereafter. I anxiously awaited the summons to start, but eleven o'clock arriving without any call, I concluded that our departure had been deferred till the following morning, and accordingly turned in. How ignorant I was of Dahoman customs, where night and day are equally applicable to business!

About one in the morning a violent knocking at the gate of the factory aroused me, and in a few minutes Beecham appeared, his head between his shoulders like a pig-faced baboon's, bearing a stick carved into a padlock and key at one end, a present from Quinun. After sundry charity-school bows, he requested me to prepare to start, as my hammock was at the gate.

I at once roused Captain Williams, who had expressed a wish to see me off, and as all my baggage had gone on I tumbled into the hammock and was jolted round to the Caboecer's. Here we found Quinun arrayed in an *owu-chyon*, or body cloth, of gaudy chintz, put on round the body with the end thrown over the left shoulder, *à la toga virilis*. After oko, dhu-ing, and watering, he said that everything was prepared for my start, that a messenger had been despatched to inform the king of my intended visit, and that he was then about to deliver the final message and instructions to my escort. After more toasts, Princee Ghu-ga-lah, nephew to the king, was introduced, who was to carry the message to the king. He was a tall youth, not more than twenty years of age, with a round bullet-head and prominent thick lips. He wore his head shaved, save a thimbleful of hair on the left side, and placed implicit confidence in the powers of a fetiche charm suspended from his neck, consisting of some magic rubbish enclosed in a goat skin pin-cushion which had been smeared with fowl's blood, and then ornamented with cowries.

Quinun speaks very tolerable Portuguese, and has either bawled himself hoarse in praise of his king, or is suffering from chronic bronchitis, as his voice is hoarse as a steam-engine's.

About half-past two I was requested to stand up while Quinun delivered me into the charge of Ghu-ga-lah and Amoosu-ndompeh. His speech was very elaborate, for all savages are orators. He told them that if they did not bring me back strong and well he would send them in irons to the king—that they were to insist upon every person's paying me proper respect as the king's friend, and that they were to take care that I wanted for nothing. I must confess that they carried out their instructions to the letter, for they were often so officious in their endeavours to promote my welfare, that I wished them anywhere but in my escort.

My boy Joseph Mensa deserves a passing notice. I picked him up in Accra as a personal attendant and assistant. He was about the ugliest specimen of a Fantée boy I ever saw. His age might be anywhere between sixteen and sixty; his face was evidently cast in the same mould as a chimpanzee's—his mouth was a mere gash in his face, into which a handful of teeth had been thrown. He was, however, a most excellent servant when in a good humour, but when he was in one of his sulky fits nothing but corporal punishment could bring him to his senses. His horror at going to Abomey caused him to assume a bottle-green hue, and his teeth chattered as much as their irregularity would permit. However, on my allowing him to carry my gun and to travel next my hammock, his fears were somewhat allayed.

The rear-guard was brought up by Bukau, son of the executioner for the king in the Uhunglo market in Abomey, who will succeed his father in his office.

More healths being drunk, I got into my hammock, and was carried at a run through the town until I arrived at the Avogan's residence, where a brief halt was made while the "place" of the Avogan drank the king's health and my own, the hammock-men prostrating themselves in the dust during the ceremony. I then

found that our starting had been delayed to this unseasonable hour to keep my departure secret from the rabble, as he did not wish it to be known that I had gone to Abomey. From Agauli we carefully threaded our way through the silent and deserted streets, undisturbed by any of Col. Henderson's myrmidons, who had been purposely sent on other beats. As we passed the Snake-house we discovered a fine fellow stretching himself across the doorway, upon which the hammock-men began their prayer, "*Borl-ah, Borl-ah,*" and hurried along in dread of his crossing their path, which would have entailed a present of rum and cloth upon us, besides causing unnecessary and unwelcome delay. The market-place was still as the grave, the shops being cleared of all their contents, while numerous bats and chanting cicadæ seemed to be the only living things in our neighbourhood.

We were soon abreast of the *Atin Li-hun*, "The big tree of Whydah," a huge bombax, which reared its lofty head one hundred and fifty feet above the ground. The limbs of this enormous "monarch of the forest" would make very tolerable trees of themselves, and the trunk was supported by gigantic buttresses, covered with prickly excreescences, and measuring at least two hundred feet round the outside of them. Between each of these necessary supports hundreds of persons could hold a conference, and travellers from the interior assemble under its ample shade to collect their escort, which *en route* usually becomes separated into a line of stragglers extending over the greater part of a mile. The neighbouring quarter is called *Atin-daho*, and is filled with fetiche huts, while the tree itself is mysteriously connected with the welfare of the town. A few yards beyond the Big Tree is the dwelling-house of Sogro, cousin to the king (not nominally so, as Burton says). Like most of the houses of the nobility, little was to be seen from the outside but the thatched roof of the various apartments within the outer wall. The entrance was decorated with two small white rags fixed to slender poles, after the fashion of a flag. One of his principal servants here presented me with a calabash of water

and a bottle of rum. I took the former and distributed the latter among the hammock-men.

Beyond Sogro's is the Custom-house, but our passage beneath the joji was secured by my stick, which, being wrapped in a white cloth, indicated our being upon state business. The officer prostrated himself before the emblem of authority, and wished us God-speed. The country immediately to the north of Whydah is a rolling prairie, with clumps of cotton and umbrella trees interspersed, looking something like a park. The road is about twenty feet wide, but cut into ruts by the feet of the passengers, who, being without shoes, are forced to tread on the softest spots they can find for the soles of their feet, although I have frequently seen them capering about like madmen on a platform that would quickly make shoes cry out for help. It is a curious sight to see a file of porters walking one after the other along a road as broad as an English turnpike; and as the rear and van are in constant conversation the approach of a troop is heralded for some distance beforehand by the harsh chattering of the people composing it. The grass was fresh and green, although the night was so dark as to render but little of the landscape visible. Seaward numerous tops of the oil-palm spread their feathery leaves to the refreshing sea-breeze that was blowing strong at the time, bringing the roar of the surf, like distant thunder, as a basso accompaniment to the shrill treble of the crickets and cicadæ that, occasionally joining in chorus with a *cree! cree! cree! cree!* completely deafened us. As we left the town behind us our pace slackened, and John coming alongside complimented me on being now actually *en route* for Abomey. We now settled down to a steady walk of about three miles per hour, and I congratulated myself upon having a very good set of hammock-men. They were eight in number, and had been impressed into the service by Quinun. Truly despotism sometimes has its advantages, for if I had been inflicted with some of the professional hammock-men, I should have suffered as much by my journey as if I had been, to use an old saying, "trussed in a bag and tossed on men's heads."

As it was, the night was warm, with just sufficient breeze to render the atmosphere comfortable; and ensconced in my hammock, with the lanyard of the awning under my right knee and a capital cigar in my lips, I envied not any person in the universe.

The principal hammock-man was Egble-egbah ("broken so bad as not to be capable of being repaired"), one of the drollest characters I ever met with. When we were out of hearing of the town he commenced his capers, dancing and throwing his whole body into such contortions, as would put a professional acrobat to the blush. Besides which he was continually cracking jokes, and although they were probably passed in a great measure at our expense, yet as I did not know a word of the language they fell upon a listless ear, so far as I was concerned. Occasionally he would rally the men upon their failings as first-class hammock-men, and then he would mimic some well-known character to such perfection that I could not restrain from laughing myself. But give the negro plenty to eat, and his natural jocularity will develop itself in spite of slavery or anything else.

In about twenty minutes we entered a thick copse that shut out the little light across the open plain, and nothing was visible save the arms of the trees immediately overhead as they stood out yet blacker against the sable sky. This clump is composed of cotton trees, figs, croton (*Croton tiglium*), and mango, the smell of which is anything but pleasant. Soon the croaking of innumerable frogs proclaimed our approach to water, and in a few minutes the earthy, fetid smell of a lagoon assailed our nostrils. The bush before-mentioned evidently owed its luxuriance to the fertilising influence of the lagoon. The road across was of the corduroy species, the soil being too spongy to allow wading. Trunks of trees had been cut into ten-foot lengths and placed side by side without any fastening. Now came the tug of war. Beside the path was three feet of black mud, with a layer of inky water some few inches deep above it. The night was pitchy dark, and the logs were up and down, and with wide intervals between them. This, conjoined with the fact that if they allowed

me even to be splashed with the water they would be severely punished, rendered the passage anything but a pleasant piece of business to the hammock-men. Egble-egbah went on as pioneer, while four others grasped the clews of the hammock. By dint of struggling violently and considerable agility, combined with a large amount of energetic swearing, the passage was effected without mishap, although several times I thought I was about to form an unpleasant acquaintance with the slimy ooze on either hand. This pleasant spot is known as the Agbana Water, and varies in depth according to the season. In the rains in June it is waist deep, and crossed by canoes, which are poled from side to side. About Christmas time it is half-way up the leg; while in February it is "frozen over" by the sun, which forms a thick cake of dry mud on the surface, which is, however, so treacherous that travellers frequently slip through into the black morass beneath, to the utter discomfiture of the pots of oil or merchandise they may happen to have on their heads at the time. It runs in a contrary direction to the Whydah lagoon, viz., from east to west, and joins the Porto-seguro Waters above Agué.

The north bank of this fetid stream is a *fac simile* of the south, and on its highest point is a small village, Yonu-Pakhon, celebrated as supplying the finest yams to the Whydah market. The road now descends with a gentle slope to a kind of spinney, the road through which was of the kind best calculated to try any traveller's temper, for in the rains the water takes advantage of the ruts worn by the feet of the people, to find an exit from the higher ground near the village we had just left. An attempt to render the path less perilous to the safety of the oil jars, by filling the hollows with earth, has resulted in a miserable failure. The rains had washed away the earth from some parts, while it had carried it to others, and the sun had baked the deposits as hard as bricks. The consequence was that the general surface was a succession of hummocks and holes, some eighteen inches or two feet deep, amongst which the hammock-men floundered for about half an hour, until I felt as if a ride in a brick-cart

over a frozen ploughed field would have been a positive relief.

Beyond this copse the road again ascends, and trees disappear until we come to the plantation round Savi. It was too dark to make any accurate observations, but I could see that the staple crops were maize and cassava, and a few oranges, plantains and cocoa-nuts were occasionally to be discovered in the gloom. The houses in Savi are for the most part built of palm branches laced together into huge mats, which are fixed to a wattled framework, something similar to a Bakali dwelling on the Gaboon. The town was silent as the grave, but as we suddenly turned a corner we came upon a smouldering fire. I here dismounted and sat down in my chair under the shade of a fig-tree. In a few moments a slave appeared, who brought water and liqueurs, and was soon followed by his master, the caboceer, Akponi, governor of the place, but subject to the Avogan. As my journey was to be kept secret as far as Tauli, he danced in silence, and after smothering his head with dirt, drank my health.

He produced his pipe, and, after filling, offered it to me, but I preferred to continue the cigar I was at the time smoking. Luckily for the olfactory nerves, Dahoman etiquette permits smoking, even in the royal presence. A huge calabash containing a cooked rooster, some boiled maize, yams, oranges, and papaws was then presented to me as a token of the friendship Akponi wished to establish between us. In return I dashed a bottle or two of rum, which educed an elaborate speech from the caboceer, referring to my great generosity and other blarney, all calculated to impress me with the idea of my own greatness, and that a few bottles of rum *extra* would be the correct thing after such a laudation.

In a few minutes we were again *en voyage*, Akponi leading the way for a half mile or so, after the usual custom of the country, when a distinguished guest is leaving. Beyond the reception tree was the market, of course entirely deserted at this hour, while the Denun was only ten minutes' walk from the

southern gate, so diminished is Savi from its former glory as the metropolis of the kingdom of Huedah.

Beyond Savi a descending road through tall grass led us in ten minutes to the Nynsin Swamp, a repetition of the marigot to the southward of the town, the black mud stirred up by the displacement of the corduroy exhaling an odour if possible more fetid. Mosquitoes and sand-flies swarmed in myriads, keeping one in a constant *qui vive* to slay any valiant fellow who, thirsting for the blood of the saints, had the temerity to alight on our bare flesh. Tobacco smoke seems only to render the atmosphere more enjoyable to these tiny pests. This swamp extends in a semicircular form from the Coast Lagoon, near Agué, to the same water below Whydah. It is so drawn in the map in Dalzel's 'History,' but is only continuous after the rains. In Mpengala's time (1780), the great-grandfather of the present king, it was described as a river, and crossed by a pile bridge. This was the northern boundary of the kingdom of Huedah, and a by no means insignificant defence, for the Toli people, who resided on the north shore, possessed few, if any, canoes. The only available ford could be easily defended by a few hundred men; but Hoofon, the King of Savi, placing unlimited confidence in the Danh snake, the tutelary deity of his country, opposed no resistance to the passage of the Dahoman troops, save a few snakes. The result has been already alluded to.

This "river" is now reduced to a boggy morass, about a quarter of a mile broad, bordered with thickets of lovely ferns and herbaceous shrubs, which, by daylight, would have a pleasing effect when contrasted with the sunburnt grass of the plain beyond; but at present we were only left to imagine their appearance, as it was pitch dark when we crossed it, and one had to be constantly on the alert to prevent a capsizing.

Beyond the swamp is a grassy plain abounding with Palmyra palms (*B. flabelliformis*), here called a cocoa, which is one of the most useful products of the country. The trunk is fusiform in shape, being thicker towards the crown than at the foot, and is

much in demand for rafters and cabinet work, as it is almost imperishable. Nothing is more common than to see a man utilising the old "cocoa-nut beams" from a ruined hut in the construction of a new dwelling. The summit is crowned with a series of flabelliform leaves, often expanding to an area of a square yard, which rustle in the breeze with a sound peculiarly their own, as Burton very happily says, reminding one of the pattering of rain upon thick foliage. The fruit is arranged in clusters round the leaf stalks, and has the appearance of huge oranges. It is rarely eaten, as it has a harsh, stringy substance, with a flavor of ginger. In old age the crown disappears, and the spindle-shaped trunks have a singular appearance. The tree yields excellent palm wine, as I have myself experienced on the South Coast, but the Dahomans seldom, if ever, extract it, as they prefer the more intoxicating production of the oil-palm. This tree is erroneously called a "cabbage palm" by Mr. Duncan. It would form a noble ornament to our shrubberies.

Two miles of this plain brought us to the edge of the forest, that extends, with but few interruptions, to Aglimé, a distance of thirty-five miles. A slight descent brought us to the Adangwin (black water), known to Europeans as the Toli Water, another corduroy-bridged bog, often dry at Christmas, but at the present time a pea-soup liquid, seasoned with decomposing vegetable matter—a very paradise of diatoms. Leaving this by a rugged ascent, we arrived at the Denum of Toli, the Toree of Mr. Norris, situated on a plateau some 180 feet above the sea. Dawn was just breaking as we entered our quarters, the posting-house of Quinum, who, like all other grandees, has a house in every large town on the road to the capital, which are used as inns on their frequent and sudden journeys to Abomey. The house was built on a similar style to that at Whydah, but with less finish. Like all Dahoman villas, it consisted of a series of huts and courtyards within an enclosing wall. The apartment I occupied was about thirty feet square, with a raised floor of hard beaten mud. The wall was of swish, with several triangular

niches cut in it, used for devotional purposes and to hold the earthen pots, which, when filled with oil and furnished with a shred of cotton cloth or twisted cotton, constitute the ordinary lamp of the country. The walls and floor were rendered smooth by a coating of cow-dung, which, when dry, is no bad substitute for plaster, although I generally used to absent myself during the application. The courtyard to the left enclosed the fetiche-house, containing the *lares et penates* of the owner. I noticed two whitewashed chamelions, a pig, several Legbas, a snake, and a large group of nondescript animals, all rudely moulded in swish, and having their appropriate offerings before them. Several ants had made their nests in the wall, while the termites, or "bug bugs," as Beecham called them, had converted the ridge-poles into wooden-coated earthen beams.

Just as we entered the town we were startled by the growl of a leopard, which are said to be plentiful in the neighbourhood. This animal is held sacred, being appropriated by the king as his fetiche emblem; the lion of Dahomey, according to Beecham's bombastic account, being only a leopard (not heraldic), the king of beasts being unknown south of the capital. The leopard is said to be a relative of the king, and is allowed to roam unmolested unless he kills or injures any human being, upon which the fetiche priests, *for a consideration*, will absolve an unlimited number of hunters who, after despatching the animal, deliver the brains to the priest, who makes most wonderful charms with their burnt ashes, while the skin becomes the property of the Crown. After a hasty breakfast we prepared to start, but were delayed for nearly an hour by the usual drinking reception and aerobic dancing. While this monotonous ceremony was going on, I endeavoured to solace myself for the delay by watching a number of finches who were building their nests in an immense tree just outside the courtyard. The bird is about the size and colour of a yellow-hammer, and did not betray the slightest fear at the proximity of human beings. The tree was covered with hundreds of nests, formed of grass stems woven into a spherical

shape on the end of a twig, the entrance being on the lower side, so that admittance could only be gained on the wing. Their chattering was deafening, and throughout the country nearly every market-place is furnished with its finch colony, while the shopkeepers, regardless of the inevitable consequences, display their eatables for sale beneath the shadowing branches of the tree. Perhaps the frequent donations unintentionally showered upon the made dishes add a piquaney to the flavour that is refreshing to the Dahoman palate.

Toli has a population of about 1,500, while Savi boasts of but perhaps 1,200, although as many as 5,000 have been stated as residing here. Probably the whole population of the ancient kingdom never exceeded 4,000. Toli was the capital of a small kingdom, about half the size of the Isle of Thanet, and possessed a *sea port* on the Toli Water, called Foulan, the very name of which is now forgotten. There is a market for ground-nuts at Toli, and the place enjoys the reputation of being one of the healthiest on the West Coast. A few weeks at Toli would do much towards restoring the constitution enervated by a residence on the low-lying coast lands; but, unfortunately, the laws of the country do not permit the merchants at Whydah to make excursions beyond the precincts of that town.

We left Toli about eight o'clock, and after passing over a sandy district about two miles broad, which was covered in patches with low brushwood, over which the wild convolvuli spread their entwining arms, while the small coppices were environed with a belt of vivid green Guinea-grass, from amongst which the antelope may be scared at dawn by the early-rising hunter.

Beyond this shrubbery the forest again commences, and the road becomes beautiful in the extreme. The path, about twelve feet wide, has the appearance of a secluded drive in England. The trees, arching overhead, shut out the rays of the sun, except where vertical, while on either hand the forest assumed the appearance of a well-kept plantation. Many of the trees were enveloped in wild creepers, which often embrace the supporting

trunk in so deadly a grasp as to squeeze the life out of the tallest and statelyest of the many fine trees with which the forest abounds. Often a tree whose wood is dry as tinder presents the appearance of vigorous growth, but a closer inspection reveals the decaying branches enveloped in a gauzy lacing of lianas, whose yellow, pink, and blue flowers shine out brilliantly in the golden sunshine which bathes the tree-tops in vivid light. The creepers sometimes wind round a young shoot, giving a curious spiral form to the stem, which it retains after the climbing plant has withered and decayed. Now and then a tree-trunk can be descried, twisted and distorted into every conceivable shape, owing to the effect of these spiral climbers upon the infancy of the tree. The twisted and curled walking-sticks affected by a certain class of shopmen are nothing to be compared for contortions to these woody ringlets of the forest.

The road ascends with an imperceptible rise for about six miles, and then a slight descent of a mile brings us to Azohweh, or Asawa, the intermediate stage between Toli and Alladah. The town is hidden from the road by the dense forest, a few house-tops only showing their brown roofs to the left. The town is built on the second of the plateaus that rise step-like to Abomey, and was the frontier of the old kingdom of Alladah. Its population has been estimated at 400, but probably the half is nearer to the truth.

The caboccer received us under the shade of a mighty fig-tree in the market-place, and offered water, spirits, and dancing for our entertainment. In the centre of the market-place was a conical shed, built for the accommodation of travellers from the capital. It is now *protected* by a row of well-honeycombed four-pounders on the *north* side. I here tasted some of the finest oranges to be obtained on the coast; but the water, as indeed is the case everywhere between Alladah and the coast, was white with the clay held in suspension.

At this place we overtook our baggage, and fell in with the escort of Takoneh, a caboccer, going to Whydah on the king's

business. His umbrella was brought out, and we were entertained by a ballet and *fou de joie*, ending in a request for rum. Truly, teetotalism has but few supporters in Dahomey!

Azohweh is surrounded by plantations of yams and maize. After the grass is burnt in February, the women turn over the soil with short hoes, the iron blades being of native manufacture, and fixed on the handle by a thong and lashing, so that the helve forms an acute angle with it; the profile being something like that of the letter I in the pointed hand, so much in vogue among the ladies. Considerable practice must be necessary to enable the operator to use it with comfort or effect; for I once essayed to use one to turn over the soil in the pursuit of Coleoptera, but the first stroke completely smothered me with mud. The yams are sown in rows like potatoes, and a good crop is ensured by a fetiche in the form of a large yam impaled on a stick stuck at each corner of the plantation. The maize is sown by dibbles, four grains being generally deposited in each hole, and the whole field is hoed into ridges, after the seeds have been covered by a dexterous shuffle of the operator's heel. The fetiche for this crop is a small earthen pot full of ground corn, mixed with palm oil, and a circle of the maize-flour strewn round the pot. The crop often yields a hundredfold in the two harvests in each year, the first occurring in September and the latter about Christmas or January.

Beyond Azohweh the road narrows to about three feet, and the forest is interrupted by clearings overgrown with tall grass, one of the greatest drawbacks to African travelling. However expert the traveller may be in the management of his hammock awning, the tall wiry stems, bent by the passage of the foremost bearer, spring back against his face and hands with an unpleasant stinging smack. This, however, is but the beginning of the trouble, for the grass is covered with minute barbed hairs which penetrate the skin and cause an intolerable itching, accompanied with violent inflammation. This grass abounds with small chameleons of a tint precisely the same as that of the leaves, and

their deliberate movements as they slowly advance, one foot before the other, on their stately progress from one spot to another, is ludicrous to behold. Should a fly, however, come within tongue-shot, their small bead-like eyes assume a brighter look, and in an instant their long tongue is darted out with unerring aim, quick as the lightning's flash, and as suddenly returned, bearing the hapless insect on its viscid extremity to the creature's mouth.

At distances of about a hundred yards, standing a few feet to the left of the path, we passed small huts about six feet square, built of wattled palm-leaves. These were the *Gu-hoh*, the stations of the soldiers during the Gun custom, hereafter to be described, and extend from Abomey to Whydah, a distance of about seventy miles.

Two musketeers are appointed to each hut, and at a given signal the firing commences at Abomey, and is taken up seriatim by the soldiers along the road, until the *feu de joie* arrives at the Avogan's house and the English fort. A present to the king is then given to a runner, who passes it on to others stationed at short intervals along the route. Meanwhile the return fire goes back to Abomey, where it arrives, or ought to, in about an hour after it set out.

At intervals, too, we passed small clearings, in the middle of which a fetiche shed, sacred to Aizan, the street god, was erected, protecting some grotesque image from the weather. These way-side gods are supposed to prevent any evil spirit from injuring the king or his subjects as they pass along the road.

An hour's pleasant travelling through this wooded country brought us to a savannah, covered with short grass and bearing abundant evidence of having formerly been a plantation. A mile of shrubbery beyond was quickly passed through, when we emerged upon the maize-fields and cassada plantations of Alladah, mostly situated on the eastern side of the road, and bearing evidences by their extent that we were approaching a town of considerable size. The bush to the left was covered with beautiful flowers of every hue, a magnificent scarlet passion-flower

being conspicuous by its fiery colour. Numerous butterflies sported themselves amidst the fragrant blossoms, awaiting the near approach of the collector with perfect coolness, and when just within reach of the net darting over the bush with a rustle easily interpreted by his irritated feelings into a derisive laugh at the would-be captor's chagrin. Lovely little *Lycœnas* flitted from flower to flower as if the azure sky had dropped winged atoms to the earth. The crash of a monkey leaping from branch to branch, with apparent reckless heed to consequences, oftentimes mingled with the tweet-tweet of the sunbird, rivalling the humming-bird of the new continent in the metallic splendour of its plumage.

A quarter of an hour's walk through the plantations brought us to the *Denun*, a more imposing structure than any we had hitherto seen. The road was crossed by a fence of six-foot poles, crowned by a vigorous growth of shoots. In the centre was an opening about six feet wide, through which every traveller must pass. It is the custom for the *caboceers*, when sending any of their servants on a journey, to furnish them with a stick carved with the heraldic insignia of the owner and a number of cowries or other small articles denoting the number of persons this primitive passport allows to accompany the principal messenger. This permit is carefully scrutinised by the *Denun* keeper, and woe betide the unlucky wight who is detected in trying to pass without due authority. He is at once suspected of some sinister design against the king or one of his officers, and taken before the *caboceer*, who is fully empowered to fine or imprison the delinquent. This custom prevents the escape of the residents in any of the conquered towns.

So suspicious are the people, that the king's custom-house and police officers will challenge any person they may meet, who is not generally known to them; and if a track is found in the bush leading in a direction opposite to that of the usual paths, they will follow it up to discover the producer. Instances frequently occurred, to my knowledge, of slaves who attempted to escape

from their masters; but although they were sometimes at large for a week, they never succeeded in getting far away from their starting-point without being discovered and brought back prisoners by some of the government spies.

As very little crockery is made in Whydah, there is a constant trade in it between the coast and the interior. The grand potteries are near the Aglimé swamp, and every pot, water jar, fetiche dish, or cooking pan that passes through Alladah has to pay a toll of ten cowries. The collectors are appointed by the king, and as their office is liable to be taken away at a moment's notice—by the mere caprice of the monarch—they invariably try to make the most of their position while they fill it.

The Denun was surrounded by numerous low fetiche-houses, the walls of many of which were rudely stuccoed in various devices, representing birds, men, animals, and fetiche hieroglyphics. The perfume of some of the offerings was most overpowering, especially as a great sacrifice had lately been made, and the blood on the images was not quite dry. The "publican" welcomed us with the usual tectotal ceremonial, and in virtue of our king's stick passed our retinue *en masse*; and I noticed that it had been wonderfully augmented in numbers since leaving Azohweh, by the addition of several petty traders who, because they were in our train, escaped the tariff.

Beyond the fetiche-ground the forest recedes some two miles, and the road is bordered by thick shrubs. An incessant chattering then fell upon our ears, and we soon passed through a small market-place, the finches, as usual, vicing with the women in making the most noise. More fetiche followed; then a row of small sheds, built for the accommodation of travellers and stump orators, and suddenly turning off the main road to the right, we soon found ourselves within the precincts of Quinun's house.

Alladah is the cradle from which sprang the notorious kingdom of Dahomey. A *résumé* of its history may, therefore, be interesting. It is mentioned by the early writers under the name of Great Ardrah, and had a sea-port on the coast called Little

Ardrah, or Offra, now called Porto Novo, the *Beach Town*, not the main town on the lagoon. This fact must be borne in mind, as otherwise the confusion between the two Ardrahs in treating of the history of the country will be overwhelming. It was also called Essaam or Azem, *i.e.*, the great town, a name bestowed upon it by the Arabic-speaking residents during its prime as the capital of an extensive kingdom nearly twice as large as Huedah. Its boundaries were Toli on the south, the Denham waters on the east, Aglimé swamp on the north, and the little kingdom of Sumwahwe to the west. The inhabitants were called Ffons, which has been misspelt Foys and Fouins by various authors, and there is considerable evidence in favour of their being a migration from the banks of the Niger, as many of their customs partake of a Moslem character.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the king of Alladah (as we shall for the future call Great Ardrah) died, leaving the government in the possession of three sons. As usual a quarrel ensued, and at length, after considerable time had been spent in palavers at Whogbo, a village a few miles north of Alladah, it was decided that the eldest should still reside at Alladah, under the title of Alladah-akhosu, or King of Alladah. The second son, Beh, was to have Little Ardrah or Porto Novo as his portion, and his capital was afterwards known as Hue-bonu. This circumstance will explain the origin of the term cousin as applied to the King of Porto Novo by the present King of Dahomey, and also his claiming that district as part of his dominions. The youngest, Daho, had the whole country to the north assigned to him. He first settled at Zeugnoomie, and then at Uhwaweh between Kana and Abomey.

The King of Uhwaweh, Awesu, took a considerable fancy to Daho, who was allowed to settle in his kingdom, and who then assumed the name of Donun, and the two names have been corrupted to Tacoodonou in Dalzel's account.

The Ffons at Alladah had divided themselves into three sections, each following the leader he most approved of. Owing to the

representations of Apronah, a caboceer at Alladah, a considerable number went over to Dahò after his settlement at Uhwaweh. Meanwhile Dahò, who was an artful designing fellow, asked permission of Danh or Dah, the king of the neighbouring state of Gedavin, to allow him to build a house on a small portion of his land. This was acceded to, and the thin end of the wedge inserted that was to result in the overthrow of Danh. As the followers of Dahò increased in number, his incessant demands for more land became intolerable to King Danh, who, when impertinently requested to assign a portion of land near his capital, exclaimed in a tremendous passion, "What! have I given you so much land and yet you want more? Must I open my belly for you to build your house upon?" Dahò thereupon declared war upon Danh on the grounds that he had been insulted, and, aided by the Uhwaweh people, totally routed the forces of Danh and took the latter prisoner. He ordered Danh to be brought into his presence, and after taunting him with his defeat, said: "You told me that I wished to build upon your belly, now I *will* build my palace upon it." Danh was killed, and the foundation stone of a palace was laid over his corpse. The palace was called Danh-homen, *i.e.*, on Danh's belly, which has been reduced to Dahomey, in consequence of the peculiar pronunciation of the *n*. This took place in 1625, when the Ffons changed their name to Dahomans. Such was the origin of a nation, known by report, perhaps, better than any other in Western Africa.

Awesu, the host of Dahò, died soon after the conquest of Gedavin, and Dahò succeeded to his throne with but little opposition. Alladah remained a separate kingdom until 1724, when Agajah, the fourth king of the Dahoman dynasty, determined to have a sea-port of his own, and began a series of conquests resulting in the subjugation of Alladah and the death of her king. Mr. Bulfinch Lambè, a factor, who was taken to Dahomey by the conqueror, gives an exaggerated account of the capture of the place; his narrative being the imaginative description of a mind paralyzed by fear. He whines and groans in confinement

in a manner disgraceful to any man, and suggested to the governor at Whydah that if he would send some "cast-off woman, either white or mulatto, that can be persuaded to come to this country, either to be the king's wife, or else to practise her old trade," he would "gain his Majesty's heart entirely by it," and he would believe anything he said about his going and returning with more white men from the Company.

Agajah took the "strong name" of Alladah Koh, *i.e.*, Lord of Alladah, after its subjugation, and the town is reckoned as the Westminster of Dahomey, a royal palace being kept in repair in readiness for a visit from the King. No Dahoman monarch can assume any strong name until he has sat on the old coronation stool of the Kings at Alladah. The present King performed this ceremony in 1869, and after his return commenced his palace at Jegbeh, as courtly etiquette did not allow him to erect a house of his own until after the coronation ceremony at Alladah. As might be expected, the purest Ffon is spoken at Alladah, the language spoken elsewhere being a *patois* of Ffon with that of the original tongue; forming differences far more striking than "Geordie" and "Cockney" English.

After dinner I prepared for the infliction of another reception, due notice of which had been sent by Mengoten, the principal caboccer. About four we mounted our hammocks and were carried past several cotton trees literally bending beneath the weight of thousands of bats, which hang in heaps from every available point of trunk and branch during the day, and at night sally forth in legions, completely darkening the sky by their multitudes. Five minutes brought us to the square of Alladah, an open space of about twelve acres, with a few umbrella and cotton trees, topped by a vulture or two, eyeing the concourse of people with a sleepy look. To the left or western side is Alladah singbo, the "Storey house" of Alladah, a barn-like structure of red swish, with a rude gateway in the centre and the first floor illuminated by oblong hole-like windows with black shutters. These singbomen are occupied exclusively by the royal

family, no officer, however high, being allowed to build a house of more than one storey. After I was made a prince a singbo was erected for me at Jegbeh, much to the chagrin of the court dignitaries. I did not stay long enough in the capital to see it finished, and doubt not that its erection was stayed the very day after my departure. The singbo occupies about one-fifth of one side of the wall enclosing the royal abode; the north-western end being occupied by a long shed with a sloping thatch projecting from the wall and reaching to within four feet of the ground. In the centre of this shed is an entrance to the palace, so that the teaching in the gate, so often alluded to in Holy Writ, is illustrated even in Dahomey, for these *Pwe*, or sheds, are the great judgment halls of the country, all state palavers being settled in them. Swish appears to be somewhat scarce at Alladah, for many of the houses, and even the palace, had wattled palm branches, in lieu of mud walls, to divide the various courtyards from one another.

Akpulogan, the second in command, had furnished me with a company of musketeers, and, on arrival at the singbo, we were carried three times round the square, Beecham turning a livid green with fright because I would not bow to the empty palace, for at that time the Amazonian residents, with but few exceptions, had gone to Whydah with the King's oil. Under the gate-shed were seven umbrellas, the splendour of each increasing with the dignity of the wearer, although each caboccer can adopt any colour or device, within certain limits, that his fancy may dictate to him, provided that each denotes some meritorious act of the bearer. Beneath the shed I could dimly see a number of figures, but what their dresses were I could not say, as the shadow was in deep contrast to the glare of sunlight above the roof. As we were carried round the square, I noticed on either side of the gate two poles, on the tops of which, fixed on wooden platters by a nail, were two heads—one that of a man apparently about forty years of age, and the other that of a woman about five and twenty. The grey hair of

the man formed a grim contrast to the black distorted visage upon which the death agony was still visible; while the woman seemed to have met her fate with perfect indifference. These ominous relics were the objects of longing desire to a swarm of vultures, who were kept off by four men stationed with long rods to drive off the marauders. I afterwards learned that they were the heads of one of the Amazons and of a drummer who had been detected in a *litison* by one of the spies. Decapitation, or enrolment into the "Gate-opening company," are the only alternatives of this crime; but, as a rule, the offenders are beheaded, always on the scene of their offence.

After the procession had straggled for the third time round the square, I dismounted and proceeded to the gate, sheltered from the sun by a white umbrella which had been sent for my use. Arrived at the gate, I discovered four caboceers sitting in state upon their huge Gold Coast stools as they have been somewhat inaptly called. We halted before the principal caboceer, and I sat down, while Amoosu and the rest immediately fell on their knees and began to smother themselves with the red earth, a process by no means pleasant to anyone to leeward. This sand bath over, a table was brought out from the mysterious gloom of the shed, and a calabash covered by a showy cloth followed. The cloth was spread upon the table and the calabash opened, revealing a smaller one containing water, which, by-the-bye, is purer here than anywhere else in Dahomey, and two decanters of rum and trade-gin, besides several bottles of muscatel and various highly-coloured liqueurs. The whole was then covered with a second gaudy cotton cloth of a bandana pattern.

My stick was then taken by Amoosu, who, crawling on hands and knees, approached the Menjoten. He then, with many bombastic expressions and a considerable amount of blarney, informed him that I was the King's friend and that His Majesty had commissioned him to bring me to Abomey—that I was desirous of paying my respects to the caboceers of Alladah in return for their kind reception, and that I was greatly pleased with the

magnificence and wealth of the country—the latter being, of course, his own invention. The Menjoten then arose, and with a pompous stride came out of the shadow of the Pwe. He shook hands, with the usual fillip of the fingers, and commenced the aristocratic Dahoman salutation, which is as follows: the water is offered and nominally tasted, and the guest says, “*Sin diyye!*” “This is good water,” and the host replies, “*Sin koh!*” “May the water cool your heart.” This formality over, rum was poured out, and “*Okod hu!*” “I compliment you,” was exchanged about half a dozen times between us, followed by “*Okod hu baddan!*” “Good evening to you,” with an occasional “*Atyan-guan.*” “Are you quite well?” I was then “*complimented*” for my journey, and assured that “God would make everything prosper with me.” Rum was then distributed to my escort, all putting their noses to the ground and smothering themselves with red sand, after the draught, and guns were discharged hap-hazard, the muzzles in the air, and about half missing fire.

The Akpulogan, the Muctonun and two other caboccers were then presented in due form, all going through the same ceremonial with the exception of the hand shaking. A gong-gong man next struck two notes several times in succession on his instrument, and silence was proclaimed. He then notified to whom it might concern, that the White friend of the King and the Menjoten were going to drink His Majesty’s health. Upon this the whole square set up a “*Bloo, bloo, bloo,*” just like a lot of school-boys, beating their lips with their fingers at the same time. The rum was poured out into two glasses, a small quantity tipped over on to the ground, to the manes of the King, and, holding the glasses on high, we paused. Down on their marrow-bones went the whole company, with the exception of the two principal performers, the Menjoten and myself; a perfect deluge of sand followed, the assembly revealing nothing but a chaos of moving arms, dirty red heads, and flying sand, and amidst the “*bloo-bloo*” and “*bort-ah-bort-ah*” of the excited crowd we tossed off the liquor, and as no heel-taps are allowed

in this ceremony, I took the precaution of selecting the smallest glass on the board. More guns were fired, a bright fire was lighted in the square to illuminate the scene, while the darkness in our neighbourhood was rendered visible by several Dahomey lanterns—a palm-oil lamp in an iron wicker frame. Dancing and smoking then commenced in full swing, and were kept up to about nine o'clock, the caboceers displaying their powers, and requesting me to give them a specimen of my gymnastic ideas; but having a proper respect for my joints I declined, as if I had not danced "Dahomey fashion" I should have been laughed at.

When I was about to retire, the Menjoten informed me that he and the other caboceers had "dashed" me two goats, a dozen fowls, four ducks and a pig; while they had also presented my hammockmen with some rum—about a teaspoonful all round. I returned the compliment by making sketches of the square during the ceremonial, with which they were highly delighted. The Menjoten then accompanied me to my house, a band playing a choice selection of airs, purely Dahoman in their want of melody. On passing the "trees of bats" on our way to quarters I noticed the utter absence of foliage on those frequented by the *Cheiroptera*, the branches being as bare as elms in winter. I found my dash had already arrived and I was requested to inspect it, but, feeling somewhat tired with the day's proceedings, I declined, telling Amoosu that I could depend upon him to see everything to rights.

Alladah is built on the third stair of the Dahoman terrace, at an elevation of 280 feet, and enjoys a mild climate much resembling that of Toli, but the sea breezes are by no means so strong. It is surrounded by thick forest, and is supplied by water from a small stream to the north, running east to the Denham water; but the best, which as usual is monopolised by the king, is found in a depression to the south-east. The water in this spring is "tabooed" to any one except those belonging to the palace, and, as usual in such cases, the locality is "fetiche." To

the west of Alladah, about two miles in the bush, is Somorne, the Lassa of Dahomey, for there are the shrines of some of the principal gods of the country ; and there the candidates for the priesthood, the higher branches at any rate, are generally instructed and pass their novitiate. This town has been kept secret from the intrusion of white men, but I obtained permission to visit it on my return. Unfortunately, time would not allow me to avail myself of this chance, but on my return to Dahomey I hope to investigate the mythical fetiche town of Alladah. The town seems to be cleaner than most in Dahomey, and the people are, by all accounts, better soldiers ; if good looks have anything to do with bravery they certainly may be, for they are the handsomes people in the country.

CHAPTER V.

JOURNEY TO THE CAPITAL (*continued*).

Departure from Alladah — Attogau — “ Hand-clapping ” N’Henvi — Picturesque situation — Red-walled N’Henvi — Palm-wine — Iuli — Whegbo — Its origin — Akpweh — Thunder-storm — Despatch of messengers to the King — A pleasant night’s rest — The Aglimé swamp — Rough travelling — Convenient thorns — Ants — A bed of “ down ” — Wondonun — Its origin — Aievajeh — Aglimé prairie — Zogbodomen — First meeting with the Amazons — Public nuisance — Plantation scenery — Kana — Arrival at our journey’s end — Visit from the Benazon — Message from the King.

AFTER a sound night’s rest we started at daybreak, and proceeded as far as the square, where I alighted and bade farewell to the caboccers who had assembled to see me off. After “ *African a guan!* ” “ It is a good morning,” and innumerable okodhus, a salute was fired and we started, the caboccers preceding us for about a quarter of a mile until we arrived at a row of carronades, all useless, and either imbedded in swish or fixed in the angle of two logs crossed in the form of the letter X. The troops then presented arms, yelled out “ *wul leh,* ” and groaned to perfection, and at last left us to pursue our way through the plantations of maize and aikun, a kind of bean, which is cultivated in short rows, the earth being heaped up as potatoes are treated in England, or, to form a better simile, like so many graves. The country for the first few miles was more open, savannah and forest alternating. Passing the hamlet of Donu, at the first rise from Alladah, the fourth from Whydah, we came to the village of Attogau (the Attogan of Burton), Atto’s town. This warrior received the *sobriquet* of Atto, the monkey, from his agility in climbing a wall at a siege. He had prepared a small donation for our acceptance,

but gave us unmistakable signs that he expected to be repaid a hundredfold.

Leaving Attogau after a few minutes' rest, a pleasant walk of three miles through a dense forest teeming with life, brought us to N'Henvi Asinweh, *i.e.*, Hand-clapping N'Henvi. This singular name was bestowed upon it in consequence of the following circumstance. Agajah, when on his way to attack Toli, arrived at this place, then an open savannah only, and encamped. During the night a messenger arrived from Abomey, to inform him of the death of his mother, Addonoh. As the exigencies of the case did not permit him to return, he clapped his hands together, and tore his clothes in token of grief; and, to show that he was not unmindful of the respect that ought to be shown to his mother, ordered a town to be built on the spot to be called N'Henveh-Asinweh, to distinguish it from N'Henvi Dovo, or Red house N'Henvi, which is situated about two miles to the north. It is one of the most picturesque spots in the whole country, the magnificent trees forming a splendid background to the cottage-like houses round the square. A conical-roofed palaver house was built in the centre of the market, but it was so infested with centipedes that I preferred to take my chance on a fallen tree trunk, under the friendly shade of the caboccer's tattered umbrella. The office of caboccer of this place is one of the sinecures of Dahomey, being always held by one of the aged relatives of the king, who is exempt from attendance at the Customs, and from bearing arms. The courteous old chief, whose name was Atakpeh, received us with due civility, and gave me some of the finest yams I ever tasted.

A walk of half an hour brought us to N'Henvi Dovo, the Hawee of many books. We here partook of breakfast in a shed opposite the fetiche house, travellers bound to the coast resting under the shade of the "palace." This courtly mansion is a mere ruin, built for the accommodation of the monarch in his progress to Alladah. As this only occurs once in each reign, and as any house can be put in thorough repair in a couple of days, it is

allowed to fall into ruins, a few Amazons and a "keeper" being stationed in it. This is the Burton-on-Trent of the country, for the only palm wine the monarch will condescend to taste is manufactured here. It has a taste of warm, flat ginger beer, but is highly intoxicating. There is a slight descent from N'Henvi Asinweh to this place, about 40 feet by my aneroid, which gave the altitude of N'Henvi Dovoh at 285 feet.

Beyond Red Walled N'Henvi the forest becomes thicker than before, the gigantic climbing plants binding the trees into an impassable jungle. I noticed a group of three immense trees, each at least 30 feet in girth, which, growing very near each other and throwing out branches in every direction, had eventually become a triumvirate; for in several places a natural grafting of the interlocking branches had taken place, the place of union forming a knob-like exerescence. The flowers were most lovely, especially the passifloræ. Blossoms of every hue adorned each bush and tree, while gaily-tinted butterflies flitted from flower to flower, whose petals were often put to the blush by the splendour of the wings of those flying gems. There are plenty of iuli here, for the white rings, the skeletons, as they may be called, of the polyped lay thick on the ground. The movements of the legs of these creatures when in motion may be compared to the advance of a wave. A step is made by the foot in front, which is followed up by each succeeding foot throughout the whole length of the animal. When in a hurry, two or three of these leg waves will be seen rolling towards the tail, as the creature scurries across a pathway.

We had determined to proceed to Kana *via* Akpweh and the Agliné swamp, as being a nearer route than the Toffo, as the road through Koji is called, which skirts the western edge of the swamp. These two roads fork at N'Henvi Dovoh, the former being the nearest, and the latter the one generally preferred in the rainy season.

Three miles from Dovoh we halted at the village of Whe-gbo, and were entertained by the caboccer with a ballet. This spot is

memorable as the site of the great palaver between the three sons of the last king of Alladah. According to the heralds, the name of the village was Aikun (a kind of bean) before the conference, but that after several days had been spent in futile endeavours to settle the momentous question, one of the councillors, anxious to put an end to the Dahomaan Tichborne case, cried out, "*Whe*," (no person is able to settle) "*gbo*" (so great a palaver). This was held to be conclusive, and the speech became the name of the town according to the usual custom. Numerous instances exist of places and people whose names are derived from remarkable speeches, and the strong names of the kings are usually the abbreviations of proverbs.

The Suzakon, as the caboccer of Whe-gbo is called, is a very young man, who succeeded his father in the mayoralty of the place, and in the possession of his father's wives also, when that worthy was slain in the ignominious retreat from Abeokeuta.

The road beyond Whe-gbo begins to slope towards the Aglimé swamp, and the forest becomes thicker than before, while numerous india-rubber vines, eight inches in thickness, evince a greater amount of humidity in the soil. The fetiche houses on the road-side were odoriferous with the blood of slaughtered fowls which had been sacrificed to obtain the all-powerful aid of the god to prevent mishaps to the oil carriers, *en route* to Whydah.

Our halt for the day was at Ak-pweh, situated on a rise forming the southern bank of the Aglimé swamp. The people are the descendants of the old Aizoh, who occupied a small kingdom, of which this was the capital. It extended from the northern frontier of the kingdom of Alladah to Aglimé, and from Akpweh to Toffo, twelve miles to the west on the edge of the Aglimé swamp. It was conquered by Agajah about 1730, and the bulk of the inhabitants of the two principal towns were transported to Abomey, where they have gradually been merged into one family with the old Ffons. The history states that the "Tuffoes" massacred a caravan of Dahomans who were going to Alladah, and that after they had been chastised by Agajah, 400 of the

prisoners were beheaded, and sent to inform Agajah's father of their defeat. After passing through the market-place, which contained a very meagre supply of Dahoman luxuries, we turned sharply to the right, and put up for the night in Quinun's house. A huge circular fetiche temple was erected in the centre of the range of buildings which was said to cover one of the most powerful private fetiches in Dahomey. Happy Quinun, to be the fortunate possessor of so potent a deity!*

The house was literally buried by immense trees towering up to the skies, whose stately heads formed a conspicuous landmark for miles around. So dense was the forest that, although the sun was shining brightly when we entered it, the thick, over-arching foliage cast so deep a shadow as to render the path gloomy in the extreme. Several monkeys took flying leaps from branch to branch, while the pretty green and scarlet love-birds twittered on every bush. While Joe was preparing dinner I was busy writing my journal, and in putting up a few specimens of *Rhopalocera* which I had taken *en route*. As the sun disappeared behind the tall trees, the peculiar "*sough*," and uneasy aspect of the forest in general, gave us timely warning of the near approach of a thunder-storm, which we had noticed brewing in the north-east for some hours before, while all nature seemed hushed as if anticipating some awful calamity; old Tampeh, the landlord, was propitiating Kheviosoh, the thunder god, by carefully trimming some of the Say-an, or thunder-tree shrubs that formed a *chevaux-de-frise* around the fetiche house. Soon after, the storm burst upon us in all its fury. The steel-blue lightning ran along the ground, and lit up the tallest trees with tongues of fire, as it rent boughs, large enough for trees themselves, from the mighty trunks. The thunder was of that sharp, detonating character only heard when the storm is close at hand, while the rain fell literally in sheets.

This chaos lasted for about two hours, during which time three trees in our immediate vicinity had been riven by the electric discharge, while the roads were transformed into rivulets and the

courtyards into small lakes. Such an opportunity for a bath was not to be lost, and my people turned out *en masse* and commenced a lathering match among themselves. The aspect some of them cut was ludicrous in the extreme. Affon, one of the hammockmen, a native of Houssa, had so enveloped himself in a coating of lather as to resemble an enlarged specimen of the woolly dogs whose squeaking powers are the admiration of English children; while others appeared to be trying to imitate the papier-maché figures of Father Christmas, by transforming their sable locks into snow-white tresses. These operations were carried on in the pouring rain, the clothes, such as they were, being not unfrequently washed on the persons of the owners. Ablutions over, followed a copious greasing tableau, until every skin shone like polished walnut.

I here despatched a messenger with my stick to give the king a formal notice of my near approach. Like everything connected with royalty in this happy land, a simple every-day occurrence was clothed in a garb of savage ceremonial. The gate of the house was closed, every stranger being turned out into the street. No one was present in my private quarters but the persons immediately concerned in the delivery of the message. My stick was wrapped in an envelope of figured silk—a handkerchief in fact, and when all was prepared, I was requested to stand up. Ghugalah and another officer of inferior rank then prostrated themselves on the ground and copiously besmeared themselves with dirt, ending by rubbing their mouths from side to side on the bare ground, and touching the earth with their foreheads. While this dirt bath was going on, I held the stick before them, and at its conclusion passed it on to Amoosu, who immediately went through the same performance. I then told Beecham to give my compliments to the king, and tell the messengers to let His Majesty know that I should cross the Aglimé swamp to-morrow, and should in all probability arrive in Kana about nightfall. This message he delivered to Amoosu, embellishing it with sundry complimentary speeches, and the old man repeated it to the two messengers. They then “bathed” again and repeated the

message, each paragraph being impressed upon the memory by sundry markings in the sand, a custom practiced throughout the whole country. The repetition of the message being satisfactory, more bathing followed, after which Ghugalah presented a naked scimitar to me, saying that I was to cut off his head if he failed to deliver my message exactly as he had received it.

A head of cowries was then given to the two messengers for subsistence by the way, and they started about eight o'clock in the evening to make their way through the swamp, which would be rendered more treacherous than before on account of the heavy rain. Two couriers at least are always despatched with royal messages, so that the one may correct any mistakes that may be made by the other; and in the court of Dahomey every great man has a confidant who is always present during interviews with the king, and who takes particular notice of all conversation passing between the monarch and his master, so as to perform the part of a living book of reference in case a dispute should arise as to the wording of any message.

The storm over, the thermometer showed a temperature ten degrees lower than before, and after a smoke I retired to *bed*, but alas! not to *sleep*. My couch was the usual Dahoman sofa, being merely a framework of the petioles of the bamboo tree, elevated about nine inches above the floor, with a raised portion at one end, forming a rude pillow. This bench, covered with a mat, forms the bedstead of high and low, and is, notwithstanding its rugged surface, a more pleasant couch than the bare earth. I generally softened the irregularities by the intervention of a rug, and capped my luxury by a pillow stuffed with dried grass. Upon this occasion my bedstead was placed close to the partition in the shed forming my bedroom. The other side of this bulk-head was the landlord's store of firewood, measuring some twenty tons or thereabouts.

Now, however profitable and pleasing decaying wood may be to the entomologist, its too near proximity is by no means

conducive to the enjoyment of a night's rest. Knowing the facilities afforded by a woodstack for the abode of insects and other "vermin," I had doubts as to the propriety of turning in. Feeling very tired, however, I thought I would risk it, and consequently lay down on the edge of the bed furthest from the wall. On a chair by my side a palm-oil lamp was burning, which served to render the darkness more palpable, casting fantastic shadows upon the bamboo lattice-work of the partition as it flickered and sputtered in its porous earthen receptacle.

Scarcely had I made myself comfortable, when a huge hairy spider of hungry mien and vengeful aspect made his appearance through one of the interstices of the bamboo. Knowing by dear bought experience in Australia the unpleasant effects resulting from the bite of the Tarantula, I determined upon the slaughter of this visitor. Up I got, and taking steady aim, quickly despatched him by a blow of my net-stick to the Elysian fields for spiders. The jar occasioned by the blow seemed to wake up legions of cockroaches, and I soon had the pleasure of seeing the dexterity with which the spiders secured their Orthopterous prey. Creeping stealthily along towards their intended victim, keeping as much as possible in the shadow of the hollows in the bamboos, so as to assimilate the colour of their hirsute bodies with the wood, they slowly made progress. When arrived within shot, they darted with the rapidity of lightning upon the back of the cockroach, which in vain wriggled itself about in the hope of escaping the claws of its destroyer, whose mandibles were busily at work. No Old Man of the Sea ever kept more pertinaciously upon the back of any Sinbad than did the spider upon the back of the cockroach. Closer and closer grew the fatal embrace, until at length, rendered powerless by the repeated injections of venom, the cockroach succumbed, and the spider commenced to revel upon the delicious viands, apparently appropriating the juices only to his use, as the carcase was usually disdainfully cast aside after a few moments.

Now, I thought that an account of this might be very

interesting to the naturalist cosily seated before a fire in a snug parlour, but the proximity of the objects at that time was anything but a desideratum to me, since I wanted to snatch a few hours' rest preparatory to the arduous journey through the "Swamp."

I thought that if I placed the light on the other side of the wood-pile, it would attract the "varmint" to it, and so leave me solus. Accordingly, I took it to the rear, but alas! on returning I soon found that darkness only added to the horrors of the scene. Sundry creakings and scratchings above and around me, on the roof and on the floor, were magnified into the tramp of innumerable centipedes, spiders, and scorpions thirsting for my blood. Out I rushed for the light, and besides getting a thorough soaking in the rain, then pouring in torrents, I nearly broke my neck in falling over some of the boys sleeping across the doorway. How I envied them!

After securing the light and refilling my pipe, I made another attempt to sleep, resolving to despise such puny foes. This is all very well in theory, but not so very comfortable in practice. The scratchings were renewed with redoubled vigour, and a wriggling noise on the palm-leaf thatch of the hut caused a not very pleasant sensation in one's nerves, suggesting a stream of cold water down the back; when, to complete the thing, the light gave an expiring effort, and finally went out in a sputter of derision.

I would not give up even then, but determined to go to sleep in spite of all the spiders and centipedes in Africa. Vain, rash vow! Not five minutes after it was uttered, when, slap upon my upturned face, came an enormous centipede, apparently about a pound at least in weight. This was too much for human nature to endure any longer, so up I jumped (and quickly too), thirsting for blood. A light was struck, and there on my pillow, comfortably curled up, with the greatest *sang froid*, was my tormentor, a fine fat green centipede, a fellow of 100-venom power.

I wonder what the advocates for general peace towards men

and animals would have done in such a case. Perhaps have quietly walked out to let the poor thing finish in calm security the sleep of innocence, or maybe have caught a handful of cockroaches for its breakfast. At any rate, what I did was to delicately take the creature up in my long forceps and quietly drop it into the red-hot embers of our fire; and I must confess that I felt no qualms of conscience when I saw it sputtering in the midst of the fire. I then took out a long bench, like a form, and placed it under the eaves of the roof, and with my pillow under my head, managed to snatch an hour's disturbed slumber; my dreams continually bringing me into contact with spiders as big as elephants, or centipedes a hundred feet long. The rain came on with redoubled fury before daylight, and the roof leaked like a sieve; but what of that: a wet bed was perfect bliss in comparison with the companionship of such vermin.

By sunrise we had made a hurried repast, and had started for "the Swamp," *par excellence*, of Dahomey. This formed the northern frontier of the kingdom of Alladah, and extends, with more or less continuity, from the Denham waters to the lagoons northwards from Porto Seguro. In the central parts there is no perceptible current, but towards the west there is a slight drainage into the Hahoh water. Its breadth near Akpweh may be estimated at five miles, but towards the west it widens considerably. It appears to be a drainage from the upper portion of the Denham Lake. Its passage in the most favourable season—January—is arduous, but in the rains absolutely perilous; for the quagmires are so deep and treacherous that broken limbs are the frequent result of the numerous slippings on the slimy clay. It would form a formidable obstacle to the passage of any armed force, and the "Koh"—"the Swamp," as it is called by the natives, is a better protection to the capital than the whole bevy of invincible Amazons.

After passing the red swish wall of the palace, we entered upon a steep descent, which soon brought us to the black tenacious clay of the swamp. Here our troubles began. The swamp was skirted

with a fringe of tall grass, which gives one a severer *cra-cra* than any other grass in the country, and abounds in snakes and chameleons. Passing this belt, we entered upon the swamp proper. The road was as uneven as if it had been turned over by a Titanic spade, and the twists and turns in it were so intricate that it was a most difficult matter to thread my hammock between the trees, which grew very close together, and were sure to have a broken stump in the exact spot to give me a severe poke in the back as I was slowly handed by; while, if I put out my hands to save myself, there were plenty of thorns to give me good hand-hold. Mpengala, in 1784, constructed a road through this slough, which had always deterred visitors from going to Abomey. Tradition says that after the defeat of the Apses in the swamp by the Dahomans, the king gave to each of the eaboccers a string of cowries ten yards long, and told them to construct a road of that width from his palace to the beach. Traces of this vast national undertaking are still evident between Akpweh and Whydah, but not a single yard remains within the swamp, although the sloughs were filled up and the trees cut down, so as to reduce the uneven character of the ground to an approximate level. As it now appears, the paths through the swamp seem admirably calculated either to break the neck of the traveller, or, if he escapes that mishap, to mystify him in a perfect labyrinthian maze.

The clay was in huge lumps, slimy at the sides, and more or less baked by the sun on the top, which was polished smooth as if blackleaded, by the naked feet of the wayfarers. If the traveller slipped off this polished apex, he sank up to his knees in thick tenacious clay, from which he had to be in several instances literally pulled out by his companions. Here and there were deep pits, some filled with water, and others with insidious mire, the surface being thinly "frozen over" by the sun. One step on this, and suffocation would assuredly be the result, unless speedily rescued.

Straggling creepers formed admirable traps to catch the feet

of the unwary, while the innumerable fragments of oil jars, calabashes, and other receptacles for produce which strewed the path on every hand, betokened the heavy toll which the Koh exacted upon the porters who passed through it. In short, the passage was one uninterrupted series of acrobatic leaps and twists from hummock to hummock, enlivened by the frequent laugh at some hapless fallen one, who often had his revenge from the cachinnations of his companions, when, thrown off their balance by the violence of their laughter, they toppled into some quagmire close by.

The frequent trains of oil-carriers enlivened the solitude by their loud cries of warning to each other, rendering their approach audible several minutes before it was visible. In nearly every gun-custom hut, groups were to be seen resting from their mountebank labours; not a few bewailing the loss of some jar of oil or piece of pottery, the sale of which was to have procured a soul-stirring draught of Hamburg potato rum. Within this swamp butterflies abound, often forming a perfect carpet, as, with expanded wings they sipped the grateful moisture from some boggy spot. Dragon flies were plentiful, a glorious *Libellula*, with a blue gloss on his wings like the azure hue of a *Morpho*, being here and there noticed. Ants, too, were in thousands, the coffee-bag nests of one species reminding me of those I had seen in the inner Gaboon country, while others erected structures like huge toad-stools or tea-canisters. The long trains of these creatures were a fruitful source of annoyance, for they swarmed across the path at frequent intervals, resenting any disturbance by a unanimous attack upon the offender; while not unfrequently, as the hammock brushed between two bushes, a perfect shower of these fiery little animals would descend upon the devoted traveller. On such occasions I used to wish that I was a polype with plenty of arms to throw off my tormentors.

The road forks at every fifty yards or so, and scouts are sent on ahead to reconnoitre, each invariably declaring that the path he had taken was the worst, so that for all the benefit we derived

from their pioneering, we might as well have been without them. In this way we proceeded, as much sideways as end on, for about four hours, and had progressed probably about half as many miles, and I began to flatter myself that I was going to escape Scot-free. No such luck, however, was in store for me, for all at once I missed the foremost hammockman, and was deposited upon a luxurious bed of soft black mud. Down, down, I went with a deliciously easy gliding motion, until I was half-immersed as I lay in the hammock on the surface of the mud. The unfortunate bearer had slipped into a mud-hole up to the middle of the thigh. As he was momentarily sinking deeper, I called out to the others to drag him out, and so they certainly did with a wrench of the arms which would have dislocated mine; and, leaving him to scrape the tenacious clay from his legs, they raised the hammock-pole and lifted me out of my easy couch. So great was the tenacity of the clay and the suction of the hammock, that it took the united efforts of eight men to clear the hammock from the bog, as they had to work from the edges* of the hole. Luckily I had provided a spare hammock, as the black bemired one I had just left would have cut but a sorry spectacle at a "reception" at any of the villages.

In the months between Christmas and May the passage through the swamp is much easier, although the hard-baked hummocks of clay are exceedingly painful to the naked feet of the bearers, who prefer making new tracks through the bush to continuing to the old path. We saw a few tortoises, and occasionally a monkey would crash through the trees, while parrots of several species kept up a continuous chattering and screaming overhead.

A few minutes' march or rather wriggle from the scene of our mishap, brought us to Kolmeh, so called from the name of the caboccer, and in half an hour we entered the grassy environs of Wondonun. This is a village built on a slight eminence in the middle of the swamp at the suggestion of the chief eunuch, who told Gelelé that the journey between Akpweh

and Aievajeh was too far to be performed by women in the wet season without a resting-place, or half-way house. Upon this the king said that if he could find a suitable place he might make a village and appoint any friend to be the caboceer. The eunuch said, in the usual metaphoric language in vogue in such cases, "The king has only to wish for the place and the ground will talk." This hint was taken, and to enable the reader to understand it, a peculiar custom of the country must be described. If a child is born with teeth or speaks before the usual time, the phenomenon is considered as of ill augury to the country, and the innocent cause is condemned to be smothered in mud. The place selected for this barbarous practice was near the present village of Wondonun, so that the eunuch alluded to the place where "the ground"—i. e., the infants buried within it—"cried out." The interpretation of the word is, therefore, *won*, = the ill thing, *donun* = speaks sense.

The village is, as usual, completely hidden from the road, and contains perhaps twenty families. The place has a fever-stricken, unwholesome appearance, and although the caboceer essayed to muster a dancing-party, his efforts were unsuccessful. It is celebrated for its yams and the peculiar taste of its plantains. We rested for an hour under the usual caravansary shed, during which interval the bearers employed themselves in scraping the caked mud from their shins.

Beyond this halting-place the swamp is more passable, although still bad enough to try one's temper. As we passed on, the hummocky nature of the road disappeared, and the black clay became mixed with sand, while patches of tall cra-cra-inflicting grass were passed through at frequent intervals. In two hours the chattering of finches and the din of voices announced our approach to human habitations once more, and a few minutes after the tortuous path through the grass conducted us to the square of Aievajeh, where we once more found ourselves upon the rufous soil, characteristic of the whole coast. This fact is made known by the etymology of the name—viz., *Aie*, earth; *va*, red; *jeh*, on

the top of; i.e. (The town built) on the top of red earth. The place is surrounded by a thicket of tall reed-like grass which is admirably adapted for thatch, and is exclusively employed for that purpose in the royal palaces. It contains a small market, offering nothing but the veriest necessities of Dahoman life. The caboceer, Semehveh, is authorised to examine the passports of all suspected persons, and to imprison any delinquent until he has submitted the case to the examination of the Ajakyaho, an officer at Abomey.

After a small reception of the usual type, we started afresh, and with a gentle ascent attained the celebrated Aglimé, or Agremé,* as Burton has it, whose *Uhon nukon* covered perhaps three acres. On the left of the road was a long shed used as a palaver house, when the king deigns to visit the place, which was utilised as a green-room to prepare us for a reception on a larger scale than we had experienced since leaving Alladah. The place boasts a palace built of a mixture of swish and bamboo wattling, within which is a shed reserved for the accommodation of white men on a visit to the king, who are required to remain here, when His Majesty is at his country palace at Kana, until summoned to the royal presence. The name is derived from a tradition that when a former chief named Jeh-mneken had command, the fetiche people declared that his wall would totter to the ground if he did not send a toll to Dahomey equal to 169 cowries per diem. As Jeh-mneken had private information that this was only a pretext to extort money from him for the use of the priests, he said that the balance of the toll would always be found *Aglimé*, i.e., in the wall itself.

At Aglimé we first come across a gravelly swish making the walls "stronger" than nearer the coast. There is a long inclined plane from this town to the Mahi hills, broken only in one or two places, and the country loses a great

* The *l* and *r* in Ffon are so peculiarly pronounced that it is often impossible to detect the difference.

part of the pluviate character it possesses nearer the sea. There are traces of copper, and, notwithstanding Burton's statement to the contrary, a little gold, which is visible as specks in every piece of pottery manufactured here. Mica abounds in the earthenware, it is true, but the result of analysis at home has revealed the presence of a small quantity of the precious metal.

After the usual gymnastic reception, we were invited to breakfast by the caboccer, who conducted us to a pleasant arbour surrounded by oranges, limes, and pine apples, which formed a dessert to the more substantial viands of roast and boiled goat, fowl, and yams. About three in the afternoon we again started for our last stage, the way leading through tall grass-covered plains, amidst which the lovely scarlet-headed weaver birds gleamed out like dots of flame. Here and there a huge pile covered with vegetation proclaimed the abode of the white ant, or bug-bug, as Beecham rendered it. These creatures are very destructive to the roofs of the houses, and I was often solicited to prescribe an unfailing remedy for their attacks.

The character of the scenery became totally changed, reminding me of the country near Cape Lopez by the park-like beauty of the wavy grass, amidst which were thickly scattered clumps of noble trees. In about an hour we arrived at the junction of the cross-road between Toffo and Aglimé. Here there was a miserable village rejoicing in the euphonious title of Zogbodomen (the name of a peculiar mode of dressing the hair), where we were watered and danced to for about half an hour.

Starting afresh, we passed through a palmyra forest, on the slope of a hill, on the summit of which is a Dauhwe, or Temple of the Rainbow god. This stands on the right hand of the road, and consists of a long low shed, the inner wall of which is daubed with figures, in all colours, representing men, animals, and fetiche hieroglyphics. In front of the temple, sacred to the God Atin-bodun, is an open space, with an immense Bombax at either end.

We had scarcely passed this shrine than the foremost of our train yelled out some incomprehensible speech, and my bearers, striking off from the road, plunged headlong into the tall grass. On my angrily demanding the reason, Beecham told me that the "Amajohns" were coming. On listening I detected a tinkle-tinkle, as if from a small cracked bell, and in a minute a train of five women, clad in blue baft, defiled past us, carrying water-jars on their heads. The front one had a rude bell suspended from her neck, which tinkled as she walked along. I was by no means prepossessed at the first sight of the women soldiers of the empire, but I afterwards learned that these were not the fighting Amazons, but the camp followers of the female braves. No man is permitted to meet them on the road, while, if the tinkle of the bell is unheeded, they will stop and rattle it in high dudgeon until the baneful male scampers into the bush.

This institution is one of the greatest nuisances of the country, for in the capital there are so many of these bands journeying from one of the royal palaces to another, that a straightforward progress of twenty yards is scarcely practicable. These worthies passed, we resumed our route, and in a few minutes the whole Kana valley lay spread open to our view. The scenery was totally different from that of the dense forest through which we had been journeying since leaving Toli, while the grass and trees wore a fresher look than in the parched lowlands near the coast. Except that the grass was six feet high, and there were a few palms visible, I could have almost fancied myself in a well-kept English park. Clumps of gigantic forest trees, amidst which the stately cotton tree reared its lofty head, a giant amidst a race of Titans, dotted the landscape; while here and there the vivid emerald hue of the maize or plantain crops enlivened the more sombre tint of the tall grass.

At frequent intervals a faint blue curl of the smoke from a wood fire showed us where a secluded homestead lay buried in groves of orange, mango, and banana. The pale yellowish green of the cocoanut stood out in bold contrast to the

more sombre olive of the oil-palm, while at intervals the fusiform trunk of the palmyra, crowned with its cluster of starry leaves, divested the scene of every particle of monotony. Numerous turkey buzzards circled as moving dots far, far, overhead; a solitary specimen occasionally perching on the summit of a decaying stump, as if acting as sentinel to its companions, who might be revelling upon the carcase of some animal on the ground below. Sun birds, vying with the most gorgeous humming birds of the New World in the metallic splendour of their hues, flitted from panicle to panicle of the tall grass, their tweet-tweet reminding one of the note of an English tree-creeper. The Whydah finches, or "widow birds" as they are often called, were often observed, but were destitute of the long tail-feathers which add such a graceful charm to their beauty in the breeding season.

On the opposite side of the valley, crowning the gentle ascent, is Kana, the Calamina of the old writers. It is a long, straggling town, swish walls and palm-leaf thatch being the building materials, as is the case throughout the country. Even in the middle of the town are large open spaces, with high trees on every side, so that the area of the town by no means gives a fair estimate of the population. Several large houses are situated on the south side, and the long mud walls surrounding the numerous courtyards of a Dahoman house, give an appearance of a walled town to Kana, as seen from the road. A nearer approach, however, dispels this idea, for the ramparts dwindle to mud walls some twelve feet high, and the off side is often utilised as a receptacle for the refuse, solid and liquid, of the entire household. The former "city" contains about 5,000 inhabitants, spread over an area of about three square miles.

Passing a small fetiche house to the right, dedicated to *Logozo*, the tortoise, we began to descend the southern slope of the valley, and in a few minutes we entered the plantations of maize, yams, cassava, &c., which are the national boast, although I could not see any superiority in the cultivation of the various crops over

that practised at other large towns in the country. At the foot of the hill the road divides into three. The one to the right leads to the Hanan water, used only by the royal household, while the two others lead to the western and central parts of the town respectively. Flowing through the valley is a small stream, the principal source of drinking-water in the town. It has a muddy, horse-pond look, and, as the main road crosses it, it is continually stirred up until the water has much the appearance of thin *slip*, the white clay beneath the superficial stratum of decaying vegetation being held in suspension for a considerable time.

No sooner does the sun begin to decline than the women of the place start on their daily journey for water, and the rivulet keeps up the notorious reputation of all tropical wells as a gossiping place. In the rains there are several hollows near the stream, which become the receptacles for the superfluous waters of the rivulet; and, although the water may become converted into a green slime, so long as any fluidity remains, it is used for drinking purposes.

We had to make several detours into small bye-paths, which abound on every hand, in consequence of the bands of Amazonian water-carriers whom we continually met. They seem to have a pleasure in turning aside any white man, who, if inclined himself to rebel at such an absurd custom, would inevitably be dragged out of the road by his negro guards. Sometimes the "bell woman" was a mere child who could scarcely walk; but still, from the crown prince down to the lowest slave, every male must "clear out." It used to make my blood boil to stand awaiting the passage of a troop of shrivelled-up old hags, whose puckered hides resembled the exuviae of some vile reptile rather than human skin.

The object of this insane custom is not very clear. Some say that if one of the Amazons were to break her water-pot, the nearest male would be accused of bewitching the portress, and would get into a scrape. Others that it is a protection to the

chastity of these ancient *virgins*; but as there are about four women at least to every man in the country, it would seem to be a useless precaution. If a "leopard wife," as the wives of the king are called, journeys abroad, the Amazons themselves have to give way, and the men and women hurry from the path as though a man-eating tiger were approaching.

Beyond the stream the road is twenty yards wide, but cut up into narrow footpaths by the porters, who travel in Indian file along the broadest roads; and in a long train, where everybody is conversing with his friend, the rear not unfrequently having an argument with the van, the noise is anything but pleasant.

A ten minutes' walk brought us to the Gaou Nehou, or Gaou's fetiche house. It is a counterpart to the Rainbow Temple, with a few clay images under conical roofs in front of it, the whole being surrounded by a grove of *Ficus*. In front of this temple was a line of bamboo tree stalks placed lengthways on the ground parallel to the road. These are a protection to the fetiche people who may be present in the temple when an Amazonian band passes by. The intervention of these sticks prevents any malignant influence from the male priest having any effect upon the Amazons; and whenever any male had occasion to remain for any length of time near a path frequented by these viragos, he always ensured his safety by a line of bamboos. The same talisman separates the Amazons from the remainder of the court within the palaces.

A few yards from this fetiche house is the Gaou Teh or Gaou's water. The Gaou is the commander-in-chief of the right wing of the Dahoman army; and, before going to war, the soldiers assemble at Kana, where they encamp in rude bamboo sheds. Before starting, the Gaou performs most extravagant fetiche ceremonies at the Gaou Nehou, after which he pours water from the Gaou Teh on his head, thereby intimating that if he does not perform successfully the commands of the king, he will expect the vengeance of his royal master to be poured on his head in the same way as he now pours the water

upon it. This Gaou Teh is merely a hollow, and contains no spring, but, no doubt, the fetiche people have means of obtaining water from it unknown to the eyes of the laity.

Twenty yards from the Gaou Teh is the *Kana-gbo-nun*, or Kana gate. A row of fig-trees, mostly pollarded, extends at right angles to the road for twenty yards on each side. Across the central opening a pole is suspended, from the centre of which a fetiche mat, stained red and green, is hung. The threshold of the gate is also a pole, and we had to alight and walk over this, as no man, the king alone excepted, is permitted to ride through a gate. All my people had a dirt bath, and the gate-keeper made his appearance from a low shed to the left, eager for a present, as indeed are all the officials of the government. Near the residence of this custodian are several fetiche huts, daubed with white or red clay.

Twenty minutes from the Kanagbonun, the road leads between two swish walls, the *enceinte* to the houses of two caboccers; and passing a few poverty-stricken sheds, where some old women had two-cowrie lots of tobacco, yam, and cankie, exposed for sale, a sharp turn to the left conducted us to our quarter at the "English" house. A few dirty fetiche images, well besmeared with stinking food, "guarded" the approach.

Passing through a courtyard containing a few open sheds, we entered a second some twenty-four feet square, on the east side of which was a barn-like structure with a lock-up cupboard beyond. These were our quarters where we were doomed to spend many a weary day, for Dahoman etiquette required me to keep a certain amount of seclusion before being publicly received by the king. The landlord was an old man with a stiff knee, who hobbled about by the aid of one of the long walking-sticks in vogue. Some of these have a large wooden crescent on the top, while others are surmounted by a kind of sword-guard, so that when the weight is thrown on the stick the fingers are prevented from slipping down by the crescent or the guard. This fellow was the very pink of obsequious politeness, bringing fire, water,

mats and etceteras; but old experience in African hospitality, whether civilised or savage, warned me that I should be expected to pay for everything through the nose. He was wonderfully particular in coming to pay his respects to me every morning; but when I discontinued the glass of rum, his anxiety for my welfare suffered a sudden collapse. How very singular!

About eight o'clock Amoosu came in to give notice that I must be prepared to receive several visitors, and scarcely had he spoken than the Benassoh or Benazon was announced. He brought a present of cankies, fowls, cooked goat's flesh, yams, soups, &c., from the English landlady, a high dignitary of the Amazonian corps, under whose care I was nominally to remain during my stay. Benassoh, who is the chief of the royal commissariat department, passed a number of very "blarneyish" compliments to me, and said that the English landlady begged me to accept the accompanying present as an earnest of what she intended to do for me.

I could always obtain a supply of food for about a third of my people by sending to this personage in the early morning; but, except when specially ordered to furnish me with provisions by the king himself, she never forgot to *forget* my wants. The viands were served up in those earthen vessels usually seen in civilized bedrooms only, but in this favoured land they were generally made to do duty as porringers. These utensils were contained in cylindrical baskets, the top and bottom of which were huge calabashes, each branded with the private mark of the owner. The coat-of-arms of the English landlady was a goat's head between a gun and a man's hand. The porters who carried these provisions knelt down by the side of their respective loads, and I was assured by Beecham that if they were to spill or spoil any of the food, they would be severely punished. Perhaps it may be so—who knows?

This deputation being dismissed, I had to receive the king's message. Glu-ga-lah and the other messenger entered the courtyard, and kneeling down at my feet, smothered themselves

with dirt. He bore a stick from the king, a rude carving something like a dolphin's head with a man's hand in the creature's mouth. This was wrapped up in a silk handkerchief, which was again covered with a white cloth. When all was prepared, the stick was undressed and handed to Amoosu, who, with Beecham, was prostrate on his marrow bones. I then stood up and received the stick, of course with all due respect. Ghu-ga-lah then began the king's message, repeating it sentence by sentence to Amoosu, and Beecham interpreting it to me as he went on. After each sentence, Ghu-ga-lah made a stroke on the sand with his finger, the invariable custom when any important message has to be delivered, for the messenger can tell by the number of strokes whether the required number of divisions of the message have been delivered. A rough translation of the message was as follows :—

“The king's compliments to you ; the king's compliments to you ; the king's compliments to you,” repeated three times *à la mode*. “The king thanks you,” also, three times three. “He thanks you for coming to see him. He thanks you for the trouble caused by the sun on your head. He thanks you for rain on your head. He thanks you for stones. He thanks you for tall grass giving you *era-era*. He thanks you for the miseries undergone in journeying through the swamp. He thanks you for your trouble in procuring chop (food),” and about twenty similar sentences. “He asks about the welfare of Mr. A. Swanzy, and of Mr. Lyall, his agent at Whydah. He holds your stick in your hand. He loves you too much, *i.e.*, very much. He holds you close to his heart. He will keep you from all harm. He loves you as his son. He comes quick to see you,” &c.

The delivery of this imposing speech occupied about half an hour, and between each sentence the messengers and Amoosu touched the earth with their lips. I thanked His Majesty for his good wishes and begged him to lose no time in giving me permission to investigate the natural history of his country

Upon this occasion Amoosu was dressed in a brown tunic profusely ornamented with cowries and tufts of blood-besmeared feathers. I at once christened him "Blood and Cowries," a nickname by which he was ever afterwards known.

Prince Ha-han-su, the heir to the throne, then sent his compliments to me, and said that as soon as his father permitted it, he would come and see me. We then drank the health of the king, and were congratulating ourselves upon having finished, when another messenger arrived with a king's stick, carved in imitation of a clenched fist, with a complimentary message from His Majesty, saying that it was an exceedingly good omen that he and I should arrive at Kana on the same day. I then learned for the first time that the king had arrived at Kana from Abomey on that very day.

More healths had to be drunk, and at last I succeeded in getting the bamboo door of the yard closed and bolted by a thick stick; and, completely exhausted by the arduous duties of the day, I turned in to bed and slept soundly in spite of a small army of mantidæ which had determined to immolate themselves at the shrine of Moloch in my candle. I heard at intervals the ting-tang of the gong-gong, and subsequently learned that a guard of honour was posted at the principal entrance of my quarters, who were relieved at stated intervals, determined by the time occupied by singing certain songs or walking a prescribed distance.

CHAPTER VI.

RECEPTION AT KANA.

History of Kana—Bats—Sandwasps—Visit from the Adonejan and the Buko-nonroh—The eclipse—Luminous centipedes—A tame chameleon—Visit to the old palace—Edible rats—The monkey king—Dahoman rifle contest—Preparation for the reception—The Gbwn-hun-li—Parade of officers—Dahoman dances—Horns—Pantomime of the Ashanti company—Jesters—My song of welcome—Nicknames—Procession to the Palace—The “stone clatter” palace—A palace gate—Grand reception by the nobility—The Ningan—The Men—Eunuchs—Gelelé, King of Dahomey—The Amazonian guards—Salutations—A novel decanter—Return to my quarters.

KANA, next to Whydah, is the most important town in the kingdom. It appears to be of very ancient date, and to have been a colony of the Oyos or Eyeos, a powerful Yoruba nation. When Daho began his career of conquest at the commencement of the seventeenth century, he captured it from the original possessors; but it repeatedly changed hands, until, in the reign of Tegbwesun, the Eyeos plundered and burnt the place, and imposed a tax upon the Dahomans.

This tribute was reluctantly paid, until, in the reign of Gézu, that monarch, finding the implacable enemies of his race embroiled in a quarrel with their northern neighbours, the Foulahs and the Houssas, attacked the Eyeo garrison at Kana, and after defeating them, declared his intention to withhold the payment of the tribute for the future. Since that time Kana has remained in the quiet possession of Dahomey, and is the summer residence of the sovereign, and the rendezvous of the army previous to its starting upon any important expedition. In memory of this signal victory, Gézu instituted the “Kana customs,” which take

place before the grand customs at Abomey. In this pageant the human victims are paraded before the admiring eyes of the rabble, dressed in the garb of their former masters, the Eweos, and carrying implements of husbandry in their hands as indicative of their unfitness to perform the part of warriors, but only that of peaceful husbandmen.

Three days passed, bringing no permission to go outside the gate; but I received several complimentary messages from the king and prince. This latter young man behaved in a manner that would put many a white man to shame. He was continually sending me presents of sheep, pigs, and fowls, besides fruit and liqueurs in abundance.

Every evening the monotony was broken by the passage of the army of bats from Abomey *en route* to the Aglimé swamp. They commenced their journey about half-past five o'clock, and continued to fly over with scarcely any diminution of numbers until it was too dark to distinguish them. They are under the protection of the king, who issued a mandate forbidding their destruction, in consequence of their being slaughtered wholesale by the breechloaders of the whites at Whydah.

I used to employ myself by catching a few diptera in a small courtyard adjoining my own quarters, but the space being only seven paces by four, the collection was not very extensive. I succeeded, however, in obtaining a small series of the telescopic-eyed *Diopsis* and the brilliant *Stratiomide*. The sides of the house were bored by several species of *Ammophila*, some preferring the innermost walls, while others had a fancy for the more exposed sites. The entrance was a circular hole about a quarter of an inch in diameter, and the passage led in an upward sloping direction, about four inches into the substance of the swish. The sides of the passage were as smooth as if the hole had been drilled and polished, and the insect completely filled it with its body. The wonderful adaptation of means to an end by Omniscient Nature, was beautifully exemplified by these insects. Had they stiff expanded wings, like some other members of the

Hymenopterous group, they would be speedily broken, if not completely destroyed, by friction against the sides of the passage. These disastrous effects, however, are entirely prevented by the peculiar structure of the wings, which fold longitudinally, so that they lie close to the sides of the insect and oppose no resistance to ingress or egress.

These sand wasps appear to be somewhat long-sighted, for I was accustomed to watch a female who was constructing a nest above my bed's head. As the place was somewhat dark to any one coming in from the glare of the sunshine, the wasp appeared to be slightly confused by the gloom, and generally alighted for a few seconds on my table. From thence, after a short rest, she made a straight course for her nest, but occasionally missed her aim and would wander about the wall in an undecided desultory manner, running up and down the wall, and applying her antennæ to any nests she might encounter in her course. She appeared to lose all idea of the locality of her own nest, and would at length fly to the table and take a fresh departure. The nest once found, she entered and in a few seconds emerged, *tail* foremost, with a lump of swish as large as a mustard seed in her jaws. Clinging to the perpendicular sides of the wall by her feet, she would drop the morsel between the wall and her body, and again enter to bring out a similar load. Although there were several compartments in each nest, none of them were sufficiently large to permit the insect to turn when inside, hence the sand wasp always made its exit backwards.

On the 10th of August old "Blood-and-Cowries" came rushing into my room in a state of extreme excitement, saying that the Adonejan or Adonijah, as the Methodist Beecham called him, was coming to meet me. A deafening noise of gong-gongs, horns, and other instruments of music, proclaimed the arrival of some great man. Dahoman etiquette permits, nay, indeed necessitates, the detention of any guest before seeing him, as any undue haste is highly indecorous. In a few minutes the bamboo door was thrown open to the horror of the lily-livered Beecham,

who dreaded the consequences of any neglect of respect to the great dignitary. This functionary, as the "English landlord for the outside," is the subordinate to the *Meu*, not the *Mingan* as Burton erroneously states, as that person has no dealings whatever with white men, being a war officer *par excellence*. His other duties are to assist the *Mingan* in the command of the right division of the army; to provide for the accommodation of all white visitors to the court; to act as Palatial engineer, and finally, to take charge of a certain class of prisoners. He was a huge, burly, bullet-headed, jolly-looking old fellow, standing over six feet—a perfect Daniel Lambert in ebony. A quiet vein of humour is infused through all his actions; even when performing a dirt bath before the king, he seems to do it as a joke more than the stern reality the degrading ceremony really is. He was dressed in a blue and white chequered cotton cloth, several silver armlets, and a necklace from which depended a padlock and key of the same metal, all of native manufacture.

He was accompanied by the *Buko-nonroh*, the court physician, and the contrast of this worthy with the fat *Adonejan* was ludicrous in the extreme. Tall as the latter was, his bulk detracted from his height, but the doctor, who was not so tall by four inches, appeared to tower aloft when he stood up, for he was as thin as a lath, with scarcely a vestige of flesh to fill out his shrivelled skin, while his long double-jointed arms reminded me of those of an *ourang-outang*. Like all of his craft, his head was close-shaven, and a necklace of leopard's fur denoted the office of professor of medicine. These doctors must not be confounded with the *fetiché* people, for they solely attend to the cure of the body, leaving that of the soul to the "*No*" or priests. The doctor was arrayed in modest white cotton, and carried a huge *houlette*, ornamented by spirals of iron wire and tin tacks. Although Burton assigns the part of a spy to this official, I never found anything of a prying nature going on during his visit; and indeed when any presents for the king are

expected, it is the Benazon who inspects and reports upon them before their delivery to the king.

These two officers of State were highly delighted with my compass, aneroid, and other instruments, the applications of which they at once understood, on their working being explained. I have always found among the nobles of Dahomey a ready aptitude to receive instruction, and a thorough understanding of matters that would be deemed far beyond the grasp of their minds. For example, I told the king that on a certain date the sun would be eclipsed by the moon. He requested me to draw a diagram of the occurrence; and, upon my making a rough plan of the phenomenon on the sand of the palace yard, he said, "Since the moon turns round the earth and comes between the earth and sun once in every month, how is it that we do not have an eclipse every month?" I had then to inform him that the plane of the moon's orbit was not identical with that of the earth, and that in consequence the moon did not always come in a direct line between us and the sun. The mere fact of the monarch asking such a question proves that he, at least, is capable of receiving a first-class education, and the longer our intimacy continued the more numerous were the proofs of the high order of intelligence possessed by this potentate.

After a stay of about an hour, I conducted my visitors to the gate, where I found a large body of the Adonejan's people assembled. At a sign from their master they gave me a *Wulleh* three times, and the Adonejan, mounting a small Yoruba horse, upon which he was held by two men, started for his domicile amidst the deafening clamour of several bands. In the evening I had a present of "chop" from both my visitors, with a message, saying that they begged they might have the favour of my company when I had been received by the king.

On strolling about the premises after dark I was surprised to observe a number of luminous objects crawling about a dead vulture. A closer inspection discovered them to be centipedes, and the light apparently proceeded from the lower portion of their bodies,

especially near the last six pairs of legs. The light was of a pale bluish-green colour, and was so strong in some individuals as to enable me to read small type when held close to the page by a pair of forceps.

In the morning I had a fine chameleon brought me alive. This saurian was usually of a pale green, irrorated with black, but varied from a uniform grass-green to a deep chrome, while the black spots assumed every possible size. Sometimes the animal would appear clothed in green and black check, which would gradually change into a pale green with a zigzag black line down the back, the sides being freckled in sepia, and the belly having a colour like cartridge paper. These changes were all assumed within a few minutes; and sometimes when alarmed the creature would give two or three snorts and go into mourning, not a vestige of the green being visible. These markings were varied at will, and sometimes the whole series would be visible at one time, the right side being black while the left was green. Its small brilliant eyes, one sometimes directed ahead, and the other along its back, gave a ludicrous appearance to the animal; but when placed on a large branch, it was wonderful to see how closely the varied colours of the skin approximated to the changing lights and shadows of the leaves and twigs. This chameleon was ten inches and a half in length, and I have frequently seen him take a fly when eighteen inches distant from it. I had it alive for several weeks, until it began to recognise me, and would permit me to handle it without betraying any alarm. It fell a victim to Dahoman superstition in the end; for a mortality set in amongst some birds I had taken alive in traps, and the poor chameleon, being accused of bewitching them by looking at them with one eye, was burnt alive in my absence. *Requiescat in pace.*

I was in the habit of taking a walk for about an hour before sundown, as Dahoman etiquette did not permit me to go out until I had been presented to the king. I was always accompanied by two or three dozen guards, who effectually prevented

my making any collection of insects. Our walks generally led us to an old palace, the erection of which is ascribed to several kings. This was about two miles S.W. of the town, and consisted, as far as an outside view permitted us to judge, of a tall swish wall, repaired here and there by bamboo, and enclosing an area of about a square mile. The gates were in better order; the thatch over the shed on either side being kept in good condition, and the square before the gate swept clean by a number of men appointed for the purpose. The wall surrounded a number of courtyards and barn-like sheds, within one of which was the grave of Tegbwesun, although the bones of that monarch have been removed to the Dahomey palace. Near this palace is a grove of fig trees, beneath which I was accustomed to take a number of large Satyridæ which never took wing except for about an hour before sundown. In some of the plantations a large bird like a partridge abounded, and furnished me with many a dainty meal. While on the subject of food I may mention that a kind of rodent, not unlike a large rat, is found near Kana. One of the hammockmen caught one in a fall trap, and brought it to me. As, however, I could not overcome a slight prejudice against the creature while I had other food, I made him a present of his game. My refusal evidently delighted him, and in a short time he brought the animal for my inspection, neatly skinned, and stretched on cross sticks, and kippered in the smoke of an acacia fire. I subsequently tasted the animal at Abomey, and can vouch for its being a dainty addition to an African bill of fare.

My own course during the day may be interesting to intending visitors: fowls—boiled, stewed, or roasted; and wild pig or goat's flesh formed the main dish of every meal, varied, as occasion offered, by a duck, pigeon, monkey, parrot, or partridge. The vegetables were represented by yams, beans or maize, boiled whole or ground and made into a pudding like the *fufu* of the Gold Coast; while for dessert I had an abundant supply of eggs, oranges, limes, guavas, cocoa nuts, pine apples, and papaws, to say nothing of melons, onions, and ground nuts.

There are several fine specimens of the monkey-bread tree growing round the square opposite the principal gate of the old Kana palace. The fruit is somewhat cuneiform in shape, and very hard. Old Blood-and-Cowries told me the following yarn respecting it. "Once upon a time a certain ambitious monkey aspired to the Simiad throne. A meeting of aged monkeys was, therefore, convened, and the process of election determined upon. Every monkey of the same tribe as the aspirant provided himself with one of the hard fruits of this tree. On the day of election the candidate was tied to a tree trunk, and the subjects over whom he aspired to rule passed by one at a time, each giving the king-presumptive a smart knock on the head with the fruit. The first monkey succumbed to such severe *head-work*; and, although several other monkeys have from time to time become candidates for office, they have invariably paid for their presumption with their lives, as none had sufficient brain to withstand the long series of blows inflicted by each individual of his tribe. I think, however, if one of the aborigines of Australia were to enter into the candidature he would come off victorious; for I have seen them playing a game of hard heads with knobbed sticks, and receiving with perfect indifference blows that would smash any civilised skull.

In one of my walks I was in advance of my escort, and inadvertently turned down a wide road, the sides of which were covered with undergrowth, and promised a rich insect harvest. Beecham commenced yelling out and came waddling along, blue or pale green with terror. I asked what was the matter, and my valiant interpreter told me with chattering accents that the road was sacred to the Amazons, for it led to the Hanan, or king's well. Amoosu and the hammockmen stood aloof, vociferating at the top of their voices, and when I came out of the dreaded path, commenced a copious sand bath, although there was not a soul in sight. I afterwards received permission to see this sacred spot, and discovered nothing but a small spring; the water in which was milk-white with the clay held in suspension.

There are several roads leading to this fountain, and there is no notice-board or other token by which the stranger may be warned off the sacred paths. I have no doubt that severe punishment would be inflicted upon the wilful trespasser, but my experience of Dahoman justice leads me to think that the unconscious offender would get off with a small fine.

One evening the king sent me by the Adonejan a large silk handkerchief, with a coloured print of the "Derby" impressed upon it. He requested an explanation of so marvellous a scene, for in Dahomey no person ever dreams of going faster than a walk when on horseback, and the rider is always held on by one or two attendants.

On the 20th I heard a terrific din of gong-gongs, guns, horns, drums, &c., and on enquiring the reason of such a display, I was told that the soldiers had returned from a war (read man-catching expedition) against one of the small towns on the northern frontier. They were going to exhibit their skill as marksmen, the target being a live bullock, which, when killed, became the property of the company to whose bullets it succumbed. I saw this Dahoman rifle match several times afterwards, and could not congratulate them upon their skill as marksmen, for their bullets were generally wide of the living target. Nevertheless I doubt not they can plant their shot sufficiently near the bullock to give a very uncomfortable feeling before the bullet comes which gives it its *quietus*. Sometimes the poor creature will be hit a dozen times before death releases it from its sufferings.

On the 26th I received a message from the king informing me that on the morrow he would give me a reception, but that I must excuse the paucity of the soldiers, as they were not yet all assembled for the annual custom. Beecham and Amoosu were all bustle and worry, cleaning up the yard, making a reception tent of mats, and furbishing up their finery.

As for myself, I was not in any humour to receive a state visit, for I had been bitten on the eyelid by an ant a few days before, and could scarcely open the afflicted eye. However, glad

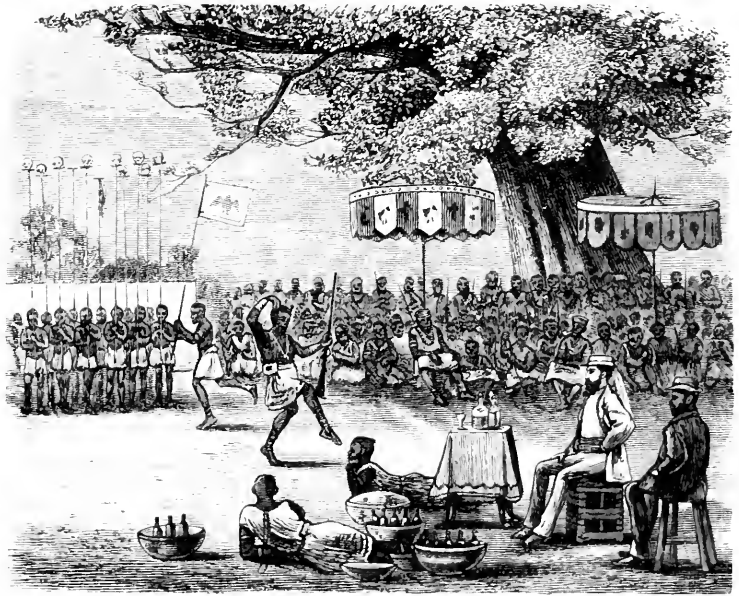
to escape the durance vile to which etiquette had condemned me, I prepared to do honours to His Majesty, and submit to the inflictions entailed by a reception.

Burton, in his account, erroneously says that the "state imprisonment with which visitors are honoured at Agbome is not the rule here." Much as I may admire that writer, I cannot but here say that in Dahomey he fell into many errors, one of which is the statement above; for on no occasion, and in no town, is the visitor to the king permitted to go at large during the interval elapsing between his arrival and reception by the king. Burton has made very caustic criticisms on Duncan, Forbes, and other writers, and it is but fair that he himself should be tried in the same furnace as they were.

However, my imprisonment was soon to end, and on the morning of August 27th I prepared for the ceremony. Escort and hammockmen were dressed in their Sunday go-ashore suits, and an extra quantity of grease was rubbed upon the sable skins of everybody who could scrape together a sufficient quantity of any unctuous matter for the purpose. About nine o'clock a messenger came from Princee Hahansu, saying that I was not to hurry myself, as there was plenty of time. Former experience had taught me the lesson that nothing delights a savage so much as to keep a white man waiting his pleasure, exposed as a show to the criticizing gaze and remarks of the vulgar crowd, so I determined to profit by the advice of my friend the Prince; and notwithstanding the impatience of Beecham, to abide my own time for going out.

In about an hour I got into my hammock, which had been newly decorated for the occasion, and started for the *Gben-hun-li* ("Road by the cotton-tree in the bush"), where the ceremony was to commence. A band and firing party, which had been sent by the Princee, preceded my hammock, my escort bringing up the rear. Immediately in front of the hammock was Ghu-ga-lah bearing the king's stick, and Bukau with my own emblem. After a ride of three hundred yards we arrived at the *Gben-hun-li*,

a clear space to the left of the road, with two huge cotton-trees in the centre. Beneath the shade of these trees our chairs were placed, facing the road to the palace, and we took our seats amidst the outspoken criticisms of some three or four hundred people, who were already assembled to witness the reception of the king's white man.



THE RECEPTION AT KANA.

After a few minutes' delay we heard a band approaching, and soon beheld it coming round a curve in the road, followed by a huge Kwe-ho or tent umbrella, which was twirled round and waved about by the bearer as if it were a mere parasol instead of a canopy with sufficient spread to shelter half a dozen people. In front of this walked, or rather danced, the Kpwa Kpwa, who may be called *arbiter elegantiarum*, the master of the ceremonies. He was the assistant or lieutenant of the Kan-gbo-deh, eunuch chief of the king's body-guard, of whom more anon. This gentleman was dressed in a sleeveless tunic of variously-coloured cloth, girt round the waist with a striped belt, beneath which

the *chokoto* or drawers appeared, both garments being tastefully embroidered with coloured cotton. Around his neck were several massive necklaces formed of different kinds of beads, a beautiful and valuable pink coral necklace, as thick as a man's finger, being conspicuous. This is only worn by the highest dignitaries. Over all the necklaces he wore, suspended from a silver chain, a rude bell, the emblem of his office as a "king's wife," as the eunuchs are called. His arms were covered with brass gauntlets, rudely embossed in various patterns, while eight or ten massive bracelets of iron or tin decorated each arm from the wrist to above the elbow. He carried the usual *Ma-kpo* or knobbed stick, and advancing, began a bravery dance, in which he was joined by his troop. This dance is a most violent gymnastic exercise, and a few minutes at it makes the operator reek at every pore.

It consists of two parts, the one an imitation of the overthrow of an enemy, and the other a mimic of his decapitation. In the first figure the performer goes through a series of wild leaps, occasionally whirling round on tiptoe, and bringing the foot to the ground with a truly nigger breakdown flop. The weapon, whether gun, sword, or *Ma-kpo*, is occasionally held at arm's length in a vertical position and then struck on the ground, while the posteriors are violently wriggled from front to rear, and the elbows flung back until they meet behind the back of the dancer. The face of the operator betrays intense excitement, the eyes bolting out of the head, while a few breathless ejaculations testify to the excitement of the performance. The second part begins in a side movement, the left hand being held edge upwards in front of the body, while the stick is clutched in the right, and makes a series of short cuts at the left, which represents the head of the victim.

This violent exercise over, the *Kpwa-Kpwa* made a charity-school bow and snapped fingers, after which he drank the health of the king and myself in an imaginary glass of grog.

Next followed the umbrella of the *Bosu Sau*, a half-brother to the king. He was a tall, grim-visaged fellow, dressed in a similar

style to his predecessor, but figured in silver gauntlets and bracelets instead of the brass ones of the Kpwa-Kpwa. He was accompanied by an escort of about thirty musketeers, dressed in various-coloured tunics, but all having white cross-belts and a kind of white glengarry, with a blue trefoil on the side. They marched three times round the square, and at the end of the third round halted before me. The Bosu Sau then danced and presented arms to me and retired to the left, when his musketeers advanced, and, amidst frantic dances, fired off a salute. A number of slaves belonging to the Kpwa-Kpwa now appeared, who carried an ordinary deal table and two immense calabash-covered baskets. The table was placed in front of me, and one basket opened, revealing two or three bright-coloured cotton cloths, one of which was spread on the table. From the other calabash several bottles of various liqueurs were produced, together with a decanter of water, a pipe, and tobacco. These were arranged on the table, and the whole covered by the remaining cloths. The Kpwa-Kpwa and the Bosu Sau then advanced, and I rose to receive my distinguished visitors. After being personally introduced, I was presented with a glass of water "in the king's name" to "cool my heart," and the Bosu Sau delivered a message, which was an enlarged repetition of that I received on my arrival at Kana. I then drank the health of the king three times, a small field piece loaded to bursting being fired every time I raised the glass to my lips. After this ceremony the two chiefs retired, and took up their positions to the left, the officers seating themselves on small Gold Coast stools, while their followers ranged themselves behind them.

At a signal from the Kpwa-Kpwa a band in the distance struck up, and a company appeared, being the escort of the So-gan, or captain of the horse. He was dressed very splendidly in embroidered tunic and drawers, while in his gorgeously-coloured sash were stuck several silver-mounted daggers, and a powder-flask, shot-belt, and medicine bag, all of gaily-coloured leather work, hung from the left side. On his head he wore two silver

horns, shaped like mushrooms, or rather like the tin save-alls used to keep candles firm in their sockets. These were fixed to the head by thin fillets of bright-coloured silk, the ends of which hung down his back. These horns are only worn by the chief officers, and are of several shapes. One, that worn by the second grade, is shaped like an antelope's horns, with a kind of pattern punctured on the sides. The other is the one mentioned above. These are of various lengths, the longest being emblematic of the highest rank. Does not this throw light on the phrase,—“His horn shall be exalted?”

The So-gan was riding side-saddle on a little brown nag, whose back was protected by a splendid saddle-cloth, and his left arm was thrown lovingly round the neck of a slave who walked beside the horse, and thus prevented his master from being unseated. His umbrella was of white cotton, with a blue man's head with goggle eyes and a blue-handled pink sword alternately on each lappet. After the procession had passed three times round us, the So-gan dismounted, or rather was lifted off his horse, and, after saluting us, commenced a dance, and finished off by firing a gun. His company then commenced a calisthenic exercise, and then, retiring to the right, fired off about a keg of powder from their heavily-loaded muskets.

The So-gan was followed by the Bi-wan-ton (*Bi*, all; *wan*, love; *ton*, that belongs to; that is to say, that he loves everything belonging to himself or the king), which? This dignitary is the lieutenant of the Meu, and one of the finest men I ever saw—tall, muscular, with a fine head and pleasing countenance, he was the beau ideal of a negro commander. His horns were of the save-all type, and he claimed respect as the nephew of the king.

The Nuage followed the Bi-wan-ton, and sat astride a chestnut mare. His escort wore a kind of cape to their tunics, with a device something like a *fleur-de-lis* in white cotton upon it.

After the Nuage the “place” of Quinun, a confidential slave, dressed in holiday costume, who bowed and danced, fired and

toasted, with all the bravado of the highest personage on the field.

The seventh chieftain was the Wenou, an aged warrior, whose face exhibited an ugly scar received many years ago in a scrimmage with the Nago people. His umbrella was blue, with a white ornament on the lappets something like a gridiron.

Next the Wenou was the "place" of Prince Chyudaton, who had not yet arrived from Whydah. This young man has a remarkably intelligent face, and is much liked by all the whites for his influence with the Avogan, to inducing him to forego a trifle of his rapacity when dealing with civilised persons.

The toxophilite escort of Chyudaton was composed of boys with bows and arrows, the latter being contained in sheaths of tanned goat-skin, like chart canisters. They knelt down and shot a flight of arrows, the butt end of the bow resting on the ground before them.

These caboceers all danced and fired a salute before retiring to their stools, where they invariably set up a long pipe and commenced to criticise my every action. By this time an immense crowd had assembled, and the heat and stench became overpowering.

Last in the procession of Bonugan or caboceers was the "place" of the Avogan, a tall warrior, whose compass-like legs took in yards at a stride. Unlike the other "places," he was afoot, the haughty Avogan not permitting his saddle-cloth to be polluted by the person of any inferior dignity.

A selection from the various regiments or companies then paraded three times round the square, the first to arrive being the *Achi* company, who were armed with Dane guns. They were fine sturdy fellows, who were called "bayoneteers" by Burton, but I never saw anything like a bayonet in the Dahoman army. They were preceded by several somewhat tattered banners, — a Union Jack, minus the red St. Andrew's cross, and one with a double-headed bird displayed, something like the Prussian standard, being conspicuous. The uniform of this company was a

dark blue tunic with a scarlet border, and with a glengarry of the same cloth as the tunic, having the eye of the heraldic royal crow emblazoned on each side. The Tower Gun Company, or the *Gan-u-nlan* corps, succeeded. Their standard was a blue animal of uncertain species lying prostrate at the feet of a scarlet hunter. This flag was emblematic of their title, which may be translated "Conquerors of all animals." Their uniform was of dark grey, with an abundance of white cowries sewn on the seams.

The large flag of the *Ashanti* company followed, bearing on its white surface the figure of a blue warrior in the act of felling a crimson tree. This corps was picturesquely dressed in kilts of leopard or civet cat's skin, with a fringe of the same round the knees and elbows. Their caps were likewise made of leopard's skin, or a velveteen fabric dyed to imitate the real article. They danced the Ashanti dance, a pantomimic display of the slaughter of an enemy, and concluded by a tableau of the stoic resignation with which they were prepared to die in the service of their king.

This latter part was performed by a single warrior, who, after making a most athletic display, imitated the action of a person who has received a death wound. He clasped his hands to his breast, and with a yell fell prostrate on the earth. He then uttered a few gurgling sighs, and after several convulsive throes his limbs grew rigid and his eyes fixed as if in the last agonies of death. His companions then rubbed sand over his body, and the captain, putting his foot on the breast of the fallen warrior, sang an extemporised ditty, which may be roughly translated thus:—

" Our brother has been slain by our enemies,
Shall we not avenge him ?
Just as sure as he will return to dust,
So will we avenge the death of our companion."

The singer brandished his sword in a violent manner, and made several frantic stabs with his weapon as though impaling a spectral foe. This pantomime occupied a quarter of an hour, after which

the deceased soldier sprang to his feet, and, rushing to us, yelled out, "*Nqualshu*," an Ashanti password, to which the response is "*Who-hau*," which was yelled out by his companions.

The *Agbaraya*, or blunderbuss-men, followed, led on by their chief, a heavy swell in the blue uniform of a French soldier, with immense scarlet epaulettes. The tunic was about four sizes too small for the wearer, and the trowsers had been cut down to breeches. The weapons of this corps were brass blunderbusses, burnished bright as brass could be, as indeed were all the arms, and all wore the *agbaja*, or goatskin cartridge belt round their waists. The dandy captain went through his performance with commendable agility, considering the strait-waistcoat nature of his uniform. These warriors, so far from being the flower of the army, as Burton says, appeared to be mere recruits, and Beecham told me that they were all young soldiers, who had seen but little active service. They fired their short pieces from the hip, or, when very heavily loaded, placed the butts on the ground, the recoil sending the sand flying several yards to the rear.

At this point one of the court *klan*, or jesters, made his appearance, and, as is customary, made me a present of some cankies and other insignificant articles. These buffoons are part of the royal household, and are privileged to do just as they please in the way of ridicule, frequently interrupting royalty itself with a pun or witty remark. They are distinguished by the meanness of their attire, and by their carrying a huge "possible sack," from the capacious depths of which they produce the paraphernalia of their craft, principally cankies, yams, or other articles of food. They whitewash their arms and shins, and daub their faces with various coloured earths. Their principal jokes are very poor,—barbarous puns, stale as the hills, or obscene jests, such as would do credit to a Ratcliffe Highway virago. They will squat on the ground and commence making grimaces, as though they wished to sit as models for some of the quaint old water-spouts and corbels one sees in Gothic churches. Uncarthy and meaningless noises vary the monotony, at which the ludicrous-imbrued negro will laugh

to splitting ; while any attempt at familiarity with a white man is greeted with screams of delight. At one time they will pretend to be idiots, and at another to be deaf and dumb ; while they will sit quietly smoking a piece of yam on the end of a stick, by way of a pipe, to the amusement of the bystanders. Some are experts in twitching the skin in various parts of the body, while others will draw in their bellies, until one would think that they were going to snap asunder, or emulate the aculeate hymenoptera in the slenderness of their waists. Others do the *alogweh*, a kind of sommersault ; while at another time they will pretend to vomit, or sit opposite some conspicuous person and imitate his every action. One thing they never forget, and that is, to beg, but if they receive a dash on their first appearance they will be satisfied. I often created a roar of laughter at their expense by turning their jokes upon themselves, such as giving them a glass of water to drink, instead of gin, and other childish pranks. A favourite occupation is to pretend to catch parasites in their hair, and to write imaginary notes to white visitors on leaves, drying the spectral ink by a dusting of sand.

The next item in the procession was a company of boys who carried twelve long poles, the summits being crowned by circular wooden discs, on the top of each of which a human skull was fixed by a long nail. Four other poles had the platters ready fixed on the tops, but the final ornaments were very ominously wanting. These were the relics of some petty chieftains, who were slain by King Gézu during one of the many skirmishes with the Nagos.

A bevy of twelve flags, all bearing some warlike device, preceded the court singers, or *Ahanjito*. They had silver horns of the conical type, and bore the distinguishing mark of their profession, the *chauri*, or horsetail, those of the principal vocalists being adorned with a human jawbone, fixed to the handle like the guard of a sword-hilt. These are the bards of the country, to whom is entrusted the history of the past ; for the Dahomans, having no written language, commit every great action to memory

through the media of songs. There is a quaint, sad melody in their monotonous chant, especially when heard on the stillness of the dead of night, for these troubadours not unfrequently sing a lullaby to the monarch which lasts from sunset to dawn.

The *Hunto*, or drummers, followed these poets, and also bore the chauri. These two corps ranged themselves on either hand, and with sundry waves of their horse-tails, commenced a song composed for the occasion. Their dresses were of far richer material than the soldier's, and their necklaces were cumbrous, and their whole *facies* denoted high rank. They were not allowed to appear in review with umbrellas, but wore horns and knives in their belts, just as did the warriors themselves. Many bore small bells, and not a few loose anklets, which created a pleasant jingle as they slowly stepped in time to their not unpleasing chant, which may be translated thus:—

The white man comes from England.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 He has seen many wonderful things there.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 He now comes to see his friend Gelelé.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 And he will be welcome to the king's heart.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 The king will show him plenty of fine things.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 He is welcome. All the people welcome him.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 The king holds him close to his heart.
 Oh Kerserlay !
 All people must join us to praise the king's friend.
 Oh Kerserlay !

The Kerserlay was intended for my name, being as near an approach to it as they could arrive at. Most people receive a nickname, not always complimentary to the bearer. Thus, Beecham was Kpon-akra, the hunch-backed vulture, in allusion to his high shoulders and gastronomic powers, while one of the Portuguese is known as the "Devil's mouth-piece."

After sundry complimentary speeches had been delivered on both sides, the various companies formed themselves into a procession—the first arrivals taking the lead, and the eunuchs bringing up the rear. I entered my hammock, and, surrounded by my people, followed the procession. No sooner had I started than a dismounted gun on the road-side was fired, and a company of soldiers from the Blue division, who had hitherto remained concealed, emerged from the bushes, and, headed by their band, commenced a gymnastic display behind us. At intervals of thirty yards or thereabouts an artilleryman was stationed by a gun, and as we approached he applied the match and fired off his salute. I saw nothing of the swivels mentioned by Burton, for these guns were 7-pounders at least, and firmly embedded in the soil; so that their removal would be a matter of difficulty, and their weight a load for four men, instead of the single porter, as mentioned by that traveller. In about an hour, during which the pageant had marched a distance of about a mile, we came in sight of the Banyanemme Palace. This, the first royal edifice in actual use that I had seen in the country, was built by King Gézu, and received its curious name, which means *stone-clatter*, in the Mahi language, from the following circumstance.

When Gézu was erecting the outer wall, some Mahi slaves were employed upon it. As their houses are for the most part built of bamboo, they considered swish to be of too perishable a nature to withstand the annual rains, and one of them, who appears to have been a kind of overseer, suggested that stones should be mingled with the swish to make it “stronger.” As there are no stones in the neighbourhood of Abomey, this remark was considered to be an insult to the king, who thereupon ordered the overseer to find the stones he mentioned. This being impossible, the unfortunate man was beheaded, and the fetiche people declared that, if necessary, so many stones would come to the palace of their own free will as would raise the dead by their clatter. This was considered too important a matter to consign

to oblivion, and the palace was therefore called *Banyanemme*—*i.e.* (the palace) of the stone-clattering.

It is a fac-simile of the Kana south palace, but in good repair, as befits the abode of a monarch. The roads leading to it are wide and in good order, and in the immediate vicinity of the “square” are not cut up into the parallel footpaths as is the case elsewhere. As we approached the first market-place, the din of guns, drums, shouts, and songs became fearful. Groups of fetiche people were drawn up to the left of the road, and as we passed they cheered or prayed for us—I cannot say which. Several posterns in the palace wall were passed, at each of which the guard were drawn up, the officers being seated on stools under their umbrellas, while their staff squatted around them, with their guns resting butt downwards on the ground, and the muzzles sloping forwards. These worthies did not move a muscle as we paraded before them, although Beccham was spooning the air with his hat, held in both hands, by way of obeisance.

We passed on through the Adogwin, the western market-place, and in a few minutes came opposite a new gate that had lately been made in the *enceinte*. It is customary for each monarch to have a gate in each palace specially appropriated to himself, and Gelelé, following the custom of his ancestors, had caused the present gate to be made in the Banyanemme palace. It differed in no way from any other gate, being merely a gap in the wall closed by rude wooden doors which were covered with fetiche charms—feathers, cowries—thunder-shrub—blood and similar humbug.

Before the gate a long shed had been erected, the breadth being about twenty feet and the height about sixty. Although so high, the roof of thatch descended to about six feet of the ground, the eaves being supported by a row of posts about ten feet apart, and which, on this auspicious occasion, were swathed in crimson cloth. On either side of the gateway beneath the shed were earthen benches—like Midland county *settles*, upon which the monarch reclines on mats while his court squat on the raised

floor around him. In front and on either side of the entrance two Egbada or fetiche trees are always planted. These are usually about five feet high, pollarded, and in the fork of their branches a fetiche pot is placed, which generally contains a mass of holy filth. Around these trees is a kind of rude altar—a bundle of Bo-soh or fetiche sticks, about as thick as a broom-handle, and painted in alternate bands of red and white. These are stuck in the ground in a bundle, and are usually surmounted by a fetiche calabash. In front of these truncheons is a little mound of earth, which is the receptacle of the decapitated heads during the Custom; and in front of all is a second pair of pollard trees twelve feet high, supporting a cross pole, from the centre of which usually hangs a sacred mat, and other fetiche contrivances for securing the privacy of the royal abode.

Within these gateways a guard is stationed day and night, and they are the usual positions of the king during the receptions, state trials, and other ceremonies of the Annual Customs.

The open space before the gate presented a spectacle truly grand.

The whole of the available force of the kingdom had been assembled, dressed in their most gorgeous uniforms, and were seated in regular order, forming a boundary to the square on all sides. We entered this parade-ground at the north-east corner, and the various regiments who had preceded us from the Gbwn-hun-li marched to the centre of the square, where they arranged themselves in a picturesque group beneath the shade of two immense cotton trees. Our immediate company commenced a trinal march round the square, the various chieftains making a charity-school bow as we passed. After the third round we alighted, and chairs being brought we took our seats in front of the gateway, under the shade of an immense white umbrella which had been set up for our accommodation near the centre of the square.

While thus seated, the “cynosure of neighbouring eyes,” I will endeavour to give the reader an idea of the appearance of the scene.

The barn-like gateway was filled to suffocation with Amazons, who, dressed in blue sleeveless tunics, with white crossbelts and black cartridge-boxes, had a very soldier-like appearance, while the gleam of the mid-day sun upon their brightly polished guns was dazzling in the extreme. To the right of these soldieresses, under a splendid tent-umbrella of crimson cloth, gaily decorated with gold and white animals of a somewhat nondescript genus, sat the Ningán or Min-gán—the premier of Dahomey and captain, or rather field-marshal, of the Right Division of the army. This high dignitary is a war-man *par excellence*, and in the Chapter on the Dahoman Army his office will be described at some length. He is a tall, round-faced, middle-aged man, with a small head, which he wears shorn save a single scalp-lock; and is so much filled with his dignity that until I was created a peer of the realm he never condescended to speak to me. He was dressed in a gorgeously coloured tunic, with quite a heavy load of necklaces, armlets, gauntlets, and other finery.

On the left, occupying a similar position to the Ningán, was the Meu—the minister of the Left Division. He was a short bullet-headed man, with a face like a chimpanzee's, and showed the huge cheek bones with such distinctness that they appeared to be coming through the skin. His eyes were deep sunken, and altogether the Meu was not by any means a person to fall in love with at first sight.

Ranged on either side of these two dignitaries were their assistants, the Gaou, the Kposu, the Sosoton, the Binwanton, and several others, all splendidly arrayed in full uniform. After a short interval the Tononun, or chief eunuch for the late king, made his appearance. This officer, a white-haired, decrepid old man, presides over the Amazonian portion of the palace, just as the Adonejan has authority over the men who are employed in building and repairing the palace walls and sheds. He is of high rank, but has no jurisdiction beyond the palace, within which his peculiar neutrality enables him to enter at all times. He was dressed in the silver horns and gauntlets of a cabinet

minister, and carried a large silver bell hung round his neck. Behind him came a number of his myrmidons, all wearing bells, and most of them having their heads shaved on the right side only, or leaving a round patch on the middle of the pate. They are known as the *Lali* or "half-heads." These eunuchs carried a table similar to the one we saw at the Gbwhunli, and having set it up, a couple of electro cruets, ten decanters of rum, a large calabash of water and several tumblers were set out upon it, and the whole covered with a gaudy cloth. The Tononun and his assistants then brought a bundle of bamboo poles, and with them formed a barrier between the Amazons and the men, leading up to but not surrounding the table.

A firing of muskets within the palace and a troop of Amazons defiling through the open gate announced the approach of royalty; and in a few minutes Gelelé appeared, surrounded by his body-guard of female warriors, and marched up to the table.

My introduction to the far-famed King of Dahomey was disappointing. I had expected to have seen a half-naked savage, with a grim blood-thirsty mien. Instead of this sanguinary monster, I beheld a tall, athletic, broad-shouldered person, several shades lighter in colour than his people, with a truly kingly dignity about him by which alone he could be recognised as the ruler of the country. His features were not by any means of the repulsive full-blooded negro type. His nose had a very appreciable bridge, and, though certainly inclined to the *retroussé*, it had none of the spread-out appearance predominating among the West Africans, which always appear to me to have a look as though they had been put on hot and had commenced to run over the face. His eyes were bloodshot and half-concealed by cataract, while his mouth, of moderate proportions, revealed even but tobacco-stained teeth between the half-opened lips. He was slightly bald, and wore his head shaved with the exception of two small thimblefuls of wool on the left side, which were decorated with small strings of beads, and, like his incipient beard and moustache, were somewhat grizzly. His expression was

pleasing, and a smile of welcome gave an agreeable charm to his features, and somewhat counteracted the small-pox marks which thickly covered his face. He was decorated with the usual Dahoman national tattoo, three short perpendicular and parallel cuts on the temple. His age might be about forty-five or fifty; but unlike his inferior contemporaries he was in the full vigour of manhood, while, in many instances, they were rapidly hastening to their decline. He wore his nails long, after the fashion of a Chinese noble, and smoked a long-stemmed silver-bowled pipe.

He was dressed in a blue and white striped silk toga, with drawers of violet and orange striped damask. His feet were encased in Arabic sandals beautifully embroidered in various colours, and which he alone in the kingdom has the privilege of wearing. As he afterwards told me, his rank is quite sufficient for him without the accessories of finery, and he never appears decorated with the profusion of jewellery affected by the nobility. Upon this occasion he wore a string of black and white beads round his neck, with a square leather bag attached containing some magical substance.

His arms were decorated with four ordinary iron rings, each about half an inch in thickness, and a plain silver ring encircled the middle finger of his left hand.

On his head a gaily coloured pork-pie hat protected him from sunstroke, and all other evils were effectually guarded against by a human tooth strung on a piece of cord tied round the head.

He was attended by a buxom damsel dressed in dark purple chintz, who held a violet and amber coloured parasol above him, while a second Amazon struggled under the weight of an enormous umbrella of scarlet velvet, having black birds with emerald-green breasts, and yellow hearts upon each alternate lappet. Besides these there were the royal spittoon-bearer, with a silver chalice containing a little sand which was held out for the royal expectoration; "grooms," who, armed with

bandanas, removed the slightest trace of perspiration from the royal brow, and several others, whose every thought appeared to be absorbed in attendance upon the Great King.

No sooner did he make his appearance than the music ceased, and all the nobles and soldiers saluted the monarch by copious shovellings of sand, which was thrown over the whole body by the lower orders, while the higher dignitaries contented themselves with bestowing a little on their heads and naked arms. This is the "worshipping" of Scripture, and a universal practice throughout Africa when in the presence. As Burton remarks, there is no intermediate rank between the king and the servile. Even the Crown Prince as copiously besmears himself as any other person, all being infinitely below the King in position. So, also, the nobles have the "worshipping" performed to them by the rabble when out of court.

The general salutation consists of a prostration before the monarch with the forehead touching the sand, and afterwards rubbing the cheeks on the earth, leaving a red patch of sand on either side. Rising to the kneeling posture, the hands are then clapped in a series of three clappings in a diminuendo style, and if a number are saluting at once, they all keep time. A peculiar fillip of the little fingers is then given thrice, and thus ends the "*itte d-ai*." Then follows the dirt bath, or *ko-dide*, a series of shovelling of the earth over the head, making as much display as possible of the smallest amount of sand. When receiving or asking any particular favour, the saluter completely smothers himself with the red earth; rubbing it well into the arms and neck until it sticks to the perspiring skin like dough.

Gelelé came up to the bamboo line, whither I proceeded to meet him, and shook hands in the European fashion without the national filliping of the middle finger. The Tonoun then removed the cloth from the table. Meanwhile the Meu came forwards and took up his position to our left. This minister is supposed to take charge of all whites who visit the king, and to interpret between them and royalty. I then saw that Beecham

was trembling with fear in the presence of the great king, and, from the hesitating way in which he interpreted my words, I could not but think that he was calculating whether they were agreeable to the royal ear. I afterwards found him at the trick of altering my words to his own ideas, if he thought they might offend the king, and he was always telling me that if he gave the king a bad palaver he would be punished. We first drank water with the king; His Majesty merely lifting the glass to his face and then pouring it on the ground. He then poured out a tumbler of muscatel, and we prepared to pledge our mutual healths. He bowed, touched glasses, and whilst I drained off the liquor, the king turned his back upon me, and the Amazons raised a thick coloured cloth as a screen between us, while others called out some of the royal titles, or "Strong names," as they are called. This was the signal for the outburst of the pent-up noise of the multitude. Guns were fired, praises of the king shouted out, bells were rung, and the jesters shrieked out as they rushed tumultuously afar; but every one studiously kept their faces turned from the king. The toast over, the Amazons removed the cloth and called out "daybreak,"—as much as to say that now the lion has feasted, people may look at him; since it is a common superstition that a person is more subject to the ill-effects of malevolent wishes while he is drinking than at any other time. Whenever the king drank in public this same tableau was always performed, since no person is allowed to see so dreadful a sight.

I then drank the healths of our most gracious Queen; Mr. Swanzy, and several other minor toasts. Luckily, etiquette only required me to touch the glass with my lips, after which I handed it to Amosu, who literally poured it down the throat of the nearest bystander. Twenty-four guns were then fired for the king and twelve for myself. The king then said that I had come with empty hands, but I should return with them full. He thanked me for patiently waiting until he could receive me, and made sundry other speeches of a complimentary nature.

I was then introduced to the principal officers seriatim, each receiving a glass of rum or liqueur on bended knees. This tedious process occupied about an hour. The king's "*drunkard*" was then brought forward, and Gelelé took up the vinegar cruet, which, like all the others, was full of rum. The Bacchanal kneeled down and opened a mouth like that of a hippopotamus on a small scale, and the king emptied the contents of the cruet down its cavernous depths, and proceeded with the remaining cruets. This was all very well with the vinegar bottles, but the mustard pot was almost a clencher, as the lid would get in the man's mouth and almost choke him. The pepper castor, too, was rather awkward, as the perforated top caused the grog to distil in a spiritual rain. I suggested the removal of the top, which being acted upon, the emptying of the castor was more speedily effected. Altogether the drunkard must have swallowed about a quart of raw rum. I don't know about getting drunk, but if the capability of drinking such a quantity of raw spirit qualifies a person for that title, he certainly passed with honours.

The king then "dashed" me a large decanter of rum for my private use and a smaller one for my escort, and then telling me that he would not detain me any longer, as my eye was so painful, prepared to conduct me part of the way towards my quarters. The umbrella and parasol were handed over to the *Dahkros*,—women who act the part of intermediates between the king and Amazons and the men,—and from them they were passed to some of the soldiers. Hitching his toga over his left shoulder and taking a lighted pipe, the king crossed the bamboos, and, accompanied by a crowd of eunuchs, strode towards the eastern entrance to the square. I there joined him, and we walked down the road towards my residence. The studious attention that was paid to the king was remarkable. A crowd walked before him and swept off every leaf and twig, and pointed out each hollow or hummock in the ground, while the Babel was deafening. Gelelé accompanied me about half way to my

quarters, and, on leaving, handed me over to the Meu, who bade me halt while the procession which had conducted me to the levée passed on ahead of us. During this interval, a small calabash containing forty-seven broken pieces of pottery was shown to me, to indicate the number of guns that had been fired in my honour. Burton says a like number are expected to be fired at Whydah, but I think he is mistaken. *En route* more gun-firing, dancing, shouting, and other noises, in which the negro ever delights, assailed our tympana.

On arrival at my quarters I found a gang of labourers had been sent by the prince, who had covered in the courtyard with matting and spread a table with rum and liqueurs. Here all the eaboceers assembled to drink my health, *at my expense*, and entertain me with their acrobatic dancing. Outside, guns were being fired, and a hubbub of drums, gong-gongs, and singing was going on. This would have continued all night had I not pleaded indisposition, and right glad was I to see the last of the captains dance out of my sight.

This was my first experience of Dahoman ceremonial. Everybody seems to have learnt their part by heart, for there is no hitch in any of the intricacies of etiquette. No matter how absurd any display may appear to a European eye, it is always carried out with the strictest decorum, for it is all *for the king*, and everything connected with him is associated with servile awe, if not the terror accompanying despotism.

CHAPTER VII.

JOURNEY TO ABOMEY.

Start for Abomey—The *namyinkpo*—Its wonderful power—Disgust of the Amazons at it—Splendid road—Fetiche—Lovely scenery—Adan-we Palace and the Akwe-janahan market—The “grove of vexation”—Small reception en route—Fetiche dances—Ironical fetichism—State carriage—Visit to Hahansu—Arrival at Abomey—My *lures et pates*—A guard of honour—An ominous protector.

WHILE discussing breakfast the next morning, a messenger arrived bearing a *kinikinikpo*, or royal lion stick, from His Majesty, who desired me to proceed to Abomey at my earliest convenience. Of course all my people were for setting off on the instant, as the custom obtains of performing all offices for the king with ostentatious haste; but as I much preferred finishing my breakfast to being jolted in a hammock, I sent word to the king that I would start before *panigan* or mid-day. Beecham was horrified as usual, but, as his ludicrous appearance only afforded me amusement, I thought best to let his fears take their own course. Old Blood-and-Cowries was busy with stick and tongue among the lazy porters, and under his able superintendence my luggage was soon packed up and despatched to the capital.

The young Prince Ghugalah had been provided with a royal stick, called a *namyinkpo*, which would ensure our speedy passage through all gates, and besides it possessed the all-important power of “passing” us through the bands of Amazons who frequent the road between Kana and the capital, and who would be obliged to give way before the bearer of so powerful a token. This was a favour rarely, if ever before, bestowed upon any

white visitant to the king; and *never* granted to a native, however exalted his rank. Old Beecham was speechless with the excess of his feelings at so marked an evidence of the royal favour; and told everybody we met, that the king "had done great things for me," but that he had made a "king's road" for me too, showing that "he loved me too much."

We soon passed the eastern market and the square, now deserted and showing few signs of the gorgeous pageant of yesterday. I learned this morning that the king had gone to Abomey during the night—an illustration of one of the singular customs of the country, where everything is done secretly, and often without any premonitory warning. The palace gates were closed and the numerous decorations stripped from the supports of the gate-house, beneath whose shade a dozen lazy guards reclined on mats, smoking, jabbering, or weaving the royal cloth.

Just beyond the new gate we met a gang of Amazons who, with their usual braggadocio air, commenced to tinkle their bells at us. Ghugalah, however, took them "flat aback," for, advancing with the magic stick raised above his head, and crying out "*A-h-go*," with a long drawl upon the first syllable, he quickly brought them to a sense of their position. Utterly dumbfounded at the sight of the royal emblem, they stood stock still, and when they had gathered together their wits, reluctantly made way for us by rushing pell-mell into the bushes; doubtless somewhat crestfallen at their unique position—that of making way for a man—instead of conceitedly swaggering along while all the males, high and low, scampered out of their path. I hope their pride received a lesson. I could not but laugh at the chagrin but too evident upon the faces of the old beldames who had charge of some of the gangs we met; but it was of no use grumbling,—out of our way they had to go, much to the delight of my hammockmen, who were overjoyed to have an opportunity of paying out the soldieresses in their own coin.

A short walk brought us to the northern Kana gate, which was richly embellished with fetiche huts, and other religious and pro-

tective emblems. The *jo-susu* over the road was of unusual dimensions, and the red and green mat, à l' *Italienne* standard, was particularly bright. Across the road a long pole marked the northern entrance to Kana, and custom necessitated our dismounting ere arriving at the *jo-susu*, for the king alone rides through any town gate.

Beyond this portal the road becomes worn into narrow footpaths; for although the grass is cleared off every six weeks, the native custom of walking in Indian file soon covers the wide road with a series of mere sheep-tracks, with high grass between; and it is no unusual thing to see a gang of women, twenty in number, walk in single file along a road a hundred feet wide, and the *first* and *last* invariably have some hot argument under weigh.

We had now arrived at the holy ground of Dahomey; for on either side of the road at short intervals were the fetiche places sacred to the various divisions of the Dahoman army. All were more or less alike, low sheds covering a squat deity, before which the various earthen pots, containing offerings that sent up a pungent odour, were guarded by a fringe of the *sayan* thunder shrub, and a tree stump painted red and white, and dressed in a white rag called an *avo*, being the normal forms. The first of these is the *Pakhey*, sacred to the remains of a powerful kinglet of that name, who offered considerable resistance to the conquering Daho, but was slain at last by that monarch's own hand. The fetiche people informed the king that sacrifices offered at his tomb would confer more than Dutch courage upon the votary, and the present shrine was therefore constructed. Nearly opposite this tomb is the *Akpwentoh*, another holy place, the name meaning "strength for man's hand," in the Mahi language. It is a fetiche for invigorating the arms of soldiers in battle, enabling them to cut off an enemy's head at one blow. Soon after, a din of drums, gong-gongs, and other instruments of *discord*, announced something extraordinary going on. This disturbance originated at the toll-place of the priests of Legba—where the chief priest of that deity

is permitted to levy black mail on the king, and all visitors to the capital. The place rejoices in the euphonious name of *Legba-sigohu*, i.e., place for the wife (priest) of Legba. Here a band was in full swing, and the great fetichist sat squatted under a dilapidated and dirty cotton umbrella. I have noticed that the clergy seem to pride themselves in the dirt and worn-outedness of their sun-shades and clothing. Fine linen is certainly not one of their vanities, although they are by no means insensible to the purple. I commissioned Amoosu to present my compliments to his holiness, and was rewarded by the present of a charm against witchcraft—a bag of some strong-smelling ingredients or other, encased in a leather pouch, and intended to be worn round the left arm above the elbow. A long wickerwork fence, the uprights of which were sprouting out in vigorous shoots, enclosed the Bwemeh or residence of the priest of Agasun, who is the palladium of Dahomey, and one of the most powerful of the gods in the native pantheon. This priest is the head of all the metropolitan clergy, and the Agasunno are the cardinals of the Dahoman religion. The chief priest does *not* rank next to the king, as Burton says, for he forgot that His Majesty of Dahomey is as far above his subjects as Buddah is above his devotees; besides which, church and state have not the slightest connection as regards precedence.

The shrine of the Blue or Bru division followed; the *Bru rodun* as it is called. This is merely a sacred tree, daubed with red paint, and the roots garnished with pots of oil and filthy rags. Opposite this fetiche is the fascine-like abode of the *Aremeh*, likewise protective of the same regiment. This deity possesses the power of conferring piercing sight upon its votaries; and its emblem—an eye, together with the tree and trefoil, the distinguishing mark of the Bruvodun fetiche, often appears on the standards borne by the Blue company.

A few yards further on, a conical heap of swish, with an earthen pot let into its summit, denoted the abode of the Aizan, or Ehzan, a deity performing the functions of the Roman Edile, whose

special office it is to protect the roads from being taken possession of by evil spirits, and to keep them in repair. If the first part of his duty is no better performed than the latter, he must be a lazy deity indeed. This god does not seem to appreciate the offerings of the Dahomans, for several vultures who had been regaling themselves at the pot containing cankie and palm oil, were startled from their sacrilegious meal by our approach.

The country here had a lovely appearance as we marched along in the shadow of the tall oil palms, whose graceful, frond-like tops shivered in the breeze; and, dotted at intervals, the cocoa palm, conspicuous by the brighter green of its leaves, waved its feathery head with an aspen-like rustling. Delicate ferns drooped their long pendent fronds from the crevices formed by the fallen palm leaves, the deliciously fresh green hue of their foliage forming an agreeable contrast to the dull olives and cool greys of the palm trunks upon which they were parasitic. Convolvuli of every hue vied with the passifloræ in the splendour and delicacy of their flowers, while here and there an orange or lime tree covered with snowy blossoms, shed a refreshing fragrance around. Orioles, weaver-birds, and plantain-eaters, gorgeous in the vivid colours of their plumage, flitted from bough to bough, while sun-birds flashed in the sunlight like winged gems. The road, knee deep in some parts with grasses of various species, was gaily speckled with flowers of many colours, amidst whose honey-laden stores butterflies of rainbow hues held high revel as they sipped the mellifluous sweets. One species, the *Papilio Pylades* of naturalists, strongly reminded me of our English swallow-tail; and in thought I was again plunging recklessly among the sedgy fens of Cambridgeshire, heedless of bogs, drains, or lodes, in the absorbing pursuit of this splendid butterfly.

It was difficult to imagine so peaceful a scene in the heart of the blood-stained kingdom of Dahomey. The a-h-go of Ghugalah soon dispelled my home thoughts, and my attention was directed by Beecham to another "holy place," the tomb *pro formâ*, of an ancient king of Adan-we, who rejoiced in an unpronounceable

cognomen, a combination of B s, G s, D s, and S s. Thirty yards beyond is the Adan-gbno-ten of the country *par excellence*, for here His Majesty repeats his coronation oath when journeying between the capital and his country residence. The road widens to a hundred yards, and the swearing-place is thickly studded with fetiche paraphernalia of every description. A thicket of locust-trees to the right conceals the wattled residence of the priest who has charge of this important post; but although his holiness did not choose to appear *in propria personâ*, he took care to have a duly qualified bagsheesh man, stationed in a conspicuous position to levy Peter's pence from our people as they passed. The road now splits into two, forming a kind of loop, the enclosed plot of ground being sacred to a deity called Avreketch, who is supposed to favour mankind by purloining the keys of the ocean storehouse, which is under the custody of Match. Why this marine god should have a fetiche place so far inland is inexplicable, as one would suppose his worship would be confined to the coast. His thieving propensities remind one of the *white lies* of the Romish church. This fork is the boundary of the district of *Ohwahwe*, or Uhwaweh, already mentioned as the first station of Prince Daho after the separation of the Alladah princes on the decease of their father. The old inhabitants still retain their name, but the original blood is considerably diluted with that of other tribes, whose amalgamation constitutes the Dahoman nation.

To the right is the classical Adan-we Palace built by Tegbwesun, the fifth monarch of Dahomey, to perpetuate the conquest of Uhwaweh. It is but a flimsy structure, half swish and half bamboo, and is rarely inhabited by royalty except as a half-way house of call, when His Majesty journeys to Kana. The palace received its name *Adan*, brave, *we* or *vi*, son of, because the possibility of the erection of such a palace in the very heart of a quondam hostile country could only be accomplished by the "sons of the brave."

Of course the mere presence of royalty entails a considerable retinue in attendance, and their wants must be supplied. Conse-

quently, around every palace there is a collection of booths where vendors of all the native creature comforts ply a brisk trade during the stay of the court. At Adan-we, however, the erection of this market was forbidden, merely in accordance with a royal caprice, and the retainers of the courtiers had to bring provisions with them from Abomey or Kana. Gelelé very sensibly declared this to be a nuisance, and instituted a market on the road-side between this palace and the village of Addein, about a mile to the left. This market without a town is called *Akwe-janahan*. *Akwe*, cowries—*janahan*, suppose you have none—meaning that "here is the market, but if you have not brought any cowries it is of no use to you." A busy trade is always under weigh at this place, for the traffic between Kana and Abomey is very considerable, and the grateful shade of the majestic cotton and umbrella trees entices the wayfarer to halt, and indulge in a "chop" and smoke.

Beyond the *Akwe-janahan* is the chameleon-guarded fetiche-place of Deje, said to impart the power of governing to its worshippers, and consequently tabooed to all save the crown prince. To the right is a little bower hiding the Logun-aizan-li, a fetiche sacred to Aizan. The words signify, "the road (taken by) Aizan when angry." Why the Dahoman Ædile should always come here when in a rage I cannot imagine; but it must be very convenient for the objects of his wrath, who have only to avoid this spot to keep clear of his displeasure.

Close to this "grove of vexation" is a holy tree, the "*Ga-sa-uhun*," or "cotton tree, for throwing bows." The meaning of this term is a secret, known only to the fetiche priests.

Here a battalion of soldiers were drawn up to the left of the road, forming a line about two hundred yards in length. The chiefs were seated on stools beneath their umbrellas, which were all of the newest and most gaily coloured designs. One officer had invested in a number of penny looking-glasses, and had stitched them to the lappets of his sun-shade. As they waved to and fro in the breeze, the reflection of the sunbeams caused a

brilliant play of light to wander over the squatted soldiery, who were completely dazzled, as much by the magnificence of the umbrella as by the glaring reflections. As I was carried past these warriors they saluted me with a *wulleh! wulleh!* and a grunt; the chieftains bowing and the band playing during the ceremony. A complimentary speech was shrieked out by a gong-gong man, and a jester made me a present of a yam amidst the jeers of his comrades. After the speech more *wullehs* followed, and the salute was ended by the firing of several guns.

By this time I had begun to feel somewhat satiated with the frequency of these holy places, and hailed with delight the ruined palace of Nakho, who was deposed and slain by Daho. It was in a rather worse condition than any other king's house we had yet seen, and was used as a palm-oil manufactory by the king, who kept a troop of Amazons constantly on guard within. These soldieresses have a fetiche appropriated to themselves a little farther on, where the road divides. This shrine is the Vodun-no-Demen, or fetiche-house of Demen, a Mahi deity who guarded the chastity of the kings' wives in that country, and consequently was a very acceptable addition to the Dahoman pantheon. Here a portion of the clearing was fenced off by a few slender sticks, the tops of which were connected by a thin grass rope. This frail barricade is amply sufficient to keep back the densest crowd, as to touch the rope is to incur the displeasure of Aizan, who will wait for an opportunity of punishing the delinquent. Why cannot we have something of a similar kind to lessen the labours of our police when any public functionary or foreign potentate passes through our streets?

On three sides of the square thus formed a motley crowd were squatted in the blazing sun, while just within the enclosure a band was creating a melodious discord. The side opposite the road was kept clear by two besom-bearing policemen, and on our approach a herald requested me to alight and see what was going on. Of course a request is synonymous with a demand in such cases; and an umbrella and chair being brought out,

together with some heart-cooling water, we prepared for the spectacle whatever it might be. The band struck up a still harsher tune, and in a few minutes a score of figures sidled into the enclosure from a low shed to the left. For some minutes I was utterly at a loss to understand the ludicrous objects that presented themselves before us. A close study, however, disclosed about twenty women, whose faces, arms, and legs were striped and spotted with red and white paint. Their hair was entwined with long grass and leaflets of the cocoa-nut palm, and a ruff of the same material was tied round their necks. On their heads they wore two kinds of coverings. The right division rejoiced in tall beaver hats shaped in the style in vogue amongst English witches, while the opposite party were decorated with immense flip-flap straw affairs, each big enough to cover a loo-table. The brims of these hats were strung with bones, feathers, cowries, and such mysterious fetiche charms, which clattered together with every movement. All wore a kind of waistcoat that seemed to have forsworn the wash-tub for many a long day. A brown skirt of cotton cloth descended to the knee, and like the hat was covered with magic "bits and bats."

These priestesses—for the pendant breasts revealed their sex—were under the orders of an aged crone, whose shrivelled appearance was anything but engaging, and who heightened her charms by daubs of yellow ochre on various parts of her body. She commenced a monotonous chant; and never shall I forget the appearance of that sepulchral mouth with its four tobacco-stained tusks that appeared bowing to each other, or to have been thrown into her mouth and have fixed themselves in her gums haphazard. The strain was taken up by her crew, who commenced a waltzing kind of motion round her. As the music quickened, so did the steps of the dancers, and in a few minutes the whole band were whirling and whizzing round the old beldam, their skirts flying out like those of a ballet girl, revealing the symmetry of their nether limbs to the admiration of the lookers-on. Faster grew the motion, and the arms of the performers were

thrown about in every attitude, while the mistress of the ceremonies directed the movement with a small baton, with which she occasionally stirred up her matted hair, or varied its use by picking her unwholesome gums. Half an hour of this whirligig movement completely knocked up the performers, who reminded me of the dancing dervishes of the East. Fetiche water was brought out, and a libation poured out to Aizan, the autocrat of the roads, and a request for bagsheesh terminated the ceremony.

I was afterwards told that these human spinning-tops were the special priestesses of Aizan, and that by the king's order they had offered up thanks to their deity in the form of a dance for preserving my life in my journey to the capital.

The two roads joining at this place are named the Ishagga and the Atakoh roads respectively, from the two villages of those names, which are built about a mile from the junction. These villages are of very recent date, having been built to commemorate the conquests of the towns of those names in the early part of the present king's reign. This custom is common to Ashanti as well as Dahomey. Burton says the king puts the captives taken from the conquered town in the commemorative village, but the fact is that the male prisoners are consigned to the tender mercies of the Ningan, while the women and children are absorbed in the capacious maw of the various palaces.

We took the main or Ishagga road, which brought us to the Shea butter tree, stated by Burton to be "the only fruitful *bassia* in the country." Surely he never could have entered the garden of the Portuguese fort at Whydah! This specimen—or rather the locality—is known as the Ugo-li, or road of the Ugo, i.e., Shea butter tree. A few miserable old hags drive a precarious trade in cooked yams, water, and fetiche beneath its cooling shade. The tree stands in the centre of the road, and is covered with strings of *wreketch* and thunder shrub. Opposite this sacred tree is a gigantic bombax, which is the abode of an evil spirit; this, perhaps, being an invention of the feticheists

who enhance the sanctity of their tree by contrast with the demon-haunted cotton tree hard by.

Soon after passing the Ugo we heard several volleys of musketry, which Beecham informed me was the signal to all whom it might concern that His Majesty was come into court. We soon came to another sacred spot, which was a perfect museum of holy pottery. This is a foreign importation, being devoted to the protection (?) of the Nago people, who are continually at war with Dahomey. Is it possible that there is such a thing as ironical fetichism? for I should imagine the destruction of the Nagos was more in keeping with the wishes of the king,—without he fears to become a second Alexander, and have no more worlds to conquer. The immediate neighbourhood is called *Leffleloh*, or country of *Leffle*, the patron saint of the Nagos, who, so far from being exterminated by *Gézu* (*vide* Burton), are to this day the most implacable enemies of the country.

We here met a deputation from Prince *Hahansu*, who brought water and liqueurs to welcome us to his father's capital. He said that the time he had so much longed for would soon arrive, when he should see his father's friend face to face.

A trivia, the junction of the roads leading to *Jegbeh*, *Coomassie*, and the *Kana-gate* of *Abomey*, was the site of the next fetiche-house, that of the *Akwashi*, a *Mahi* goddess who presides over child-birth.

We took the path to the centre, where we passed a couple of the royal carriages drawn up to the road-side. These were ordinary stage-coaches of the last-century pattern, no doubt the gift of some lucky slave-dealer. As horses are never used for draught, the carriages were drawn by gangs of men who tailed on to long trail ropes attached in lieu of traces, while half a score steered the machine by means of the pole. An admiring crowd stood gazing at these marvels of the king's wealth, none daring to approach the royal property nearer than a dozen yards.

After a half mile of dull road, lying between fields of maize

and yams, we arrived at the private residence of Prince Hahansu. This was on the left hand of the road, and possessed nothing remarkable in its appearance to indicate it as the abode of the future autocrat of Dahomey. Of course there were the usual Bo fetiche and Legba sheds before the gate, and a jo susu hung from the gallows over the door. The principal courtyard was surrounded by a fence of twisted grass, wattled between uprights of young tree trunks, which showed evident signs of the fertility of the soil in the vigorous growth of the shoots from their tops.

We alighted from our hammock, and, after proceeding through several courtyards, arrived at a long shed beneath which a row of highly polished guns were arranged on a table, while cartridge-belts, powder-horns, and other implements of warfare decorated the walls. The whole place was beautifully clean and neat; not a stray leaf being visible on the smoothly swept floor. About a dozen guards lazed about, some smoking and others busily engaged sleeping.

Beneath the roof, suspended from the rafters, a peculiar machine like a fly-cage attracted my attention. It was made of twigs bent into a hexagonal form, and covered with blue and white cotton yarn in stripes, like those on a water melon. From the lower portion of this cage a square of parchment was hung, illuminated in blue and scarlet, and inscribed with a verse from the Koran. This was a Mohammedan charm against fire.

Leaving the guard-house we proceeded down a narrow passage to the left, and after sundry twistings in every direction came to the prince's fetiche-house—hereafter to be described—and, sitting upon chairs provided for us, awaited the coming of the prince. In a few minutes a messenger entered, and we proceeded across two more courtyards, and again took our seats under a long shed, the walls and floor of which were whitewashed. After a short delay the door opposite us opened, and Prince Hahansu made his *entrée*. He was a fine young man, apparently about twenty-four years of age, tall, like his father, and of a most

intelligent expression. His head was shaven, leaving but a single tuft on the right side. Like all the royal family he was more tawny than black, and the *tout ensemble* of his appearance was more Circassian than Negro, and strongly reminded me of the late Marquis of Hastings. Round his neck he wore a fetiche chain, encased in a square leather bag, ornamented with leopard skin. His dress was merely a black and white print toga, worn after the fashion of the Arabic *hyke*.

He cordially shook hands with me, and said that at last he was satisfied, for he had seen his friend. Water and various drinkables were brought out and our mutual healths were pledged, after that of the king had been duly honoured. He said that he had taken advantage of a few spare minutes to see me, but that his presence was required at the palace. He told me that he would be only too happy to supply me with anything I required, and during the whole of my stay this young man was unremitting in his attention to my wants. A more generous, hospitable, intelligent young fellow I never met. Pipes were brought out and filled from the capacious pouch in vogue throughout the country, and I felt more at home with Hahansu than I had done since leaving England. After a short chat we were conducted to our hammocks, the prince preceding me, according to Dahoman etiquette. Soon after starting a smart shower set in, and the prince sent a large umbrella to keep off the rain.

Close to the prince's house is the abode of the Adonejan, who also possesses a jail, within whose walls are immured scores of wretches, who will linger in duranee vile for many a day. Near it is a small market, and beyond is the usual gallows-like josusu, denoting a town gate. We dismounted and walked across the boundary, the custody of which was entrusted to a numerous family of fetiche deities who—conspicuously arrayed in red and white stripes and spots, or plainly whitewashed—kept guard over the entrance to the capital of the kingdom. The ground around was strewn with ashes, and the smell of the decomposing offerings in the fetiche-pots was anything but exhilarating. We

shortly after turned off the main road to the left, and in a few minutes were brought to the English house in the Coomassie quarter, where Beecham told me other white visitors to the king had previously been installed.

Its condition had in no ways improved since they left it; the accommodation consisting of a long barn, with two rooms for eating and sleeping in, and a couple of store-rooms (*Za-ho*), dark as Eblis. Between this sanctum and the street was the reception court-yard, with a somewhat dilapidated shed in the centre. The hammockmen and porters were quartered to the left, and between them and myself was a little temple containing the *laves et penates* of the place. These were worth describing. The fetiche-house was whitewashed all over within, and the gods were installed on raised platforms of hard beaten earth. Opposite the door were two alligators or dolphins—I never could exactly tell which—certainly they were as much like the one as the other. To the right of these monsters was a heap of red clay stuck full of broken pieces of pottery and garnished with a chaplet of feathers. This deity had a platform a few inches high appropriated to himself.

Balancing this god on the left was a wooden doll—evidently of the male sex—with a piece of rag tied round his loins. Before this Bo-fetiché was a red pot perforated with round holes, much resembling a cullender. Then came a Legba—ugly even for that deity—a squat little monster made of swish, with cowries for teeth, eyes ditto, and a nose truly negro in its breadth. This “devil” as Beecham called it, was seated on a low stool with its hands upon its knees, and its flat feet extended in front. Such a monster was, as Burton truly says, “well calculated to frighten away, as it is intended to do, witchcraft from the devotee.”

Numbers of curious iron funnel-shaped deities garnished with blood and cowries were arranged around the temple, and several other gods in various stages of decay, were scattered over the floor. The main entrance to the compound was guarded by an immense Aizan fetiché, flanked on either side by a Danh fetiché

—a clay snake, evidently of the *Cerastes* species, while on each side of the gate was a collection of fetiche ceramics. The lintel of the gate was thatched, and from the centre hung an unfortunate cock, the smell of which was so unbearable that I surreptitiously removed it, for I was accustomed to have my smoke under its shade. I did not experience any ill-luck from doing so to my own knowledge. Our landlord, a fac-simile of the cripple at Kana, soon made his appearance, and after “maunin” made signs of wishing to drink our health.

Shortly after our arrival a guard of ten soldiers from the palace marched in and took up their station at the main gate. They were extremely useful in keeping out intruders, and their presence was a distinctive mark of the esteem in which I was held by the king, for no other visitor had before been honoured with such attendants.

Old Blood-and-Cowries soon ran up a balneary at the gable end of the house; and Joe was quickly engaged in superintending the cookery department, while Bukau tallied the stores into the rooms prepared to receive them.

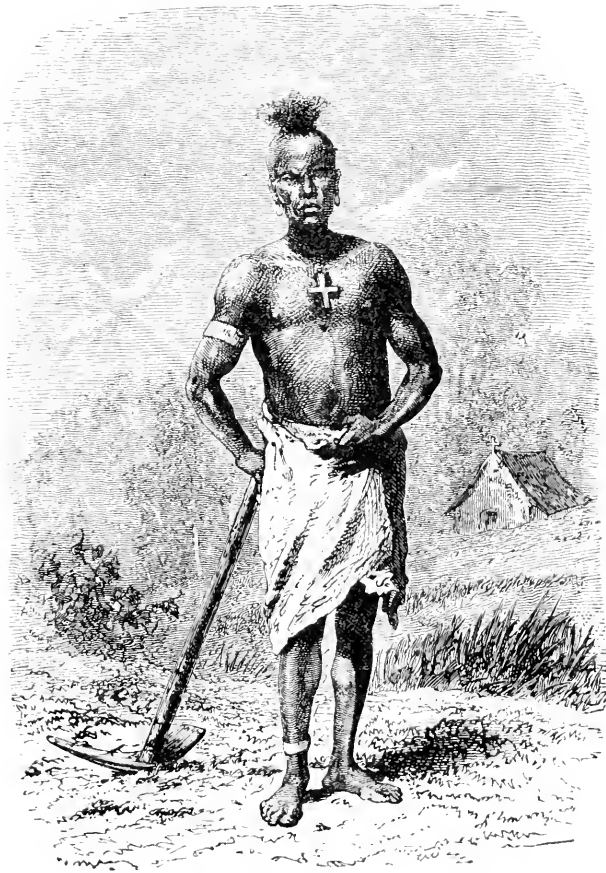
A fetiche priest came in in the evening, bringing the skull of a man, which he affixed over the lintel of my private apartments, and, after sundry incantations, departed. I was told that a herald went round the town and gave notice that no one was to molest me or intrude upon my privacy, under penalty of having his skull nailed up as a companion to the one already fixed over my door. Truly *summum jus summa injuria*.

CHAPTER VIII.

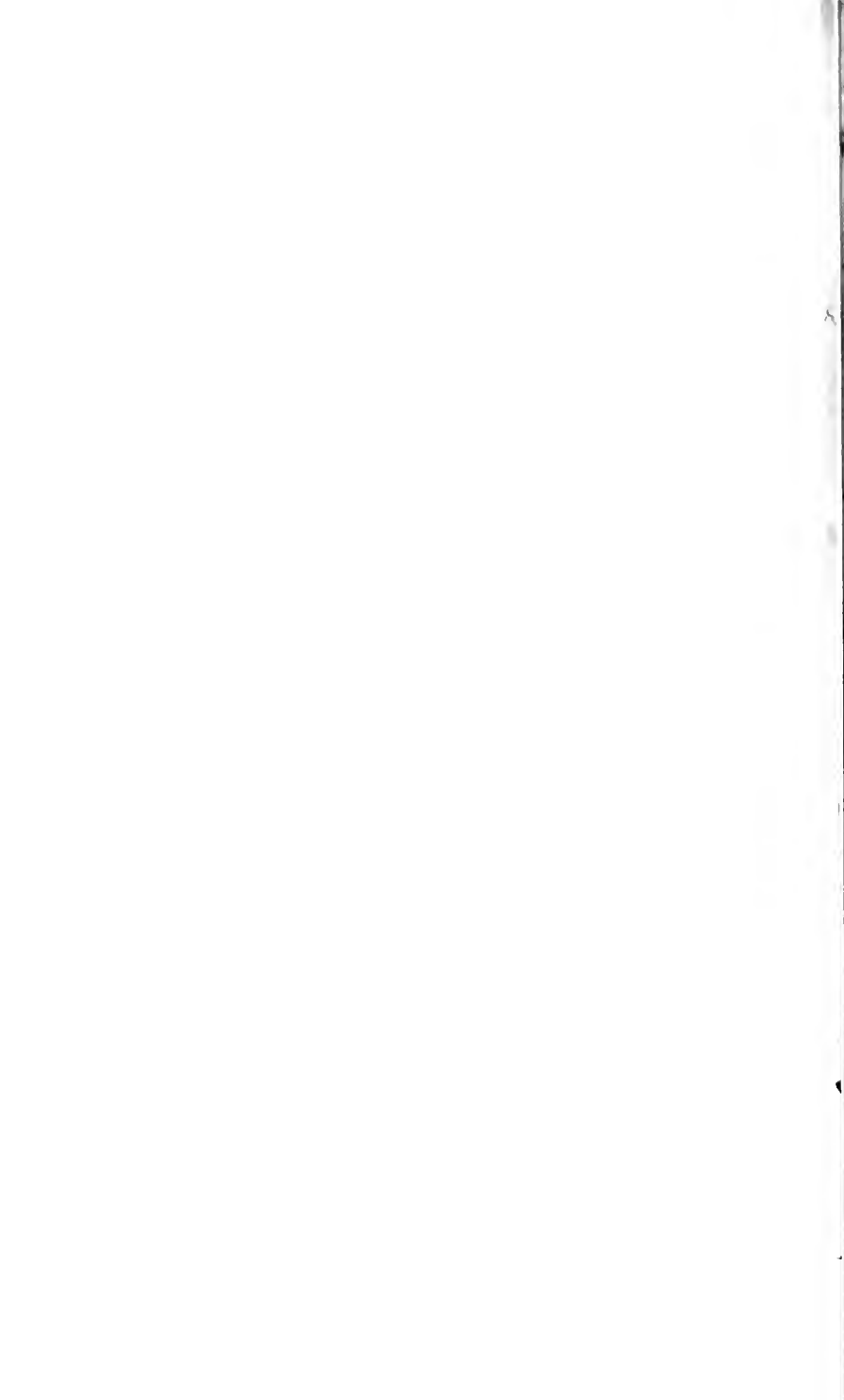
THE AMAZONIAN SALUTE.

Complimentary sticks—The Akwaji Uhon-nukon—Bwekonhun—The Adanzan—Avenue of palms—Amazonian music—Gelelé's appearance—The Amazonian corps—The Agbaraya—Manner of firing their guns—The male soldiery—The bamboo rubicon—Reappearance of the Amazons—The Cowrie scramble—Gelelé drinks my health—Ningan's speech—Jesters—Night guards—Their reliefs—Fearful music—Visit from the Klan—Visit to Hahansu—Arrival of the Governor of the Portuguese fort at Whydah—Washing clothes—Visit from the prince—Patience a necessary article.

IN the morning I received complimentary sticks or "Kpo" from the King, the Prince, and the Adonjan. The messengers, of course, expected a draught of rum, and as the kpos would be sent every morning I at once gave orders to Amosu to stop the grog of all messengers except those of the King and the highest dignitaries of the State. I saved many a gallon of spirits by this timely order. During breakfast Prince Ghugalah brought the royal stick—a "Kini-kini-kpo,"—*i.e.*, a "lion stick," the pattern distinguishing this one being a very good carving of a lion with a hand in his mouth. This was wrapped in a white handkerchief, as are all the royal sticks. Ghugalah brought a message from his Majesty requesting—*i.e.*, demanding—my presence in the square at the Coomassie Palace to receive a salute from the Amazons. Knowing it was but a short distance to the palace, in my ignorance I was going to walk, but no such plebeian mode of locomotion was permitted to the "King's friend," as I was by this time universally called. My hammock was ordered out, a band was in readiness, and half a score valiant soldiers guarded my unworthy person. Altogether, what with chair carriers, note-book bearers, pipe men, and sundry other attendants, my



A DAHOMAN LABOURER. *Facing page 162.*



retinue contained about thirty men, and made quite an imposing display.

A walk of a few yards brought us to the south-eastern corner of the Coomassie Palace, where the king was at present residing.

Crossing the Uhon-nukon, or square, we passed the main gate, the Akwagi, which possessed an immense Pwe shed to the right of the entrance, that on the left being much smaller and solely appropriated by the guards. As usual, a josusu with a tricolour hung over the gateway, the door itself being decorated with several ancient crauia, besides a series of figures cut in rude relief representing, at least so I was told, the procession in the So-sin Custom. The space opposite this gate had been cleared and swept, and a number of the guard with bells round their necks kept off all intruders.

A few yards to the right of the gate was a small postern shaded by several fine trees, under which a large white cotton umbrella decorated with cross swords of blue baft had been set up for our convenience. As soon as I had taken my seat, and my escort had arranged themselves around me, Prince Hahansu came up and told me that his father wished to show the respect and friendship which he felt towards me by giving me a public salute of the Amazons—his household troops. A brief interval followed the delivery of this message, which we will fill up with a description of the Coomassie square which takes a prominent position in the Annual Customs.

Immediately facing the main gate is a square enclosure bounding a low swish wall, within which is an immense cotton tree sacred to the late King Gézu, for he was accustomed to hold his court beneath its shade before the Coomassie Palace was built. (I hope he was more fortunate with the vultures in the branches above than I was.) It was therefore preserved by his son and received the name of Bwekon-hun, the living (*i.e.*, ever) happy cotton tree. Within the walls is a small fetiche hut, and a white flag is kept flying from a barbarous calumny upon a flagstaff at the entrance. The reader is cautioned against confusing this tree with the Palace of Bwekon Hwegboh, hereafter to be described.

To the right of the Bwekon-hun is the Adanzan, Gézu's swearing house. This is a series of circular steps, thirteen in number, protected from the weather by a conical thatched roof surmounted by a white flag. The sides are hidden by mats, except two entrances, one to the north and the other opposite. These entrances are marked on either side by a pile of stones brought from Mahi, while a row of the knob-kerric sticks, *Anatinkpoh* or *Ogoh*, sacred to the Bo fetiche, surrounds the mound. Before starting on any great war palaver the king has this swearing-house unroofed and daubed with *bois de vache*. His Majesty then ascends the rostrum, and amidst the admiring cheers of the multitude swears that he is going to "break" certain towns, while his officers emulate their master and each other by their vain-glorious boasting. All mean to go to war on the *veni, vidi, vici* principle, but with the majority it is *vox et preterea nihil*.

There is a tradition attached to this swearing-house which has been handed down from Gézu's time. When that monarch was building the Adanzan, the drought was so severe that the workmen had considerable difficulty in procuring sufficient water to mix with the swish. All the water-pits were reduced to slimy pools of a very horse-pondy nature, and the only well that supplied any good drinkable water was the Didoh, or sacred spring to the north, the water of which is used in the worship of Nesu, especially in the Sin Kwain Custom hereafter to be described. One of the soldier-builders audaciously attempted to obtain some of this holy water, but, being discovered, was brought into the king's presence. His Majesty said that, as the culprit had not only insulted his king by attempting to obtain his drinking water for building purposes, but had also sacrilegiously attempted to take the holy Nesu water, the only expiation he could make for so heinous a crime was to be decapitated on the Adanzan and give his blood to be mingled with the swish. The offender was at once dispatched, and the floor of the swearing place is formed out of this blood-moistened swish, and if any person were to take a false oath during the ceremony at the Adanzan, the blood would at once cry out against him.

Between the Adanzan and the gate is a pollarded tree, with the usual accompaniment of pots of filth, the whole being surmounted by a white flag flying from a crooked pole. This is a Bo-fetiché. The left side of the square is hedged in with a long shed, where the caboceers administer justice in minor cases during the early morning hours; each officer having a particular spot assigned to him. At the south-western end of the palace wall is also a long shed, beneath the shade of which the officers of the court await the summons of their royal master. The south side of the square contains several other sheds; while the road to Jegbeh exposes a lovely vista of palm-trees to the view at the south-eastern corner. Opposite the "waiting-sheds" is the residence of the Meu, whose jail is, like the Adonejan's, crammed with prisoners.

A volley of musketry and a beating of drums, with other martial sounds, caused the assembled crowd to turn their heads to the Akwaji gate, from which a band emerged, composed of young girls dressed in showy prints, who, by their plump condition, showed that whatever else they might be required to do within the mysterious walls of the palace, they were not expected to starve themselves. They took up their station round the fetiché pots and flag, and commenced a hideous row with no more music in it than there is in a ship's galley when she is rolling heavily.

They tortured us with their noise for a quarter of an hour, when, amidst a second volley his Majesty of Dahomey stalked out of the palace. Upon this occasion he was dressed in a blue tunic without sleeves and "chokoto" of gaily coloured silk. His arms were naked, except a few rings, with fetiché bags attached, which he wore above the elbow. He smoked a long silver-mounted pipe, and wore a kind of Scotch bonnet, with the dragon of the Bru Company embroidered on the sides. His feet were protected by sandals richly ornamented with leather, and a couple of silver rings jingled round one of his ankles. He was followed by four of his "Leopard-wives," or *Kposi*, who kept near his person during the review, while a bevy of attendants took turns in holding

a yellow and scarlet parasol over his head. Over this parasol a gaudy tent umbrella was held by a squadron of buxom women, who appeared to pride themselves in the manner in which they twirled and twisted it round, in time to the music which had at last struck up a tune something like "Ninety-five." The king was a good head taller than any of the Amazons, and appeared to take a pride in showing off his fine person before us.

A troop of Amazons followed the immediate attendants of the king, and arranged themselves in a straggling line, twenty deep, across the square. There were detachments from several troops of these soldieresses, each distinguished by its particular badge. The Life-guards, or Agbaraya troop, who are veteran warriors, were dressed in blue tunics, with grey petticoats showing beneath and reaching to the knee, their ammunition being contained in black leather cartridge-boxes (*agbaja*); while a long fillet, with an alligator or dragon, was bound round their brows. Another troop represented the *Gbeto*, the elephant hunters, the corresponding regiment to the Gan-u-nlan, or Conquerors of all animals, on the men's side. These were dressed in brown waistcoats, with pink undershirts, with a profuse girdle of leather thongs, which hung down below the skirts.

A third batch were to show off the prowess of the Tower Gun company, whose insignia were scarlet tassels to their *agbaja*, and tower-guns for arms; while a fourth represented the blunder-busers.

The king advanced to the front, and, giving a signal, the whole force prepared to load. The *agbaja* were brought to the front with a jerk, and a small cartridge very like a wooden German match-box was taken out. These cartridges have lids to them, and contain about a handful of coarse powder. The lids were taken off and held in the mouth, while the powder was poured down the gun, which was generally held slanting, not with the butt resting on the ground. A few jerks brought the powder down to the breech, and a few pinches of priming from a small pouch, on the right side, completed the loading. Their guns

have the pans protected by a conical leather affair, which slides along the barrel, and the muzzles have likewise a leathern cap. A piece of rag is also attached to the butt to wipe the flint and striker, and a leaf of the sayan shrub is rarely wanting, besides sundry private fetiche charms of the owner, such as cowries stuck on with the blood of a fowl, afa marks, &c. All are kept in splendid order, and in court the soldiers are constantly polishing their weapons.

A musket was handed to the king, who, holding it to his shoulder, rather an unusual attitude, fired it off. The Amazons then took up the salute, and kept up a straggling fire for a quarter of an hour. Some fired their pieces from the hip. The blunderbuss women placed the butts of their brass weapons on the ground, and seemed delighted at the dust thrown up by the recoil. When a gun missed fire the owner was greeted with jibes by her comrades, and the unlucky one usually retired to the rear. Some would advance on tip-toe, as though stealing up to an enemy; while others would fire off their guns in the midst of sundry *écarts*. Others held their guns over their heads with both hands, the muzzle being pointed horizontally, and then fired them off, to the danger of the eyes and wool of their right or left files. Some of the very old warriors fired by a substitute, they themselves being only armed with an iron-bound latti.

The firing being over, the king and his soldieresses advanced at a *pas-de-charge*, his Majesty bowing as he passed us. After he had shuffled along round the uhon-nukon, the whole company started off at a brisk walk, firing their guns as they advanced. Some of the warrioreesses were badly singed by the burning powder, and it is a marvel that there were not more accidents when their carelessness is taken into consideration. At the third round the whole bevy of Akhosusi set up a yell which ended with a groan, and was meant to be a welcome. It was more calculated to frighten one than to set his mind at ease. All then started for a firing trip round the palace, the king in the van.

Just before the Amazons made their appearance, a number of the guards of the palace, marshalled by several eunuchs, who tinkled their bells at every step, brought bundles of the bamboo tree (*Raphia vinifera*), and laid them end to end round the uhonukon. These poles are the boundary line between the Amazons and the "outside." To cross them is death to any man, except the chief eunuchs; but women and young children are exempt from the penalty. A guard squatted at every few yards round the line thus formed, and warned off all intruders by the tinkle, tinkle, of his bell. Here and there a hunch-backed policeman kept the rabble in awe by the application of the rods he carried in his hand; and these keepers of the peace varied their occupation by shouting out the king's strong names from time to time, interlarded with cries of *N'daboh*—silence.

After the Akhosusi had departed on their round, the sticks were removed, and a battalion of men-soldiers appeared to the right. A line was formed, and they advanced in higgledy-piggledy order, firing their guns as they came along. Some warriors would rush to the front with staring eyes, and after taking aim, let drive at an imaginary foe. So heavily were the guns charged, that the report was as loud as that of a 4-pounder, and two or three burst during the review. Officers and men were indiscriminately mingled together, but their showy dresses and bright arms, as seen through rifts of powder smoke, made up a grand spectacle of savage military display.

After the customary trinal march round, the king and the Amazons made their appearance to the left. The men retired and the eunuchs again laid down the sticks, while several paniganhuntoh struck warning notes on their gong-gongs. When the ground was cleared, the Amazons drew up in an irregular line in front of me; the king occupying the centre beneath a crimson and gold umbrella, with blue velvet birds sewn on the lappets. He was still smoking, and while one maiden held a silver spittoon, shaped like a goblet, and half filled with sand, others wiped the perspiration from the royal face, neck, and armpits with perfumed

handkerchiefs; while a third bevy cooled his brows with brazen fans.

A continuous firing was then kept up for upwards of an hour and a half, after which the soldieresses moved off, and the male warriors performed the same evolution for about thirty-five minutes. Ahgo was then sounded, thereby enjoining silence upon the clamorous throng, and the soldiers departed on a circumambulation round the palace. The sticks were again laid down, and the king made his appearance, followed by a troop of Akhosusi, carrying baskets of cowries, strung on grass, and tied up in bundles of forty-eight strings. These were handed to his Majesty, who threw them hap-hazard on the ground as he walked about over the square. When all were expended a division was made across the middle of the square by a line of bamboos, and the king, leaving the Amazons on the extreme left, came to the barrier and eyed the assembled crowd with a laughing expression.

He then picked up a head of cowries and pretended to throw it at the troops, upon which a roar of laughter went round the square. The officers of the Amazons were then called to the front, where they knelt down and took a dirt bath. The male caboceers were then summoned, and they went through the same ceremony on their side of the sticks. The king then took up his position under the fetiche-tree, and gave a signal by clapping his hands, upon which the whole of the people present—Amazons, soldiers, and civilians—rushed to the cowries and scrambled for them. When all were cleared off, Ahgo was yelled out, and the scramblers huddled off the field of contest. The king then danced for about a quarter of an hour, accompanied by the Amazons, guns being fired, and his strong names called out during his terpsichorean performance. He then sent a message to me to ask if I would dance to him, as he had danced to me. I declined the honour on the ground that I was unacquainted with the various figures—an excuse that was graciously accepted by his Majesty.

A herald then proclaimed that the king was about to drink my health. Every person, myself included, then turned their

backs on the king, or buried their faces in their hands. A glass of muscatel was then given me, and when the Amazons raised a cry, I tossed it off; not being permitted to look at my *vis-à-vis* during the toast. The roar of prayers, guns, and strong names during the ceremony was deafening.

The sticks were then placed in a line opposite the gate shed, and the soldiers advanced and took up their position before it, the chief officers being in the centre. All kneeled down and rubbed their foreheads in the dust, (the *ko-dide*); after which, the Amazons, who were drawn up in similar fashion round the gate, went through a like performance. His Majesty was reclining on the Pwe, which was covered with mats, and several gorgeous umbrellas were fixed up before him, the handles being dropped into holes dug in the ground by iron crowbars or "diggers."

He then made a speech, which was afterwards translated by the Ningan (not the Meu, *vide* Burton), the substance of which was, that "he had tried to show the respect he entertained towards me by giving me a public reception at Kana; but that he thought he would do more than that for his friend, so he had given him a salute at Coomassie." The people applauded by calling out "*bloo, bloo,*" tapping their lips with their hands during the utterance of the words, after which several speeches were made by various high dignitaries, applauding the decision of the king, and pouring an amount of "blarney" into his royal ears that was truly sickening.

A number of jesters, with whitewashed faces and limbs, then entertained the company with their buffoonery; but, except their facility at "making faces," in which they emulated any ancient corbel or water-spout, they did not exhibit much of the ludicrous in their performances. Several "*Whenukhodotoh,*" or singers, then chanted a plaintive ditty, praising the king for his kindness to his friends, extolling his greatness, and ending in a kind of rhapsody in which the most extravagant speeches were made and the most plaintive tunes yelled out. Finally,

presents of a few heads of cowries were "dashed" to the chief officers, and the king getting up from the Pwe, entered his palace, followed by the Amazons, and the audience was at length at an end. By this time it was nearly six o'clock, and we hastened to our quarters fully prepared to do justice to the dinner that had been so long awaiting us.

The rain had been falling in heavy showers since four o'clock, and the aspect of the excited crowd was anything but comfortable, while the *beau-monde* were scarcely better off, since they had to "set" the palavers of the day before they could adjourn to their respective homes.

As we were busily engaged over our dinner, we heard the gate-keepers of the palace commence their monotonous chant, which is kept up all night, relieved only by solos on the gong-gong. A party of men watch outside, while a corps of Amazons keeps guard within the palace walls. They are relieved every three hours; the time being computed by the time occupied in repeating certain set phrases, and in walking round the palace a fixed number of times. When each watch is changed, a herald strikes his gong-gong, and cries out the number of his watch, and afterwards repeats a number of the strong names of the king, with a brief epitome of his powerful exploits. A gun is then fired, and the herald of the succeeding watch takes up the strain.

Just before daylight the Paniganhuntoh on duty walks round the palace, and gives mouth to a number of the strong names opposite every gate of the palace. This ridiculous ceremony is kept up at every palace wherein the king sleeps. The guards go on duty at sunset, and are known by the bells suspended round their necks, after the fashion of those of the eunuchs.

At daylight two guns are fired in succession by the "outsiders," which are followed by a like number from the inside custodians of the palace. Nothing but habit can enable any person to sleep through the noise made by these fellows, who, when not joining in chorus, are giving vent to a solo in a loud falsetto voice that can be heard far off in the stillness of the midnight hours. During

the continuance of the Custom the performances of the patrol are slightly modified, and the watch are on duty day and night. The number of guards is considerably increased, and they are divided into three gangs, one being on duty while the others sleep.

They are supposed to commence at sunrise, when they begin their monotonous chants, the interludes being filled up with a concert of gourd-rattles. This watch lasts for three hours, and is called *Ahanweh*.¹ The next watch, which lasts till about 11 A.M., is called the *Brohun*,² when the gourds are supplemented by the kra-kra, or ring-rattle, and by drums of various kinds. At the conclusion of the *Brohun*, the *Panigan*³ watch comes on, during which a full band with gong-gongs charms the ear, with interludes occupied by the *Whenukhodotoh* in chanting the praises and strong names of the king. Noon is marked by a discharge of muskets, and a *resumé* of all the kings of the present dynasty with their great deeds. After this comes the *Wemeh*,⁴ lasting till about three in the afternoon, the instruments being gong-gongs and flutes. The last of the daylight watches is the *Goh-weh*,⁵ when a deafening noise is made by the small egg-shaped drums, and at sunset the palace is circumambulated by the whole of the night guard.

The first night-watch lasts three hours, or till about 9 P.M. It is known as the *Agbaja*⁶ drum watch from the instrument played during its continuance. At its conclusion a fearful uproar is made by the serivello horns, called *Kpwen*,⁷ the sound being like that of a chorus of lusty jackasses. At midnight the *Akho*⁸ performers make the night hideous with their noises, and they are succeeded about three in the morning by the *Paniganafwan*,⁹ or early morning gong-gong watch. All the strong names and exploits of the various monarchs are given out in detail, in a long drawling voice, similar to that in which the *Ezann* is droned out in Mohammedan countries. At daybreak a volley of

¹ *Ahanweh*, a gourd rattle. ² *Brohun*, a calabash drum. ³ *Panigan*, a gong-gong. ⁴ *Wemeh*, a flute. ⁵ *Goh-weh*, a drum. ⁶ *Agbaja*, a drum. ⁷ *Kpwen*, a horn. ⁸ *Akho*, a trumpet. ⁹ *Panigan* and *afwan*, morning.

musketry proclaims the advent of the sun, and the *Ahanweh* relieve the hoarse bards from their tasks.

On turning out the next morning, I found that Amoosu had been up betimes, and had made a kitchen in a corner of the yard with a screen of mats tied to upright poles stuck in the ground. Here Joe was in his element, for nothing pleased him more than cooking, except, perhaps, eating, and he had already organised a staff of helpers, who were busy chopping up wood, preparing yams, and fetching water for his use. The usual morning stick compliment being paid, I hoped to be able to do a little collecting, but the fates were against me, for scarcely had I finished breakfast than several jesters made their appearance.

These Ah-hun-da-toh brought me a present of yams, oranges, and such trifles, and stayed nearly an hour grinning at each other, making barbarous puns and obscene jokes, twitching various parts of their bodies and drawing in their stomachs as though they were mere wind bags. One would pretend to be suddenly struck deaf and dumb, and the by-play that ensued was such as would probably amuse a European child ten years of age. Another then produced a filthy mass of cankie from the capacious bag or *akpetokoloh* he carried beneath his left arm. This pudding he commenced to devour, dirt and all, and did not cease for an instant until the whole had disappeared in the cavernous depths of his stomach. Notwithstanding this "feed" he immediately set to at the bellows play, and drew in his *venter*, until I thought he would snap in the middle.

While this fun was going on, his companions sat gravely on their little stools, and pretended to smoke bits of yam stuck on the end of a stick, vigorously expectorating during the operation. One of the Klan amused me by taking notes of everything he saw. He picked up a stick and a withered leaf, and made his memoranda upon it, strewing sand over it "to dry the ink" afterwards. I dismissed them with a glass of grog all round, and they went forth to give their companions an exaggerated account of the bounty they had received at my hands.

After these buffoons had departed, I set out to pay a visit to the prince, especially with the idea of asking his permission to be excused from a regular attendance at the court, so that I might employ myself in making a collection of the fauna of the neighbourhood. Our way led us through maize plantations, and luxuriant crops of sweet potatoes which were just coming into the market, each having its proper fetiche guard.

On arriving at the prince's residence, I was startled at hearing the notes of a bugle, and on asking what it meant, I was told that the Governor of the Portuguese fort at Whydah had been summoned to the capital, and that upon his refusing, he had been brought up by sheer force. When he found that go he must, he determined to overwhelm me with his military display; and accordingly started a bodyguard of six Congo soldiers, under the command of a mulatto corporal, a flag-bearer, and a bugler, This force he was quite certain would be amply sufficient to raise him in the estimation of the king, the news of whose grand reception of myself had reached Whydah. How he succeeded the sequel will disclose.

As the governor had only arrived about an hour, I would not intrude my presence upon him in the hurry of unpacking, but sent Ghugalah with a complimentary message to him, asking the favour of his company to dinner in the evening. My messenger returned in high dudgeon, as the governor had not only refused to receive his message, but had ordered him off the premises, a gross breach of etiquette, as Ghugalah carried the royal stick. Almost as soon as he had delivered his message, a "stick" arrived from the prince, who presented his compliments to me, and begged to apologize for the governor's rudeness, of which he had just been told. He said that the king had ordered him, the Governor, to Abomey, because he had boasted that no "savage" could ever make him go anywhere against his will. The prince had just started to ascertain his father's wishes with respect to the Governor, who was waiting to see him; but I was assured that no sooner had the prince finished his palaver

with the king, than he would come on and see me, and that the governor must wait.

On my return to my quarters I found a number of men cutting down the long grass and levelling the road. They were under the charge of a petty officer, who saluted me with the usual "*atyanguan*"—are you well this morning. He said that he had received orders from the prince to make a good road between his house and mine; for that since he hoped to have frequent conversations with me, the road between our respective dwellings must necessarily be kept clean.

On arrival at home, as there was every appearance of a heavy storm, I overhauled my stock of presents, and served out the respective allotments to the different recipients. These consisted of cloth and liqueurs, and, assisted by Amoosu, I doled out a sample of each for the king, the prince, the Adonejan, and the English mother. This matter over, I had nothing to do but sit and watch the women collecting water in huge earthenware vessels, which were set out beneath the eaves of the various houses. Most of my people were taking advantage of the heavy rain to wash their clothes and persons, and many *in puris naturalibus* revelled in a strong lather from head to foot.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a messenger arrived, to inform me that Hahansu was coming to pay me a visit. In a few minutes he arrived, being protected from the rain by an immense straw hat, the brims of which were supported by an attendant on each side. He again apologised for his absence from home when I called in the morning, but told me that his duties at the palace frequently obliged him to leave his house at a few moments' warning, but that in future, if I would give him previous notice of my intention to honour him with a visit, he would endeavour to be at home to receive me. He was considerably interested in several articles in my possession, such as a compass, barometer, and other scientific instruments, but was particularly struck with my gun, a breech-loader, which he was desirous of firing off. I therefore loaded it for him, much to his

astonishment putting on neither priming nor percussion cap, and handing it to him he fired it off, the bullets taking effect in the swish wall opposite. He remarked that my powder was very much better than his, for his was a long time "before it talked," while mine "talked one time," meaning that the ignition of my powder was more instantaneous than that of his.

He said that his father Gelelé knew he was coming to see me, and had given him particular orders to see that I was supplied with every comfort the country would afford.

He also told me that the king wished to speak to me about some great palaver with reference to the English Government, of which he could not talk with trade men; and that he was very glad I had come to Dahomey, as I had given him the opportunity he had so long waited for, of talking the matter over with a person whose position was such as to be unbiassed by any commercial interests.

He told me that when the governor was received, I would see the difference in the feeling the king entertained towards him and myself; and that the reception was only given in respect to the position of the governor, and not by any means a private mark of esteem. The next day I received a notice from the prince that the Annual Customs would begin in five days, and that the king particularly wished me to see the commencement of the state pageant, and that after a short stay I should be "passed" and permitted to return to Whydah.

I was considerably disappointed at hearing this. Not a word had been said about the guns I had brought up, and the only answer I could obtain to my repeated solicitations for permission to collect a few insects was: "The king puts the whole kingdom in your hand, and you may do what you like with it; but he is afraid if you go about the bush some harm will happen to you, and the white people at Whydah will blame him for permitting you to run any risk whatever while you remained the guest of the king." I don't think it is possible for any man to keep his temper long in a country where such excuses as these are given.

I do not doubt for a moment that the king meant to do his best to please me; but his ignorance of the value of time made him indifferent as to whether I began my entomological research to-day or in a month's time. Truly in Dahomey *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*.

Feeling sure that it would be some weeks at least before I should be allowed to depart, I determined *tirer le diable par la queue*, and to make the most of the sight-seeing I was forced to be witness of, and to rely upon some benefit that might accrue to me from the great palaver of which the prince had spoken to recoup me for lost time.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SO-SIN CUSTOM.

Origin of the customs—Of two kinds—The Akhosutanun—The Khwetanun—The Eyeo custom—General outline of the customs—The human sacrifices—“Wanted, a doctor”—My prescriptions—Richards—Visit from the Adonejan.

First Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Commencement of the So-Sin Custom—Clotho—The Akhosu-sosin-bekpah, or victim shed for the king—The human victims—Gézu's tent—Bo-fetiché—The Agasunno and his assistants—Feeding the gods—Victims for the Bush king and the people—A plea for Dahomey—Umbrella heraldry—The Gézu-yeho—Seizure of the horses by the Sogan—Reception of the governor—The “strangers”—Promotions in the army—New drummers—Unveiling of the Bo-fetiché—A ghostly spectator—Gelelé's speech with his father—Leopard wives—Oblation to Gézu—Distribution of rum.

Second Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Curious superstition respecting dogs—Procession of fetichéers—The ceremony at the Didoh—Return of the priests with the sacred water.

The interval that elapsed between the incidents related in the preceding chapter and the commencement of the Customs may be advantageously filled up in giving the reader a brief outline of their meaning and derivation.

The word is an Anglicised form of the French *coutume*, the signification of which is “a general habit.” The “Customs” may therefore be defined to be “certain state ceremonies, the performance of which has become imperative through long usage.”

The Customs are of two kinds: the Grand Customs, which are only performed after the death of a sovereign, when his successor has become firmly seated on the stool of his ancestors; and the Annual Customs, which take place every autumn, and are far less imposing than the celebrated Grand Customs. The Annual Customs are also of a dual nature, one being held every

alternate year. The one is the *So-sin*, or Horse-tie Custom, and the other the *Attoh*, or Platform Custom.

The Grand Customs appear to have dated far back in the history of the kingdom of Alladah, as the heralds have several traditions of the splendour of the Grand Customs made in honour of the old kings of Alladah. They appear to have consisted of the same ceremonies as those practised at the Annual Customs, but on a far grander scale, and combining the *So-sin* and the *Attoh* or Platform Custom of alternate years into a single ceremony. They are called "Akhosutanun," "the king's head thing," to distinguish them from the "Khwetanun," *i.e.*, "yearly head thing," as the Annual Customs are named. In Dalzel's 'History,' a vague account is given of the Akhosutanun, celebrated in honour of Mpengala by his son Agongolu in the year 1791. In Burton's account of Dahomey, he gives an extract from a letter by the Rev. P. W. Bernasko, detailing an account of the Grand Customs in honour of Gézu, the predecessor of the reigning king; but Burton very properly calls attention to the palpable untruths which are there set forth, and my personal knowledge of that missionary is such as to lead me to believe just as much as I pleased, and no more. From accounts given me of the Grand Customs, I feel justified in my statement as above, that they are nothing more than an enlargement upon the Khwetanun.

These Annual Customs are of comparatively recent origin. It appears that when Akabah died, his son Agajah was not content with the Grand Custom he made to his father's *manes*, but in the year succeeding the Akhosutanun of Akabah he held a sequel to them, and was so delighted with the effect, that he instituted the Annual Customs to be held every year at Abomey. After the Eycos were finally expelled from Kana by Gézu, the annual Eycos were established by that monarch. This custom usually takes place about June, after the return of the armies from the war-path. The Eycos Custom has but one distinguishing feature, a brief epitome of which is as follows. A number of gallows are erected in the Uhon-nukon, and to the cross-pieces small wooden stools are attached. On a certain day a number of

men-criminals, or aged prisoners of war, are dressed in garments similar to those of the conquered Eyeos, and, after being killed by blows on the head, are lashed to the stools. These victims are intended to bring the remembrance of the deliverance of the Dahomans from the hands of the Eyeos by Gézu. They have calabashes containing maize, yams, and other food in their hands, and some are fixed up by the side of a dead goat or fowl, to show that once the Dahomans were obliged to bring food to the Eyeos, but now the Eyeos, although dead, are obliged to supply the wants of their conquerors. These bodies are exposed for about a week, by which time they have become too offensive for even a Dahoman stomach; the unfortunates are then taken down and buried without the town. I cannot understand Mr. Duncan's statement, that the bodies he mentions had been exposed two moons and a half, and were dried like leather, since putrefaction would have utterly destroyed them long before the expiration of that time, supposing the vultures had remained quiet, and the Dahomans have no knowledge of the art of embalming or otherwise preserving the bodies of their dead.

One of the principal features at the Annual Customs is the payment of the taxes to the king by every person in the land, from the Ningam in the capital to the lowest free man in the villages. At these times all great palavers are settled, punishments are inflicted upon those guilty of heinous crimes, and rewards conferred upon the meritorious. The division of the prize-money, the produce of the sales of the captives and animals taken in the wars of the past year, is also effected, and various degrees of rank are conferred upon the junior officers, promotion by purchase being unknown in the Dahoman army. At this time also the Amazons, whom the king may select as wives for his favourites, are bestowed upon the lucky bridegrooms, and several royal princesses are usually married to some of the principal officers of state. New laws are passed, old ones repealed, when necessary, and all petitions are heard.

At these times also the retinues of the deceased monarchs are supplied with new recruits; for the Dahomans believe that after

death a person exists in the other world in a rank similar to that occupied by the deceased before death. Consequently, it is necessary to supply the dead monarchs with slaves; besides which, the continual sending of messengers to them by their successors in this world, keeps the departed sovereigns in a happy state of mind, as to whether their greatness is forgotten on earth, and they are induced to give the living monarch the benefit of their ghostly advice. This in a great measure is the cause of the continuance of the human sacrifices at the Customs; since every Dahoman believes that, if they were discontinued, the glory of the kingdom would depart, because the old kings would be so vexed with their representative who refused their accustomed *post-obit*al honours, that they would give the enemies of the country the wise counsel they were wont to give to their successor. The victims who are exhibited in the markets are not messengers, but criminals and troublesome captives, who are held up as a terror to all evil-doers.

The Annual Customs may be divided into the following sections:—

THE EYEO CUSTOM.

THE SO-SIN CUSTOM.

A. *For the King.*

Section I.—The So-sin-gbeh; or, Horse-tie to-day.

Section II.—The Agasunno-jaga-sin-tansi-gbeh-Nesu; or, the Agasunno will go and fetch ghost-water for Nesu to-day.

Section III.—The Avo-usu-gbe; or, we will show a change (number) of cloths to-day.

Section IV.—The Bonugan nun-kpon gbe diyeh; or, the officers will look at a marvellous sight to-day; or,

Bonugan owu-chyoh uzu 'gbe—the officers will change cloths to-day.

Section V.—The Mino-kyanan'gbe; or, the Amazons will dance to-day.

Section VI.—The Zan-men-huwu-wonh; or, the night for the ominous human sacrifice.

Section VII.—The Menaiye-kpon menhuwu Uhunglo akhi ; or, we will go to look at the sacrifices in the Uhunglo market to-day.

B. *For Addokpon, the Bush King.*

Section I.—The Nun kpon gbe Addokpon ; or, we shall look at the custom for Addokpon to-day.

Section II.—The Akhosusi zohn gbe ; or, the Amazons will march round to-day.

Section III.—Addokpon-nun-kpon gbe-diyeh ; or, the people will look at a grand sight for Addokpon to-day.

Section IV.—Addugba-ho-gbe ; or, the Addugba drum will be played to-day.

Section V.—Zan men-huwu wonh Addokpon ; or, the night for the ominous human sacrifices for Addokpon.

Section VI.—Addokpon Dang-be ; Addokpon will fine to-day.

THE ATTOH CUSTOM.

A. *For Gelelé.*

Section I.—Bonugan Kayon gbe ; the captains will dance to-day.

Section II.—Gelelé Akhosu Kayan gbe ; Gelelé and the princes will dance to-day.

Section III.—Hunto-Kayon gbe ; the drummers will dance to-day.

Section IV.—Men sané Attoh gbe. Gelelé ; the victims will be thrown from the Attoh to-day for Gelelé.

Section V.—Miuo Zolm-wa gbe ; the Amazons will walk in procession to-day.

Section VI.—Meu huwu gbe ; or, the Meu's victim to-day.

Section VII.—Alloh gomojeh gbe ; the Attoh will be broken to-day.

B. *For Addokpon, the Bush King.*

THE FIRING FOR THE ATTOH CUSTOM.

THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

THE ANLIN CUSTOM.

THE PAYMENT OF THE TRIBUTE.

THE AZAN GBEH ON GUN CUSTOM.

Mais revenons à nos moutons. On the day succeeding that on which I received the intimation that I was expected to stay to see the Customs, a man was brought to me with his arm completely shattered by the bursting of his gun. I declined to have anything to do with the case, for I could plainly see that he was rapidly sinking from loss of blood, and if he had died while under my hands I might have been accused of killing him. Caution is always necessary in such instances, and lucky was I in keeping myself clear of the case, for the poor wretch died ten minutes after he left my house. Setting dislocated joints or broken bones, or strapping up knife wounds, is quite another matter, since the bystanders see what you are doing, and they all respect a surgeon. Savages look upon all Europeans as doctors, and I have had the most ridiculous cases brought to me for treatment. One man who had received a bullet in his head nine years before, which remained fixed in his skull, and had caused a swelling as large as a good-sized loaf, was brought in as quite a favourable case. Dwarfs, hunchbacks, palzied old people of both sexes, men with withered arms, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the lame, all came to be cured. Others came, with all sorts of internal complaints, the description of which usually consisted in squeezing the stomach with the arms and rolling the eyes from side to side. One fellow was asked to put out his tongue, and ever after I always knew a patient from afar off, by his coming along with his tongue hanging out several inches from his lips.

The worst of the matter was, that one and all refused to depart without some medicine. How I longed for a hog'shead of strong Epsom salts, flanked by another of tartar emetic. No savage has any faith in any internal medicine unless it acts as a strong purgative or a violent emetic, save only when it is made of something that will burn the throat as it goes down. This last opinion saved my reputation as a learned leech. Fortunately I possessed several bottles of curry-powder with which, combined with the carbolic acid and camphor I used for entomological purposes, I felt my fame secure. Whenever a patient came with any

internal disease,—and nearly all came in the hope of my prescribing rum,—the following was my method of procedure. Taking out my watch I would feel the patient's pulse, pull his tongue, tweak his nose, or otherwise pull him about, my face as grave as an undertaker's during the operation. With a shake of my head I would then consult a huge Johnson's Dictionary, ever and again giving the patient a fresh overhauling. That being satisfactory, out would come my curry-powder, a teaspoonful of which, duly seasoned with a drop of carbohic acid or a grain of camphor, and well stirred up, invariably convinced the lucky recipient that he was swallowing a certain "cure all." A small portion of powdered chalk, wrapped up in a bit of paper, with instructions to take it in four days convinced the patient of the wonderful skill of the doctor, and away he would go to his own delight and my relief; for without such stratagem I should never get rid of the suppliants, who would load me with presents of yams, fruit, &c., to propitiate my goodwill, since they always laid the refusal to prescribe to a want of presents or a dislike to the patient. Old sores, withered arms, lameness of years' standing, and all chronic rheumatics were at once cured by the application of a catholicon composed of flour stained with Prussian blue or gamboge and smeared on the back of a newspaper fragment. Truly faith works wonders in the cure of bodies as well as of souls!

In the afternoon a wretched object, with a scrap of coarse cloth, round the waist, was ushered into my presence. On looking up it addressed me in good English. The apparition proved to be Edward Jackson Richards, a native of Sierra Leone, who had been taken by the King's people seven years before. It appears that a slaver was waiting at Whydah to take her living freight on board, and information was given to an English man-of-war at Lagos, which led to the capture of the vessel with her full complement of slaves. Richards and two others were suspected of being the tale-tellers. The other two, fearful of the vengeance of the Avogan, escaped to Lagos. Richards, however, who declared to me that he was perfectly innocent in the matter, stayed at the factory

unsuspectingly, and the affair blew over. *Six months* afterwards he was called to the gate of the factory at dark, and on his appearance hurried off to Agauli, and from thence was taken into the interior, and put in charge of the Meu, the predecessor of the present one. During the whole of his captivity he had not been harshly treated, but merely denied all access to the coast. He had applied to two Europeans who had been up to the King, Burton and Mr. Lyall, but these gentlemen had been unable to do anything in the matter. I promised to use any influence I might possess in obtaining his liberty, and in the interim supplied him with a suit of clothes, and gave him permission to board and lodge in my house.

He was then in charge of the Adonejan, and slept in a little hut at the gates of his house. He was permitted to stay with me all day, but had to report himself to his janitors at sundown.

The same day Amosu was sent to Whydah in charge of the mortars, which the King would have stored in the palace, but he feared the natural curiosity of the women would not fail to discover them, and in that case the secret would soon ooze out. The old man started at 11 P.M., strict secrecy being observed with regard to his departure.

On Monday, September 4th, a musical hubbub at my gate intimated to me that something unusual was on the *tapis*. This proved to be the private band of the Adonejan, who had called to pay me a complimentary visit.

Before a visitor to the King has been received no person is allowed to call upon him, and after he has been introduced to the King, if it so please that functionary, he can "taboo" his visitor's house to all the rabble, who otherwise would annoy him by their repeated complimentary visits; the true respect being shown to the rum-bottle, and not the owner of it.

When, however, any high officer of state is about to honour a visitor with his company his retinue is sure to be considerably augmented by every idler who can anyhow smuggle himself into the company.

This was the case with the Adonejan's escort, which was swelled to three times its usual complement by these *canaille* volunteers. I doubt not the fat old fellow secretly acquiesced in their enrolment in his "tail," since it gave his escort quite a formidable look by reason of its increased numbers. I produced brandy and liqueurs, while Bukau did the honours among the chief attendants with rum—well diluted to prevent any risk of headache.

The Adonejan inspected my instruments, and, as usual, the compass attracted considerable attention. Before going he requested me to procure a gold crucifix for him larger than the one he usually wore round his bull-neck. This emblem of Christianity appears to tickle the fancy of the Dahomans, for I saw chameleons, lions, birds, and other animals fixed crucifix-fashion to little gold or silver crosses, and worn with considerable ostentation by the fortunate possessors.

THE "SO-SIX GBEH;" OR, "HORSE TIE TO-DAY."—THE FIRST SECTION OF THE SO-SIX CUSTOM.

At length the long-wished-for day arrived on which the Annual Customs for 1871 were to commence. Busy preparations were commenced at daylight on the morning of September 5th, the hammock-men begging, borrowing, or stealing any greasy material with which to make their bodies shine like polished boot-leather. The soldiers in my retinue were furbishing up their arms and putting on gaudy *chokoto* formed for the most part of striped or plaid cotton cloth. Every *fetiché* that could be obtained was placed in the haversack each soldier carries, while their *abagan*, or iron armlets, of which some wore a dozen, were brightened by scrubbing with sand. *Todofucoh* and other urchins, the pipe-bearers of the petty officers in command, appeared for the first time in a respectable suit of clothing, a square yard of blue baft and a few beads round the neck, while those who could obtain it prided themselves upon a fillet of pink and white string tied below the knee.

A newly washed hammock, with a freshly seraped pole and "fixings," awaited me at the gate, and the *Khogudah*, or back yard was filled with a jabbering throng disputing as to who were to accompany me and who were to remain at home. On these occasions the voice of Joe was usually heard above the mingled sounds of men, women, and children all talking and shouting at once. What on earth the fellow could find to put himself in a passion about I never could imagine; but, whenever there was an opportunity for a row, Joseph began his complaint. The best of the fun was that he never appeared to know what his grievance was, and addressed his voluble jargon of Ffon, Ga and Fantee to anyone who might happen to be opposite him. Joe certainly was a "cure."

All being in readiness, I started for the Uhonnukon before the Coomassie main gate, the Akwaji. On arriving at the south-eastern angle of the palace I dismounted, and the hammock was reared up against the wall, and the hammock-men, lighting their azoquch, prepared to do nothing but loll about in the shade until my return. Egblie-egbah usually commenced a dance on his own account as soon as my back was turned, throwing his limbs about in the normal fashion.

Preceded by Ghugalah and Bukau, both of whom carried the iron-ringed "latti" so much in vogue, I walked across the square followed by my chair-carrier and about a score other attendants.

Close to the thin-leaved fetiche tree opposite the Bwekonuhun, a large white umbrella had been set up, the pole being inserted into a hole in the ground, which was dug with a crowbar and the earth scooped out by hand. The space round this *kucho* was kept clear of intruders by a hunchbacked policeman, who rejoiced in the title of Boseku-ugbeh, evidently a corruption of the French, and our chairs were placed in the shade thus provided; the stick-bearers squatting in front, while the rest of my people took up positions in the rear.

The ground opposite the gate was swept clean and two immense
a
tl-soh truncheon altars, gorgeous in new paint, had been erected

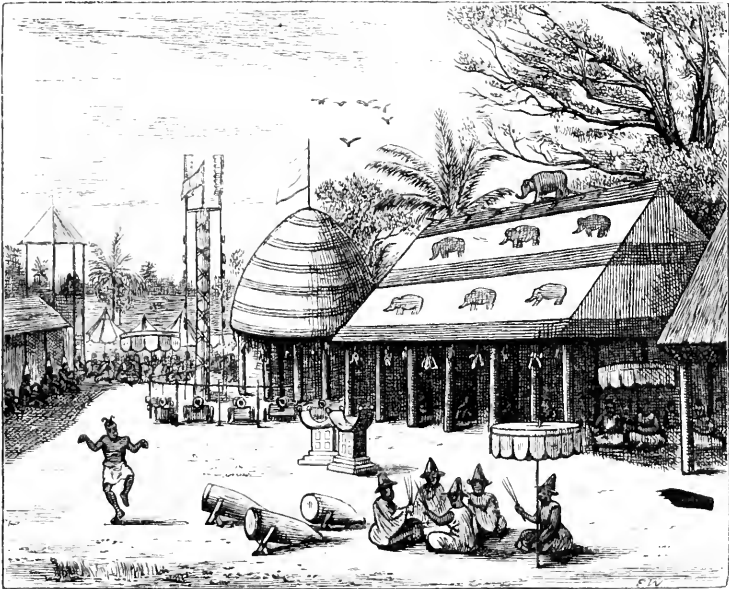
on each side of the palace gate. In the centre of each of these bundles an *Aseu* was stuck. This curious offering is best described by imagining an inverted extinguisher, or the receptacle of a common naphtha lamp, to be fixed on the extremity of a long iron rod. Some are double, and all the principal ones are decorated by strings of cowries, as usual, copiously smeared with fowl's blood. In front of these altars were two heaps of sand moistened with holy *Nesu* water, which will hereafter be the resting-places of several human heads.

The *Adanzan* was gay in a brand new flag, while the holy trees near the *Bwekonuhun* also rejoiced in fresh earthenware, containing a supply of *Legba-nundudu*, or food for *Legba*. Round each trunk was a piece of sacred rag, called an *Avo*, and above this the leafy girdle of the *Aizan* fetiche completed the arrangements. Under a tattered umbrella of white baft, that rivalled in the irregularity of its ribs that of any London costermonger woman, sat a priestess, spinning the sacred yarn that is used to thread the beads which encircle the various fetiche deities. She was dressed entirely in white cloth, and a thick towel-like affair was bound round her forehead.

The *Pwe* shed was lengthened, and the pillars were swathed in turkey-red cotton cloth, while the raised floor was clean swept and covered with mats, and a broad line of white sand was sprinkled along the front of it. On the outer side of this, the line of bamboos shut off the ladies of the palace from the sterner sex. To the left of the *Pwe* a shed was erected called the *Akhsu sosin bekpah*, or the King's *So-sin* shed. This building was about 80 feet long, of the usual barn type. The eaves were supported by thirty tree-trunks, stained red and white, from the tops of which rafters of palmyra connected the two sides. The eaves were thickly hung with tobacco leaves, bottles of gin, and liqueurs (empty), demijohns of rum, and bunches of thunder-shrub; while between each post a head of cowries was ostentatiously displayed, with a string of dollars hanging from it. The roof was covered with a cloth formed of broad stripes of

blood-red, white, and black cotton cloth, the colours being separated by a narrow border of blue checked calico. On the white stripes three black elephants with green ears and yellow tusks, pointing downwards! were displayed; the animals being cut out of cloth and sewn on the white ground,—all the needle-work of the Amazons.

On the top of the ridge a wooden elephant was fixed, the fac-simile of the figures on the cloth, while ten Tower muskets



THE SO-SIN PAVILIONS.

were laid across the ridge on each side of the elephant. In front of this "Elephant tent" the ground was raised a few inches, and beaten hard, and a row of eight four-pounder ship's guns were placed before it. This yard was fenced off by a row of bamboo poles and the usual grass rope, and the enclosure was tabooed to all but the King.

Seated on the ground beneath this shed was a row of twelve victims dressed in white shirts with scarlet trimmings, and a

blood-red heart on the left breast and right shoulder. Their heads were covered with long white caps of the "tom-fool" shape, and were turned up with blue baft, while a "dogoh" or loin-cloth of coloured cotton completed the costume appropriated to these unfortunates.

They were bound to a row of posts running down the centre of the shed, their legs being passed round the posts, and their ankles tied together, while their wrists were lashed in like manner. Their necks were encircled with grass halters, which were connected with their wrists and ankles, and the whole led back and secured to stakes driven into the floor.

Above these, seated on low stools fastened to the rafters, were four others, dressed similarly to those on the ground floor, but in addition to being lashed they were also gagged. The gag is a piece of stick about eight inches long, wrapped round with cotton. To the centre of this a forked piece of wood is attached, one prong resting on the tongue, while the other presses the roof of the mouth. The gags in the present instance were merely artificial, as no person could survive the application of the real instrument for any length of time. Not a sound can be uttered when it is fixed; and although I have been in close proximity to nearly a score of victims, I never heard a moan from one of them.

Contrary to what some good people in England would have us believe, these *morituri* were in the best of spirits, the ungagged laughing and talking with each other, while their muzzled brethren were taking matters just as apathetically, swaying their heads from side to side in time to the music of the bands. Burton says that their spirits are kept up by the knowledge that the king always spared the lives of some of the victims, and that each was buoyed up with the hope that he would be one of the lucky ones; but I don't think that had anything to do with their demeanour, for I have seen men laughing who knew their heads would be stuck at the palace gate within five minutes. The dull brain of the negro is too sluggish to permit any future fate to influence his passions for good or evil.

Indifference stolid in the extreme marks the whole race, and even the near approach of death is not sufficient to rouse them from their natural stupor. Every writer has remarked this *non-chalance* in the African.

These victims were confined in the shed during the day, and released when the court was dismissed. An attendant waited on each, who supplied them with water, food, and other necessaries, and who continually waved a bundle of bamboo splints resembling a butcher's "fly broom," to drive off the tormenting insects.

To the right of this shed a small conical hut was erected, the roof swathed in red and white striped cloth, and containing a sample of tobacco, liqueurs, and cowries tied in bunches round the eaves. This was the tent for the late King, Gézu, and was an illustration of the Dahoman idea, *le roi est mort, vive le roi*; for this little hut was erected to show that although Gézu was supposed to be dead, he was still alive to the people, and if he chose to return to his country and loving subjects, he would find a shed ready prepared for his reception.

To the left of this little hut a tall structure with a cross-piece near the top, like a telegraph pole, swathed in mats attracted my attention. This was a Bo-fetiché guarding the Custom, and was unveiled when the proper time arrived. It was surrounded by a mat screen, the supporting poles of which had white flags fastened to them. Opposite the Adanzan a group of twenty fetiché men were dancing round a huge umbrella, tattered *en règle*, beneath whose shade were the *loci tenentes* of the Agasunno, the fetiché priest who takes charge of the Custom. A row of Asen of various shapes was spread out before the priests, and several ugly little deities were fixed in the ground by short handles; the most noticeable of which were, a squat little black imp with his face stuck full of scarlet seeds, as though it were breaking out with a virulent small-pox, and a pink image carved in wood in a kneeling posture, with clenched fists before it in a praying attitude. Before each of these divinities an oblation of

rum was poured out, and a few pinches of cankie or other food were placed in the centre of a little ring of farinha and palm oil. When these offerings were set out, a number of boys, the neophytes of the priestcraft, were called in, who greedily devoured the sacred food. No doubt the gods were as much benefited by it, as though they themselves had eaten it.

On the southern side of the square a long shed was erected between the Adanzan and the Meu's house. This also was an open barn about a hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and about the same distance to the ridge. The ground within was beaten hard, and the roof was covered with a white cloth with four transverse stripes of plaid cloth, the pattern being that known as of the McDuff clan.

At the eastern end of this a tall square hut stood prominently forward, the posts supporting the roof being at least twenty feet high. Half-way up the posts a series of palmyra rafters supported a grating, and the eaves of both the long shed and the tower were ornamented with bunches of thunder-shrub.

On the raised floor of the tower six victims were seated in the long basketwork frames that are used to carry loads on the head. They were pseudo-gagged, and their hands and ankles bound together; while the whole compound of man and basket was securely lashed to the rafters. Beneath these wretched beings a further group of six were bound to the supporting posts of the roof. In the long barn were twenty-two condemned, bound similarly to the others, but not gagged. Those in the tower had blue patches on their gowns, while the shed-victims had square ornaments of chequered cotton-like bed-ticking; otherwise their dress was similar to that of the victims in the "Elephant shed." The sacrifices in the tower were appropriated to the Bush king, Addokpon; while those in the long barn-like structure were national property. These unfortunate beings, who were fated to perform such a fearful part in the national drama, were all criminals, having been guilty of crimes, the punishment of which, according to the national code, was death. A serious miscon-

ception has arisen with respect to these victims; some reports having gone so far as to say that the king picks out the required number from his subjects haphazard, or at the best chooses those whose influence might be supposed to be getting too great to be permitted in the country of a despotic tyrant.

Other accounts state that the victims are prisoners of war. That some of them may be such is very probable, and indeed whenever any enemy who has been particularly obnoxious has the ill-luck to fall into the hands of the monarch, he is generally made a public example of; but with these few exceptions the victims sacrificed at the Customs are criminals. Special messengers to the dead are often captives; but these ghostly postmen are liable to be dispatched at any time of the year; though of course so important an occasion as the Customs demands a more frequent correspondence with Kutomen, the Dahoman spirit world, than at other times. Much of the horror of this barbarous practice is therefore taken off when we consider that nearly all the capital punishments inflicted in a year are carried out during the Customs; and I doubt not that if we were to hang all our murderers at one period of the year—say at Christmas—the list would be as long a one as that of Dahomey. How long is it since human crania were actually to be seen on Temple Bar? Besides this, the monarch imagines that he is performing a truly filial duty to his father by supplying him with these recruits to his ghostly household.

But let us get on with the account. The square was filled with a dense crowd of men, who were squatted on the ground, each before the captain of his regiment. During the Customs every caboccer that can possibly be spared is bound to put in an appearance at the capital; and as they were nearly all present on this opening day, their umbrellas made a grand display. A word or two in this place about these umbrellas will be *à propos*. As in feudal times, the shield of the knight was a hieroglyphic or symbolic picture of his exploits, so at the present day the umbrella in Dahomey illustrates the principal deeds of its owner

by the various devices emblazoned upon it. The frames are invariably of wood, and are connected by narrow pieces of cotton, and give a spread of seven to twelve feet; a wooden cylinder slides up and down the eight-foot centre pole, and is kept in position by a wooden peg fixed into a hole bored through the pole. The young caboceer, on being invested with the *Bonugangei*, or officer's beads, is presented with a plain white umbrella, and is not permitted to assume any heraldic device until he has won his spurs on the field of battle. After he has slain an enemy, he quarters a decapitated head and a sword on alternate lappets of the umbrella, and this is of course the most common bearing. After each great event other bearings are added on the top of the umbrella or on the end of the pole, the latter distinction generally taking the form of an image carved in wood, and usually painted. Instead of quartering their arms, as would be done by heraldic augmentation, the nobles begin a fresh series of bearings on another umbrella, so that the highest officers have as many as a dozen of these emblazoned Kweho. The state umbrellas are made of silk or velvet, a material tabooed to any but the blood royal, and certain devices are borne by the royal family, the quartering of which by any other person is high treason. Some of the regal bearings are the lion, the white-breasted crow (*Corvus Senegalensis*), the harp, a shark, and a fleur-de-lis. Some of the umbrellas, especially those of the caboceers, who had frequent opportunities of visiting the factories at Whydah, were very prettily decorated with stars, diamonds, chevrons, and other plain devices, besides a host of rude patchwork, representations of some remarkable event in the life of the owner. In short, the assemblage of umbrellas formed one of the most showy spectacles I ever witnessed, whatever prejudiced travellers may have said to the contrary.

Each of the caboceers had his horse behind him, the gaudy saddle-cloths being very creditable specimens of leather-work, and the arrangement of colour invariably harmonious. Indeed, savages seem to have intuitively a perception of agreeable blending

of colour, a harsh combination being of rare occurrence, while schools of painting have to be established to teach civilized nations the very art that is an instinct with the savage. Finally, between the pwe-shed and the elephant-tent, was a cow-shed-like structure, the roof of which alone was visible, swathed in a blue and white striped cloth, while the remainder was concealed from the public gaze by a mat fence. This was known as the *Gézu-ye-ho*, the house for Gézu's ghost, and under a white umbrella before it sat Agotime, the Amazonian mother* of that king, surrounded by a squadron of holy women, in blue body cloths and tall steeple black hats, who constantly shook little bunches of twigs. To the right of these fetichists was a row of four shapeless bundles swathed in palm matting, and in a line with them a series of the *Kago* or food calabashes, with the bandbox-like mat baskets standing in them, which were encased in blue, pink, yellow, crimson, and parti-coloured cloths, and stamped with the royal brands. During the day's ceremony the number of these was augmented by troops of women from the palace, who brought other calabashes and placed them on mats, under the direction of a Dakro.

A volley of muskets fired inside the palace, and the cessation of the dancing or music, notified to us that the Autocrat was soon to show himself to his assembled people. A panigan-huntoh struck a succession of notes on the highest-pitched cymbal on his gong-gong, and concluded by three ting-tangs; after which premonitory warning, he cried out, *Ahgo!* "give audience," *vie kpo!* "the leopard (king) comes." Profound silence reigned as the massive doors of the palace-gate swung open, and a troop of Amazons filed into the pwe-shed and took up their position on the extreme left. They were principally Agbaraya, the blunderbusers, and Nyckpleh-hentoh, or blue knives, a troop hereafter to be described. They squatted on the ground, and held their weapons sloping to the front or resting over their shoulders, while the umbrellas of the officeresses were arranged in a kind of

* For an explanation of this term, see Chapter xxv.

verandah before the pwe-shed. Then, preceded by a band of female performers, the king walked with stately tread beneath the shade of a green-figured silk parasol, above which was held a splendid umbrella of white velvet with the royal crow on blue velvet on the lappets, the top ornamented with a curious but handsome pattern of scarlet and gamboge-coloured damask, and the pole surmounted by a green lion *rampant regardant*. Gelelé, who of course was smoking, carried a *kinikinikpo*, or lion stick, carved out of white wood, which he held with aristocratic carelessness head downwards or hooked over his shoulder. He advanced to the edge of the sticks and regarded his subjects with a pleasant expression of face as they fired volleys of muskets and called out various short prayers and strong names for his benefit; while hundreds who were having a dirt-bath raised quite a cloud by their vigorous shovelling. While this was going on, the large umbrella was being fixed before the royal seat on the pwe, and a second batch of soldieresses seated themselves on the right of the king's position. The bands of the Amazonian corps arranged themselves on either hand, while a bevy of Dakros seated themselves round the royal umbrella. When all was ready, I left my seat and advanced to the front, accompanied by Beecham, Ghugalah and Bukau bringing up the rear. After exchanging bows, the king shook hands with me and made sundry inquiries after my health, and concluded by saying that he wished me to take particular note of everything that occurred, and to send to him for an explanation of anything I did not understand. I resumed my seat amidst a perfect storm of applause, while the king retreated to the shadow of the umbrella, where he was but dimly visible in the semi-darkness of the Pwe.

A herald then announced that the Customs would begin at once, as the king was anxious to prevent his fathers becoming impatient, but that he wished them to know that he, Gelelé, the lion-king, was still mindful of the ancient customs of his forefathers, and would strive to fulfil all the wishes of his ancestors. Loud cries and yells, "*Bloo-bloo*," and strong names

ensued; after which a ting-tang and "*Ahgo*" restored silence; the "Gobbo," or hunchbacked police screaming out, "*N'daboh*," "be still," and belabouring the naked backs of the people who happened to be nearest to them at the moment.

The Sogan, or Master of the Horse, dressed in a showy striped tunic, and sitting side-saddle on a brown nag, shaded by a white umbrella with pink horses on the lappets, and preceded by a band, then paraded round the square, followed by his private retinue. After the third round he dismounted opposite the king, and kneeling down, bowed his head in the dust, and threw several handfuls over his head. Then rising on all fours he spoke as follows: "Great king, we all see you once more performing the wishes of your fathers. They will rejoice to see you so doing. I now go to catch the horses of the caboceers, that they may not depart until you give permission." Another dirt-bath followed, and the Amazons cried out, "*N'yoh*," "it is good."

The followers of the Sogan then marched round the line of caboceers, and collected their horses, which were tied up in the Uhunglo market, and not returned to their owners until released by a fine of cowries.

While this was going on, dancing was resumed by the priests and the high dignitaries under the umbrella, who occasionally groaned out, "*Akhosu lih Akhosu*," "king of all kings," "*Kini kini Akhosu*," "lion king," and other strong names.

It was then discovered that some of the caboceers had but a small modicum of their followers, and the Ningam, advancing to the front, soundly rated the delinquents for daring to appear before royalty with so meagre a retinue. Loud cries of "*N'yoh*" from Amazons and men ensued, while the culprits smothered their fine dresses with dirt.

The ground was then cleared for the reception of the governor, and the old table brought to the front. Continual ting-tanging of gong-gongs, and loud cries of "*Ahgo!*" announced the head

of the procession, of which but a brief *résumé* will suffice, as all the officers who figured in it have already been described.

First came the band and flags of the Bosu Sau, followed by the Nuage, who did not seem to relish the loss of his horse, and whose umbrella-man evidently was suffering from St. Vitus' dance, for he kept the ponderous sun-shade in a continual quiver. The toxophilite body-guard of Chuydatoh followed, who, as is customary with him, showed off his civilization by smoking a cigar with an affected air. A couple of quasi-Union Jacks announced the *locum tenens* of the Avogan, who preceded the Akhosi eunuch troupe. Next in order were the Bru guards, who whirled round in the normal style. This company was followed by the skull standards, and the Adonejan brought up the rear.

An awkward squad of six Congo soldiers, in charge of a corporal, preceded the governor, who reclined in a hammock, the Portuguese flag being balanced by a bugler on the right and left of him. After the customary three marches round, the hammock was set down on the south-eastern corner of the square, and the governor, with his interpreter and body-guard, advanced to the front. I could not help contrasting the unwashed, ragged appearance of the governor's escort with the smart get-up of the Dahomans; while the brightly-polished arms of the latter put the rusty worn-out muskets of the body-guard to shame. During the perambulation of the train, guns were fired, and the bands of the caboccers made a hideous medley, impossible to associate with any kind of music. The Congo soldiers then made an attempt at a salute, but half the guns missed fire. Hahansu then sent a company of soldiers, who took the undischarged weapons out of the soldiers' hands, and deliberately drew the charges, lest they should go off and hurt the people; besides which no loaded gun is permitted to remain in the hands of any person, except the authorized saluters. Such an indignity to the Portuguese was insufferable at the hands of a savage.

Gelelé then came from under the pwe, and advanced to the

side of the table. He was dressed in a scarlet and white satin *owuchyon*, or toga, thrown over the left shoulder, with drawers and pork-pie hat of plaid silk. He drank the governor's health, a cloth being held before him *à la mode*, one of the "Gobbo" crying out, "Lions do not let other beasts see them drink." The governor was then escorted to a seat under the big umbrella which shaded our party; while an artilleryman presented a calabash containing fourteen gun-stones for his inspection. The reception was but a poor affair compared with that with which I was honoured. Why this partiality? Gelelé evidently was not awed by the military display; while the mishap of the salute caused a derisive laugh to go the round of the crowd.

A number of "strangers" were then received. Amongst others were the ambassadors of the King of Ashanti, conspicuous by the gold plates glittering on their hair, and the massive gold "jujus" depending from chains round their necks. The headman had a private executioner, known by his cap of a skinned monkey with the head in front, and his very suggestive necklace of human teeth, to say nothing of an elaborately-embossed two-handed sword. A "poisoner" or "medicine man" formed also a part of the retinue of the caboccer, whose possible-sack was bulged out with various "mysteries." Twelve boys carrying daggers swathed in white cloths, with massive handles of gold, knelt behind the principal chief, while a stool and shield, each garnished with plates of the precious metal, were consigned to the charge of a special attendant. The dress of this company was far more valuable than that of any dozen of the Dahoman caboccers. Ashanti and Dahomey are the two great nations of the West Coast, and are always on friendly terms with each other; peace being principally procured by the fact that each monarch is afraid of his neighbour. Nevertheless, Gézu made a pseudo attack on Ashanti, which resulted in the building of the Coomassie palace. When his Majesty of Ashanti heard of this affair, he immediately set out on a similar mission, and called one of his palaces Abomey. It must be understood that both these

invasions were purely imaginary, the troops never crossing their respective frontiers.

Besides these auriferous chiefs, there were delegates from Houssa, and a score of other tribes to the northward, as well as an infinity of odd men from every petty kingdom within a considerable radius.

The Ashanti, Houssa, and the other principal ambassadors were honoured with a small procession, and, after a dirt-bath, with a separate drinking with the king; but the smaller fry were arranged in a row before His Majesty, and after smothering themselves in the dust, Gelelé drank their healths by a deputy. These foreigners were announced by the Adonejan, who knelt behind each and called out their rank and titles in his butcher-like voice; the object of attention lying prostrate on the ground.

Ningan then made a long speech, the king prompting him through the medium of a Dakro, or messengeress, who knelt at the bamboo line. The sense of the speech, which occupied a quarter of an hour in its delivery, and in which the paucity of words in the language necessitated frequent tautology, was—that Gelelé was still a great king, and was visited by people from afar, but that he would not forget that his fathers had raised the kingdom to the state of grandeur in which he found it, and that it devolved upon him to maintain it in its *prestige*.

A number of junior caboceers were then promoted, the distinctive necklaces being brought to the front by the Dakros, with a piece of cloth for each recipient of additional rank. Ningan then invested the officers with their new dignity by winding the cloth round their bodies, and afterwards putting the beads round their necks. Their new rank was then called out, and the newly-fledged officers performed the *itte dai* and the *ko dide*, and afterwards did their best to dislocate their limbs in an agility dance; concluding by an extempore song by one of them, and a grand salute grunt by way of chorus.

After them a score of half-naked boys came up, marshalled by

the Meu. These were to be created drummers, or, in other words, enlisted into the Jotosi company. Three new drums, smothered in fetiche charms, were then brought to the front by the Dakros, and Gelelé said that he did not see the use of giving drums if the recipients would not use them, so he hoped the boys would learn to play them at once. The drums were then handed to the boys, who were joined by several old drummers from the regiment, and oldsters and youngsters commenced playing a rub-a-dub. The four bundles were next seized upon by the Amazons, and the mats being stripped off, a large drum was disclosed in each. These new instruments were formed of a tree-log of a truncated conical shape, with a goatskin head, kept tightly stretched by thongs passing over crooked pegs, fixed six inches down the sides. Two sticks, crossed at right angles, accompanied each drum, which rested between the fork, while the narrow end touched the ground. The player officiated on it by straddling across it and beating it with crooked drumsticks called *agideh*. Each drum had a covering of red and blue checked cloth hanging on each side. These drums are known as the Ganchyahun, and the dance is called the Ganchya dance. Gelelé came out, protected by his parasol, and accompanied by his spittoon woman and handkerchief-bearers; and taking up one set of drumsticks, commenced to operate on the goatskin, the three others being played by Amazonian drummers.

After a five minutes' practice, amidst the cheers of the delighted audience, a herald sounded his gong-gong, which was answered by one on the Amazon side, "*Ahjo!*" was called, and all was still. The three female players then commenced a new tune, and Gelelé, taking up a *kpogi*, or singer's stick, began a slow and solemn dance, shuffling the feet in studied time, and paddling with his hands *secundum artem*. He began to sing in a somewhat husky voice an ode composed for the occasion, the following being a condensation of its meaning:—"Gézu being dead, is succeeded by a good son, who still keeps up all his customs, as if he were still alive, so he must be happy." During this song, the air of

which was very *triste*, and indeed had a plaintive sweetness in its melody, the telegraph-post fetiche was unveiled, disclosing a tall pole, painted white and striped red and blue, and carrying on the top of a cross-bar two huge swords, with serrated edges, like saws. These were painted blue, and had a row of yellow stars down the centre of each blade. From the cross-bars nine green cords of fetiche spun-cotton were hanging, to which several bottles of rum and liqueurs, tobacco, beads, cowries, and other articles were attached. Between the saw-knives a flagstaff was fixed, with a crimson flag bearing a device of two blue swords, crossed upon its ground. This ceremony elicited a deafening round of applause.

The shrouded hut, or *Géznycho*, was then unswathed, revealing a square shed closed by matting on three sides, and open to the front. The posts were spirally draped with green and white chequered cloth; while two umbrellas of the same material were opened as a verandah before the door. Within it was a large *Asen*, wrapped up in white calico, and a couple of *Tansino*, or Ghost-mothers, kept watch beside it. In front of this temple, attached to a fetiche rope, stretched between two bamboo sticks, was a row of six crimson skull-caps, and two sentinels, with guns resting on forked twigs, guarded the approach. This strange building was supposed to contain the spirit of King *Gézu*, and the monarch alone is permitted to remove the calico which enshrouds the iron extinguisher within its sacred walls.

Meanwhile a flagstaff had been erected in the middle of the square, from which the tricoloured numeral flag "W." in the Commercial Code floated proudly on the breeze. It, or rather its fragments, was still flying when I left the capital, at Christmas time.

Several princesses, whose sleek skins were suggestive of frequent applications of pomatum, now stalked in from the palace-gate. They were all dressed in gaily-coloured silk skirts, with velvet tunics, while a long black velvet robe was thrown, plaid-fashion, over the left shoulder, and fell behind nearly to the feet. All wore a profusion of silver armlets, and a small silver-

hilted dagger peeped out of the scarlet sash. Their brows were encircled with silver coronets, which formed a striking contrast with their swarthy complexions, and each one carried a crooked kpo-stick. Some had their hair cut to a length of two inches, and combed straight up till it looked like a black velvet turban, while others were content with a few thimblefuls on one side. Conspicuous amongst these was the Adonejan's wife, a huge porpoise, whose obesity was such that she could scarcely waddle, and who would have made a fitting bride for Anak. These royal beauties sat down on the king's right, and most of them set up a pipe at once with the air of connoisseurs.

A jester, whose face was a perfect model for the escape-pipe of a drinking-fountain in its ugliness, then advanced to the front and yelled out, "*Look at him! Look at him! Gelelé the shark!*" followed by a copious dirt-bath.

The cheers of the crowd were then stilled by a gong-gong, and Gelelé advanced to the elephant-tent, amidst the silence of every one, except the Agotime, who solemnly cried out at short intervals, *Gelelé! Gelelé! Gelelé!* The king was supposed to be paying a visit with his father to the victim-shed, and for any one to speak during the ceremony was to call upon himself the sure vengeance of the Bo-fetiché. After this ceremony, the Agasunno, or head fetiché-man for the Custom, who had been hitherto enshrined in the Gézu-ye-ho, stood up and made a speech, the burden of which was that Gelelé had done right by remembering his father, and all things would prosper with him.

A gang of Amazons then appeared, bearing a huge stool of the normal Gold Coast pattern, and a smaller one with a black seat to it. The large one was Gézu's, and the smaller Gahqpwel's, the bush king for Gézu. These were set up on mats before the elephant-tent, and a couple of umbrellas erected to shade the ghostly occupants from the sun. A body-guard of Amazons then took up their positions round them.

The leopard-wives (kposi) then filed in to the right. These, the favourite spouses of the king, are known by their smart

appearance, and by the fact that everybody—Amazons and all—is obliged to give way before them. The leopardesses were dressed in white waistcoats, bound with scarlet velvet, and a long petticoat of violet and green figured silk descended to the ankles. Above this a “polonaise” of dark blue velvet reached half way down the petticoat. Their hair was frizzed out in the turban style, and a row of silver coins, attached to chains of the same metal, jingled in a circlet around their brows. A profusion of silver necklaces, coral beads, and other finery, with several armlets, completed their get-up. Their necks and shoulders were smeared with scented pomatum of a pale green colour, and of the consistency of thick paste, which was plastered on in fanciful designs of curves, diamonds, and parallels. These ladies of the harem sat down alongside the mat-covered seat of their lord, and employed themselves by cooling him with oval fans of bullock’s hide stained red and blue.

I forgot to mention that after the reception of the governor a table was brought out, and set before me. Upon this a showy cotton handkerchief was spread by way of a tablecloth, and several bottles of liqueurs, rum, and water were placed upon it, and the whole covered by a second cloth. From time to time we helped ourselves to the contents, and never failed to empty the last drop among our followers, much to the horror of Beecham, who was astonished at such “waste.” This table was set out at every levée during my stay.

The king then sallied out of the shadowy depths of the Pwe, and accompanied by his wives and spittoon and handkerchief-bearers, advanced to the front. One of the leopardesses held the parasol over his head, while an Amazon kept off the sunshine by means of a splendid umbrella of green velvet, edged with yellow and crimson. Upon each lappet was a white vulture, with a scarlet and blue eye and violet claws, that was tearing out the entrails of a sky-blue man, with a white waistcloth and scarlet legs, the man being about half the size of the bird. On the summit of the umbrella was a rude carving of a vulture, and the flat top was covered with a row of vultures of similar colours to

those on the valance, but having their wings "displayed." The lining of this umbrella was pink cotton, and round the edge of the top a chequered fillet connected the valance with the roof.

Several baskets were brought out by the Amazons, and the king, taking a bottle in each hand, walked to the front of the stools, and poured out the spirit on the ground, in a circle around him. Twenty-seven quart bottles of rum and gin were thus poured out as an oblation to Gézu, and the ceremony concluded by His Majesty drinking his father's health, a cloth being held up, and the audience hiding their faces during the toast. The ministers and head generals were then called to the front, the Ningan, Meu, Adonejan, and Ajakyaho kneeling a little in front of the rest. Bottles of grog and provisions from the several baskets were then given by the king to the officers, who, after touching the ground with their foreheads, put the palms of their hands together in a praying attitude, while Gelelé poured the spirit down their throats. The remainder of the spirits were then given in the same manner to the soldiers, and the provisions distributed amongst the people. Everybody crowded to the front, and the hunchbacked police were busy with their besoms keeping the *canaille* from a too close proximity to the sacred bamboos, the Dakros assisting them in a similar manner. A herald then proclaimed silence, while the police cleared a lane through the excited multitude, and Gelelé advanced towards us. We arose at his approach, and after shaking hands with me, he drank my health. He then passed on to the governor, and honoured him in the same way. Several bottles of rum, and two baskets of provisions, were then given to each of us, and in this way we received permission to leave the presence, after being nine mortal hours in court, sitting on our chairs under the umbrella. The hammock-men immediately began to squabble over the division of the provisions, but Bukau speedily put an end to the strife by producing his stick, and ordering my people to carry off the whole to my quarters, where he took upon himself the task of appropriating the delicacies, while the rest had to be accepted by

the governor's people. This was always the case when any provisions were given to be divided between us, and I found that Gelelé had given orders for the division of the spoil to take place at my house, under the superintendence of Bukau. Everybody is supposed to make merry to-night at the king's expense, and certainly, if all the lieges followed the example of my people, a very little sufficed to keep them up haggling, singing, and dancing for the greater part of the night. So ended the first day of the Customs.

THE AGASUNNO-JAGA-SIN-TANSI-GBEH-NESU. — THE AGASUNNO WILL GO OUT FOR THE GHOST WATER TO-DAY FOR NESU.

During the night I heard several yelps as if a dog were being beaten, and this anti-sommulent was repeated at short intervals, until near daylight. On inquiring into the matter, I was told that on the first night of the Custom, all the dogs that can be caught by the night watchmen are slaughtered; for it is a fact, well known to every Dahoman, but concealed no doubt, for wise reasons by Providence, from white men, that on the first night of any Custom, the dogs assemble in the streets, and try to talk like men. If they were once to succeed, they would call down various plagues and pestilences upon the nation. *Risum teneatis, amici?*

The second day of the Custom is devoted to a religious ceremony called Agasunno-jaga-sin-tansi-gbeh-nesu, a long-winded title meaning—Agasunno (the head feticheer for the Custom) will go to fetch the ghost-water (water for spiritual purposes) to-day for Nesu. During this festival the king remains in his palace, and none of the officials appear abroad. About ten o'clock in the morning I went to the south-eastern angle of the Coomassie palace, where my umbrella was set up. The road was fenced off by a line of bamboo poles and a thin rope of "tie-tie" spun from the cloth-like bark of a palm tree. This fence extended from a fetiche hut, near the western gate of the Coomassie palace, called a Nesu hwe, or Nesu temple, the shrine of

the celebrated fetiche Nesu, the tutelary deity of Abomey, through the Uhunglo market to a water-pit on the northern side of the town called Didoh. At intervals of a hundred yards or thereabouts long poles were erected, carrying a plain white flag, like a table-cloth, at their summits; and at the foot of every alternate one sat a fetiche herald, with a large gong-gong, having five cymbals fixed on the end of as many rods, which radiated from a common centre, like the fingers of a man's outspread hand. A tune something like the chimes of a peal of bells was played on this instrument, and occasionally a strong name would be called out.

About half-past ten a volley of muskets, accompanied by the blast of a score of horns, announced the commencement of the procession. Presently, a troop of Amazons of the Blunderbus company advanced from the western side of the palace, marching along the space marked off by the fence. They were firing guns as they walked along, in about the same order as that taken by a drove of sheep. A white flag, emblazoned with a blue alligator, was carried in their midst; and the Begani, or Captainess, strode along under the shade of an umbrella, bearing green squares on its white valance.

Behind this advanced guard came a troop of twenty-two princesses, marching in Indian file. They were dressed in sombre grey and brown pagnes, with black necklaces and iron armlets for ornaments. On their heads, resting on a pad of white cotton, they carried small jars of various shapes, covered on the top with an inverted calabash, and having a string of blood-stained cowries hung round the neck. These pots are called Bagweh, and hold the sacred water, which is used in the worship of Nesu.

Behind the princesses came a row of 123 fetiche women, all clothed in sad-coloured garments, with a black silk sash round the waist and a white calico skull-cap on their heads. The first twenty-four were Mau, or moon fetiche women, distinguished by long necklaces of cowries, with black seeds, called Attikuhn, interchanged. A dozen Avreketsi, or fetiche priestesses, for

Avreketch, a sea deity, followed; their necklaces being contrived of cockle-shells. Behind them came a gang of Bo-fetichists, who preceded a few Sapatansi, or small-pox priestesses, whose chaplets of scarlet feathers contrasted glaringly with their ebon cheeks and snowy skull-caps.

Behind this long train came the eight Tansi-no, or ghost mothers, who are the corporeal dwellings of the spirits of the mothers of the deceased kings. They were preceded by a peculiar-looking affair of brass, like a twelve-foot curtain pole, tapering to a point, and having a piece of white rag, the avo, wrapped round it at about three feet from the top. These sacred persons wore blue steeple hats and blue gowns, like an Arab burnoose, with a black sash thrown over the left shoulder.

Behind the ghost-mothers, again, came the bandsmen of the Agasunno, playing exclusively on five-noted gong-gongs. Next came the great feticheer himself, who walked between two lieutenants under a scarlet umbrella, with black crows, edged with white, stitched to the lappets. The Agasunno carried a scarlet stick, crowned with an avo, and profusely decorated with cowries. Those borne by his deputies were not so highly ornamented.

Finally, came a rearguard of about a hundred Amazons, who made our ears ring with the loud reports of their muskets. They had scarcely passed ere the mid-day guns were fired, and the guard, preceded by a cunuch, who tinkled his bell, started off on their round, at a slow pace; the heralds calling out the *nysesynsyn*, or strong names, with the customary drawl.

Leaving some of my people in charge of the umbrella, I retired to breakfast, half-baked with a two hours' séance under a vertical sun.

While we are eating our well-earned breakfasts, I will describe the ceremony at the Didoh, as related to me by a fetiche priest.

When all the Bagweh carriers have arrived, the jars are filled with water from the pit. A small image is then made of the clay from the water-side, and set upright on a little mound

also of the clay. A fire is then kindled near the deity, and the Agasunno proceeds to slay a number of fowls, ducks, and other animals, provided for that purpose, and previously left in the charge of Jobwah, the custodian of the king's water-pits, who resides in a house to the north of the principal pit.

The heads of the sacrifices are then stuck in the mound at the feet of the muddy god, who is the *locum tenens* for the time being of Nesu.

The bodies have the feathers singed, and are then torn in shreds, and devoured by the Agasunno and his company. The feast over, the blood-stained clay of the mound is employed as a seal to the calabash coverings of the jars, and the contained water is then carried to the Nesu-hwe to be used for various purposes, principally for watering the graves of the kings in the Sin Kwain Custom, hereafter to be described.

About three o'clock the firing of the returning priestesses began to be heard, and Egblic-egbah rushed in to say that "the fetiche live," i. e., is present. On our arriving at the umbrella, the vanguard were opposite us, and firing their muskets with considerable rapidity. No wonder that some of their hands disappear on these occasions, for an excited warrior will sometimes commence to reload her piece, while it is still smouldering at the touch-hole. Accidents *will* occur in spite of the Aizan fetiche.

The Bagwe carriers were chanting a song to a merry tune—

"Gésu made a son who still remembers him, and he
will always fetch water for his grave.
All people shall know and tremble at the shaking
of the earth when this great leopard king walks out."

The rear guard were frantically rushing about all over the road, darting up to one herald, and shrieking out a strong name, and then tearing off to another, and shaking their gun in his face, treating him to a brief resumé of all the good qualities of Gelelé. Guns were thrown into the air, ballet-girl twirlings were attempted, with every possible antic that a party of escaped

lunatics, who were afflicted with chronic St. Vitus' dance, could be expected to go through. The dust they kicked up was fearful, and the bodies of most of the people, both Amazons and spectators, were coloured brick-red with the flying showers.

When the pots were deposited in the Nesu-hwe, a dance and feast would conclude the day's pilgrimage.

Burton made a surreptitious visit to the Didoh pits, and thereby incurred the vengeance of the fetiche people. I never heard whether he suffered any ill effects from their *brutum fulmen*. No person except those connected with the palace are allowed to use any of the water from the Didoh, but must content themselves with that from the other pits to the eastward. The water is much purer than any in the neighbourhood; and on my representing to the king that I could not drink the milky stuff from the Nyasso and other pits, he sent me a jar of the king's water three times a week, the mouth of the vessel being closed by a lid luted with clay, and a fetiche tied to the neck, *which would cause certain death to any common man drinking thereof*.

CHAPTER X.

THE SO-SIN CUSTOM—(continued).

Third Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Pleasures of waiting upon royalty—Procession of eunuchs—Parade of the king's robes—Dance and song of the Amazons—Court zanys—Procession of the "inside" officers—The Nunupweto or omnipotent cloth—The royal solo on the new drum—Exhibition of the king's robes—Gelelé's metamorphoses and dances.

Fourth Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Gelelé's three skull trophies—Dance and procession of the ministers—Their song—Gelelé's dance—The Bassajeh—Fighting for cowries.

Fifth Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Preparations for the human sacrifices—The Braggadocio company—Song of the national bards—Amazonian ballet—Abeokenta threatened—Song of the generals—National songs—Procession of Amazons with cowries.

THE "AVO-USU-GBE;" OR, WE WILL SHOW A CHANGE (NUMBER) OF CLOTHS TO-DAY.

IN the early morning I went by hammock to pay Hahansu a visit, and thank him for a 4 lb. canister of tea which he had sent me, it having been hinted to him by Ghugalah that my store was running short. I had started from Whydah with a fortnight's provisions, and I had been absent more than five weeks already, and Amosu had not yet returned from the factory with fresh supplies.

About noon we started for the king's gate, and on arriving at the Uhon-nukon, our chairs were set down beneath the spreading branches of the Bwekon uhun. A crowd of idlers then assembled round us, and commenced stock-taking our persons. Urchins naked as they were born, came up to us and cried out "Yeoroh," "white man," to our faces, while the adult portion passed free comments on our every movement. I tried to keep down my

rising choler by a pipe, and gave Bukau a hint that in the case of the rabble, distance certainly lent enchantment to the *view*, to say nothing of the *smell*. I hardly think bloodhounds can be necessary to follow up a runaway slave, for surely his natural scent is strong enough to render his pursuit a simple matter of "following your nose." Many tribes can be distinguished by their peculiar aroma, and at the Gaboon I have often detected the presence of a M'pangwe in the factory by the odoriferous radiation from his skin. *Ab uno disce omnes*. After a quarter of an hour of this public exhibition, it was a comfort to see the straggling escort of the Governor appearing in the distance down the Jegbeh road.

The tree above us was a favourite perch for vultures, and their presence was anything but agreeable, until, as a *dernier ressort*, I suggested the unfurling of one of the large umbrellas. Our patience was fairly tried before we received notice that the king was about to come forth, and at half-past one we took our seats after an hour and a half of chaff at the hands of the *canaille*. From that day I vowed I would never start for the court until I heard the premonitory guns; and as long as we were within hearing of the signal I kept my word, much to the disgust of Beecham and the Buko-no.

A mat-walled tent, whose roof was covered with a cloth of blue and white striped calico, had been erected near the fetiche tree, occupied by the spinning priestess.

A colour-sergeant was rushing about the square, whirling a tattered ensign charged with a blue soldier slaying a very podgy crimson enemy. No sooner did we appear upon the scene than he came up at the top of his speed, and, reeking with perspiration from every pore, began a severe dance, singing a war song, having reference to the probable fate of Abeokeuta, should Gelelé attack it, flinging about his limbs as if he wished to emulate a crustacean and throw them off.

Gelelé came in with his escort of leopard-wives, dahkros, and captainesses, and leaving them a few paces in the rear,

advanced to the front, where we met him, and exchanged compliments.

The unfortunate governor again made a failure of a salute, and received a hint from the king that such displays were not exactly calculated to raise him in the estimation of the Dahomans. The king then took his seat beneath the newly erected shed, whither his wives had preceded him. Tononun then staggered to the front, his withered limbs contrasting unfavourably with those of his lieutenant, notwithstanding he was radiant in a long blue coat of European cut, sadly deficient in nap.

The junior eunuchs carried a huge stretcher, upon which an immense mat-basket was placed. These neuters paraded thrice round the square, at the third round depositing their load on the men's side of the sticks. The Tononun then stepped across the fatal line—a privilege he alone has the pleasure of indulging in, and, picking up the rods, placed them on the men's side of the package, which was thus enclosed within the women's boundary. A number of Amazons then advanced and carried the package to the front of the new tent.

The Yavedo, or chief eunuchess, followed by the second in command, the Visetigan, then led a number of *female* eunuchs to the tent, each carrying a load of something wrapped up in coarse matting. Others bore the large calabash-ended baskets before mentioned, but with the lids removed, so that a dozen rolls of various coloured cloth could be seen within, packed tightly together in an upright position. There were 147 of these calabashes and twenty-four of the mat-covered parcels, all of which were placed round the new tent, under which Gelelé was sitting.

A score of gong-gong men then marched round the square, singing a Nago or Egba song. They were followed by a detachment from three regiments, who were trying to dislocate their limbs in every possible manner, unfortunately without success.

After ten minutes of this violent exercise, they were happily

relieved from further exertions by the ting-tang of a herald, followed by *Ahgo ! n'daboh !* A group of Amazonian singers (Wenukhodotoh), distinguished by their crossbelts of white beads and their kpopi, or staves—short truncheons, having a strip of coloured cloth attached to the top,—then started up, and giving a few preliminary beats with their wands, commenced the following song :—

“ We a-k King Gézu to teach us to dance
 For if we are not good dancers we shall disgrace him.
 Why should he not therefore show us how to do it ?

As these bards sang their ditty they waved their batons in time to the measure, and posed themselves in different attitudes as their fancy dictated.

At the end of the song they commenced their Terpsichorean exercise. Standing in line, one behind the other, they performed a series of hops to the right and left ; at every tenth movement jerking their bodies to the front and rear, and finishing the figure with a hop and a twist round, so as to bring themselves to the right about. A similar set was then performed with their faces pointing in the opposite direction, and the dance concluded with a march round and a kind of swimming motion of their hands, followed by a violent jerking of the shoulders to the rear, until the elbows met behind the back. During this performance a band on the left did the instrumental business, and the excited crowd gazed at the spectacle with unconcealed delight.

Suddenly Gelelé stalked into the dancing throng, and began to follow their movements. Guns were fired, strong names shouted out, and a Bloo-Bloo of applause went the round of the assembly. Meanwhile two officers of the Braggadocio Company, or Menhoblutoh, attired in red serge smock-frocks, prowled about the court, smoking pieces of yams stuck on sticks, wearing their hats in the presence of royalty, sneezing,* interrupting and mimicking the actions of the king, and other-

* Sneezing in the presence is punished by fine.

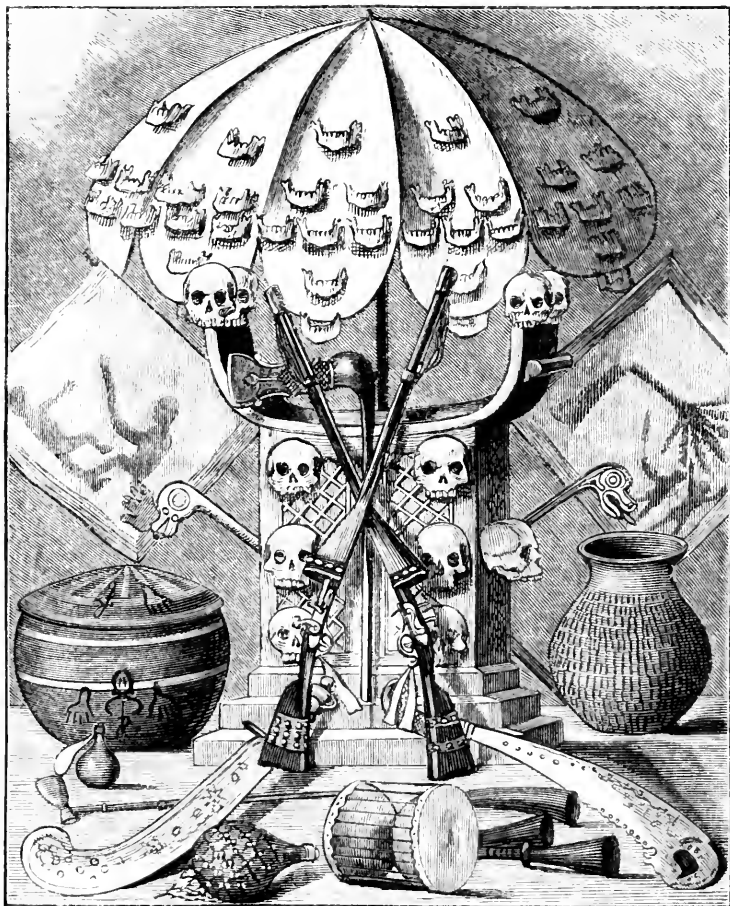
wise showing their peculiar prerogative of doing just what is opposed to court etiquette. One of these clowns called out to the king to come and light his pipe, upon which the other said, "No, I will do that;" and thereupon he poured some water on his companion's pipe. Roars of laughter betokened the success of this childish buffoonery.

The dancing over a procession was formed, proceeding round the square from right to left. First came the Ajakyaho, whose pug nose was set off by a pork-pie hat. Then followed the Anlinwanun, wearing a pair of silver horns like the handle to the lid of a common black teapot. He had a formidable escort of drummers and gong-gong men, and was followed by the Benazon, or treasurer, radiant in a brilliant coat of scarlet and white striped chintz. Next in order was the old Tononun, leaning heavily on his stick, and sadly put out by the speed of the procession. After him came the Kangbodeh, a eunuch, the inspector of the night-guard, wearing a huge silver bell and long conical horns. His lieutenant, the Kakopwe, followed, evidently out of temper because his horse was still unredeemed, since this officer is so tender on the score of dignity as never to appear in public on foot when he can help it. The Gbwewedo, or chief eunuch for the present king, brought up the rear of the "inside" officers, who were followed by a band and company of dancers.

Presently, a bevy of Amazons spread a line of bamboo mats from the railing before the victim shed to the sheds on the south side of the square, a lane having been previously marked off by the eunuchs with the bamboo poles. A second batch of women then appeared, carrying long poles like alpen-stocks, the tops of which had an iron hook affixed to them. A hole was then dug with the usual iron spade, and the poles laid beside them.

The mats covering the massive basket that had been brought in by the Tononun were then removed, and a gigantic piece of patchwork was unrolled. This was the Nun-u-pwe-to, or "omnipotent" cloth, formed of samples of every kind of textile fabric that is imported into the kingdom. It is the duty of the

De-gan, or custom-house officers, to *levy* a piece of every different kind of cloth, to augment this "able-to-do-anything" robe. Its formation was commenced by Gézu, and it has assumed the



THE JAW UMBRELLA, GELELE'S STOOL, GUNS, STICKS, SWORDS, ETC.

enormous length of four hundred yards and a breadth of about ten feet. The pieces are not of uniform size, varying from a square foot to a full-sized piece, three feet by nine. The various kinds of cloth, such as denhams, chintzes, silks, vento-pullams, velvets, &c., are arranged hap-hazard, and are of every hue and

design that can be imagined. Reds, blues, greens, yellows, browns, blacks, and whites are mingled indiscriminately; while striped, checked, plaid, and figured patterns add to the medley. Its exhibition was received with a torrent of applause, and while it was being raised on high by means of the poles, the hooks of which were inserted into eyelet holes in the selvage, the heralds were busy "strong naming" the king. A huge drum, adorned with nine bleached skulls round the head, and carried on the heads of four strapping Amazons, was then brought forward. This interesting musical instrument also rejoices in the same name as the cloth, being known as the Nunupwetohun, or "all-powerful drum." Gelelé then advanced to the front, and, taking a monstrous pair of crooked drumsticks from one of the custodians of the big drum, beat a few notes on it. He then commenced a stump oration, saying that the drum and cloth were both instituted for a special purpose, namely, the drum to be beaten as a death-knell to a number of messengers to send to Gézu to inform him of the fall of Abeokeuta, and the robe to be worn on the return of the victorious king. He said that it was all very well for them to get up in an excited manner and declare that Abeokeuta must be taken; but that when he led them to the attack they allowed themselves to be beaten. Loud cries of "*Abeokeuta menaiye,*" "We will go to Abeokeuta;" "*Abeokeuta sundehgbwe,*" "We will cut off the head of Abeokeuta," here interrupted the royal speech; and when the cheering had subsided, Gelelé proceeded, saying that the people ought to be ashamed to put him to so great an expense as was entailed by the constant additions to the Nunupweto cloth.

The king then retired to the front of the newly-erected shed and divested himself of every stitch of clothing, the chokoto alone excepted. The various baskets of cloth bundles were then brought up, and the cloths unrolled and displayed before the admiring crowd, and placed upon a semicircular line of mats round the dressing shed. Cloth after cloth was unfurled until the accumulation formed a wall of gorgeous-coloured fabrics nearly

six feet high, the grandest silks being selected as the uppermost cloths. This collection comprised cloths of every description, both of native and European make. Owuchyon, heavy as blankets, formed of cotton and woven into the royal patterns, which none must imitate, were gorgeous in scarlet, blue, and green. Orange and violet silks, velvets of crimson, sky-blue, or gamboge, yellow muslins, chintzes, and other fabrics formed a most radiant galaxy of colour; while the no less splendid hues of the "all-powerful cloth" which flaunted to the left completed a most gaudy picture.

While the cloths were being piled at the heap, his Majesty donned various robes, being assisted by his wives in his toilette. After each change of dress he strutted to the fore, a strapping Amazon holding a many-hued parasol over his head, and showing the perfection of umbrellaship by constantly twirling it round. The parasol was changed with each renewal of costume, one of the series of moults consisting of the assumption of the royal fetiche dress. This was a dull brown mummy-cloth-looking toga, bound round the waist with a blue and white sash, while a black and white shoulder-belt passed from the left shoulder to the right side, where an enormous medicine bag was suspended, formed of embossed and embroidered leather, the principal emblem being a rampant lion, *Leo heraldicissimus*, and a fish of a very ambiguous race. The toga was decorated with a *semé* of fetiche charms secured in little square leather cases and sewn to the dress, intermingled with which were cowries smeared with blood. In his hand he held a Bo-stick richly studded with blood-stained cowries, and bearing several strips of blue, brown, and white calico from its crooked head. A fetiche umbrella, black, with white skulls and cross-bones on the lappets, and the stick crowned with a real cranium, was slowly turned round above his head. A musket, "cowried" like the rest of his costume, completed a *tout ensemble* truly fetiche in its get up.

The "able-to-do-anything" drum was then beaten in a kind of tolling stroke, and Gelelé began his dance, which consisted

principally of a side-to-side movement, while the elbows were crooked like a peewit's wings, or held akimbo, and violently jerked about. As he danced he whirled round on one foot, and I was considerably amused at seeing a naked urchin, about five years old, mimicking the king behind his back. Gelelé, on discovering this sable imp, led him to the front and danced to him, his movements being imitated by the pigmy dancer, and the crowd, men and women both, fairly screamed with excitement.

Several captains then got up and danced on their own account, and everybody seemed working themselves into an absolute frenzy, until Gelelé raising his musket to the present, advanced with crouching gait to the front, and concluded the dance by firing it off.

Wiping the perspiration from his brow, the king then commenced a "Nago" dance, called "Agbata," the principal feature of which seemed to be a series of leaps over imaginary hurdles, and the kicking about of spectral foot-balls. Deafening cheers, as usual, followed the royal display, and guns and strong names were let off without stint. A series of twenty-seven dances followed; the king performing the first figure of each, and then calling upon one of the Amazonian captainesses to finish it for him; for dancing under a blazing tropical sun is no light employment, as the reader can be assured. Gelelé then doffed the fetiche dress, and appeared in the costume of a captain in the Blue Guards. His musket was slung at his back, and he carried a lion stick over his shoulder. His cap was of blue-figured silk with a dragon, or rather wyvern, of scarlet with yellow wings, employed in the dissection of a green fish. A sham attack upon an adversary was the main feature of this dance, which concluded by a presentation of the musket, which was not fired.

A last change of cloth followed, the retiring dress being of crimson and yellow striped damask, with a sky-blue sash suspending a silver-belted dagger, and a waist-belt of emerald green silk with an enormous curtain tassel at the end. A newly-

carved Kpo stick was carried in the king's left hand, and his head was covered with the coif of the Fanti Company—a golden lion with a scarlet band in his mouth, standing in bold contrast to the green velvet of which the cap was composed. Down the centre of the crown of the cap a narrow piece of leopard skin was stretched, and narrow pieces of the skin with the fur twisted into spirals formed two flying tails behind it.

A few steps of the Mahi dance, a violent display of gymnastic powers, and the king, much to our delight, ordered the provision baskets to be opened. The grandees of the kingdom advanced to the stick-line, and, kneeling before the bamboos, were exhorted by the king to attack Abeokenta “for true” this time. Meanwhile the various cooked meats were doled out into portions by the Dahkros, and at the conclusion of the speech the eunuchs removed the bamboo sticks to the back of the provisions, and the slaves of the Ningam and his comrades carried off the food. The sticks being replaced in their old position, sundry bottles of rum were similarly given to the ministers, who, after a copious sand bath, retired.

The king next presented his soldieresses with a similar donation of meat and drink, and then, pointing to two unopened baskets which were placed on the men's side of the sticks, and taken up by a batch of porters, advanced towards us. After shaking hands he presented the “chop” to us, and bidding us eat, drink, and be merry, and come and see him on the next day of the Custom, retired to his divan under the little shed.


The Bukono, who considered that to show proper respect to the king, the viands must be immediately attacked, as was done by the natives, fetched out several handfuls of grilled goat meat, and handing it to us bade us commence. Much to his dismay I declined; upon which, seizing a bottle of rum, and taking a swig himself, he at once made an assault upon the Congo escort of the governor, who, nothing loth, swallowed the fiery fluid as though they possessed funnels instead of throats. This was more than the governor could stand, and, getting up,

he began a vigorous rating of the Bukono, who not understanding a word of Portuguese, and caring nothing for the futile efforts of the governor to prevent the administration of the spiritual comfort to the guard, quietly proceeded with his bottle, and did not desist until he had emptied about two quarts of raw spirits down the gaping mouths of the Congo men. I tried, but in vain, to get a word with the governor, who, frantic with rage, was wildly throwing his arms about, and making himself a laughing-stock of the whole assembly, who cheered the Bukono, and as lustily derided the Aguda-avo-gan (Portuguese). Nothing delights a savage so much as putting a white man in a passion at a thing he is incapable of preventing. Had the governor quietly intimated to the Bukono that he would not permit his escort to have any rum, all would have been well; but he at once commenced to wrest the bottle from that officer's hands by main force, and at once and for ever lost all his dignity and the respect which would otherwise have been shown to him.

After this disgraceful scene, the Amazon Whenukhodotoh sang the following song:—

“Gelelé has changed his cloth for his father and has danced many times for Gézu;
Gézu will therefore remember his son and will prosper his arms against Abeokeuta.”

A bottle of rum as “pass” was then brought to the bamboos by a dahkro, who was specially appointed to carry messages between the king and myself, and Bukau, and the governor's interpreter fetched it, bending their knees before the semi-sacred Amazon. Nothing loth to quit a scene where we had been for six hours, we at once left the presence, etiquette not requiring us to bid adieu to royalty, and were soon enjoying a bath to get rid of some modicum, at least, of the red dust that flies about in clouds whenever the Kodide is performed.



THE BONUGAN NUN-KPON GBE DIYEH ; OR, THE OFFICERS WILL
LOOK AT A MARVELLOUS SIGHT TO-DAY.

Early on the morning of Sept. 8th, we were summoned to the presence, but not relishing the idea of a two hours' exhibition, I sent word to the king that for the future I would take care to meet him when he entered the court, but would decline the honour of showing myself to his people for several hours beforehand. In about an hour I heard the guns fired, and then started for the Uhonnukon, where I arrived about five minutes before the advent of royalty. The governor had enjoyed a two hours' séance with the rabble, and was not very pleased that I had not been his comrade.

I found the small shed had been removed, and in its place were three brass-mounted calvariæ placed in large calabashes. The first was the skull of Bakoko, king of Ishagga, who was slain by Gelelé's own hand. It had been boiled and smoothly polished, and the lower jaw removed to form an ornament to Gelelé's royal stool. It was encased in a rude helmet of brass, the top of the head being covered with a brass bowl shaped like a calabash, the stalk of which served as a handle. This calabash is used by Gelelé as a drinking cup. As is customary with most things of the kind, there is a legend attached to the cup. When Gelelé attacked Abeokenta in 1851, the Ishagga people proved faithless to their allies, the Dahomans. This treachery was revenged in 1862, when the people were utterly routed, and their king Bakoko brought a prisoner to Abomey. At the succeeding annual Customs he was slain by Gelelé himself, who ordered his head to be made into a drinking cup, because, said he, "if he does not know how to give water to a friend in need, he must now let his friends drink from his head."

The second cranium was that of Akiaon, king of Attakoh, a small town near Badagary. This king, on the death of Gézu in 1858, sent a defiant message to Gelelé, his successor, saying that now men could be happy, for that the scarlet bird (Gézu) was dead, and that the sea (Dahomey) had dried up in consequence.

In 1860, Gelelé attacked Akiaon, and had his skull mounted in a ship resembling an old Spanish galleon, having a couple of masts with round tops, and a jib-boom with jib set from each end. Shrouds, anchors, and cannon are all of brass, and the skull completely fills up the hold. Gelelé on exhibiting this ship to his people, said, "Akiaon said the sea was dried up. Perhaps it was so, but there was still enough water left in the sea to float his skull."

The third skull was that of an Abeokentan general, Fladoh, or Fa-la-leh, who was sent by them to incite the Ishaggans to fall upon the Dahoman forces. He was given up to the Dahomans when they "broke" Ishagga, and after having been tied to a horse and dragged round the palace, was exposed in the market in the following So-Sin Custom. His skull was mounted on a brass stand similar to those used by shop-keepers to place their ham and beef joints upon. A series of brass bands supported a brass plate which covered the crown of the head. From this plate a copper twig rose to a height of six inches, to which a brass chain was attached which ended in a catch, upon which a fall trap was placed. The twig was surmounted by a brass flag, beneath which a white avo was tied. The legend attached to this skull is, that Fladoh laid a trap to catch the Dahomans, but like all treacherous people he fell into it himself.

After the usual complimentary salute to the king, a number of jesters entertained the company for a quarter of an hour by their buffoonery. During this interval the principal caboceers left the presence and retired to the long market sheds behind the Bwekon uhon.

In a short time a band struck up its monotonous rub-a-dub, and Ningan appeared, dressed in a showy tunic of red and green striped silk, with drawers of blue and white chintz, and a full suite of silver ornaments, horns, necklaces, etc. He carried a circual ended knife, with holes in it like those in a fish slice, and performed the usual swimming dance round the Adanzan. He was followed by the Men, the Adonejan, the Ajakyaho, the Gaou, the Kposu, and the locum tenens of the Avogau. All these high

dignitaries were superbly dressed in various-coloured tunics, and their silver ornaments glittering in the sun formed a gorgeous pageant, barbarous, it is true, but none the less gaudy on that account.

The perambulation of the "swearing hill" being finished, the caboceers began a march round the square. Each was followed by a number of his wives, dressed in rich costumes, and carrying boxes like brandy cases, in each of which several "changes of raiment" were displayed. A band preceded each officer, and an umbrella bearing the heraldic insignia of the owner was carried and twirled by a slave. As each caboceer arrived in front of the king he danced, "ko didied," and called out sundry strong names, being rewarded by a bottle of rum, which was sent from the royal shed by the hands of a Dahkro. This ceremony was performed six times by each caboceer, the dresses and umbrellas being changed with each round. On the seventh circuit each officer appeared riding his horse, which he had redeemed, the Sogan heading the procession on a chestnut nag, the Ningan and the Adonejan being conspicuous in immense black felt broad-brims. While this pageant went the round of the square, the junior officers received their horses from the hands of the Sogan's assistants; and when the circumambulation of the seniors was completed, they mounted, and, joining the others, proceeded to the front, where they alighted and, arranging themselves in a semicircle, began a song as follows:—

Gelelé took our horses as his father Gézu did,
But he has allowed us to have them back again,
So we will fight for him and break Abeokeuta.

Each of the head officers then spouted a string of blarney in succession, finishing off their speeches with a dance.

While this speechifying was under weigh, the king's head smoker was prowling about with an immense wooden pipe, from which he blew clouds of smoke in the faces of whomsoever he chose. His uniform was of brown cloth, sewn all over with long strips, in imitation of tobacco leaves; and his only ornament was

a necklace of pipe bowls. When the orations closed, the caboccers formed another procession, all on foot, and with a final strong-name shout took their seats among their respective slaves.

The Tononun then appeared, looking more haggard than usual. He took up the three calvaria, and after putting the bamboos behind them they were carried off by his myrmidons. Presently the ministers retired, and soon appeared at the head of a procession. After them came a number of slaves, the three first carrying the brass-mounted skulls, and the following forty-six bearing calabashes called *mentadokamen*, each containing about ten skulls, all boiled, clean-scraped, and polished. The Gbwewedo, with fourteen eunuchs, brought this procession to a close. They marched four times round the square, and at the end of the last round placed the grim trophies along the bamboo-poles, which were then lifted over them to the men's side. The Dahkros and other Amazons then carried them off, and deposited them in a row before the Pwe shed.

Gelelé then came to the front, and calling for Bakoko's skull, began a war dance—toying with the relic by placing it under his arm, setting it on the ground, and jumping over it, or holding it out at arm's-length, and apostrophising it. A deafening round of applause arose from the multitude, and guns and strong names were let off *con amore*. Their excitement rose to its highest pitch, when Gelelé, holding out the cup from the skull, drank perdition to Abeokeuta, in a bumper of trade rum. As was the case when Burton witnessed this ceremony, the skull was then sent to us, to pledge the monarch, but we preferred to fill our tumblers with muscatel, and pouring a portion in the skull goblet, to drink the remainder from the glass. Upon this, Gelelé publicly announced that he conferred upon me the strong name of "Adanaievido," or "Son of the strong heart for drinking health."

Gelelé then retired, and a procession of Amazons was formed, which advanced from the palace-gate, and marched before the king. First, came eight Bassajeh, or fetiche-women, who

represent the ghosts of the deceased kings. They were dressed in white robes, turned up with blue, and wore black felt steeple-crowned hats, the rims being bound with gold lace. Each carried a long *rodun-kpo*, or fetiche-stick, and their faces were concealed by veils of thick grey muslin. Twenty-two Amazons then followed, bearing the mentadokamen, each with twelve crania in it. The Yavedo and her lieutenant brought up the rear with their company of female eunuchs. After a walk round, the Bassajeh halted before the king, who advanced, and solemnly shook hands with his ancestors, through the medium of these women, holding their hands above their heads. After the skulls were deposited behind the preceding lot, a number of slaves came filing in, carrying a series of eight stools, umbrellas, mat-covered bundles, calabash baskets, and a quantity of cooked meats, rum, and other liquors, together with pipes, and tobacco-pouches, a band of miscellaneous instruments bringing up the rear. As each series passed, the Bassajeh bowed to them, and the Tansi-no, who sat near the tall telegraph fetiche, sang a mournful song to the memory of the departed kings.

The Amazonian Ningan, the Gundeme, followed by the Akpadume, the Khetungan, and the fat old Nadudeagoh, or Avogan's mother, then marched past, each with her umbrella, band, and retinue. All danced, dusted themselves, and sang a song; afterwards taking up their position to the king's proper right.

A number of baskets containing cowries threaded in strings of forty-six on twisted grass were then brought in; and the "Gobbonites," prepared to guard the sacred bamboos, by stationing themselves in a line along them, shaking their whips with an ominous jerk. The king then advanced to the line, and as he approached, the caboccers removed their necklaces and tunics, and clad in drawers alone, prepared to "fight for their king and their cowries." Burton says, nob and snob join in the *méléc*, but I think he is in error. I never saw the "upper ten," and the "million," squabble together. These scrambles are no

jokes among the *canaille*, who strip naked, save a coarse waist-cloth, like sacking, which is formed into a bag to hold the *spolia*. Fights are the order of the day, some bringing in the aid of teeth and nails, the petty officers being mounted on the shoulders of their subordinates. Such barbarities, as eye-gouging, as mentioned in some accounts, are however, unknown.

Gelcé strode to the front, in a pagne of pink cotton, with a crimson shoulder-belt, having a silver-hilted knife, knotted at the end of it. He wore a yellow and scarlet-striped smoking cap, and was shaded by a violet parasol and four gaudy umbrellas, which were supported by Amazonian dames. The baskets were brought to the king by soldieresses, and bunches of cowries handed to him by two Dahkros, one on either side.

The bunches were thrown hap-hazard among the nobles, who tumbled over each other in eager scrambles, after the Royal bounty. About five pounds' worth of cowries were thrown; the time occupied in so doing, being about an hour, by the end of which the *beau ton* of Dahomey were in a state of transition, between flesh and mud, being stained deep red by the soil, which adhered to their reeking bodies.

The governor and I were then summoned to the front, and cowries were thrown for us to scramble for. The governor did not enter into the thing at all, upon which a jester came up, and stole half of those that fell near him, adding insult to injury by calling out "*engh, coward.*"

I was dismissed with a present of forty heads, which were carried off by my people, while the governor had only a pass of ten heads, and a miscellaneous handful of loose cowries.

The Ambassadors and "Strangers" were then summoned, and had their scramble, the Ashantees, Houssas, and other chiefs, receiving a few heads as dismissal.

The king then walked up to the victim shed for his own Custom, and dashed several heads of cowries to the unfortunate wretches therein. These were picked up by the guards, and

placed upon the heads of the victims. He afterwards threw a couple of heads of cowries to each of the *morituri* in the bush-king's and the people's victim sheds.

Our chairs were then placed close to the bamboo barrier, and the mob advanced. After throwing cowries for about half-an-hour, several Amazons were deputed to relieve the king of this severe labour; Gelelé standing by as *arbiter elegantiarum*. The struggle was severe—a mass of arms and legs appearing here and there, as the mass swayed to and fro, after fighting for ten minutes over a single cowrie. Broken noses and bleeding skins were to be seen on every side, as the multitude screamed out, when a head of cowries was fairly caught by any one—that being tacitly understood to establish a right to the undisputed possession of the prize, the winners going outside the *mêlée*, and smothering themselves with dust at the king's *largesse*. The king walked up and down the bamboo line, throwing cowries here and there; and I noticed sundry Amazons slyly throw bunches at the governor, who sat in sullen dignity, tormented by the grimaces of two Menhoblutoh, who, according to court custom, were mimicking everybody; and, as the governor, by his stolid ill-temper, offered the best chance of fun, he was baited all the more accordingly. *Entre nous* I never saw a person less fitted to hold intercourse with a semi-savage race, than this *noli-metangere* governor.

During the cowrie fighting the hunchback guard were busily engaged in indiscriminately administering swinging blows with their whips upon the naked bodies of all who came into a too close proximity with the bamboos.

The cowrie throwing continued for four hours, by which time it was quite dark, and we were not a little delighted to receive our usual pass rum, and go home to dinner.

THE MINOKYANAN GBE.—THE AMAZONS WILL DANCE TO-DAY.

The next day was devoted to the recruiting of the strength of all parties, both king, lords, and commons—and on the tenth of

September we proceeded to the Uhunglo market, where the prince had been throwing cowries to the night-guard on the night following that on which his father had been "dashing" these valuables in the Uhonukon. I here saw nine gallows-like frames, composed of two upright poles with a cross-bar at the top, and three with a second bar midway between the upper one and the ground. Besides these there were two other gallows with a double cross-bar at the top. Each of these ominous erections was guarded by Bo-fetiché, and between them a flagstaff carrying a white tablecloth was planted. The gallows were at intervals of fifty yards, and extended down the main road to Abomey; while the double crossed-barred frames were erected in the market-place. They were all fenced in by the usual bamboo and grass rope, "tie-tie."

We then proceeded to the Coomassie Uhonukon, and found the caboccers dressed in their oldest and shabbiest attire, with torn umbrellas and rusty worn-out muskets.

A group of the Boasting or Braggadocio company, in calabash masks, were buffooning before the king, who, like his chiefs, was also dressed in a ragged suit. This mourning was to commemorate the death of the king's ancestors, who are supposed to grieve for a restitution of their earthly grandeur, which will not be restored to them unless their representative on earth continues to supply them with fresh slaves. The Tononun and his eunuchs, assisted by the hunchbacks, then enlarged the boundaries of the bamboo line, our chairs being set back to the fetiché trees. A band of "*whenukhodotoh*," or bards, afterwards advanced and squatted down before the king and sang the following song; a single note being struck as a kind of time measure on a gong-gong during its performance.

"Our king is great and loves his fathers' memory,
He wished to make his fathers happy,
So he has made a Custom to show them that he is mindful
Of their requests."

At the conclusion of this ballad a number of Amazon chieftainesses marched in solemn gait round the bamboo enclosure, singing a

song the drift of which was that they had no reason to wish themselves out of the country, for Gelelé was so mindful of his father's wishes that he would always remember the people. I could not see the logic of this myself, and so asked Beecham for an explanation, but that worthy said "you must not ask such things." I verily believe he was as afraid of the fetiche as the greatest idolater in Dahomey, his missionary education notwithstanding.

When this company arrived in front of Gézu's ghost shed they bowed, and, bending low, shovelled up the dust over their heads. Then holding their arms pointing to the sky they walked round the enclosure, repeating their song in a minor key.

A burst of music succeeded this tragic display, and after bowing to the king the singers sat down to the left. A large band of rattles, gong-gongs, and drums then took up their position on the right, and a *corps de ballet* came before us. These dancers were dressed in showy skirts of figured chintz, no two performers wearing the same pattern. Waistcoats of white cotton, open at the breast, and confined round the middle by sashes of various colours, allowed free motion in the limbs. Their necks were encircled by small necklaces of bright-coloured beads, and most of them wore anklets of similar make. Two tall dames, dressed in velvet, with a chaplet of scarlet beads round their heads, and bearing horse-tail whisks, like East Indian chauries, mounted in wooden silver-ringed handles, directed the movements of the dancers, who began their performance by ranging themselves in a line with their faces turned to the king.

The band struck up and the ballet began, the mistresses of the dance giving the cue from either end. The first figure consisted of a series of shufflings performed by each dancer in succession, beginning at the end of the line. This being over, they commenced leaping and squatting in a manner that made one's knees ache to look at; at one time bending nearly to the ground, and then springing eighteen inches into the air from that constrained position. Another series of *écarts* followed, and then the figure

changed. Two of the performers would go to the band, and commence to sing the new tune, beating the time with their hands until the musicians picked it up. They usually commenced with words in the Nago language, "*O nujuh cheyoh, a gau demeh, a weh! weh! weh!*" the three last words corresponding to staccato movements in the band, and hops in the ballet. When *o seh! weh! weh!* was called, the band gave a loud prolonged crash of rattles, and the performers went through an undulating movement with their bodies, their hind-quarters being lasciviously moved from front to rear, while they inflated or expelled the air from their lungs. If the band did not play to the satisfaction of the mistresses of the ballet, they would yell out the time, beating their hands together and slapping their posteriors in a manner calculated to make anyone smile.

Other figures followed, some resembling the actions of a person trying to fly or swim on dry land; others consisted in a series of hops to one side, a shuffling of the dust, and a hop back again. A third figure was a violent jerking of the body to the right, a right-about face, and a similar feat to the left. Another, again, consisted of a shuffling of the feet while their heads were bent down, first on one side and then on the other; the performances being first gone through facing the king, and then with their backs turned towards him. Another feature was the scraping of the body in various parts by the fingers; picking up a handful of sand, throwing it away, and repeating the same performance with the face turned towards another quarter. After three hours of this violent exercise they advanced at a *pas de charge*, and, saluting the king, retired, no doubt feeling as much relief as we did. There was very little to admire in the display, except the gymnastic and salutary influences induced by it; the whole idea seeming to be to keep perfect unison in the most corybantic actions.

Several captains then advanced, headed by the Ningan, and an hour was consumed by their speechifying, the theme being the never-ending one of Abeokeuta. Yells of "*Abeokeuta menaiye*," "we will go to Abeokeuta," with a short speech

accompanied by such violent thumping of the breast and gesticulating, that the orator appeared to be either in a terrible passion or a madman, interlarded the more elaborate orations of the generals; the end of each talk being a copious dirt bath. All this was *vox et preterea nihil*, for similar displays were made before Burton, the result of their braggadocio being their defeat before the walls of Abeokeuta. In Dahomey great things are always *going* to be done—everything is *in futuro* both with the king and the people—with war palaver and with the smallest trade palaver, nothing can be done at the time, but everything must be put off to the auspicious future.

At length Gelelé, laying aside his pipe, said that he was ashamed to hear such talk from men who had not fulfilled their promise to bring back Abeokeuta as Gézu had done with some of the towns of his enemies. He did not believe them, but thought they were all cowards and afraid to fight.

A perfect uproar of indignant officers and men then raged through the audience; all declaring that if he would only lead them to Abeokeuta they would pull it down without guns; while one man took an oath that if Gelelé would only take him to Abeokeuta, he, single-handed, would bring in a score heads to be ransomed. The women taunted the men from time to time, giving them the names of sheep, vultures, and similar epithets, telling them that they were women, and must learn to fight for them, the men. On these occasions the men did not make any reply, that being contrary to all precedent.

A song was then given by the generals, of which the following was the pith:—

Gelelé must lead us to Abeokeuta,
That we may break it so that it shall be irreparable.
We will then give him plenty of skulls for Gézu's grave.

Gelelé afterwards arose, and coming to the front, said—"You have promised to fight like heroes. I will soon lead you to the Abeokeutas, where you can prove your words by your actions. Vultures can croak, but eagles alone slay living creatures."

A furious uproar of yells, strong names, gun firing, and Bloo Blooing followed this announcement; some testifying their joy by a deluge of sand, while others rushed frantically about in all directions, telling everybody that they were going to smash Abeokeuta single-handed.

A chorus of Nago songs followed this excitement; and afterwards the king ordered the bards to sing the national war-songs, detailing the victories of the kings of Dahomey. Their recital appeared to rouse the king to a frenzy, for he came out, and amidst violent gesticulations, jumping, and breast-beating, declared that Abeokeuta must be destroyed. A few heads of cowries were then distributed to the bards, and Gelelé sat down. A second company of bards then sang the praises of the king, and his conquests of the Nago and other tribes, which appeased the royal mind.

The panigan-hun-toh then proclaimed "*Oyéz*," and Gelelé made another warlike speech, and the jesters again appeared, and pretended to be deaf and dumb.

Meanwhile a procession of princesses filed in from the king's left, and after bowing in front of the king sang one of the national war-songs, Abeokeuta being the subject. The bamboo-sticks were then moved to a greater distance from the king, the neutral Tononun operating, and occasionally tinkling his bell. Then came in a batch of fifty-six women, each carrying a head of cowries on her head, followed by as many more bearing a double handful of the shell coin in a calabash. A band of gong-gongs and drums preceded a deputation of the aged mothers of the high dignitaries of state, who were followed by thirty girls, each carrying two heads of cowries. Forty-two girls, carrying bottles of rum on their heads, followed, and were succeeded by thirty others with twenty strings of cowries on their pates.

Sixty women bearing calabashes with a head of cowries in each preceded the Gundeme and the Akpadume, and the rear was brought up by another gong-gong band. This procession marched thrice round the square chanting the exploits of the

departed monarchs, and saluting the king as they passed his stool by crouching in the dust. These cowries were deposited in the hands of the Videkalo, the female treasurer, and will be dashed to the officiating caboccers on the Evil Night, when the gallows in the market will receive their fearful burdens.

More chanting succeeded, and at last, to our joy, we saw the long-wished for decanters of rum being handed from the English mother to our Dahkro ; and in a few minutes we were *en route* for our quarters, having been warned that we were not to leave the premises to-morrow, as it was a *dies iræ*, and no one was to be seen abroad.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SO-SIN CUSTOM—(continued).

Sixth Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Difficulty in preventing the human sacrifices—Abeokeuta as bad as Dahomey—Exaggerated accounts of the sacrifices—The king's statement respecting them—Ill effects of Bernasko's example—Ceremonies of the "evil night."

Seventh and Last Section of the King's So-Sin Custom.—Victims in the Uhunglo market—A horrible mark of favour—More victims—The Coomassie palace—Splendid pavilion—Curious artillery—The Bush king's seat—King's fetiche—Gelelé's appearance—Parade of ministers in state robes—The war captains—The inferior officers—The eunuchs—Parade of Amazonian ministers, captains and officers—Undress review of men and Amazons—Grotesque appearance of some of them—Speeches of the two Ningans—Tiffin—Procession of the king's wealth—Powerful fetiche—Razor women—Gelelé's tomb ornaments—The Gbeto, or elephant hunters—State chariots—King's leopard wives—Tail dancers—Mothers of the kings—Throwing cowries in the market—Conclusion of the King's So-Sin Custom.

THE reader has already been informed that one of the greatest obstacles to the total suppression of the human sacrifices at Dahomey is the fact that the monarch has a *bonâ fide* belief, misplaced and fallacious, no doubt, but none the less genuine, that by so doing he is carrying out an act of filial piety, such as devolves upon every dutiful son to perform for the memory of his father. As Burton truly observes, "the king takes no pleasure in the tortures and death of the victims, or in the sight of blood." On the contrary, I have seen him turn from the execution scene with a shudder, and in every case the victim's passage to the other world is as speedy as that by hanging or other orthodox mode of capital punishment.

In Ashanti a man is sacrificed every morning, except on the king's birth-days, which are held every eighth day; and the death of every high functionary demands the decapitation of one or more victims to accompany him to Deadland. Other nations, notably the Peruvians and the Mexicans, were notorious for their human sacrifices, while the Druid priests of our own island are known to have immolated scores of wretched beings in wicker baskets, a wholesale holocaust to their gods. To this day the Abeokentans, after having had missionaries resident among them for years, have a "a basket sacrifice," as they euphemistically call it. Yet for them the facts are deceptively glossed over by the missionaries, who, with characteristic "cant," have spoken of Abeokeuta as "a place specially favoured in the conversion of the heathen;" while for Dahomey and Ashanti, which have only had the worst specimens of Christian teachers as their instructors in a new faith, the most outrageous tales have been promulgated; many of them so founded upon facts as to leave little doubt of their veracity until investigated by unbiassed persons. For instance, we have been told that the King of Dahomey walked to his throne along a pathway ankle-deep in human gore, and that he afterwards killed 2000 innocent persons in a single day, and paddled about in a canoe, floated on a lake of their blood. Such horrors were calculated to deter any person from putting himself into the power of such a *monstrum horrendum nullâ virtute redemptum a vitiis*.

Do the Dahomans, in their wars, approach anything like the wholesale slaughter of the Israelites, or do they inflict such tortures upon their prisoners as those suffered by prisoners in the Tower of London? It is but fair to state all the surroundings of such facts as these human sacrifices, and though they are to be deplored, nevertheless they are not the mere vents of a cruel, bloodthirsty mind. When we consider that there is no torture accompanying the executions, and that every person decapitated has a sure passport to a better world, the loss of his head being supposed to be a full expiation of all his sins; besides

the overwhelming fact that they are only a part of a religious ceremony, we can but confess that they are not one whit more barbarous than the suttee of the Hindoo, and far less so than the incarceration of an unwilling maiden within the loathsome walls of a Popish nunnery. Matters have considerably improved in Dahomey since men's heads were used as ornaments to a wall, the wretched prisoners being sacrificed for that object *alone*, as was the case a century ago.

The only chance of effectually putting down the sacrifices is to show the Dahomans the errors of their polytheistic faith, and this must be done by sending intelligent instructors among them, not such bare-faced hypocrites as are at the present time located at Whydah.

A man who, by his example would show the Dahomans the good fruits of Christianity, would do far more towards converting the people than a score of the dictatorial text-quoting individuals who try to convert a nation on the *veni, vidi, vici* principle. Gelelé himself would gladly abolish this part of the custom, and risk the displeasure of his deceased predecessors, as he knows that their continuance is one of the main causes of his kingdom being avoided by Europeans, but he is afraid that if he were to hint at such a proceeding he would be dethroned, and the conservative party at once ascend the stool. If the English would but assist him to maintain his position during the struggle, all might be well; but we can hardly suppose that the king will risk his position without some extraneous aid, knowing that even if he maintained his authority his victory would be almost as disastrous in its effects to the country as his defeat.

Such persons as the Bernaskos are calculated to frustrate every endeavour of laymen to bring about the much desired change. Gelelé himself said to me upon one occasion, when I had been speaking to him on the subject of the executions, "You say that your people abhor the thoughts of men being sacrificed; that their religion teaches them such things are contrary to the will of the Divine Being. Now, we have a 'God man' at

Whydah, and does he set such an example to my people as I would wish them to follow? Does he not drink till he talks foolishness? Does he not make plenty of mischief by his tale-bearing, and has he not told lies to the English people about me and my country? Do not all the white men in Whydah hate him? How then can I believe your religion to be better than mine when your God men are such people?" What could I say to so forcible an argument as this? Gelelé said that he always liked the English, but that their "God people" always created as much disturbance as the "war enemies" of his country. Happy will be the day for Dahomey when she receives a conscientious missionary on her shores!

THE ZAN MEN HUWU WONH.—THE NIGHT FOR THE OMINOUS HUMAN SACRIFICE.

But, to get on with the Custom. The day preceding the last day of the So-Sin custom is what might be termed a "fast day" in Dahomey. No person is allowed to go about any business or be seen abroad except when engaged upon the king's palavers. No person is allowed to fire any gun or light any fire, and the males and females in every house are supposed to sleep apart. During the day we heard the heralds crying out the strong names of the king, and the death-drum tolled the knell of many a poor wretch.

At night the king, clothed in fetiche dress, accompanied by his wives, will march in a procession by torchlight from the victim sheds to the Uhunglo market. There he will be received by the Ningan, the Meu, the Agasunno, and other high officials who have brought the required number of victims from the king's private shed near the Coomassie palace. There before the Tansino and Bassajeh he will cut off the head of a messenger, after having given him instructions to acquaint the deceased kings that Gelelé is about to sacrifice a number of men who will attend upon them in the unknown world. The traveller is furnished with a head of cowries, a bottle of rum, and some cankies as subsistence by the way.

After he is dispatched upon his long journey, an alligator, a cat, and a hawk are similarly decapitated. The alligator is to inform the fish of the occurrence, and a similar message is to be taken to the animals by the cat, and to the birds by the hawk.

The Ningan will then proceed to immolate the remaining victims; striking them on the occiput with a heavy knobbed stick which almost instantaneously deprives them of life. They are then mutilated with a curved knife, out of respect to the king's wives, and afterwards fixed to the gallows in the positions they are to occupy. During this ceremony the whole of the occupants of the various jails are ranged to witness the execution in order that they may profit by the example of the punishment inflicted upon those who transgress the law.

Burton mentions two evil nights, but there are always three, one for the king, one for the bush-king, and a third for the people.

These victims are not *bhanged* as are the sufferers in the Buddhist festivals, nor is there any *éclat* attendant upon their death which might excite such a state of frenzy in the victims as to render them comparatively unconscious of pain.

Including the messengers to the dead, who are dispatched with the most trivial news, such as the arrival of a white man, the marriage of a princess, or the institution of a new dance, the number of lives that are annually forfeited in Dahomey cannot be less than 200, while on extraordinary occasions, such as the Grand Customs, the number must be trebled.

In the victim sheds in the Uhonnukon, there were 50 victims, and as there are an equal number sacrificed for the Amazons within the precincts of the palace, the total number of these *morituri* was 100. Of these, as will be hereafter seen, 64 were spared, making a total of 36 human beings sacrificed for the So-Sin Custom alone.

This number contrasts favourably with the hundreds who were formerly decapitated at the Customs, besides a still larger number of messengers.

At Benin, at the present time, men and women accused of bewitching any person are cruelly murdered, but in Dahomey; although there were several women exposed as victims, they were always pardoned.

THE MENAIYE KPON MENHUWU UHUNGLO AKHI.—WE WILL GO TO LOOK AT THE SACRIFICES IN THE UHUNGLO MARKET TO-DAY.

At 7 o'clock in the morning of the 10th of September, 1871, a troop of the blue company assembled at my house to conduct me through the Uhunglo market. As we passed the house occupied by the prince, near the south-eastern angle of the Coomassie palace, he came out to accompany us. The road still remained fenced off by the frail grass-rope, and we passed on the eastern side of it, where a passage had been left for the traffic between Abomey and the southern suburbs.

We soon came up to a Nesu temple—a long barn with the front supported by a row of barked tree trunks, and the back wall covered with rude paintings in distemper of men and animals. Just beyond this holy building was a tall flagstaff, crooked as usual, from which a large white sheet was flying.

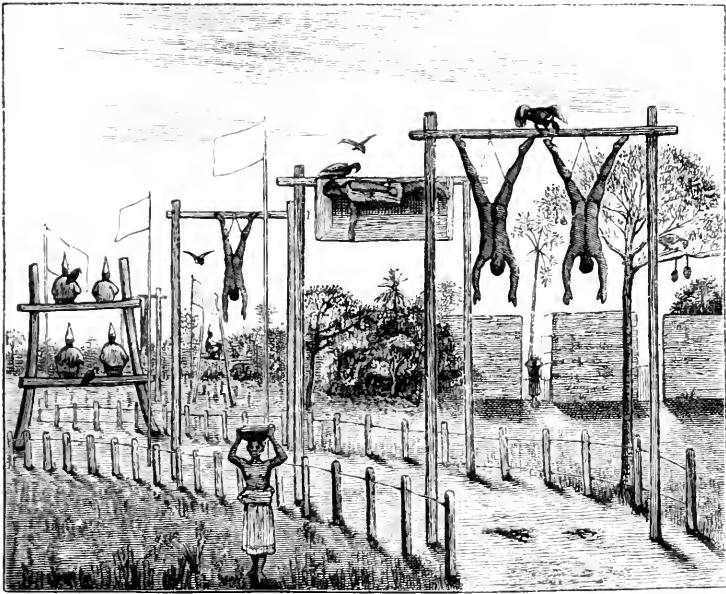
A few yards to the north we came upon the first victim, a fine stalwart fellow, suspended by the ankles and knees to the cross-pole of one of the gallows. His arms hung limp, and the eyes were staring with a glassy look, while his mouth was pegged open, as were all the others. This was done to show that in death they repented of their crimes, and wished to warn the people in the market against falling under the king's just displeasure. All were stark naked, and showed no signs of the knife, save the mutilation before mentioned, and a slow drip, drip of dark-coloured blood from the mouths and nostrils, and the fractured occiputs, showed that they had been killed by the knobbed club.

Two other gallows beyond have the same ghastly fruit, and opposite the Uhunglo gate of the Coomassie palace two victims depended from the same cross-pole. These were two Abeokeuta

not so recent

soldiers who had been taken in ambush at one of the outlying villages near the eastern frontier.

Five single bodies depended from as many gallows in a circle, opposite the Ako-chyong bonun, the south-eastern gate of Abomey. The next was the king of a small village called Salu, which had been broken during the past year for treacherously murdering some of the Dahoman people. This victim was dressed in a white waistcoat and blue body-cloth, and was suspended in a



THE SO-SIN VICTIMS.

horizontal position from two cross-bars placed a few inches apart. His neck was lashed by grass-rope to one of the poles, and a strong nail passed through his ankles, his feet being placed one over the other, while several cords passed round his body and prevented it from drooping. One arm dangled listlessly towards the earth, while the other was lashed to his side. The cross-bars were concealed by a blue and scarlet cloth edged with a black and white checked print, and the whole bore no incon-

siderable resemblance to a hearth-rug with the body placed before it.

The next gallows, also a double one, was supporting one of the late Katu chiefs who had been convicted of treachery. He was suspended horizontally before a green and white hearth-rug, but both his arms drooped towards the ground.

At the north and south ends of the market stood the double-barred gallows before mentioned. Upon each of the cross poles two small caboccer's stools were fixed, and upon them, clothed in the striped garments they wore when sitting under the victim shed at Coomassie, were six wretched beings. Their arms were pinioned, and the gags still remained in their mouths, while the white nightcaps they still retained formed a grim contrast to their livid countenances.

It will be thus seen that eighteen victims were offered up in the market-place to the deceased monarchs on the king's evil night. Of these, fourteen were criminals, and the remaining four prisoners of war. The people passed to and fro, utterly ignoring the presence of the grim fruit each gallows bore, and several vultures were already busy at their work of destruction. The prince told me that he was authorised by the king to permit me to walk underneath the bodies, if I so pleased, but I begged to decline the honour, and told him that I could not look upon such a revolting spectacle except with abhorrence, and that so long as they continued such practices, so long would the English and every other white nation avoid Dahomey.

We then returned to our quarters, and after breakfast prepared to see the procession, which has been called by former travellers the "Procession of the king's wealth." We started for the Coomassie palace about ten o'clock, and on reaching the square found the governor already arrived. A messenger then came out, and informed us that the king wished us to inspect the victim sheds. We accordingly went towards the ominous structures, followed by the usual crowd, but when we came near the edge of the raised earthen floor, from which the railings had been re-

moved, the old Tononun appeared with two of his myrmidons and fenced off the sacred ground with a row of bamboo poles. Then lifting one of them up and tinkling his bell, he motioned our party to advance, and when we had all passed through, effectually barred all intrusion by simply laying down his bamboo. We found the sheds emptied of their occupants, and were informed that the king had graciously pardoned the remaining eight out of the thirty-eight victims we noticed at the beginning of the Custom. We observed nothing beyond what has already been described, except that on the front of the shed, fixed on an iron frame like an immense egg boiler, were five large silver, blue, and gold globe reflectors, like those in vogue as ornaments to public-house lamps and Christmas trees. These were exhibited as a marvellous example of the wealth of the king. The umbrellas and guns were duly pointed out, and after a thorough overhaul of the premises we returned to our chairs. In a few minutes we were summoned inside the palace. Before the striped Bo-so altars were twelve heads stuck in the little heaps of earth before-mentioned with the faces downwards, leaving the occiput and back part of the neck visible in all its gory horror. There were six of these on each side of the gate. These were the heads of criminals who had been despatched by the Agusunno and his assistants in front of the gate, to inform the departed kings that their living representative was about to send them their annual batch of recruits.

Together with the market victims, a total of thirty wretches lost their lives during the king's So-Sin Custom.

The entrance to the palace was through the Pwe shed and a dismal archway with a creaking wooden gate at each end. On emerging into the courtyard, or *notoh*, a high wall to the left reminded me of the side of a factory, at the far end of which a double-storied thatched barn shone out in a fresh coat of white-wash. This was the store-house for the cloth, cowries, and rum, to be used in the Custom. Two windows, closed by leaden-coloured shutters, flanked a door which was reached by a primi-

tive ladder—two tall trees with the rungs nailed across. The thatched roof of the gate shed bordered the southern side, while the eastern view extended to the red swish wall of the palace. Several trees were scattered at intervals on the right centre, each with its little earthen divinity, and a number of terrific swish images seared us to the extreme right, the most noticeable being a Siamese-twin deity with stag's heads.

Opposite us a large oblong building had been erected, eighty feet long, and twelve feet to the upper floor, which was supported by massive posts, connected by cross-beams securely fixed with grass rope. Across the rafters a flooring of boards was fastened, and the whole was covered with a triple series of mats. Above this rose a second row of posts eight feet high, supporting the eaves of a thatched roof, the ridge of which was probably forty-five feet above the ground. The ground-floor posts were shrouded in blue and yellow drapery, and the first floor in white cloths; several openings for windows being formed in the side, and edged with a narrow blue and scarlet striped border. The roof was covered with a black and crimson cloth, and from the gables two small white flags bearing crimson heraldic eagles were displayed.

A rude ladder led up to the door in the centre of the shed, and several gaudy umbrellas were placed as a canopy in front of the entrance. At the foot of the ladder the usual Bo-so altars, and other fetiche emblems were set out, and a body of Amazons squatted on either side. A wall of matting cut off the court-yard level with the front of the shed; several large mats hung from grass ropes officiating as doors in the fence. Finally, the caboccers formed a gay verandah with their umbrellas on the south side of the courtyard, opposite the shed; and beneath them, the upper ten of Dahomey sat awaiting their lord, surrounded by their vassals. Our umbrellas were placed on the right close by the trees, and the table was covered with a scarlet and yellow cloth.

In the centre of the courtyard two jesters, sienna coloured by reason of their copious sand baths, were dancing and buffooning

round a little black image representing a kneeling soldier, holding his head in his outstretched arms. On each side of this deity was a gun, stuck muzzle upwards, and having a brazen arrow fixed in the muzzle. From the muzzle to the trigger-guard, a crimson cord extended, and was stretched tight by a brazen arrow, the whole forming a rude bow. Behind us a line of bamboos shut off a strip of the courtyard some twenty feet broad. Here a collection of artillery was arranged which demands a minute description. Resting in the crutches of forked twigs, two to each piece, were fourteen brass blunderbusses and nine musketoons. Two huge guns like baby cannon succeeded, and were followed by a like number of swivel duck-guns of the largest size. A block of wood cut into the semblance of a gun-carriage supported five brass cannon about a foot long, placed side by side, and fired by means of a flint lock which ignited the powder in a hollowed iron trough connecting the touch-holes. Two pistols similarly mounted on a wooden carriage were stationed near them, and in addition to these were two very suspicious pieces of ordnance, bearing a close resemblance to short lengths of stove piping, with a plug at one end for a breech. The artillery men did not appear to have much faith in these Dahoman cannon, for they put but a small quantity of powder in them, which exploded much in the same fashion as a squib.

To my right, a tattered white umbrella shaded Addokpon's, or the Bush King's seat. A series of mats were spread on the ground, upon which a low stool was placed, also covered with mats. Before this was a row of the conical iron cressets, which as usual were highly decorated with cowries. A guard of nine priests kept off the rabble, and a small white flag waved over the umbrella.

Soon after entering, the mat-door to the proper left of the large pavilion was raised, and a band of gong-gong Amazons came out and took up their seats to the right of the steps. Several girls then entered the courtyard, carrying large calabashes of provisions and drinkables, which were set out before the shed, close to the dividing bamboos. Then a band of the

Jotosi drummers came in, followed by an armed troop who paraded up and down the courtyard, bowing to the Bush King's seat as they passed by it.

A band of artillery women next came up to the row of guns, and prepared to salute the king as he entered, cocking their pieces and carefully wiping the strikers, while those in charge of the small batteries had smouldering matches ready to let them off.

In the interval that elapsed between their arrival and the advent of the king I employed myself in examining the royal fetiche, which was on my left. A row of twenty-four twin irons of all sizes and shapes, some topped with a tortoise, others with a crescent or other emblem, and each with its avo and cotton bag, were ranged in a line behind three little images. The centre one was about three feet high, and represented a man turning the sails of a windmill, or *vice versa*; in fact, an exact imitation of the toys of that description which are sold in every fancy bazaar. The wind turned the sails round, and the man being attached by the arms to the cranked axle, appeared to be at work. This marvellous fetiche was the admiration of all present. The other ten images were of the ordinary kneeling type.

Hahansu, in high dudgeon, sent me a coral necklace for my examination, and said that he thought it was not real, as the colour was turning to a dull grey. I told him that it was imitation coral, and he seemed pleased with my candour, and said that it was bought at one of the factories at Whydah for the genuine article.

Presently a movement amongst the gunners and a noise like the firing of a mine announced the approach of the king, who strode along in the midst of his leopard-wives, while the heavily charged guns behind us were fired off.

He was dressed in a blue and white silk toga, with a pork-pie hat of crimson velvet. Drawers of green and scarlet plaid were just visible between the folds of the robe, and beautifully worked

sandals covered the royal feet. A massive silver necklace suspended a very brassy looking locket, and several bracelets and anklets completed his costume. He carried a *kini-kini kpo*, or lion stick, and was protected by a violet and yellow silk parasol. A group of attendants, spittoon-bearers, and others surrounded him as he walked to the sticks, where we advanced to meet him. After the usual compliments he said that he wished me to sketch all I saw. He hoped I would not judge them by the same standard as I would Europeans, but hoped I was pleased with what I had seen.

He then ascended the ladder, and took his seat behind the doorway, his parasol serving to distinguish him from the crowd of sable faces of wives, princesses, and nobles, who had been filing past and taking up their seats within the pavilion. The Dahkros were seated on the steps of the ladder, and the Tansino to the extreme left.

Opposite us the Moslem visitors were seated, amidst the king's "show Mohammedans," and to our right several of the king's sons were grouped beneath an umbrella, but in no way distinguished from the common herd.

The usual cry was then raised, and every head bowed as the king drank his own health, the conclusion of the ceremony being known by the Dahkros crying "*Zin kpo*"—"daybreak!" One Dahkro then came up and called Amoosu (who had returned from the coast), and told him that the king would drink our healths. Bumpers of liqueur were then filled and the Governor and I stood up. When the cry went forth every head was turned, except ours, and we tossed off the contents, Gelclé doing the same behind the curtain of grey cloth that was held before him by the Amazon guards, so that we could not see the "Lion" drink.

A company of the Whenukohodotoh, or singers, gaily dressed in pink skirts, with silver horns and necklaces, then sang and danced before the king, the leaders having horse-tail fly-flappers, which they waved to and fro in time to the tune.

After this the chief officers of state came to the front. They were all splendidly dressed in silk, velvet, or damask robes, shaped like a burnouse, with wide sleeves and skirts hanging down to the heels. All wore their full insignia, this being a state procession. Silver and bead necklaces glittered on all their necks, while the metal gauntlets of the higher officials showed conspicuously upon their dark skins. They formed themselves into a procession, seniors first, and slowly marched round the square against the sun, so as to present the right shoulder to the king.

First came the Ajakyaho, wearing a crimson figured damask robe. His head was encircled with a yellow fillet, and he bore a long scarlet wand in his right hand, "walking-stick fashion," and in his left a circinal-ended sword. He walked first in the Coomassie palace as the landlord of the ground; otherwise his place is behind the Meu. Then followed the Ningan, whose robe was of crimson and green striped silk. He wore a silver helmet, with a scarlet crest. He also carried a crimson wand, with a similarly coloured pennon attached to it just below the handle. Being the executioner for the king, he was decorated with a silver skull, hanging from his girdle, from which also dangled a European sabre.

The Meu succeeded the Ningan, dressed in a crimson and yellow robe. His bullet head was bound by a scarlet fillet, with a small silver dagger stuck in it, on the right side. His wand was like the Ningan's, but his sword was a curved one. Then came the "place" of the Avogan, in bright blue striped silk and brass helmet. Followed the fat Adonejan in yellow and green silk, and two immense silver horns. He carried a crimson-tufted staff, and was followed by the Gaou's place, in a showy yellow damask "aba." The left-general, the Kposu, succeeded, in green and yellow. His horns were highly exalted, although of the mushroom type.

The Alolokponugan, a brother of the king, came next, in blue and yellow, and was succeeded by the Aulinwanun, in crimson and



An engraving of a procession.

PROCESSION OF MINISTERS



gold. He carried a scarlet and white striped stick, with a similar pennon. The Tokpo, Binwanton, Aboh, Matro, and a host of other high dignitaries followed, making up a total of sixty-eight.

All wore showy robes, some carrying daggers hanging from sashes, besides the swords they held in their hands. Some wore horns, others—the Agasunno and the Bukono—half-helmets fixed on the head by leather straps; some had silver stars fixed to their scalp-locks, while others, again, wore a kind of crown, formed of a hoop of silver, with four others meeting at the top, and surmounted by a horn. I saw none of the “dirty trade shirts” mentioned by Burton, all being dressed in their best. As the various members of the procession slowly passed before the king they bowed their heads; and after the third round marched up in a body, and touching the earth with their foreheads, sang a short song complimentary to the king, and ended by shrieking out, “*Nquahshu!*”—a word in the Ashanti language meaning “We compliment you—to which the king replied, “*Whohau,*” meaning “I accept it.” They then retired to their umbrellas, and a second procession of the inferior captains then formed, sixty-two in all.

These carried muskets in place of the swords of the superior troop. The Echillé led this file, in a robe and a blue sash. Two Lali, “half-heads,” followed, wearing the semi-helmets alluded to in the former procession. There was a greater diversity in this procession than in that of the Ministers. Some prided themselves in the cast-off tunics of European soldiers, others were dressed in a mixed garb, half civilized, half savage. The Adanmennukon was rigged up in a bright blue tunic, with crimson sash and crossbelt, and carried an immense axe over one shoulder and a blunderbuss on the other. His head was encased in a cocked hat. Some wore fillets, others nothing, not even hair, while a few were half hidden beneath high broad-brimmed hats of the cardinal type. The Amma-sin-kpele, or custodian of the king's medicine, was smartly surmounted by an immense flap hat, the edges of which were valanced and covered

with trade looking-glasses, while little fillets of red cloth suspended bits of bright tin from the edges. Two six-footers in black frockcoats of European cut, but sadly deficient in nap, and habited as to their nether limbs in blue petticoats, carried a couple of long buccancer guns. After them came the scarlet-coated Honjeno and his lieutenant, wearing bright brass helmets, and armed with two swivel brass guns. The rear was brought up by the Kpofensu,* smoking a sham pipe, and his assistant, who was busily engaged in keeping his pseudo pipe of bone clear of the phantom ashes, whose removal necessitated frequent stoppages and expressive reproofs from his chief.

A salute followed the third circuit, and the jesters sent the king their donation of a half-rotten yam.

The last parade of the men's side consisted of a medley of captains, stewards and others. One old soldier carried a peculiar weapon, like a huge pair of scissors; while the road clearers of the king flourished immense brooms. They were conspicuously dressed in green, and wore brass helmets with black plumes. Some had succeeded in getting old military uniforms, and a fat old fellow was often seen stuffed into a coat four sizes too small for him, while his successor, a thin slim fellow, was lost in a suit big enough for "the Claimant." Last of all came a number of gaily-dressed fellows, who carried bows and arrows.

The number of this last procession was twenty-seven, and the parade of each lasted about a quarter of an hour.

The Tononun and his company then marched round, the old chief being very tottery. He had on a kind of silver mitre, and carried two immense wooden keys. When they came to salute they sprawled before the king at full length, tinkled their bells, and called out "*Fifaleah*," "hail, king," to which he replied "*fejale*," "hail, I hear or accept."

The Amazons then struck up a noisy hubbub, and the guns behind us were fired off. The Tononun and his fellows, who had doffed their finery, then spread the bamboos into a circuit

* This officer is captain of the blunderbusscers, and head jester also.

similar to that taken by the men, and we prepared to view the procession of the Amazonian ministers.

The Dahkros and Lali being squatted alternately round the bamboo line, the mat door was raised, and the she ministers, fifty-one in number, came forth in all their "bravery." Like the males they slowly paraded round the enclosure at a funeral pace.

Their dresses were of a similar cut to those of the "outside," and the colours were as gaudy. First came the she Ajakyaho in a bright scarlet robe, wearing a silver crown and carrying a red staff. Then came the Gundeme, or she Ningang, tottering along under the weight of her rank. She carried a long sickle-shaped sword, as being the Calcraft for the Amazons. The Akpadume, in a blue and orange toga, and a curiously plaited fillet round her head, followed. Then the Nadude-Agoh came before us, swaggering along in a silver crown and a bright yellow robe. The she Adonejan succeeded, and was followed by the female representatives of the first procession of the men. All were provided with daggers, and the head gear was of a similar type to that of their male comrades.

After the usual three marches round they advanced *en masse* to the king, saluted and disappeared behind the matting, a band playing before the king during their exit.

The Begani, or captainesses, then came on to the scene, armed with muskets, cartridge boxes and bullet pouches. Most of these viragos wore blue robes—but one individual, the third caboccer of Alladah's "mother," shone conspicuously forth in a violet and white checked toga.

The female druggist wore a skull cap of monkey skin with the head in front—a head-dress similar to that of the Ashanti executioner. Some wore the steeple-crowned witches' hats, mentioned in the male processions; and two gaunt women, whose meagre condition contrasted with the general obesity, wore red caps of liberty, like those brewers' draymen affect, but ornamented with a silver fish on each side. Some, again, prided themselves in tall

night-caps, two especially attracting notice by reason of the black beards of goat skin they wore on their chins. The fetiche priestesses were distinguished by the skulls that dangled from their sashes, the keeper of the Jaw umbrella, bearing as a coronet the lower jaw of some poor victim. They likewise saluted and retired, and were succeeded by twelve she eunuchs, headed by the Yavedo. All these carried knives with skulls fixed on the hilts, and after tinkling their bells to the king disappeared to the right.

While these lady members were parading, the ministers and captains were busy disrobing themselves and putting on gala dresses, which they took out of calabashes ready set before them by their vassals. A band of drummers and gong-gongs then played a tune, while the jesters roamed about calling out to everybody to look at the great king.

This over, the ministers again paraded, all smoking, some long clays, others German painted bowls, some the ordinary native azokweh, while the Chuydatoh and the Adonejan whiffed cigars—they being “white” men.

The Meu was obscured in a sou'-wester with a scarlet ribbon tied round it. Ningan strutted round in a faded cocked hat, worn, as Burton also remarked, on the wrong side. A grey robe and a yellow jockey's cap adorned the Ajakyaho, while the Adonejan's fat tub-like person was squeezed into a very Joseph's coat of patchwork, his head being crowned with a straw hat with a glazed top. Wideawakes were quite in demand, twelve nobles being finished off with them. Some wore Crimean shirts of glaring colours over their robes, and one officer was uncomfortable in a square of felt carpet. After the usual marches they advanced to the king, made a charity bow with their hats and retired.

The captains then paraded, smoking and dressed in a similar style. The most conspicuous get up was a couple of hearth-rugs, worn one before and one behind, and confined round the waist by a scarlet girdle. They saluted, dusted themselves, and made way for the eunuchs, who wore nothing out of the way.

The bamboos were then taken in charge by the Dahkros and

half-breeds, and the Amazonian nobles came in, smoking and dressed up in a corresponding style.

After their exit the whole of the outside nobles assembled before the king, and the Ningan, kneeling while all the others were prostrate, delivered an oration commencing with "*Aiah*," imitating the voice of a lion; as upon these occasions the Ningan must talk "lion-mouth," or the king will not understand him. His speech referred to the glory of the kingdom, the downfall of Abeokeuta and other matters; at the end of which the whole body cheered in a triple series of hand clappings, ending off in a single loud clap, and then copiously dusted their fine robes.

A similar speech was then delivered by the grey-headed Gundeme, after which the servants of the outside and inside officers brought in calabashes of "chop." The ministers who possessed wives in the inside were served by their royal spouses, who brought the food from the palace, and squatted down before their lords while they partook of their luncheon, bowing to the ground after handing anything to their husbands, although many of them were daughters of the king.

All these princesses were gaily dressed in rich cloths, and a profusion of necklaces, bracelets and other finery bedecked their swarthy persons. It being the custom for everybody to lunch before the king, his Majesty sent us two calabashes of very savoury viands, and nothing loath we set to with fingers and cankie dippers in the natural style.

During this interval the various bands played selections of the national music, and the jesters prowled about watching their opportunity to steal a *bonne bouche* from any unsuspecting lord, their successful raids being greeted with a round of laughter as they exhibited the morsel before the king, and derided the loser.

A series of "Ahgos," "n'dabohs," and ting tangs on the gong-gong announced that the procession was about to commence. A salute from the artillery behind us having been fired, "Ahgo" was called and silence reigned.

First came six Amazons, in long red togas, carrying black pots; two, which Burton calls Ajalela, being about four feet high, and shaped like those in which the forty thieves hid themselves. They were followed by ten iron frames, representing four arms terminating in brazen heads, which were the stands to sustain the Ajalela. One of these pots was riddled with small holes, and is the fetiche by which the army to attack Abeokeuta is preserved. Its efficacy is so great that when water is poured into it, it does not escape through any of the numerous orifices. How was it that with this talisman the Dahomans were routed in the last attack upon Abeokeuta? The other pot was solid and adorned with silver and brass stars, squares and half moons, all powerful charms. A gang of twelve men then appeared dragging a dray of native manufacture, upon which was the wooden figure of a very heraldic lion, rampant, and carrying a sword in either hand. Like the preceding company, this gang halted before the king, danced, bowed, and were dismissed with a present of cowries and rum. They then proceeded through the gateway and paraded down the Uhunglo market and round the palace. This saluting was performed by each batch.

A wooden man with a ram's head, also in a fighting attitude, and mounted on a wheeled platform, succeeded. Next a black figure with a demon's head, four horns, glaring red eyes, grinning teeth, and etceteras, on a truck followed by a gang of soldiers, firing guns as they marched past. Twenty-four nyekpleh-hen-toh, or Razor-women followed — strapping Amazons dressed in dark blue pagnes with crimson cross-belts. They carried their curious weapons over their shoulders. They are evidently imitations of the razor of civilization, but the blade is about thirty inches long, shutting into a black wooden handle of the orthodox shape, and kept open when in use by a spring. These novel arms were invented by King Gézu for the sole purpose of cutting off the heads of the kings he captured.

A gang of women bearing calabashes of provisions followed this company, and were succeeded by sixteen dancing priestesses,

preceded by two girls blowing long silver horns, and followed by a large band. Twelve priestesses carrying red jars of fetiche water, followed by a white flag with a rude design representing a blue man cutting off the head of a scarlet enemy. This was mounted on a wheeled truck, and surrounded by a green railing.

Twenty-one fetiche priestesses, in grey togas with black sashes, carrying black jars from which hung strings of bloody cowries interchangeably with strips of coloured cloth. Three regimental standards—the fetiche emblems of three companies. One was white, with zig-zag scarlet affairs on it like a handful of Jupiter's lightning. Another was blue, with a white tree with a blazing top; while the third was white, with a scarlet shark upon it. Nine highly-polished brass pots, carried by as many buxom damsels in scarlet robes, wearing a profusion of coral and silver bijouterie, and preceded by a band. Six blue-robed damsels—Amazonian beefeaters, with long red-handled brass spears, monstrous copper hoes, diggers, and other implements of native husbandry, all highly polished and glittering in the sun.

Then came a silver candlestick of Brazilian workmanship, perhaps a forfeiture from the Catholic mission at Whydah—twelve fetiche images all painted black, with coral necklaces and scarlet avo—twenty-two blue jars containing loose cowries, unpierced for stringing, as the usual currency is; nine large calabashes containing something very magical no doubt. Then, borne on the heads of eighteen women, with bustles quite on a civilized scale, were square boxes, wrapped in blue cloth.

Twenty-one soldieresses, habited in pale-blue tunics with yellow cross-belts and sashes, came next, carrying long Danish guns stained bright blue, and with their lock covers, shoulder straps and other fittings of the same colour. Nineteen tall women in long scarlet tunics, emblazoned with yellow lions on the breast, back, and lappets, and wearing highly-polished brass helmets with crimson plumes. Twenty ditto ditto, in yellow robes with scarlet lions, with black sashes, the ends hanging in front, and helmets with yellow plumes. Eighteen as before in white robes,

semé of passant lions, with red-plumed helmets. Guarded by twelve bayoneteers came the "Iron Umbrella," an ordinary kweho with iron rods for frames and a gun barrel for a handle, followed by a long pole with a silver and a blue globe reflector hanging from it, also under an escort of bayoneteers.

A tall silver candelabrum in the form of a tree, about five feet high, with candles of silver; a six-foot silver stork; a crow; an immense silver skull, and a smaller silver tree about four feet high, all the workmanship of the royal silversmith, next followed. These are the fetiche allegorical ornaments that will surmount the grave of the present king. The candelabrum will show that he was the light of his nation; the stork that he was a wise man; the crow that he was valiant; the skull that he conquered many enemies and took their skulls; and the tree that, like a flourishing tree, his kingdom prospered under his reign. Then followed a silver skull, mounted on a short stump, and a monkey climbing up a tree of the same order as those on a willow-pattern plate. These are the ornaments for the grave of Addokpon, the Bush King. The skull shows that he too conquered many enemies, and the monkey and tree that the bush, *i.e.*, Dahomey, was so much liked that foreigners came to settle there, that, like the monkey, they might possess some of its riches. Other ornaments were exhibited during the Custom, and will be explained in their proper place.

A band of singers in emerald-green skirts and scarlet sashes then sang a Nago ballad, after which they danced to the accompaniment of their own band. After a largesse of cowries and rum they were dismissed.

Forty-eight elephant huntresses, the Gbeto, then came before the king. They were all tall well-proportioned women dressed in dull-brown petticoats, and indigo-dyed tunics, with black sashes, profusely ornamented with magic relics. Round their waists they wore a curious affair composed of strips of hide with the hair on dangling from a belt, and a fillibeg of leather ornamented with cowries in front. Their guns were heavy, wide

bore muskets, and their ammunition was carried in black leather pouches. All wore their hair cut close, save a circular patch on the top of the poll, where it was combed out like a brush. They are renowned for their prowess in the chase, and are sometimes absent two years on one of their hunting expeditions. They sang and danced before the king, and then saluted him by raising their guns at arm's length. They were followed by the female smokers, who puffed clouds of smoke from enormous long-stemmed pipes of native manufacture. Their dresses were fringed with imitation tobacco leaves, and their appearance was highly smoke-dried and wizened.

After them came a troop of eighteen girls, bearing long knives with brazen blades, and nine others succeeded, carrying scarlet guns with brass hoes fixed to the muzzles by bayonet joints. Then came thirty-eight girls in various fancy tunics, who bore large calabashes containing provisions on their heads, and a band of twenty-three musketeers guarding two large boxes of silks followed. Next came four girls who lustily blew long silver horns. They ushered in nine Tansino in long blue gowns and black steeple hats, who solemnly held up a blue cloth round a mysterious something which was supposed to be the king's "life fetiche." This was protected from sun-stroke by a pink umbrella. These holy women were followed by their chief, who walked along by the aid of the tall copper rod we saw when she fetched the holy water. Behind them, crawling at a funereal pace, were the eight Bassajeh, who were the incarnate ghosts of the deceased kings. They wore grey robes and white skull caps with long trailing ends, over which were blue "witches' hats." A number of mysterious pots and vessels of several kinds succeeded, all wrapped in red and white checked cloths. Then came a girl dressed in white, who will receive the spirit of the present ruler when he goes to Deadland. After her sixty-four priestesses followed, in white turbans and yellow robes, emblazoned with various fetiche hieroglyphics, and wearing necklaces and other ornaments in profusion. All carried long walking-

sticks, and chanted in a very funereal strain as they crawled along. These were the priestesses who attend on Gézu's spirit when it comes to this world. Then, dressed in cloths of every hue, and of all ages, from twelve to forty, came nine hundred and eighty-one amazons, carrying bottles of trade rum on their heads, a bottle to each individual. They were brought up by a band beating a terrific storm on their drums, and were followed by a hundred and sixty-five women who carried bottles of liqueurs, green, crimson, sky-blue, and other gaudy colours, beautiful to the eye but poisonous to the stomach—at least a European one. A fitting guard of sixty bayoneteers followed this company, and a band, if possible more noisy than the first, succeeded. This large quantity of spirituous liquor will be paraded round the palace, and then given in charge to the Benazon, who will receive it in a newly-erected shed in the Uhunglo market. At the conclusion of the procession to-night the indefatigable king will distribute this to the captains and deserving privates of the army.

While this almost interminable string of Hebes were passing, the Amazons and chiefs sang the praises of the monarch alternately, the heralds on either side bellowing out the strong names; while every few moments the whole crowd burst into a "Bloo Bloo," patting their lips with their fingers as they uttered the sound. A company of indescribable beings dressed in white Moslem robes, whom Burton calls "King Birds," who sat on the left, varied the performance from time to time by a whistling noise like that heard in a bird fancier's menagerie.

Two girls then followed, twirling white flags emblazoned with the Danh snake, *nowed* in a circle, and were succeeded by an extensive band and a dancing corps of Jotosi. The leaders had the usual Kpogi, with strips of various-coloured cloth fastened to the ends, and wore strings of red and blue beads.

Twenty-four women in green frocks, with white facings and white turbans, bearing long white wands, succeeded by eighteen in dark blue, with similar staves, then followed, after whom came

eighteen professional dancers, who waved white fly-flappers like horse-tails. They were dressed in yellow waistcoats and black skirts, and danced before the king, and were afterwards "paid off" with a dash of rum.

The royal wives of the officers then brought in a light repast of oranges, bananas, cashew nuts, and similar dainties to their lords, and Gelelé sent by our Dahkro a like dessert for our acceptance.

Then a noisy band of braying horns and thumping drums of all sizes came along, preceding a company of seven girls, who carried as many white flags, each with some allegorical design upon it.

Next, a company of dancers came before us, naked to the waist, which was clothed in a heavy fringe of plaited grass, dyed bright red with cam-wood; a similar ornament was also bound round their ankles. They performed a dance of the Can-can description, and retired amidst a volley of applause.

At this point the princes sent their pipes to the king through the medium of a Dahkro, and asked their father, *i.e.*, the king, to supply them with tobacco. In a few minutes the Dahkro returned and brought a roll of pig-tail, which she presented to the princes in the king's name.

Then came a gang of the Amazonian minstrels, holding small scarlet flags in their right hands, while the left twirled a singer's horse-tail. Their heads were wrapped up in scarlet handkerchiefs, and they wore yellow hoods over scarlet tunics, which were blazoned with rampant lions of sky-blue. They were joined by about four dozen women, and danced for about a quarter of an hour, while their band deafened us with its discordant music.

Then the monstrous Gold Coast stool of King Gézu, swathed in crimson cloth, followed by twelve girls carrying brass and copper basins filled with cowries, preceded the Agranhowe, an enormous white umbrella, covered on the lappets and top with eighty-four human jawbones, disposed chevron-wise.

A large drum, as big as a brewer's vat, with twenty-two human

crania, succeeded, and was followed by a woman carrying an enormous executioner's knife, with a blade seven feet long and two broad at the end, with a number of perforations in it, after the fashion of a fish slice.

Then came the All-powerful drum *semé* of skulls, which has been before described, followed by a large silver stork on the top of a silver tree, the whole mounted on a four-wheeled truck. Two silver ships of the Galleon pattern; a couple of silver soldiers, in the dress of Spanish buccaneers, fighting a duel—a present to Gézu from the King of Portugal; eighty-four girls dressed in blue, with white turbans, carrying brass Neptunes, each containing six to ten skulls, the war trophies of King Gézu. Gézu's mule, with a bell round her neck, led by a gaunt warrioress. A dark green coach, evidently of native manufacture, with two yellow flags attached to short staffs in front. It had a long pole, and was drawn by forty-two men harnessed to it by rope traces. A dark blue coach, with lions on the panels, a present from the Chacha in the slave-trading times. A yellow ditto on springs, of the stage-coach species, with a flagstaff let through the roof; a red carriage, like a brougham, with silver lamps and axles, and a yellow lion on the panels.

King Gézu's hammock, a palkee looking affair of red and white silk; a wooden rocking-horse, with full trappings and saddle, mounted on a wheeled truck; a band of gourd rattles; a large chariot of bronze-green, very crazy and moth-eaten; a ditto, ditto; King Agongolu's chariot; a brown coach, picked out with scarlet, with the original hind wheels replaced by a pair of native workmanship; a light green American waggon, with a cow-hide hood; and a green chariot, belonging to King Gézu.

A sedan chair, with crimson furniture trimmed with gold, carried by eight men, who held the pole at arm's length above their heads, while another batch of four kept the sun off by scarlet parasols—thus denoting that the king makes use of the conveyance; a claret-coloured vehicle; a black pony harnessed to a basket-chaise, the property of Gelelé; a huge scarlet and green checked

board, for His Majesty to play a game upon ; a cumbrous hammock of red silk, with yellow curtains, and various emblems on the pole ; Gézu's yellow coach, creaking, and with the varnish sadly cracked ; a wooden mule, carrying a Gold Coast stool on his back, mounted on wheels. The Menta-zinkpo, or stool of war—a large chair and footstool of cumbrous native manufacture, cut out of the solid, and ornamented with seven skulls ; two Amazons, in green tunics, carrying small brass swivel cannon ; a large war-stool, with twenty-seven crania upon it, the Menta-pwe ; a Bath chair, with a red silk canopy over it ; two large war-stools for the Bush King ; a green hammock, with a black velvet awning, followed by two Katake war-chairs.

A band then performed a national air, and the procession continued. First came a blue velvet hammock, with a yellow lion on the top of the pole and on the curtains. This also is used by the present monarch. A wooden fighting man, with a drawn sword ; a group of nine hunchbacked women ; a white satin hammock with scarlet lions, profusely decorated with beads and a brass-mounted pole, followed by a noisy band ; a French drum and a tambourine ; thirty-three Amazons carrying nine brazen and eleven iron swivel guns, bearing lighted port-fires in their hands ; a large silver bowl ; a second American waggon, followed by a band of "*wimeh*," or players on the flute, whose leader was a tall woman in a scarlet cloak. Ten drums of various sizes followed, ushering in the *Mau-no*, or Moon Mother, the priestess of the Dahoman Astarte. She was dressed in grey cloth, with a long necklace of black and white beads, and her umbrella, of the tawdry white calico species, was carried by a female hunchback. The *Lisa-no*, or Sun Mother, followed her in a dark blue robe, her assistants bringing up the rear with a collection of red and white striped pots, and a red flag charged with a blue chamelion, the emblem of Lisa.

Sixty-eight Amazons, dressed in various-coloured skirts, and bearing long red poles, from the extremity of each of which a long string of cowries depended. Forty-eight girls carrying

heads of cowries, stained red and white, followed by a band of singers, who wore silver plates tied to the right side of their heads by scarlet cords. These were gorgeously dressed in scarlet, and bore long whips of raw hide, like cat-o'-nine-tails.

A large party, carrying Kago, with an abundance of cooked provisions, followed by a band, preceded eight Leopard wives, each under her own state umbrella of gorgeous hue. They were dressed in green and blue silk, richly embroidered with gold lace, and glittered in the sun in the profusion of their jewellery of silver and coral. All wore a string of silver ornaments round their heads, which contrasted well with their dark skins, and the royal coiffure of a turban-like tuft on the top of the head was combed and pomatumed to perfection. Each carried a fish-slice sword; and on arriving before the king they were presented with a tumbler of spirits on a silver salver. Tasting a little, she turned to her maid, who, on bended knee, swallowed the nobbler at a draught, and then took up the present of five heads of cowries and proceeded. A band of panigan-hunto followed.

Then came another procession with red staves, with black cowries hanging therefrom, followed by a second batch of red jars, and two things, like frying-pans, one of brass and the other of copper, which nobody seemed to know the name or nature of. After them a group of singers made melody for ten minutes.

Preceded by their umbrellas, eight other royal spouses now came before us. These were dressed in grey figured silk, and bright scarlet under-skirts. After drinking the king's health, they passed on with the rest.

Three immense brass pots, shaped like water-coolers, four copper ditto, and six iron kettles then defiled before us, followed by four girls, playing on long horns encased in calico. More red poles, jars, pots, and other fetiche cookery, preceded twenty-four Bagwe or Nesu water-pots. A large box of black wood—nine trade desks, brass mounted, and four large pots, enveloped in calico cloths. Then came on a miscellaneous troop of girls, carrying various fetiche “notions”—jars, with white braid pennons

attached—little stools, some covered with blood and cowries—umbrellas of every possible material, all fetiche—urns—pipe-cases, two yards long—basons—glass dishes—little model fetiche houses, etc., etc., etc. Then came the Menta-dokamen, with their skull contents, followed by Messrs. Bakoko, Akian, Fladoh and Company.

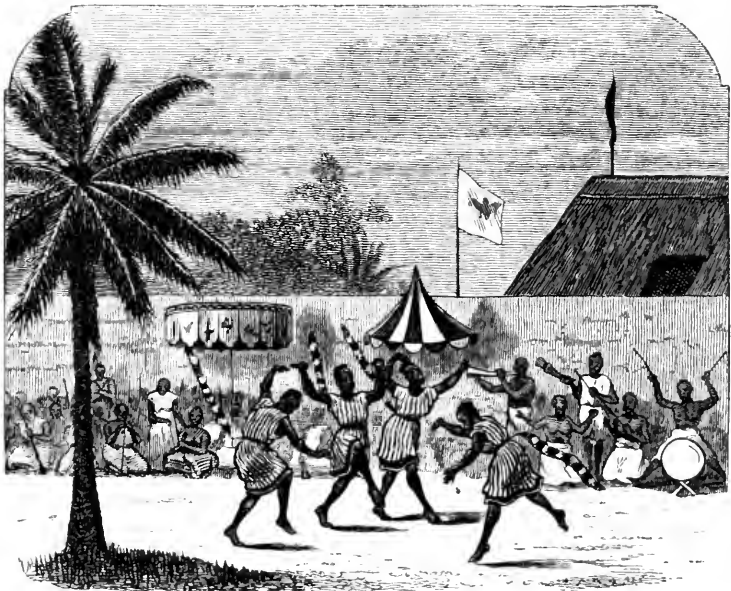
A large stool, with twelve crania attached, which was carried on a hand-barrow, after which a troop of the Ananun-hwesuhuntoh, or Blue Knife Company, defiled before us. They were dressed in Prussian blue gowns, with white cross-belts, and carried chopper-like weapons, fixed to wooden handles, stained blue. These peculiar knives are presented by royalty to the bearers, and the blacksmiths are forbidden to manufacture them. Then came a company of Archeresses, in many-coloured skirts, followed by a band.

A deafening uproar of horns, rattles, and drums—announced the Eahweh, or English landlady. She appeared dressed in a profusion of cloths, as though her whole wardrobe was on her back. Her head was covered with a brass helmet, and her blue tunic, and orange skirt turned up with scarlet, gave her a smart appearance. Her umbrella was blue, with scarlet stripes upon it, and her escort wore tall beaver hats, and blue robes. A band followed this important personage, who was honoured with a glass of grog instead of the bottle, as dashed to the vulgar herd.

A large and powerful band ushered in the Tail-dancers, or Logun-sinsi. These celebrated performers were the especial invention of Gelelé. They were about twenty in number, and wore pink skirts reaching down to the knee, and open-throated tunics of white calico embroidered with scarlet. Round their waists they wore broad scarlet sashes, to the back of which enormous bustles were attached. From the back of these proceeded a short stick, from which depended a long tail of alternate black and white horse-hair, as thick as a man's arm, and just clearing the ground. They came in, and saluting the king, commenced their peculiar dance. Standing in a row, with their backs to the king, and

their arms in the orthodox swimming position, they began a see-saw movement of the gluteus until, their tails acquired sufficient momentum to swing completely round like a sling. They then commenced to waltz in a circle, still keeping up the rotary movement of their tails, thereby eliciting thunders of applause from Amazons and warriors. A heavy bagsheesh followed their performance, and, wagging their curious appendages, they filed out of the presence.

Two French tricolors, surmounted by gilded eagles, were then



THE TAIL-DANCERS.

brought out, the flags being half rolled round their poles. Twenty-two glass jugs, basins, and other utensils, in gilt or brazen basins followed, and introduced a procession of eighteen stools of various sizes, shapes, and importance; the last two being huge affairs of black and white wood. A man! walking in the midst of this procession, carrying a long blue staff with a

wooden knife, painted vermilion, at the end of it, then appeared, much to our surprise.

An English sheep with a body-cloth and a string of cowries and fetiche by way of ornament round its neck then appeared.

The first portion of this interminable procession had by this time perambulated the palace, and appeared at the gate, and passed behind the mat screen to the king's proper right.

Then came a gang of blunderbuss-women in scarlet liberty caps, with white fishes on the left side. These preceded eight Leopard wives for the late Gézu; aged crones, richly dressed in violet and yellow silk, and in no way behind their juniors in the profusion of their jewellery, although their age necessitated the support of a stick. A number of curious images of various kinds, some black, some white, and others parti-coloured. Then came a party of twenty-eight fetiche-irons, asen and stieks, all swathed in calico; a crimson cushion, supporting a silver lion, most probably of European manufacture, followed by a smaller one, very heraldic; a large Chinese jar—an immense calabash, with skulls for feet; sixty-eight girls bearing conical heaps of cowries in wooden platters; several porcelain jars; and large glass dishes, of the custard pattern; a large drum, decorated with a considerable number of human teeth, carried by two side poles—ten crimson shields, said to belong to the Leopard wives, and a deafening band.

Preceded by a woman wearing a grey tunic and a silver half head, who brayed on a long trumpet, came the Yavedo, or chief eunuchess for the "inside." She wore a brazen helmet, with a black plume, and a row of scarlet feathers along the crest.

Two scarlet flags; eight small drums, carried by girls in red tunics and skull-caps and blue petticoats, with red fetiche emblems sewn on; a peculiar lantern or chandelier, so broken as to be entirely concealed by its calico envelope, and slung to a hammock-pole. Fourteen crimson umbrellas preceded the "place" of Zoindi, the mother of the present king, who was closely followed by Danhlike, the mother of the "Bush-king." They were shaded by

white umbrellas, and dressed in sober grey and blue robes. A batch of provisions, stools, swords, and other paraphernalia, formed a train of a hundred and thirty-four people. Then came a dilapidated flag, eighteen brass pans full of old crania, several stools, pots, sticks, and umbrellas, announcing Agotime, Gézu's mother, followed up by Ntobe, the corresponding bush-king's mother.

Two dirty umbrellas, much the worse for wear, protected the shaven pate of a squat little dame, whose brow was encircled with a silver tiara. Senunc, Agongolu's mother, was the name of this interesting being.

Then two umbrellas, in the same condition as the last, ushered in Hunajileh, the mother of Mpengula—the usual bevy of calabashes, bands, and stools, following in the rear.

After her came the newly-appointed mother of Tegbwesun—Chai by name, whose broad back was enveloped in a scarlet cloak. The skull-decorated umbrella of Agajah the Scourge, whose mother, Adono, wore a chaplet of human teeth, followed. Her band was composed of gong-gongs, and gourd rattles alone.

A second company of Tail-dancers then came up, whose performance was somewhat curtailed, as by this time the sun was near the horizon. Succeeded a troop of seventy-four girls, loaded with calabashes of provisions, followed by a number of "Ashanti" drums. A troop of liberty-capped dames followed, and were succeeded by a curious affair like a waggon, drawn by twelve girls.

Then came a large wooden vulture and a number of girls carrying long pink poles, with white pennons. Twelve old crones in fools' caps, wearing striped dresses of blue and white calico; a company of singers, whose leader was absorbed in a large beaver hat; two pseudo union jacks, a band of razor-women, and twenty-four Nago girls, who danced and sang in their native language. They were dressed in pink skirts and blue waistcoats. Ten of the king's "white men," Dahomans dressed in calico trousers and black frock coats, hatless, shoeless, and shirtless; a long chair mounted with skulls; a large curved knife, and a box of twelve skulls.

Then a batch of twelve girls sang a brief song, and were succeeded by the skull standards carried by women in dark blue dresses. Twelve umbrellas, covering as many Bo-fetiche priestesses, followed by two brass shields, a large drum, two large scimitar-shaped blades, fretted as usual, and having skulls on the hilts, eighteen Bo Kpo in red avo, six executioneresses in leopard cloths of yellow with black spots, silver horns and bracelets; a number of black affairs like Highlanders' targets, and five flags.

Last came the Gundeme in grey robes, followed by her retinue, dressed in white blouses, said to be the garments worn by the criminals in the victim sheds—perquisites of Calcraft.

By the time the last of her gang had passed out it was seven o'clock, and quite dark, as a matter of course. A number of captainesses were to have paraded, but Royalty as well as ourselves was satiated.

A deafening fire of the artillery behind us flashed out in the darkness, and announced that the procession of the king's wealth was over. Right glad were we to hear it. A number of lanterns were then brought out, and two were handed over to us. Aided by these, we groped our way to the bamboo line where the king met us, and, after inquiring whether we had enjoyed the spectacle, requested me to come to the market to see the rum delivered. I begged to be excused, and said that I was too fatigued to sit any longer. Upon this he said that, although the custom was without precedent, he would make a special act empowering me to recline in my hammock if I would honour the court with my presence. Who could refuse such right royal condescension? I said I would come in two hours' time, but that I must have a short respite. Much pleased at my reply, he bade me go and refresh myself, and said that he would not begin the ceremony without sending me notice.

The Ningan, the Meu, and other officials then conducted me through the gate, where they halted, and a troop of soldiers fired a salute in my honour. I then went to my quarters to

gather strength and patience for the night's additional ceremonies.

In about an hour we heard the indefatigable king set out from the market; a squadron of Amazons with lanterns lighting the monarch on his passage to the small shed where the rum had been stored.

Our messenger having arrived to state that the king was ready, we again started, and on arrival at the market found our umbrella set up under one of the trees, and two trestles placed ready to support the hammock pole. The governor had been ordered to attend, and was expected to sit in a chair, but I told the king that it was against all ideas of etiquette for one white man to sit and the other to recline in the presence. His Majesty sent a message to say that "he was king, and that he allowed me, his friend, to lie in my hammock, but that the Governor was too 'hot' a man, and therefore must sit. Nevertheless, as I had asked a favour he must grant it, and the Governor might also lie in his hammock."

The Royal seat was surrounded by lanterns which just rendered darkness visible, and the ghastly spectres of the victims were faintly seen through the gloom. One could hardly prevent a cold shudder as he turned from the fearful sight. The ceremony was of short duration. The Ningan, Meu, Ajakyaho, and the Adonejan were summoned to the front and received about thirty bottles of rum each. I was then called, and had a dash of a like number. The Governor received a present of twenty black demijohns of rum as his share.

The officers then proceeded to distribute the royal largesse to the various caboccers and braves, after which the female representatives received their share.

The liqueurs were then doled out in like manner, twelve bottles falling to my lot. A number of speeches praising the king's generosity were then delivered by Meu and Amazons, and a firing party rushed madly about calling out the strong names. A duet was then sung by alternate Amazonian and "outside"

troubadours, and, last of all, a dance by the ministers of both sexes brought the long day's performance to a conclusion.

To our unspeakable relief we saw the Dahkro bearing our "pass rum," and, completely tired out, we left the presence after a reception of sixteen and a half hours' duration. Truly a Dahoman state reception is *Ouvrage de longue haleine*.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BUSH KING'S SO-SIN CUSTOM.

Origin of the Bush King—His palace—His officers—The King of Dahomey not a trader—Meaning of the name.

The First Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Gelelé's speech—Ningan's reply—Distribution and fight for cowries—Ballet of the Amazons—Royal drummers—Dance with the King—Small procession of fetichists.

The Second Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Dahoman jesters—Procession of Amazonian ministers—Native horsemanship.

The Third Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Ask permission to leave Abomey—The King's answer—Jack in the green—Parade of Amazonian ministers—Procession of the King's wealth for Addokpon.

The Fourth Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Prophetic vultures—"Jail-birds"—The Akhosu Gelelé's speech and song—Present of cooked provisions.

The Fifth Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Dies irae—Whitewashing the gods—A small dose of medicine.

The Sixth and last Section of the Bush King's So-Sin Custom.—Victims in the market for Addokpon—The Doho—Song of the guards—New umbrella—Criminal cases—Smoke with a vengeance—We are passed—A double conscience—The forlorn hope—Procession of ministers—The Zankuku—Addokpon's escort—The war captains' parade—Review—Grand display of the Dahoman army—Gelelé's dress—Parade of Amazons—My dance—"War food"—Parade of male soldiers—Distribution of rum and cowries by night, and conclusion of the So-Sin Custom.

THE duality of the Dahoman monarchs has been already mentioned. This singular freak was the invention of the fertile brain of Gézu, Gelelé's father, and, as will be seen, the Customs are prolonged to nearly double their former length, to do honour to the country king as well as the town monarch.

The Bush sovereign, although a mythical person, nevertheless has all the appurtenances of the town king. His palace is at Akpucho, a few miles from Abomey, on the Toffo road, to the

north west. It is half swish and half mat, and has nothing remarkable about it. Like all other palaces it has several gates, with the usual Pwe-sheds, and their accompanying fetiche exhibition. The courtyards are surrounded with long sheds, used to store the maize and other cerealia for use in the royal household, and here, too, the manufacture of most of the royal cloth is carried on. I saw nine looms at work upon a new cloth for the king, besides a number of others engaged in the weaving of cloth for members of the royal household.

Besides this manufacture a great many of the pipes sold in the Uhunglo and other markets are made here, the king granting a monopoly of them to the landlord of the palace.

Addokpon has his Ningan, his Meu, and other officers like Akhosu, the town king, besides a large establishment of Amazonian guards and ministers. In short, he may be called the "double" of the Akhosu, and whatever is done for the king in public is thrice repeated; first for the Amazons, then for Addokpon, and thirdly, for Addokpon's Amazons. Visitors to the court are received by Akhosu, but it will be seen in a future chapter that before I was permitted to visit the interior I had to be received by Addokpon.

These two monarchs are not connected like the Japanese rulers, where one, the Tycoon, is the temporal sovereign, and the other, the Mikado, the spiritual king. No such distinction in their functions exists, Gelelé being king of Abomey, and Addokpon of the "bush," or country, as opposed to the town.

So great a monarch as the king of Dahomey could never soil his hands by commercial dealings; but since the wealth of the king and country depended upon the sale of slaves and palm oil—the former being an exclusive royal monopoly, and the greater part of the oil exported from the country coming also from the king—how could these be sold without demeaning the monarch to the position of a petty trader? There was the rub. Gézu surmounted this difficulty by the invention of the Bush king, who could take all the onus of ignoble trade, leaving the true monarch

to rule over his subjects and spend his revenues. Gézu's "double" was called Gah-qpwéb, the first two words of a short proverb, as most of the Dahoman names, or rather titles, are, viz., *Gah*, market-day, *qpwéb*, coming; "plenty of things will be there," being understood as completing the sentence. Addokpon, the *alter ego* of Gelelé, is an egotistical strong name. *Addo*, a yellow popo bead, imperishable by fire, *kpon*, look at it, *i.e.*, Behold the eternal.

All the oil and palm kernels sold at Whydah are the produce of Addokpon's plantations, but Gelelé buys the rum, powder, and cloth; a very convenient arrangement for getting a good name for spending money, since Addokpon sells only, whereas the generous Gelelé does nothing but buy. Nevertheless at the Customs Gelelé has by far the largest share of tribute, Addokpon being put off with a very meagre allowance.

THE NUN KPON GBE ADDOKPONTON.—WE SHALL LOOK AT THE CUSTOM FOR ADDOKPON TO-DAY.

After so tedious a day as the tenth, it could not reasonably be expected that anyone would be very early in court the next morning, however enthusiastic they might be to call hard work pleasure.

It was late in the afternoon before we took up our stand outside the southern gate of the Coomassie palace, where Gelelé was going to commence his Addokpon custom, contrary to the usual proceeding of holding the Bush kings' levees in the Uhunglo market.

We were not kept waiting long before the king appeared, looking somewhat jaded, but pleased to see us there ready to welcome him. He shook hands with us at the Amazonian barrier, and then retired to the cool shade of the Pwe-shed.

We found the usual assembly of nobility, clergy, and gentry, besides a fair sample of the *canaille*. The bamboos were stretched from the telegraph pole fetiche to the fig trees opposite the palace gate, and twenty-two baskets of cowries were arranged in line along the barrier. The proceedings commenced by Gelelé

delivering a speech about the bravery of his ancestors, how, one and all, they had conquered every tribe that opposed them, how none of them ever submitted to any insult from any neighbour but it was wiped out in blood. Such being the case, what had he done that he was not revenged on his enemies. Had he not made a good Custom for his father? Had he not given the people good laws? Did he not work as hard as any slave in the land? Why then did not his soldiers go and break Abeokeuta? They were too fond of talking and bragging about their great valour, but when it came to the push they were cowards. He felt vexed that his people should not have the same blood as those of his father Gézu, but that they were like sheep and not lions.

Loud cheers, "bloo bloo," and strong names greeted the royal speaker when he had concluded his harangue. The Ningán then came to the front, followed by the Meu, Adonejan, Kposu, and others. After the kodide the Ningán, kneeling with his hands before him in an attitude strongly reminding me of the plaster of Paris "Little Samuels," commenced a reply by calling out "Aiah." "Why does the king talk in the disparaging manner that he does? What king is so great as Gelelé? Does not the very earth tremble when he sounds his war drum? Shall not he lead his armies where he chooses? We will go and break Abeokeuta. When you take an egg and dash it on the ground, can you gather it up into the shell again? Just so will we do to Abeokeuta." A burst of applause followed this speech, which was succeeded by similar blarneying and braggadocio declamations on the part of several officers, both male and female.

One aged warrioresse worked herself up into a towering passion, stamping, calling the gods to witness that she would lay hold of Abeokeuta and cut off its head, suiting the action to the word, and seating herself down with a bump, as though she would shake Abeokeuta to pieces by the concussion. The king then came out and said that since they had promised to break Abeokeuta he would not feel vexed.

The caboocers then formed themselves into a line, seniors lead-

ing, and passed before the king from right to left, presenting their left shoulders to the king, who placed a head or two of cowries on the cranium of each as he stooped before him. After the ministers were thus rewarded, the king called out the Governor and myself, and caused us to fall in behind the Adonejan. He gave me three heads, and the Governor a couple, which we bore away to our seats rejoicing.

When all the officers were passed, the remainder of the cowries were thrown to the soldiery, who scrambled for them with the usual violence.

The bamboos were then moved to the rear, and a gang of dancers came and exhibited their agility to the admiration of everybody. They were succeeded by another *corps de ballet*, and this Terpsichorean display continued for three hours. During the activity dances the king sent me a pipe ready filled and lighted, saying that a pipe was good for any one who was looking at people dancing, because it made him forget the progress of time—not a very flattering compliment to the ballet dancers, in whatever way it is put.

The monotony was occasionally varied by songs on the part of the Amazons, and by a few noisy speeches by sundry warriors emulous of distinction, a copious dirt bath following every elocutionary display. Once or twice the king came out, and taking the crooked drum-sticks from one of the players, beat a tune with his own hands. A volley of cheers went the round of the square, and we rose and bowed, a compliment the king acknowledged by a wave of the drum-sticks. Gelelé then danced a kind of double shuffle, and sent for the Governor and me to dance with him. My comrade flatly refused, to the horror of his interpreter, who dreaded falling under the displeasure of the English landlord. Although I begged to be excused, the king sent such flattering requests that no one could hold out against them. Accordingly, lighting a long native pipe in imitation of the king, I went out into the arena, and placed myself opposite Gelelé. The band then struck up, and we began our performance. Gelelé leaped to the

right, and I followed suit, a wriggle by both of us succeeding—another hop, this time to the left, and I was not behind my instructor; then a series of dislocating movements only to be performed by a Dahoman, a lay-figure, or an eel. In this way, nearly half an hour was spent amidst the cheers, shrieks, and yells of the excited mob; the enthusiasm at length getting to such a pitch that the square was covered with isolated dancing couples.

The ballet over, Gelelé presented me with four heads of cowries, a compliment I returned by picking up six heads from a basket near me and placing them on the king's shoulder, telling him that he had danced better than I, and that he must therefore have his pay. Such a babel of strong names, gun firing, bloo-blooming and yelling then arose that I thought every person in the presence was trying to give himself a sore throat.

A series of palavers, the never-ending one of Abeokuta being the general topic, then ensued. How the Abeokeutans' ears must burn, if there is any truth in the popular saying. The sticks being replaced, a procession of fetiche images and crania then paraded the square to a concert by the Amazons, and a short ballet brought the proceedings to a conclusion. Our pass rum was then brought out, and we left the court just as the sun was setting.

On arriving at our quarters we were agreeably surprised to see a present of cooked meats, fruit, and liqueurs ostentatiously displayed in the court-yard. This had been sent to me by the English landlady. I found letters from home awaiting me, one of which contained the carte-de-visite of my wife. I showed this to Hahansu one day, and he wished particularly to know if she was my "principal" wife. He could not understand monogamy at all, and said that perhaps it might be good for white people, but never would be tolerated amongst black men.

THE AKHOSUSI ZOHN GBE.—THE AMAZONS WILL MARCH ROUND TO-DAY.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of September 12th we repaired to the Uhon nukon, which was newly swept, and bundles

of bamboos placed at intervals round the square. Our umbrella was set up in the shade of the southern wall of the palace, to the east of the gate. The jesters were busily employed in their silly tom-foolery, which was about on a par with the attempts of a nine-year-old child to do the funny. One would offer a lump of cankie to his comrade, and, on the latter attempting to bite it, he would adroitly slip the end of a stick in his mouth. Another would squat down and grin as though sitting as a model for a church gargoyle. A third would be busy catching phantom acari in his waist-cloth, while a fourth would be pretending to cry his eyes dry because he could not swallow a calabash.

An hour of this buffoonery quite exhausted our patience, when the braying of horns and firing of guns at the palace gate announced the arrival of Gelelé. He soon appeared, and was escorted by a number of the ladies of the harem to the south-eastern side of the Bwekon-uhon, where a canopy of umbrellas was quickly set up and a crimson-covered sofa brought out. A table was set up before this, and covered with a cloth, upon which a large broad-brimmed felt hat, heavily braided with gold lace, was placed. At a given signal Gelelé stood up, and we followed suit, bowing towards the king, who acknowledged the salute by waving the broad-brim.

A party of eighteen "tail dancers" then appeared from behind the fetiche tree, and entertained us with a whirligig ballet for half an hour. They were dismissed with a largesse of rum and cowries, and a concert of the Amazonian bands followed.

The Tononun and his myrmidons then severed the cords binding the bundles of rods, and encircled the square with a line of these impassable leaf-stalks.

The Amazonian ministers then appeared, riding on horseback, but not cutting very imposing figures. First came the female Ajakyaho in a scarlet robe, sitting astride of a brown nag upon a highly ornamental saddle-cloth, like a Californian aparejo, but made of leather dyed bright red, blue, and yellow. The horse was led by a halter of grass rope, and wore a small brass bell

suspended round his neck. The right arm of the Ajakyaho was passed round the neck of a stalwart Amazon, and, in addition to this, she was held on her seat by a groom on the left. In her left hand she grasped her sword, but her attention was evidently completely engrossed in the problem of maintaining her equilibrium. A less dignified equestrian I never saw, but she was quite able to hold her own with any of her followers.

The she Ningan came next, and was succeeded by the Meuess, who bestrode a mule, and did not appear in the least afraid of showing the columnar proportions of her nether limbs. The other she-ministers followed, to the number of fifty-one, all cutting very sorry figures. The Dahomans are evidently not intended to shine as equestrians. As each officeress passed our umbrella she saluted, and the English mother and the Meu presented us with a demijohn of rum apiece. All had their umbrellas borne furled on the head of a female servant, and a band of about half a dozen girls brought up the rear of the escort of the principal ministers. Notwithstanding the ludicrous figure some of the soldieresses cut, the display was well worth seeing, as it gave us a better idea of the dresses worn by the Amazons than the hasty glance that the procession in the King's So-sin Custom afforded.

Behind the captainesses came the three brass-mounted skulls and a small collection of fetiche deities, some of which bore a strong resemblance to the figure-heads of vessels. After thrice perambulating the square they saluted the king, and marched down the road towards the Uhunglo market, where they saluted the victims, whose presence was by this time apparent, not only to the eye, but the nose. They afterwards marched round the Coomassie palace, a firing party of eighty-four Amazons bringing up the rear. The jesters then came on again in full force, but our patience was not again to be tried by them, for we saw our Dahkro approaching with our case bottles of "dismissal spirits," and without waiting for the appearance of the Amazons from their circumambulation of the palace, we retired to our respective homes.

ADDOKPON NUN KPON GBE DIYEH.—THE PEOPLE WILL LOOK AT A GRAND SIGHT FOR ADDOKPON TO-DAY.

The next day was a holiday, and I availed myself of the opportunity of sending a message to the king, requesting him to permit me to return to Whydah; representing to him that his detention of me was a serious loss, and that I had not come prepared for so long a stay; more especially as I had been given to understand that I should only be absent from Whydah eight days. Had I come as a mere pleasure-seeker, it would have been a different matter; but I had visited his country for a special object, the accomplishment of which he was entirely frustrating by his detention of me.

The answer I received deserves a literal translation, and will give the reader a faint idea of the more than Job-like patience demanded of those who once get into the power of African potentates.

“The king’s compliments to you (thrice repeated). Why are you so vexed with your friend? Keep your heart cool. The king loves you ‘too much.’ Left three days (*Anglice*, in four days) and the Custom will be finished, and then you shall be passed. Why are you so impatient to get away from your friend? When he no more sees your face he will be sad. Why then wish to leave him?”

What could any one say to so flattering a message? To attempt to leave without the king’s permission would be useless, for not a single porter would dare to carry a package under such a condition of things.

About eleven o’clock the next morning we went to the palace gate, where a kind of Jack-in-the-green, in a long grass robe, with a bullock’s head covering his own, was moving over the square, halting occasionally before some of the assembled chiefs, and bellowing out in imitation of a bull’s challenge cry. The whole affair was about on a par with the child’s play in England, where one pretends to frighten the others by crying out “*Booeh.*”

After enduring this for a quarter of an hour, we were sum-

moned within the palace. I found the ministers and captains seated under their umbrellas, and a vocal concert was going on under the direction of the head bard, the Ken-tin. This Dahoman Sir Michael Costa was somewhat smartly got up. He wore a scarlet serge petticoat, with a vest of dark blue blanketing. Over this was a dirty velvet cloak that had once been crimson, but was now any colour between sienna-brown and blood-red. Since he was a great person he was decorated with a pair of brass horns of the mushroom type, and a single brass gauntlet round his left wrist. He carried the usual Kpo stick, a horse-tail *chauri*, and a black-handled scimitar.

The little black image holding out its head in the palace yard was joined by two others painted pink, and representing players on the gong-gong. On the king's coming in we advanced to meet him, and awaited his approach near the three images. He was dressed in a green and violet striped silk, with yellow figures upon it, a small scarlet turban with a band of yellow braid, several necklaces, and a pair of European slippers in beadwork. He shook hands with us in his accustomed affable manner, and then, turning to me, desired me to have a little patience, and then I should see what he would do for me. Baskets of cankie, cooked fowls, goats, pigs, yams, and other provisions were then brought in and displayed along the row of bamboos.

The mat doors on the king's left then opened, and a troop of she-ministers, headed by the Ningan, paraded in a circle. Their appearance was very similar to that on the last day of the King's So-sin Custom, except that the ministers in front wore red velvet instead of silk—velvet being the peculiar fancy of Addokpon.

The captainesses then paraded, the van being led by a virago, whom I did not know, with a long pole walking-stick tipped with a skull, and a fringe of black horse-hair beneath. This procession was brought to a conclusion by four jesters, who rushed about the square calling out Addokpon's strong names.

When these two displays were over, a couple of artillery women came in carrying two small brass cannons mounted on pieces of short plank, which they laid down in the middle of the square, and primed from their cartridge-boxes. Advancing to the front they began a declamatory address to the king in the name of Addokpon; the gist being that Addokpon was prepared to show Akhosu that he too could make Custom. At the end of the harangue the cannons were fired, going off with a fizz, and the blunderbuss women in the rear followed suit, one blowing off her little finger in the excitement. Of course a Dahkro came to ask if I could cure it, and I said that if she wrapped the stump up in clean linen rag it would soon heal. Luckily they were for once satisfied with my prescription, and during the afternoon I saw the wounded gunner heaping dust on herself as vigorously as any of the others.

Ningan's mother then stood up from amidst a troop of Amazons on the king's right, under the shade of the pavilion, and said that last night seven men were hung up in the Amazons' market inside the palace, and that four were sent to Gézu and Gahqpweh to inform him of the event. It thus appears that the victims for Addokpon are slaughtered in the Amazons' market before those for the Uhunglo market.

A loud series of Bloo-bloo followed this announcement, and the Tononun proceeded to form a lane of bamboos from the king's left to the palace-gate.

A procession similar to that of the King's Wealth then commenced to parade before us, the details of which would be tedious to the reader. We will therefore mention those "valuables" which appeared on this occasion, which were not exhibited at the King's procession on the last day of his So-sin Custom.

The procession led off with a party of the king's smokeresses, and after they had blown a cloud a troop of girls carrying long fetiche affairs like iron palm-leaves preceded the black jars. The run was carried by nine hundred and fifty-one girls, who were

followed by twelve others carrying green jars like flower-pots. Several bands of dancers also appeared at intervals wearing sashes of black, indigo blue, or orange. A band of Amazons, wearing scarlet robes, with yellow rampant lions emblazoned upon them, were very conspicuous, as also were a couple of butter-dishes, of the commonest yellow earthenware, representing a hen sitting on a nest. These were probably a dash from some trader at Whydah.

Addokpon's mother was gaily dressed in bright sky-blue silk and a yellow sash, besides a scarlet and yellow coif, perched jauntily on one side of her wool. A number of flags with dragons, sharks, lions, snakes, and other heraldic animals, were borne behind the old king's mother's; and the brass shields of two of the Amazonian corps, with skulls in the centre, were exhibited for our admiration. Behind these came the skull-standards, and next a troop of Abosi, or Gate-wives, dressed in grey togas, with red crossbelts, and armed with axes, having a skull below the head. These women are deputed to open the gates of Abeokeuta, when the king leads them against that town. Ajakyaho's mother brought up the rear, just as the sun was setting.

Cowries and rum were given to the king's wives only during this procession, the state of Addokpon's treasury not permitting such extensive largesse as that of Akhosu. After the last of the Ajakyaho's retinue had disappeared through the palace gate a salute was fired, and the Dahkros commenced to distribute the viands. As we had been seven hours in the presence, we sent to ask permission to retire, and on the receipt of the usual bottle of rum, gladly passed through the gloomy portal on our way home. The Jack-in-the-green was still cutting capers about the square, but despite his repeated solicitations, he did not obtain any "*bagsheesh*" from us. At night the king would distribute the rum in the market, and I dreaded a summons to attend, but resolved to plead utter exhaustion, and not to be seduced by any offers of hammock into going to see the ceremony. My fears

were, however, groundless, for Gelelé was merciful for once, and left us undisturbed.

We heard the palaver begin about nine o'clock, and from the account of old Blood-and-Cowries, who never absented himself from any *levée*, there was nothing that I should have cared to see. I received a demijohn for my share of Addokpon's rum, and was quite satisfied with the acquisition of that without undergoing three hours' purgatory to obtain it.

ADDUGBA-NO-GBE.—THE ADDUGBA DRUM WILL BE PLAYED
TO-DAY.

The next day we were again seated in our chairs beneath the sacred bombax in the Uhon-nukon by two o'clock P.M. On our way to the palace we saw the tops of the gallows, with their ghastly burdens, in the Amazons' market, above the palace wall. Burton appears to have omitted all notice of the Amazonian sacrifices, but it is very probable that their occurrence was carefully concealed from him. Indeed he was intentionally kept in ignorance of many events that occurred during his stay at Abomey, for somehow he had by no means a good name with either king, lords, or commons.

The Elephant tent and the trees behind it were covered with vultures, as though they had a prophetic knowledge that the victims who still remained would soon be their lawful prey. A troop of prisoners from the Adonejan's jail filed past us into the palace, and a more pitiable sight I rarely beheld. All were brick-red with the dirt from the floor of their prison, and their unkempt locks were long oblivious of the comb. Most of them wore a square of coarse grass-cloth round their waists, while others had a mere apology for a loin-cloth. All had their wrists tied with grass rope, and several of them were tied together in long strings by cords round their necks. A filthier set I never beheld, but it was only what could be expected from a confinement within such jails as obtain in Dahomey, where sanitary measures are unknown, where might is right, and within whose walls a person may be immured for life, if he neglects or

fails to attract the king's notice when brought into the presence as upon this occasion.

When summoned to the palace these rufous convicts were busily engaged heightening their colour with a dirt-bath, and I was relieved to find that they were separated from our chairs by the whole breadth of the square. I had no desire to procure specimens of their fauna for my collection.

A number of women, the Ko-si, or authorised prostitutes, were dancing before the throne, their actions being under the surveillance of a captiveness. These women are a public institution in Dahomey, and receive licence from the king to practise their trade. They are under the orders of the Meu and his Amazonian double, whose duty it is to keep up the supply of these somewhat superfluous ladies in a land where polygamy is rife.

The initiation is performed by an old hag, who takes the neophyte into her confidence, and when fully instructed leaves her in a small hut, where she is forced to receive gratis the attentions of all gentlemen who may please to visit her for seven days. At the expiration of this period she is entitled to a fee of about two strings of cowries, and is obliged to submit to the embraces of any person who pays the *honorarium*. Similar ladies of pleasure are to be met with on the Gold Coast.

There are likewise Ko-si *for the inside*—rather a curious circumstance, since there is not a single man within the palatial walls. The outside Ko-si, according to Burton, reside in the Bwekon quarter, and near the Abomey gate.

These ladies have the exclusive privilege of playing a large drum called Addugba, and they exhibited themselves with all the *nonchalance* of their trade. The Addugba drum is the accompanying music to a peculiar dance, more like a quadrille than anything else. A soldier stood opposite each Ko-si, and when the music struck up the couples commenced a wild corybantic display, having no beauty whatever in its movements. After a few moments the couples crossed over and changed sides, and repeated the figure. All wore long white turbans, and

carried round brass fans, like small frying-pans, much reminding me of similar articles in use among the M'pangwes of Gaboon. The captain wore a leather tunic, embroidered with cowries, and an extra large turban.

At the conclusion of the dance, the inside Ko-si made a similar display, the place of the male dancers being taken by girls dressed in men's costume. These inside *meretrices* wore blue robes and scarlet turbans, while the officer was clothed in a yellow and crimson striped tunic.

After this display, so truly Dahoman in its duality, the stick boundary was enlarged by the Tononun, and the king, accompanied by about twelve concubines, strutted forth. He was dressed in a green toga, with drawers of blue and yellow tartan, and was shaded by a silk parasol striped alternately crimson and yellow. He made a long speech, principally invoking the aid of his soldiers to assist him to break Abeokeuta, and calling upon the principal generals by name to excel each other in deeds of daring. As each soldier was called upon he answered "*Wae*"—"I am here," and proceeded to the front, where he copiously dusted himself. This harangue lasted nearly an hour, when the monotony was somewhat varied by Gelelé singing a song, composed for the occasion by himself—

"We are all brave people and will break Abeokeuta,
After that we will all sit down and take our rest."

The chorus was taken up by the Amazons, and the "king-birds" chirruped their praises at each interlude.

Another speech followed, alluding to the desire of the king that during this Custom everybody should eat their fill. During its delivery several calabashes of the usual provisions were brought in, and when all were displayed before him, Gelelé finished his speech by saying that the petty kings whom he had conquered must be glad to be put out of their misery, because they had no sons to honour their ghosts with offerings of food and drink. Gézu was happy, for had not Gelelé, his son, poured out subsistence with a lavish hand?

Several baskets of the usual pattern, with calabash covers, branded with the royal hieroglyphics, were then brought in and set on one side for Gézu; the whole assembly praising the king's bountiful hand. We were then called to the front, and a sucking-pig, fried whole, nine fowls, two ducks, and an abundance of stews, hashes, and cankies given to us. The ministers then received their share, after which came more singing, and the day's performance concluded with a "tail-ballet," lasting till dusk. Just as the sun was setting, Gelelé arose and came to the front and danced a short break-down in our honour, guns firing and people praising during its continuance. We followed suit by a fandango of five minutes' duration, and finally we received our pass-rum from the hands of Royalty itself, and, escorted by the Meu and Adonejan, left the palace.

ZAN MEN HUWU WONH ADDOKPON. — THE NIGHT FOR THE
OMINOUS HUMAN SACRIFICES FOR ADDOKPON.

The next day was another *dies iræ*, for the remaining victims would be hung up in the market for Addokpon at night.

In the morning the unpleasant job of removing the corpses of the King's victims from the scaffolds was performed, the bodies being taken to the ditch on the south side of Abomey, while the heads were preserved to increase the number of those in the neptunes. At the same time the heads at the King's gate were removed and a fresh heap of earth built up; the blood-stained earth of the old heap being carefully preserved to repair the swish wall of Gézu's spirit house, hereafter to be described.

The Elephant tent, the victim sheds, and all the other structures in the Uhon nukon were also removed; the presiding fetiche alone remaining standing solitary and weather-stained near the row of cannon. Every trace of the victim sheds was obliterated, the holes occupied by the upright posts being carefully filled up. The restriction as to remaining indoors, lighting fires, and other similar actions referred to the period between sunset and sunrise, instead of the whole day as in the Akhosu Custom; and the

holiday was employed by the householders in repairing their doors, as on this night a spirit walks round the town, and if he finds any door broken, enters the house, the owner of which will have bad luck for the next twelvemonth, and run a considerable risk of gracing the next evil night by his presence on one of the gallows. My hammockmen were busy whitewashing the fetiche images in their "Jos house," and in repairing their finery in readiness for the glad day to-morrow.

I was laid up by an attack of fever which caused considerable anxiety to the Bukono, who did not so much care for my illness as the fear that I would be unable to attend the Court the next day. He brought me about a quart of some fetiche medicine, the mere appearance of which was enough to turn one's stomach, and insisted upon my taking the whole of it. I respectfully but firmly declined, and when he grew too importunate he was inveigled out of the courtyard, and the door closed behind him, much to the surprise of my people, who would not have dared to refuse him admission had I been *in extremis*. My boy Joe was the only one who did not have a great respect for the diviner; and to him I entrusted the custody of the long wooden pin which acted as a bolt to the door of my private apartments; and ever after the troublesome landlord was kept at a respectful distance.

ADDOKPON-DAN-GBE.—ADDOKPON WILL FIRE TO-DAY.

The old Bukono need not have been at the trouble of mixing his magic philtre, for I was much better in the morning, and went to the market to see the Bush King's victims. There were four gallows with a single body attached, and one with a brace of corpses hanging side by side. At the southern end of the market a long shed called a *Do-ho*, or bamboo house, was erected; the roof being covered with a blue and yellow tartan, and the walls with white calico. Here the fetiche rum that was carried round the palace on the third day of Addokpon's Custom was stored ready to be delivered to the people at night. On the north side

of the market a similar but smaller pavilion was set up. This was Addokpon's special hut.

About ten o'clock we entered the Notoh and took up our seats under the familiar white umbrella, prepared to exercise our patience by a long *séance*. We found a gorgeous verandah of umbrellas surrounding the ladder leading to the royal seat, and the red-cloaked jesters busily engaged in smoking yam and cassada pipes with the utmost gravity.

The women on our right were busily charging their guns and carefully resting them on the forked sticks.

A troop of dirt-stained prisoners from the Meu's jail then hurried in, and kneeling down *en masse*, kicked up such a shower of dust that I was thankful that I was a long way to windward of them. Presently the guards, who had been perambulating the palace since dawn, came in and squatted down in a row before the bamboo line. They then commenced a monotonous chant referring to the victories of the Dahoman monarchs, the prowess of the warriors, and the utter insignificance of every other nation upon earth. In the midst of this cantata Gelelé appeared, ushered in by a loud braying of serivello horns and rattles. He was accompanied by his five "Leopard wives," and both he and they were splendidly dressed in brilliant silks, and a profusion of jewellery shone out conspicuously against their dark skins. The king walked under the shade of a new umbrella of his own design, representing a very podgy parody upon a white man shaking hands with a sable specimen of the genus homo in blue pantaloons, pink hair, and legs and arms much on the same scale as those of a tortoise. This device was emblazoned upon every lappet, the groundwork being dark green velvet bordered with yellow and scarlet. The pole was surmounted by a curious specimen of carving, supposed to represent a fish with a white man protruding from his mouth—a very sorry Jonah. The king came up to me, and after the usual greeting told me that this umbrella had been made to commemorate my visit to him. Whenever any visitor saw this umbrella

he would ask what the design meant, and then would be told that the king's friend Kerselay had stayed so long with Gelelé that he had made this umbrella to remind everybody that he, Gelelé, had a great friend among the English people.

The song of the guard being finished, the prisoners came forward and renewed their dirt shampoo; after which the King called upon the Meu and inquired into several of the cases. As each person was called on he was brought to the front by a couple of the Meu's soldiers, who held the end of a grass rope which was fastened round the neck or waist of the prisoner. Some were pardoned and others hurried off to jail again; both guilty and not guilty being duly honoured with several smart slaps on the head and back by their janitors. Why?

A long palaver between the King and Amazons on the one side, and the Ningan, the Gaou, the Kposu, and the Anlinwanun on the other, the subject being the never-failing one of Abeokeuta.

Several songs, dances, and speeches followed, each relating to the wonderful deeds to be performed by the various companies if Gelelé would only give them one more chance. The royal smoker in his sienna robes then came to the front, and waving his immense pipe declared that what the King had just heard was all nonsense, for if Gelelé would only furnish him with sufficient tobacco he would go and smoke out the Abeokeutans just as bees were smoked out of a tree, and then Gelelé could go in and take the honey.

After this little piece of braggadocio we were dismissed to our quarters for an hour to partake of a hurried breakfast, and at one p.m. were again in the presence. The king had been engaged in passing a number of soldiers who had been away for eight months on a visit of inspection to the northern frontier towns. They each received a head of cowries, a bottle of rum, and a small roll of cloth, the total value being, perhaps, half-a-crown. They dusted themselves with as much gusto as though they had been dashed millions; and exhibited their largesse to all beholders, wearing the cloth round their heads all the day.

Soon after our arrival we were summoned to the front, and told that we must be "passed." Four baskets of cowries, each containing seven heads, nine bottles of Brazilian caxaça, and a couple of fathoms of striped cotton cloth, of English manufacture, were the passing *douceur* of Akhosu. Addokpon presented half the above quantity, but gave us four black vessels, like soup-plates, full of blood-stained cowries, with which to make *fetiche*. The governor received about a third of the articles in the above list, and a number of boys were impressed into our service, who took up the valuables on their heads, and paraded the courtyard three times; the rear being brought up by a herald, who told everybody who felt disposed to listen, that Gelelé had given all the treasures they saw to Kerselay and Aguda-avo. Headed by Bukau, the boys perambulated the town, and in about three hours reached our respective homes; by which time I should think the necks of the cowrie-carriers had sunk a few inches at least into their shoulders.

Presently a movement amongst the caboccers announced something on the tapis. All appeared to be dressing themselves in long robes of flaming colours, having a patch on the left breast, connected by a scroll, with a similar one on the right shoulder. This was explained to me to be the emblem of the wearer's *conscience*! How very convenient to have a conscience before and another behind.

When all were ready, the sticks were placed in a line, so as to allow the officers to proceed into the courtyard behind the mat screen, where they disappeared from view.

Meanwhile, a troop of thirteen young men came to the front, and began a violent speech, saying that Abeokeuta must be taken, and that they were the boys to do it. They then threw down their guns, and swore that unless Gelelé gave them new ones, the Amazons would take the town, and would therefore reap the glory of the deed. New guns were therefore brought out by the Dahkros, and presented to the soldiers, who thereupon commenced a vigorous capering about, rushing from one side of the

square to the other, and telling everybody that they were going to break in the gates of Abeokeuta, beating their breasts and foaming at the mouth with the violence of their gesticulations.

Ahgo! was then called, and the forlorn-hope hurried out of the palace-yard. The ministers and captains then filed out of the courtyard on our left, and marched three times round the square. The procession was headed by the Agasunno, preceded by twenty fetiche irons, images, and other mysteries. Twenty-four priests surrounded a square box-like affair, carried by a pole, and much resembling an East Indian palkee. A blue cloth veiled this mysterious shrine, and a tattered brown umbrella was held over it. All proceeded at a snail's pace, chanting a tune or funeral measure. This was the *Zan-kuku*, a word meaning "night is dead"—i. e., when the sun is gone in, all nature dies away. It is supposed to contain the spirit of King Gézu, and is revered by all. No one is supposed to know what is within the blue screen, and it was only after we arrived at our quarters that the lily-livered Beecham would tell me what it represented. It is kept within the spirit-house of King Gézu, which will be hereafter spoken of.

Then came the "place" of Gelelé, an old white-haired man, under a crimson velvet umbrella, followed by a yellow and blue, a green and blue, and a white one; sixty-four soldiers, a band, Gelelé's stool of war, sundry fetiche images, the skulls of Bakoko and Company, eleven mentadokamen of skulls, and four standards.

The next escort belonged to Addokpon, who was represented by a man in a scarlet militia tunic with green facings, and a forage cap, with the number 34 in brass figures on it. His umbrellas were chequered red and white; dark blue, with a yellow tree on the lappets, and a white one with blue crossed swords for charges. He was followed by his stool, fetiche images, twenty-seven fighting men, a band, and two flags.

Then came the Ningan, with an escort of twelve men and a

Prince Charlie tartan umbrella. A band of rattles, six fancy umbrellas, and a rear guard of eighty men succeeded, his stool, musket, and flag being carried in the midst.

The Meu followed, with a large blue umbrella, with gold fringe on the lappets. His escort consisted of seventy-two men, and contained four parti-coloured umbrellas, his stool, gun, &c. The "place" of the Avogan succeeded; an English union jack, a mule, calabashes, and a band with long lances, being the conspicuous objects in his retinue.

Then came a band of rattles preceding the fat old Adonejan, who bowed to us as he past. His escort was rather numerous: ninety-seven soldiers, seven umbrellas, a horse, stool, four flags, a large key of wood stained red, ten English easy chairs, a decanter, and a writing-desk.

Next appeared the Ajakyaho, in a bright yellow tunic. He was preceded by several Asen and red pots, with strings of cowries round their necks, several stools, umbrellas—one a gorgeous affair of blue-figured chintz—and two deiced flags followed in the midst of eighty men.

The Anlinwanun then came before us, followed by the Akpulogan, the Ganzeh, and the Sogan, the latter bestriding a brown pony, and sheltered from the sun by a *square* umbrella, alternately red and orange. Next came the Tokpo, whose immense umbrella was adorned with heads and knives alternately, and fringed with yellow streamers. Followed the king's uncle, Bokovo, a grey-haired warrior, who walked by the aid of a long stick. Next came the Tometti, the Vodoh, the Nuage, and the Nonpwento, all brothers of Gelelé, who were followed by the Biwanton, in a splendid robe of black and crimson silk. The Benazon, or treasurer, succeeded, his umbrella being decorated with blue keys on a white ground. Next came the Bukono, with a large party of boys carrying boxes, supposed to contain charms for all the evils that flesh is heir to. He also bowed to us, and danced a few shuffles before the king, his soldier escort of seventy-four men wheeling round him during its performance. Then

came several other captains, whose names need not be mentioned, sixty-two in all.

A band of tail dancers preceded the field-m Marshals of the Dahoman army. First came the Gaou's place, under a suggestive umbrella, representing a number of men blown or cut to pieces; his stool, calabashes, and war umbrellas were all blackened to show the effect of the gunpowder smoke, and his umbrella-man carried a knob kerri of a human thigh-bone. His escort numbered a hundred and forty men, and had eleven standards charged with various devices.

The Matro, or lieutenant to the Gaou, followed with forty-eight men, two umbrellas, and three flags.

Then came the Kposu, the field-marshal of the left, a young man who prided himself in a white nankeen coat of European cut. His escort consisted of ninety-eight men, four umbrellas, and seven flags.

His lieutenant, the Ahweg-bamen, succeeded him in a green tunic. A white flag, with two green animals in mortal combat, was the only conspicuous object in his escort of sixty-five soldiers. Several other generals followed, and the rear was brought up by a procession of stools, flags, jars, umbrellas, the Amazonian shields, the wooden images on wheels, and a band of razormen.

We had expected to have proceeded to the market, where all these high functionaries had assembled to see the "Firing for Addokpon," but by the time the last of the razormen had passed out it was quite dark. Lanterns were brought and placed round the ladder, and Gelelé descended amidst the "Bloo bloo" of the crowd, and coming to the front of the bamboos, announced, to our satisfaction, that the procession had been too long for him to finish the Custom on that day, so he would fire for Addokpon on the morrow.

This news appeared to please everybody; and the Dahkro appearing with our pass rum, we gladly left the palace, the spectators waiting to hear a lengthy speech, by one of the Amazonian officers, about the eternal Abeokuta.

The next morning we took hammock to the Uhunglo market, and "brought up" opposite the fetiche sheds. Several gaudy cloths had been substituted for the plain calico covering of the king's Doho; that of Addokpon remaining in its original simplicity.

A Bo-fetiche had been erected, consisting of a tall pole painted red and white in spirals, like a barber's emblem, and a rude imitation of a cross-tree at the top, from which hung four skulls, the lower jaws being suspended alongside the crania, which rattled against each other as they swayed to and fro in the breeze. A short topmast, stained blue, upheld a white flag with a variegated double-headed snake "*novèl*" by way of a bearing.

To the left of the Doho several mat screens shut in a retiring place for the Amazons; and a long alley of the same material led up to the palace-gate. In front of the pavilion a large white umbrella was set up, so highly decorated with small figures that it had quite a patchwork appearance from a distance. A closer inspection showed that the charges consisted of the figures from chintzes, prints, and other fabrics, which had been cut out and sewn on by the Amazonian sempstresses. This centre-piece was supported by five other umbrellas, all of gaudy colours; three on the left hand and two on the right of the king's seat.

This latter was a rude sofa of native workmanship, covered with a long cushion of leather work, over which several country cloths were thrown. In front of this was a brass table of the Louis XIV. style, and the gold-rimmed black hat appeared conspicuously displayed upon it. The whole of the open space, an area of about 500 yards by 300 yards, was lined with gay umbrellas, the Amazons on the western side near the palace, and the men-soldiers opposite, to the east. The divisional line of bamboos stretched across the area, and in the centre of it the palsied Tononun, with five assistants, kept the ground clear of children and market-women, who otherwise would have made a free passage right across the square, even in the presence of

royalty itself. I have seen naked urchins tumbling about within a few yards of the king, and the huckster women, with their two-cowrie lots of cooked provisions, crying out whilst the king was in the middle of a parliamentary debate. Africanism "will out," and this is one of its phases—the glaring neckties and gloves and patent leather boots of the civilized Sierra Leone merchant is only another.

The usual burst of savage music heralded the approach of royalty, and Gelelé made his appearance clad in the dress of the Ashanti company of soldiers, the blue and white uniform and black accoutrements setting off his stalwart form to advantage. His face was ornamented with three streaks of gunpowder, one under each eye, and a third down the ridge of his nose. This is the distinguishing mark of the Ashanti company. His tunic of blue cloth was covered with little pellets of magic charms, all smeared with blood; and the short kilt of grey baft was steeped in the sanguine fluid, and fringed with little tufts of feathers stuck in cones of leather. His drawers were white, edged with black, and his feet were protected by black sandals. Round his head he wore a fillet of black and white velvet plaited, with the ends streaming behind, and iron armlets, and black cowrie ornamented fetiche charms were worn on various parts of his person.

His neck was "gorged" by a string of bloody cowries, with a black seed between each, and ornaments of a similar pattern encircled his wrists. On his left side he carried a "medicine bag" of brown leather, with several black horse-tails depending from it, and a larger one hanging from his right shoulder. A silver-handled dagger was stuck in his black leather cartridge belt, and a crooked black latti, ornamented with steel rings, hung over his left shoulder. His umbrella was tobacco-coloured, and the whole get-up savage in the extreme. He looked like the bloodthirsty monster that he is generally considered to be.

A battalion of Amazons then formed a line extending across the square, from east to west. They, too, wore a war-dress of grey, brown, or dark blue, covered with tufts of charms, and white sash over the left shoulder. All wore chokoto, like the

men, and were armed with muskets, the polish of whose barrels shone out in flashes of light in the glaring sunshine. Behind the king came his five Leopard wives, carrying swords in lieu of guns; and behind these a number of servants, who loaded the guns for the king's use, handing them first to the Leopardesses, who delivered them to the monarch.

The front rank commenced a straggling fire, holding their muskets at the hip with the barrels pointing upwards, so as to prevent accidents, and after the first volley the firing became general. The smoke quickly obscured all save the nearest soldiers from our view, but the ruddy flashes of the guns were visible along the whole line. After firing four rounds they marched across the square, loading as they passed us, and on arriving at the other side fired a second volley. The king then advanced a few paces before the line and fired off twelve muskets. He then danced to his wives, twirling the stick about *à l' Irlandaise*, and then crossed to the southern side, followed by the Amazons, who fired as they marched along. The king then came up to us, and fired several brass carbines before our umbrella, and afterwards danced a short fandango. He then returned to his station among the Amazons, and started off to perambulate the square three times, the firing being continued during the march. After the third round a large drum was beaten, and the king danced a peculiar figure, called the "Hun-gbo-gan," or "Big-drum dance."

The fetiche women loudly cheered the king during his performance, and the "king birds" twittered lustily. The whole battalion then sang a war-song, while the king received a new black latti from a fetiche man. After a preliminary dance, the king advanced to our chairs and beckoned me out. As the tabooed sticks were now in close proximity to our umbrellas, I could only advance a few steps before coming up to them. The king then took hold of my hand and led me across the sticks, while the surprised audience fairly screamed with excitement. I believe I was the first white man who had been honoured with a passage across the bamboos. A stick, similar to the king's, was then

given me by the Agasunno, and Gelelé and I performed the decapitation dance. After ten minutes of very violent exercise under a midday sun I was permitted to retire, and Gelelé drank my health in St. Julien.

A march across the square and back concluded the Amazons' "firing for Addokpon"; after which they passed off to the western side of the square and sat down under the umbrellas. Gelelé retired to the shade of the Doho, and sent us a present of cooked provisions, with a message to say that as I had danced I must eat, for he had not done with me yet. A second messenger brought liqueurs and other drinkables, together with a large calabash of fruits. Soon after a third Dahkro came to us, bearing a calabash swathed in a blood-stained cloth. Gelelé had sent this to show us what he ate when on the war-trail. The contents were ginger, bananas, fufu, Malaguetta pepper, and pounded capsicums. After half-an-hour's interval, a movement among the male soldiery told us that the second part of the firing was about to commence.

The programme opened by the company who had sworn to open the gates of Abeokuta advancing to the front and capering about like lunatics. They wore kilts and chaplets of palm leaves, while some added a necklace standing up like the collars of good Queen Bess. Burton remarked the contrast of the vivid green of the leaf and the black skin of the wearer, but he says they were blunderbus-men. Next came a party of bayoneteers, all in their war paint, and behind them the main body of the soldiers.

Gelelé then came out, riding on a brown pony with a bell round its neck. He smoked a long black pipe, and was held on his saddle by four grooms. He stationed himself in the centre of the line, and headed them as they marched across the square and back again; the movements being similar to those previously gone through by the Amazons. The whole party then formed column, and marched round the square, tumbling over several market sheds and mounting a large heap of earth on the north-

western side of the market-place. They afterwards formed line and advanced towards us, firing as they came, some from the hip, others with the butts of their pieces resting on the ground, with the muzzles pointed forwards. When they arrived within twenty yards of us they suddenly turned round and retreated with stealthy movements, as though stealing up to surprise an enemy.

When they had passed over to the western side they halted, and the officers arose and marched across to them. The caboccers wore a profusion of steel and cowrie ornaments and charms affixed to every part of their dress, while amulets were hung from their necks, arms, knees, and ankles. I only noticed a few with the Sayan shrub fetiche, as mentioned by Burton; but I fully concur in his views, that but few Africans would fight at all unless they had fetiche charms to bring them safe out of the *mêlée*. What canoeman will venture among the breakers without his bits of composite candle stuck in his hair to prevent the sharks taking him? True, those who possess the magic charms sometimes come to grief, but that is because they have not given a sufficient "dash" to the fetiche man; *not because the charms were incompetent to deliver the bearer out of his danger*. Certainly not! The fetiche priests would be ruined if such a doctrine were promulgated.

After this manœuvre, the fetiche people joined the main body, which by this time numbered about a thousand strong. They then advanced towards us, the scouts, standards, and priests in the van, next the officers and the main body in the rear. All the captains carried their umbrellas, and each division had its own band. Each company was distinct in itself, and marched separate from the rest. The noise of the firing was terrific; the smoke clinging to the earth, as the sea breeze had not yet set in. This sham-fight was kept up for half an hour, when all the powder being expended, and the usual number of thumbs and arms burnt or shattered, the warriors retired to the southern side of the square. They then marched across the market-place, singing and dancing, and after a final yelp and cheer, fell out of

the ranks and dispersed to their umbrellas. Gelelé then dismounted and called me out to dance a second time, after which he permitted me to return home on my promising to come at sunset to see the rum and cowries delivered to the soldiers.

At 6.30 P.M. we were again at our posts, the two Dohos being lighted up with lanterns. The officers were assembled before the king, who began the evening's performance by a warlike speech. He then distributed the rum to the officers, as was done in his own Custom, and afterwards called us to the front and gave us fourteen bottles of rum a piece. The cowries were next brought out, each officer receiving from six to ten heads, according to his rank, and we were presented with seven heads as our share.

Addokpon's Doho was then visited, and half the quantity of Akhosu's present given us as the Bush king's dash. After this the rabble advanced, stripped to their waist cloths. The rum was soon exhausted, more than half being wasted as the excited multitude pressed forward to get a drink from the royal hand. The rum was handed to the king in uncorked bottles, and his Majesty coming to the front poured some of it down the throat of the nearest man, who was down on his knees, with his thick up-turned lips held in the form of a funnel. The bottle was then given to another person, who retired with it to the rear. After the last of the rum was doled out, loose cowries were thrown, which were scrambled for with the usual uproar.

Some of the petty officers were mounted on the shoulders of one or a couple of their men, and in that elevated position endeavoured to catch the cowries as they fell like hailstones. This was kept up until past midnight, by which time about thirty pounds' worth of shell coin had been scrambled for. These cowries are exclusively used for fetiche purposes, while those given by Akhosu are devoted to the purchase of luxuries, such as rum, tobacco, snuff, &c.

Gladly did we view the dusky visage of the Dahkro who brought us our pass rum; and quite tired out with fourteen hours of pleasure, we tumbled into our hammocks and went home.

A firing of guns as we passed into our courtyard announced the departure of the king and the termination of the So-Sin Custom.

I hoped to be *en route* for Whydah in a few days, but was doomed to disappointment, for it was months longer before I received my final pass and got free from the overwhelming friendship of the king of Dahomey.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRESENTATION AT COURT.

Visit to the king at the Coomassie Palace—Leopard wives—The audience—Smoking—"No pass" as yet—I am a "tame" man—Permitted to visit Mahi—Abeokeuta—The human victims—Drinking healths—Present of girls and men—My escort.

Soon after daylight the next morning, Prince Gugalah came in with a message from the palace. I roused up and received the royal stick with due ceremony. The purport of the message was that the king wished to see me at the palace when the sun was "so high," indicating the position of that luminary about 10 A.M. Delighted at the prospect of getting away from the capital, I replied that I should feel greatly honoured to attend on his Majesty at the appointed time. Beecham and old "Blood and Cowries" were for hurrying me off to the palace-gate at once, there to sit breakfastless, the gazing-stock of a crowd of idlers. Experience had by this time taught me better. I therefore had an early breakfast, dressed at leisure, not forgetting to put up my sketches and material for taking more if opportunity offered. The king was delighted with my rude drawings, and gave me every facility for sketching anything I desired. As I had made several that he had not seen, I thought to propitiate his favour by showing him the whole set at once.

At 9.45 A.M. we were grouped on the Uhon-nukon, under the scanty shade of "the happy Bombax." The tall fetiche had been removed, and we could no longer see the small flags on the top of the pavilion in the Notoh, so in all probability it had been

taken down also. The gallows in the Uhunglo market had likewise been removed, and the whole scene bore its every-day aspect, except that the flagstaff with the tricoloured W. was rather more out of the perpendicular than usual, and the flag itself was more holes than bunting. A few caboccers were sitting under the palaver sheds dispensing justice to a few delinquents, the punishment being usually inflicted upon the spot, every facility for carrying it out being afforded by the bystanders.

After about a quarter of an hour's waiting, the crown prince arrived, and arranging his mats under the Pwe sheds, sent for us to have a chat. I noticed that the heads and swish heaps had been removed from the gate, but the fetiche was as rife as ever. In a few minutes we heard the tinkle-tinkle of a bell within the palace, and the ponderous gates were opened by a Dahkro, who cried out "*Ahgo.*" This is the warning that a "Leopard wife" is coming out, and we all arose from our reclining positions and hurried away from the gate. The royal spouse appeared, swaggering along with a contemptuous look on her face. She was followed by twelve servants, the foremost of whom carried a bell, and called out "*Ahgo*" from time to time.

When she was out of sight we returned to our mats, and in a few minutes the gates again opened, and the familiar face of our Dahkro appeared. Amoosu and Hahansu went to her; and knelt down before the royal messengeress to receive her communication. She said that the king wanted to see me, and we were to enter. We all prepared to appear before his Majesty, and preceded by the Dahkro who called out "*Ahgo,*" entered the Notoh. All bowed their heads as they crossed the square, from which the tent had been removed and every trace of its existence eradicated. We passed through a small gate opposite the outer portal, and a miniature of it in shape, and entered a smaller courtyard. The Pwe shed of this inner gate was utilized as a storehouse for the wheeled images, drums, old worn-out carriages, and other curiosities. Turning to the left, we passed through another door, and entered a large Notoh, on the opposite side of which a gay

cloth spread on the roof, an umbrella before it, and a few Amazons, at squat, showed us the royal "place."

After a bow on my part, and the usual *itte dai* and *ko dide* on that of every one else, the king came from under the shed and cordially shook hands with me. He then motioned to our Dahkro, who sat on his left hand, to bring out a chair of native manufacture, which she placed just outside the white sand line which environs the royal seat upon every occasion. Four Leopard wives surrounded their lord, and the fat English landlady tried to keep down the temperature of her ponderous body by the aid of a brass fan.

Hahansu reclined on his elbow to my right, and Amoosu and Beecham to the left. Behind me Ghugalah, Bukau, and Hahausu's pipe-bearer constituted the whole of the attendants, the hammoek-men and others remaining outside the palace.

Gelelé was smoking of course, and his first question was, "Why do you not smoke?" I replied that in England we did not usually smoke in the presence. A pipe was then filled by the royal pipe-bearer, a dark-eyed Mahi girl, and handed to me, together with a box of Bryant and May's "light-only-on-the-box" Noah's Ark matches. Here was civilization for you—none of the tedious process of striking fire with a flint and steel, although in public the royal pipe is always lighted by their aid.

After a few preliminary whiffs the king asked me if I had been pleased with the Custom. I replied that I had, but must confess that I had been detained against my will, and that serious loss would accrue to me on account of the delay. I reminded him that I had consented to visit him with the express understanding that I should be back in Whydah on the eighth day after leaving it, and that the detention of Europeans was one of the reasons they did not visit him more often. He said that he was sorry I was vexed, and would repay me for all losses incurred by my detention, and for this purpose sent forty heads of cowries to my house the next day. Such was his idea of the value of time to an Englishman. He then said that I was a "*tame*" man, and did

not get vexed like *Major* Burton, as he is called here ; so he was going to make a Platform Custom this year, in order that I might see it, and give the English people an account of it, for he had heard that some travellers had spoilt his name in England by the erroneous statements they had made respecting his kingdom. He said he wished to be friends with every Englishman, but that some who came to him tried to disgrace him before the eyes of his people. "For instance," said he, "Major Burton knew that no person is allowed to visit the place where my drinking-water is obtained, and he got up in the night and went there, thereby causing a great scandal to me before all the people. If a black man were to do so in England he would get a bad name."

I then asked him when he would commence the Platform Custom. "In one moon." "Will you not permit me to return to Whydah until then?" said I. "Why do you wish to leave me in this manner? If I allow you to return to Whydah you will go on board a ship and never return, and then all the expense I shall have been put to in making a Platform Custom will be thrown away, and the people who know the Custom is organized on your account will say, 'See, the king made a Custom for Kerselay, and he treated him so badly that he would not stay!' I cannot let you go to Whydah, but you may see all my country with that exception." Here was a grievous disappointment. I had been two months absent from Whydah and had done nothing in Entomology, for it was a hopeless case to set any of the natives to collect, although I had tried it over and over again.

I therefore asked the king if he would permit me to visit Mahi and the high mountains, or *Soh-daho* to the north. He was evidently surprised at my request, and asked me why I wished to peril my life among a wild people, where his eye could not watch over me, and pictured to me the treachery and cruelty of the people, in order to deter me from my attempt. I replied that my health was beginning to suffer from too close confinement to the house, and that his power was sufficient to guard me wherever I went. That little piece of blarney carried the day,

and he gave me permission to go, provided that I was back again by the time the moon "lived so," drawing a crescent in the sand with his walking-stick.

I thanked him for the permission, and said that I would certainly be back to time. He then asked me when I wished to start. "To-morrow," said I. This startled him. "You English are always in a hurry; why not wait till four days from this time, which will allow me to collect an escort to protect you from all harm?" I replied that Englishmen never put off anything to another day when they could do it at once, and that as for the escort, I would rather be without it. "You may go to-morrow, if you will," said he, "and I will provide you with a guide and escort."

The king then asked me why the English were good friends with Abeokeuta, when they knew that he was trying to break it. I said that the English had nothing to do with the palavers between other people, and that so long as the Abeokeutans treated them properly, they would be friends with them, but that if they behaved badly to any Englishman, they would punish them severely. He then asked me why so many English went to Abeokeuta, and so few to Dahomey. I told him that the Abeokeutans were great trade people, and had plenty of cotton, oil, and kernels, and that if he would devote himself to mercantile pursuits, as they did, he would have plenty of visits from the English. Another advantage would be the increase of his revenue, and he would not then be put to the expense of his wars. I also told him that the English looked with abhorrence upon the immolation of victims at the Custom, and that until they were put a stop to he would never gain the respect of the English. He assured me that the people he killed had all done wrong, either by transgressing the laws of the country or by making war upon him; and asked if we did not hang people in England when they killed another man. I replied that we certainly did, but that we did not expose the corpses as he had done, and that the custom of sending messages to the deceased kings by human beings was

a cruel and wicked act in the eyes of all civilised nations. "Different peoples have different opinions," said he, "and my fathers did so before me and had the good opinion of the English, who bought plenty of slaves from them." I said that the English now acknowledged that they had done wrong in making slaves of human beings, and that although they desired to keep on friendly terms with him, they could not but condemn the human sacrifices.

He said that he would think over the matter, but that he knew that if he attempted to stop the Custom his people would rise against him and dethrone him; and then where would be the gain? Fruit and drinks were then brought out, of which I partook, the king drinking my health, while everyone else bowed their heads. I believe this was the first occasion on which he had allowed the person he was toasting to see him drink the liqueur face to face. It created quite a sensation when it was told outside, and I received the strong name of "*Deyeh-nun-kpon*"—"He drinks and looks at (the king's) face."

He then asked me to show him my sketches, and commented upon them, the ladies joining in the conversation. He asked why the Germans "broke" the French, and passed a very poor compliment upon the Gallic courage in allowing their country to be overrun by an enemy. His memory did not permit him to remember his retreat from Abeokuta, I suppose!

After half an hour of desultory conversation, he whispered to the Dahkro, who disappeared behind a door to the right. In a few minutes she reappeared, leading four Mahi girls by the hand, who were paraded before me. The king then said that he gave me these girls "to cook my food, to wash my clothes, to wait on me, and to do everything for me. If they disobeyed me, flog them, if they stole my money, flog them. They were in my hand, and I was their master." Four men, also Mahi captives, were then given me, accompanied by a similar speech.

I thanked him for his kindness to me, and said that I would take care that the English people knew his sentiments with regard to the Custom.

He then arose, wrapped a blue and white print around him, and preceded me to the gate, after Dahoman etiquette.

The audience lasted about two hours, and as soon as I reached my house, I began preparations for setting out to Mahi. The eight human presents cowered down against the wall, not daring to raise their eyes. The officious Bukono wished to parade them through the streets, but I denied him this pleasure, saying that I would do what I liked with my own property. I packed up nets, boxes, and other entomological paraphernalia, determining to make up for lost time. Amosu had returned to the palace to receive instructions respecting my journey, and returned at sunset with an escort of eighty soldiers of the Blue Company, under the command of Caboccer Sua-mattoh. I was surprised at the promptitude of the king in supplying the escort in time, a proceeding so much opposed to the usual course of affairs in Dahomey. At the same time I wondered if I was expected to "subsist" this miniature army, as, if such were the case, I determined to forego my excursion altogether. To my relief, however, I found that they carried ten days' "chop" in their haversacks, and had permission from the king to forage on their own account when the supply was exhausted.

I determined to take the Mahi captives with me in hopes of being able to restore them to their friends, but on announcing my intention to them, they did not appear to care one tittle what I did with them. African stolidity again.

Joe did not approve of my taking him among "bush-men," and went about his work in a very sulky mood. Little Todofweoh was trying to raise his ire by sundry insinuations against his courage, in hopes of having a row, in which this young "Arab" delights, generally managing to get off scot free by his agile movements, much in the same spirit as a London gamin will capsize an old woman's apple-stall and enjoy the pursuit of half a dozen of the panting myrmidons of Col. Henderson. Boyish exuberance of spirits is much the same from Esquimaux to Fuegan, and from Japanese to Blackfeet.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOURNEY TO THE KONG MOUNTAINS.

Start for Mahi—Gymnastic travelling—Sohmeh—Kannah—Bobai—Zeugnoomic—Mbomen—R. Lagos—Canoe-making—Leopards—Blood-thirsty enemies—Dovoh monkeys—Abundance of game—Pawch-Ahunseh—Driver ants—The Mahi captives—Iron-smelting—Picnicing—Delightful climate—The hill “Difficulty”—Ampasim—Visit to Zoglogbo, the Dahoman Magdala—African naturalists—Splendid view—Kodongo—Bevangeh—Lions—Dorseh—Pahlookoh—Its history—Ants again—Beautiful scenery—Kangro—Native panic—Jallaku—Elephants—Pythons—A man-eating hyæna—Vedoh—Mbogelah—A thirsty Aquarius—Chararah—Ascent of the peak—Glorious sunrise—Extensive prospect—The glacial epoch—Return to Abomey.

LONG before sunrise the next morning, Monday, September 25th, Amoosu was astir, assigning the loads to each porter, of whom I had six, not including the four Mahi captives presented to me by the king. Egblic-egbah seemed to be possessed with an evil spirit, for he was dancing and capering about as though the prospect of a long day's march was the most delightful thing in the world. Joe, as usual, carried my gun. Beecham had prepared for a long walk *by taking off his shoes*, those emblems of civilization being too irksome to permit free movement in his snow-shoe-like feet.

By daybreak all was ready, and the advanced guard of thirty soldiers, provided with tinkling bells round their necks, marched off. The porters followed; next came my humble self, and the remainder of the escort brought up the rear. The Uhon-nukon was soon passed, not a soul being visible except the guard under the Pwe shed, who struck up a livelier air on our approach.

Turning the south-western angle of the palace we crossed the open space opposite the western gate, and soon found ourselves filing along the narrow paths between the scattered huts of the western suburb. The morning was chilly, the thermometer indicating 68° F., a temperature about 5° below the average, and a thick white mist enveloped all but the nearest objects. A drenching dew, such as is only to be found in the tropics, saturated every bush and tree, and the drops descending in copious showers as they were shaken off by our passage, soon wetted us through.

Beyond the suburb we entered the maize plantation, and a walk of ten minutes brought us to the edge of the table-land upon which the metropolis of Dahomey is built. On favourable opportunities the southern spurs of the Mahi hills are visible from this cliff, but we had only a view over a rolling sea of fog, the plain beneath peeping through occasional drifts in the mists, looking like islands in a cloudy ocean. The descent was precipitous in the extreme. Egblic-egbah wished to show off the proficiency of his hammockmanship by carrying me down, but having no spare neck, I declined the honour, and descended from my hammock. Even then I was not unthankful for the aid of a couple of bearers, for the road (!) was full of rolling blocks of sandstone, rendering foothold very insecure.

At the foot of this precipice there is an extensive plantation belonging to the inhabitants of the villages near at hand.

A large market is held here every alternate fifth day, and a great portion of the vegetables sold in Abomey are raised in the neighbourhood. Several small rills gurgled down the slopes, feeding the large pond known as the Elemeh water, and finally losing themselves in the marsh beyond. This swamp is a small repetition of the Aglimé Kho; but trees are few and far between. The pathway led across hummocks of peaty soil which shook under our footsteps, as we jumped from one heap to the other, and at frequent intervals some unlucky person would come down with a "swish" which, if it softened his fall, bespattered

his neighbours with mud. So difficult was the passage of this morass that it was past noon ere we reached the other side, and we were glad to reach the village of Soh-meh and have a rest under the shade of the palaver shed. The caboceer came out and presented water, and wished to get up a dance, but I told him I would rather be excused, and he seemed pleased to get off the display of his meagre retinue.

We were soon *en voyage*, the country being of an undulating character, but exceedingly picturesque from the clump of magnificent trees that crowned each hill, while on our right we saw a low range of hills running in a S.W. direction. In a short time we reached the village of Kanah, and our tired hammock-men again had a rest.

The caboceer was at Abomey "doing Custom," and his *locum tenens* had but a poor company to receive us, much to my delight, for I was too tired with the jolting of my hammock to care about any great parade. Two miles beyond is Bobai, a repetition of N'Henveh dovh, with its environs of noble forest trees.

We had now marched fifteen miles, and the sun was pouring down upon our heads with terrific force. I proposed a halt, but Suamattoh and Amoosu told me that their instructions were to take me to Zeugnoomie, twelve miles further, before encamping for the night, and that they dared not disobey their orders.

After a stay of an hour at Bobai, we started afresh, the Denun keeper abundantly besmearing himself before the king's stick. Todofweoh, as usual, was plaguing Joe, and the caustic remarks of this little imp caused great merriment to the porters. In about an hour we crossed a small stream having no particular name, since every inquiry only elucidated "*Woh*," which means "a river." The country still continued its rolling character, with thick tops of trees, such as the silk-cotton, the tamarisk, the shea butter, and many others.

At length the plantations of a large town appeared, covering the slope of one of the hills, and shortly after we heard the

chirrup of the palm finches, the heralds of every market place. Our train marched on with a brisker step, and at five o'clock we found ourselves in the market shed of Zeugnoomie, the native town of the Meu who preceded the present officer holding that rank. Its former name was Setta, or Setta Dean, but Gelelé changed it, together with that of several others, soon after his accession to the throne. There is a large market in this place, in the centre of which are four huge trees covered with large bats of the same species as those at Alladah and Kana.

Zeugnoomie is twenty-eight miles from Abomey, and the aneroid gave an altitude of 620 feet. As far as its general appearance goes, it is much the same as other large towns, scattered over a considerable area, and containing, perhaps, five thousand inhabitants. The caboceer was ill, and his lieutenant away at the capital, consequently we were received by the third in command. At my urgent request the ceremony was postponed until sunset, as we had not had a substantial meal all day, and a five o'clock p.m. breakfast is rather late for even the gayest bird in Cockaigne.

The reception was of the usual character; a few corybantic dances, accompanied by a blowing of horns and a noise of drums and gong-gongs, after which a *feu-de-joie* was given as a salute.

At eight o'clock I turned into my hammock which had been slung up in the caboceer's house, and, in spite of a fearful raid of ants upon the premises, slept soundly until old Blood-and-Cowries woke me at sunrise.

Making a hearty breakfast off some cooked provisions which had been sent as a present from the caboceer, we left Zeugnoomie about half-past six o'clock. The caboceer accompanied us for the first mile, leaving us at the edge of a small stream that flowed, ankle deep, to the east. Passing the village of Zoogeh, we entered a thick forest where numerous monkeys scampered off at our approach. In an hour we reached the village of Mbomen, where the finest shea-butter I ever tasted is made. The market-

shed is fringed with a row of threaded cockle shells brought from the coast, and which are considered to have a remarkable efficacy against witchcraft.

After a brief halt, we again set off, being now within the boundary of the old kingdom of Mahi, and at nine o'clock arrived at the banks of a considerable stream, flowing eastward. This was the first river of any size we had come to, and the steep banks formed a striking contrast to the flat swampy borders of the Whydah lagoon. The forest came up close to the bank, and the luxurious undergrowth was literally smothered in flowers of the gayest hues. In vain did I try to delay the progress of my caravan. They had received certain instructions from the king, and must carry them out, therefore they could not permit me to do anything that might lead to harm. Such was the excuse that was held up to me whenever I attempted to stay the forced march through the country. Suamattoh assured me that if he failed in bringing me to the appointed resting places every night, his head would be the forfeit. He said that a messenger had been despatched before us who would inform the caboceers of my coming; and, if I delayed the escort, serious palavers would be the result. He also informed me that the king had demanded his eldest son as a guarantee of his fulfilling the instructions given to him. He assured me that this was all for my good, and that the king "loved me too much" not to take the greatest care of me.

This news was anything but pleasant. I had hoped to have made a slow journey through the hilly country, and collected specimens as opportunity offered. Instead of this I was carried by forced marches at the rate of thirty miles per day.

This stream is the upper portion of the river, flowing into the sea at Lagos. It was crossed by Mr. Duncan at the same place. He calls it the Zoa, but that word means "the river," not this particular river, but any stream of water.

We were ferried across in three immense canoes, each ninety feet long, and six feet broad, cut out of the trunks of the

gigantic trees growing on the bank. The mode of constructing one of these canoes is as follows:—

A tree is selected with a suitable straight trunk, growing near the water's edge. It is felled towards the stream, and a portion of the trunk of the length of the intended canoe divested of bark and limbs. The top is then hewed flat with rude axes, and the sides trimmed to a rough boat-like form with the same tool; the ends being sharpened in some instances, and in others sloping upwards from the bottom of the boat, but not narrowing into the usual form of a bow and stern. A groove is then dug out round the edge of the upper surface of the canoe, leaving a sufficient thickness to allow the sides to have the necessary strength. Fires are then lighted along the top of the canoe, and kept constantly alight, the charred wood being removed from time to time to expose a fresh surface to the action of the heat. The fire is prevented from burning the sides by wetting them with water, and this process is continued until the whole of the internal portion of the canoe is burnt out. The canoe is then filled with water, and thwarts inserted across it at short distances, which are kept close up to the sides by wedges. As the wood swells the wedges are driven up, until the canoe attains its greatest proportions, and the sides are in danger of splitting. The water is usually heated during this process, by dropping red-hot stones into it. When the process of stretching is completed, the water is emptied out, the wedges kept well driven up, and the canoe left to dry.

All having safely crossed, we resumed our journey along a narrow path through a thickly-wooded jungle.

A cry from the advanced guard of "Kini-Kini" made me snatch my gun from Joe and hurry to the front; but, on arriving at the van, I was just in time to see the tail of a fine leopard disappearing in the bushes. As this animal is sacred, I dared not follow it, but was obliged to return to my hammock with an empty game-bag. Numerous black *Tabandæ* alighting on the bare backs of the soldiers and porters gave them considerable

annoyance by their painful bites, which caused a stream of blood to dribble from the puncture. It was ludicrous to see the people slapping each other to kill or drive off their tormentors, a grunt of satisfaction accompanying each successful stroke.

In about half an hour we emerged from this jungle and entered upon a grassy savannah, a very hotbed of snakes, the advanced guard having to keep their eyes open to avoid treading upon the reptiles, which seem to have a penchant for sunning themselves in pathways, ready to spring upon any intruder. The land descended with a slope towards the north, the altitude being only 382 feet. We came shortly afterwards to a fork in the road, the path to the right leading to the village of Nkordeh.

A few miles on we saw a high hill to the eastward, probably the "mountain" of Gbowelley mention by Duncan. We were now fairly in the hill country of Mahi, and the fresh bracing air blowing from the north-east was very different from the fever-laden winds of the sea-board.

Halting at the village of Dovah, where we met a train of women carrying cotton to the Abomey market, we indulged in a short tiffin and a long smoke. Joe was busy with a packet of needles I had given him buying some onions from a market woman, the stumbling-block being that she wanted to have the needles in the paper case, while Joe insisted upon retaining it for his own use. Maize grows here in perfection, and the Mahis make a very palatable cake by grinding it between two stones, and mixing the flour with water and a dash of shea-butter, and baking it in the usual earthenware oven. Monkeys abounded, and I shot five, much to the delight of Joe, who, like his master, had a particular fancy for the gamey flavour of the quadrumana, in spite of their very "babyish" appearance.

Starting afresh we proceeded at a brisk walk for a mile and a half, when we again came to a halt at a small village rejoicing in some unpronounceable name in the Mahi language. A small stream running to the east, most likely joining the Lagos river below, supplied us with a few fish, which Joe

purchased for a few needles. Several lofty hills were visible from the village; notably one bearing W. by N., which our guide called Wheseh. The aneroid gave an altitude of 762 feet to this village.

Guinea fowl abounded, being quite as numerous there as the ordinary domestic species; and cattle, goats, hairy sheep, ducks, and swine, seemed to be in the possession of the very poorest.

Leaving this village, which would certainly take a long time to starve out, we again proceeded, and late in the afternoon arrived at Paweh-Ahunseh, where we intended to remain. This town is about the size of Kana, and is mostly built of swish. It stands in a commanding position on the summit of a hill, and the view from it, especially on the southern side, extends for a considerable distance. The Denum was an elaborate archway of wattled poles, from the centre of which a joji, consisting of two tortoises hung back to back, brought good luck to all passing under it.

We passed through a market where the usual bustle was going on, although many of the stalls were empty, the proprietors having probably "sold out." The goods exposed were mostly similar to those in other towns, but there were fewer cloths of European manufacture, the grass-woven produce of the country being substituted.

We halted under the shade of an immense Bombax vying with the "big tree" of Whydah in its gigantic girth of trunk. The deputy caboceer advanced to meet us, preceded by a band of players on the flute and gong-gong, and though for the life of me I could not detect the slightest approach to a tune, the musical "pie" was not unharmonious. Water was offered, followed by rum, and the caboceer proceeded to "compliment" me for all dangers, past and to come. The king's health was honoured, all bowing to the ground, and finally the "king's white man" was toasted in caxaça. A present of a bullock, two goats, four ducks, twelve fowls, some eggs, yams, maize, and a quantity of cooked provisions, was then made me, and after a few complimentary

speeches we again started, the caboccer leading the way to his house situated in the centre of the town. Arrived there, half the escort went back to the market-place to sleep under the sheds, as the accommodation at the caboccer's was not sufficiently ample to afford sleeping room for so large a number as ourselves.

The next morning Amoosu arrived as usual at daybreak, but to his surprise found me sitting enjoying a pipe on an inverted water-pot. I said that it was useless for him to hurry me, for that I had been waging war to the knife with a marauding expedition of "driver ants" which had endeavoured to make a bridge of my hammock-pole from one cave of the hut to the other. If they had contented themselves with quietly passing over, I should not have cared so much, but they were continually sending out scouts, who investigated the nature of my flesh to such a degree, that I was forced to shake them off. This movement only made matters worse, and in an instant I was literally smothered with the "varmint," and had I not stopped and emptied a large bowl of water over myself, I should have paid dearly for my temerity. As it was, Joe and I were occupied for nearly an hour in picking their heads out of my flesh, for so tenacious was their hold that they would suffer themselves to be torn to pieces rather than let go.

Amoosu said that we were only going to make a short journey on that day, but we must purchase provisions here, since this was the frontier town of "the king's old country," meaning that we were on the confines of the district over which the king kept absolute rule, and that beyond I should meet with the wild people who were held up to me as a bugbear to frighten me out of my desire to visit Mahi.

About eleven o'clock we were drawn up in the market ready to start on our journey. A kind of review of the soldiers in our escort was held, followed by a display of the garrison of the town. These latter were about a hundred in number, and all wore grass-cloth petticoats, with numerous cross-belts suspending various charms, amongst which the tortoise predominated, that

animal being the tutelary deity of the town. Some were armed with flint guns and others with bows and arrows, the bows being of the suddenly recurved type carried by Chuydatoh's company, whose uniform and ornament were copied from the Mahis.

My eight human presents here intimated to Amoosu that if I was really going to leave them in their own country, they would rather remain here, where they would have a chance of seeing some of their own village mates, than go with me further into the interior. As their native town was about twelve miles east of this place, and the caboecer agreed to take charge of them until they found means to return to their homes, I agreed to their request, upon which they knelt down and smothered themselves with dirt. The caboecer then gave them in charge to one of his people, and they went off to his house. On my return, I learnt that they fell in with a friend two days after my departure, and returned with him to their own locality.

The review being over, we started amidst a volley of guns and in twenty minutes arrived at the gates of the town. This was the blacksmith's quarter where the iron ore obtained in the neighbourhood is smelted. The furnaces are of the usual truncated conical shape, and the ore and wood are stacked up in alternate layers until the furnace is filled. A fire is then lighted and a blast kept up by means of goat-skin bellows. The molten metal runs into holes cut in the earth, and the knives, agricultural implements, and fetiche irons used in the neighbourhood are made from the pigs. The workmanship was very good, much similar to that of the M'pangwes of Gaboon.

Bidding adieu to the hospitable caboecer, we continued our journey. Numerous herds of cattle, enclosed in fences like the kraals of South Africa, bellowed at us as we passed; and the frequent trains of porters bearing produce to the market bespoke the wealth and industry of the people. Cotton grew on every side; but little, however, being manufactured into cloth at this town, the main bulk being carried to Abomey.

The walls round the town reminded me of the Abomey gates,

but the swish rampart encircled the town in the present instance, in addition to which a thick bush of thorny shrub afforded a further protection. Just outside the gate is a small market-place, the resort of traders from the various Houssa towns to the north, who bring leather bags, cloth, and other commodities to barter for the ironware brought from the coast to Paweh-Ahunseh.

In about an hour we came to a junction between two roads, that to the right leading to the river Taweh, and the Zoglogbo mountains, whilst the one to the left proceeded to Ampasim.

Our way led through a dense forest, inhabited by numerous leopards, hyænas, and other *feræ nature*, and our people kept well together, instead of straggling over a distance of a mile from van to rear, as they had hitherto done.

I call the path a road, but it was a mere sheep track, nothing like the broad clear highway between the Coast and Abomey. A march of three miles brought us to a small stream, most likely the Aditay of Duncan, and we availed ourselves of an opening in the forest to partake of tiffin. Our party formed quite a picturesque group; the soldiers eating huge mouthfuls of cankie or tearing the meat off the rib of a roasted porker; while Egblic-egbah amused the whole company with his sallies of wit. Four miles further on, we came to a second stream, the Taweh of Duncan, running over a pebbly bottom, and deliciously cool to the dusty feet of the travellers.

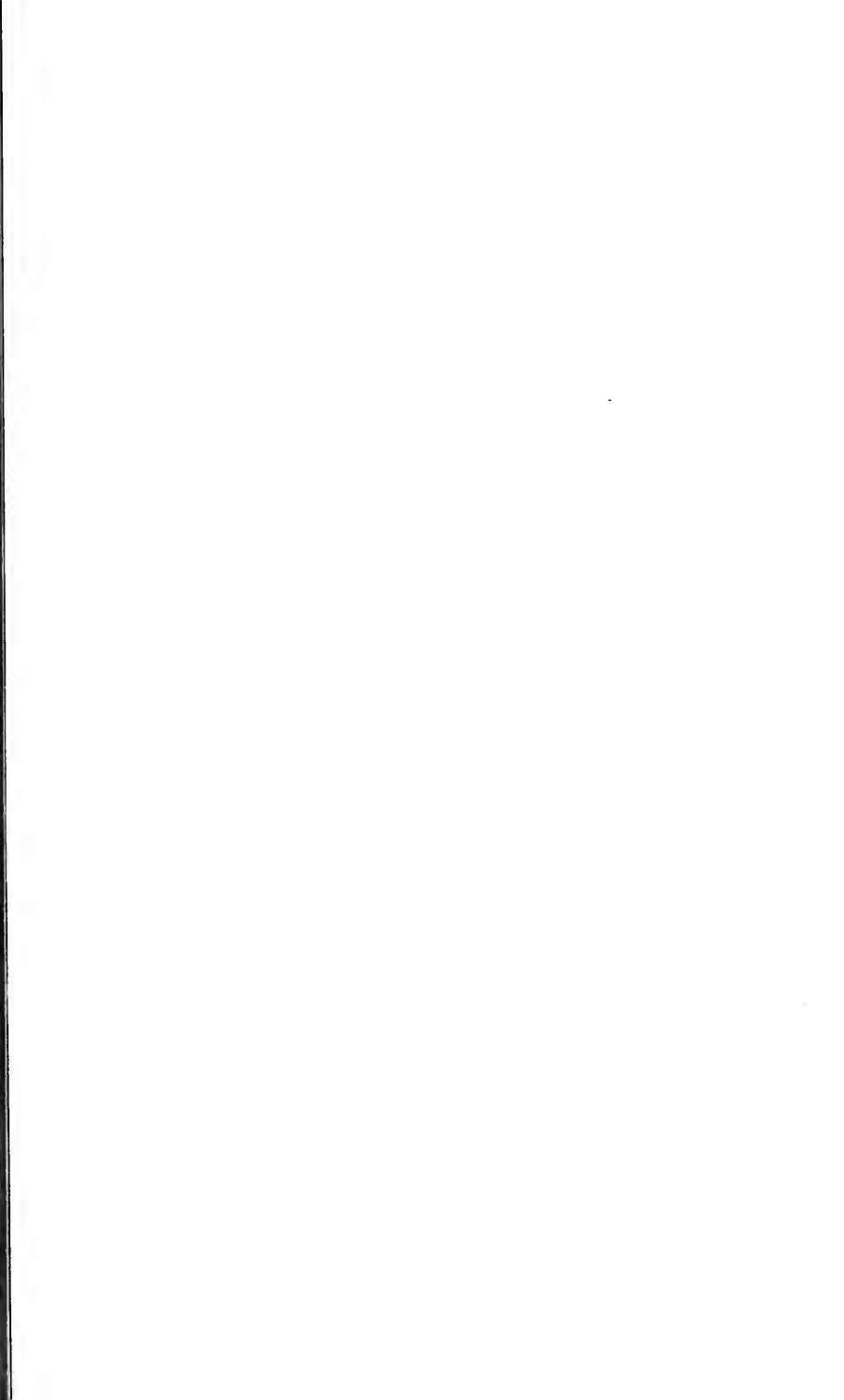
The country then began to assume a rugged appearance, the hills being broken up by ravines and long glens, which were richly wooded on their summits with clumps of African oak, mahogany, and other trees. The valleys were covered with a profusion of tall grasses, in which numerous deadly serpents lurked.

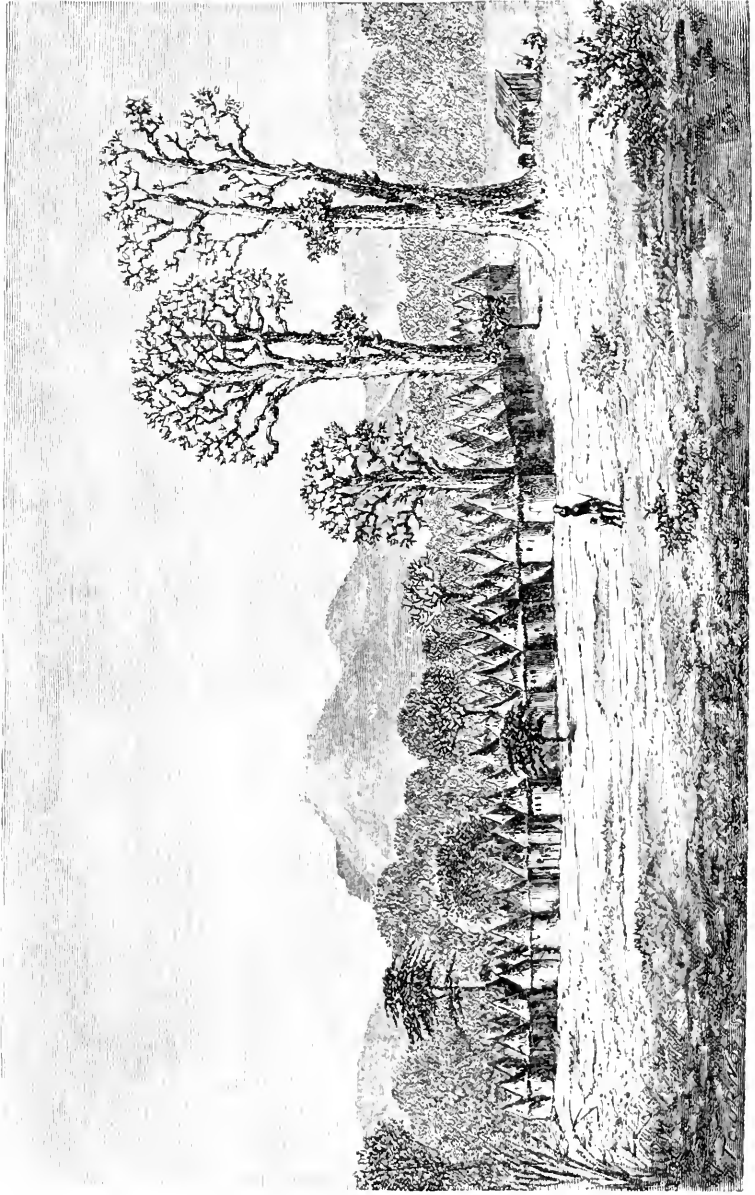
To the north, the blue peaks of some lofty range proclaimed our approach to the Kong mountains, and the air had an exhilarating feel, which roused the sluggish blood that drowsily coursed through the veins under the enervating climate of the coast lands.

Three miles further on, we came to a steep hill, up which we had to climb. The path was a mere goats' track, so narrow, that we had to proceed in Indian file. Huge blocks had to be surmounted, reminding me of the ascent of the pyramids of Ghizeh, and occasionally a boulder dislodged by the feet of the advanced party would come rolling and crashing down the path.

After a difficult ascent of about five hundred feet, the country became more level, seeming to indicate that we had surmounted one of the rises on the terraced system of the hills of Mahi. A mile further on, we came to the village of Sundoweh, where we made but a slight halt. The people here were by no means so good-looking as the Ffons, their features being more brutal and repulsive, and they had not the same regard for personal cleanliness. Some of the labourers we met were clad in nothing but a narrow petticoat of coarse grass cloth, with a "languti" of the same material beneath. All stared at the unprecedented spectacle of a white man escorted by a company of the king's soldiers. Their amazement was extreme, and upon recovering their surprise, they dropped upon their knees, and performed the *Ko dide*.

Resuming our journey, we travelled over an undulating country for the next two miles, until we arrived at a small town called Ampasim. Here we were entertained by the caboccer, Nquaveh, who had received news of our approach from a runner, and had prepared a sumptuous repast for our delectation, which was served under an immense baobab in the court-yard of his house. He first offered us the usual heart-cooling water, and the rum, palm wine (most execrable stuff), *dohr*, a sour liquor made from maize and other drinkables. If quality was absent, there was certainly no stint, perhaps on the same rule that the miles on bad roads have always good measure. Fowls, roasted and boiled, pigs, pigeons, and goat's flesh, were then brought in, together with yams, sweet potatoes, and roasted plantains. There was an abundant feast, and the hospitable caboccer seemed displeased if we declined to taste of any of the dishes. Of course





A MAHI VILLAGE.

there were no knives, forks, or spoons, except those brought by ourselves; and all the viands were served on plantain leaves spread on calabashes placed on the ground. The production of a plate by Joe caused considerable surprise, for scarcely any of the bystanders had ever seen such an article before.

During the feast a numerous band of flutes, harps, and gong-gongs, not forgetting the noisy drum, kept up a deafening noise, while a crowd outside them gazed with eager faces at the king's white man. They did not appear the least shy, especially the juveniles, but indulged in criticising remarks and laughable jokes with each other, doubtless at our expense.

Dinner over, pipes were produced, and after a smoke Nquaveh conducted me to a small thatched shed, where I was to pass the night.

Ampasim is pleasantly situated on the top of a rising ground, and contains about a thousand inhabitants. The general aspect of the place was very different from that of the towns nearer the capital. The houses were for the most part circular wattled structures, with a conical thatched roof, much resembling those of the Kroomen near Gran Sesters, on the windward coast. The interior is sometimes divided into two apartments by a mat partition, but children and parents usually sleep in one room, the bedstead being the floor of the hut covered with a mat.

European cloth was becoming very scarce, none but the very wealthiest possessing any clothing except the native grass cloth. This, however, was woven in striped or chequered patterns, and was much softer to the touch than might be supposed from the material of which it was composed.

None but the caboccers and priests eat animal food more than once a week, and even then the meat is usually eaten in a semi-raw state. Goats, fowls, pigeons, pigs, and Guinea fowl abound, but rats, snakes, dogs, bats, and lizards are greedily devoured.

Most of the people were engaged in cutting the long grass and tying it in small bundles, which were dried in the sun. This is principally used for thatching their houses, and is fixed on the

wattled roof by small pegs and grass-rope. Beads were in great demand, so also were brass rings, from curtain hoops to finger rings. The fashion obtains of inserting a ring through the cartilage of the nose or ear; and a lady who can afford both is a belle indeed.

The next morning we continued our journey, intending to pay a visit to a lofty hill called Zoglogbo, distant some five miles to the east. Our road was none of the best, being a mere track, and travelling had become very irksome, as sometimes one of the hammockmen would be standing on a part of the road three feet higher than the other, as they stepped from hummock to hummock.

The road led through a very rugged country, gradually rising, with a few level stretches here and there. The scenery was truly magnificent, the day being particularly fine and a deliciously cool north-east wind blowing. In the patches of verdure many beautiful flowers were just bursting into bloom, and the trees bore a refreshing emerald hue instead of the parched, burnt-up appearance of those in the lowlands. The black and yellow canary was abundant, twitting from bush to bush, reminding me of an English lark; and majestic eagles soared aloft above our heads.

In two hours we arrived at a cluster of huts at the foot of the mountain, where we halted while Amoosu went on ahead to inform the caboccer of our arrival. While waiting his return I prowled about, net in hand, in hopes of taking a few Lepidoptera, but I was so pestered by the guards that surrounded me that I only took four specimens in an hour. Whenever I made an attempt to catch one, a dozen soldiers would join in the pursuit, brandishing their weapons and taking off their waistcloths to knock down the insect. The result may be imagined. Either the insect got off scot free and hurried away at a pace rendering pursuit a hopeless task, or it was battered out of all resemblance to a butterfly by the cloths of the soldiers, who would often consummate their attempts by putting their foot on the insect and

then bringing it to me in triumph. Grasshoppers and mantidæ I could obtain by bushels; but it was a hopeless case to attempt to teach the "bush people" to collect. As an instance of the way they go about, I was accustomed to offer a glass of rum to any person who would bring me insects. Upon one occasion a man brought me a dung beetle amongst a peck of smashed locusts. I showed it to him and asked if he could obtain some more. "Oh yes," said he, and away he went. The next afternoon he appeared with about thirty of these coleoptera, which was a common one, and received his pay of two glasses of rum with great glee. I was prevented from going to the place where he obtained them in consequence of the King's Custom going on. After four days of this sort of work I thought I had obtained enough of this species, and asked him if he never saw any other beetles. "Oh yes," was his reply, "but they don't be good," and I found that he had been carefully selecting the common ones to the exclusion of other, perhaps new, species. Do all I could I never succeeded in impressing upon him that I wanted all he could obtain "both good and bad." He said I was "vexed for true" and gave up all idea of collecting from that time.

But, to get back to Zoglogbo. On the arrival of the head man my guards performed a war dance, the caboccer going through his exercise in front of our chairs. Water and peto, or native beer, was brought and healths drunk. We then prepared to enter the town. Like all Mahi towns, it was built on the summit of a hill, the only access to it being through a narrow pass which led up the steep side of the hill. In some places it was so narrow that only one man could pass at a time; and so steep that the aid of an alpen stock was necessary. Large boulders appeared here and there, the road winding round the larger ones and leading over those of less magnitude.

On either side a thick wood shut in the view. This narrow gorge was allowed to remain in its almost impassable condition as a national defence; and certainly a mere handful of men armed with breech-loaders could defend the pass against any numbers.

As we neared the summit the road somewhat improved, and in a short time we passed through the gates of the town.

A thick wattled fence surrounded this Dahoman Magdala; the gates being of the usual rough-hewn plank, turning on wooden hinges and thickly studded with iron plates. A Josusu, consisting of an owl, a round pot, and a string of cowries, hung above the portal; and the guard squatted outside armed with rusty guns, and bows and arrows. A broad road led round the wall, and the houses commenced about forty yards within the enclosure.

The summit was evidently an extinct crater, confirming my opinion that the Zoglogbo was of volcanic origin. In this depression a collection of about a thousand houses was built, some of them of large size, and built of wattled brushwood daubed with clay. In the centre was a market-place, where the simple necessaries of life could be obtained. The caboceer led the way to his own residence, situated on the north side of the town. As we passed through the streets a crowd of persons came to the gates of their houses and stared at us. We saw two circular ponds or tanks which supplied the water for the consumption of the townspeople, the rains filling them in the months of July and August.

Several fetiche houses were erected on the banks, the shrines of the rain god, and we saw several parties of worshippers presenting their offerings of cooked food and native beer.

Arrived at the caboceer's quarters, we were again presented with water and peto, and I delighted our host by handing him my tobacco pouch and telling him to help himself. He appeared particularly pleased because I smoked a native pipe, and was continually pointing it out to his wives and children as a remarkable circumstance. Soon after this a calabash of water was brought to us by a female slave, who held it while we washed our hands, towels being of course dispensed with. A variety of cooked meats, stews, and vegetables were then set out on the floor of the room, and we fell to with fingers, the caboceer frequently helping me to some of the dainty morsels with his own hand. We took up a morsel of cankie, and with it scooped up a mouthful from

any of the viands that pleased us, washing our fingers from time to time in small calabashes placed by our side.

I was then given to understand that we should remain in the town till the following day, and in the afternoon took a walk round the place. The town contains about two thousand inhabitants, but at the time of my visit the greater portion of the men were absent at the Customs in Abomey. Large boulders of granite impend over the edge of the crater in several places, looking as if a very slight push would send them crushing upon the houses below. Heaps of stones were collected at intervals near the gates, and I was told that they were intended to be showered down upon the heads of any persons who might have the temerity to attack this hill fort. The view, from a mound near the caboceer's, was truly sublime. We could see far away on the western horizon the cloud-capped summits of the hills near Krobo and Aquipim, and the more distinct outline of the intermediate range extending in a south-westerly direction towards the river Volta, where they gradually become merged into the low-lying swampy plains near the coast.

Northwards was the conspicuous peak of Kpaloko, and on the north-east the three mountains which have been called the Egehlin, or Cankie Mountains, from a fancied resemblance to three lumps of cankie placed close together. Opposite the southern gate was a similar entrance to the town, with a steep road leading to the north. It appeared as if the mountain had been split by some gigantic throe of nature, and the *débris* falling into the fissure had partially filled it up. These two fissures were the only means of access to the town. Numerous goats were feeding on the rocks, and a herd of fourteen black cattle were rubbing themselves against the angles of one of the larger houses.

Cotton grows in profusion in the neighbourhood, but is rarely made use of, the natives being either too lazy or too stupid to weave cloth for themselves, other than the grass waist cloths worn by everybody. Several Mohammedans reside in the town,

having probably come from Houssa, and they alone wear cotton robes to the total exclusion of grass cloth.

After a pleasant night's rest, the thermometer never rising higher than 69 degrees, we prepared to descend to our escort, who had remained in the village at the foot of the hill.

The caboccer again honoured us with a specimen of his dancing, and bidding us adieu, after accompanying us for a mile on our way, left us to proceed on our return journey to Ampasim, where we arrived about four o'clock.

The last day of September was a *dies non*, for a continuous downpour of tropical rain rendered travelling impossible. By seven o'clock on the morning of October 1st, we were again *en voyage*, and passed through several villages of the predominant wattled type, the country gradually rising as we journeyed towards the north-west. At three o'clock we halted at the hamlet of Kodongo, after a journey of twenty-two miles. Our accommodation was very limited: the soldiers sleeping on their mats in the open air, covered only by their togas. Snuff appears to be the great failing of the Kodongo people, for I could have bought a supply of food sufficient to last a month for about half-an-ounce. Just before we arrived at the town, I noticed a range of hills to the eastward, probably the Dassa mountains of Duncan; and to the west a lofty peak, but which was unknown by name to all the people of whom I inquired.

Leaving Kodongo at seven a.m., in about an hour we came to a stream thirteen yards wide, and knee-deep in the centre, flowing to the eastward on a rough pebbly bottom.

From this river the country was a confused jungle for the next five miles, and not a hamlet was to be seen. Far away to the north-west the lofty crests of the Kong mountains merged into the clouds as they receded to the west, while northwards was a magnificent peak where our journey was to end, as Suamattoh was instructed to conduct me so far and no farther.

We halted at the village of Bevangch, built on the summit of a hill, or rather on the northern edge of a sudden dip to the north.

This appears to be the northern scarp of one of the lateral ranges of the Mahi group of mountains.

We did not start from Bevangch until late in the forenoon of October the 2nd, in consequence of the difficulty experienced in obtaining food for so large a party as ours. The road led through a ravine at the bottom of which a small stream gurgled along its rocky bed, running in a south-easterly direction.

About three in the afternoon, the caravan came to a dead halt on hearing the loud roar of a lion apparently close on our left. All was consternation—the soldiers in the van urging each other on to accept the challenge, and do battle with the animal, but notwithstanding their boasted valour no one attempted to lead the way. The jabbering and gesticulation was terrific; and had the lion felt inclined to have a fat negro for supper there was nothing to prevent him, for I verily believe had he made any attack the valiant soldiers would have turned tail and run away. Joe was already making tracks to the rear, carrying my gun with him, and on his being forced back again to his station by my hammock, I could not help smiling at the fear-stricken horror of his ugly visage. He looked as though he had been frost-bitten. Our fears, however, were groundless; for, although we heard the lion frequently give vent to his awful roar, which was prolonged from side to side of the ravine to a fearful length, we never got a glimpse of his tawny hide.

We encamped at a small village called Dorseh, on the banks of the stream, and of course the general topic of conversation was the lion. Each vied with the other in recounting the wonderful exploits they meant to have performed had opportunity been afforded for exhibiting their prowess.

Crossing the stream about eight o'clock the next morning, we again commenced to ascend the range of hills whose conspicuous feature was the Pahlookoh (two hills), an isolated cluster of peaks, the highest being saddle-shaped. About two in the afternoon we arrived at a large town, called from its situation, Pahlookoh sch, or the foot of Pahlookoh. Concerning this town, there is told

the following account of the manner in which it fell into the possession of the King of Dahomey.

“In the reign of King Gézu, the present king’s father, war was declared against Danyoh, the King of Pahlookoh, on the plea that he had ill-treated the messengers of the king. Upon this Danyoh sent to Ge-nah-Koh (the Elephant), one of the Eyeo chieftains, asking him to come to his relief, as their common enemy, Dahomey, was about to attack him.

“Meanwhile Gézu laid siege to the place, and while so engaged he received word from De Souza that ‘the Elephant’ was coming to fight against him. This was corroborated by the king of Porto Novo, and by thirty-three of the small kings of Mahi, who were at that time on friendly terms with Dahomey. These messengers urged upon Gézu the necessity of an immediate retreat; but he said that ‘he did not know how to go back, but that he must break this people.’

“After much difficulty, Danyoh was slain, and his brother Joon-toh taken prisoner and sent to Abomey. This was effected before the junction of ‘the Elephant’ with Danyoh.

“Gézu then waited for Ge-nah-Koh in the valley at the foot of the mountain, and in the first encounter completely routed his forces, and killed ‘the Elephant’ before he succeeded in joining the Pahlookohs, who had assembled to witness, as they fondly hoped, the total discomfiture of the Dahoman army.

“No sooner were they convinced that the Dahomans were again victorious, than they threw down their arms and sued for mercy on bended knees. Gézu said, ‘As you are brave men, and know how to fight well, you shall belong to my army for ever.’ It is said that the present Gaou is one of the generals of the Pahlookohs who fought against Gézu.”

Pahlookoh now contains about eleven hundred inhabitants, who are not in a very prosperous condition, since they are too lazy to make the best of their position. But little flesh is eaten except upon certain fetiche days when they have a feast, rival-

ling the Patagonian orgies after a successful hunt, and like other savages gorge themselves to repletion.

We left this historic town about eight o'clock the next morning, passing round the base of the mountain, which was one immense thicket of prickly pear and pine-apple, which were tabooed to the natives in consequence of their being declared fetiche.

Beyond Pahlookoh a comparatively level table-land extends for several miles, running in an easterly and westerly direction, and having a presumed elevation of 1,500 feet above the sea. It is more or less covered with erratic boulders of a hard sandy conglomerate, which lie scattered indiscriminately all over the plain. Here numerous agates, jaspers, tourmalines, and other mineral productions, were frequently met with in the gravelly soil, generally on the western edge of the large boulders. The appearance was very similar to that of the diamond diggings in the Trans Vaal, and probably a close inspection would reveal the presence of the precious gem. Specks of gold too were frequently observed, but there were no evidences of its being worked. A short wiry grass covered the plain, wherein numerous antelopes, guinea fowl, rabbits, and other small game, fell an easy prey to the hunter's gun.

As we journeyed along this flat, monotonous district, our people were much annoyed by the myriads of ants, whose trains crossed our path. Thousands, nay millions, of these black creatures were going and returning from marauding expeditions, the "labourers" being prevented from leaving the ranks by a line of "soldiers" who were stationed on either side of the line of route. Any "labourer" attempting to pass the sentries was immediately seized upon by a "soldier" of three times his size, and ignominiously thrust back among his companions. Every now and then some unlucky porter would tread upon one of the columns, and in an instant he would be attacked by the guardian "soldiers" who, swarming all over his naked body by hundreds, inflicted summary punishment upon the offender.

At length we reached the foot of the range of hills whose peaks we had seen from the southern edge of the Pahlookoh table-land. The country then presented a very different appearance from the tame district we had just left. Huge masses of granite were piled up, and some of them appeared to threaten us with immediate destruction if we ventured too near. Trees were comparatively few, and none of the giants of the forest appeared. The curious chandelier tree (*Pandanus candelabrum*) was plentiful, rising to about thirty feet, and then throwing out forked branches, the extremities of which were terminated by long rigid leaves pointing upwards. Another conspicuous tree was one something like the linden, with but few leaves, while the whole surface was literally ablaze with scarlet blossoms. Ginger grew in profusion, and together with the capsicum, constituted an agreeable seasoning to Joe's made dishes.

About three in the afternoon a thin film of smoke appearing above the trees, announced our approach to our resting-place for the night. This was Kangro,* a town "broken" by the present king, and kept from falling into oblivion by reason of its being the rendezvous of the Ganunlan company, who assemble there previous to their annual elephant hunt.

The few inhabitants who came out to see us were of a very low type, with narrow dolicephalic skulls, low foreheads, and prominent features. They spoke a different language from the Mahis and exhibited the greatest terror at our approach, imagining most probably that we were the advanced guard of an army. Nearly all abandoned their various pursuits, and hid themselves in the bush. The old women especially were positively hideous, rivalling the aged crones of the Gaboon in the repulsive appearance of their faces and persons. They are not by any means so cleanly as the Mahis, the *débris* of every meal being thrown outside the door of the hut, and there left to putrefy unless carried off by the hyenas.

Their huts are merely sheds, constructed of the mid ribs of

* This must not be confounded with the Koglo or Kenglo of Duncan.

palm leaves wattled with the smaller branches, and thatched with mats made of the leaflets woven or plaited together something like the Gaboon *mpavo*. Plantations of cassava surround the houses, and their only food appears to be a kind of cankie, boiled in an earthen pot placed on stones over a fire.

Their dress consisted of a waist-cloth of grass and a few fetiche ornaments, besides which many wore necklaces of beads of Dahoman manufacture.

A few men carried axes, each one made by inserting an iron chisel in the split end of a stick and binding it in firmly with sinews. The old caboceer was the only Dahoman in the place, and he brought out an empty demijohn, thereby indicating that he had nothing wherewith to welcome us, and hinting that we could replenish his stock if we chose. The old fellow walked by the aid of a crescent-headed stick, but must have been a powerful man in his prime. He was dressed in blue baft, plentifully besprinkled with dirt, and carried a fine collection of fetiches about him. After a palaver, on my hinting that I would give him a supply of rum, he slyly produced a square bottle of gin, with which the king's health and my own were honoured. He said that he was on the point of sending the tribute of the country to Abomey, and on my requesting him to allow me to see it, he conducted us into an apartment in the rear of the house where it was deposited. It consisted of a few jars of palm oil, bags of cotton, cowries, Guinea corn, and large calabashes of yams. The bearers had just received their rations, and were going to start early in the morning for Abomey.

Frequent mishaps necessarily occur, owing to the rugged character of the road; and as Gelelé will only accept full payment, nearly twice the amount of the tribute is sent up; and after the losses are made good the remainder is disposed of.

Leaving Kangro at eight o'clock the next morning, we passed over a fine undulating country well watered by small streams running to the westward, and abounding in game of various kinds. Passing the village of Jakowouleh, we again entered the

mountain district, after recruiting our strength by a hearty breakfast on the banks of a small brook that afforded the most deliciously cool water.

Travelling was rough in the extreme, the road leading over large blocks of ironstone, rendering a sprained ankle inevitable if we did not take particular care where we planted our feet. Joe as usual was grumbling about the "bush country," as he called every place except Accra. Occasionally we passed through grassy spots where the view was completely cut off by its luxuriant growth. Numerous Shea butter, umbrella, mahogany and other trees, were scattered at frequent intervals.

About three we came in sight of the town of Jallaku, built at the base of a lofty mountain, which had been visible to us ever since leaving our last halting place. This was the frontier town of Dahomey under the reign of G^ézu, and the inhabitants enjoy immunity from many of the taxes imposed upon other towns by reason of the bravery with which they withstood an attack upon them by the Nagos in the beginning of the present king's reign. It possessed nothing worth remarking, there being two market-places, one near the entrance to the town, and a smaller one near the caboccer's house in the centre. The "Government house" was almost as labyrinthine in its arrangements as that of the Avogan's in Whydah, for we passed through six courtyards before entering the one appropriated to our use. Water being handed about, a small bottle of rum was produced from my stores, and the king's health duly honoured. A very abundant supper was then set before us, of which we partook very heartily, the old chief being highly amused at the process of eating with a fork.

The next morning we started soon after daylight and proceeded to the north-west round the base of the mountain. This mountain is a huge mass of basalt, the peculiar forms assumed by which give an artificial appearance to it when viewed from a distance. Some of the largest trees I ever saw grew in the fissures of the rocks, rivalling by their immensity the huge

denizens of a Brazilian forest. Little patches of cultivated ground were interspersed between the rocks; maize, yams, and millet being the principal objects of care.

Our route lay well to the westward, and we were now in the newly-acquired portion of Dahomey. The country was well-wooded, with occasional openings, in one of which we observed the peculiar spoor of the elephant, and towards evening saw a herd of them quietly nibbling the young shoots of the talma bushes down one of the glades in the forest. The path was a mere trail, and we were under the necessity of relying upon the knowledge of a young man who was going to Mbogelah, and had availed himself of our arrival to join our party.

Our halt for the night was at Dassa, twelve miles W.N.W. of Jallaku. One of the natives had just brought in a python that he had killed by a poisoned arrow. These reptiles are very numerous in the neighbourhood, and the vertebræ form an article of trade with Abomey, where they are used in the ornamentation of the gourd-shaped rattles. The flesh is eaten, and has much the taste of that of a rabbit with a dash of eel. Leopards are not unfrequently met with in the neighbourhood, but, being fetiche for the king, no one thinks of killing them.

At three in the morning I heard a great outcry. On inquiring the cause, I found that a hyena had entered a hut and seized an infant sleeping in its mother's arms by the head, but being frightened by the screams of the inmates, had dropped its prey and decamped. The poor little fellow was quite dead; its skull being crushed in by the teeth of the monster.

Leaving the next morning we commenced our toilsome journey, and at noon arrived at Vagee, where we unanimously decided to remain for the night. Sentries were posted round the camp, as Suamattoh was not by any means prejudiced in favour of the inhabitants, who were a wild set of people, whose language was different from any we had as yet heard.

In the morning we again proceeded through a rugged mountain country, our course being nearly N.N.W. I was much

struck with the beauty of the Whydah finches (*Vidua*), whose plumage was then in its prime, the long tail-feathers of the male being curious appendages to so small a bird. Our encampment was made at Vedoh, nine miles from Vagee, but owing to the villanous nature of the road we did not arrive before four o'clock.

After a sound night's rest we started before daylight, and by 9 o'clock A.M. found ourselves comfortably installed in the wattled residence of the caboceer of Mbogelah, situated on a level piece of ground near the foot of the mountain, which was to terminate our journey.

This town was similar to those passed during the last few days, and contained nothing worth remarking. It is the frontier town of Dahomey, and the old caboceer had been allowed to retain his position after the annexation of his district to the kingdom. The civil law as administered by him in no way differed from that under which his people had lived prior to the conquest; but all criminal cases were treated according to the Dahoman code.

After a day's rest, of which we were all in much need, I started with Beecham, Amoosu, and a few others to ascend the mountain on the side of which Mbogelah is situated. Our road led up the bed of a torrent, dry at that season of the year, but a furious stream when swollen by the rains. After a difficult ascent of about 500 feet, we halted beneath the shade of a cliff, and prepared to breakfast. Then happened one of the little incidents that are always occurring to the traveller, and which tend to make his temper none of the sweetest. On asking for a small quantity of water I found that the man with the skin, dipsas-bitten mortal that he was, had been helping himself; and not taking sufficient care in fastening up the leg of the goat skin which served as a spout, the whole of the precious liquid had leaked out. The sun was blazing overhead, and the exertion of walking over a rough road had produced intense thirst. Luckily Joe had brought a few oranges with him, and I succeeded in cooling my parched throat with these while the water-carrier was

despatched to a hut that appeared at a short distance, to procure a supply of the necessary liquid. During his absence we fell to work upon the breakfast, which did ample justice to the care bestowed upon it by Joe, and while so doing the water-carrier returned with the news that we could have no water except by paying for it. Amosu was for demanding it in the king's name, but I preferred to keep on good terms with the people, and offered a head of tobacco for a supply. This payment soon had the desired effect, and in a few moments Aquarius appeared staggering under the weight of a couple of skins of water. I determined he should carry them as a punishment for his pilfering. With this some tea was prepared, and then we took a siesta, and about three again started.

We crossed a number of terraces mostly cultivated; the crops being chiefly yams, maize, or cassava. The road was very steep, and walking no child's play, and by this time we could distinctly perceive a difference in the temperature from that of the plains we had left in the morning. Just at nightfall we arrived at a small hamlet consisting of only seven houses built on three sides of a square. This was Chararah, the plantation house of the caboceer of Mbogelah. In the middle of the square a large fire was blazing, and round it the twenty-five or thirty inhabitants of the hamlet were busily cooking the evening meal.

We were soon following their example. I turned in to a hut about ten feet square, and soon fell asleep, though I woke towards morning with my teeth chattering with cold, in spite of a thick rug I had thrown over me. Joe was dreadfully put about because the cold was "biting" him, and the carriers were huddled round the fire, which blazed furiously all night, both as a means of supplying warmth and a protective against any wild beast that might be prowling about on an empty stomach.

At 2 A.M., while the stars were still twinkling brightly in the clear atmosphere, we were again on the move, as I was anxious to gain the summit before sunrise. Our way led us up a

precipitous track, liberally strewn with loose stones and larger boulders, against which we were continually tripping. As we approached the summit we gradually left the forest behind, the very apex being covered with a few thorny shrubs. It was still dark, and a fire was quickly got under way, for the thermometer stood at 48° F. A strong wind was blowing from the N.E., and in that bleak spot, the solace of a pipe and cup of hot tea was very cheering.

Presently a faint grey streak illuminated the eastern horizon, and we were at once on the *qui vive* to catch the first glimpse of the sun. Broader and brighter grew the streak, sending out offshoots, and at last a thin line of rosy hue was faintly perceptible close to the eastern verge. Another, and yet another, followed, and at last Joe called out, "Look, master!" and there at last was the evidence of the birth of another day. On our left a lofty peak, gilded with the rays of the sun, as yet invisible to us, shone out against the leaden-coloured sky as if made of burnished copper. Every instant its colour changed, and one by one other peaks appeared as if lit up with spectral fires.

Streaks of yellow and ruby light now darted upwards from the horizon, and a few beams of glorious colour shot up from the spot where the sun would soon appear. The colours of the sky were truly gorgeous. Green blending into the clearest azure or deepening into more sombre indigo, was shown up in the boldest contrast by the rosy edgings of the fleecy clouds. We could now begin to see a few of the neighbouring peaks, but all beneath us was still bathed in gloom. Slowly the gilding crept down the sides of the mountains until at length the sunlight flashed out upon the spot where we stood with dazzling splendour.

The scene was now grand in the extreme, as the sun climbed with rapid strides his steep path in the heavens; the different pinnacles appearing like islands of fire in the midst of a sea of fog. Some of the more distant peaks had the appearance of molten copper with shadows of exquisite violet or grey.

In a short time the effect of the sun's beams began to tell upon the mists which had settled down upon the lowlands during the night. Slowly and imperceptibly they crept up the mountain side, rolling like billows of smoke, and only occasionally giving us a peep of the world beneath us. The birds had by this time left their roosting places, and the insect-world in its myriad forms was again on the alert. On came the foggy tide, until we were enveloped in its moisture-laden embrace, and at Joe's suggestion breakfast was put in requisition. Poor fellow, he evidently had no taste for Alpine scenery, for to use his expression "too much cold live to catch him for that country."

About nine o'clock, after nearly two hours of isolation from everything except the ground upon which we stood, the mists gradually floated off and disappeared. A beautiful panorama was then spread around us. To the east, immediately before us, was a precipice some three hundred yards deep, at whose foot a stream was murmuring along. Beyond rose a colossal mountain, looking quite close at hand in the deceptive atmosphere.

The little stream, whose birth-place was the mountain upon which we stood, wound round its base, looking like a silver thread as it now appeared, and then was hidden from our view by an intervening hill. Here and there a few black circling dots, conspicuous against the clear blue sky, pointed out a number of vultures, wheeling around at a giddy height, eager to discover a dead animal on which to feast themselves. The thin blue smoke from Chararah stole slowly upwards, indicating that our caboccer's plantation men were about to prepare their morning meal of boiled yams or maize cobs. Beyond these rose peak after peak as far as the eye could reach, until clouds and hills became merged into a shadowy boundary to the landscape.

Southwards a wide expanse lay spread out before us. The smoke of the wood fires indicated the brown wattled huts of a few villages, surrounded by plantations, the emerald green of the young maize showing bright against the dull olive of the forest. A narrow patch of grassy hue, blotched with black spots, showed us the

marshy district of Nkoveh, and beyond these the peaks of Zoglogbo, and other high pinnacles of the Mahi ranges, were darkly outlined against the sky.

Westwards a panorama of majestic beauty lay disclosed to our view. Far as the eye could reach, mountain towered upon mountain and valley merged into valley, presenting every aspect of Alpine scenery, from the isolated crater to the fortress-like appearance of some of the trappean hills. Over these the ever-moving fog still hovered, now appearing as if endeavouring to hide some distant peak from our view, and again enveloping a whole group in a filmy covering as if with a bridal veil. What most attracted the attention was a valley to the south-west, which bore all the appearance of one of the moraines of the Alps in the lines of stones left in curious positions along its sides, and in the ice scratched pebbles strewn in every direction, specimens of which were brought to me by Amoosu.

To the north the country appeared less hilly, and I was told that no hills "lived" for a considerable distance. Numerous little rills meandered through the valleys, perhaps mingling their waters with those of the Niger after a course through the extensive plain beneath us. No villages greeted the eye in this direction. Far as we could see, a series of rounded undulations met the view, rolling in parallel lines of hill and valley as if we stood upon the shore of some immense sea whose billows had become suddenly solidified.

The silence and solitude were overwhelming. Not a sound fell upon the strained ear but was increased in its intensity, even the hum of the tiny insect being augmented until it seemed almost out of place in that vast immensity of silence; and the soul, becoming conscious of its own inferiority and puny littleness when its mightiest efforts are compared with the handiwork of the Deity, seemed to be filled with wonder, reverence, and awe.

The range appeared to increase in altitude westward, splitting up into a number of forks which strike off towards the coast; the highest peaks being well-known landmarks for shipping, and

called the Cook's Loaf, Mumquady, the Abbey Dome, and other characteristic names.

After staying some hours on this, the summit of one of the loftiest of the Kong mountains, we reluctantly began the descent, which we accomplished without any mishap, my only regret being the inability of taking any observations on account of my not possessing the necessary instruments. One day I hope to revisit the same scenes—prepared to do more than make a flying survey of this interesting country, which had never been visited by white men, except by Duncan in 1846.

On arrival at Chararah we found all ready for starting, and without stopping we went on to Mbogelah, which we entered at four o'clock, and were entertained in a most sumptuous manner by the hospitable caboceer.

As we had already somewhat exceeded the time allowed for us to reach Mbogelah we made a series of forced marches, until we reached Evyango, situated on the north side of the marsh district near Abomey.

Here we were delayed, in consequence of the caboceer's insisting upon giving me a reception, and we were inflicted with about four hours of very poor dancing, gun firing, and music, so that a whole day was lost, and we did not start from the place until the eighteenth of October. After a night in a miserable hovel, at a village about ten miles from Abomey, we arrived there on the twentieth, to Suamattoh's delight, who no sooner brought us to the uhon-nukon than he sent a messenger to inform the king of our arrival, and after an hour's patient waiting Dahkro came out with a message from the king to say that he would see me in the morning, and that the Custom was ready to commence. The caboceer's responsibility being now over, a *feu d'enfer* was immediately fired by his soldiers and himself, after which he conducted us to our quarters, and then, instead of going quietly home, like a sensible fellow, spent the night in sacrificing to his fetiche for bringing his journey to a successful issue.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ATTOH CUSTOM.

Visit to the king—Despatch of messengers to the late king—Procession of captains and Amazons.

The First Section of the Attoh Custom.—The Attoh platform—Victim sheds—Creation of a new Jotosi company—Dance of Gundeme's Amazons.

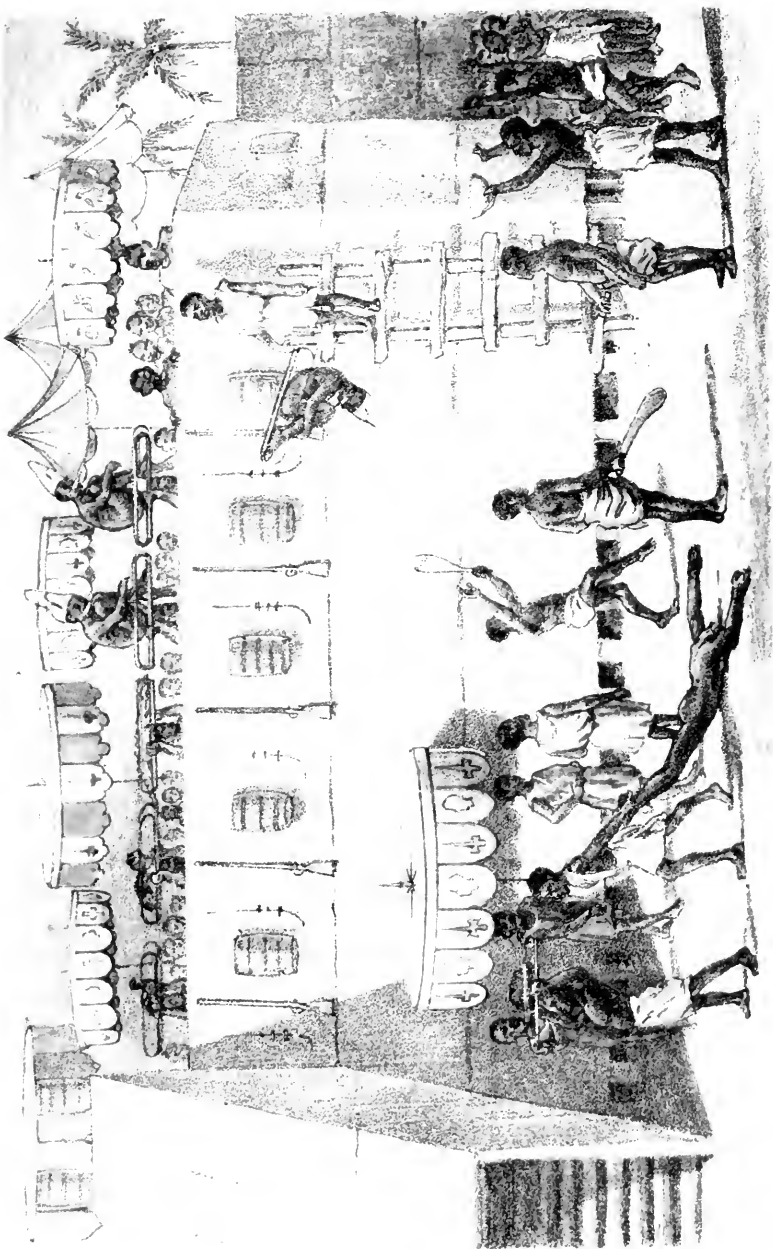
The Second Section of the Attoh Custom.—Under the doctors' hands—Dance of the royal family.

The Third Section of the Attoh Custom.—Arrival of Moslems from the interior to purchase slaves—Dance of drummers—Creation of a new Gaou.

The Fourth Section of the Attoh Custom.—Parade of men and Amazons—Cowrie fighting—Procession of fetiche priests—Execution of a captive for Ningau—The Tokpon—Procession of king's wealth.

By seven o'clock the next morning we were waiting outside the palace gate, expecting to be summoned to the presence. There had been heavy rain during the night, and the morning was refreshingly cool. I could not help being amused at the grotesque figures cut by the vultures as they expanded their wings to allow them to dry in the sun. The Dahomans say that when it rains the Akrasu determine to build houses for themselves, but when the sun again appears they hold out their wings and say to each other, that the open air is quite good enough for them.

After half an hour's delay, the dahkro summoned us to the inside. His Majesty was reclining under the shed where we had our first audience. He asked me whether I was satisfied with my journey, and if I had been well treated by the people. After an hour's audience, he wound up by saying that the Platform Custom was about to commence, and that to-morrow he would



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VICTIMS FOR THE ATTOH CUSTOM



open the new gate and inaugurate the Custom. In the afternoon I was summoned to the market-place to see the despatch of several messengers to inform the deceased monarchs of the commencement of the Platform Custom. Although the sight was not by any means an agreeable one, yet as I had been told many marvellous tales about the executions, I determined to see for myself what were the real facts of the case.

We proceeded to the Uhunglo market, and as we passed the Nesu shed overtook a procession of fetiche people, headed by a band, who were walking round the market at a funeral pace. Preceded by a herald, with arms bound and a gag in their mouths, were two Nago captives, who were pushed along by a couple of janitors behind them. This mournful *cortége* passed three times round the market, and then halted near the place where the pavilion for Addokpon formerly stood. A number of hunchbacked policemen kept the ground, surrounding a heap of beaten swish in the shape of a truncated cone. The herald ascended this rostrum, and called the attention of the populace by a ting-tanging upon his gong-gong, and loud cries of Ah—go, delivered in a mournful prolonged minor key. The Nago victims were placed in a kneeling position before the paniganhuntoh and their guards squatted behind them. A bottle of rum, a head of cowries, and a pellet of cankie were placed before each, and one of the court jesters sat grinning in the opposite corner, carrying on his buffoonery in the very presence of death itself.

The king's strong names were then called out, the recital occupying nearly an hour. The victims were then placed with their heads bowed to the earth, while the message was delivered. The purport of it was as follows:—"Gelelé sends his compliments to his father, and declares that he would do all things as he had wished his son to do. He has made one Custom for him and now makes another, so that Gézu shall know that his son Gelelé does not forget him." With a long ting-tang on the gong-gong the message was concluded, and preparations for the fearful consummation commenced. The rum bottle was opened,

part poured out on the ground, and the remainder on the heads of the victims. The bunches of cowries were then laid on their heads for an instant, and afterwards placed before them. The eankie was placed in the waist cloths of the poor wretches, and then the executioner made his appearance. The regular officer was unable to attend in consequence of illness, and his son took his place, and much to my surprise it proved to be Bukau. He was armed with a long fish-slice-shaped knife, and carried a bunch of horse tails round his neck.

One of the victims was then brought to the front, and his head being bent forward, Bukau with one well-aimed stroke severed it from the body, which then toppled forwards, and the life-blood poured out over the ground. The head was lifted up by Bukau and handed to the herald, who placed it in a basket, while the body was dragged off by the multitude and thrown into the ditch near the Abomey gate; children and adults—of both sexes—insulting the corpse in every possible manner with sticks, stones, and filth.

The other victim, whose feelings can be better imagined than described at seeing the execution of his comrade, was then similarly despatched, and the heads were carried off to the Coomassie palace, where they were stuck in little heaps before the new gate.

We then proceeded to the western side of the palace, where the Adonejan was busily engaged in felling a large tree, which grew near the gate. A number of new palaver sheds had been erected opposite the gate, and a tall flag-staff, with a white standard flying, was planted in the centre of the square.

A procession of the captains was then formed, and marched three times round the square, the soldiers firing guns, throwing them up in the air, and performing various dances. All wore their war dresses and dismal paraphernalia of cowries, bloody tunics, and dark sienna umbrellas. One company had as a distinctive feature in their uniform a pair of white cotton drawers with the *right* leg cut short off at the thigh.

The king then came out of the gate, escorted as far as the Pwe shed by the Amazons, who there delivered him over to the male soldiers. He was dressed in grey and blue fetiche costume, and had two black streaks of gunpowder on each cheek. He rode in the glass chariot made by his "goldsmith," a cumbrous affair, like a square photographic studio on wheels. I could not congratulate him upon his pleasant journey, for the carriage was fearfully jolted over the rough surface of the ground as it was thrice dragged round the square, his Majesty bowing to us as he passed our chairs. He then returned to the Pwe shed, and entered a green hammock, emblazoned with yellow lions. In this he made four circumambulations, amidst the deafening uproar of his subjects. He must have been dreadfully jolted about; but then most people will put up with considerable inconveniences for the sake of display.

A similar procession of the Amazons then perambulated the square after it had been railed off by the Tononun and his assistants. They fired, danced and whooped quite as frantically as the men, some of the fat officeresses cutting a ludicrous figure as they waddled along.

A Dahkro then came to the gate and called Amoosu, who on returning to us brought a decanter of rum and permission to retire, with a request to come early in the morning to see the platform that was to be erected during the night under the superintendence of the Adonejan.

BONUGAN KAYON GBE.—THE CAPTAINS WILL DANCE TO-DAY.

During the night we heard a fearful howling and most unearthly laughter among the hyænas, who were feasting upon the bodies of the poor wretches who were killed yesterday.

About nine o'clock I went to the newly-made uhon-nukon before the western gate of the Coomassie palæce. On arrival there I was surprised at the alteration that had taken place during the few hours which had elapsed since I left the place yester-

day. The tree was felled and the roots torn up, and the whole of the square nicely smoothed with earth; not a sign of the place recently occupied by the tree being left.

To the proper left of the Pwe shed, at a distance of about twenty yards, the celebrated Attoh was erected. A fence of stout poles supported a mat screen, enclosing a space of about 100 feet by 30, to the south of which the Attoh was erected. A number of posts had been driven into the earth, their tops being twelve feet from the level of the ground. Across these rafters of Palmyra wood were lashed, and on these again a flooring was laid similar to that in the pavilion in the Coomassie palace. The area of the flooring was about ninety feet by forty. To the rear a shed was erected upon the platform, extending the whole length, but only twenty feet broad. Within this were twenty-six victims gagged and bound *à la mode*, and sitting upon basket-work frames similar to those used for the transport of merchandise upon the heads of porters. The front and sides of the platform were enclosed by a parapet four feet high. Admission to the Attoh was effected by a rude ladder near the northern end, and a covering of white calico, similar in shape to those in use in England to protect visitors to a ball from the weather between the carriages and the entrance, extended from the top to the bottom. The sides of the platform and the roof of the victim shed were covered with white calico. The parapet was ornamented with guns, kpo and empty powder kegs fastened perpendicularly against the side, and a row of fourteen powder kegs was fixed to the roof of the victim shed, while a similar decoration of four graced the calico verandah to the ladder. The king's royal umbrella was fixed at the south-western angle of the platform, and those of the Amazons appeared above the parapet at the opposite extremity. Finally a large table-cloth flag waved from a flagstaff at the north-west corner. This was the Attoh for Gelelé.

To the north of the Pwe shed a similar platform was erected, but in this case the victim shed extended round three sides of the platform, leaving the front only open to the square, and the ladder

was at the extreme N.W. corner. Sixty-two victims were here exhibited; thirty-two for the bush king Addokpon and thirty for the Dahoman people, thus making a total of eighty-eight human beings as offerings to the *manes* of Gézu. There were three table-cloth flags along the front of this Attoh, and the ornaments of guns, sticks, and powder-kegs were similar to those of the other platform.

Before the gate a small shed was erected containing a number of Bo-fetiché idols and the accompanying Clotho spinning the magic thread. The usual Josusu was erected before the gate, and from the centre a mat was hung painted with a St. Andrew's cross of black upon a red ground, and a grinning skull fixed in the centre. The Sohwe, the Boso altars, and the head heaps of swish were placed on either side, and over the wall of the palace we could see a long white flag and the powder-keg ornaments to the Amazons' Attoh.

The day's ceremonials commenced by the king's ascending his Attoh, and our chairs were soon after brought near the platform where our umbrella had been placed. A band of thirty-six young men were then paraded before the king, and after a copious kodide the Ningán called out the name of each, in his harsh voice. Meanwhile a short ladder was placed against the side of the platform beneath the royal umbrella, and the Adonejan ascending, received a number of horse-tails for distribution to the new company of dancers, who were to be created from the thirty-six candidates before us. Of these thirty-two were chosen as fit and proper persons to act as Jotosi, and received the horse-tail whisks; while the remaining four were made privates in the Mnan, or "foolhardy corps." A Kpogi was then handed to each of the dancers, who thereupon commenced a corybantic display which lasted upwards of an hour; the principal figure being a bending of the knees until they nearly touched the ground, and then springing upright with a single effort. The war captains then advanced and formed a line before the platform, and went through a similar performance, the last figure in the row being a

hunch-backed warrior whose efforts to surpass the leaps of his more rectilinear companions caused the crowd to burst forth in shrieks of laughter. Two hours of this "pleasure" brought the captain's dance to a conclusion, and the Tononun appeared and cleared off the rabble by the tinkle of his bell, while some of his inferiors laid down the magic rods.

A company of Amazons belonging to Gundeme, the female Ningán, then came in and danced for nearly two hours. They were all splendidly dressed in silks, velvets, and chintzes, and nearly all had their necks, shoulders, and other parts of their persons ornamentally daubed with a pale green pomade. At the conclusion of the ballet the king descended from the platform and danced with two of the leaders among Gundeme's corps. Guns were fired and strong names shouted out during the royal dance, and at its conclusion Gelelé came up to us and made sundry complimentary speeches, finishing off with a request that I would dance with him.

Taking his hand amidst the acclamations of the assembly, Gelelé and I went through our united performance, and when I signified to the king that I had had enough of it, he passed me with five heads of cowries and a bottle of rum. On returning home I found a banquet spread out for me, the gift of Hahansu, not the least acceptable portion of it being some very passable rolls, made by the prince's cook, who had been instructed in the mysteries of his craft in the French factory at Whydah.

GELELÉ AKHOSU KAYAN GBE.—GELELÉ AND THE PRINCES WILL DANCE TO-DAY.

The next morning I was very unwell with fever, and the complimentary stick-bearers conveyed the news of my illness to the king. In about an hour the Ammasinkpele, or druggist to his Majesty, accompanied by thirteen Ammablutoh, or doctors, paid me a visit. They examined my tongue, felt my head, hands, feet, and back, and then retired to Joe's kitchen, where they mixed an aperient draught for me. After that one of the Bukono

priests arrived, who proceeded to cast lots and consult Afa* by means of his magic nuts, and at last discovered that ten fowls must be sacrificed for my benefit. The required offerings were supplied by the king's druggist, and the sacrifice duly made; after which the "faculty" took their departure, much to my relief.

In the afternoon I felt much better, and went to the western uhon-nukon about three o'clock. The verandah of umbrellas round the Pwe shed announced that royalty had already arrived. On being presented to the king according to custom, he sent two of his doctors to stay near me to see that I did nothing that would prevent the due operation of the fetiche they had made for my recovery.

The space before the king's seat was railed off by the usual tie-tie fence, and numerous white calico flags were waving from flagstaffs erected all over the square. Gelelé and fourteen of the royal princes were dancing to the music of a band squatted under a tent umbrella on the left.

All were stripped to their drawers, which were made of silk or velvet, and tastefully embroidered. Gelelé, as usual, wore sandals, the others being barefooted. He also wore a peaked topped cap of black velvet, with scarlet binding, the pattern being evidently taken from a Scotch bonnet. The head dresses of the other members of the royal family were various, some wearing regimental caps, emblazoned with a fanciful device, while others were content with a broad fillet such as is worn by street jugglers and mountebanks. The ballet lasted two hours, and consisted of several figures; the king giving the cue to the band as to the proper measure for each, by singing the words of a song to the principal musician. Songs were sung during the dance, and a considerable quantity of powder wasted in firing salutes.

During the performance groups of dancers who had been infected with the sight of the royal ballet, were wildly throwing

* See page 474.

their limbs about on all sides of the square, yelling and screaming at the top of their voices until the uproar was deafening.

When this mania was expended, Gelelé retired, and the perspiring princes squatted down in a line and sang the following song :—

“ Gelelé has made a Platform Custom for Gézu,
We will therefore dance for him to-day.”

The newly-organised band of Hunto then gave us a sample of their agility, and we were not at all displeased when we received our *congé* in the form of a bottle of rum.

Since I had returned from the Kong mountains I had seen nothing of the governor, and was sorry to learn that he was unwell. I paid him a visit in the evening, and he requested me to use my influence with the king to allow him to return to Whydah. I promised to do so, but reminded him of the procrastinating nature of the king as exemplified in myself, who had been repeatedly told that I should be allowed to leave in “ three days.”

HUNTO KAYON GBE.—THE DRUMMERS WILL DANCE TO-DAY.

On arriving at the square about two o'clock in the afternoon of to-day, I was surprised to see a considerable increase in the number of Moslem spectators to the Custom. I was afterwards told that a large party of Houssa, and other northern people, had arrived on a visit to the kingdom to dispose of their wares, and also to buy slaves. From repeated inquiries I ascertained that these traders succeeded in buying ninety-four of the Nago captives from the king, the price he received being on the average about sixty dollars (£12) per man. I have every reason to believe that the slaves were well-treated by their new masters, and I was told that they have frequent opportunities of purchasing their freedom, and that they often amassed a comfortable fortune in their new homes.

The whole of the afternoon was taken up by the Terpsichorean

performances of several corps of drummers, who vied with each other in the grotesque and extravagant attitudes into which they threw themselves.

About four o'clock a loud dimming of gong-gongs and cries of *Ahgo n'daboh* hushed the comments of the assembly to silence. The Gaou, the lieutenant of Ningan, was an aged and decrepid servant of the government, and totally incapable of performing the irksome duties that devolved upon his position. Gelelé called this ancient warrior to the front, and after a long speech thanking him for his long and faithful services, formally gave him permission to retire on his laurels. The old soldier performed a feeble ko-didi, and leaning heavily on his staff left the presence.

The election of a new Gaou was then proceeded with. The Ningan proposed an old soldier from the Bru company as a proper person to entrust with the responsibilities of so high an office. "This man," said he, "has fought bravely under Gézu, and has assisted to break many towns. Look at his left arm," which showed signs of a fearful wound: "there you see evidence that he is not afraid to face the foe. It is good to have experienced warriors to command the raw recruits, or they will not know how to fight. The example of this man will be fire in the hearts of the soldiers who first go to war for Gelelé." This concluded the speech of Ningan, who with his *protégé* then copiously besprinkled themselves with dirt.

A young lad, not more than fifteen, then jumped up and proposed himself as the new Gaou. "What is the use," he argued, "of nominating an old man to the Gaouship? he will soon be too feeble to fight, and then another election will have to be made."

The Meu next stepped forward and proposed a soldier who had only just recovered from a severe wound received in the capture of one of the Nago towns last year. "This man," said the Meu, "combines the good qualities of the other two candidates. He has had plenty of hard fighting to learn experience

as a soldier, and his severe wound is a guarantee of his bravery. He also is as yet a young man, and therefore Gelelé will not be put to the trouble of electing another Gaou in a few years. Besides this, it is good that a brave soldier should be rewarded for fighting the battles of his king." A murmur of applause followed the conclusion of the Meu's speech, after which the three candidates gave a very boastful account of the deeds of daring they would perform if they were elected to the vacant Gaouship. The Amazons frequently taunted the candidates during their bombastic speeches; telling them that they would have to come to them before they could learn the proper way to fight, and in other ways exhibiting the rivalry that existed between the sexes. The female Gaou, the Khetungan, said that none of the candidates were worthy of the dignity of the Gaouship, because they had not taken Abeokenta for the king as they had promised.

Gelelé then discussed the merits of the cases seriatim.

With regard to Ningan's man, he said that after a man had so bravely fought for his king, he ought not to have much work, but should rest from his hard labours during the war.

As for the youth, though it was good not to elect an old man to the Gaouship, nevertheless the chosen officer must have given proof by his bravery that he was fit to hold the responsible post of Gaou.

Meu's candidate was a well-known brave man, and had not yet been rewarded for bringing in four heads to the king. He therefore should confer the vacant post upon him.

Loud cheers, gun firing, and strong names followed this speech, amidst a copious dust bath of the personages mentioned in it.

The investiture of the new Gaou was then proceeded with.

The Ningan advanced to the front, and called the successful candidate by his new title, Gaou! That officer answered according to custom, *W̄ae!* "Yes, I am here," and hurried to the Ningan. A new stool, umbrella, and caboceer beads were then brought from the king by the dahkros, and delivered to

the Ningan, who placed the latter upon the Gaou, while the umbrella and stool were displayed before the assembly.

According to custom some of the wives, slaves, and official household property of the old Gaou were then paraded before the court, and formally handed over to the possession of the new Gaou. Some of the old wives did not appear to relish the change of husbands ; but as it is the universal custom they could not complain of being taken by surprise. The Gaou then copiously besprinkled himself with sand, and retired, followed by his newly-acquired property, animate and inanimate, and on arrival at the umbrella set up for him performed a vigorous war-dance. The old Gaou then was called and received a present of nine slaves, and the use of one of the royal farm-houses until he died. His private property was transferred to the new abode together with the balance of his establishment, and the aged warrior left the scene.

Gelelé then gave a lengthy account of the exploits of the retiring officer, and ended by expressing his wish that the newly-appointed Gaou would "go and do likewise." The new Gaou, a fine tall fellow, then daubed himself with swish, and swore to take Abeokeuta, or any other place, single-handed. The arrival of our dahkro, with the pass rum, soon after announced the termination of the day's proceedings.

MEN-SANÉ ATTOH GBE GELELÉ.—THE VICTIMS WILL BE THROWN FROM THE ATTOH TO-DAY FOR GELELÉ.

In the middle of the night a herald went round the town with a corps beating the death-drum, and announcing that on the next day the victims would be thrown from the platform.

We had taken up our positions by eight o'clock the following morning ; a large crowd having already assembled, the umbrellas of the chiefs forming a line of shade along the whole of the western side of the square. Soon after our arrival a body of about seven hundred men assembled near the Pwe shed, and in

a short time the firing of muskets, and the shouting out of the king's strong names announced the approach of the king. He mounted his green velvet hammock, and the seven hundred warriors commenced to perambulate the square, carrying the king in their midst, amidst their tumultuous firing of muskets, shouting, and wild dancing.

After the usual three marches round, the king was delivered over to the tender mercies of the Amazons, and a similar procession on the women's side then danced round the uhon-nukon. When they had concluded their parade, they mounted the stairs leading to the king's platform, Gelelé having dismounted from his hammock and preceded them, the way being pointed out to him by the royal officers, who are the John the Baptists for the king.

Meanwhile a thick hedge of prickly pear, acacia, and other uncomfortable shrubs had been planted round the platform at a distance of about ten feet from its base. The soldiers who had perambulated the square now made their appearance, divested of every stitch of their finery, wearing nothing but drawers of the coarsest grass-cloth, evidently prepared to "fight for cowries." The king then made a short speech, exhorting the people to remember his liberality when they came to fight in reality for him at Abeokeuta. A few guns were then handed down from the platform by Adonejan, and given to the soldiers named by the king, the lucky recipients being straightway mounted on the shoulders of their comrades, and carried *volens volens* round the palace.

A few pieces of cloth, horns of powder of the coarsest description, and bullets of every possible shape, except spherical, were then distributed, when Adonejan, descending the ladder and proceeding to his umbrella, announced that the "fight" was about to commence in earnest. Cowries were then thrown to the excited throng by the king, assisted occasionally by some of the Amazons. Small pieces of calicoes, chintzes, etc., just large enough to make a loin-cloth, were then thrown, the struggle over

one of these being furious in the extreme, and when at last it did come into the possession of any one it was dirtied and torn to such an extent as to be almost worthless. Nevertheless it was unwound and displayed by the lucky fighter, who, mounted on the shoulders of one of his companions, was often carried about for hours after.

This Olympian struggle was continued for about an hour, when Ningán was sent for, and, mounting the ladder, called out "*Aiah*." The gong-gong heralds took up the cue, and in a few moments the fighting throng was dispersed, and silence reigned.

Presently a solemn procession of fetiche priests and priestesses, headed by the Agasunno, clad in sombre grey robes, and preceded by several Bo fetiche images and ironmongery, defiled in from the south-western corner of the square. In the middle was a native of Katu, gagged and bound to one of the baskets in common use by porters, and behind him lashed to similar baskets were an alligator, a cat, and a hawk. These were borne on the heads of some of the inferior priests, and a band of horns and drums played a kind of knell in staccato time, something after the fashion of a bell tolling—a few quick notes, and then a pause. This sad procession slowly paraded three times round the market, and were followed by a second band playing on the jaw drums, and the Nunupweto with its suggestive wreath of skulls. Finally, the standards of human crania brought up the rear.

At the end of the parade they formed before the platform, and cowries, cloth, powder and a gun, were dashed to the victim, who, together with the three animals, was then placed upon the heads of some of the Amazons and carried on to the platform. Ningán then cried out "*Aiah*," and ascended the ladder, where he was within reach of the royal ear. The man, the alligator, the cat, and the hawk, were then brought to the edge of the platform parapet, and, the king prompting Ningán, that officer made the following speech:—"Hear all the peoples of the earth

what the lion hath spoken. He has made a So-Sin Custom for his father, and shall he not make an Attoh if he pleases. Happy are the sires of those who are able to sacrifice to the memory of their fathers. You see the man, the alligator, the cat, and the hawk; these are about to depart to the next world to acquaint all the inhabitants of the great respect Gelelé has for his fathers. The man will go to the dead men, the alligator to the fish, the cat to the animals, and the hawk to all the birds, to tell them of the great things done by Gelelé. Hear and tremble when Gelelé, the lion king, speaks."

The basket with the unfortunate man upon it was then toppled over the edge of the platform, the poor wretch falling on the hard earth at the foot with a force that, let us hope, stunned him. The basket was then upended, and the executioner for the nonce commenced his horrid work.

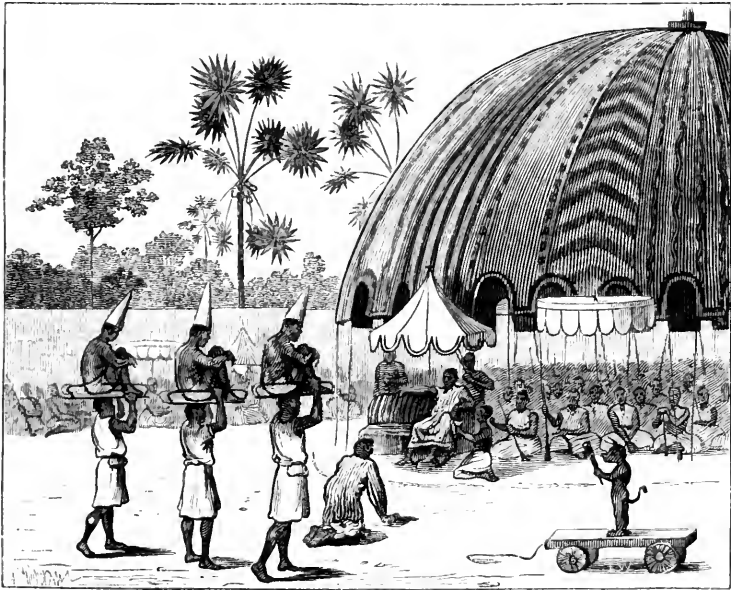
The knife was light, short, and without edge, and after three chops at the neck of the victim without separating the vertebræ, he put the bloody weapon between his teeth and borrowed another heavier knife from a bystander, and with it completed his barbarous work. Sickening as was the spectacle, I was not able to discover the least sign of pity, horror, or disgust on the faces of any of the throng; the monarch alone turning his head away from the fearful sight. The deed being done, the body was cut from the basket, upon which the head was placed and carried round the market while the yet warm body was dragged off to the *Aceldama*, near *Abomey*, there to be devoured by hyenas. The alligator, the cat, and the hawk were then similarly despatched, the alligator giving some trouble on account of the toughness of his scaly epidermis. A few cowries were then thrown upon the blood-stained earth, and we then departed to partake of breakfast, which was not relished any the more after so appetising a sight.

By noon we were again at the square, and found the courtyard was to be the scene of the succeeding pageants. After being duly announced we entered the palace; the head of the victim of

morning being stuck in the swish heap at the entrance, with a sentry over it to keep off the flies.

The courtyard was similar to the one at the Akwaji gate, and the umbrellas of the chiefs formed a verandah round the southern and western sides of it. On the eastern side, opposite the gate, was the celebrated Tokpon, one of the "Lions" of the Custom.

This consisted of a huge tent, shaped something like an English umbrella, with a high conical roof. It was composed



THE TOKPON.

of twenty pieces of figured damask, crimson and yellow being the principal colours. These formed a kind of valance to the centre-piece, which was also formed of silk. The central portion was supported by a tall pole, while strong posts upheld the outer edge. The valance had its lower sides deeply scalloped and stretched out by strong iron rods, about five feet long, planted in the earth, and supported by stays of grass rope. On the top was a fetiche figure, about six feet high, representing a woman

carrying a powder keg. Under the cool shade of this gorgeous pavilion, a sofa covered with several native-made cloths and the familiar brass-legged table were placed; while the front of it was screened by three or four splendid umbrellas stuck in the ground *secundum artem*. Two or three white Bo fetiche flags were erected at intervals, and a mat screen shrouded the entrance to the Amazonian quarters behind the Tokpon on the northern side of the square.

This Tokpon was, I believe, the invention of Gelelé, and a substitute for the worn-out affair mentioned by Burton. An altar of the barber's-pole sticks, and a row of fetiche images, guarded the entrance, and the usual line of bamboo poles partitioned off the Amazons from the sterner (?) sex. Our umbrella, as usual, was set up between the Bush king's "place" and the king's fetiche images, and on our right the miscellaneous battery was planted.

The arrival of the artillery-women put us on the *qui vive* for his Majesty, who was greeted with a salvo of musketry and the discharge of the "big guns" on our right. After saluting us he retired to the sofa under the Tokpon, and Ningan advancing announced to the people that the Custom was about to be continued. The Tononun then shut off the gate from all access to the male soldiery by a row of bamboos, and presently a line of fetiche images, pots, irons, crockery, and what not, notified to us that we were going to be treated to another display of the royal nick-naeks. After the deities came the king's white mule, which was accommodated with an umbrella, and lustily cheered as it passed. Then came several wooden images, the lion, devil, and others; the rear being brought up by a man carrying a black wooden pig, which had succeeded in swallowing another of equal size to itself, except the head, which still stuck out of its mouth. A number of new standards for presentation to the various regiments followed, the devices being fighting men, double-headed eagles, heads, swords, &c.

The ministers then paraded in their long robes, and were

followed by the captains, then by the head soldiers, and lastly by the Tononun and his half-head company. Ningan then made a great speech, saying that last night four men were sent to join Gézu's household, and that their heads were then placed round the tomb of that monarch at Abomey. Thus it appears that last night was another *Nox iræ*, but the victims were executed within the palace wall, and not in public.

Meu then delivered an elaborate speech, the subject being principally that of the king's various tents. He said the king had one with all animals on it (probably the Tokpon mentioned by Burton); another, a "double" tent, with side pieces, which was kept at Kana—the large tent we had seen in the Akwaji courtyard; and now they saw a large tent made by Gelelé for his father's spirit to sit under. He finished by saying that "a man covering his house with thatch often has it blown off, and then must go to the bush for grass to repair it. If, however, he had a tent, and it was torn, he could always repair it with a needle and cotton. Gelelé had, therefore, made this tent so that his father should not be roofless, in case the thatch on his tomb should be blown off."

The usual miscellaneous procession followed; but in the place of the rum and liqueurs carried at the So-Sin Custom, guns, powder and bullets, cowries in heads and loose in baskets and calabashes, cloth, &c., were carried on the heads of the women. Behind them came fourteen victims bound to the baskets, who were exhibited to the king and received a mock pass of rum, which was drunk by their guards. These men will be executed for the king; they were taken from the victim-shed on the Attoh.

The silver ornaments for the king's tomb, a number of state carriages and Leopard wives, followed; each Kposi receiving a glass of spirits from the king's private table, which was set before him.

Meanwhile the gathering clouds had long foretold the coming of a heavy thunder-storm, and at this point in the proceedings it

burst upon us in all its fury. A gust of wind sent the umbrellas flying in every direction, and getting under the Tokpon, rent it in several places, and I fully expected to see it carried to the ground, in spite of what the Meu had just said about it, to say nothing of the powerful fetiche guardians belonging to it.

Gelelé seemed to be of the same opinion, for he stopped the procession of Amazons and took shelter from the pouring rain under the Pwe-shed. He then sent for me, and said that the rain would prevent any more display; and as he was afraid, if I got wet, I should have a return of fever, he would pass me. He then summoned the Tononun and seven others of the eunuch company, and bidding me adieu, passed me through the Amazons. On arriving at the outside, I found the path cleared for the passage of these semi-sacred soldieresses, and the crowd assembled in a line outside the stakes.

When they saw me passing down the Amazons' lane, they immediately set up a praise-yell for the king. Thanks to this great favour on the part of his Majesty, we arrived at our quarters without any delay; as if we had not been thus "passed" we should have been obliged to walk all round the palace to avoid the Amazons.

The rain continued until nearly seven o'clock, when we heard the indefatigable king distributing the guns, cowries, cloth, and powder from the platform of the Attoh to the crowd who were gathered at the foot, knee deep in mud and mire. A berth under the Dahoman Government is by no means a sincere, especially during the Custom; for both king, lords and commons, appear to be engaged for about eighteen hours out of every twenty-four.

About two in the morning a loud knocking at our gate announced the arrival of our portion of the gifts, consisting of two guns, nineteen heads of cowries, one one-fifth keg of powder, a bag of bullets, four country cloths, and a calabash of loose cowries. The king had only just left the platform when the messengers started.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ATTOH CUSTOM—(*continued*).

MINO-ZOHN-WA GBE.—THE AMAZONS WILL WALK IN PROCESSION TO-DAY.

The Fifth Section of the Attoh Custom.—Procession of Amazons—Executions for them—Amazonian Tokpon procession—More victims.

The Sixth Section of the Attoh Custom.—Palaver with the Amazons—Execution of eight of the offenders, and establishment of the Rouc company—Procession of war captains and Amazons—Distribution of cowries and cloth to the warriors—Sacrifice of a victim for the Meu—Novel cure for headache—Procession for the Meu—Visit to Hahansu—His opinion on the slave trade and the human sacrifices.

The Seventh and Last Section of the Attoh Custom.—Distribution of cowries to the Amazons and sacrifice of two victims—Presentation of new cloth to the ministers—Procession of the principal officers—Distribution of cloth to the Amazons and procession afterwards—Gift of cloth and cowries to the princes—Parade of cowries by the army—Dahoman cannibals—Decapitation of four Nagos and gift of six to me—Conclusion of the Attoh Custom for Gelelé.

OCTOBER the 26th was occupied by the king in distributing cowries, cloth, &c., to the Amazons within the precincts of the palace; and the next morning we proceeded to the western square, where we arrived by nine o'clock. A number of Amazons then marched round the Uhon-nukon, firing, dancing, and throwing up their guns, as their male predecessors had done before them. The king was carried on a dark Prussian-blue hammock, handsomely decorated with orange lions and tassels from the awning. After this display they went outside the palace, and cowries, guns, and cloth were given to them, just as had been done to the men on the 25th. In an hour they again appeared, and the king,

mounting the platform, announced, through the female Ningán, that cowries, cloth, &c., had been given to the Amazons, and that a man, an alligator, a cat, and a hawk had been sacrificed for them. We were then dismissed to breakfast, and recalled to the palace about noon.

We again entered the western courtyard, and found the ill effects of the storm had been effaced, the torn damask of the Tokpon being repaired, and all made clean as a new pin. The Amazonian ministers, captains, lifeguards, and eunuchs then paraded similarly to the outside nobles, the Gundeme giving a thrilling, cold-blooded account of the three victims she had decapitated during the night. Loud cheers from both sides of the audience followed this confession of murder, and the Gundeme and her companions retired to the right of the king.

The usual procession followed, the victims being represented by nine poor fellows, with the accompanying alligator, cat, and hawk. The guns, cowries, powder, &c., were supplemented by cartridge-belts, bullet-pouches, and other accoutrements, and the silver ornaments were followed by two women bearing silver swish-beaters, "to show," as Beecham said, "that the tools were ready for any great undertaking the king might wish performed." The last time these were used was at the formation of the late king's tomb, so that Beecham's allusion was not very *à propos*. The procession closed with a parade of the wives of the present king and the "mothers" of the late sovereigns, the rear being brought up until dark by a medley group of captains, privates, priestesses, and lay-women. During the ceremony the king sent me a large calabash full of cashew-nuts, pomegranates, oranges, limes, and other fruits, with a specimen of Amazonian confectionery in the shape of a pudding of ground maize mixed with sugar and fried in palm-oil. As soon as it was too dark to see anything, the king passed us, sending a couple of lantern-bearers to light us on our homeward journey.

Addokpon's wives followed, clad in gorgeous raiment of pink silk. Then came six hundred and forty-one young girls, carrying small gourds of loose cowries. Some of them were captives, taken from their homes but a short time, who, on coming into the presence, betrayed their fear of the Dahoman monarch by running past the royal seat, much to the disgust of the Dahkros, who rushed after them and boxed their ears, besides overwhelming them with a torrent of abuse that only added to their terror.

Then came two victims, tied to baskets as usual. They wore foolscaps of lilac calico, and one long-backed fellow, who was mounted on the head of a tall Amazon, received a severe blow from the lintel of the Pwe-shed as he was carried under it. The royal hammocks, carriages, flags, Akhosusi, and fetiche images then followed, and at 6.30 we received our signal of dismissal from the Dahkro, who brought us a large decanter of port wine as "pass."

After dinner I paid a visit to the prince, and told him that the king was causing me serious injury by his detention of me. He replied that in *three days* the Custom would be finished, and then I should go. He was sorry that any ill effects should accrue to me, but was assured that I would take it in good part, as his father had a very great liking for me. He then entered upon the slave question. He said that the custom of the country required the king to make war, and that from the captives he selected some of the victims. The English Government had stopped the slave trade from Whydah, and now wished the king to discontinue the sacrifices of the Custom, asking him to give up the time-honoured state pageant, and offering nothing in return. Why did they not allow them to sell the victims for the Custom, as then they would not have any occasion to slaughter them, for the people would be satisfied if they were sold and the proceeds distributed to them. But if the king discontinued the sacrifices, and did not substitute an equivalent, the people would think the king was afraid of the English people, and would say that he was not fit to rule so brave a people as the Dahomans. More

than three hundred * had been killed during the Custom already, and the king was willing to save their lives if he could do so with safety to himself and his dynasty. He said that to-night the cowries would be fought for in the square before the gate, and that the ferocious nature of the people demanded the human sacrifices to keep them in awe.

ATTOH GOMOJEH GBE.—THE ATTOH WILL BE BROKEN TO-DAY.

The next day was occupied by the king in reviewing a procession of the Amazonian ministers, throwing cowries, cloths, &c., from the inside platform and in decapitating the two victims who were paraded yesterday.

The following morning we arrived at the palaver-sheds in the western Uhon-nukon by half-past six o'clock, fully resigned to our inevitable fate of a twelve or fourteen hours' séance. Early as we were, the greater portion of the nobles and captains had already assembled, and were marching round the square dancing, firing guns, and singing war-songs. The newly-created Gaou was capering about in the midst of a company of the Bru guard, from amongst whom he had been raised to his present high office. The night guards, with all their heralds, were perambulating the palace, firing their guns, dinning upon their gong-gongs, and waving flags about as if they were "possessed." The old Tononun and his half-heads were in a fearful state of excitement over their bundles of bamboo sticks. The Ahundatoh and Klan the two companies of jesters, were conspicuous in newly white-washed limbs, and paid us frequent visits, each striving to cut the other out of our good favour. Adonejan was busy repairing the thorny fence at the foot of the platform, and several fetiche men were replacing the broken crockery at the foot of the flagstuffs.

Presently the gates of the palace opened, and the king came out under a gorgeous umbrella of violet and orange velvet. His

* I cannot but think this is an error of Beecham's translation, especially as the higher numbers in Ffon are very ambiguous.

leopard wives followed him, dressed in green silk with pink underskirts, and silver chaplets round their brows. A salute of guns, strong names, and ringing of the eunuchs' bells greeted the monarch, who bowed to the crowd, and then ascended the platform. The ministers were then called to the foot of the Attoh, and after a preliminary speech from the king, he threw the Ningan a piece of cloth, which that officer received on bended knees, and after well smothering himself with swish, put it on. He then ascended the rostrum, while a similar piece of cloth was given to the Meu, who stationed himself at the foot of the ladder, the remainder of the ministers being outside the thorny hedge. Cloth was then handed down to the Ningan, who called out the name of the recipient, and handing it to the Meu, he passed it over the hedge to the presentee. All the cloths were opened by the Ningan, and the receivers at once put them on over their other robes. The Governor and I were then called, and were each presented with a fine native cloth, value about 80 dollars. The strangers, headed by the Ashanti ambassadors, were then similarly passed, after which cowries were distributed; four large baskets, each containing eight heads, falling to my share of the royal bounty.

The king then descended from the Attoh and got into his hammock, a splendid affair of crimson velvet, embroidered with yellow braid, and awnings and curtains to match. He then started for three marches round the square, the ministers following, wearing their newly-received cloths and firing guns, singing and dancing.

The procession over, the king again ascended the Attoh, and the Tononun and his companions fenced off a large space before the platform. The female ministers then came in and were presented with cloths, just as their male comrades had been before them. The king was then carried round in his yellow hammock, with the gun firing, singing, and dancing accompaniment.

This over, and the Amazonian ministers and king having again

mounted the Attoh, cowries and cloth were dashed to the common folk, the usual scramble ensuing. After an hour of this "pleasure," the gong-gong men sounded "*Ahgo*," and the perspiring crowd dispersed.

I was told that upon these occasions, if any company does not succeed in obtaining one at least of the pieces of cloth, they are brought before the king and severely reprimanded, and then condemned to sleep all night in the mud surrounding the water-pits, to the north-east of the town.

The princes then assembled before the Attoh and received presents of cloth and cowries, Hahansu bearing off as his share three country cloths and eleven baskets of cowrie money. Some old soldiers who had been pensioned off then received cloth and cowries from the royal hand; loud cries of "*Bloo bloo*" following this act of the king, who called each of the pensioners by name, thereby showing that, although they were exempt from attending at court, he had not forgotten them nor their services to the government.

A company from each of the principal regiments then marched round the square, each followed by four men, dragging behind them large flat baskets filled with cloth and cowries. The *roués* who had been pardoned then appeared on the scene, bearing a new flag, a white sheet with a tree on it, the trunk being half cut through. This was an allegorical representation of the late reprieve, signifying that they had almost lost their lives, but had been pardoned by the king just in the nick of time. The general of the Bru company, a tall fellow with a grey beard, of which he was terribly vain, then harangued the new company, exhorting them to repent of their crime, and show that they could after all be brave soldiers. They then marched up and down before the king, singing, firing their guns, and dancing. Several generals then received presents of rum, cloth, and cowries, and at last the Ningan, ascending the ladder, called out "*Aiah*."

We were then sent for to the foot of the platform. Fourteen Nago captives bound to baskets, an alligator, a cat, and a hawk

were then elevated on men's heads above the parapet of the Attoh. Ningan then made a long speech, telling the assembly that this was the concluding ceremony of the Attoh Custom for Gelelé, and that they would see that he was not forgetful of his father's wish that the Attoh Custom should be sometimes performed at Coomassie.

The ladders were then removed, and preparations made for another butchery. A dispute arose among the various companies as to who should have the pleasure of killing the victims. Each candidate for the murderership declared that he would fight bravely for the king, and begged to be allowed to show His Majesty how he would slay his enemies. At length two men who had distinguished themselves in the late Mahi war were chosen as the executioners, and the palaver was settled.

Then four men, the Menduton, or Cannibals, stationed themselves before the platform, each being furnished with a sharpened stick, by way of a fork, and a knife. In their left hand they carried a small calabash filled with salt and pepper, and they at once commenced to cry out to the king to give them meat to eat, for they were hungry. These were the "blood drinkers" mentioned by Duncan, who are supposed to devour the flesh of the victims of the Customs. When the captives are beheaded they take one of the bodies and cut off pieces of flesh, which they rub with palm-oil, and roast over a fire kindled in the square before the platform. The human flesh is then skewered on the pointed sticks, and carried round the market-place; after which the Menduton parade before the State prisoners, and go through the action of eating the flesh. They chew the human meat before the terrified captives, but do not swallow it; and when they have worked upon the fears of the poor wretches for a sufficient time, they retire, and spitting out the chewed flesh, take strong medicine which acts as an emetic, and I sincerely hope the dose is by no means stinted. This is the nearest approach to anthropophagy in Dahomey.

A hint was then given me by Bceeham that if I asked the

king to dash me one of the victims he would do so. Resolving to make an attempt to save the life of one, at least, of the poor wretches, I sent my compliments to the king, requesting him to present me with one of the victims, as Englishmen did not at all approve of the human sacrifices, and if he spared only one it would show that he had regard to the feelings of his friends. The king sent word that he would grant my request. The four men who were nearest the king were then thrown from the platform and decapitated. The first three were not put to any extra torture, but the fourth must have suffered excruciating agony. Four blows were given without severing the vertebral column, the back of the head presenting a fearful sight. The butcher then put the bloody knife in his mouth, and seizing the ears of the wretched being, wrenched it from side to side in the endeavour to screw it off, and finally, having dislocated the atlas, cut the flesh that still connected the head with the trunk. A more horrible sight I never witnessed.

The alligator, the cat, and the hawk were then beheaded, and the remaining ten men unbound from the baskets, which were thrown from the platform. The ladder was then replaced, and six of the poor wretches handed down like sheep and passed over to me, where they were made to kneel down and smother themselves with dirt. Two more were then passed down and presented to the company, and the remaining two given to the Amazons. These four latter will be drafted into the service of the outside and inside Ningans, and set to work as scavengers.

I then thanked the king for his present, and told him that his leniency should be reported in England.

Several heads of cowries, wrapped up in crimson calico, were then given to the ministers, and a firing party of Amazons took up their position round the parapet.

"*Ahgo*" was called out, and the king made a speech, saying that he had now finished the Attoh Custom for himself, and in two days would perform the Attoh for Addokpon, but that before this he must welcome his friend Kerselay. When I heard

this I was in hopes that the long-wished-for permission to leave the capital was at last about to be given, but I was again doomed to disappointment. A volley of musketry, and a perfect uproar of gong-gongs, strong names, prayers, &c., then succeeded, and Gelelé left the Attoh and retired within the palace.

This concluded Gelelé's Attoh Custom.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WELCOME FROM THE KING.

Fearful thunder-storm—Visit to Jegbeh palace—I am saluted by the Ashanti company, and created a general of that corps—Presentation of “ chop ”—Delivery of the king’s message by Hahansu—Salute of the royal body-guard of Amazons—State banquet—Dahoman waiters.

EARLY on the morning of November 1st, Hahansu sent a messenger to inform me that the king would welcome me during the day. After waiting until noon in expectation of being summoned, a second messenger arrived, telling me that the welcome would take place at the king’s palace at Jegbeh. About two in the afternoon a fearful storm of thunder and lightning set in, and lasted for two hours. Its fury reminded me of the storms in the Bay of Bengal during the changes of the monsoon. The thatch was whirled from the roof by the fury of the gusts, and the rain descended in sheets. The vivid lightning seemed to run along the ground, and the crepetant thunder crashed around as if the sky were rending in pieces.

In the midst of this Ghugalah arrived, bearing the summons to the palace. He said that the king was now prepared to welcome me, and that the rain would prevent the thatch from catching fire in consequence of the gun-firing. As the back of the storm was evidently broken, we started, a large umbrella being held over my hammock as an additional protection from the rain. Still the lightning flashed at intervals of a few seconds, and the gloom beneath the trees was unearthly.

We passed along the road leading by Hahansu’s house, so as

to avoid the main gate, which would have entailed my alighting from my hammock. I could not help remarking the curious effect of the vivid flashes of lightning, which gave an appearance to the sky similar to that observed on watered silk.

On arrival at the palace we entered the shelter of the Pwe-shed; and were received by the prince. In a few minutes the Dahkro summoned us to the inside, where we found a company of 260 soldiers of the Ashanti regiment in their leopard-skin uniform, ranged before the king. The monarch sat under the Pwe-shed, surrounded by his wives, and on my arrival advanced to meet me. After "compliments," our mutual healths were pledged, and then I took my seat beneath an umbrella, to the king's right.

The soldiers then commenced firing, dancing, and singing, which lasted for about half an hour. The king then called me and presented me with a leopard-skin cap and a musket, and said that he made me a general in this company. This honour is usually conferred upon visitors who fall into the good graces of the sovereign. More firing and dancing continued, the captains of the soldiers advancing to me and calling out their password, "*Nqualshu!*" to which I replied *pro formâ*, "*Whohau!*" The Governor then was announced, who was received by the king, and afterwards conducted to an umbrella on the left of the square, where he could get but a very sorry view of the scene. It must have been rather humiliating to him to be a spectator, but he had brought it all upon himself by his foolish conduct.

A troop of Amazons then filed in, bearing calabashes of cooked food, cankie, maize, flour, tea, a sugar loaf, jars of oil, sealed pots of water, onions, oranges, bananas, pomegranates, cashews, and other fruits. These were set in a row before the king. After them came a second band, bringing fowls, ducks, Guinea fowl, pigeons, partridges, four goats, four sheep, and two bullocks.

I was then summoned to the front, and Hahansu kneeling

before me with a lantern on each side of him, for it was by this time quite dark, delivered the king's message.

“Gelelé sends welcome to you (thrice repeated). He holds you close to his heart! No man who ever came to see him was so good a man as yourself. He thanks you for your trouble for the sea, for the journey to Abomey, for the swamp, and for waiting for him until now. He was determined to welcome you to-day in spite of rain, thunder or lightning. He welcomes you with all these gifts, and promises to give you your pass to Whydah in a few days.” I made a suitable reply, and then Hahansu danced to me, a compliment which I returned.

The Amazons then brought in numbers of lanterns, horn, glass, or tin with holes in the sides, and the king, Hahansu, and I had a ballet among ourselves; the gun-firing and shouting being deafening. We went through the decapitation-dance, the sword-dance, and others; I, of course, taking the cue from my partners.

Rum, liquours, and water were then brought and distributed to all, and the provisions were carried outside and delivered to a number of porters who, under the charge of Bukau, conveyed them to my residence.

The prince then made another speech, saying that Gelelé had welcomed me as he had never before welcomed a white man, and that he had sent his own Amazonian guard to fire a salute in my honour, and that I should have the stick of my regiment. He then presented me with a Kpo carved into a rude idea of a human fist, with several rings of silver round the apex.

A troop of Amazons then came in and fired off a considerable amount of powder; after which, shouting out their password, they retired. The king then delivered me over to Hahansu, with instructions to conduct me to the state banquet prepared for me. I was led through several courtyards, *Ahgo* being duly cried out before us, and finally halted under a large shed which was dimly illuminated by several lanterns and four large palm-oil lamps. On a table a perfect regiment of bottles were arranged,

and we opened the proceedings by drinking the king's and the prince's health. Hahansu said that, although he was glad to welcome me in this manner, by which all the people would know that I was really the king's friend, yet he was sorry, because he would soon have to bid me good-by, and would never see my face again, he feared.

A sumptuous repast was then served up, consisting of roast, boiled, grilled, and devilled meats, vegetables, bread, and claret together with *limonade gazeuse* by way of drinks.

We were furnished with knives and forks, and most of the conveniences of civilization; the greatest drawback being the assiduous attention of the waiters, who sometimes, fearing that I had overlooked some *bonne bouche*, would pick it up in their fingers and put it on my plate.

The banquet over, water and napkins were brought, and we rinsed our hands, after which more lemonade was produced, together with a box of cigars.

After a long conversation on various topics, the prince rose and conducted me to the gate, where he delivered me to the care of the Ashanti soldiers, who accompanied me to my quarters, singing, dancing, and firing guns. When I arrived I gave orders to Amoosu to give the escort a demijohn of rum, which was received with volleys of applause. They assured me that I was a "proper" general, and that they would be led by me to fight against any people. If I said they must go through fire, they must go; if I wished them to go into the earth, they must descend; all my wishes must be carried out.

I then retired, the weight of honours pressing heavily upon me, and did not succeed in getting any sleep until long past midnight, owing to the singing, gun-firing, and dancing of the escort and my guard of honour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BUSH-KING'S ATTOH CUSTOM.

The king's speech—Palaver with the Benazon—Distribution of cloth for Addokpon—Present to the builders of the Jegbeh palace—Execution for Addokpon, and conclusion of his Attoh Custom—Attoh Custom for Hahansu.

The Firing for the Attoh Custom.—Attoh Custom for the Amazons—Baptism of the Roué company—Sham-fight of the male troops—Parade of Amazons—Gelelé's speech—Reproof of the priests—Allegory of the Liseh—Consecration of Gézu's calabashes—Caution to the priests.

THE next morning was to commence the Attoh custom for Addokpon, the bush-king, and we were summoned to the gate about three o'clock.

No sooner had we lighted our pipes than the king came out accompanied by his Amazonian guard, and ascended the platform to the right of the Pwe-shed. I noticed that the king had not his usual parasol in addition to the state umbrella, and was told that when performing custom for Addokpon the parasol was not used, that being one of the privileges Akhosu reserved to himself.

He then made a long speech respecting the conduct of the soldiers during the late attack upon Abeokeuta. He said that they had often promised to break Abeokeuta for him, and yet they had never done anything but bring disgrace upon him. He asked what he had done to deserve such treatment. Of course several braves got up and declared that they would take Abeokeuta single-handed, and made other braggadocio speeches of a like nature, which, however absurd, appeared to satisfy the monarch, who thereupon commenced to throw cowries, which were scrambled for by the rabble.

After an hour of this sport, "*Ahgo*" was called, and the Benazon summoned. Contrary to the usual custom in such cases—when the name of the officer is scarcely out of the king's lips ere the customary answer of "*Wae*" is made, and the person asked for is seen running to the king—Benazon did not put in an appearance. His name was called out by the heralds, and at last a messenger was despatched to his house to make inquiries.

The king then made a speech, and said that it was not a good thing for a monarch to ask for any person and find that he was not in the presence; everybody ought to wait and see if the king wanted them. In about ten minutes the delinquent treasurer made his appearance with his hands bound before him, hurried along by two of the Ajkayaho's guards. When he approached the platform he fell on his knees, and began to throw dust on his head. The king then asked where he had been. He said that he had been home preparing his house for the princess whom the king had promised him in marriage. Thereupon the king ordered him to be taken to prison, and this high dignitary was hurried off as if he were one of the rabble, and ignominiously thrust into the Ajkayaho's gaol. The law in Dahomey evidently knows no distinction of persons.

The king then said that he should not give his daughter to any man who had not respect enough to him to wait in the court until the king left it. It then cropped up that Benazon had asked permission of the king to retire, and a new palaver arose to find out the Dahkro who ought to have given the king the message, and who had evidently given the Benazon a false reply. This, however, was a matter for the "inside" and not to be spoken before the *canaille*. After this, several ministers and generals received cloth and cowries for Addokpon, and I was summoned to the platform, where I was presented with a large roll of chintz and twelve heads of cowries.

The Adonejan then ascended the ladder, and said that so many palavers had arisen during the day, that the king could not finish all the cowrie-throwing on that day, but would come out

early in the morning and dash the remaining cowries, and then proceed with the second portion of the Custom for Addokpon.

The Meu then came to us, bringing a huge decanter of West India rum, and gave us permission, in the king's name, to retire.

We did not go to the court on the following day until three in the afternoon, as we were by this time getting rather tired of sitting still for hours and seeing a number of half-naked savages scrambling for cowries.

We found on seating ourselves that we had arrived in the nick of time, for the cowrie struggle was just over. The masons, carpenters, and other workmen who were engaged in building the Jegbeh palace were then summoned, and cowries, cotton cloths, oranges, and cankies were given to them. The "strangers" were next called up, and presented with similar valuables. After this the Governor and I received a few yards of printed *brillante*, and then took up our position near the hedge of thorns at the foot of the platform.

Ten men were then brought up and hoisted upon the shoulders of some of the Blue guards, together with the three victims of lower organization. I again begged the king to dash me some of the victims for Addokpon as he had previously done for Akhosu. The eight captives to the extreme left were then unlashd from the baskets, and the other two thrown from the platform and decapitated, together with the alligator and his companions.

Cowries wrapped in *crimson* cloth were then given to the officers present, and a firing of guns announced the conclusion of Addokpon's Attoh Custom.

Gelelé then descended from his station on the platform, and seated himself on a sofa beneath several large umbrellas which had been set up to the proper left of a small platform that had hitherto escaped my observation, or more probably, had only been erected since yesterday.

This smaller Attoh was a miniature of Gelelé's, but without the victim-shed and the calico covering. Hahansu and the

other princes of the blood then ascended this platform, *and* threw a few cowries to the people, and concluded by throwing over four ducks, two goats and a sheep, which were tied to baskets in a similar manner to the human victims. The heads of these animals were then cut off; and a few bunches of cowries tied in *blue* cloth being thrown to the people, two guns were fired, thus bringing the Attoh for the princes to a termination happily without the crime of murder attached to it.

Gelelé then retired within the palace, and we received a pass bottle from the king and one also from the princes, and, just as the sun was setting, set out for home.

THE FIRING FOR THE ATTOH CUSTOM.

For the next two days the king was busily engaged in performing the Attoh custom for the Amazons within the palace walls; merely perambulating the palace about ten o'clock in the forenoon, accompanied by his Amazonian guards. He was carried the first day in a dark blue hammock, and on the second appeared in state in one of the old-fashioned chariots, drawn by about forty Amazons.

I was suffering from an attack of intermittent fever, and was glad of a couple of days' respite from the hard labours of "pleasure;" for I can assure the incredulous reader that it *is* hard work to sit for hours under a burning sun.

In the evening of the second day I went by hammock down the Kana road to see the "proving" of the newly organised *roué* company, as I christened the culprits in the Amazonian palaver for want of a better term. Just in the fork of the roads near the Adanwe palace the soldiers were drawn up in line, and on my arrival declared that they were going to make a road for Gelelé. As the only road open was the main road to Kana, I could not understand their palaver for a few minutes, until Amoosu told me that they were going to charge the "bush." The "bush" was a tangled thicket of prickly pears, acacias, lianas, and aloes; and I could scarcely believe that any naked-

Man in his senses would attempt to enter it. I was however, for at a given signal the corps charged full to the bush, and in about ten minutes emerged on the opposite road, whither we had gone to see them come out. A sorry appearance they put in when they arrived, with torn uniforms, bleeding with numerous wounds from the thorny shrubs as they limped along; but when all had passed through they commenced a song for Gelelé, and notwithstanding their wounds, commenced to dance. Surely they must have been in a state of frenzy, for after an hour's performance they started off for Coomassie, singing and firing guns as they marched along, sorely scratched by their conflict with a botanical foe.

The next morning we repaired to the western Uhon-nukon at an early hour, prepared for another long day's sitting. After being stared at for about twenty minutes, the king made his appearance, dressed in fighting costume, with the black war-streaks on his face. On his arrival, the ministers advanced to meet him, and throwing themselves on all-fours before him, scattered the sand about them in perfect showers. The main body of the soldiery, who had remained concealed round the northern angle of the palace, then came forward, and formed a line on either side of the king. At a signal from Gelelé, they all advanced, firing their guns, as on the "glad" day for the So-sin Custom, and an army at the western side of the square wheeled round, formed into a clumsy column, and marched three times round the square.

They then assembled round the king, and in a deafening uproar yelled out their respective watch-words, ending by throwing their guns up into the air, and catching them dexterously by the barrel as they descended. The effect of a thousand brightly polished guns suddenly thrown aloft was very curious. The male soldiery then filed off to the north on an itinerary round the palace and Uhunglo market.

The Amazons then came forward and went through similar evolutions, their watch-cries jarring upon the ear by reason of

their shrill voices. Just as they started on their round the male soldiery appeared on our right, and the Tononun and his company commenced to set up the umbrellas in an open square before the Pwe-shed at the gate, leaving a bamboo-guarded path for the Amazons to enter the courtyard on their return from the circumambulation of the palace.

Meanwhile Gelelé had taken his seat under the shed, and had "liquored up," and by the time "daybreak" was announced, the firing party of Amazons had arrived upon the ground and taken up their positions round the king.

Gelelé then made a lengthy speech. He commenced by asking where the remainder of the fetiche people were, and why they had not come to the court? He said that a herald had gone round three days beforehand and given notice that everybody must attend on this day. He would have sent for the Avogan, were he not too old to be hurried up to the capital. He would, however, send full particulars of the meeting to him by trusty messengers. "*Ahgo*" was then called out, and a few strong names ejaculated by the hunchbacked police.

The king then said that formerly the Dahomans were always in hot water, being surrounded by powerful enemies, who made them pay tribute, and were constantly ravaging their country. In Tegbwesun's time, however, there was quiet; so also in Mpen-gula's and in Agongolu's time. During the reign of Gézu everybody was happy, and there was plenty of trade, and everything prospered. He conquered many nations, and broke towns without number.

Now, however, the people had become stiffnecked and perverse. His Mohammedans, with their Arabic inscriptions and charms, deceived him. His fetiche people made all sorts of mistakes, and the Bukono diviners, who cast lots to ascertain the will of the gods, told him many lies. How was this? He gave them everything that lay in his power, and everything they asked for, whether cowries, bullocks, goats, slaves, or wives; but still, in spite of all this, they did not tell him the truth. Look at the

expense he was put to during the last war, no person could estimate it, not even himself. The diviners told him he would go out and meet with an easy victory, and yet he was beaten back and disgraced.

If any person was desirous of becoming king, thinking that he would have nothing to do, let him come and try it, even for one moon. He would find that he would get no rest, night or day, but would be constantly receiving and sending messengers, and if he made any mistake great palavers would arise.

It was true that he was a great king, and had plenty of wives, slaves, money, and umbrellas, but what was the good of all these, if he had no leisure to enjoy them?

On the other hand, he had many enemies, and if he once rested they would rise up and take his country and his people from him. He must always be on his guard. He was befooled by his people in the last war, but they should not do it again. If he were not continually making Custom, and telling his people what to do, they would all desert him and run away to the bush, where they would be caught and sold as slaves.

The Khetungan, the Amazonian Gaou, here made the remark that the Amazons inside performed their part properly, and that it was the outside people who neglected their business.

A basket of fruit like a cashew, here called *Liseh*, the Akyan of the Fantees, was then brought out. The ripe fruit is easily broken open, but the immature ones are very hard and tough. Gelelé then took a ripe and an unripe cashew in his hands and "made a parable."

He said that he saw plenty of ripe fruit hanging in the garden, but he was going to despise it and go straight to the unripe. It would not be long before he went. The "bush" would tremble this year. "The Lion" would get up out of his lair and prowl about for his prey, and every one would quake with fear.

The hidden meaning of this was that Gelelé would not go to war with the small towns, but against a large one—Abeokeuta. He then unfurled a new standard, bearing four scarlet cashews

on a white ground. This he gave to the captain of the Life-guards, and told him that when he had taken Abeokeuta he was to give the flag back again to the king inside the palace. I am very much afraid the flag will never be returned. He then said that his father Gézu had told him that if he made two calabashes for him, when his spirit came to drink it would come to the calabashes, and would there tell him if he would be successful in his undertakings, so that he need not be deceived by the fetiche people.

He then called out to the Amazons, who brought out two fetiche "calabashes" of the extinguisher shape, made of silver, with iron and brass ornaments. On the side of each extinguisher were four iron projections, pierced with holes, and round the bottom was a row of silver Lisch nuts, above which a row of brazen knob-sticks for the Bo-fetiche was fixed. From one of them a small affair like a fish-hook dangled, and from the other two indescribable filagree somethings; both strong fetiche, no doubt. Attached to one side of each calabash was a highly decorated silver pistol; one with a barrel twelve inches long for Gézu, and the other eight inches long for Gahqpwel, Gézu's bush-king. A silver cover, in the shape of a calabash, with a small stalk by way of a handle, covered the calabashes, which were about eighteen inches high and nine in diameter, and fixed on iron rods five feet long.

Gelelé had these planted before him, and showed and explained them to his admiring audience. Kposu then made a speech, saying that "it was good that Abeokeuta must be taken this year. King Gézu was a great king. All the white people loved him, and last year the white people came and danced for him, although he was dead. This was a good sign. Now white men were here also; one of them the king's great friend. Let them come and see the calabashes, that the king's friend may write and tell his people what Gelelé has done for Gézu."

Loud applause followed this speech, and I was then called out and requested to examine the fetiche calabashes. They were of

rude workmanship, most likely formed out of dollars melted up, and to the king's delight I took a sketch of them, which he greatly admired. I said that it was, no doubt, good for the white men to reverence the memory of his father, Gézu, and that I was glad that I was present at this Custom to see the calabashes, and had no doubt that when the king went to war again he would be successful. Deafening cheers and prayers then succeeded, and the king taking my hand said, with much emotion, "Yes, yes, it is true, as long as you are my friend I must be successful."

Gelclé then had the calabashes removed, and told the people that when they retired from the court they were to think of what he had told them, and be industrious, and fight with brave hearts, and not run away as if they were cowards. He said that if they only carried out his orders they would always be happy; but that if they disobeyed the orders of their lawful king they must expect sorrow and punishment. He concluded by saying that in future if any of the Bo-fetichists, or enchanters, told him anything false, so that it did not come to pass, as they prophesied, at the next war, they must certainly be killed; and that if any man gave any fetiche priestess a bullock, goat, or fowl to pray strongly for the success of any undertaking, and it afterwards failed, the priestess should certainly lose her head.

It was by this time nearly nine o'clock, and we were very much relieved when we saw our Dahkro approach with our passurum, and a lantern for our accommodation.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

Visit to Abomey—The “Storey House”—Palace gates of the kings—The blacksmiths’ quarter—Description of a smithy and native mode of working iron—The Gaou-hwe-gudoh—The Abomey gate—“Golgotha”—Palaver at home.

The First Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.—Visit to the Dahomey palace—Gates of the mothers of the kings—Tombs of Daho, Aho, and Akabah—Ceremony of conversing with the deceased kings’ spirits—Kpofensu’s palaver.

The Second Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.—The Kosi bards—Offerings to the spirits of the three kings—Prayers to the deceased kings—Decapitation of a man for the spirits—The blood sprinkling—Banquet of the kings’ spirits—Return by the Western route.

The Third Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.—Agajah’s palace at Abomey—Tombs of Agajah, Tegbwesun, Mpengula and Agongolu—Description of their monumental ornaments—Agajah’s spirit-house—Tombs of the mothers of the four kings—Speech of the Kosi—A forgetful Dahkro—A crafty merchant—Offerings to Agajah.

THE next day Ghugalah came early to me and brought word from the king that he had gone to Abomey to pay a visit to one of the tombs. As I thought it would be a good opportunity to see more of the old town than I had hitherto done, I ordered out my hammock and started for the palace.

The way led through the Uhunglo market, where as heterogeneous a collection was exposed for sale as at Whydah; but the space covered by the booths was more than four times as large. Leaving this busy scene on our left, we passed through the Akoehyogbonun, the south-eastern gate of the capital. I dismounted from my hammock and walked through. The “gate” was a thick mud wall, five courses high, with two gaps ten feet wide cut through it. The one to the left was appropriated by the king, and closed by a wicker screen, while the right-hand portal was open to the common folk.

Passing straight through this by no means imposing structure, and leaving a battery of honeycombed guns on the left, we went on in a northerly direction, until we reached the celebrated Abomey palace on our left, the usual swish wall of five courses high.

I then alighted from my hammock to have a chat with Hahansu, who was having an *al fresco* breakfast, consisting of all the delicacies of the season. He conversed upon various matters, but was particularly profuse in his eulogies respecting the carrying powers of one of my guns,* with which he had been shooting the day before. He said that the guns bought at Whydah were not worthy of mention in comparison with mine; besides which they were flint guns, and when the edge of the flint was worn away, it took up much valuable time in adjusting another.

The trade guns of which he spoke are Birmingham manufactured articles, all Tower proof; but as they can be purchased retail for seven shillings and sixpence, their finish is not the acme of perfection.

After pledging our healths I again started for the scene of the state ceremonies, the jabbering of the hammock-men being wonderfully increased by the heavy potations of rum they had indulged in at Hahansu's expense.

We continually met gangs of the Amazons with their bells, causing our progress to be a succession of tacks from side to side, instead of making a straight course. We soon came on to a broad open space, the Uhon-nukon Singbo, or square, for the "Storey House." Here the Customs were performed last year.

Beneath some large trees in the centre were several old brass cannons, one, as mentioned by Beecham, with the date 1640 upon it, and others doubtless nearly as ancient. On the left was an opening in the palace wall, with the usual Pwe-shed, called

* This was a double-barrelled muzzle-loader, of 13 gauge, by Messrs. E. M. Reilly & Son, of Oxford-street. It was a great favourite with me, and had proved a faithful servant among the gorillas of the Gaboon. A more steady-shooting, trustworthy weapon at the price I never handled.

the Adan-glo-koh-deh. The name means, "Let the brave people (come and take Dahomey) if they like plenty of fighting." Beyond this was the celebrated Singbo, or Storey House, the first building ever erected in the capital with an upper floor. It was a barn-like shed, about forty feet high, with the usual thatched roof. Eight holes, closed with green-painted wooden shutters, served as windows, and a small Pwe-shed covered the rude ladder that led to the upper floor. Opposite this a row of low sheds were built for the accommodation of the lieges during the sitting of the Dahoman Parliament.

Turning an angle in the palace we came upon another shed, the Agrim-masogbe; and beyond it a second gate, the Agwaji, called also from its builder, Tegbwesun's gate. In front of this was a small pool of water, which received the drainage of this portion of the Abomey palace, not by any manner of means a wise sanitary arrangement.

Beyond, round another angle of the palace wall, is the Cowrie House, as the Gehwe is known to Europeans. This, like the Singbo, is a "storey-house," but very much weather-worn and dilapidated. A row of what were once window-holes are now fast merging into a single gap, and the whole place is evidently tottering to its fall. In the good old times long strings of cowries were hung out of the windows during Customs time, and festoons of dollars, the price of the slaves sold at Whydah, astonished the gaping crowd below. On the palace wall near it the heads of numerous victims, including the 127 victims of the Customs of 1785, formed an ornament along its ridge.

We were now arrived at the north-eastern angle of the Abomey palace, where a large Pwe-shed covered the ancient gate of Agajah—the Agrim-go-men. Turning to the left, we came to the Han-ho-nukonji gate, the north-eastern entrance built by Mpengula, in Abomey, with several elephant bones and other relics strewn around. This palace is one of several others built within the spacious walls of the Abomey enceinte, and the reader is cautioned against supposing that it is a totally separate building

from the Abomey palace, when, in fact, it forms a part of that enormous pile of mud buildings.

Amoosu then went into the courtyard to present my compliments to the king, and soon after returned with a pass bottle of rum. His message was that the king sent his compliments to me, and said he was not doing anything worth seeing, but merely making arrangements for the Sin Kwain Custom, and that tomorrow I should be admitted. Nevertheless he was pleased that I had called at the palace.

I therefore again took hammock, and returned home, this time taking another route. Our way led us past the Meu's palace, through the blacksmiths' quarter, where a number of native artificers were at work. I dismounted to examine their mode of forging the ironwork which I had seen exposed in the market. The shops were open sheds, and the fire was made in a hollow on the floor, the fuel being charcoal and palm kernel-husks.

A draught was generated by a small pair of bellows of the regular savage pattern. Two wooden cylinders, rudely formed from portions of tree trunks, were fixed in the ground about four feet from the fire. On the top of each of these, a leather bag, like a stocking leg was fastened, the upper end being gathered round a long stick passing through the wooden cylinders. Within the tubes were leather valves, so that by raising one of these air was admitted into the bag, and on pressing it down it was expelled through a wooden pipe extending from the bottom of the cylinders to the fire, where the end was covered with clay to prevent it burning. The two pipes from the cylinders were fixed into one tuyère, so that by alternately elevating and depressing the handles, something like a continuous blast was produced. I have seen a pair of bellows among the Fans exactly resembling these. It is one of the many instances of the great similarity between the implements of widely separated savage nations. Between the hearth and bellows a large earthen saucer was set up on its side to act as a screen,

and the cylinders and pipes of the bellows were buried in swish. The anvil was a large block of granite, brought with considerable labour from Mahi. The face was tolerably smooth, but not placed horizontally as with us, but sloping at an angle of forty-five degrees. The hammers were heavy iron affairs, shaped like the beaters used by plumbers in flattening lead. Some had flat faces, and others convex, the latter being used in fashioning hoes, fetiche-ascen, and other hollow articles. The operator stood behind the apex of the anvil, and stooped over his work in a very back-aching position, one would suppose. The work was held by tongs of iron, evidently copied from European articles, and they had in addition punches, cold chisels, files, and drills, all manufactured on the spot. Some of the more wealthy blacksmiths have a few English tools; but with the majority, as is also the case with Chinese cabinet-makers, skill in the use of an inferior tool more than compensates for the want of the better articles manufactured in England.

When any orders come in—for they manufacture for stock with but few exceptions, as in the case of the more common knives and fetiche-irons—a certain quantity of iron is weighed out, from which the required article is forged, and the price of the article is dependent upon this and the finish. They do not smelt iron, but obtain it from the coast, where it is imported from England in the form of bars and rods. A very little is bought from the tribes to the north, and this is exclusively used for fetiche purposes.

Their workmanship is not nearly so good as that of the Fan tribe on the Gaboon, who, with even ruder tools, will make knives of wonderful temper. The labour is excessive, the massive iron maces they use for hammers rendering a heavy blow almost a herculean feat. Strange that they should not have discovered so simple a tool as a hammer, but this is a circumstance noticed among many tribes.

Of course the craft has a tutelary deity, the *Guh*, which is stuck up in a conspicuous place under the shed, and has offerings of

water and a hasty pudding of maize-flour made to it every morning. The deity is often decorated with small hoes, knives, fetiche-irons, all the manufacture of Tubal Cain or his assistants. The price of a hoe with a blade six inches square, is two heads of cowries; and when we consider that a week's labour is expended upon its production, it is by no means exorbitant.

Immediately beyond the blacksmithery is the quarter called the Abo-kho-nun, the old wall-gate, from the circumstance that here was the entrance to the old town which was taken by the Ffons when they conquered the country. Agajah had it removed further afield and rebuilt on the old model. We shall presently pass through it. Near this smithery are the houses of the two great field-m Marshals of the Dahoman army, situated on the edge of a square called the Gaou-hwe-gudoh, on the eastern side of which are two batteries containing about seventy aged cannon, utterly useless except to blow their artillerymen to pieces. On the right is the residence of the Kposu, and opposite is that of the Gaou.

Passing between these "Horse Guards," we entered a small market-place, the Agbonunkhi, where a few catables were exposed for sale, and returning the salute of the guards stationed in little sheds on either side of the way, under the command of the Dosumwen, we dismounted at the Abomey gate *par excellence*.

The Ffon word "Abo" or "Agbo," means "a gate," or rather "a town wall with gates in it"; and the preposition "men" signifies "within." Abomen, or Abomey, as we call it, means therefore "(the town) within the gates." This is literally true, for it is not a walled town, the Abo being a repetition of the Akochyon gate leading on to the Uhunglo market—a mud wall eighty yards long pierced with two gaps, the one on the right as you pass out, for the king, and the other for the people. A hurdle-like screen closes the royal entrance, and a like protection is said to be placed across the other gate at night, but I never saw it. The sides of the gaps were well ornamented with skulls and other human bones, with a

multitude of indescribable fetiche charms, while a Bo-fetiche figure on each side guarded the entrance.

Hats off was the rule as we passed through this ancient portal, beyond which was a shallow ditch bridged by two tree trunks well worn by the passage of the feet of travellers. The royal entrance was reached by a mound thrown across the ditch, which extended round the town, but was, as usual, choked with weeds.

A singular custom prevailed respecting this bridge. The tree trunks are very slippery and inclined at a considerable gradient. If any person slipped off into the ditch he invariably lost his head, which was fixed up to the outside of the gate, and we saw nine of these grinning mementoes of mortality nailed to the swish.

Immediately adjoining this gate, which leads out upon the Kana road, the thick acacia hedge commences which surrounds the town, growing on each side of the moat. This is known as the Zun, and is left for defence, a natural fortification common to many towns in West Africa. It would appear to be practically impassable; but, after the experience of the Roué company, its invulnerability is questionable. The road leads about seventy yards outside this hedge, the intervening space being kept clear of weeds; as otherwise, when the grass is burnt before the rains, the Zun would run a considerable risk of being set on fire. At the time we passed, the acacias were in flower, their fragrant white blossoms reminding me of the shrubs growing by the side of some of the carriage-drives of English houses. Turning to the right, we passed along the outside of the *enceinte*.

Five minutes' walk brought us to the "Golgotha," I was going to say, but that term is hardly appropriate to the place where the headless corpses of the victims are dragged. A narrow path led through the Zun into the ditch, where hundreds of human skeletons lay bleaching in the sun. All bore evident traces of the horrid work of the hyenas, and on the left several vultures were busily engaged on the recent additions to this fearful *Aceldama*. This was the place whence the unearthly laughter

and satanic growls proceeded that had so often disturbed me in the midnight watches. The tracks of numerous animals were well marked in the soft earth, and after nightfall no person will pass along this *via dolorosa*, for fear of furnishing a meal to the *fera nature* who prowl about.

Beyond this unhallowed spot, at a distance of about half a mile, we passed the country residence of the Adonejan, Ghugalah's father, which was the usual dwelling of his mother and of his royal sisters. Passing this we soon after came out upon the main road near the fetiche-guarded entrance to the Coomassie quarter by which we had entered the capital. A walk of a quarter of an hour then brought us to our quarters, where a great palaver had to be settled.

It appears that there had been considerable difficulty in settling the disputes among the hammock-men and porters as to the division of the rum and provisions sent from the palace. Last night the haggling culminated in a fight, and Amoosu had sent the ringleaders to jail.

On arrival this evening, the palaver was to be tried, and the culprits were brought before Amoosu with their hands tied behind them. After giving them a severe reprimand, he condemned each of the nine delinquents to have two sticks broken across their backs, and the sentence was carried out on the spot, after which the criminals came and *begged my pardon for disturbing me*.

THE FIRST SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

The Custom of Watering the Kings' Spirits, which was now about to commence, usually follows the So Sin, but upon this occasion the Attoh intervened. The So Sin and Attoh Customs are a general Custom for all the king's ancestors, especially for the father of the reigning monarch. Hence the Gezoyeho in the Uhon-nukon, and the frequent songs in that monarch's honour. In the Sin Kwain Custom, which was instituted by Agaja, the

king visits each of the graves of his ancestors *seriatim*, usually sleeping four or five days in the palace of each of the seven predecessors of Gézu. The spirits of the deceased monarchs are invoked and solicited to lend their aid to the living representative, by the sacrifice of men and animals, whose blood is sprinkled not upon the tombs, but upon the mysterious fetiche-irons which are swathed in calico envelopes and guarded in the spirit-houses of each of the kings. The human sacrifices upon these occasions were formerly very numerous, but under the milder reign of Gézu the number was reduced to two.

In consequence of the performance of the Attoh Custom, the king slept one night only in each palace, generally passing from one to the other at night time with the usual pageant. The Custom commenced on November 8th, by the king proceeding to the old Dahoman palace to the north-west of the Abomey *enceinte*, accompanied by all his Amazonian guards firing, dancing, singing, and playing "music" (?).

About noon we started for the scene, and, after passing through the square opposite the Agrim-go-men and the Han-ho-nukonji gate of Mpengula, we continued our march along the side of the palace wall through the Kechi market-place. Turning short round one of the angles of the palace, we came upon another gate, the Patinsa, where the palace of Aho is situated. Beyond this, at the north-western angle, is the postern sacred to Adono, Agajah's mother, the columns supporting the Pwe-shed being chequered black and white. A little beyond is the gate of Hunajileh, Mpengula's (Sinmenkpen) mother.

Leaving this to the left, we struck off to the old Dahoman palace, opposite which is the residence of the Ningam, occupied by that officer when the court is in Abomey. The usual gaol was annexed to the ministerial palace, the tall swish walls being armed with a *chereaux-de-frize* of sharpened spikes, and the compound, as usual, well filled. This gate is known as Adanglacordeh, which is called Dange-le-cordeh by Forbes, and which Burton erroneously places in the Abomey palace.

After being announced by Amoosu, we passed through the courtyard behind the Pwe-shed, and entered a second enclosure through a gate on the left. This courtyard is called the Ago-men, and contains the tombs of the first three kings of the empire, Daho, Aho, and Akabah. These are situated on the left, and consist of three low circular walls covered with a high-pitched conical roof. The walls were whitewashed, and a low door was just visible beneath the projecting cones. Aho, the



TOMBS OF DAHO, AHO, AND AKAHAI.

first king, had his tomb in the centre; on his left was Akabah's sepulchre, while Daho reposed on the right.

The summit of Aho's tomb was crowned by a silver ornament representing an umbrella with fetiche ornaments suspended from the lappets by silver chains. On the top of this, supported by a tall stand, was a silver cock. Daho's tomb was likewise decorated with a similar ornament. The apex of the mausoleum of Akabah was crowned by a silver wheel placed horizontally, with a silver

affair like an elongated acorn rising from the axle; on the top of this, the umbrella-shaped ornament upbore a third silver chandelier. Over each door the thatch was cut back, and a miniature josusu gallows erected before it.

Encircling each of these tombs, with a gap on each side, was a mound of swish with a little conical heap at the ends of each segment. The mounds were stuck full of skulls, and the heaps were crowned with a pile of human thigh bones. On one side of Akabah's tomb was an inverted neptune, or brass pan, and several blood-stained sohwe were scattered about.

At a distance of three yards before each of these, a fetiche-*asen* of enormous size was fixed, swathed in a multitude of cloths. These are supposed to be the spirits of the three kings, and they are the fetiches which are sprinkled with Nesu water and blood during the Custom.

Opposite the gateway leading into the courtyard a long shed extended across the western side. The walls were whitewashed and pierced with square holes, generally arranged in quincunx like those on the side of an English barn. In the centre a green and white cloth was spread over the thatch, indicating the position of the king, who reclined on the usual sofa; a verandah of showy umbrellas rendering his person almost invisible by reason of the deep shadow. The Amazons were squatting under the barn, but in consequence of the walls but few could be seen except those in the immediate neighbourhood of the king.

The three brass-mounted calvariæ and fourteen neptunes of skulls were set out in front of the royal seat; and near the fetiche spirit-irons the Tansino and Bassajeh were seated in mysterious silence under tattered umbrellas. Round the swathed fetiches a group of women were squatting, waving bundles of small rods, like butchers' fly-besoms, with the idea of driving away evil spirits.

A long palaver was under weigh as we entered respecting the capture of Abeokeuta, each war-captain giving his opinion as to the better plan of assault.

A loud ting-tang from a monstrous gong-gong and cries of *Ahgo!* and a general movement among the assembly, the rear-most standing up, betokened the advent of some ceremony of unusual interest.

The king then rose from his couch and came from under the umbrellas into the open. The Bassajeh, escorted by the Tansino, then slowly approached the king, silver horns being blown in a diminuendo style. The king took each of the Bessajeh by the hands, and raising them to a level with their faces, in this way shook hands with his deceased ancestors. The eight Bassajeh joined their hands one above the other, and Gelelé grasping their upper and undermost hands in his own, swore that Abeokeuta must be taken this year. He then held a long conversation with his ancestors in a low voice, and finally, again shaking hands all round, the Bassajeh retired, and a similar performance was gone through with the Tansino.

Rum, cowries, and cloth were then dashed to the deceased monarchs through the medium of the Bassajeh; and the Tansino had a similar present on behalf of the methers of the old kings.

The effect of the king's bounty was to open the mouths of the priestesses, who delivered the answers of their indwelling king-spirits in an oracular manner. They said that the king must go to Abeokeuta and take it, assuring him of their aid in the matter. He would be successful this time, and then he and his people could rest and make plenty of trade. During this ceremony the greatest excitement prevailed amongst the audience, all speaking in whispers and silently throwing themselves flat on the ground after their manner of praying for the king.

When the spirit-wives had retired, the Amazonian captains made several speeches, accompanying their words by violent gestures, Abeokeuta being as usual the theme.

A number of old men, superannuated privates in the army, then received presents of cloth, cowries, and rum. The Kpofensu, or head-jester, watched his opportunity and stole a bottle of rum

from one of the aged soldiers, and, going to the front, commenced to drink it with every sign of the enjoyment and relish generally said to appertain to stolen fruit. This petty larceny being one of the peculiar offices attached to his position, a roar of laughter went through the court. Kpofensu then got up and gave the audience the benefit of his life-history. He said that Agajah, the fourth king, bought some brass blunderbusses, and formed with them the renowned company of Agbaraya. The grandfather of the present Kpofensu was placed over these as colonel, and under his command they achieved many glorious victories. "Kpofensu when at war fights like a lion, but when at Abomey he dresses in rags and whitens himself and then steals, smokes, dances, and whistles before the king," suiting the action to each word.

THE SECOND SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

The next day we proceeded to the Dahoman palace to witness the concluding ceremony of the Sin Kwain for the first three kings of the Empire.

On our arrival the Ko-si, or public women, were playing their peculiar Addugba drum, and singing the history of the three kings, who were buried within the precincts of the palace. The Ko-si for the inside occasionally relieved their "outer" brethren, and then both parties danced to the music of two flageolets.

The Tansino and Bassajeh then set up a monotonous chant, and three gagged and bound criminals, two bullocks, four goats, one sheep, and several ducks, fowls, pigeons, an alligator, three cats, and a number of small parrots, together with several bottles of rum, Bagwe pots with Nesu water and a large quantity of fruit and cooked provisions, were brought in. The king, dressed in fetiche costume, with his face blackened, and wearing a white cloth tied round his head, having a very different appearance from that he usually presented, came out from the Pwe-shed,

and approached the three sacred irons, which were unswathed and a trench about a foot deep dug round each. The Bassajeh then raised their hands above their heads, and king, lords, and commons went down on all fours, while we bowed our heads. The Agasumo then prayed to the ghosts of Daho, Aho, and Akabah that they would bless the labours of their descendant, and give him long life, success in his wars, and would confound his enemies.

The rum and Nesu water were then splashed over the irons by the priestesses, who uttered a kind of wail which rose and fell in measured cadence. The three human victims were then brought to the front, and the two nearest the king released, while the third was decapitated by the Agasumo, and his blood sprinkled upon the fetiche-irons. Then followed a wholesale butchery of the various animals, until the ground in the neighbourhood of the Asen was literally a sanguinary swamp.

Three tables were then brought out and set before the three fetiche-irons, upon which the cooked provisions and fruit were set out, and the feast of the deceased monarchs commenced.

A small fetiche-iron to the extreme left was next uncovered, and a few fowls sacrificed to it after the rum and water had been poured over it. This was the spirit of Chai, Tegbwesun's mother.

After this, other provisions were brought out and distributed to the ministers and privates, the strangers and ourselves coming in for a share with the rest.

A song and the discharge of nine muskets brought this sanguinary rite to a conclusion.

We set out for our quarters by the western route, leaving the gate of Hunajileh on the left. A short walk brought us to the Ajahi market-place, whose market-day precedes that at the Uhunglo, near the Coomassie palace. In this quarter the clay-pits which furnish the material from which the native pottery is made, are situated, the manufacture being chiefly in the hands of the Amazons. We were then brought up by the passage of a

long string of Amazonian water-carriers, who were bringing in a supply from the Nyassa pits.

After they had passed we came to the gate of Tegbwesun's mother, Chai, principally distinguished by the number of fetiche-pots surrounding it. Beyond it is the portal of the mother of Gézu, Agotime, with an ornament of eight skulls on either side of the doorway, and a collection of bones at the foot, while a very dilapidated skull was nailed to the centre of the rude wooden door.

Near it is Senune's gate, the mother of Agongolu, with a mound on each side, capped with a chaplet of skulls and a pile of bones. After another interruption from the royal aquariæ, we came to a gap in the swish wall of the palace, closed with matting and bamboo trellis-work, similar to that of which the houses of the Mpongwes on the Gaboon are built. On the death of Zoindi, Gelelé's mother, this gate will be finished and called after her. At present a mere postern, with a door of matting, is all that is to be seen. We were then at the north-western angle of the palace, and, turning sharp to the left, passed along the western wall or enceinte, containing one gate only, the Nukuson, and came out near the Akochoyo gate, thus completing the circuit of the Abomey palace. A walk through the Uhunglo market soon brought us to our quarters; and leaving Amoosu to divide the savoury viands we had received at the palace, I wrote up my journal, a matter which ought never to be postponed until the fresh impressions on the mind are clouded or erased by new events.

THE THIRD SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

We started at midday on November the 10th for Agrimogo-men, the gate of Agajah's palace in Abomey. On reaching the gate we waited under one of the umbrella-trees opposite the portal, while Amoosu went in and announced our arrival to the king. The outside of the gate is ornamented with pieces of wood, bearing a considerable resemblance to horse-shoes, and

the remnants of forty-six crania are still to be seen upon it. A pile of elephant's bones, trophies from Mahi, is heaped before it, and the usual Bo-fetiché altars are erected outside the Pweshed.

On being summoned to the inside we passed through the dim portal into a long shed, evidently used as a kind of lumber-room, beyond which is a long passage, turning abruptly to the left and nearly pitch dark, having no windows in the walls. This led us to a large Notoh, containing the wrecks of several of the royal coaches, drawn up to the right, together with a number of sedan-chairs and other relics of the "good old times," when such presents were made to the king by the slave-dealers. Passing through this courtyard to a gate opposite, we entered a second Pweshed, where a perfect museum of worn-out fetiché deities, wooden images, and what-not was stored up. Two massive wooden doors, covered with fetiché charms, closed the portal, and, on being admitted by the janitors, we entered the presence.

On the left we discovered a long whitewashed barn, whose sides were ornamented with rude figures of men, animals, and inanimate objects in relief. Underneath this the Amazonian cohorts were assembled, peeping through the loop-holes, which were the only windows in the wall. Opposite us, separated from the Amazons' shed, was a similar building, the walls being stained in broad stripes of red, white, and brown. A gorgeous cloth, spread over the roof, and three umbrellas, marked the king's seat, the captainesses and Dahkros being seated on either side. Immediately opposite the king was the mausoleum, containing the ashes of four kings—Agajah, Tegbwesun, Mpengula, and Agongolu. The tomb was a long barn with a high-pitched roof. On the ridge were four silver ornaments belonging to the respective monarchs.

To the left was the monument of Agajah—a silver cock standing on a globe, supported by an Asen which rose from the centre of a silver wheel, from the circumference of which four fetiché hearts of silver were suspended by chains. The wheel rested

upon the top of an extinguisher surmounting a skull, all being wrought out of silver dollars.

The next ornament was that of Tegbwesun—a silver acorn, supporting a wheel and skull, on the top of which was a silver tree with two straggling branches, each supporting a cock.

To the right of this was a peculiar double-globed cylinder, supporting a silver coronet, from the lower edge of which silver hearts were hung. Above this, surrounding the top of the



TOMBS OF AGAJAH, TEGBWESUN, MPENGULA, AND AGONGOLU.

cylinder, was a circlet of knobbed *oyoh*, and on the apex a man with his left arm akimbo brandished a sword in his right. This was Mpengula's ornament.

On the extreme right was the elaborate monument belonging to King Agongolu. Two silver soldiers, armed with guns, supported on their heads a square framework hung with silver hearts. Above this two other soldiers bore a smaller framework, on the top of which two Dahoman warriors stood in warlike

attitudes. Through the centre, a tall cylinder with globe-like ornaments helped the soldiers to support the frames. The whole of this elaborate affair was of silver, and about four feet high. The hearts swung about in the wind, and chinked together with a peculiar tinkle, and the polished silver glittered in the sun, showing that these valuables were only set up upon state occasions.

The entrance to the tomb was beneath the ornament of Agajah ; a mere gap in the wall and thatch, before which a royal umbrella, a fetiche ditto, and a large parasol of crimson and white silk were set up. A group of Amazons surrounded the portal waving their besoms, to "drive the devil away." In front, and to the right, was a long mound ornamented with human crania, and numerous heaps of human bones were scattered about. Between the heaps and the tomb was a small conical thatched shed, supposed to contain the spirit of King Agajah. It was surmounted by a peculiar brass ornament like a broad arrow.

On the right was a large conical shed with a brass ornament on the top, representing a cresset with branches growing out of it. This was the tomb of Adono, Chai, Hunajileh, and Senunc, the mothers of the four monarchs.

The Adugdoh and the Kosi were busily engaged in singing historical ballads. On my entrance, one of them explained, that whereas the old kings fought and conquered many people and built fine palaces, yet Gelelé did better than them all, for he was only going to break Abeokeuta, after which he will dash plenty of cloth and rum, wives and slaves, to his people. He had no rest day nor night ; yet, although he was so good a king, his people did not fight strongly for him ; they must, therefore, try and do better for so good a king in future wars.

This speech greatly pleased Gelelé, who dashed four heads of cowries to the bard. Other songs followed, both by the public ladies, the Amazons, and "outsiders." During this ceremony I received permission from the king to approach the tomb and make a sketch of it, with which the king was highly delighted,

pointing out the several ornaments as depicted on the paper, to his royal wives.

One of the Dahkros was sent with some message to the inside, and returned, requesting the king to repeat it, as she had forgotten it. This roused Gelelé's ire, and the memory of the Dahkro was refreshed by one of the Dahkro captains, who belaboured the poor creature with a stick, until she thought discretion the better part of valour, and ran away, followed by the fat old captainess, who waddled like a duck in the vain endeavour to catch the offender. I should have mentioned that during this Custom the officers wore long Mohammedan gowns of various coloured cloth, with the double "consciencés" on them. Kpofensu and his company got into a scrape for not executing some trivial command of the king, and were brought up to the front, where they raised a little sandstorm by their vigorous dirt shovelling. The Ajakyaho and his myrmidons carried out the sentence passed upon them by boxing their ears, just as a child is punished at home; the abject submission of the men being pitiable to see.

After this palaver a crafty merchant was brought up for trial, accused of obtaining goods on credit from the factory at Godome, in the name of the king. He was sentenced to have forty-six rods broken over his back, and to have his house broken by the Donpwe. As this was Custom time for the spirits, his punishment was deferred until the conclusion of the Sin Kwain, he, in the meanwhile, being consigned to the tender care of the Ajakyaho.

The Tansino and Bassageh then came out, and the king held communion with his ancestors, as at the Dahoman palace. After this two Nago prisoners were brought in, together with a miscellaneous collection of sacrifices similar to those for Aho and his companion.

A long palaver ensued comparing the respective bravery of the Amazons and the Men, and at its conclusion the Nago victims were released and appointed as sweepers in the palace. The

baskets were then taken off to the right, down the narrow passage between the king's shed and the Amazons' barn, followed by the remaining animals for sacrifice. After this a procession of nine stools, nine hammocks, nine flags, and nine swords marched past, which were manufactured to show that Gelelé was the ninth king in the Dahoman dynasty.

We soon after left the palace, having begged to be excused from attendance on the morrow to see the victims killed, as I was suffering from an attack of fever.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM—(continued).

- The Fourth Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.*—Visit to Tegbwesun's palace—Custom respecting it—Sacrifice to that monarch—Mahé trophy from Kenglo—Its history—Circuit of the northern *enceinte* on our return.
- The Fifth Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.*—Visit to Mpengula's palace—Present of "chop" to the king by the officers' wives—Mpengula's spirit-house—Curious ape from Mahi—Offerings to Mpengula—Visit to the pottery.
- The Sixth Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.*—Visit to Agongolu's palace—Weavers—Agongolu's spirit-house—Caught napping—River ants and their habits.
- The Seventh Section of the Sin Kwain Custom.*—Sacrifice of a Nago for Agongolu—Gézu's spirit-house—Sacrifice of three victims and conclusion of the Sin Kwain Custom.

THE FOURTH SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

ON the 12th we started soon after breakfast for the palace of Tegbwesun, on the north-west of the Abomey palace. Passing the old Dahoman mansion on the right, we came to an opening in the *enceinte*, called the Abo-e-jaga (the gate through which [the king] goes out.) We were then in the north-western suburb rejoicing in the name of Adan-do-kpo-ji, and soon came to the royal abode of Tegbwesun, encircled by the usual five-storied swish wall. This palace is called Adandokpoji-Lisch hoonzeh.

When Tegbwesun had determined to build his palace, he fixed upon this place, which had a grove of Lisch trees growing upon it. These were cut down, with the exception of one, to which human sacrifices were offered, it being one of the representatives of Attin bodun. He therefore gave the palace the name which it now bears, and which may be translated, "The brave (man's

house) over the top of the hill of the blood-stained Lizeh trees."

Upon our entrance Gelelé arose from his reclining posture, and bade us welcome to the old palace of his fathers, and asked me to make a sketch of Tegbwesun's spirit house, which was situated there.

This sacred abode was built on the left of the square courtyard, and consists of an oblong shed, the roof being supported on three sides by swish walls coloured red, white, and green. On the red stripe to the right there was a white globe, representing the sun, and on the left a crescent, obviously intended for the sister luminary. The eaves were supported by tree logs, not very straight, and a little raised earthen step ran before the entrance. Within this gay temple we could see the swathing cloths covering the fetiche iron of Tegbwesun's spirit, with its custodians beating off the devil with their besoms. In front of the temple was a circular patch of chalked earth, in the centre of which an umbrella was stuck. On the left a circle of twenty-two skulls enclosed a similar whitened circle, with a single skull in the middle.

A custom prevails respecting this palace for the caboccers to watch all night at the gate. A number of the lieges being more fond of their couches than their duty slipped away to their houses, but Gelelé, perhaps suspecting such a remission, sent Benazon to inspect the officers in the middle of the night, and the delinquents were discovered. The Ajakyaho was immediately sent with orders to put the offenders in prison as soon as he caught them.

On our arrival at the palace the prisoners were before the court, two of the king's brothers and the Kposu figuring amongst them. The king soundly rated them for their lax observance of the laws, and said that a man, who, being set to guard the king's gate, went to sleep or left it to visit his wife, ought to be severely punished, as the enemy might come and take his guns from him, and kill him, and afterwards come and take the king prisoner.

He told his brothers that if they did not humble themselves before him, he would disrate them and make them sweepers in his palace, and put more deserving persons in their places; since, although they were his brothers, they were also his subjects. The Amazons also lent their mite to the reprimand, and the palaver lasted about an hour, after which they were sentenced to be abused by the whole court. Every person in the court then gave them the benefit of all the degrading epithets in the Dahoman slang dictionary, and truly the *langage des halles* of the native vocabulary afforded ample scope. During their punishment the culprits were throwing handfuls of dust over themselves, until they looked as if they had been buried and dug up again.

The Tansino and Bassageh ceremony was then performed, and three victims brought in, two of whom were spared. The remaining portion of the ceremony was similar to that in the Dahoman palace.

On our return we passed round the eastern side of the palace, and crossed over the open space to the south-western extremity of the wall which bounds the town on the north, forming a crescent-shaped outwork. *En route*, we passed a heap of blocks of granite, one of the national trophies. When Duncan paid a visit to the Mahi tribes, he was insulted by the caboceer and people of Kenglo, and on his return Gézu told Duncan that when he came back again to Abomey he would see that Gézu had brought Kenglo there to meet him.

The next year Gézu fell upon the Kenglo people, who, fearing the vengeance of the Dahoman monarch, had piled up heaps of stones on the top of the hill, upon which the town was built. As the Dahomans had to climb the hill in the face of the avalanche which was launched upon them by the Kenglo people, they suffered such heavy losses that they began to waver. Upon this E-ah-weh, the English mother, with nine others went to the other side of the hill and took the Kenglo people by surprise in the rear. Thereupon a panic ensued, and the Dahomans rushing

up utterly routed the people, taking a great number of prisoners, amongst whom was the king, Dansogeh. Gézu made them take up the stones they had collected to throw down upon the Dahomans, and carry them to Abomey, where they were piled up in a pyramid thirty feet high, with a side of about forty feet. Dansogeh was then taken and placed before the Adanzan, near the Coomassie palace, and the Dahoman army marched before him to show him his presumptuous folly in insulting any friend of so great a king. He was then beheaded, and his skull now adorns one of Gézu's sword handles.

Passing through the gate leading to the Nyassa water and the Didoh pits, called Alomablimenbonun, we turned to the right and proceeded round the Zun hedge, which concealed the ditch before the wall. In twenty minutes we arrived at another gate, the Tohunbonun, a dilapidated postern leading to the north to a village called Dokon, where is the country estate and palm oil plantation of the Avogan. Turning to the right again we continued our march, and soon afterwards came to the Abomey gate and the Kana road, which we had before visited. On passing the dreaded burial ground our hammockmen hurried along to avoid the fearful stench. A number of vultures, disturbed by our approach, took a few circles in the air, and then settled down again to the horrid banquet.

THE FIFTH SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

The 13th was again a holiday to us, as we did not care to witness the inhuman butchery at the palace, and on the 14th we proceeded to Mpengula's palace, situated near Tegbwesun's, and called Adandokpoji Hasch, or "the brave man's palace built on the top of the hill of Hasch trees." Burton, on page 237, vol. ii., confuses this with Tegbwesun's palace.

We again changed our route, so as to complete the circumambulation of the town, proceeding through the Uhunglo market and the Kpogoeji, where a small market is held purposely for the sale of vegetables. We entered the Abomey *enceinte* by the

Eyeosegbabonun, or the gate to commemorate the breaking of the Eyeos, who, attacking Agajah and being repulsed, filled this ditch with their dead bodies. Ten minutes beyond, surrounded by plantations of cassava, is a fetiche-guarded swearing place or Adangbnoten. Presently we came to the gate in the wall, known as the Adandokpoji gate, leading to that quarter, guarded by four blackened skulls and several magic charms. Beyond is a small temple erected by Mpengula to contain the Nesu water, and in ten minutes we arrived at the Meu's house, opposite the palace.

A splendid grove of palm oil trees stretched on our right hand; part of which was fenced off by a line of grass rope, to allow a safe passage for the Amazons, whose trains were continually going and returning between the palace and Abomey. Soon after our arrival all the prisoners from the Adonejan jail came along, red as North American Indians, and all with their wrists bound together.

On entering we passed through the first courtyard, where the wives of all the caboccers were assembled with presents of cooked food for the king, contained in calabashes wrapped in new cloths. Passing through a second gallery, we entered the inner notoh, where the court was being held.

The walls of this reception square were coloured dark brown, with broad white stripes running parallel to the ground, and were covered with paintings of men, birds, beasts, guns, &c., in brown and yellow ochre.

Opposite the entrance was Mpengula's spirit-house.

Thick pillars of swish supported the roof, the end ones being whitewashed and decorated with blue horizontal lines upon their front. The centre ones, which were rudely fashioned into columns with capital and plinth, were also whitewashed and ornamented with squares, diamonds, triangles, and other figures in blue, scarlet, and black distemper. The front of the raised floor was covered with white sand; and within, the usual spirit-guardians surrounded the cloth-covered Asen.

To the right was a small conical shed, like a Legba temple, by the side of which stood a table with several human bones spread out upon it.

The king was seated to the left of this temple, and before him were several huge baskets filled with kankie, which was afterwards dashed to the soldiers.

Presently the wives of the caboceers marched in procession before the king, delivering up their burdens to the Amazons, who ranged them in a triple row behind the bamboo poles.

Various palavers were then brought upon the *tapis* and discussed, during which a company of hunters, who had been absent nine months in Mahi, brought in the semi-putrid body of a large ape, neither a gorilla nor chimpanzee, with both of which my experience in the Gaboon rendered me perfectly familiar. Is it possible that there is yet another anthropomorphous animal to be discovered? I made every endeavour to get an examination of the body, but it was at once handed over to the fetiche people, who carried it off and destroyed it before I could get a chance of a close inspection.

The jesters, who were dressed in brand new jackets of scarlet blanketing, then performed various childish antics before the king; after which the usual conference with the spirits completed the ceremony. Three men were brought in, but happily were all reprieved, and rated sweepers in the palace. After receiving *pass rum* we left the presence and proceeded homewards through the Abijeh, where a considerable quantity of the earthenware used in the country is manufactured. The clay is impregnated with manganese, giving a black colour to the pottery. It is principally dug near the Didoh water pits, situated to the north-east. We then struck the road leading to the Tavosagbonun, or gate of Tavosa, said to be the mother of Akabah, and a quarter of an hour after entered the inner *enceinte* through the Agesi-bonun, the gate of Agesi, Aho's mother, the road from which leads to the northern water pits.

Pursuing our way through crooked lanes, in great want of

an inspector of nuisances, we at length struck the Dahoman palace, from whence the road home was well known to us.

We had now passed round the walls or rather hedge of Abomey, and also the northern outwork. It will be seen that the Dahoman palace contained the tomb and residence of the three first kings of the empire; while Abomey was the residence of Agajah, and contained the tombs of Agajah, Tegbwesun, Mpengula, and Agongolu. Gézu's tomb is also within its precincts, and will be hereafter described. The custom of each king constructing a gate in this palatial residence for himself and one for his mother also obtains; the royal gates being on the north-east and east, and south, while the gates of the kings' mothers are on the north and north-west.

THE SIXTH SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

On the 16th we started for the Bwekon-hwe-gboh, the palace of Agongolu, situated on the south-east of the Coomassie palace. The name may be interpreted as meaning "the everlasting happy king's big house," a singularly inappropriate title, for Agongolu was the King John of Dahomey, being the most unfortunate of her monarchs. Our way led us through the palm-bordered approach to the Coomassie palace, leaving which by a sharp turn to the right, we arrived at the Nesu house for Agongolu, where we awaited our summons to the inside. The Uhon-nukon was occupied by several of the royal weavers, who were preparing the warp for grass-cloths. Four sticks were fixed in the ground at the angles of a large oblong, and the grass, which was very much like *phormium* or New Zealand flax, was tied to one of the sticks and carried outside the others, forming three sides of the oblong.

One of the umbrella trees in the square was so covered with cuckoo-spit insects that the sap exuding from their bodies dropped on the ground in a continual shower like rain.

The Ningan made his appearance soon after our arrival, on his way to the palace *incog.*; he having been very ill for the last four days. On going inside, the Ko-si bards were in full song,

accompanied by two jesters who brandished wooden swords with the blades richly carved with figures of birds, men, and animals, while the females waved circular brass fans.

The spirit-house was on the right of the courtyard, of the usual oblong shape; the centres of the whitewashed pillars being ornamented with a kind of rude tracery on the swish, above which a green bird was painted.

The royal seat was in front of the entrance gate in the middle of a long barn; the usual bright-coloured cloth on the roof marking the position of royalty. The pillars in the neighbourhood of the king were bound round with blue cloth, and a number of various coloured cloths formed a background to the throne.

Nothing worth mentioning transpired during the *séance*—one of the two victims being reprieved—except the fact that just as we were about leaving, a number of soldiers were caught asleep by the hunchbacked guards, and a palaver ensued which lasted until 2 A.M.

It is said that the cowries that are given to the Tansino and Bassageh upon these occasions are taken from the stores left in the palace by the deceased monarchs.

For several nights past we had been much annoyed by the black driver ants. During the day, only a few stragglers are to be seen, who appear to be scouts from the main army, on the look-out for prey, to which they may lead their companions when they sally forth at nightfall. The vanguard generally makes its appearance about eleven o'clock, just when everybody is sound asleep. The moment they arrive, the unfortunate sleeper who happens to be in their path, is aroused by a sensation as if his whole body were being pierced with red hot needles, the pain increasing every moment. His only resource is to yield the palm of victory to his tormentors, and getting out of the way as quickly as possible, to pick them off his body one by one. The pain caused by their bite varies according to the nature of the assailant. A soldier after firmly placing his legs so as to obtain

good foothold, grasps the flesh of his victim with his powerful mandibles, and having once pierced the skin moves his jaws with saw-like motion from side to side. With each stroke he penetrates deeper into the flesh, and so eager is he in his thirst for blood, that he will allow himself to be torn away, piece by piece, rather than let go his hold. The heads and mandibles of the soldiers are of enormous size compared with their bodies, and the pain of their bite is excessive.

The workers seldom attack unless provoked, and their bite is like the prick of a needle. Upon one occasion I observed them attack a half dead rat. The soldiers first commenced operations alone, swarming all over the body, and the malignity of their bite was testified by the squeaks and writhings of the devoted rat. When all the struggles were over, the workers came upon the scene, and began cutting and tearing at the flesh, detaching pieces of gigantic size, when we consider the comparative minuteness of the insect. These fragments were seized upon by the workers below and carried off to the nest. Hundreds of thousands of ants were engaged in the work of destruction.

Their path was about an inch in breadth, perfectly smooth, all the rough particles being removed to the side, where they formed a bank about a third of an inch in height. Along this road the ants were coming and going in countless myriads, the stragglers being hurried back to the line of route by the soldiers stationed at intervals, whose business seemed to be the preservation of order and the protection of the workers. The approach of a lighted lamp seemed in no way to disconcert them, but towards morning they disappeared, except when the superiority or abundance of the food held out an inducement for prolonged labour. On such occasions they took every precaution against exposure to sunlight, the shadow of a wall or tree being eagerly seized upon.

When the line of route necessarily crossed the open, as when it came to a footpath, a bank was thrown up high enough to shade the workers, or if the sun had long risen an arched tunnel of sand was formed above the pathway. The broad glare of the

sunshine was fatal to them, and after one of the tunnels was destroyed, the ground in the vicinity was strewn with the bodies of terror-stricken ants. Nothing seems exempt from their attacks. Some birds in a cage, hung up against the wall of my house, were attacked and killed, fowls were often found dead and half devoured, and a goat that was fastened up to a stake appealed to us by its bleatings for release from its tormentors.

Scalding water stays their progress for an instant; but so countless are their numbers that though ten thousand be destroyed, their places are at once filled up. Sometimes compact masses containing millions are to be met with, generally in long grass. These appear to be armies resting during the day, as, when the sun is set, they may be found busily at work.

Often were we driven out of house and home by the armies of drivers; and I would any day sooner face a gorilla or a leopard than suffer an attack of drivers.

THE SEVENTH SECTION OF THE SIN KWAIN CUSTOM.

On the 17th November a Nago captive was sacrificed to the Maues of Agongolu; and about midnight the king returned to the Coomassie palace, amidst the hubbub of gun-firing, dancing, and singing. As this was the last ceremony of the Sin Kwain, we gladly repaired to the palace, and had sent in the announcement of our arrival before noon. Passing through the Notoh, where the "Procession of the king's wealth" was exhibited, we arrived at a gateway, the door of which was adorned with the wooden carving of a head. Beyond this, a narrow passage led from the various apartments on the east to those on the western side of the palace. The wooden figures mounted on wheels were here stored up beneath thatched sheds. Crossing this alley-way we entered an inner court, within which was the spirit-house of Gézu, Gelelé's father. This was an oblong edifice of twice the size of the spirit-houses of the other kings. The whitewashed pillars, which were deeply fretted, were covered with splendid cloths of native manufacture, and the inner walls were also

covered with tapestry of a similar kind. The interior contained a large fetiche calabash, or asen, before which an ottoman or divan was covered with gaudy-coloured country cloths. The front of the temple had a space two yards broad parted from the rest of the courtyard by a row of skulls, with broken pieces of pottery and stones between them, set in the swish which was taken from the gates of the palaces wherein the heads of the victims and messengers had been stuck. The roof was of thatch, and down the centre hung a very creditable specimen of blacksmith's work. This was a brass apron, composed of forty rectangular sheets of brass, each hinged to the others, the whole covering a space of about six feet square. Each of the brass sheets was embossed in a fanciful pattern, the general effect being very beautiful. To the lower edge of the apron a row of seven and thirty bells was attached by brass chains. The apron was suspended by four chains, composed of flat pieces of brass attached to an embossed ridge piece of the same metal, to the top of which thirty-eight bells were attached. From the centre of this brazen ridge-tile a brazen affair of a dumb-bell shape supported a small coronet, from which hung four small brazen human heads, and above this a large wheel supported eighteen bells which tinkled in the wind with a weird music, which was supposed to be Gézu's spirit calling to his son.

The ceremonial was similar to that at the other palaces, except that three victims were sacrificed, and the number of the animals offered at the shrine was also increased.

This concluded the Sin-Kwain Custom for 1871, at which seven human beings lost their lives.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ANLIN CUSTOM AND THE PAYMENT OF THE TRIBUTE.

The Anlin Custom.—Dance of princes—Ballet of Addokpon's company—Akhosu's procession—His Amazonian procession—Addokpon's processions for the Aulin—The "Lake of Blood"—Sacrifices for the Anlin custom, and conclusion.

The Payment of the Tribute.—Dance of princes—Payment of cowries by the ministers—Fetiche ecstasy—A Dahoman box of Pandora—A drunken deity—New fetiche irons and their consecration—Apotheosis of Gézu.

WE had by this time given up all hopes of returning to Whydah until the Annual Customs were over. From the 19th to the 27th the king was employed in dismissing various regiments who had been detained at the capital on account of the Custom; at intervals keeping up the public excitement by dances, and firing at the gates of the Jezbeh palace, his own private residence. During this time the Gu-hoh or Gun Custom huts were repaired between the king's palaces and Whydah.

On the 27th, I was sent for to the Coomassie southern Uhonukon, where I found Hahansu and the princes of the blood accompanied by a band, dancing round the Adanzan, brandishing swords, and leaping like eastern dervishes. The Prince led the way, not keeping in a direct line, but progressing in a series of zigzag takings from side to side. After him came Addokpon's company, composed of the sons of the late king. After thrice perambulating the square they formed a line opposite the Adanzan, and danced for about an hour, when the usual signal of guns and drums announced the arrival of the king in the western Uhonukon.

The dancers then ceased their exertions, and we went to the western square, where we found our umbrella set up on the northern side, nearly opposite the spot where the princes Attoh had formerly stood.

The king and his Amazons were seated beneath an umbrella verandah at the Pwe shed, and soon after our arrival a body of soldiers appeared, firing guns, dancing wildly, and singing. They were followed by a troop of 103 men, carrying long poles, to the ends of which ducks, fowls, alligators, pigeons, cats, and birds of every description were attached, together with bottles of rum and strings of cowries. They were followed by others carrying 20 sheep, 14 goats, and 20 pigs, tied to baskets, while five Nago prisoners of war brought up the rear.

After these came the priestesses, dressed in long grass sashes and turbans, who danced before the king for about an hour, their singular dresses forming a weird picture.

After them a similar procession of Amazons paraded, the place of the doomed men being taken by a woman who was not tied to a basket, but hoisted on the shoulders of a strapping Amazon. She was gagged, and as the Amazons danced along, the two guards on each side of her kept shaking her hands and inciting her to dance; a not very likely thing for a person to do in her fearful position. This was the only time I ever saw a woman led out for execution.

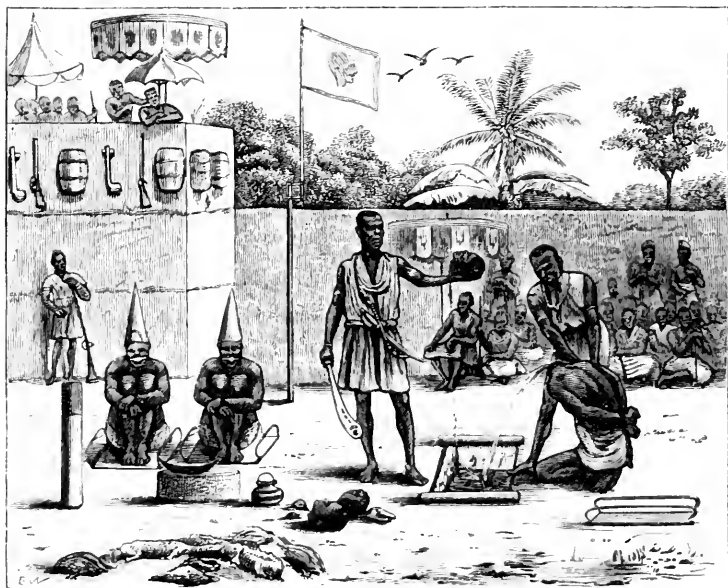
Then followed the princesses with grass accoutrements, who, after perambulating the square three times, danced before the king for about half an hour, and then retired to the left of the gate.

Addokpon's company then appeared, carrying a smaller assortment of fowls, etc., and five other Nago captives. After their dances they halted near the prince's company, and were followed by the Bush king's Amazons, with a second female victim, who danced, and then retired to the right of the first Amazonian company.

I was then summoned to the right of the Pwe shed, where I found the following preparations made :—

Two pits, about three feet square by three feet deep, had been dug, the edges being protected by logs of wood. On the side of one of them stood a small silver canoe, upon a small raised earth step, and several Bo-fetiche images with their accompanying irons were ranged around.

The princes then came up to the pit, having the canoe opposite to it, and commenced to decapitate the fowls, ducks, sheep, etc., their necks being placed on the logs, and the blood allowed to run



THE LAKE OF BLOOD.

into the pit. One of the men was then brought up and his head cut off by Hahansu's executioner. Either the knife was very blunt, or the man unnerved,—not a very likely thing, however,—for the poor wretch was hacked about in a fearful manner before the operation was completed, and my clothes were splashed all over with the blood. The other victims were then beheaded.

The Bush king's company were then taken to the other pit, and a similar sacrifice offered, except that the captives, after the

baskets were tilted on end ready for the fatal stroke, were re-
rieved by order of the king. While this butchery was going on to
the right, the Amazons were performing a similar office on their
side, but happily for the cause of humanity both the women were
spared. I never heard of a woman being decapitated as an
offering, although their fears were well worked up beforehand,
so that they suffered all the mental torment of an actual ex-
ecution. After this the princes danced round the square, and
a feu d'enfer from the soldiers brought this ceremony to a con-
clusion.

This is the Custom respecting which we were told in England
that "the king possessed an artificial lake, and during the Custom
he had so many persons killed that their blood filled the lake,
and the king stepping into a canoe paddled about the gory sea."
Exaggeration could scarcely go further, but this is only a single
instance of the tales we have been asked to believe of this
country. *Ab uno disce omnes.*

THE PAYMENT OF THE TRIBUTE.

The next day we went to the gate to see the Payment of the
tribute by the caboccers.

On arrival at the western gate we found the king distributing
cloth and cowries to the outside and inside ministers.

The Tononun then arranged the sticks in a semi-circle round
the throne, and several heaps of cowries were placed at intervals
along the bamboos.

The princes then commenced a dance, which lasted for about
five minutes. The chief of the Doupwe then knelt down
behind the first heap of cowries, and placing his hands upon it
called out, "Ningun sends cowries to the king to help him make
Custom. He has received many cowries from Gelelé, so he must
return a portion."

The heads of cowries were then carried off by one of the
Amazons, and a ballet of five minutes' duration on the part of
the princesses followed; when Meu's tribute was announced, and

this alternate dancing and paying tribute continued until nearly sunset. It must be understood that the heap of cowries exhibited in public is only a *pro formâ* tribute, the actual payment being made to the Benazon, and amounts to a considerable sum on the part of the ministers, who nevertheless go down on all fours and smother themselves with swish when offered a single string by the sovereign. Besides the cowries, private douceurs were presented to the king, some being the veriest trifles, but, like the widow's mite, valued more for the spirit with which they were given than their intrinsic value. For instance, cankies, gun flints, half a dozen strings of white beads, a few pipes, a knife, trade looking-glass, packet of needles, a brass thimble, &c., were all presented and duly announced; the donor kneeling down and dusting himself during the ceremony. The next day a similar performance occupied the court until nearly four o'clock, when a new fetiche rite was introduced.

"*Algo*" was sounded, and everybody seemed on the tiptoe of expectation, the courtiers quietly rubbing swish on their foreheads with their fingers.

Presently a band of Bukono appeared from behind the southwestern angle of the palace. They were clustered round a girl apparently about eight years of age, who carried a calabash ornamented with blood-stained cowries, besides being copiously daubed with the sanguinary fluid. This girl was evidently in a state of ecstacy similar to that state of clairvoyance which is utilised by the "Spiritualists" for the delusion of their victims.

She reeled from side to side as though intoxicated, her eyes having that peculiar vacant look which ever denotes an abnormal action of the brain. Her attendants had considerable difficulty in keeping the calabash on her head as she staggered about all over the square.

On the arrival of this cortége before the king, the Bukono pushed the girl across the sticks, where she was met by the king, who, assisted by some of the Tansino, endeavoured to keep the calabash firmly upon the girl's head. After a prayer for the king

had been offered by the Agasunno, the calabash was lifted off the girl's head by the Tansino, the spirits appearing to be exorcised by the removal, for shortly after the priestess recovered her senses.

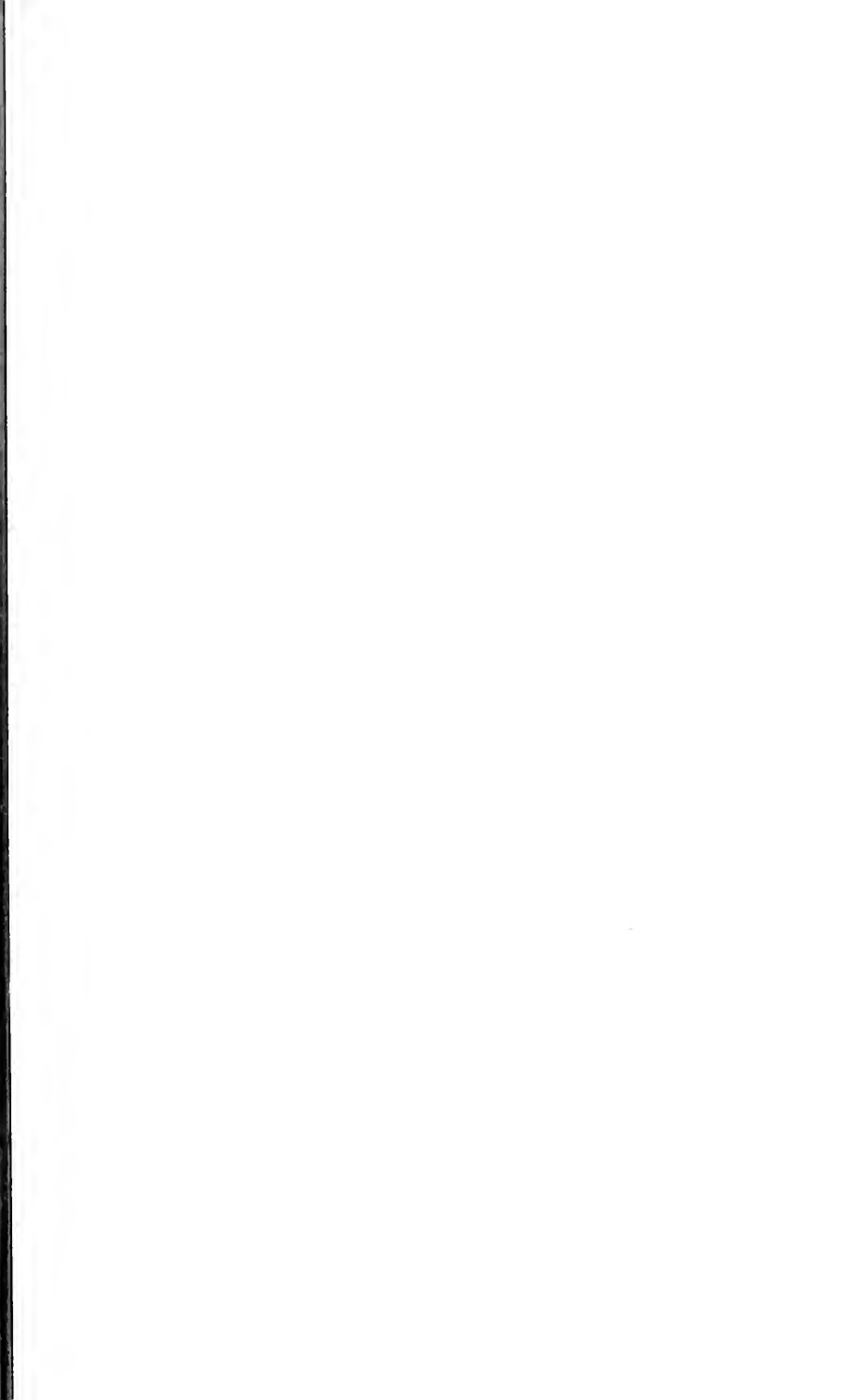
The Bukono then sang a song recounting the brave deeds of the Dahoman monarchs, after which the Agasunno made a long speech to the same effect. The king then brought a bottle of rum, and cautiously raising the lid of the calabash, as though it were a veritable box of Pandora, slipped the bottle under it. The calabash was then lifted on the girl's head, who shortly after commenced her wild actions, and the Bukono receiving her from the king, conveyed her to the Abomey palace, whence she had set out. This was said to be a fetiche ceremony introduced from Mahé to prevent the devil from going about and inflicting the small-pox upon the people. The deity is supposed to be contained in the calabash, and the rum is stealthily introduced so as not to allow him to escape. Upon perceiving the tempting offering, the god applies to the rum bottle and gets drunk upon the contents, when he is of course incapable of fulfilling his evil mission until he is sober again. A quaint superstition!

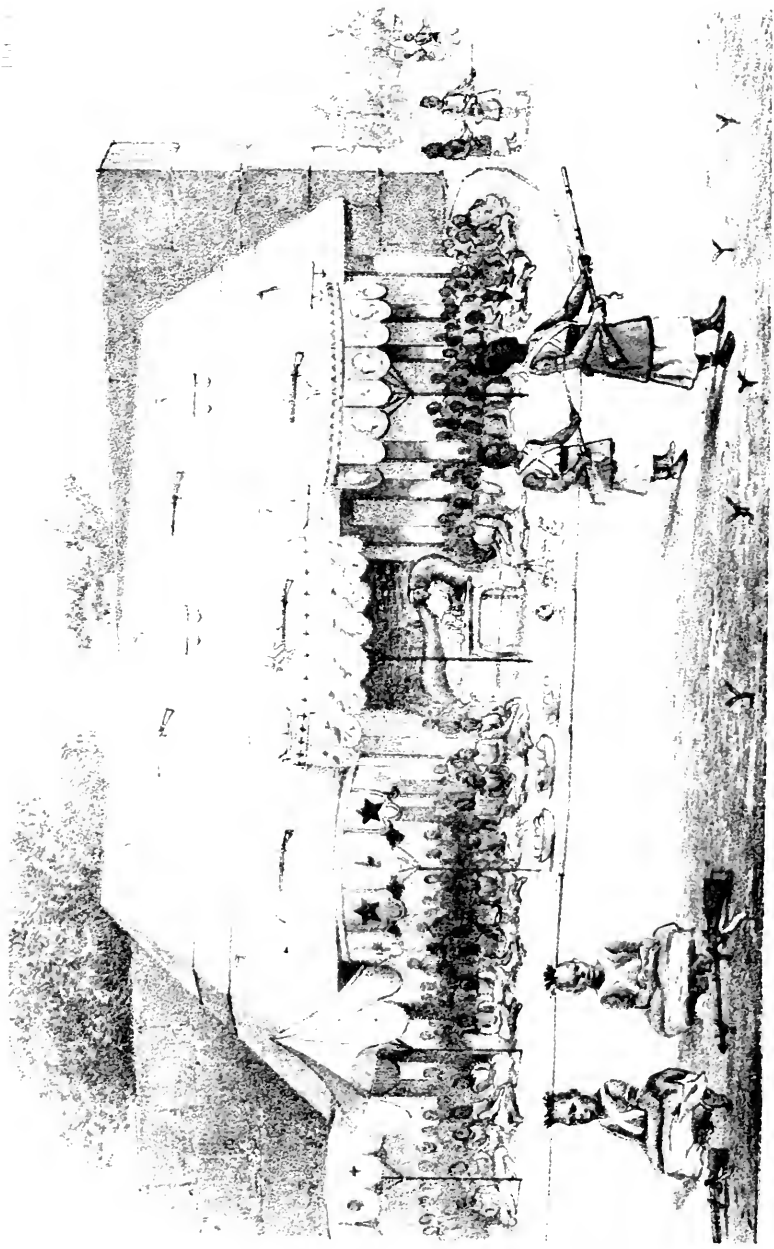
Three large fetiche extinguisher irons were then brought out and set up. They were made of iron, with brass ornaments upon them. Gelelé then came up and explained their use. He said that if a man wished to prosper he prayed to his fetiche to help him. Gézu prayed to his fetiche, and succeeded in everything he attempted. Gézu himself was therefore the greatest fetiche of them all, and the people must therefore pray to him. These calabashes were made for him, and by praying to them he hoped to be successful.

This speech was then repeated by the Meu, and upon its conclusion all the people present commenced to throw themselves on the ground, rolling over on their backs and muttering cries of *Borl ah, Borl*, and other unintelligible nonsense; that being the national system of prayer. This speech of Gelelé's was the nearest approach to apotheosism I met with in the country.

Prayers over, the king took a bottle of rum and poured out a libation before the calabashes, thus consecrating them to his service. After this several corps of Amazons came out and danced, the ball being kept up until after midnight; it would perhaps have lasted until daylight had not a severe thunderstorm dispersed the crowd.

The next day two other calabashes were dedicated to Gézu, after which new guns were presented to the ministers, with strict injunctions to use them in the capture of Abeokuta.





Marriage at Pondicherry, 1840

CHAPTER XXII.

THE AZAN-GBÈH.—THE GUN CUSTOM.

Origin of this custom—Trial of defaulting soldiers—Speech of Gelelé—Procession of captains—Jegbeh palace—Gelelé's spirit-house—Allegory of the silver ornaments—Present of cowries to the people by the king's spirit—Splendid pavilion—Drinking the king's health—The firing to the palaces from Jegbeh—Song of the Kosi-sacrifice to Gelelé's familiar spirit—Presents of "chop"—Allegory of the gun and hoe and of the frog and pond calabashes—Distribution of daggers to the ministers—Firing for Addokpon—Distribution of cowries—Procession of cowries—Ceremony of breaking canxies—Horrible fetiche—Conclusion of the Annual Customs.

DURING the reign of Gézu the Great, the Chacha, wishing to amuse the king with some novelty, conceived the idea of stationing men at short distances along the road between Whydah and the capital, and sending by them a present to the king, much in the same manner as the post was conveyed in India. The idea so tickled the fancy of Gézu, that he determined to inaugurate a state ceremony of a similar character, and he instituted the singular telegraph which, among the English on the coast, is generally called the "Gun Custom."

At distances of about 250 yards huts called *Guhoh* were erected, extending from the Avogan's palace and the English fort at Whydah to the king's palace at Jegbeh, and from thence round to all the palatial residences in the capital. We had passed the ruins of these on our journey to Kana; but those between that town and the capital are always newly erected every year. They were about ten feet square, with a thatched roof and a mat verandah in front, supported by thin poles, and long fringes of the thunder shrub, or "*Sayan*," were festooned about them.

They were open to the front and occupied by a couple of soldiers, whose loaded guns rested in the crutch of forked twigs stuck in the ground.

Similar structures were erected from Jegbeh to Bwekon-hwe-*gbo*, thence to Bwekon, Coomassie, Agringomen, Patinsa, Adangla-cordeh, Adandokpoji Lisch hoonzeh, and thence to Adandopoji Haseh.

The ceremony is supposed to commemorate the king's birthday, and is the concluding portion of the Annual Customs.

On the third of December Gelelé left the Coomassie palace about two A.M., and proceeded amidst the usual noisy display to Jegbeh. About three in the afternoon I started for the court, and arrived there after a walk of about half an hour. We halted under the shade of a long shed, such as is used in England to shelter waggons. Beneath were two long field-pieces, rusted until they were useless, and mounted with wheels and trail-piece of native workmanship. These were shown to me as wonderful evidences of the royal wealth. Amoosu having announced our arrival, we took up our seats amongst the crowd who were already assembled before the Pwe shed to the proper right of the gate.

A palaver of importance was going on, no less than the trial of three soldiers for misdemeanour during the late skirmishing in Mahi. It appears that one of these miscreants had gone to fight without bullets; the second had run away on the approach of the enemy; but the third was detected in drawing powder from the royal stores, and then appearing on the field of battle without this necessary article.

After a severe reprimand, they were sentenced to be broken by the *Donpwe* and to receive a severe castigation.

This trial occupied so much valuable time that it was nearly four o'clock before the real business of the day commenced.

A ballet of Amazons led off the ceremonies, after which Gelelé explained to the lieges that this Custom was instituted by Gózu, but that if any of his successors found that his exche-

quer was somewhat low, he was at liberty to forego the Birth-day commemoration.

He then went on to remark that as this had been an unusually long Custom, the guns would not be fired to Whydah, but only round the palaces—an ingenious excuse to hide the *res angusta domi*.

He concluded by saying that the Custom would be opened by the spreading of a table for Gézu at Jegbeh.

After this speech we were entertained with a procession of the various captains, with their companies, who marched round the square, firing their guns in rapid succession. As it was at the time nearly dark, we could only distinguish the flashes of the guns, which strongly reminded me of a number of squibs being let off, for the powder was of the coarsest description, and the greater part did not ignite until after it had left the barrel.

After this pyrotechnic display a song was struck up, but feeling more inclined for eating than singing, we “asked leave,” and groped our way home, coming into violent collision with a train of water-carriers opposite the Coomassie palace.

The next morning we were “anchored” off the Jegbeh palace by eight o'clock, where we found a gang of labourers busily engaged thatching an oblong swish building, which was destined to enclose a scene of barbarous cruelty, reminding me of the superstitious rites of the Cannibal Fans of the Remboe.

Dancing and singing was going on outside the palace, and we began to think we had been summoned thus early to afford a gazing stock to the rabble, when about nine we received the long expected message requesting us to enter the palace, whose walls were stuck full of cockle and oyster shells, and barbarous reliefs in grey swish at intervals.

Passing through the first court, where some workmen were busy erecting a pavilion, we entered the inner arena, where all the snobs and nobles were assembled, dressed in long Houssa robes. The courtyard was very extensive, more than three times the size of any of the reception halls in the other palaces. The

walls of the Notoh were smoothly plastered and stained dark chocolate, with a broad central white stripe, above which yellow triangles were painted at intervals of about four yards.

Opposite the gate the spirit-house of the present king stood conspicuously forward. It was similar in shape to those of the other kings', but larger. The pillars were whitened and ornamented with blue fleur-de-lis and other designs.

Down the centre of the roof a splendid cloth of emerald green and white velvet extended from ridge to eaves. On the top, at either end, was a wooden carving representing a white dog barking, supported on a black pedestal.

In the centre a very pretty design in silver, standing about four feet high, was erected. A stately tree overshadowed an antelope, accompanied by a young one, which was cropping the tender shoots of the young twigs. In the branches of the tree several birds were building their nests.

The allegory represented by this ornament is as follows. "Gézu before he died gave this ornament to his son to place in his palace, to remind him of his duties to his people. If we look in the forest till we come to a full grown tree with wide-spreading branches, we shall find that the antelopes resort to it for its pleasant shade, and the birds build their nests in it, knowing that so stately a tree will not be thrown down by forest storms. The Kingdom of Dahomey may be represented by the tree, to which all nations resort for the protection afforded by its greatness. Gelelé being King of this Country, must be careful of its government, otherwise the people will leave it, just as the birds leave a tree which is not flourishing and bearing plenty of fruit."

The courtyard was divided down the centre by a line of bamboos, along the men's side of which a row of seventy-two fetiche priests were sitting, with bundles of cowries before them.

In the centre of a crowd of Amazons, surrounded by the Tansino and Bassageh, sat the king, clothed in white, with a white skull-cap on his face, which was blackened with gunpowder.

A band of female bards, dressed in deerskin aprons, with red edges, garnished with strings of cowries, then sang a weird chorale respecting the virtues of the deceased monarchs.

Then the Amazon "beef eaters" in scarlet cloaks, emblazoned with yellow lions, emulated the bards by their songs.

A movement among the caboceers then put us on the *tapis*, and at the conclusion of the vocal entertainment, Afarigbe, one of the king's brothers, stepped to the front and explained the allegorical signification of the tree and antelope, and concluded a very elaborate speech by informing his hearers that the cowries they saw spread before them had been dashed by the king's spirit to the people. I was then called to the bamboos, and presented with ten heads of cowries, together with a couple of flowered decanters of Brazilian rum. The strangers then received rum and cowries, and the ministers approached to carry off their ghostly presents, but during the ceremony a Dahkro came to give us permission to retire for an hour to breakfast, which, foreseeing a long *séance*, we had ordered to be brought to the Meu's house at Jegbeh.

Within our allotted time we again arrived at the palace, where we found the court adjourned to the outer notoh, the pavilion in which was completed.

This was a splendid affair, at least as regards the roof, which was covered with a white cloth, along the centre of which a crimson plaid ran parallel to the eaves. Above and below this division were quaint figures of ships, with conspicuous poops and prows, rigged with a single mast, and two triangular sails like jibs set. Scarlet pennons were flying from the trucks, and beneath the keel two stoekless anchors of blue baft were hung. Between each of these were curious affairs which Beecham called "pillars of salt." To me they appeared to be Christmas crackers resting on scarlet muskets. These ornaments were constructed of coloured cloth, and sewn on the white calico covering of the pavilion.

The pillars of this shed were swathed in crimson velvet; and

the back and sides were composed of gorgeous green, violet, blue, and crimson silks, satins, and damasks; the richness of their colouring being, however, lost in the shadow of the pavilion. In the centre was the royal sofa, covered with a splendid patchwork velvet cloth of many colours; and a gorgeous umbrella, of yellow velvet, with dark crimson birds, with emerald-green necks, carrying blue guns in their black dexter claw, was set up before the divan. We could also see the brass-legged Louis Quatorze table, and the gold-braided cardinal's hat upon it.

Other umbrellas, less gaudy, were ranged on either side of the central one, beneath which the Amazonian guards waited the approach of their Royal master.

Ranged at short intervals before the pavilion, and also in front of the ministers, were rude four-legged tables; and a series of forked sticks laid in pairs, at intervals, were ready placed to receive the guns of the warriouesses when they arrived on the ground.

Kpofensu, conspicuous with circles of white chalk round his eyes, looking like huge goggles, must necessarily have a table of his own, a rickety affair of bamboo staves, beneath which he sat grinning like an ape in a cage. All the ministers wore splendid Houssa robes of every hue, and their silver and coral ornaments glittered in the sunshine.

Presently the king came in, gorgeous in an emerald-green damask robe, with a bright orange sash and drawers, while his royal head was covered with a scarlet velvet fez. On his arrival a deafening cheer went the round of the audience, and liqueurs were produced on the brass-legged table, a Dahkro also bringing a supply to us, with a message that the king wished to drink my health. A glass of muscatel was then poured out, and I stood up, while Gelelé also rose and waited. The usual hubbub then set up, all turning their backs to the king, and after thrice bowing to each other, we tossed off the bumper, and I sat down. I found, however, that I had then to drink health with Addokpon

through the medium of Gelclé, and a second toast was gone through; Beecham, who with the rest had his back turned to the king, being in mortal fear lest I should offend the king. During this ceremony guns were fired, and the cloth usually held up before the king was so disposed that we could see each other, while the royal person was obscured from the vulgar gaze. I at last sat down, overpowered with this special mark of the Royal favour, as even the Ningan and the Meu are not allowed to see "the lion" drink.

After Abeokuta had been maligned, a number of soldieresses came in and squatted down in pairs behind the forked sticks, in which they rested their guns.

The king then drank the health of the people through the medium of one of the Amazons, he himself bowing with the black sombrero.

Loud cries of *Ahgo! n'daboh!* then succeeded, and at a signal the guns began to fire, running in a series of sharp detonating reports round the palace, then out to the soldiers stationed on the road, and finally dying away in the distance.

Meanwhile the fetiche priests commenced to spin a slender thread from a bunch of cotton fibre, and then Ningan began a rambling speech respecting the wars of the monarch, throwing a cowrie on the ground from time to time, as if he were counting time, and such in fact he was doing.

The Klan entertained the company with their jestings, and at intervals the Ningan was relieved by an apostrophe by some warrior emulous for fame.

In ten minutes the guns were heard returning, having been taken up by the soldiers stationed around the various palaces.

The Kosi then commenced to sing a parable, as Beecham called it. "When a man dies his spirit will go into his descendants' bodies, but not always into the sons. The king has asked Gézu's spirit at Coomassie whose ghost it was that lived in himself, and it was to this spirit that the king had been giving water." I then learnt that during my absence a man and several animals

had been sacrificed, and their blood sprinkled on the spirit calabash under the shed in the adjoining courtyard.

After this a band of gong-gong men with instruments of highly polished brass and silver, both "outsiders" and "insiders," entertained the company with a musical quartette, alternately played by the men and the women.

A long train of slave women from the palace then came into the presence, bearing calabashes of provisions, which were set out upon mats spread along the bamboos. The bill of fare was very *recherché*.

Meanwhile cries were heard approaching from the distance, and at last the gun firers stationed near us yelled out some unintelligible war cry, and running towards their neighbour received from him a parcel swathed in matting. This was a present to the king from the Bwekon-hwe-gbo palace, which had been passed from hand to hand by a number of runners stationed along the road. At intervals similar parcels arrived from all the palaces, and finally, just as the sun was setting, we received a donation of "chop," consisting of all the delicacies of the season, which our delighted hammockmen and porters eyed with watery mouths. Just as we were leaving a Dahkro came to us bringing a second supply of provisions, a special present from the king.

Our journey home was very speedy, the movements of the hammockmen being quickened by the thoughts of the glorious "feed" they were going to have, and I could hear their uproarious mirth up to the small hours of the morning.

The next day the usual palavers occupied the first two hours of the *séance*, after which two fetiche calabashes were brought in and set up before the admiring eyes of the people. The first consisted of the usual extinguisher-shaped cresset, with a long stalked cover above it, upon which a silver ball rested. To the iron rod supporting the cresset, a curious affair, a combination of a gun and a hoe, stuck out at an angle with the upright.

The legend of this calabash was as follows: "Gézu invented this calabash, and gave it to his son, and said, men must till

the soil to raise food, but they have always plenty of war palaver going on, so that when a man went to work in his field he first looked this way and that way to see if any enemies were in sight, and then worked for a few minutes, and afterwards had another look round. This was very bad, so he made this gun-hoe that all the people when they went to work in the fields should have their guns and hoes ready to hand. As soon as the report of this went among the surrounding nations, they would be afraid to attack the Dahomans, and consequently the country would have peace."

"With regard to the ball at the top of the calabash, children take balls, and putting some into one hand, ask their companions how many they hold, and neither of the parties know what number is in the hand until they look. So he (Gelelé) is the ball which his father Gézu held in his hand during his life; and though every person knew that he would be king, until Gézu died, and thus opened his hand, they did not know what sort of king he would be."

The other calabash was of the usual cresset shape, surrounded by vertical hoops of iron, upon each of which a brass frog was fixed. At the base, on two sides of the cresset, were models of houses with a couple of guns on the eaves of the roofs. The allegory in connection with this was as follows: "The cresset is a pond about which there are numerous frogs. Whenever there is water in a pond, the frogs in it are a proof of its sweetness; therefore a pond without frogs is not fit to drink. Dahomey is a pond, and Gelelé is the frog in it, without which the water would spoil. The water being good, leopards, wolves, and other animals come to it; and although they do not permanently injure the water, yet by stirring up the mud they render it unfit to drink until the sediment is deposited. So men with guns must be stationed to keep off these intruders, and the huts and guns on the calabash are representative of the Dahoman soldiers."

The king then commenced dancing and playing solos on drums of various kinds, amidst the deafening cheers of the

crowd. A number of daggers with silver mountings were then brought out, and presented to the Ningan, the Meu, and a few of the higher dignitaries. "Chop" in the meanwhile was being brought in by the palace slaves and distributed to the various companies. After this we were conducted to the Uhunnukon, where a firing party was drawn up, but as we had by this time had enough of royalty, we "asked leave," and retired.

The next day firing round the palaces for Addokpon opened the ceremonies, and after numerous palavers and dances, the palace gates were closed and the crowd cleared to one side of the courtyard. Cowries were then brought in by the Amazons and placed near the bamboos, and the soldiers began to pass the king in single file, his Majesty throwing a few strings across the neck of each, as he bowed low on passing him. Four hours did this crowd pass before him, and at length the upper ten came in for their share, receiving two or three heads. Then came the royal princes, Hahansu in the rear, and last of all the strangers, I receiving four heads for my share, and the Governor a like amount.

After this, singing, dancing, and speechifying went on till dark.

On the 8th we went to the Jegbeh palace to see the conclusion of the Gun Custom, and the soldiers passed for war.

The Amazonian generals, with their umbrellas, stools, &c., first paraded round the building opposite the gate-shed, followed by the Meu's side. A firing party of each side then came on, and wasted a considerable amount of the king's powder, but so long as a noise is made it pleases the African.

After this "*Ahgo*" was called, and the king made a speech, telling the assembly that he was going to break cankies for war, and that his fetiche men had made a powerful charm by which he must inevitably break Abeokuta this time. Our chairs were then brought near the entrance to the building, which was newly thatched, and which was a bake-house for cooking the cankies which are broken before going to war.

The interior contained two immense ovens of the usual globular-shaped earthenware, fixed in swish mounds, which were liberally garnished with skulls. A row of Bo-fetiché images, with a background of Asen, was placed in the rear of the ovens; but before them were a couple of most fearful objects. Two stakes, about six feet long, had been driven into the earth, and two Abeokeutan captives, after being killed by a blow on the occiput, were impaled thereon. These were the omnipotent charms which were to break Abeokeuta. I had seen impaling at Agoué on the coast, but never heard of such a fearful punishment being inflicted in Dahomey.

Gelelé came to the bake-house, and took up his position at one of the ovens. The Ningan then advanced, and Gelelé taking one of the cankies broke it in half, and gave one to the Ningan, and the other to his representative on the women's side, the Gundeme. The Meu next came up, and he and the Akpadume received the second cake between them, and in this manner the whole of the officers for outside and inside received the war-cakes.

Gelelé then made a speech, the gist of which was, that as the cakes he had given them were eaten, the one part by the men, and the other by the women, so they could never be joined together again. Just in the same way must they break Abeokeuta, so that the people might not be able to recover themselves, and fight any more against Dahomey.

After this ceremony we retired to the gate, and witnessed the dancing of a new company of Jotosi, and at last, amidst a volley of guns, the Gun Custom of 1871 concluded.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FINAL LEVEE.

Private visit to the king at Jegbeh—The king's wishes with regard to the ambassadors—I am passed at last—Presents from Gelelé—The bullet ceremony—I am created a prince—Visit to Gézu's tomb—Skull trophy—Legends of the ornaments—Tombs of Gézu's mothers—Visit to the Coomassie palace—Private apartments and state bedroom of the king—Visit to the Benazon—A Dahoman bride—Native book-keeping—Hahansu's water sprinkling—His fetiche house—Grand farewell ceremony and arrival at Whydah.

On the 12th, having been duly informed beforehand of what was to come off, we started for the gate at Jegbeh, at an early hour, arriving there by seven o'clock. We there found Hahansu and his escort already awaiting our arrival, and soon after our grey-haired Dahkro summoned us to the inside. Passing through the low courtyards already described, we turned to the left and entered a third, where we found the king sitting under a long shed, with a single umbrella before him. The English landlady and his Leopard-wives surrounded him, with a few Dahkros. Hahansu was accompanied by his interpreter, whose duty as memory-assistant has already been described.

Gelelé cordially shook hands with me, and introduced me to his wives. He then opened the business by saying that he wished me to ask the English government if they would commission me to conduct his ambassadors to England, for he very much wished them to see that country, and return to Dahomey, and tell the people what they saw there. If so, he might be able to put down the executions, as Commodore Wilnot had asked him. The

English Government had wished him to send ambassadors before, but he would not permit them to go with a person who did not thoroughly understand the country.

He then entered upon another business, which policy will not allow me to divulge, and concluded by saying that he was going to create me a prince, and wished to know if I would be passed then or the next day. I had had enough of " next days," so requested to be passed at once.

He then gave me 100 heads of cowries, and three new cloths of native manufacture, worth nearly £50 a piece. These were wrapped round me according to the usual custom, but as the sun was blazing down upon me, I soon divested myself of their cumbrous weight. He then gave me three young slave girls, and a like number of boys, all natives of Salu. He said that I had not yet seen Gézu's tomb, nor the interior of the palaces, but that Hahansu should show me all before I left. The conversation then turned upon various topics. He showed me the coat of mail presented by Captain Burton, and told one of his wives to put it on. He said the English must be very strong to fight with such a weight upon them. Various other curiosities, such as a stereoscope; watches, without main springs; musical boxes, ditto, ditto; a binocular, given by Tojikhosu, as Commodore Wilmot is called; and other articles.

He then dismissed me, accompanying me to the gate, and said that I was to dine with Hahansu, to whose house I proceeded. In the afternoon, a few dances preceded the procession of the outside and inside officers, who, passing before the king, took a bullet out of a calabash, with which to kill an Abeokeutan, when they went against that devoted town.

The next day we went to Jegbeh, to present compliments to the king, and thank him for his trouble yesterday in passing us. This is the usual custom. We had another audience with his Majesty, who requested me to inquire if the mahogany which grows near the capital would be purchased in England. I told him it would, but that unless they brought down a regular supply,

the merchants would not trouble to come for it. The main difficulty was the carriage to the coast.

After breakfasting, we return to the palace, where the usual dancing was going on. At length, Gelelé announced, that as Kerserley was his friend, as James, the governor of the English fort, was for his father, so he must do him great honour. He had made caboceers of some of his visitors, but that was not rank sufficient for his friend. He, therefore, was going to make him a caboceer with the rank of a prince, and allow him to use the royal bird on his umbrella.

The Ningan then went to the front, and called out "Kerserley," to which I replied "Wae," and went up to him, followed by Beecham and Amoosu. The Amazons then brought in a caboceer's stool and umbrella, and several calabashes, covered with showy cloths. A scarlet and blue-striped country cloth was then spread out before the people, and afterwards placed over me, toga fashion. Next, an embroidered tunic of crimson, blue, green, and yellow-striped cloth, of one of the royal patterns, was put on me by the Ningan; followed by a state robe of yellow and white cotton, of beautifully soft texture, with a crimson *conscience* in front, and one behind.

My right hand was then placed on my head, fifty-six yards of white calico wrapped round me, and over that some pieces of black and violet twilled silk, twenty-two yards long. The "bonugangei" or caboceer beads, were next placed round my neck, consisting of seven bead necklaces of various colours, three massive coral ditto, and two silver ones, all having a bunch of plaited white cotton, like braid, dangling behind. A cap, shaped like a Scotch bonnet, made of blue and white figured damask, turned up with green, and with a green silk chin strap, was then given me. Down the centre, a thick pad of leopard skin was sewn, on the right side a crimson dragon, and on the left a Prussian eagle of similar colour. Finally, a silver-mounted dagger with a Turkey red sash, a pair of silver gauntlets, a beautifully ornamented fetiche bag, and a tobacco-pouch, of the

carpet-bag size, completed my get-up, and very glad was I to get to the end of it, as I stood, a candidate for sunstroke with four suits of clothes on, and a hundred yards of cloth wound round me, until I looked like a water-butt. The Ningan then made a speech lasting half an hour. He said that the king made me a prince and caboceer equal in rank to the Avogan, and that all the English town of Whydah was put in my hand. I was also made commander-in-chief of the Ashanti company, and wore their cap. To this I returned my thanks for the great honour conferred upon me, my speech being received with deafening cheers.

I was then presented with a splendid umbrella of marone silk-velvet. On alternate lappets were the royal blue bird, holding a yellow shark in his beak, and a golden trident with scarlet hearts on the prongs. The top was ornamented with tridents, and hearts of blue and red damask, and the pole was surmounted by a figure of a human being, sex unknown, with long curly black hair, holding a dolphin's mouth open with both hands. The body was naked, and painted bright vermilion. This was supposed to be myself, and the fish betokened that I was a prince permitted to go across the sea, for none of the royal family of Dahomey are permitted even to hear the noise of the surf, otherwise they would certainly die within three days. When I was created one of the blood-royal, this fetiche was given me to avert so great a calamity.

A rudely-carved stool, 100 heads of cowries, 1 case gin, 1 of liqueurs, 1 large demijohn of rum, and 19 calabashes of provisions were then handed over to me. Next came two Salu slaves, one as stool-bearer, and the other as umbrella-man. After these came twenty-two men to carry the presents, and to act as my servants.

Men then conducted me to the gate, where I made a shuffle, as dancing was out of the question, and marched three times round the square, escorted by "my regiment," firing guns, dancing, and singing.

I then got into my hammock,

"Accoutred as I was,"

and proceeded home with a procession of about 500 soldiers with,

me. On arrival at my house, I found the prince with his usual forethought had sent four demijohns of rum for my use, together with four pieces of romals to "dash" my regiment.

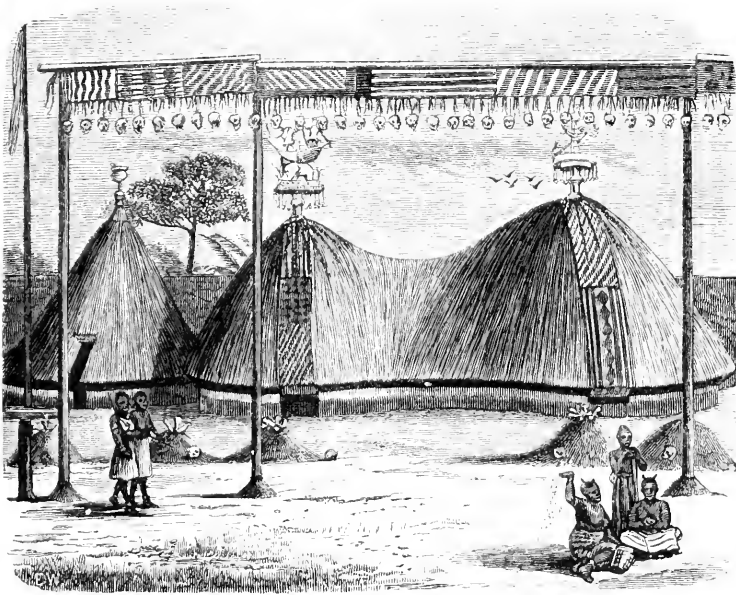
No sooner did I arrive, than, finding my honours pressing too heavily upon me, I took off my finery, and appeared "en mufti." Amoosu then distributed the spirits and cloth, and I retired.

The Ashanti company then set up their usual dances, and a battery of guns being extemporized out of their muskets, a series of running shots was kept up all night. The poor captives who had been presented to me seemed glad to get into the hands of the English, whose anti-slavery principles they had long since heard of.

In the morning I went again to Jegbeh attired as caboceer, with umbrella, stool, etc., to pay my respects to the king. The Ningan was then "judging," as Beecham called it; and now that I was a "war-man," he became very affable, and offered me a seat on his left, saying that I must take up my seat and judge palavers, as became my dignity as one of the highest officers. In the afternoon, the usual dancing and singing wearied us for four hours, my stool being placed among those of the ministers. On receiving our pass rum, we were told that on the next day we were to be shown the tomb of Gézu, and the royal palaces. By eight o'clock the next morning we were all ready, but heavy rain coming on, our visit was postponed until the next day.

On the 16th, we started for Abomey by seven o'clock, and waited under the trees opposite Gézu's storey house. In a few minutes, the Binwanton, the Ningan's assistant, came up dressed in full state costume, and conducted by him, we entered the Adanglo-koh-deh gate, where we were received by a company of eunuchs, who preceded us, crying out Ahgo in the usual drawling tone affected upon these occasions. In the first court, a large carriage was drawn out, with a number of bells hung round the roof, and a wooden elephant on the box. Passing through this, we entered the second court, where the far-famed tomb of Gézu is situated.

On the right two conical thatched roofs, joined like Siamese twins, covered low circular walls, painted white, and a broad piece of coloured velvet extended from the eaves to the apex. The tomb to the right was Gézu's, and the other one the Bush king Gah-qpwel's, surmounted by massive silver ornaments. Gézu's consisted of a square disc of silver with a raised border, and a string of silver hearts depending from its lower edge. Above this an elephant, standing in the middle of a number of silver



TOMB OF KING GÉZU.

trees, like laurels, had overthrown a soldier. On the back of the elephant was a ship, with mast and three soldiers, two of whom rivalled the mast in altitude, while the third, much smaller, held a cannon in his lap, on the top of the mast; the whole being much after the style of the ships on wheels, sold for a penny in England.

The allegory is that as soldiers who go out to shoot elephants are often killed by them, so the enemies of Dahomey who look with

envious eyes upon the kingdom must be destroyed. The ship denoted that many foreigners came to see Gézu.

Gah-qpwch, Gézu's Bush king, had a tall silver tree with a Guinea-fowl of monstrous proportions resting on the top of it. Round the circular base a double row of silver Amazon's bells tinkled in the wind. From the base of each of these ornaments long strings of coral, Popo beads, and other valuables, hung down the roof.

On the extreme left were the tombs of Agotime and Nutobe, the mothers of the late monarch and his bush companion. They were covered with a conical thatched roof, with a large brass cooking-pot on the apex.

Before the king's tomb was a swish mound, with 146 skulls stuck in it, and the terminal heaps were *frisés* of human thigh bones, and a bordering of the same marked out two white-sanded pathways, leading to the low doorways of the tombs. Outside these were four tall scaffold poles, crossed at the top by others, from which a valance of variously coloured cloths hung with vandyked fringes at the bottom. Attached to the cross poles by iron chains were 122 skulls, which rattled against each other with a ghostly music. On the right was a small fetiche house with a Legba pot, ascen, and other emblems; and a tall flagstaff bearing a white flag was fixed at either end.

In the centre of the roof a bright coloured cloth denoted the king's throne, around which several Amazons were seated. A background of beautifully-coloured cloths was suspended from the pillars supporting the roof, and the floor of the shed was covered with matting. A tall brass-mounted liqueur case was conspicuously placed in front, and several tame Guinea-pigs and grey parrots were playing about.

Opposite the throne an umbrella of European shape with scalloped valances was set up, with a smaller one on the right. These are brought out every day in readiness to receive the king, if he should take any sudden idea into his head of visiting the palace. A similar custom prevails in all the palaces. A table

with liqueurs and other refreshments was set out for our accommodation, and we drank Gelelé's health with "vivas." After complimentary speeches from the Amazonian housekeeper, we left the court, bearing 10 heads of cowries, bottles of rum, liqueurs, and 4 calabashes of cooked provisions, which were set out in the shed in the outer court, and we fell-to upon the venison, goat, fowls, and other dainties, which were by no means to be despised. Binwanton and I feasted beneath the shed, the others, including Beecham, having their breakfast in the open, as none but officers of high rank are permitted to "chop" under the shelter of the king's roof.

After duly "chopping," we left the Abomey palace for the Coomassie palace, where we were received by the So-So-ton, the Ningán's assistant. After passing through the court where the brass-aproned spirit-house of Gézu was still tinkling in a mysterious way, we entered a long range of apartments of the barn order of architecture. These were beautifully clean, and white-washed, or coloured in distemper, and were the private apartments of the late king. Leaving this on the left, we entered a spacious area with a small shed in the centre, surrounded by a hedge of skulls. This was the state bedroom of the warlike king, the bedstead being a huge four-poster of European make, with several fine grass mats by way of bedding upon it. Several fetiches were scattered about, and the gateway was guarded by a corps of Amazons. After viewing this we returned to the spirit-house court, where we again drank the health of the monarch, and received a present of chop. As I had made a good breakfast at Abomey I wished to send this second donation to my quarters, but court etiquette necessitated my eating it in the palace, as these feasts are considered to be taken with his Majesty himself, he never dining with any male person in *propria personá*. On leaving I received a further present of provisions, and then took my seat *pro formá* on the magisterial stool at the gate.

The following morning I went to see the Benazon, whose residence adjoined the Jegbeh palace. We passed through several

courtyards, calling out Ahgo in case any of the Amazons were about, and waited for the State treasurer in his fetiche house. This officer has just married a princess, and he wished to introduce us to his new bride. After drinking healths we were conducted through two courts to the private apartments, where we found the new wife got up in splendid style. She was apparently about eighteen years of age, by no means bad looking, and profusely decorated with jewellery. Coral and silver necklaces and bracelets covered her neck and arms, and round her head she wore a fillet of black velvet, from which a number of silver and gold coins depended, after the fashion of the Fellah girls in Egypt. She said that she was pleased to see her father's friend, and presented me with provisions cooked by herself, according to custom, an honour I returned by giving her my hair-brush with a looking-glass set in the back, and a comb sliding behind it. This seemed to delight her, and with a profusion of thanks from her we retired. The Benazon has a peculiar method of keeping accounts. Each article, whether beads, guns, cowries, cloth, or palm oil, is contained in a bin, and on the wall opposite a rude drawing of the article beneath is made. A number of marks corresponding to the number of articles are made on the wall, and as the contents of the bin are used, a second series of marks are made, and the accounts are balanced by the tallying of the two series.

On the 20th we went to Hahansu's palace, where that prince was going to water his private fetiches. His fetiche house was a museum of curiosities in fetichism. There was a complete series of the Dahoman gods with their crockery and iron ware. From the roof, globular affairs covered with cotton yarn of different colours, were suspended by cords, supposed to have some magic influence upon the life of the owner. The floor was covered with whitewash, and marked in several places by squares, diamonds, and other geometrical designs, and down the centre a broad stripe of red, yellow, and blue chalk, looked like a piece of oil-cloth.

To the right a small shed covered a large asen, and before this

a number of ducks, sheep, fowls, and other animals were decapitated, and their blood sprinkled on the ascen. Grog and cowries were then distributed to the people, who then proceeded to the palace, where Gelelé made a short speech, calling upon the lieges to fight bravely when he called upon them, and a final discharge of muskets brought the Annual Custom of 1871 to a conclusion, which had cost the lives of sixty-eight to my own personal knowledge, while probably eighty would be nearer the mark when the Amazonian victims are counted.

On the 23rd, after a busy day spent in packing up, I proceeded to Jegbeh, and finally bade the king adieu, with protestations of continual friendship, his Majesty presenting me with a splendid piece of cloth for Mr. Swanzy, one for my father, and a third for myself. He also gave me a handsome cloth for her Majesty, together with a royal Kpo stiek, as an emblem of my authority to bring over the ambassadors to England. He then gave me the land formerly belonging to Kunhoton, a caboccer of Savi, who had lately died, and promised to build me a house in Jegbeh for my accommodation on my return. To cultivate the land he gave me sixty-four slaves, who were immediately dispatched to the plantation, where they were joined by others of their tribe whom I had received from the king at various periods. There they remain happy in the security of my protection, and ere I left had set up for themselves, and seemed to be better off than they ever hoped to be in their own country.

I then went to Hahansu's house, where the prince and I dined, and he gave me a beautiful piece of cloth made by his weavers, several goats, pigs, fowls, and two bullocks, and about eight o'clock we started.

On arrival at the gate I found a company of the Ashanti regiment drawn up, who were to accompany me to Whydah. They commenced to fire and dance on my arrival, and we then started down the Kana road. The prince accompanied me quite half-way to Kana, and then bidding me adieu, returned to his palace, with sincere regret depicted upon his countenance; and I

must confess that I felt truly sorry to leave this inestimable young man. The firing was kept up till the prince left us, and then discontinued until we reached the Kana gate, where our arrival was announced by salvos of musketry. I there found my people who had been sent on beforehand, but learned to my sorrow that Richards had been detained by the Meu's people on some pretence, but was told that the prince would send him on to me in a few days. I believe this unfortunate person was hurried away by the Meu's jailer, for I could hear nothing of him, although I sent several messengers demanding him from the king, who assured me that he had made every enquiry about him, but could not find him.

We left Kana the next morning at seven, and made a quick passage through the Aglimé swamp, and arrived at Akpweh about 4 p.m., where we had a small reception, and received presents of live stock.

On the next day, Christmas day, we stayed for the night at Alladah, where a grand firing and reception kept me awake half the night.

Finally, I arrived at Whydah at seven o'clock on the evening of the 26th, our entrance being delayed until night, as I was to be received by the Avogan in public, and my arrival was to be concealed from the public gaze.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DAHOMAN CONSTITUTION.

Duality of the Dahoman monarchs—Despotism of the king—Curious laws—The army—Its divisions—Officers of state—Military tactics.

THE reader has already become acquainted with many particulars respecting the king and army of Dahomey, and it now remains to give additional information respecting the system of Government as practised in that kingdom.

The present King of Dahomey is the ninth monarch who has occupied the throne. He succeeded in preference to an elder brother, Godo, whose reputation as a drunkard was too notorious to admit of his sitting in the "stool" of his ancestors. Gézu, his father, on his death-bed, especially recommended Gelelé as his successor, but ere being firmly established he was obliged to overcome several insurrections headed by his many brothers.

Upon his succession he adopted Addokpon as his Bush king, an account of whose fictitious person has already been related.

As might be supposed, the king is an absolute monarch, whose will within certain limits is law. This, however, is only true in a restricted sense, for even so despotic a monarch dare not run contrary to the wishes of the majority of his subjects.

Most of the laws of the country emanate from the king, who before passing an "Act of Parliament" submits it to the opinion of the principal ministers. Should they deem it impolitic, the idea is abandoned, but if they approve of its adoption it is announced at the next court assembly, and heralds are sent round to proclaim it. If, however, any of the lieges wish to suggest an

improvement upon an old decree or propose a new one, it is done in open court and the *pros* and *cons* discussed in public.

All minor criminal cases are submitted to the caboccers in the order of their rank, but crimes involving capital punishment and high treason are tried by the king alone, and he reserves to himself the passing of the sentence of death upon any subject.

Many of the laws of the country are the mere caprices of the king. A brief summary of some of them are appended.

No person is allowed to build his house of more than four tiers of swish.

No person is allowed to marry a wife without first submitting her to the king, who, if he pleases, enlists her in the Amazonian corps.

No goods landed at Whydah can be reshipped.

No subject is allowed to sit in a chair in public.

No subject is allowed to wear shoes or to ride in a hammock.

No Dahoman woman is allowed to leave the country.

Such are a few of the peculiar laws regulating the welfare of the Ffons.

The whole organization of the empire below the king is centred in the army. The higher the rank the person holds in the military scale the higher his position in everything. This is the case in every country where civilization is as yet in its infancy. The bravest warrior is always respected above his less warlike compeers.

In Dahomey every man is more or less a soldier, either actually or liable to serve at a moment's notice. In the field the men take the wings, while the Amazons occupy the centre. Each of these bodies is again divided into right and left divisions, while the Amazons have a central brigade, the king's bodyguard.

The right brigade is considered the superior one, and all officers connected with it hold a rank a step higher than their coadjutors on the left.

The prime-minister of Dahomey, field-marshal, and war captain-in-chief, is the Ningan. He is also the chief magistrate, superintendent of police, and executioner for Gelelé. He holds no communication with visitors to the king unless they are

created Bonugan, or war captains, and he has no dealings with any civil business whatever. War alone is his province, and trade palavers are far below his dignity and consideration. All captives taken in war are put under his charge. The Ningang is the only officer who has the privilege to talk "Lion mouth," that is, to address his Majesty of Dahomey with the prefix "Aiah," an onomatopetic word supposed to resemble a lion's roar. He invests all newly made officers with their robes, and is the supreme judge in all cases that do not go before the king.

All these high dignitaries have deputies, and the Ningang's assistant is the Biwanton, a tall, fine fellow, who conducted us through the Abomey palace.

The commander of the second division of the right wing is the Gaou, whose appointment has been described. His deputy is the Matro, a half-brother to Gelelé, by the same father but a different mother. All these officers have corresponding "mothers" among the Amazons, who take precedence of their male coadjutors.

On the left wing, the second minister in the realm is the Meu, whose office is anything but a sinecure. He is the officer under whose care all visitors to the court are placed, the executor of Addokpon's victims, and the collector of all revenues, which he hands over to the treasurer, or Benazon. The present officer is a shrewd little man, very different to the childish imbecile who filled the office in Burton's time. The Adonejan is the deputy of the Meu, who is the "English laudlord" and engineer-in-chief to the palaces.

The corresponding officer to the Gaou is Kposu, a young man who is extremely fond of appearing in court with a calico coat of European cut covering his naked back. His deputy is the Ahwegbamen.

Next in rank to the Meu is the Viceroy of Whydah, the Avogan or Yevogan, whose peculiarities have been already mentioned.

Besides these there are several erratic officers, whose position seems to be unsettled. Of these the Ajakyaho holds the highest place. He is the custodian of the offending Bonugan when they are committed to prison by the king's order. He administers

the oath to witnesses upon all state trials, and is the landlord of the Coomassie palace. His second is the So-gan already mentioned. He is the "Captain of the Horse," a rather misleading term used in the History. His real office is to take charge of the horses of the caboccers during the So-Sin Custom.

These are the principal Ahwangan or war officers, and next to them are the Owutunun or officers of the household. Of them the Benazon or treasurer is the principal, who has charge of the royal coffers, war munitions, and stores of every description.

Then come the eunuchs, under the aged Tononun, who is the chief eunuch of Gézu, and who, instead of accompanying his master to Deadland as is usually the case, was spared by special order of that king. The chief eunuch for Gelelé is the Gbwewedo. He is superintendent of the Amazonian quarters in the palace, and, like the Tononun, has the privilege of stepping across the barrier which always separates the sexes in public. He or his deputy is one of the first to visit strangers, and he brings the royal welcome to all visitors who are honoured with a reception.

The inspector of the night guards of the palace, the Kangbodeh, is the next officer, who, like the eunuchs, wears a small bell round his neck. His myrmidons assist the eunuchs in the placing of the bamboo sticks, and in the guarding of them during the Custom Processions. His deputy is the Kakopwe, and his deputy's deputy the Kokoagi. The town police have been mentioned in speaking of Whydah.

We then come to the Akhisin or trade captains. Of these the Quimun at Whydah is the chief, who inspects all ships' cargoes, and receives the customs dues. Next to these come the commanders of the various towns, who are innumerable, and in fact the officers form nearly a fifth of the army.

The privates are divided into several corps, of which the following are the principal:—

The veterans are known as the Blue or English company, who wear indigo-coloured tunics with white crossbelts, and Scotch

bonnets with alligators embroidered on the side. Next come the Achi, the Bayoneteers of Burton, whose distinctive mark is a trefoil on the cap. The Agbaraya or blunderbusseers, under the Kpofensu, who is also chief jester and hereditary court fool, rank next. Their weapons are short brass blunderbusses which explode with a report like that of a young cannon. Besides this there are the Ashanti company recently organized, the Ganu nlan, or royal hunters, whose weapons are supposed to kill a person dead at one shot; the Dahoman Hastati or Zohunun; the Madcap company or Mnan; and the Aro or archers. All these brigades have their respective officers, and are divided equally amongst the right and left wings of the army.

Each soldier is provided with arms and ammunition at the Government expense, but they receive neither pay nor rations, and on the march each warrior is supposed to carry his own provisions. On the war-path they lodge in small bamboo huts, like the Gu-hoh or Gun-custom huts, and ere starting on any expedition the forces assemble at Kana and encamp in the Gu-hoh on the south side of that town.

Every soldier is expected to bring back a head or a prisoner, and at the end of the campaign the heads and captives are given to the king, who buys them from the soldiers at fixed prices. After the disastrous defeat at Abeokuta, Gelelé ransomed many of the Dahomans from their captors.

The system of warfare is the usual barbarous one of surprise. When the king declares war he rarely tells even his ministers the name of the town he intends to attack. The army marches out, and when within a few days' journey of the town, silence is enjoined upon everybody, and no fires are permitted to be lighted. All stragglers are taken prisoners, and the army is led through a road cut through the bush, and not along the regular highways. The town is surrounded in the dead of night, and just before day-break a rush is made, and every man, woman and child captured if possible. None are killed save in self-defence, as the object is to capture, not to butcher.

If the attack has been successful every inhabitant that has not escaped in the *mêlée* is sent to Abomey and placed under the care of the Ajakyaho, when some grace the following Customs, and others are sent to distant parts of the kingdom. Some are enlisted in the Dahoman army, and the highest offices are open to them. The women are invariably made Amazonian camp followers, and reside within the precincts of the palaces. The town, after being captured, is usually razed to the ground, unless it occupies an important position, and every goat, fowl, or duck that can be laid hold of is carried off.

Should, however, the invaded offer any resistance, a severe and bloody struggle ensues, lasting but a short time, as the native courage is but a spasmodic ferocity, and soon burns out, and in that case the army decamps, never rallying after being once beaten off.

On the return to Abomey the heads and captives are bought by the king, and the chief of the conquered people usually graces the succeeding Custom. The wars are, therefore, merely slave-taking expeditions, or head hunts, after the fashion of the Dyaks of the Malay Archipelago. The season for these maraudings is that immediately succeeding the Customs, or in the dry weather which lasts from January to March. Owing to the many privations and hardships entailed upon the army, whose *régime* is in so crude a condition, the loss of life by disease is far in excess of that by the sword and gun. After the return it is no unusual thing for an epidemic of small-pox to break out, when the ravages it commits among such a people can be imagined. Three out of the eight kings of the present dynasty have fallen victims to this dreadful scourge.

The following is a tabular list of the Kings of Dahomey:—

I. DAHO¹, 1625—1650.

His “strong names” were “Donun” (omniscient); Akwazhu (the leveller of his enemies), and many others. He was the son

¹ All the names of the kings at the commencement of sentences *Daho* means omniscient.

of the last king of Alladah, at whose death he migrated north and conquered Adanwe, and founded the present kingdom (see p. 85). In the history he is called Tacoodonou. His palace is called Dahomey, and his spirit is watered at the Adangladordeh gate.

2. AHO¹, 1650—1679.

His "strong names" were Adan-hun-zo (a brave man with courage); Sin-wula-gan (beware of the captain if you play tricks); Sin-nyenkpon-edan (water will dry up before him), &c.

He was the son of Daho, but when the heralds commence the list of kings he is always placed first in consequence of his many victories. He seized his father's wives, and was banished, and at his father's death returned and conquered King Agrim, a neighbouring chief, over whose body he built the Agringomen palace.² His spirit is watered on the Patinsa gate of the Abomey palace. He is the Adahoonzou I. of the History.

3. AKABAH³, 1680—1708.

The best-known "strong names" of Akabah are Hwes Akabah (the Great Akabah) and—

"He flung a cutlass, and the owner of the country resigned to him his lands (alluding to his throwing a sword at Yaghaze, the conquered king of Weme)."—Burton.

He was the brother of Aho, and conquered the district of Jegbeh, near the Mahi country, hence the Jegbeh district near Abomey.

He was the king who reigned when Dahomey came into intercourse with Europeans. He is the Weebaigah of Dalzel. His palace is at Dahomey, and his spirit-watering takes place at Adangladordeh.

4. AGAJAH⁴, 1708—1728.

His strong names were very numerous, the principal being

¹ A solid rock.

² Other accounts say that Agajah killed Agrim.

³ A tall man.

⁴ A branched tree must be lopped before it can be burnt.

Dosu deh Menh (Dosu will cut down all his enemies); if he looks at a man he must close his eyes, &c.

He was a usurper, having deposed his elder brother, Mbogela, and became one of the greatest monarchs of the kingdom, which, under his rule, assumed considerable importance. He was anxious to have free passage to the coast, and being refused by Alladah, conquered it, and took Bulfinch Lambe prisoner. In 1727 he conquered Whydah, and sacrificed 4,000 prisoners in his triumph. He is mentioned by Capt. Snelgrave, in his book, "A Full Account of some parts of Guinea and of the Slave Trade." He also conquered the Toffos, but in repressing a revolt of the Whydahs under Fosu (p. 28) was only saved by the intervention of Governor Wilson. He was the originator of the Amazons, and although he died at the early age of 45, yet his conquests were only equalled by those of Gézu. He is the Guadja Trudo of the History, while His palace is called Agrimgomen, where also His spirit is watered.

5. TEGBWESUN¹, 1729—1775.

His strong names were not very numerous, according to the heralds, the only one I ever heard being "Si men egbe don" (a woman will not go to war for nothing).

He was the second son of Agajah by Chai, and succeeded to the exclusion of his brother Zingah, whom he threw into the sea at Whydah. His cruelty caused many revolts, and the Eyeos made a descent upon the country and overran it, and imposed an annual tribute. In his reign the Avogan, a eunuch named Tanga, made an attempt to obtain the throne, but was defeated. The king's brother-in-law Shampo fell under the king's suspicion, and fled to the Popos, whose army he commanded for many years (see p. 30).

Tegbwesun was visited in 1766 by Mr. Archibald Dalzel, who wrote the History of which we have spoken. Tegbwesu's palace was called Adandokpoji Daho, or Lisch-hoonzeh, and in the History he is called Bossa Ahadi.

¹ No one can take the cloth off a wild bull's neck.

6. MPENGULA¹, 1775—1789.

The principal strong name assumed by this monarch was, "People who sell hoes do not *give* any to buyers."

He was the son of Tegbwesun by Hunajileh, and a very warlike monarch. One of his first conquests was that of the Nagos, and afterwards he attacked the Apees. The Eycos were very troublesome, and feuds between them and the Dahomans were of constant occurrence. In 1789 he attacked Katu, and carried off many prisoners. During his reign the road between Abomey and the coast was constructed, and his palace at Adando kpoji Hasch is the most substantial in the capital. He was also called Sinmenkpen², and is the Adahoonzou II. of the History. His spirit is watered at his palace, but the victims are usually relieved.

7. AGONGOLU³, 1789—1817.

The best-known strong name for this king is Menbe Khesin Dahomey Egbam (all people must fear to destroy Dahomey).

This monarch was the son of Mpengula by Senume, and had considerable difficulty in establishing himself on the throne, in consequence of the opposition of the late king's brothers. The Grand Customs instituted in honour of Mpengula were notorious from the number of victims, no less than 1,300 captives being sacrificed. He was very unfortunate in his wars, and the Eycos imposed heavy taxes upon his people. Dalzel calls him Wheenoohew, but, like most of the titles given by that author, it is unknown to the heralds. Agongolu died in 1817. His palace is called Bwekon hue gbo, where his spirit is also watered.

8. GÉZU⁴, 1818.

This monarch is the most celebrated of all the Dahoman kings. His strong names are very numerous, a few only being given.

Bodun - Ganu - Minh (a fetiche conquering everything) ;

¹ A brave rock.

² Water in a stone.

³ A palmyra cannot be struck by lightning.

⁴ The scarlet bird is not afraid of the bush.

Eganu-mensch Minhwae Gézu (he conquered all his enemies, so everybody comes to Gézu); Gan kaka de jeh (a conqueror for whom everybody will wait); Vokhe Mau (the scarlet bird of the gods), &c., &c.

At the death of Agongolu there were two persons eligible for election—Gazé and Gézu, his two sons. The former, being a hunchback, was induced to retire, when Adanzan, a younger brother, raised the standard of rebellion, but was defeated.

Gézu commenced his career of conquest by treacherously destroying Jena, and he afterwards attacked the Eyeeos, and freed his country from their imposts. He made frequent excursions into the Mahi country, and extended his northern frontier to the Kong mountains. In 1848 he made a descent upon Ota, near Badagary, and carried off thousands of prisoners. In 1851 he advanced against Abeokeuta, but was repulsed with considerable loss.

He was visited by Duncan and Commander Forbes, and in 1852 signed a treaty, whereby he agreed to discontinue the slave trade.

He instituted a Bush king, whom he called Gah-qpweh', and commenced the formation of the "omnipotent cloth."

Gézu died in 1858 of small-pox, and the present king has erected a splendid mausoleum over him at Abomey. He made a pseudo attack upon the Ashantees, and in commemoration of the event called his palace Coomassie. Gézu's mother was Agotime, and his bush king's Nutobe. His spirit is watered in the Coomassie palace.

9. GELELÉ², 1858.

Some of this king's strong names have been mentioned *passim*: others are Tenge makan fenkpon (a rock, the finger nail cannot scratch it, behold!) (Burton); Kimi Kimi (the lion king), &c.

Like his father, Gelelé ascended the throne in place of an elder brother Godo, who was a notorious drunkard.

¹ When market-day comes it must be full.

² Big, without being capable of being lifted.

He conquered many petty chiefs at the commencement of his reign, and in 1860 Akiaon fell before him.

In 1861 he advanced against Abeokeuta, but was compelled to retreat in consequence of small-pox. In 1862 he fell upon Ishagga, and carried off thousands of prisoners, amongst whom were some negro missionaries. In 1864 he again attacked Abeokeuta, but was signally defeated, losing the flower of his army.

He was visited in 1862 by Commodore Wilmot, and in 1864 by Captain Burton.

Gelelé's mother still survives, Zoindi by name. His Bush king is Addokpon¹, and his mother Dahn li Keh. He has lately built a fine palace at Jegbeh, where also his spirit-house is erected.

¹ Look at the Addo (a bead supposed to be imperishable).

CHAPTER XXV.

THE AMAZONS.

Origin of the Amazons—How recruited—Their ranks—Their titles—"Our mothers"—Female soldiers of civilised nations.

ONE of the most singular institutions of Dahomey is the female army, or Amazons, as they have been called. When these soldieresses were first introduced into the country is unknown; but, in 1728, Agajah, the fourth king, having received a defeat at the hands of the Eyeos, the implacable enemies of his race, organized a regiment of the women in the palace, and with these attacked the old Whydahs under Ossue their king, and completely routed them.

Under Gèzu, however, the corps attained its greatest prestige, who raised it from a mere subsidiary position to a status equal, if not superior, to that of the men. He also effected the balance of power by creating she-officers, corresponding to the "outside" ministers, thereby checking any rebellious intentions that might enter the mind of any ambitious subject, and ensuring his personal safety by surrounding himself with an armed body of viragos, who, like every blue stocking amongst civilized nations, were conceitedly vain of their *manly* qualifications.

The late king issued a decree, summoning every subject to present his daughters, above a certain age, at the court, upon an appointed day. There, he selected the most promising of the children of the upper ten, and created them officers, while the lower orders were dubbed soldiers, and the children of slave

parents became the slaves of the Amazons within the palace. The remainder were returned to their parents. Of the selected, many were dashed to the deserving soldiers as wives, and every three years a similar conscription of the daughters of the land is made; while all the children of Amazonian women are Amazons from the birth.

Celibacy is enjoined upon every Amazon, except those legally married; and a particular fetiche, the Demen, is erected in one of the palace gates, called the Abo dewe gate, which, by its peculiar powers, causes certain pregnancy in any Amazon of easy virtue.

Besides this god, there is a certain jealousy of such matters, which generally results in the crime reaching the ears of one of the officeresses, and the culprit's fears are so worked upon, that she invariably confesses the name of her seducer. An instance has been given of a large band of these fallen Amazons, who were brought up for punishment.

The king has several of these Amazons as concubines, and from their ranks he selects his Kpo-si or Leopard-wives, who enjoy many special privileges.

They may number possibly 4,000, but the flower of the corps perished under the walls of Abeokuta, in the disastrous defeat in 1864. They are divided into three brigades, known as the king's company, the right, and the left wings. Each of these has a peculiar head-dress, by which they may be known. The king's brigade, sometimes called the Fanti company, or Centre, wear the hair shaved *à la turban*, and bound with narrow fillets, with alligators of coloured cloth sewn on them. The right wing have their heads shaven, leaving only a solitary tuft or two, while the left wear the hair *au naturelle*.

The king, or his representative, the Alinwanun, commands the Fanti company, who are the bravest and strongest of the corps—the household troops of the country—whose correspond to the Blue or English brigade amongst the male soldiery. Under the king are the Danh jihunto on the right, and Jibewheton, with her fleur de lis, on the left.

The right brigade is commanded by the Gundeme, the grey-haired representative of the Ningam. Her lieutenant is the Khetungan, who corresponds to the Gaou.

The left brigade is under the Akpadume, and the Fosupoh, who are the "doubles" of the Men and the Kposu.

Besides these war captains, there are others who take command of skirmishing parties and small predatory assaults upon the minor towns. These are the coadjutresses of the Adonejan, the Ajakyaho, the Biwanton, the Tokpo, and the Sogan.

Each of the three brigades is divided into four classes, with a captain and numberless lieutenants to each.

They are as follows:—

The Agbaraya, or blunderbusses, the veterans of the army, and, like the ancient *Tuari*, only called into action upon urgent need. They wear blue tuzics, with white cross belts, and their fillets are very large and long. Their standards are of the most ferocious description, such as a man cutting an enemy to mincemeat, or blowing him to fragments by a single discharge of his musket.

The Gbeto, an elephant huntresses, whose uniform has already been noticed, who correspond to the Gan-u-nlan of the men's side. This corps is one of the most celebrated in the army; when on a hunting expedition, they are exposed to many dangers, and Hahansu gave me a long account of a disastrous campaign, in which twelve Amazons lost their lives. The hunters had attacked a herd as they browsed in the open, and had succeeded in killing one, when they were attacked by several who had been concealed by the tall grass. Several perished, pierced by the tusks, or literally dashed to pieces by the trunks of the infuriated animals, and every Gbeto carries a particular fetiche to prevent a recurrence of the awful catastrophe.

The Nyekpleh-lentol, or razor women, of whom there are but a few to each wing since their special object of aversion is the king of the enemy for whose decapitation their singular weapon was invented by Gézu.

The Gulonentoh, or musketeers, who form the main body, and



THE AMAZONIAN "ELEPHANT HUNTERS."



whose appearance has often been described. The king's brigade has a fifth company, the Gohento, or archeresses, the representatives of the Aro, or the men's side. These are all young girls, who are mostly used as a show corps, their weapons being comparatively useless in actual warfare. They are, nevertheless as boastful as any of the veterans, and in the dance their youthful agility comes out in a conspicuous manner.

Besides these, there are a number of camp-followers, whose duty it is to draw the water, cut the wood, and till the ground for their superiors, and these are the impudent hussies one is always meeting with their belled leader, and out of whose way one has to scamper, to the ruffling of one's temper. All the other corps are armed with muskets or blunderbusses, kept scrupulously clean. Of their qualities as marksmen I never had any experience, but I should think the hitting of a haystack would be about the sum total of their accomplishments.

Addokpon, the Bush king, likewise has his Amazonian corps, and all the deceased kings have their wives or mothers represented. Besides this, every official, no matter how high or low his rank, has a corresponding "double" on the inside. When I was created a prince, a wariress was raised to equal rank inside, who will be known to future travellers as the Avagansi, or white prince's "mother."

The titles by which the Amazons are known to the Ffons are, Akhosusi, or king-wives, and Mino, or "our mothers." Respecting this last cognomen, curious errors have arisen. For example, the same person may one day be called the Ningan's "wife," and on the next, his "mother." Again, on inquiring the name of some distinguished old crone, we are told that it is so and so's "mother," when perhaps she is younger than her child. Dunean remarked upon the youthful appearance of the mothers of some of the kings, whereas the actual maternals were dead and buried long ago.

The corps have a great reputation for valour. Indeed such a thing is only what might be expected. Whenever a woman

becomes unsexed, either by the force of circumstances or depravity, she invariably exhibits a superlativeness of evil.

“ For men at most differ as heaven and earth ;
But women, worst and best, as heaven and hell.”

Who has not heard of the ferocious actions of a drunken woman ; and do not the daily papers bear witness to the fact that, once roused, a woman will perpetrate far greater cruelty than a man ? Did not the petroleuses of Paris wander about like she-demons of the nether world ? What spectacle is more calculated to inspire horror than a savage and brutal woman in a passion ? and when we imagine such to be besprinkled with the blood of the slain, and perhaps carrying the gory head of some decapitated victim, one may cease to wonder at the dread with which these female warriors were, and still are, looked upon by the surrounding nations.

I cannot think that their forced celibacy renders them more ferocious, as though venting their chagrin at the total deprivation of love, to which they are subject, upon their enemies. On the contrary, I believe that if an army of married soldieresses were possible, they would be found to be equally cruel with these spinster-warriors, if not to surpass them in their ferocity. Certainly the sour temper, ever characteristic of the old maid, may have something to do with it ; and, knowing that she has been born and lived without performing the functions for which her sex was intended, she may have become imbued with a bitter spirit of animosity against all men, whether soldiers or privates, and so find a gratification of this morbid feeling in the slaughter that necessarily accompanies a fight.

Indeed, now that the subject of female employment is so prominent before the public mind, it would, in many cases, be a happy release from their relatives if all the old maids could be enlisted, and trained to vent their feline spite and mischief-making propensities on the enemies of the country, instead of their neighbours. At any rate, they would be removed out of the way

of the sycophantic parasites, who invariably hover round them, should they be possessed of any property, in the hope of cajoling them out of it. Instances are not by any means rare, of females who have donned the soldier's uniform, and fought bravely side by side, not taking into consideration such heroines as Joan of Arc, Margaret of Anjou, Boadicea, and a host of others. Indeed, what is there less feminine in the life of a soldier, than in that of the new race of Dr. Mary Walkers who are now springing up around us? As for physical endurance, do not scores of charwomen and laundresses drag out a life of literal slavery, compared to which the hardships of a campaign would be nothing, and which may come once in a while, instead of being lifelong?

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the Amazonian army of Dahomey is one of the causes of its slow decadence. The proportion of celibates is too great for the population, being somewhat about three to one.

Four thousand women represent twelve thousand children, the greater part of whom are lost to the state, which cannot afford such a drain. ✓

This, combined with the losses by disease and war, is one of the fertile sources of the national loss of prestige, which is only too true; and ere long, unless there is a change, Dahomey will have to be classed among the nations that have been.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAHOMAN RELIGION.

General ignorance of the religions of savage nations—Mau—Kutomen—The Bassajeh—Fatalism—A journey to spirit-land—Fetichism—Dahn—Ophiolatry—Alinbodun—Hu—Khevioso—The Bo-fetiche—Legba—Minor deities—Afa—Tabooed food—The priesthood—Ecstasy.

PERHAPS nothing is so remarkable on visiting the factories situated on the outposts of civilization, as the utter indifference of the people in charge with regard to the manners and customs of the savage tribes among whom they reside.

Often have I come across persons who have lived for many years in constant communication with a rude people, and, on my seeking for information, have found that they were as ignorant of the mode of life of their neighbours as if they had remained at home. The consequence of this is, that when a traveller comes among them who will use his eyes and tongue and who afterwards publishes an account of the people he has visited, the residents pooh-pooh his account, and deny his assertions; saying, that “they never saw anything of the kind, and surely they ought to know, after having lived as many years among the people as the writer did weeks.” Even when a slight notice is taken of the social arrangements of the people, the religious customs are totally neglected.

Although we have had intercourse with the Dahomans for over two centuries, Burton was the first traveller who made any attempt to fathom the mysterious rites of the fetichism which for the most part forms the national belief of Dahomey.

The Dahoman religion consists of two parts, totally distinct from each other. First, the belief in a supreme being, and, second, the belief in a whole host of minor deities.

The supreme being is called the Mau, and is vested with unlimited authority over every being, both spiritual and carnal. He is supposed to be of so high a nature as to care very little for the circumstances of men, and his attention is only directed to them by some special invocation. He resides in a wonderful dwelling above the sky, and commits the care of earthly affairs to a race of beings, such as leopards, snakes, locusts, or crocodiles, and also to inanimate objects, such as stones, rags, cowries, leaves of certain trees, and, in short, anything and everything.

This deity is said to be the same as the God of civilization; but the white man has a freer access to Him than the negro, who is therefore obliged to resort to mediators. Hence the origin of fetichism. Mau is in every respect an anthropopathical deity, having his likes and dislikes, and being influenced in his actions by the prayers and offerings of his worshippers. Mau has an assistant who keeps a record of the good or evil deeds of every person by means of a stick, the good works being notched on one end, and the bad ones on the other.

When a person dies, his body(!) is judged by the balance struck between the two ends of the stick. If the good preponderates, it is permitted to join the spirit in Kutomen, or "Dead land;" but if, on the contrary, the evil outweighs the good, it is utterly destroyed, and a new body created for the use of the spirit. With this single exception, all rewards and punishments are given in "this world." No matter how bad a man's life may be, if he can only escape punishment on earth, his spirit is released from all the consequences of its wrong-doing, and whatever may be the social condition of the person at the moment of his death, so will he remain for all eternity. Hence, earthly kings are kings in spirit-land, and the slave on earth is the slave hereafter. There is no Hell in the Semitic sense, and the place of judgment of the

body hardly corresponds to the Purgatory of the Roman Catholic faith.

In short, the "hereafter" of the Dahoman is an eternal continuance of the state of being enjoyed by the deceased when on earth. The ghosts are supposed to take a great interest in worldly affairs, and to secretly impress the mind of their protégés with the good advice that their knowledge of the future enables them to impart. These protégés are invariably the descendants of the ghost, unless some flagrant act of disobedience against the commands of the father, on the part of the child, causes the enraged parent to withdraw his protection, and to confer it upon a stranger.

This belief is the one great stumbling-block against the abolition of the human sacrifices at the Customs. The suppression of these would be looked upon by the popular eye as a direct insult to the protecting spirits of the country, and a general revolt would be the inevitable consequence.

Besides the ghostly advice that is administered in secret, the Dahoman monarchs have special *mediums* in the Bassajeh already mentioned. An application to these holy women, on the part of the monarch will ensure a reply. (The common folk must apply to a fetiche priest of great sanctity, who will act the part of a medium between the present and the future world.) Perhaps it may be a comfort to the "spiritualists" of the present day, to know that their hobby is no new thing. *Nihil sub lumine novum.*

The Dahomans are to a certain extent fatalists, since they imagine that to each person a double set of deeds are appointed, the one being good, and the other evil. Each person, however, has the power to avert the consequence of the evil deeds, by certain offerings paid to the deity, not direct, but through the medium of one of the interlocutory mediators.

The Dahoman therefore considers this present life as only a means of attaining an eternal status. Earth is only a temporary dwelling-place; Hades is their "home." There is nothing of the

Sadducee in the Dahoman; on the contrary, the most trivial actions are mixed up with ghostly influence. Certain priests pretend to have visited Kutomen, just as in every Popish monkey



PRINCE BAHANSU'S FETICHE-HOUSE (see page 140).

there is a picture of Purgatory painted under the instruction, or from the sketches, of some Saint who has visited it. The priests who most frequently take these infernal journeys are those of

the Dahn, the Sapatan, the Gbwejeh, the Attin Bodun, and the Guh.

Of course, the medicine-man and the priest are allies, in general one individual combining the two offices in his person. When a patient is afflicted with a disease which has resisted the application of any of the "all-powerful" medicines of the doctor, he usually announces that the sufferer is not labouring under disease, but has been summoned to Dead land by one of his spectral friends. The morbid fear of death usually impels the patient to pay the doctor or priest a handsome fee for him to visit Kutomen, and beg to be excused from attending to the summons. If the patient recovers, it is of course owing to the intercession of the priest, whose fame goes abroad; but if he dies, the subterfuge is that the ghostly inquirer would not accept any excuse for the non-attendance of the person subpoenaed.

Upon one occasion, I saw a priest who was about to depart on a visit to Hades. He received his fee beforehand, cautious fellow, and then went into an empty shed near the patient's house. He then drew a circle on the ground, and took out of his "possible sack" a number of charms, all tied up in blood-stained rags. Squatting down on the centre of this magic circle, and bidding us upon no account to step within it, he covered himself with a large square of grey baft, profusely ornamented with tufts of magic. In a few minutes, he commenced to mutter some unintelligible sounds in a low voice, his body and limbs quivering like an aspen. Half an hour of this farce ensued, when the feticheer uncovered himself, and prepared to deliver the message. He said that he had found considerable difficulty in obtaining access to the ghost who had summoned the patient, as when he knew that a priest was coming he hid in the bush. He said that the ghost was that of Nuage (one of the sick man's dead uncles), and that he was much offended by this summons not being answered in person, but in consideration of certain sacrifices offered to Guh he would think over the matter. Rather an ambiguous answer, but just in the prevaricating way affected by all priests, whether in Japan

or on the Yellow-stone. From the statements of these priests, it appears that life in the other world is much the same as in this, —wars, palavers, feasts, dances, and other incidents going on much in the same style as on earth. It appears that the clothes in which the deceased is buried accompany him to Kutōmen, for sometimes a priest will bring back with him a necklace, bead, or other small article, known to have been buried with the corpse of the person who summons the sick man. Burton mentions the case of a man who, “after returning with a declaration that he had left a marked coin in Dead land, dropped it from his waist-cloth at the feet of the payer, while drinking rum.” A very careless priest that.

Another singular belief is that of the possibility of the same spirit being in more than one place at the same time. This was exemplified in the So-Sin Custom, where Gézu’s ghost was in his shed, on his war-stool, and in his own Bassajeh at one and the same instant of time. Again, a ghost will sometimes remain in Dead land, and also come back to earth in the body of a new infant; and, in fact, nearly all the king’s children are but the transmigrated spirits of the old kings. Hahansu, for example, was declared to have the spirit of Agongolu, his grandfather, within him. Agongolu’s name, when a prince, was Hahansu, wherefore the heir to the throne of Dahomey took that name.

The mediators between the Mau and humankind are propitiated through the various objects they inhabit. The occurrence of these go-betweens with their material existence mainly owes its existence to the fact of the mind of the African not being able to grasp the fact of a deity asomatous and ubiquitous. The deity must either be worshipped through the medium of an intervenor, who has a tangible form, or the religion must be reduced to anthropomorphism. \ Dahomans deny the corporeal existence of the deity, but ascribe human passions to him; a singular medley. Their religion must not be confounded with polytheism, for they only worship one God, Mau, but propitiate him through the intervention of the fetiches, who are not inferior deities, but only

beings of an intermediate order, like the angels of Christendom, who have powerful influence for good or evil with Mau.

Of these fetiches, four hold a superior rank to the others. They are Danh-gbwe, Atin-bodun, Hu, and Khevyosoh. Danh, the first in order, is the most powerful fetiche in the country. It is the tutelary saint of Whydah, and its worship was introduced into the national religion when that kingdom was conquered. Its emblem, the snake, and its temple have been described. Ophiolatry is a prevalent form of fetichism in Africa. I have noticed it amongst the Mpongwes and Bakali of Gaboon, and it exists among the Niger tribes and amongst the Ashantees. Though so powerful, its aid was insufficient to protect the Whydahs from the conquering Agajah; but the old worshippers still held faith in their deity, and were highly pleased when it was introduced at Abomey. Snake-worship, indeed, appears to have been one of the earliest forms of idolatry, for we find it amongst the Ancient Egyptians, and the brazen serpent which Moses "lifted in the wilderness" was no doubt a symbol derived from the religion of the Pharaohs. We hear of it in the earliest accounts of the Allemanic nations, and Brahminism still bears it as one of its emblems. Even among the Moslem Feloops and Mandingoes traces of ophiolatry exist, and Burton mentions the King Snake of Sierra Leone.

The snake is supposed to be almost omnipotent in procuring the welfare of its devotees, and no undertaking of any importance is commenced without sacrificing to it. It has no image, the worship being confined to the adoration of the living snakes, which are kept in the Danh-gbwelweh in all the principal towns. The devotee goes to the temple and pays a heavy fee to the priest, who dismisses the worshipper with the assurance that his wishes shall be attended to. These snakes are a nuisance to the people residing near their temples. My house in Coomassie was so situated, and at night the reptilian deities often wandered into my courtyard. Upon one occasion I had been sleeping on the Pwe earth bed, and at midnight awoke, as was

customary, and prepared to rise to look at my meteorological instruments. While sitting half asleep, with my legs hanging over the edge of the Pwe bench, I noticed something white and shining on the ground beneath my feet. A closer inspection revealed a fine python, eighteen feet long, slowly crawling along on his way back to the fetiche-house. Lucky was I not to have trodden upon the creature, for he would certainly have avenged himself upon me, and my people would have been too frightened of his magic powers to have rendered me any assistance. I roused out Joe, who brought a light, and we examined the splendid reptile as it slowly crawled out of the courtyard.

The Snake Priests, or *Danh-si* (snake wives), are extremely numerous, Burton says 1000. Strange is the fact that the most profitable fetiches generally have the *most priests*. These are of both sexes—married or single—and of various ranks. The high officials, after a preliminary course of instruction at Whydah, finish off at the fetiche town of Somorne, near Alladah.

The next deity in importance is *Atin-bodun*, whose earthly form is that of various trees, while its domestic abode is in some curious specimen of ceramic art. First is a red cullender, stuck bottom upwards, on a little earthen step at the foot of some bush or young tree growing at the house door; on the right of this is a small goolah-shaped vessel, with a narrow neck, and generally whitewashed outside. The worship of *Atin-bodun* consists in faith in its power of averting and curing disease, especially fever, and in offering small quantities of water, which is poured into the little pot. Of course this is the tutelary saint of all physicians. Any tall tree is considered to be inhabited by this deity, but those especially sacred to it are the *Hun*, or silk-cotton tree, and the *Loko*, or poison tree, a decoction of whose leaves is used as an ordeal to detect any hidden crime. We find an analogy to this worship in the mistletoe of the Druids, nay, even in the holly and May-pole, and among foreign nations in the sacred tree of the Mohammedans, the holy fig of Buddhists, and the *aklakan* of the Cherokee Indians. The *Atin-bodun-si*, or priests, number

almost as many as those of the snake, but they are not of so high an order.

Next in precedence is *IIn*, the Dahoman Neptune. Like the former two fetiches, this is also a Whydah deity, and still holds the head-quarters of his worship at that town, where the high-priest or *Huno* resides. A temple near the snake-house is the great shrine of this deity, a dilapidated hut, with bones, skulls, sharks' jaws, and other curiosities suspended from the thatched roof within the bare walls.

Hu is supposed to have no particular dwelling, but has given the sea at Whydah in charge of *Agbweh*. At the end of the dry season the *Huno* marches in great state, accompanied by a long train of priests, to the beach, and propitiates the goodwill of *Agbweh* by an offering of maize, bananas, rum, cloth, &c.

The little huts erected on the beach are small temples sacred to this god, where canoe-men offer donations of food to induce the deity to give them a smooth sea. Formerly the king was accustomed to send a man, dressed as a caboceer, with umbrella, stool, beads, and other insignia of his rank, to the beach, where he was placed in a canoe by the *Huno*, and, after sundry offerings and paryers, carried out to sea and thrown overboard. I believe this practice is now happily discontinued. The emblems of this deity are small canoes stuck over with shells and mounted on a little heap of swish.

(Last of the four principal fetiches is *Khevyosoh*, the thunder-god, who may be taken as the Dahoman Jupiter.

He presides over the weather, and punishes those who do not please him with the abi, or lightning. A person killed by lightning is supposed to have fallen under the especial displeasure of the deity, and a ban of excommunication is passed upon the body by the *Khevyosoh-si*. The corpse is not allowed to be buried, but is brought to the *Khevyosoh-ho*, or thunder temple, and there stripped stark naked. A heap of beaten earth outside the temple is then deluged with water and the body laid on it. The priests, male and female, then march round it,

carrying bowls containing salt, pepper, and lumps of goats' flesh. The body is then hacked with the knives of the priests, who pretend to eat lumps of the flesh, but in reality devour the goats' meat in the calabashes. During this pseudo-cannibalistic rite they cry out, "Come and buy God's meat." Burton erroneously states that the flesh of the corpse is chewed; he is mistaken.

We now come to the secondary deities.

Of these the most powerful is Bo, the Dahoman Mars, who takes all brave men under his protection, and leaves all cowards to the mercy of their enemies. His temples are usually conical huts, placed at every town gate and cross road, and covering a rude swish deformity of the human figure, copiously besmeared with blood and cowries, and altogether a disgusting object. The priests of this deity number over a thousand, and are, of course, held in great veneration among so warlike a people as the Dahomans. The tufts sewn on the war dresses are all Bo fetiche, so also are the blood-stained cowries on guns, uniform, and cartridge belts. The horsetails carried by the *caboceers* when dancing are also Bo fetiche, and the gunpowder streaks on the face of the king doubtless have some connection with this deity. The domestic emblems of the god are the Bo-so, little altars of round truncheons stuck in the ground, like the fasces of the Roman lictors, and painted in alternate bands of red and white. So also are the small wooden images, red, black, or yellow, that are exhibited during the Customs, stuck in the ground before a row of fetiche cressets, or devoutly placed in a little niche in the wall of a house, much after the style of the Roman Catholic crucifix.

The next deity in importance is Legba, the Dahoman Priapus, whose little huts are to be met with in every street. This deity is of either sex, a male and female Legba often residing in the same temple. A squat swish image, rudely moulded into the grossest caricature on the human form, sitting with hands on knees, with gaping mouth and the special attri-

butes developed to an ungainly size. Teeth of cowries usually fill the clown-like mouth, and ears standing out from the head, like a bat's, are only surpassed in their monstrosity by the snowshoe-shaped feet. The nose is broad, even for a negro's, and altogether the deity is anything but a fascinating object. Round the deity is a fence of knobbed sticks, daubed with filthy slime, and before the god is a flat saucer of red earthenware, which contains the offerings. When a person wishes to increase his family he calls in a Legba priest and gives him a fowl, some cankie, palm-oil, and some water. A fire is lighted, and the cankie, water, and palm-oil mixed together and put in the saucer. The fowl is then killed by placing the head between the great and second toes of the priest, who severs it from the body by a jerk. The head is then swung over the person of the worshipper, to allow the blood to drop upon him, while the bleeding body is held over a little dish, which catches the blood. The fowl is then semi-roasted on a fire lighted near, and the priest, taking the dish of blood, smears the body of the deity with it, finally taking some of the blood into his mouth and sputtering it over the god. The fowl is then eaten by the priest, and I suppose the wives of the devotees have twins immediately.

Akwashi, a Mahi deity presiding over childbirth, is perhaps best introduced here. She has a shrine on the Ishagga road, near Abomey.

The deity held in the next degree of reverence is Hoho, the preserver of twins. Its pottery is known as Hozen, and consists of two little earthen bowls like teacups or paint pots, united by a short bar of red clay and covered with round lids. The pots are usually thickly coated with whitewash, and the offering is nothing more expensive than water, or rum on great occasions. Behind this is usually stuck one or more Asen, iron affairs like the cressets of mediæval times, ornamented with cowries and usually provided with calico cases.

We then come to Gbwejeh, the Diana of the country. Her

emblem is a small snake coiled up, and painted white with red spots. All huntsmen offer sacrifices of water or rum to this deity, and it is the tutelary saint of the Gan-u-nlan Company and the Gbe-to hunters among the Amazons.

Ajaruma is the next fetiche, in whose custody all the Europeans at Whydah are placed. The temple is in the garden of the English fort, where a dilapidated shed covers a white-washed tree stump, stained red at the top, with a white avo round the line of junction of the two colours.

Zo, the god of fire, perhaps claims the next rank.

A small pot of the porringer species, usually striped red and black, is placed in the fetiche-house that is erected in every house of any pretensions. Offerings of water are made to this deity, and a string of grass-rope with palm leaflets attached to it is hung round every house, and, together with a white streak encircling the building breast high, is far better than any fire insurance policy against pecuniary loss through the breaking out of the igneous element.

The next two gods are under the immediate command of Atin-bodun. The first is Sapatan, the goddess for small-pox. This national scourge is warded off by an oblong affair of clay, divided into two equal parts, one of which is *semé* of broken pieces of pottery stuck in on their edges, and the other by cowries. Another altar for this god is a clay oblong, painted red on the right side and white on the left. Behind these is the usual Asen. Every palace has a number of these scattered about, for the small-pox had taken off three of the eight Dahoman monarchs.

The second goddess is the Demen, a Mahi fetiche which presides over the chastity of the Amazons. Over a certain gate in every palace, which is known as the Abo-dewe, a "gate to find out your crime," a bunch of fetiche charms is suspended, which by virtue of Demen will cause certain pregnancy in the transgressor. Such a goddess is highly necessary among so miscellaneous a collection of women.

We now come to the national Ædile, Aizan. This god preserves all travellers from the evil spirits infesting the roads, gnomes, and folks of that ilk. Every market and town gate is under its protection, and its pottery is seen along all the roads in the country—a heap of clay, surmounted by a small round pot containing a decomposing mixture of cankie, palm-oil, &c.

The following deities are the protecting or patron saints of various places:—

1. Agasun, the original fetiche of Uhwaweh, before Abomey was conquered by the Ffons and the empire of Dahomey founded. It is held in great reverence, and its high-priest, the Agasun-no, is the greatest feticheer in Abomey—a sort of local pope. The emblem of Agasun is a curious affair, like a harp without strings, before which the usual porringer is set out, and oblations of-rum poured out. The head-quarters are at Bwemeh, to the south of Abomey, where the palace of the Agasun-no is situated.

2. Leh, an old Whydah fetiche, whose head-quarters were near Savi. Its emblem is a crocodile.

3. Dohen, an old fetiche of Whydah, whose special province it was to call vessels to that port. I know nothing of its temple nor its worship.

4. Nesu, the tutelary deity of Abomey, introduced by Agaja. The temples called Nesu-hwe are its special shrines, and the Sin-Kwain Custom is the great feast in its honour. The waterpots known as Bagweh are the receptacles for its offerings.

The remaining deities are of various kinds.

Lisa, the sun, the incarnation of Khevyosoh. This god is worshipped when the crops are ripening, by sacrificing fowls and doves to it. Its emblem is a peculiar teapot-shaped affair, striped diagonally red and white. The lid is usually surmounted by a chameleon.

Agaman, the chameleon, the messenger for Lisa.

This animal is usually quartered red and white. Pots of water are placed before it.

Mau, the moon fetiche, which guards the sleeping Dahomans. I know nothing of its worship. Its priestesses wear long necklaces of cowries with black seeds between each pair.

Kpate, a canonised Whydah man, who first enticed Europeans to the town. His emblem is a tree stump with a white rag tied round it.

Kpase, the assistant of Kpate, according to Burton.

Danh, the Rainbow Snake, whose conciliation is necessary to all who wish to amass riches. The large clay snake, with the scarlet feathers of the grey parrot stuck in for horns, is its emblem. Before this is a whitewashed pot. The ants are supposed to be the messengers for the Rainbow snake, and ant hills are supposed to be the "bush" houses for Danh. The highly valued popo beads are supposed to be the excrement of Danh.

Agbwetoh, a sea deity, who assists Agbweh to keep the sea smooth.

Nateh, the person who has charge of the fish in the sea. In his honour little huts are erected on the beach, within which is a conical heap of clay, stuck full of fish-bones.

Avreketeh, the fetiche who steals the keys from Nateh and gives to man—hence he has some 500 wives (Burton). He has a shrine near Abomey. I know nothing of this deity.

Tokpodun, the alligator worshipped at Savi and Alladah as the god of wisdom. His emblem is the clay alligator, quarterly gules and argent on a raised step.

Takpwonun, the hippopotamus, supposed to confer strength and far-sightedness upon its worshippers.

Kpo, the leopard, a special fetiche for the king. It is the cause of the courageous and magnanimous actions of the monarch.

Guh, the deity who presides over blacksmiths in the manufacture of hoes, knives, &c.

Besides these, every person has as many private fetiches as his means will allow him to purchase. These are of every possible description. Rude clay models of animals, birds of clay or wood,

curious sticks stuck over with feathers, shells, melons suspended from the roof, texts from the Koran, purchased from the Moslem visitors, and anything else that strikes the fancy of the owner.

Lastly is the peculiar worship of Afa, the god of wisdom. This divinity is consulted upon every occasion by all who can afford a fowl or pigeon to pay the fees. It is the Dahoman representative of the Grecian geomancy, a custom prevalent all the world over. It is performed by sixteen palm-nuts, denuded of the husk, and then marked with peculiar mystic hieroglyphics. The book of fate is a board about two feet long and six inches broad, with a handle at one end. One side of this contains sixteen series or marks called the "mothers," and the other a similar number of "children," formed by the combination of the mothers' marks. Each mother has a special symbol, to which certain mystic properties are assigned, such as giving the diviner luck in hunting, sowing, war-palavers, house-building, &c. Certain days are sacred to certain mothers, and the diviner always consults Afa as to the proper day to commence any important undertaking, as marrying a new wife, building a house, or sowing corn.

The following is a list of the Afa marks:—

1. Bwé Magi, the head mother.

Symbol—Six dots in a square.

2	2
2	2
2	2
2	2

2. Yeku Magi.

Symbol—Two circles conjoined.

1	1
1	1
1	1
1	1

3. Ooé Magi Wudde.

Symbol—A square.

2	2
1	1
1	1
2	2

4. Di Magi.

Symbol—A triangle with a dot in it.

1	1
2	2
2	2
1	1

5. Losu Magi.

Symbol—A cross in a circle.

1	1
1	1
2	2
2	2

6. Uram Magi.

Symbol—Two triangles with their apices together.

2	2
2	2
1	1
1	1

7. Abla Magi, or Unun. Symbol—A circle with a triangle in it.	1 1 2 2 1 1 2 2	12. Tula Magi. Symbol—A crescent.	1 1 2 2 1 1 1 1
8. Akli Magi. Symbol—A square with a circle in it.	2 2 2 2 2 2 1 1	13. Lete Magi. Symbol—Two stars and a dash.	1 1 1 1 2 2 1 1
9. Ba Magi. Symbol—Two squares.	2 2 1 1 1 1 1 1	14. Ka Magi. Symbol—A trident.	2 2 1 1 2 2 2 2
10. Guda Magi. Symbol—Two circles in a square.	1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2	15. Che Magi. Symbol—Two triangles in a circle.	1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2
11. Tumpwu Magi. Symbol—A five-pointed star.	2 2 2 2 1 1 2 2	16. Fu Magi. Symbol—Two stars.	2 2 1 1 2 2 1 1

The first and the last of these are the most powerful, and their children are also of the most importance. These are formed by taking the right side of one and the left side of another mother. Thus 2 1 is the child of Bwé Magi and Yeku Magi, and so 2 1 on. The nuts are held in one hand and thrown 2 1 into the other, one or two being dropped intentionally 2 1 on the ground during the throw. If one nut is left, a single mark is made, and if two a couple. If more than two are left, the throw is void. When a mother is found, the day denoted by its symbol is propitious for the business inquired about.

If a child is cast, no particular day is more propitious than another. These simple answers of "yes" or "no" can be obtained by every person, but there are certain events connected with the sequence of the mothers and children, together with a mystical association between the diviner and one of the mothers, which can only be learned from one of the Bukono. Accordingly, as soon as any person can scrape together a sufficient fee, he "gets Afa," as it is called. He brings a duck, goat, sheep, or bullock, with cowries varying in quantity from ten to a hundred heads, according to his rank. These he presents to the diviner, and is instructed in the mysteries. The two consult Afa in a sacred grove, unseen by profane eyes, and there the Bukono discovers the symbol connected with the birth of the neophyte. He then casts to find the symbol of the ancestor whose spirit is in the pupil, and the combination or children of these two "mothers" have peculiar signification to the student. Then the particular food whose use is prejudicial to the pupil is announced, and such is tabooed to the neophyte. Sheep are frequently tabooed to the lower orders, and upon one occasion, when Hahansu had presented one to me and I was annoyed by the importunities of the jesters and their "tail," I hung the skin at my gate, and was rejoiced to see the greater portion turn back with a shudder from the unholy food. The selection of prohibited objects includes palm-wine, goats, cankies, rum, and in short everything, and particular modes and places of performing certain actions are debarred from the pupil. For example, Amoosu could not eat chop with his back to the moon. Egblie-egbah could not light a fire, and one of the porters was not allowed to drink rum without offering the cup to another person beforehand.

As might be expected, but little is taught the neophyte, the grand secrets being the stock-in-trade of the Bukono, who drive a brisk business with the repeated consultations of the people. In short, Afa is the medium of communication between men and gods, and when a sacrifice has been offered to any deity, Afa is

consulted to ascertain if the propitiation of the god has been effected.

In Dahomey there is none of the barbarous cruelty which inevitably results from a belief in witchcraft. No Ffon believes that any person can injure any other by any prayers, incantations, or ceremonials, since all are under the care of a Supreme Being who will not delegate his authority to any mortal. A man may influence the gods on his own behalf, but with regard to the fate of others he is powerless. We therefore see none of the inhuman butcheries such as are practised in Equatorial Africa, where no person can die without submitting his nearest and dearest relatives to the suspicion of having bewitched him, and if ever the suspicion rests upon any individual he is doomed and put to death often with a refinement of cruelty truly devilish in its character.

The Snake Priests are recruited in the manner before mentioned,¹ but the other sections of the clergy are generally hereditary, though occasionally a layman is initiated into the mysteries, of course after the payment of heavy fees.

A case of abnormal brain-action or ecstasy has already been mentioned. The candidate for orders is usually kept totally secluded, and his feelings worked upon by mysterious noises and ejaculations, which are kept up for a certain period, generally about a month. If at the end of that time the fetiche has not declared itself, the candidate is dismissed as unfit for the priesthood.

The inspiration generally takes the form of ecstasy, and the subject talks wildly, and often has to be held down by main force to prevent him doing himself injury by his violent actions. This fit usually lasts about half an hour, and has such a powerful effect upon the sufferer that he usually faints as soon as its violence is over.

On recovery he tells his instructor that he has seen some vision, which the priests announce as some deity, such as Khevyosoh,

¹ Page 56.

Zo, or others; and the neophyte is thus summoned to the priesthood of that particular deity.

This peculiar mesmeric trance is by no means confined to the Dahomans. Roman and Grecian history mentions it. The medicine men of the North American Indians work themselves into a similar frenzy, and the "calls" of fanatic Methodists, Shakers, Mormons, Spiritualists, and other modern sects may be traced to the effect of impressive pseudo-sacred, awe-inspiring speeches and actions upon the overworked and excited brain. Who amongst us has not occasionally seen some street preacher denouncing all the terrors of the law worked up in the blue fire, blood-and-thunder style of a penny gaff, and at length so exciting the feelings of some hysterical female as to cause her to utter the most wild, incoherent sayings in an apparent unconscious condition, that has been sometimes called "the spirit of prophecy?" The more ignorant the disciple the easier does the spirit descend, and it is very singular that these prophecies should be often accompanied by unpolished English and misquoted texts of Scripture.

There may, perhaps, be some hidden meaning in this ecstasy, such as Spiritualists would induce us to believe, and which mediums are so anxious to set forth, notwithstanding there always appears to me to be too much of the convenient ambiguity of the dream-book and the gipsy fortune-teller about the revelations. Most certainly I have seen instances of the mesmeric trance in persons who, like myself, have been endeavouring to fathom the mystery, unbiassed by any religious or interested feeling whatever; and though fully believing that it is an action of the brain totally uninfluenced by the external senses, yet I cannot as yet, in the present embryo state of the theory, bring myself to believe that it has any more connection with prophecy or Spirit-land than table-turning, spirit-rapping, or such "humbugs."

The peculiar deity having thus declared itself, the acolyte is instructed in the worship of the god and in the mysteries of the calling. Many have a peculiar language or "cant" by which

they impress the ignorant with a sense of their holiness, in which they are not by any means singular, since the devil can quote Scripture for the attainment of his ends.

During this matriculation the friends and parents of the neophyte have to pay the priest for subsistence and instruction, until in about three years the disciple is considered to be fully instructed in all the mysteries of dancing, singing, praying, taking Afa and other equally sacred ceremonies, the agglomeration of which is called religious worship.

A final call is then made upon the friends of the candidate, who returns to his kindred for a short time before ordination, after which he must renounce all the influence which his relations might have upon him to procure stronger fetiches for them at a price below the authorized tariff. Finally, he is taken to the chief priest of his deity, who gives him a new cloth and a fetiche name, and, if at Abomey, presents him to the king.

It does not necessarily follow that a priest should not also be a tradesman. On the contrary, most priests have a business, such as farming, soldiering, weaving, or other secular calling. The highest dignitaries, however, have no need of such means to eke out their incomes, as they live on the fat of the land upon the fees paid to them by those votaries who are desirous of attaining wealth, health, and wisdom.

There are by far a greater number of fetiche women than men, as it is by no means an uncommon custom for the priest who assists at the christening ceremony to dedicate the child to a particular fetiche on the spot. Such children are universally respected, and the giving birth to a priestess is a great honour to the parent.

The clergy are not subject to the same code of laws as the laity. Formerly their power was absolute, and no priest could be punished except by the ecclesiastical court. Gézu, however, slightly modified this system. During the practice of fetichism no priest can be taken into custody; but when not employed upon religious duties, the feticheer can be punished just as a layman.

In these cases it is the lay part only of the priest that suffers, the sacred portion of the priest being incapable of receiving punishment. I never, however, came across any priest who could point out this vulnerable portion of himself.

Ordinary wives are entirely at the mercy of their husbands, but fetiche spouses are exempt from the frequent chastisements inflicted upon the lay portion of the harem by the lord and master.

Many privileges also accrue to the priesthood. They have full permission to marry any other man's wife they may take a fancy to, to beg in public, to collect tithes from their votaries, and to wear many dresses forbidden to the laity.

Many shave one side of their heads, others string beads on their wool, similar to the custom among the Fans, while a third series decorate their scalp-tufts with feathers of the firefinch. Most of them carry medicine-bags and horsetails, and not a few have an ornament of a skull or jawbone attached to the handle of the latter.

The peculiar dresses worn by the Tansino and other priestesses have been mentioned in the preceding pages, and Hahansu's fetiche-house may be taken as a sample of a completely furnished Dahoman "Joss-house."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE DAHOMANS.

Character of the Dahomans—Their subtlety—Fallacy of the common belief in their affection—A plea for Darwinism—What is a negro?—His beau ideal—How to civilise him—Albinoism—Dress—National tattooings—Asphalted negroes—Food—Aromatic sauce—Agriculture—Weaving—Architecture—Furniture—Marriage ceremony—Funerals—Zoology.

WE have already informed the reader of the rise of the Dahoman nation from the original stock of Alladah. So many different tribes have added their quota towards forming the present people that there are scarcely half a dozen families remaining in the country who have preserved their original Ffon blood uncontaminated by that of other tribes. These are readily known by their lighter colour, and, as might be expected, the royal family, having the best opportunity of preserving their caste, exhibit the most marked differences from the canaille.

Collectively, the Dahomans are of the middle height, agile and very slightly made, capable of enduring a considerable amount of fatigue, but lacking the strength of the natives of the Kroo coast. The muscles of the arms and legs stand out conspicuously, and in their dances they exhibit a wonderful suppleness of limb, such as would delight a civilized gymnast. Their skins are of various shades of chocolate, from the dark brown of the Whydahs to the lighter coffee-coloured hue of the Alladahs. Their necks are rather short, which, combined with their flat skulls, make them excellent hammock-men, and all burdens are carried on the head.

Their morals are not of a very high order. Truth is never resorted to where a lie will screen the talker. Braggadocio and bombast are mixed up with all their speeches; but whenever they get a chance they will cheat and swindle in the most underhanded fashion. As a natural consequence of their despotic rule they are cringing, servile, and cowardly to their superiors, but arrogant, dogmatic and overbearing to those over whom they are placed. Liars all, and cheats of blackest hue, they never trust a stranger, and their shrewd, overreaching propensities often victimise the unsuspecting white trader. As an instance: a woman will bring in a dozen pots of oil to the factory and obtain a receipt for the same, stating the amount of oil she has brought in. This docket or "Book," as everything of the kind is called, even to the railway labels on a portmanteau, is then taken to the store and exchanged for goods. Sometimes a crafty trader will exhibit her ticket and ask for some goods, and endeavour to avoid giving up the book to the clerk in the hurry of business. Once let her get away with it, and she will carefully preserve it for months, and when the transaction is forgotten produce it again and obtain a second lot of goods. As among all negroes, everything noisy is "music," and they are extremely fond of singing, without the least idea of music, dancing without grace, and gambling.

The old Ffons were a warlike race, but, like the ancient Romans, degeneracy and effeminaey crept in with success, and the Dahoman *prestige* is now on the decline. Cruel, bloodthirsty, and vindictive to their enemies, they fought with the ferocity of wounded tigers, and in the home circle exhibited none of that affection which some namby-pamby stay-at-home sentimentalists would have us believe in. A man looks upon his wife and children as so many servants, who will feed and clothe him, and the conjugal and paternal love that is expressed by Cowper in the lines—

" Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot alter Nature's claim ;
 Skins may differ, *but affection*
Dwells in white and black the same,"

is a sentiment that my experience rarely enabled me to discover. Among children up to about ten years little difference exists in their treatment of each other, whether white or black; but after that age all the little mutual kindnesses gradually disappear, and at twenty-one a man cares little more for his brother or sister than for strangers he has never seen. So far from being an advocate for the "man and brother" theory, I am strongly inclined to think that there exists in the negro an "innate and enduring inferiority of a race which has had so many an opportunity of acquiring civilization, but which has ever deliberately rejected improvement."¹ Most heartily do I agree with Burton in his statements showing that the negro has been raised to a pinnacle from which he will be overturned when the true knowledge of his race *as it is*, and not *as it is supposed to be*, is obtained.

Is it not true that the strongest advocates of the philanthropic schemes for elevating him to a position, for which he is mentally and physically unfitted, are those very persons who have never heard anything of him, except from the one-sided statements of the missionary, still less have they visited him in his native haunts? It, therefore, devolves upon all who have been fortunate enough to form an intimate acquaintance with the every-day life of the negro to give an unvarnished and faithful picture of him as he is to be found.

The song representing a slave-mother offering herself in the place of her child, in the words,

"Chain me, starve me, flog me, kill me,
Heaven have mercy, spare my child,"

never had any other origin than in the fertile imagination of the author. The condition of the negro as yet renders the preservation of self his primary object, and the affairs of other people, however closely related, possess but little interest to him. Nevertheless, it is a gross error to suppose that negroes dispose of their own wives and children. I never heard of a single instance of

¹ Burton.

such a case, not even among the degraded tribes of the Cameroons and the Ogowai. What cause can be brought forward to account for the universal degradation of the negro if we reject the theory of a lower psychological organization? Without alluding to the much-maligned Darwinian theory, I would here state roundly my belief that the negro is a sub-species or permanent variety of the genus *homo*. One of the distinctive features of a species is its power to procreate a succession of individuals similar to itself, and which have a like creative power themselves; or, as Buffon defines it, "*succession constante d'individus semblables et qui se reproduisent.*" Now one of the strongest arguments in favour of the sub-species theory is the fact that the children of a white father and a negro mother are notoriously unproductive, more especially when they marry mulattoes like themselves.

One of the most fertile sources of the erroneous *prestige* which has accrued to the negro is the universal ignorance as to what a negro really is. With the generality of the supporters of the "man and brother" theory, every native of Africa, from the Kaffir to the Moor, and from the Soumal to the Mandingo, is a negro; and in the United States the slightest taint of African blood constitutes a "nigger." The error is as gross as the calling of all the Asiatics, Cingalese, would be.

The limits of the true negroes may be defined to extend between the parallel of the Kong Mountains and that of the Congo, but its boundaries are by no means regular. North of this boundary we find a race of a far higher civilization in the Semiticised negroids of Houssa, Bambara, and Nubia; and it is from amongst these that the greater number of the bright examples of *negro* philosophers are obtained, who are thrust in our faces as indisputable evidences of the equality of *negro* and white in the scale of intellect by the philanthropic Wilberforeses of the day.

The negro is a mimic—one of the surest evidences of an innate conscientiousness of inferiority. He voluntarily accepts servility as his proper station, and it is well known that he will obey a mulatto rather than one of his own race, and a white man rather

than either. Among the tribes on the outskirts of European trading do we not ever find that the white man is looked on as a spirit, a being of far higher order?

Among the Gaboon tribes a rude deity in the form of a human being is worshipped, and this idol is nearly always whitened.

No greater mistake was ever made than to commence to preach to negroes on the supposition that they were on a par with white men. A race who have not had the sense to invent a personal deity, can never understand the theology of Christianity. They may, parrot-like, quote texts by the yard, and have the professional "cant" at their tongues' ends; but as to understanding one iota of it, it is the height of absurdity to imagine such a thing. The converted negro has no reverence for the Deity, such a feeling having no existence in his brain. He will pray for palm-oil to cook his cankie, in or for a piece of new cloth to decorate himself with—(facts) much after the blasphemous style of William Huntington, who having nothing to eat prayed for food, and walking in the fields shortly afterwards met a little girl carrying a loaf which he stole and thanked God for answering his prayer. (See his "Bank of Faith.")

Give him plenty to eat and drink, clothing, a roof over him, and a wife, and he will revel in luxurious ease; much in the same condition as a well cared-for pig might be supposed to do. The highest ambition of the race is to be a trader, and when one succeeds in becoming so far outwardly civilized as to engage in mercantile pursuits, he turns round upon his white instructor and treats him with contempt for having lowered himself to his level. Take S'a Leone, for example, where a white man can rarely obtain a civil answer to an inquiry, and where the officers of the mail steamers are subjected to the grossest insults from a set of dressed-up "*merchants*," who use language towards them such as would not be tolerated in a European port. I think it is Winwood Reade who mentions a case of a full-blooded negro taunting a Frenchman with the remark, "*We beat you at Waterloo.*" But why multiply examples when such facts are

known to all who have visited "the Coast," and whose interests do not run contrary to their mentioning such cases?

To civilize the negro nothing would be more conducive to success than to transplant him to another continent, and there compel him to labour under a strict but enlightened system until he is capable of taking care of himself. Where they have been obliged to work, either by compulsion or by necessities, they have always improved up to a certain standard, where they all stop short as though wound up, and the cases where they have advanced beyond this limit are rare as white crows. The improvement of a race by even a small admixture of better blood is abundantly shown in Dahomey, where the pure-blooded Ffons are a highly intellectual class, as exemplified by Hahansu and others, especially the natives of Alladah; while as we approach the coast and the negro blood gains the ascendancy, so do the thinking powers decrease in a similar ratio. Compare the conduct of the Ashantees and the Fantees in the present war.

Let it not for one moment be imagined that I am an advocate for slavery, if by that is understood the possession of one human being by another as a chattel. On the contrary, I would use my best endeavours to put a stop to so nefarious a traffic in human flesh; but, at the same time, I would defend the exportation of negroes to our tropical colonies, there to be utilized as farm-labourers, just as Coolies are shipped from one part of the globe to another. White labour in the tropics is impossible; and the animal best calculated to perform the necessary tillage is the negro. So far from pining in captivity, as most slaves are supposed to do, the human chattels of Da Souza, Medeiros, and other slave-owners at Whydah could not be more severely punished than by giving them their freedom; and in many instances, where it has been offered to them, they have refused it. These slaves are not the cat-o'-nine-tailed bloodhound-hunted wretches of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, but the unpaid labourers of masters, who demand their daily toil, in lieu of the board and lodging they supply. I have heard these "slaves" deriding the white coopers

at work on the beach, and six of them will often be set to perform a piece of work which would be allotted to but one European. Could we return to the days of Wilberforce, our better experience would now lead us to avoid all such catastrophes as witnessed in Jamaica, under Governor Eyre, who, because he looked at things in their proper light, was called a "murderer" by the ignorant. What has been the effect of the establishment of that Elysium for freed negroes in Liberia? The government is an unlimited anarchy; neither life, limb, nor property is safe, and the last state of these objects of pity is far worse than their original existence in their native wilds.

To return to the Dahoman. Unlike the tribes nearer the equator, the Ffon never resorts to poison, either to remove an obnoxious enemy or as an ordeal for theft. They evidently take a pride in this circumstance, which may owe its existence to the fact that every person in the kingdom belongs to the king, and, if one were poisoned, the administrator would be punished, not for the crime of murder, *but for destroying the king's property.*

In Whydah there are several instances of albinism, their leprous-looking skins, yellow hair, and pink eyes, combined with their negro features, rendering them anything but comely objects to a European. Among the natives they are supposed to be under the special protection of the Divinity, just as idiots are among the North American Indians.

The women are of a stronger make than the men, and are not bad looking for negroes, until they attain middle life, after which they speedily degenerate, and nothing is more repulsive than an old shrivelled-up beldam of forty. The breasts are of a decided pendant order, and the amateur artist who commences to draw a Dahoman woman had better begin his sketch by forming the letter W, and putting a human figure round it. >

The principal features of the Dahoman dress have been described *passim*. All use the languti T bandage, here called a Godo, and, above this, the better class wear a very short petticoat or nun-pwe, and, if they can afford it, the peculiar

drawers called Chokoto ; but, if poor, the Godo is the only article of clothing worn by the male sex. Above these, a long toga, the owuchyon, is thrown, being of various sizes, according to the means of the owner, from nine feet by three to eighteen by eight feet long. It is worn something after the fashion of a Scotch plaid, being tucked under the left armpit, taken round the back, and then thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free. The women wear the cloth rather different, as it is simply wound round their persons above the breasts; and not thrown over the shoulder. Both sexes have a great partiality for beads, rings, and other ornaments, a common one being a plug of composite candle, thrust through the lobe of the ear. Most persons wear a few beads threaded on a string, and tied round the left calf, below the knee, and the richer sort wear a thick and heavy belt of beads round the waist, after the fashion of the Gaboon tribes.

The women's petticoat is called a dovoh ; and their upper dress the agavoh, which extends to the ankles.

Both sexes wear a peculiar tattoo mark on the temple, consisting of three short perpendicular cuts, the cicatrice leaving a distinct scar. These peculiar cuts are national characteristics, observed among several tribes on the west coast. The Kroomen tattoo a blue mark down the centre of the forehead, and this same mark is the brand of a thief among the Ffons. The Mahis cut a long slit from the hair to the commencement of the nose, in which some peculiar substance is inserted, which causes it to stand up above the general surface. The Salu people have an ugly gash obliquely across the left cheek, and the old Alladah Ffons cut out a thin slip of flesh from each temple, and turned it back towards the ears, in which position it healed. In addition to these national marks, each woman who can afford it tattoos her stomach with a series of raised patterns, a common ornament being a series of arches which look like a Roman aqueduct.

The mode of dressing the hair varies according to taste. Some shave the entire head, others leave one or two thimblefuls for the

attachment of fetiche or beads, others again shave the crowns, while a fourth group shave all but the top of the head. A dandy will have squares, circles, and triangles shaved on his woolly pate, while others comb the hair straight out until it looks like an electrified head. The instrument is a razor of European manufacture, and the operation is performed on the dry skin. Combs, like those used for horses, are in great demand, and so of course are looking-glasses. Leaving the hair unkempt is a universal sign of mourning, and is continued for twelve moons.

The characteristic *fetor* of the negro is not so highly developed in the Ffons as in many other tribes, but in the violent struggles of the cowrie-fighting it becomes quite sufficiently apparent. The better classes bathe at least once a day, but many of the poorer folk are only washed when the clouds perform the office. All use unguents to keep the skin from cracking, and a freshly greased negro shines like polished walnut. However disgusting this practice may appear to over-nice people, it is a very great comfort under a burning tropical sun, and as it is well rubbed in no unpleasant effects result. They do not go about with the grease dripping off their skin; and a well-oiled negro is not one half so disgusting as a hair-oiled cobbler on a Saturday night.

Respecting this greasing propensity, I will tell the following story. Upon one occasion, I was on board the "Astarte," and Captain Haynes had complained to me that the canoemen had been stealing the cook's fat. At the time the decks had been varnished, and a pot of hot varnish stood conveniently out of sight near the galley. A boat came alongside, and the canoemen spied out the pot of *fat*, and at once commenced a copious besmearing from head to foot. Haynes was going to sing out; but guessing the result, I begged him to desist. The boat loaded, away went the shining crew, rejoicing in their new coating. Before they were out of sight, I saw by sundry twitchings of the eyes and mouth, and a wriggling of the limbs, that the varnish had begun to dry. They landed, and in about half an hour returned in a better condition than even I expected. When they

stepped on the beach, the fine sand mingled with the sticky varnish, and they presented as pretty a group of "asphalted" niggers as any one would wish to see. They never stole any more "*fat*."

✓ The diet of the lower classes consists of the universal *cankie*, with but a little animal food at rare intervals. This substitute for bread is of several kinds. They all consist of maize, ground by the women in a rude fashion, similar to that at the rubstone in Ireland. A large block of granite, brought with considerable labour from Mahi, forms the lower stone. It slopes from the operator at a considerable angle, and its upper surface is slightly hollowed. The grinder, having put the maize in soak overnight, places a few grains in the hollow, and then proceeds to bruise them with a smaller stone shaped like a painter's muller, but with a convex bottom. The attitude is stooping, and the labour severe, as the grains are slowly reduced to a coarse powder, which falls down the slope of the stone into a calabash placed ready to receive it. This is the heaviest work the women have to perform, and when we see one rubbing away at the stone, with a child fastened on her back, and her breasts going like pendulums, it is by no means a romantic sight. These stones are very valuable, and it is no uncommon thing to find one in the joint possession of a dozen families.

The corn being ground is mixed with boiling water and stirred up until the husks subside, when the remainder is boiled until it is of the consistency of Scotch porridge. It is then allowed to cool, and formed into balls as large as oranges, which are wrapped in plantain leaves. It has much the consistency and appearance of blancmange, but the taste is sour and unpalatable to an unaccustomed stomach, reminding one of dumplings boiled in soap-suds. When, however, the traveller has overcome the first repugnance it is wholesome, cooling, and very nutritious, and in time he will emulate the natives in the quantity they eat per diem.

The best and finest is called *Akansan*, which is made from new

corn, and is strained off before kneading. Lio is the next best, and the common sort of Agidi is very sour. A peculiar fine cankie is made in the palace from the first-ripened grains, and its taste is delicious. Enough of the common cankie for a day's subsistence can be bought for about three half-pence in cowries. The cankie is often taken as the only provision for a journey, in which case it is often squeezed through the hand into a calabash of water, forming a mixture like cold thin burgoo.

Besides this there is the "Woh" or dab-a-dab of Duncan. This consists of maize ground and mixed with boiling water until it is like gruel, when it is placed in small calabashes to cool.

When yams are in season they are eaten boiled or made into fufu. This is the mashed potato of Africa, and is made by pounding boiled yam in an immense wooden mortar, until it becomes quite leathery, but very agreeable to the taste.

Cassava is eaten near the coast, where it is dried and grated or ground into farina, and made into a pudding, which is even less palatable than the long plantain-cased rods of *n'dika* of the Gaboon. As Burton says, it is "exceedingly like saw-dust."

The cankie balls are sometimes eaten with a peculiar compound called Afiti. This is the fruit of a tree which is plentiful near the capital, and has been called a tamarind. It forms a very beautiful feature in the landscape, the tree being like an acacia, and the fruit, which hangs from the extremity of a long cord, is of a brilliant scarlet, and as large as an apple when ripe. The husk splits off, and the inner nut sends out long green pods containing black seeds. These are washed and boiled, and afterwards buried in the earth and covered with sand, where it is left until fermentation takes place, and the skins of the seeds are half rotten. It is then exhumed, pounded, washed, and exposed to the sun in a calabash for three days, by which time it is supposed to be fit for eating, and is mixed with boiling water, and forms the well-known Afiti sauce. Some people in England are fond of game very high, but the Dahomans completely beat them in the

highness of this sauce. Assafoetida is a relief compared with its perfume, and if any one is curious to get a slight idea of it, let him catch a lacewing fly, and make the experiment. I was almost choked with it the first time, and, though by no means over particular, I never could bear any of this sauce on the premises. Nevertheless it is one of the greatest delicacies of the Ffons. I have eaten lizards fried in the fat of white ants on the Remboe, and have dined with a man who had just finished picking the bones of his father, but I never met with anything that so completely upset me as this "Palaver sauce."

The ground maize is sometimes mixed with pounded capsicums and palm-oil, and fried in little balls, when it is called Dukoh, and, when mixed with sugar instead of capsicums, forms the favourite dish of the fat old Adonejan, called dukoh-kweh, or sweet dukoh.

Besides this there is a bean, white and about the size of our scarlet bean, the *sale* of which is prohibited, but which any person can grow for his own consumption—another of the singular *laws* of the country. This pounded and mixed with palm-oil forms the Ata, a very agreeable adjunct to the table.

There is a leguminous plant yielding a black-husked pea, by no means to be despised when nicely cooked with uguh or shea butter; and, finally, the Ocro, or *Hibiscus esculentus*, which forms when sliced up a nutritious and very palatable thickening to soups, although its glutinous tenacity renders it somewhat unappetizing to a stranger. This soup is called *Nennu*.

Oranges, limes, cashews (*akakasu*), cocoa-nuts, pomegranates, pineapples, tiger nuts (*flau*), bananas, and plantains grow everywhere, and are eaten by all classes, although the latter do not by any means form so important an item as in Equatorial Africa.

As I have before mentioned, the lower classes subsist almost entirely upon an azymous diet, but this by no means infers that there is a lack of animal food. Fowls (*kokolu*), ducks (*kpa-kpa*), goats (*akeve*), very lean and stringy, sheep, ditto, ditto, and pigs,

very savoury when fed, are all eaten, roast, boiled, or made into very savoury stews by the addition of the cardamoms and eschalots to be obtained in every market. Turkeys are rare, and worth six beads of cowries, and Guinea-fowl are fetiche for so many people that they are hardly to be bought at all.

Many of the grandees have cooks who have been brought up at the European factories, and from them they obtain bread and other articles of a civilized nature. The cooking utensil is a flat clay pot, black with the manganese in its composition, and of a rude Etruscan shape. The fire is made between two stones or heaps of swish, and the pot placed above it. Ovens are of the usual primitive style. A large earthen vessel is embedded on its side in the swish, and a fire lighted within it. When fully heated the viands are placed inside on the red-hot ashes, and the mouth closed and heated with swish. The baking is by no means to be despised.

Besides these regulars, bullocks, monkeys, rats, bats, lizards, pigeons, partridges (*kokoloasso*), antelopes, elephants, and alligators are eaten as occasion offers. Eggs (*kokolusi*) are scarce, fetching about a penny each, and milk is unknown.

The viands are served in large calabashes, called kago, and every person helps himself, mats being usually spread around, and the encasing plantain leaves utilised as plates.

Fingers are the prevailing forks, and at the conclusion of every repast the hands are washed, the mouth well rinsed, and the teeth cleaned by the aid of a chewed stick. Tables are only to be seen in the houses of the highest nobles.

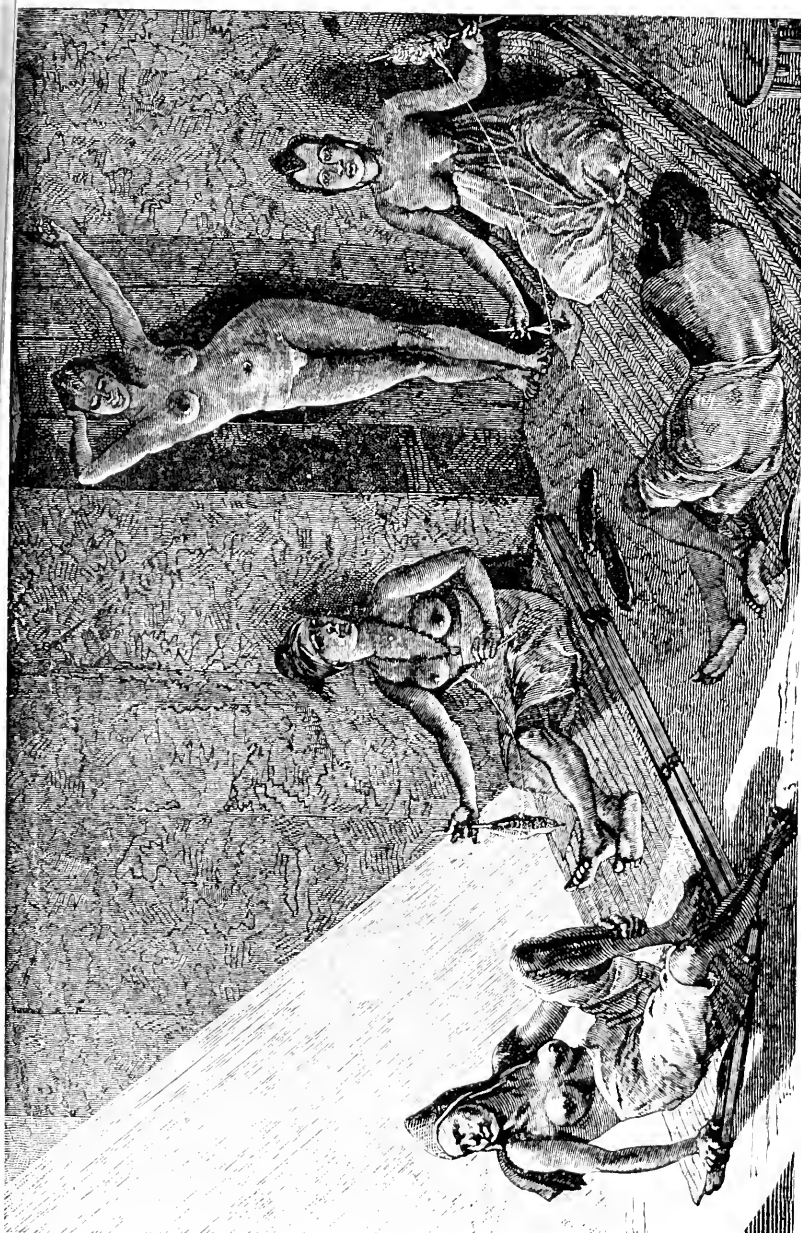
The master is usually served by his wives, who hold the various dishes to their lord on bended knees, none daring to partake until he is satisfied.

By way of drinks water is the usual beverage, often fetching as much as twopence-halfpenny per gallon in a country where a person can live on threepence a day. Rum, wine, and liqueurs are indulged in to excess by all classes when they have the opportunity; in addition to which they manufacture a kind of beer,

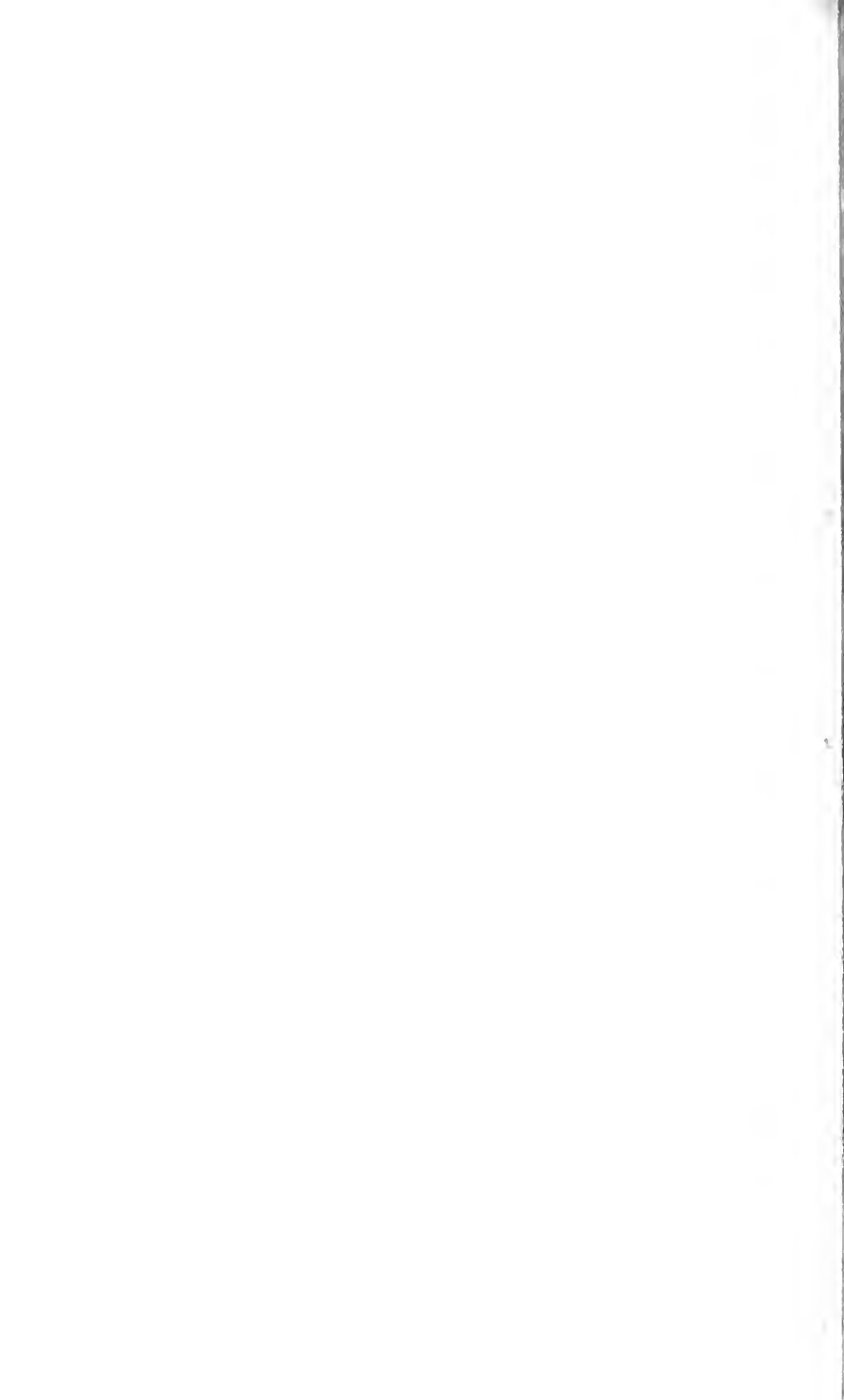
called pitto. This is made from maize, or more rarely from rice. The grain is wetted and placed in the sun until germination commences, when the starch becomes changed into sugar. It is then boiled, mixed with water, which when cool is the beer. It is rather inclined to bring on dysentery, but in moderation is not unwholesome. The palm-wine has already been mentioned.

Agriculture is at a very low ebb, the ground being cleared with a hoe, and the maize, yam, millet, or beans dibbled in before the rains, and the earth hoed into a series of long mounds like those in a potato field. The yield is enormous, often a hundredfold, and two harvests are usually gathered every year. The maize cobs are cut off with knives, and stored in baskets for future use, and the straw is burned in the annual firing in February. There is no such thing as a succession of crops, but when the land is getting impoverished a new field is cleared and sown. All the land is rented of the king, and as usual the women perform the greatest part of the tillage.

Cotton is not cultivated at all, the supply being obtained from the wild growth. It is gathered and picked, and spread out on nets to dry in the sun. When wanted it is placed in little heaps, and a small bow is used to separate the fibres and give it a "fluffy" character. It is then fastened to a stick about a foot long, and is ready for spinning. The instrument for this purpose is a thin slip of bamboo about a foot long, stuck through a heavy round piece of clay which acts as a fly, and the whole is then twisted by the fingers, the weight of the fly generating sufficient momentum to keep it in motion for a considerable time. The end of the thread twisted from the bundle of cotton on the distaff is attached to this, and as it twirls round the cotton is disengaged with the right hand, and when a thread of sufficient length to allow the spinner to touch the ground has been spun off, it is wound round the spindle-stick, hitched over its top, and the operation continued. A small quantity of wood ashes is placed near the operator, who from time to time takes a little on her fingers to prevent them adhering to the cotton fibres. The thread



PAHOMAN WOMEN SPINNING COTTON.



is very uneven, and as thick as crochet cotton. When a sufficient length has been spun it is woven into cloth. The loom is extremely rude. The threads are wound round two sticks fixed in the ground at a certain distance apart to form the warp, and when a sufficient quantity is wound off it is attached to a heavy stone by one end. The other end is passed through a series of holes in two flat pieces of wood, each *alternate* thread being passed through the same piece, so that by pulling on either alternate series of threads can be brought up to the top. These flat pieces are worked by cords, with, sometimes, a rude treadle, or rather loop, on the end. The shuttle is a long piece of wood round which the weft is wound, and the operation consists of passing this between the alternate series of the warp and hardening down the weft with the edge of the shuttle, just as word mats are made by sailors. As the cloth is woven the heavy stone attached to the end of the warp is drawn nearer the weaver, and the cloth is wound round a roller before the operator. The width of the cloth is seldom more than six inches, and the necessary width to form a garment is arrived at by sewing the narrow strips edge to edge.

The royal cloth is frequently no wider than two inches, and the labour necessary to produce one of the large togas may easily be imagined. The robe given me by the king is formed of this two-inch yellow and white cloth, and occupied a weaver nearly six months, while the time taken to spin the cotton could be scarcely less. The common folk wear cloth woven of grass, which is sometimes mingled with cotton, and some of the royal cloth is woven of English-dyed yarn.

The weaving is chiefly confined to the manufacture of the royal cloth, and is conducted at all the palace gates under the Pwe-sheds. As before mentioned, the king does not allow any of his subjects to wear cloth of any of the patterns in which the state robes are woven.

Architecture is entirely of the barn order. When a person wishes to erect a dwelling for himself, he prepares a number of

long bamboo or palmyra poles and a quantity of thatch. The earth or swish is dug near at hand, and mixed with water to the consistency of putty and formed into lumps like dumplings. The ground is cleared and operations commenced by marking out the walls, which are always oblong. The swish balls are then handed to the builder, who with them forms a mound about two feet thick and three feet high. This is then covered with a light thatch and left to dry. Four of these steps or "kohwe" are allowed to be raised by the people, while all the royal palaces and gaols have five. The height of the wall of an ordinary dwelling is about twelve feet, and upon this rafters are laid and crossed with smaller sticks, and finally wattled with straw for a ceiling.

A row of poles are then set up in a slanting direction to form the roof, and are securely lashed together with grass rope, while the lower edges are either fixed to short stakes driven into the wall, or attached to a row of posts erected in a line before the house, thus forming a verandah. The thatch is fixed with grass rope, and is usually nicely trimmed at the eaves. Underneath the verandah an earthen bench is built up, and the whole nicely smoothed and coated with a mixture of cow-dung and water. The doorway is a mere gap in the wall, seldom if ever closed with a door, unless the building is a store-room or "Zaho," when a rude plank door swinging on wooden hinges, and secured with a lock of native manufacture, protects the contents from purloining hands. The lock is nothing more than a latch with a projection upon it, against which a boss on the key catches. The cooking is often performed in the open air, or under a Bekpah or hut built of poles with matting sides or simply left open. The fetiche-temples, of which every large house possesses one at least, are usually circular, and in the centre of the cluster of oblong barns which make up a Dahoman homestead. The whole of these buildings are enclosed in a high fence, which is replaced by a swish wall as opportunities offer for its completion. The gate has a wooden lintel with a single course of swish above it, and the top of this is always, and in well-kept houses the whole wall, thatched.

The establishment of each wife is usually separated from that of her comrades, and the slaves reside in a quarter specially allotted to them, called the *sra*. Most of the *grandees* have houses in all the large towns, besides country villas on their plantations.

There are no builders by profession in the country, each person superintending the erection of his own dwelling. Should any trees be enclosed in the spacious courtyards, they are allowed to remain, so that the heart of a populous town appears as green as some parts of the open country. The drainage is effected by a slight slope in the ground towards the *enceinte*, through which a hole is pierced, and the sewage, solid and liquid, is allowed to flow through and form a quagmire outside. No wonder small-pox rages with such fearful mortality sometimes, but Cape Coast and Accra, which have long been under British rule, are very little better, as any person can tell the moment he lands on the beach. A *Josusu* and a few *Bo fetiche* images at the gate with a *Legba* hut and pots, and a string of *sayan*, complete the house, and it now remains to describe the furniture.

Among the nobles the visitor can occasionally discover a table, often rude and rickety, a few European chairs, and perhaps a vile German print. The usual sleeping place is the earthen floor, upon which a mat is spread, though occasionally raised earthen benches are constructed in the dormitory. A bedstead is sometimes used, formed of bamboo leaf-stalks, about six feet long and a foot high, with a raised pillow of similar construction at one end. This, covered with a few mats, is not to be despised as a resting place when encased in mosquito netting.

Earthen jars for water, baskets for corn, calabashes, a wooden pestle and mortar, a grindstone, and a few cooking pots, and the furniture is complete.

The marriage ceremony of the *Dahomans* is quite a complex affair. When any person is anxious to add to the number of his harem, he looks about for a likely damsel, and when found selects a man and a woman to negotiate with the girl's parents. These

messengers are sent to the parents with a present of ten large demijohns of rum and two heads of cowries. The name of the suitor is told to the father, and the daughter whom he wishes to marry is also notified. The messengers then leave the girl's parents and return to the suitor. Meanwhile, a meeting of all the relatives of the bride's father is convened, and an inquiry made into the merits of the proposed alliance. If any of the near relatives of the would-be husband have offended any of the family of the bride, the offer is at once rejected. If this difficulty is surmounted, Afa is consulted and a favourable reply being obtained, which can always be insured by the payment of a heavy fee, the rum and cowries are retained, and the empty demijohns at once returned to the owner. If Afa gives a denial, or if there exists any unhealed sore between the families, the rum and cowries are returned and there is an end of the matter.

On the receipt of the empty demijohns, a similar present to the first is made to the father-in-law, together with two new cloths for the bride elect, and the betrothal is confirmed. The husband then collects as much cloth, handkerchiefs and other valuables as his means will permit, which, according to some, is the dowry of the bride, and by other accounts the price paid for her. The collection of these cloths is always a tedious process, unless the husband is wealthy enough to be able to buy a stock off-hand, and during the interim between the betrothal and the wedding the wooer has to pay all the fetiche demands to which the *fiancée* is liable. This is sometimes no little trifle, for if the bridegroom will bear bleeding, the priests are sure to find some sacrifice omitted, perhaps an offering to the manes of some ninety-fifth removed cousin or other. Besides this, if any wealthier suitor should crop up, an immediate payment of the dowry is demanded or the girl becomes the property of the new wooer.

All being prepared, a grand entertainment is announced, and a messenger at sunrise, at mid-day, and a third at sunset, is sent to beg the bride from her parents. At sunset the bride, attired in white, is escorted to her new abode by her parents and a large

circle of relatives and friends. The post of honour is assigned to the father, the mother sits on his right hand, and the bride elect on the left. The friends of the bride sit on one side and those of the bridegroom on the other, and mutual assurances of eternal friendship flow fast and free. The feast is then spread, generally in the courtyard of the house, and water offered to the guests, after which all fall to upon the savory viands. A band enlivens the marriage feast and several jesters are present, if they can be paid for.

During the banquet the bridegroom is not permitted to see his future spouse, and the feasting continues until midnight or first cock crow in very wealthy families. Water is then given to the guests, and the bridegroom retires to the nuptial couch. The bride is then taken in hand by four aged fetiche priestesses of Legba, who administer sundry words of advice, and lead the blushing girl to her husband, and placing her hands in his, say, "We have brought your wife; take her; flog her if she is bad, and cherish her if she is good." They then drink the health of the bride and bridegroom in as many different liquors as the host is able to supply, and finally retire. A young girl is then posted outside the courtyard, and the friends disperse.

The Mosaic custom with regard to the *premisses* obtains in Dahomey. The couch is covered with a new piece of calico, and in the morning, if all has gone well, the *godo* is borne in triumph to the friends of the bride by the girl stationed in the house, while the bridegroom exhibits the covering of the nuptial couch. A second feast is then given, and the bridegroom is supposed to confine his attentions to the bride for a period corresponding to our week. At the expiration of this short honeymoon, the bride returns to her father's house, and sends a present of food cooked by her own hands to her husband, who returns a complimentary present of rum, cowries, and cloth. The bride then returns to her new home, and the next morning goes to market and buys provisions with the cowries sent her by her husband. With these she prepares a feast to which the friends of the husband alone

are invited, and afterwards subsides into the same social position as the remainder of the harem.

Should, however, the bride have proved herself *virgo disrupta*, great palaver ensues. The bride is sent back to her parents in disgrace, and the full restitution of all expenses incurred is demanded, while the parents of the damsel use every means of finding out the defiler of the family name, and compel him to marry the girl, besides paying heavy damages. In some instances the marriage into any family entails upon the husband the necessity of aiding his father-in-law in case of sickness, death, or poverty.

√ The birth of a son is always anxiously looked for, but the advent of twins was looked upon at Alladah and Whydah as a sure sign of the infidelity of the mother; as they considered that no woman could have two children at once by one husband. The twins were thrown into the water, and the mother impaled and her breasts cut off, much after the fashion of the Chinese. This barbarous practice has been put down of late years, and in the capital the mother receives a present from the king. A childless woman is held to be under the ban of Legba, to whom propitiatory offerings are made. If she is unable to obtain her desires, she is called *uen-si-no*, but is not looked down upon, as is the case with many tribes.

4 The birth of a child is attended by some female friend of the mother, who is often out and about twenty-four hours after, pounding corn or hoeing maize, as if nothing had happened. Sacrifices are made to Legba, and on the sixth day a Bukono priest is sent for, who makes Afa and ascertains what ancestral spirit, if any, resides in the child. If the infant is "possessed," it is called by the same name as its ghostly tenant; but if not so honoured, by any name that the parents may choose. Most children are circumcised, not in infancy, but between fourteen and twenty years of age.

Whenever a Dahoman dies, notice is sent to the magistrate of the district, who inspects the body and receives a fee of a head

of cowries, two bottles of rum, and some cankie for his trouble. This custom was instituted to prevent any encroachment upon the king's prerogative of taking the life of any subject, as in former times many slaves were killed by their masters.

This inquest over, the friends and more distant relatives of the deceased shave the body, wash and anoint it, and dress it in the finest cloths, including all ornaments, such as necklaces, horns, gauntlets or bracelets. A new cloth is rolled up and placed under the head of the defunct, who is laid upon the bed in his sleeping apartment. The wives and children meanwhile sit round the corpse weeping and wailing, and consoling themselves by frequent applications of the rum-bottle. The grave is usually dug in the floor of one of the rooms in the dwelling-house of the deceased, unless there is some special place of sepulture for the family. A wooden coffin is prepared, the size depending upon the rank of the deceased. The corpse is placed in it on its right side, and cowries, rum, and small rolls of cloth are placed in the coffin to pay toll on crossing the Dahoman Styx.

The coffin is then nailed up and carried to and fro before the grave by the mourners, a horrible din being kicked up by singing, crying, and beating cracked earthenware. It is then lowered by grass ropes, always at night time; and the children of the deceased throw handfuls of cowries upon the coffin. The grave is then filled up, with the exception of a small space near the head, which is left open to enable any relative who may wish to present any cowries to the deceased to do so. At the expiration of these days of grace, the grave is filled up and smoothed over with swish, and usually some token, such as a cresset-shaped iron, is set up upon it, and upon certain days offerings of water and food are made upon the shrine.

The greater number of the friends of the deceased then go home, but a few remain for two or three weeks with the bereaved, dashing them cowries, rum, and cloths, besides cooking all the necessary food. A "strong day," such as Wednesday, is then chosen, and a feast proclaimed, when singing and dancing hold

their own until daylight. This finishes the burial rites, and on the following Monday the whole of the family shave their heads and do not dress their wool for twelve moons after. Shaving over, the bereaved go round to the friends who have assisted at the funeral and thank them, promising to return the compliment whenever opportunity arrives. The betrothed husbands of the daughters of the house are supposed to assist, and also to pay all the *fiancée's* expenses.

The Dahomans, like the Chinese, have a great desire to be buried in their native land. Whenever a person dies abroad his finger-nails and a small portion of the earth from his grave are brought to Dahomey; the nails are buried and the foreign soil spread over them, and the spot is revered as the grave of the defunct.

The zoology of Dahomey, although differing but little from that of the other parts of Western Africa, is nevertheless highly interesting. Besides entailing considerable pecuniary loss, the overwhelming kindness of Gelelé in detaining me at Abomey as his guest, entirely prevented me from carrying out my original intentions in the pursuit of natural history. I can therefore only give a mere outline of the fauna of the country; in fact my remarks will be confined to a catalogue of the most prominent animals.

In the swamps the hippopotamus, alligator, and manatee are found, the latter, however, being only an occasional visitant. On the slopes of the Mahi ranges the elephant still exists, but is being slowly and surely killed off by the royal hunters and huntresses. The buffalo (*Bubalus caffer*)? is occasionally to be met with in the plains, where it falls a prey to the python.

Among the carnivora, the leopard is far from scarce, but the hunting of it is prohibited by royal edict.

To the north the forests occasionally resound to the roar of the lion, while the screech of the hardly less formidable wild cat grates harshly upon the ear. In all the towns, especially at

Abomey, the hyænas perform the task of scavengers, their unearthly laughter as they revel in the feast of human flesh at the latter place lending additional horror to the fate of the victims. The Civet cat (*Viverra civetta*) reveals its presence by its powerful odour, and one which I brought home with me is now in the Gardens of the Zoological Society.

One of the most singular animals is the Pangolin (*Manis tetradactyla*), or Scaly ant-eater. One of these was brought to me at Assince, and became quite tame. It was about two feet in length, and the whole body covered with broad, sharp-pointed scales, a curious modification of the ordinary hirsute covering of the mammalia.

Monkeys abound, of several species, two of which, the *Cercopithecus Ruber*, and *C. nictitans*, are often tamed and sold to the passing steamers.

The birds of Dahomey are excessively beautiful, but only a few can be here mentioned.

The splendid Grackles with their rich green and violet robes contrast with the crimson-breasted nutcrackers. Conspicuous by their long graceful tail feathers are the Whydah finches (*Vidua*), of which there are several species looking like miniature Birds of Paradise. These elegant appendages, however, are only worn in the breeding season, after which they drop off, and the bird retires into private life. Orioles of the most gorgeous hues, especially *Oriolus auratus*, the Golden Oriole, whose brilliant gamboge plumage forms a glaring contrast to the dark green of the forest trees. The curious Touracos (*Corythix*), with their elegant green and purple colouring and hair-like crests, are often to be seen perched on some lofty tree, while Flycatchers and Swallows—the latter reminding one of those in far-off England—are busily engaged in the pursuit of their insect prey.

In the tall grass, especially near Kama, the magnificent Fire finch (*Euplectes flammeiceps*) with its gorgeous scarlet plumage, flits from panicle to panicle, oft-times disturbing the sedate chameleon by its rustling. Here, too, the love-bird (*Agapornis Swinde-*

rianus) enlivens the scene with its emerald body, beautifully set off by its scarlet head.

Just at dawn and again at sunset the screeching of the grey parrots (*Psittacus Erythacus*) grates harshly on the ear as they fly high overhead.

Among the undershrub the gleaming Sunbirds (*Cinnyris*) vieing with the Humming-birds of the opposite hemisphere in the splendid metallic lustre of their hues, may be observed sipping the honey from the flowers by means of their long tubular beaks; while, on the banks of every stream, the hardly less gorgeous Kingfishers flit noiselessly in pursuit of their finny prey. All over the country the black and white King-birds (*Motacilla*) walk about unmolested, and innumerable sparrows, finches, and other birds, are to be met with on every side.

In December Abomey is visited by flocks of snow white cranes, and on the marshes the red-coated flamingo, with its black and white brothers, may often be seen intent upon the procurement of its morning meal as it poises itself on one leg.

Among the insect tribes there are splendid butterflies flitting along the glades, or sailing round and round some lofty tree far out of reach of the entomologist's net. After the rains hundreds of these winged gems, chiefly Papilios, may be seen drinking in the grateful moisture, and often so thickly settled upon the ground as to form quite a carpet. Beetles of bright metallic hues, especially Cetoniae and Longicornia, are seen running and flying about, while among the Hymenoptera there are several interesting species.

Dragon-flies, some of splendid colours, which, alas, vanish speedily after death; Ant lions, with curiously-spotted wings Loeustidae, phasmas, those curious stick-like beings, Mantidae and Hemiptera of every possible shape, hue and smell, are to be met with in profusion. Near the capital a deadly Tstse fly is occasionally seen hovering over a devoted buffalo, and the Tabanidae are a source of annoyance to the traveller. The Termites build their wondrous houses in every forest, and not a

tree or bush is to be found without being covered with ants. The curious *Diopsis* or Telescope fly with its curious pedunculated eyes is obtained near Abomey, where also I captured *Cynthia Cardui*, the Painted Lady of British Lepodopterists.

In short the fauna of Dahomey affords a rich harvest to the naturalist, and ere long I hope to revel in its sweets without fear of being taken care of by Gelelé.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

Reception by the Whydah caboceers—More delay—Punishment for arson—
Start for England and arrival—Appendix on Ashantee.

AFTER a delay of six days all was prepared for my reception at Whydah. Accompanied by my hammockmen, stool, and umbrella-bearers, and the remainder of my body guard, I started from the factory for the "big tree" soon after daylight. On arriving at Sogro's we formed into a circle, myself under the umbrella being the centre. The soldiers who had accompanied me from Abomey were drawn up into what by a very imaginative person might be called a column, while several bands grated upon the ear with their inharmonious strains.

About 6.45 we formed into a procession, bands and soldiers in front, next the cloths, dresses, and other gifts from the king displayed to their best advantage, then the human presents, and last my humble self, preceded by the king's stick.

On arrival at the Bwendemen gate of the Avogan's residence, we found the Whydah caboceers drawn up under their showy umbrella verandah to the left of the gate. After the usual three circumambulates, during which we were deafened with the discharge of cannon and musketry, I alighted, and the aged Avogan, tottering from beneath his gorgeous canopy, advanced to meet me. After a dirt bath before the king's stick, he shook hands with me and welcomed me to Whydah with the usual "compliment you" from all the ills that might befall the traveller

from the capital. Healths were then duly attended to, that of the king being honoured with priority.

Meanwhile my stool of office and umbrella had been set up to the right of the Avogan, that of the Chacha being on the left. I then took my seat amongst the caboceers, while a ericr, after a prodigious ting-tanging on his gong-gong, announced my rank and titles to the assembled crowd. He then displayed and explained all the various gifts, animal and vegetable, dilating, as usual, upon the unbounded generosity of the king. While this was going on I was enjoying a pipe amidst my brother nobles, Quinun, Chuydatoh, the Chacha, Segro and another.

After the catalogue was completely exhausted we adjourned to the interior of the palace, where more healths were drunk and specimens of dancing given for our entertainment. The palace appeared to be a general "lumberim," for heaped on all sides were broken and used-up muskets, umbrellas, carriages, fetiches, and what not. In about half-an-hour we started on a grand parade round the town, bands playing, drums beating, and guns firing "*à la mode*." The Avogan was represented by a gaunt warrior who proceeded on foot-back, while the other officers were mounted on the Yourba horses in use by all the nobility.

On arriving at the English fort, Mr. Ely, the acting-manager for Messrs. F. and A. Swanzy, who has since unfortunately fallen a victim to the climate, had prepared to receive me from the hands of the king's people. Several of the old rusty guns had been loaded, which as we came in sight were fired off, giving one the sensation of being carried leisurely past a number of exploding shells, for it was a miracle that they did not burst. The caboceers dismounted at the fort gates and went upstairs into the reception-hall, whither I followed them, while the soldiers, some 400 in number, remained outside firing their muskets, dancing, yelling, &c., &c. I was amused at the method of loading the big guns. Four or five stalwart soldiers would seize one of them by the muzzle and up-end it, while another would pour

the charge down the gun from a powder keg. No wadding was used, but the gun was merely laid on the ground and fired by a piece of lighted stick, the gaping touch-holes admitting a fuse as thick as a clothes-prop.

On the tables in the hall, wines, spirits, and liquors, were arranged, and a series of toasting commenced, each caboceer giving us a terpsichorean display as he drank my health. This game was continued for two hours, when, having been formally handed over to Mr. Ely, and a messenger despatched to Abomey to inform his Majesty of my safe delivery, the weary throng took its departure, and I was at last out of the tedious but hospitable clutches of Gelelé, king of Dahomey.

I was then anxious to return to my wife and family, and was disappointed at learning that no steamer was expected for several weeks. Day after day I busied myself among the insects of the neighbourhood, but the fauna in no way differed from that of the whole coast. The time passed but wearily, the monotony being occasionally varied by a military flogging-match, or a fire, one of which was of considerable extent, unroofing the whole of the huts between the beach road and the western part of the town. At first we thought the factory was in danger, but a strong body of men set to work to unroof the houses to leeward of the fire, which thus died out for want of fuel.

One morning we received news of the destruction of one of the factories at Godome by an incendiary, who had been taken in the act and sent up to Abomey for trial. He was sentenced to be decapitated on the scene of his exploits, and was sent down to Whydah for that purpose. One morning we were told that no black men would be allowed to leave the town until the parade of the condemned had taken place. As luck would have it, a steamer made her appearance, much to my chagrin, for, although I could have gone to the beach myself, I could not have taken any of my luggage with me. About nine o'clock the usual braying of horns and drumming announced the approach of the

condemned. A long pole like a piece of scaffolding sharpened at the top was carried before the unfortunate, who marched along with his hands tied before him, and the usual gag in his mouth. By his side was a man with a lighted pipe, and a handful of tinder. Behind came the caboceers, with the rear guard of tag-rag and bob-tail.

On arrival at the gates of the factory the gag was removed from the man's mouth, and he took the pipe and tinder and explained to us that he had gone to the factory with a lighted pipe and, setting fire to the tinder, by means of it had ignited the thatch and had so burnt the factory, and for so injuring one of the white people who were under the protection of the king his head was going to be cut off and fixed on the top of the pole we saw. After this speech the gag was replaced and he went to the next factory to repeat the tale, and the next day was taken to Godome and executed, his head gracing the pole which was set up as a warning to any person against the crime of arson.

At length the *Astarte* was ready for home, and I again took my passage in her. The voyage home was a very anxious one, for we were first dismasted in a severe tornado when off Cape St. Paul, and then, after a succession of light winds, sprung our main topmast above the cap. This would have been nothing had we not to contend with a mutinous crew who repeatedly threatened the life of Captain Haynes, whose cares were thereby increased to such a degree as to give him but little rest either night or day. Slung shot were picked up, and it was unsafe to be about the decks alone.

At length, owing to the firmness of the captain, we succeeded in reaching the Downs, when, as a wind-up, the crew set upon the mate at the Nore, and a severe fight was the result. Of course they met with their deserts, but no punishment could repay the captain for the anxiety they caused him. I would here return my most hearty thanks to him for the cordial hospitality I met with while on board his vessel both on the outward

and homeward passages, and trust that if we should ever be shipmates again he will not be harrassed by such a worthless crew as were aboard the *Astarte* in 1872.

Having now reached the civilized world I will bid my reader adieu, hoping he has not been too much wearied by the foregoing pages.

APPENDIX.

THE ASHANTEES.

THE neighbouring country of Dahomey, Ashantee, is now merging into notice by reason of the war which is now waging between the English and Koffee Kai, the ferocious King of that country. As comparatively little is known of the country, a short description of it, the result of two short visits, may not be uninteresting.

The Kingdom of Ashantee, or Ashánti as it is called by the natives, is of equal, if not greater, extent and importance to that of Dahomey itself.

Like all African countries its boundaries are very vague and ill-defined, but they may be assumed to be the River Volta in 1° East longitude on the Eastern side, and the meridian of 5° West on the opposite side, and to extend from the southern slopes of the Kong Mountains in 9° north latitude, to within thirty miles of the sea coast. This narrow strip between Ashantee and the ocean is inhabited by a number of negro tribes, such as the Assinees, the Kinjabos, the Ahantas, the Elminas, the Fantees, the Accras, and others.

The climate is similar to that of Dahomey, but the seasons are about three weeks later than in that country.

Like Dahomey also, the country is well wooded, but the open grassy plains are of greater extent. The surface rises with gentle undulations from the coast to the feet of the mountains, and Coomassie in $6^{\circ} 40' N.$, $1^{\circ} 58' W.$, has an elevation of 800 feet above the sea level. Unlike Dahomey, however, Ashantee is penetrated by several streams.

The Volta is a large stream, navigable as far as Sagaleh some hundred miles from the mouth; but its shores are thickly fringed with the deadly mangrove, and extensive swamps reach for several miles on either side near the mouth. The next river of importance is the Prah, which embouches into the sea at Chumah. About twenty miles from its mouth there is a small waterfall, but beyond it is navigable for small craft as far as Alardeh or Prasu, where the main road from Coomassie to the coast crosses the river.

About forty miles from the coast the Prah is joined by a large stream flowing from the N.N.W., called the Bosom Prah, which takes its rise in the marshy land near Coomassie.

Besides these two there are other smaller streams such as the Assince, the Boutry, the Bujah, and others.

As regards mineral wealth, Ashantee is the gold country *par excellence* of the West Coast. The quantity of dust and nuggets which is brought down to the coast in a single year is enormous. I have seen 300 ounces taken in a small factory in a single day. The precious metal is obtained by digging, washing, and searching the auriferous rocks. Iron, copper, and titanium are also found, but not worked.

The population of Ashantee may be roughly estimated at three millions. Like the Ffons, the Ashantees are a Semiticised race, far superior to the Negro coast tribes. Their features are very like those of the Dahomans, and indeed they appear to have originated from a similar stock.

As in Dahomey, nearly every man is a soldier, and the army of Ashantee may be estimated at 300,000 men. They are armed with muskets as in Dahomey, but possess likewise Enfield rifles, and their military organization is on a far superior scale to that of Dahomey. In all probability we shall find them formidable enemies, as in addition to their numbers they have the unhealthiness of the climate for Europeans in their favour.

The capital, Coomassie, covers a hill on the north side of a marsh, and is a place of some 60,000 souls, and by its situation naturally fortified. The houses are similar to the Dahoman ones, but near the court the swish gives place to wattled bamboo.

The non-possession of a coast line, which debars them from a direct traffic with Europeans, has led to innumerable feuds with the Fantees and other tribes. The Ashantees produce the gold and pass it over to the coast through the intermediate tribes, who do not forget to levy a heavy brok-orage. The scene at a factory when any gold is brought down is a busy one.

The Ashantees are by no means behindhand in the manufacture of "Brummagem," and this renders the purchase of gold dust a precarious traffic except in experienced hands. At all factories there are professed "gold takers," whose duty it is to assay every particle of gold dust before it is passed into the traders' hands. A half-naked savage will arrive in the factory with gold dust to exchange for guns, powder, or cloth. The dust is carefully tied up in small pieces of paper, in one corner of his waist-cloth or often enough concealed in the intricate mazes of his wool.

The small packet is opened and the gold taker empties it into a copper blow pan, shaped like a banker's shovel without a handle, and with a dexterous movement of the wrist separates the large from the small particles. With a feather-tip he then picks out all the suspicious particles and bits of dirt, and, with a wonderfully-regulated puff, blows off the specks of mica and pyrites which would otherwise escape unnoticed. The blown gold is then weighed and handed over to the trader. The wages of a good gold taker are very high, and some over-acute but penny wise and pound foolish persons who have dispensed with the services of these gold

takers and have relied upon the efficacy of aquafortis and touch-stone have found on consigning the gold dust (?) to England that they have been buying silver gilt or even gold dust made in Birmingham itself.

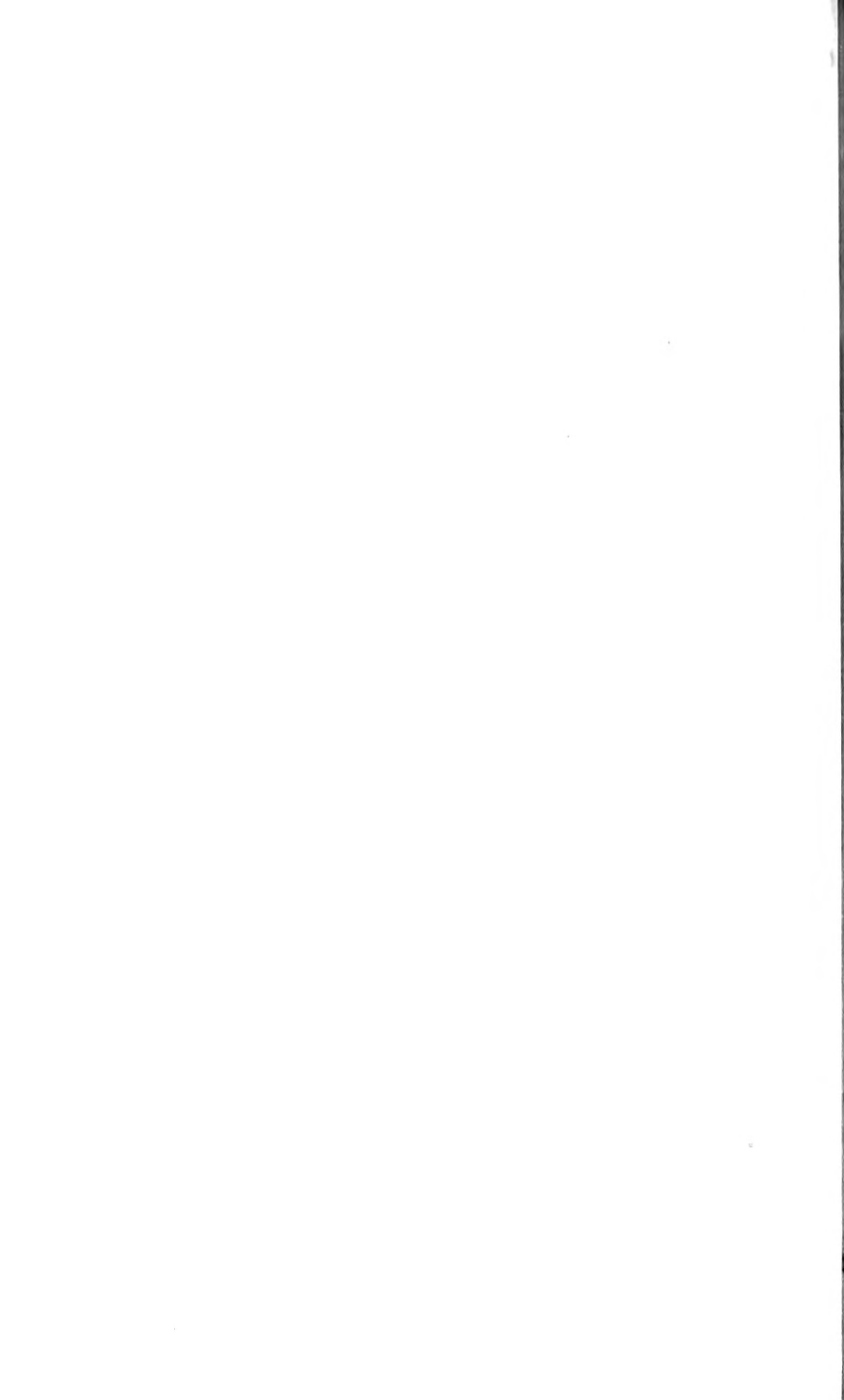
Like the Dahomans the Ashantee chiefs use the umbrella. Their dress is similar to the caboceers, but the highest dignitaries have sometimes as much as a pound weight of gold about their persons, either sewn as nuggets upon the dress, which nuggets are all possessed of magical virtues, or fashioned into stars, crescents, squares, and other figures, and attached to their long woolly locks. Each chief is attended by a medicine man with his whole pharmacopœia contained in a leather bag slung to his side, and an executioner, who is distinguished by a cap of monkey-skin with the head in front, and by having his face usually whitened. Besides this there are several sword-bearers, who carry swords of native manufacture with massive handles of solid gold. A shield likewise accompanies each caboceer, with a central boss of the same precious metal, and stools, umbrellas, and all the state paraphernalia are inlaid with gold.

Unlike the Dahomans the Ashantees are great poisoners, and they are far more cruel and vindictive in their passions than the Ffons. They have an Annual Custom, at which the victims rival those of Dahomey in Teghwesun's days, besides a monthly slaughter to the gods. The King keeps his birthday every seventh day, and so important an event must necessarily be celebrated by the spilling of human blood. The death of every chief is likewise made an excuse for murder, and indeed, the tales which have been bruited about Dahomey have far greater application to Ashantee than to that country.

There are no Amazons in Ashantee, but the King's harem is 3000 strong, selected from all ranks of society.

Between the King and the nobles a great gulf exists, the prime minister humbling himself in the dust just as the Ningan and the Men do before Gelelé.

Could the Ashantees be induced to stop their blood-thirsty practices and turn their talents to commercial pursuits they would soon develop the natural resources of their country, and it is to be hoped that a way to the coast will ere long be opened for them which will go far towards their civilization, and I doubt not that in a few years they will have completely walked over the heads of the negro Fantees whose aptitude for learning is but of a very low type. Should we become masters of Ashantee it is to be hoped that they will be ruled with a strong hand, and at the same time every opportunity of direct trade given them, by which means we may develop a cruel blood-thirsty race into the greatest mercantile tribe on the Western Coast.



GLOSSARY OF DAHOMAN WORDS AND TITLES.

The figures refer to the pages.

In this Glossary I have followed the orthography of Burton, except where I have deemed the sound to be better expressed by a different spelling.

- ABAGAN, an iron armet, like a snake.
 Abé, lightning.
 Abijeh, the pottery, 408.
 Abo, or agbo, a gate.
 Abodewe, a gate in the palaces to contain the Demen, 471.
 Aboejaga, the N.W. gate of Abomey, 403.
 Aboh, an uncle of the king and a general of the right, 249.
 Abokhomun, the old gate of Abomey, 388.
 Abosi (Gatewives), to open the gates of Abeokeuta, 281.
 Achi, the Dane-gun or bayoneteer company, 132, 447.
 Ada, a tooth.
 Adan, brave.
 Adandokpoji, the N.W. suburb of Abomey, 403.
 Adandokpoji Liseh hoonzeh, Tegbwe-sun's palace, 403, 450.
 Adandokpoji Hasch Mpengula's palace, 406, 451.
 Adangbo ten, a swearing place, 31, 152.
 Adanglaordeloh, one of the gates in the Dahomey palace, 391, 442.
 Adanglo koloheloh, a gate in the Abomey palace, 385, 436.
 Adaumennukon, one of the generals of the left, 249.
 Adanwe, one of Tegbwe-sun's palaces, 152.
 Adanzan, Gèzu's brave hill, 164.
 Addo, a Popo bead said to be imperishable.
 Addokpon, Gelelé's bush king (addo and kpon).
 Addokpon dan gbe, the sixth section of the bush king's So-Sin Custom, 286.
 Addokpon nun kpon gbe diyeh, the third section of the bush king's So-Sin Custom, 278.
 Addonoh, or Adono, Agajah's mother, 266.
 Addugba, the drum played by the kosi, 283.
 Addugba ho gbe, the fourth section of the bush king's So-Sin Custom, 282.
 Addugbwebo, circumcision.
 Addug-doh, the player on addugba.
 Adeo, good-bye.
 Adissin, charcoal.
 Adogwin, the third market day at Kana, 138.
 Adoh, the yellow Popo bead.
 Adonejan, the Men's assistant and chief engineer, 120, 415.
 Afa, the god of wisdom, 474.
 Afarigbé, one of the king's brothers, 425.
 Afin, ashes.
 Afiti, a soup with a highly unpleasant odour, 491.
 Afunfun, the small tent under which the king sits at the Gun Custom.
 Afunsoku, the white-breasted crow.
 Agajah, the fourth monarch, 449.

- Agaman, the chameleon deity, 472.
 Agasunno, the priest in charge of the Bo fetiche guarding the Customs, 191, 472.
 Agasunno-jaga-sin-Tansigbeh nesu, the second section of the Custom, 206.
 Agavoli, a woman's upper cloth, 488.
 Agbaja, the watch from 6 to 9 P.M.
 Agbaja, a drum, 172.
 Agbaja, a cartridge box or belt, 166.
 Agban, profit, luggage, cargo.
 Agbanh, meat.
 Agbaraya, the Blunderbusseers, 447.
 Agbata, a Nago dance, 219.
 Agbenunkli, the market-place at the old Abomey gate, 388.
 Agbweh, the custodian of the sea, 468.
 Agbwetoh, a sea deity, 470.
 Agesi, Aho's mother, 408.
 Agesi bonun, Agesi's gate, 408.
 Agi, a seed used as a counter.
 Agideh, a drumstick, 201.
 Agidi, common cankie, 491.
 Agi doh, the game of tables.
 Aglimé, a town north of the swamp.
 Agodomen, the courtyard at Adangla-cordeh, with the tombs of Aho, Daho and Akabah, 392.
 Agon, the Palmyra tree.
 Agongoh, the seventh monarch, 45.
 Agotime, Gézu's mother, 266.
 Agran, a jawbone.
 Agran howe, the jaw umbrella, 259.
 Agringomen, Agajah's gate at Abomey, 385.
 Agrin masogbe, one of the gates of the Abomey palace, 385.
 Agudaavogan, a Portuguese, 289.
 Ahan, a liquid.
 Ahanjito, court singers, 135.
 Ahanweh, the first watch, 6 to 9 A.M., 172.
 Ahanweh, a gourd rattle, 172.
 Ahgo, audience ! oyez, 148.
 Aho, the second monarch, 449.
 Ahundatoh, one of the bands of jesters, 173.
 Ahwagbamen, the lieutenant of the Kpostu, 292.
 Ahwangan, the war officers, 446.
 Aiah, an onomatopoeitic name supposed to be a lion's roar, 253.
 Aie, the heart.
 Aikun, a bean.
 Aizan, a fetiche girdle of palm-leaf to protect from fire, also the street god, 150, 472.
 Ajahai, the first market day at Abomey, 396.
 Ajakyaho, the landlord of the Coomassie palace, 445.
 Ajalefa, large black fetiche pots, 254.
 Ajaruma, the god presiding over the destinies of white men, 47, 471.
 Ajoh, trade.
 Ajudo-akhi-men, the Ajudo market at the entrance of Whydah, 12.
 Ajudo chacha, the Brazilian quarter of Whydah, 45.
 Ajijah, a narrow trap set in a river.
 Akabah, the third monarch, 449.
 Akakasu, the cashew tree.
 Akansan, the best cankie mixed with water as a drink, 490.
 Akeve, a goat.
 Akhaon, a vulture, *V. auricularis*, 25.
 Akhi, market day.
 Akho, a trumpet, the watch from 12 to 3 A.M., 172.
 Akhosu, the town king as opposed to the bush king, 290.
 Akhosusi, the Amazons, 167.
 Akhosu sosin bekpah, the king's So-Sin Pavilion with the elephants upon it, 188.
 Akhosusi zohn bwe, the second section of the bush king's So-Sin Custom, 275.
 Akhosutanun, the Grand Customs, 179.
 Akhisin, the trade captains, 446.
 Ako, a family.
 Ako-chyon-gbonun, the S.E. gate of Abomey near the Uhunglo market, 241.
 Akpadume, the Amazonian Meu, 456.
 Akpatokloh, a double bag, 173.
 Akpetokoloh, a large leather bag, 173.
 Akpotin, a box.
 Akpotoh-Bodahun, Gelelé's princely name, 51.
 Akpucho, the palace of Addokpon, 270.
 Akpuloan, the second caboccer of Al-ladah, 89.
 Akpweh, a town south of the Aglimé swamp, 97.
 Akpwentoh, a fetiche place near Kana, 149.
 Akrasu, a vulture, *P. Niger*, 10, 25, 338.
 Akwaji, the main southern gate of the Coomassie palace, 163.
 Akwakejeh, the king bird, a small motacilla.
 Akwashi, a Mahi goddess presiding over childbirth, 157, 470.
 Akwe, cowries.
 Akwe-janahan, a market held between Kana and Abomey, 153.

- Alih, a road.
 Alladah, the old capital of the Ffons, 85.
 Alo, the hand.
 Alogan, an armet.
 Alolokponugan, one of the king's brothers, 248.
 Alomablemenbonun, the western gate of Abomey, 406.
 Alogweh, a somersault.
 Amma, a leaf.
 Ammasin, medicine.
 Ammasinblutoli } doctors.
 Ammabluto }
 Ammansinkpele, the keeper of the king's medicine, 249.
 Ampasin, a town in Mahi, 318.
 Ananun, madness.
 Ananun-hwesuhuntob, the Blue Knife regiment, 263.
 Anatiokpoh, a fetiche club, 164.
 Anlin, a hole or pit, one of the Customs, 414.
 Anlinwanun, the king's representative in war, 215, 455.
 Anun, the dry season.
 Ardrah, the old name of Alladah.
 Aremeh, the fetiche of the Blue company, 150.
 Aro, archers, 447.
 Aseu, a fetiche iron like a cresset, 188.
 Ashanti, one of the corps of the Dahoman army, 447.
 Ata, bean cakes, 492.
 Atakin, capsicums.
 Atakun, Malaguetta pepper.
 Atin, or Attin, a tree.
 Atinlihun, the "Big Tree" at Whydah, 72.
 Atinbodun, the tree deity, 403, 467.
 Attikin, a necklace of black seeds.
 Attogau, a village near Alladah, 94.
 Attoh, a monkey.
 — a platform, one section of the Custom, 342.
 — Gomoyeh Gbe, the seventh section of the Attoh Custom, 364.
 Atyan guan, are you well this morning, 175.
 Avo, clothes in general.
 — the rag wrapped round a fetiche, 188.
 Avogan, the Viceroy of Whydah, 51, 445.
 Avokangbekhe, the bird that weaves cloth for man.
 Avo-usu-gbe, the third section of the king's So-Sin Custom, 211.
 Avreketeh, a marine deity, 152; also his fetiche, 473; strings of cowries, 156.
 Avreketesi, the priestesses of Avreketeh, 208.
 Awahn, war.
 Awanjigo, the French quarter at Whydah, 29, 45.
 Awesu, the King of Uhwaweh, who entertained Dahome, 86.
 Ayan. See Sayan.
 Azekbé, a crow, *Corvus Senegalensis*.
 Azekbeh, an owl.
 Azezeh, a fabulous monster.
 Azoh, tobacco, 25.
 Azohweh, a town near Alladah, 82.
 Azon, a club.
 Azoqual, a tobacco pipe, 25.
- BAKOKO, a King of Ishagga whose skull is used as a drinking cup, 222.
 Banyanomme, Gelelé's palace at Kana, 137.
 Bagwe or Bagweh, the pots to hold Nesu water, 207, 472.
 Bassajeh fetiche priestesses who represent the ghosts of the deceased kings, 226, 462.
 Be or Bi, all.
 Begani, captainesses, 250.
 Beh, happiness.
 Bekpah, a mat fence or hut, 496.
 Benazon, the royal treasurer, 291.
 Binwanton or Biwanton, Ningun's deputy, 291, 445.
 Blin, to roll over.
 Bloo Bloo, cheers.
 Blue Company, one of the regiments, 446.
 Blutob, one who does.
 Bo, and.
 Bo, the Dahoman Mars, 469.
 Bo-chio, knobbed sticks used in Bo-fetiche, 470.
 Bodun, fetiche.
 Bokovo, one of the king's uncles, 291.
 Bonugan, a general or caboccer.
 Bonugangei, the beads worn by a caboccer round the neck, 194.
 Bonugan-kayon-gbe, the first section of the Attoh Custom, 341.
 Bonugan-nun-kpon gbe diyeh, the fourth section of the King's So-Sin Custom, 222.
 Bonuganton, the armlets worn by a caboccer.
 Borl ah borl, a form of prayer, 32.
 Boro, fetiche captains.

- Bo-so or Bo-soh, painted truncheons for fetiche, 139, 469.
 Brohun, a calabash drum, 172.
 Brohun, the second watch, from 9 to 11 A.M.
 Bruvodun, the fetiche of the Bru or Blue Company, 150.
 Bukono, priests, the king's feticheer.
 Bukononroh, the health officers of the king, 121.
 Bweh, happy.
 Bwekon-huleh, the Coomassie palace.
 Bweken Hwegboh, the palace of Agongolu, 409, 451.
 Bwekon-nhun or hun, the fetiche cotton-tree near the Coomassie palace, 163.
 Bwemeh, the palace of the Agasunno, 472.
- CABOCEER, an officer.
 Cankie, maize ground and boiled.
 Chacha, a Brazilian officer of the king at Whydah, 64.
 Chararah, a town in Mahi, 107, 333.
 Chauri, a horse-tail fly flapper, 135.
 Chokoto, drawers, 165, 488.
 Chop, food.
 Chai, Tegbwesun's mother, 266.
 Chuydatoh, the second caboceer at Whydah, 20.
 Chyo, all.
 Coomassie, the palace of Gézu.
 Cowries, small *Cyprææ* used as currency, 28.
 Custom, a state ceremony, 178.
- DA, fire.
 Da, to play on an instrument.
 Dada, grandfather.
 Dahkro, Amazonian messengers, 145.
 Daho, large, huge.
 Daho, the first king of Dahomey, 86, 448.
 Dakoh, a kind of cake, 57.
 Dan, to shoot.
 Danh, the King of Godavin slain by Daho, 87.
 — the rainbow, 473.
 — a snake, 54.
 — a fetiche, 466.
 Danhgbwe, a python, 54.
 Danhgbwehweh, the snake-house at Whydah, 54.
 Danhgbweno, the priestesses of the Danh, 55.
 Danhjihunto, the lieutenant of the right wing of the Fanti A. 456.
- Danhlike, Addokpon's mother, 265.
 Danhsi, the Danhgbweno.
 Danyoh, the King of Pahlookoh, 326.
 Dash, to give, present a gift.
 De, all.
 De, customs dues, 65.
 Dede, softly, slowly.
 Degan, a customs officer, 216.
 Deh, one.
 — cut off or finished.
 Dehn, to cut.
 Dejuh, a deity imparting the power of ruling, 153.
 Dekyeh, tinder, 26.
 Demen, (Dewen)? a Mahi deity guarding the chastity of the king's wives, 154, 471.
 Denun, a custom house, 8.
 Dewen, to search for.
 Deyeh-nun-kpon, a strong name conferred on me by the king, 305.
 Dhu, now.
 Di, here.
 Diden, to take up.
 Didoh, springs north of Abomey whence the Nesu water is fetched, 208.
 Dijeh, this.
 Do, a bamboo mat.
 Dodoh, put down.
 Dogbwe, night.
 Dogoh, a waist cloth.
 Doh, a hole.
 Dohen, a god at Whydah, 47, 472.
 Doho, a bamboo house, 286.
 Dokon, a village north of Abomey, the residence of the Avogan, 406.
 Don, young.
 Dounpwe, Amazons who destroy traitors' property, 48.
 Dosu, the name given to the first son born after twins.
 Dosunwon, the keeper of the Abomey gate, 388.
 Dovoh, a woman's petticoat, 488.
 Dukoh, maize fritters, 492.
 Dukoh-kweh, sweet maize fritters, 492.
 Dukomen, the Portuguese quarter of Whydah, 45.
 Dun, to eat.
- EAWHEN, the English landlady and Amazonian Adonejan, 263.
 Echilé, the fourth caboceer of Whydah, 249.
 Eghan, to break.
 Egbe, that will not go into.

- Egbleh, completely.
 Egbolu, the old Men's mother.
 Eh, he.
 Eyeos, one of the Yoruba tribes N.E. of Dahomey, 118.
 Eyeoseghabodun, the S.E. gate of Abomey, 406.
- FANTI, the King's company of Amazons, 455.
 Fefaleah (Ashanti), hail king, 250.
 Fefale (Ashanti), hail, I hear, 250.
 Ffene, tiger nuts.
 Foli, the son of Shampo who shot himself at Whydah, 31.
 Fosupoh, Amazonian kposu, 456.
 Fouseh, the third market day at the Dahomey palace.
 Fufu, a maize pudding.
- GA, a bow.
 Gah, market day.
 Gahn, a bell.
 Gah-qpweh, Gèzu's bush king, 272.
 Gan, metal.
 — a captain.
 Ganchya, a black drum for Addokpon, 201.
 Ganchyahun, a drum band, 201.
 Ganu, conquering.
 Ganunlan or nlan, the "Conquerors of all Animals"; one of the male regiments, 133, 447.
 Ganwe, iron.
 Ganzeh, a general of the left, 291.
 Gaou, the field-marshal of the right wing, 292, 445.
 Gaou-hwe-gudoh, a square near the old Abomey gate, 388.
 Gaou-nehou, the Gaou's war temple, 113.
 Gaou-tel, the Gaou's water, 113.
 Ga-sa-uhun, a fetiche cotton tree near Abomey, 153.
 Gbe, to-day.
 Gbeto, Amazonian Elephant-hunters, 166, 256, 456.
 Gblol, a large drum for Addokpon.
 Gbman, to swear.
 Gbnon, an oath.
 Gbo, large.
 Gbo, to leave off.
 Gbwe, a bush.
 Gbwewedo, Gelelé's chief eunuch, 215, 246.
 Gbwejeh, the national Diana, 470.
- Gbwu-hun-li, the place of reception at Kana, 127.
 Ge, thin.
 Gelwe, the "Cowrie House" at Abomey, 385.
 Gelelé, the present King of Dahomey, 142, 452.
 Gelelé-akhosu Kayan gbe, the second section of the Attob Custom, 344.
 Gesinnun, the custom-house at the Whydah lagoon, 8.
 Gèzu, the eighth monarch, 451.
 Gèzuyeho, the tent for Gèzu's ghost, 195.
 Gha, a chimpanzee.
 Gion, to like.
 Gle, or Gre, a plantation.
 Gleta, the forest country.
 Glo, a bag.
 Go, a quiver.
 Golo, the T bandage, 487.
 Gohento, archeresses, 457.
 Gohweh, a drum, the watch from 3 till 6 P.M., 172.
 Gon, in the place of (an affix).
 Gongi, the district between Whydah and the lagoon, 11, 12.
 Gozogoh, a land tortoise.
 Grewhe, the Ffon name of Whydah, 44.
 Guh, the presiding deity of blacksmiths, 387, 473.
 Guh, a dog.
 Gu-hoh, a wattled hut.
 Guhoh, Gun-custom huts, 421.
 Gulonentoh, Amazonian musketeers, 457.
 Gundeme, the Amazonian Ningam, 456.
 Gong-gong, a cymbal, 19.
- HANANSU, Gelelé's eldest son, 150.
 Han, to sing.
 Hanaa, one of the king's wells near Kana, 125.
 Hanhomkouji, the N. E. gate of the Abomey palace, 385.
 Hen, to hold.
 Hieglensi, the English quarter at Whydah.
 Ho, the belly.
 Ho, a room.
 Ho, tall.
 Ho, great.
 Hoho, twins, the deity preserving twins, 470.
 Hoho-zen, twin-pots, 470.
 Hojeno, the head door-keeper, 250.
 Homen, the entrails.

- Hon, a door.
 Hon, to beat or strike.
 Hu, the Dahoman Neptune, 468.
 Huedah, the old name of Whydah, 44.
 Huhu, dead.
 Humen, in the sea (the south).
 Hun, a drum.
 Hun, or uhun, a ship.
 Hun, or uhun, a cotton-tree, 467.
 Humajileh, Mpengula's mother, 466.
 Huno, the head priest of Hu, 468.
 Huntoh, or huntto, a drummer, 346.
 Hunto Kayon-gbe, the third section of the Attoh custom, 346.
 Huwun, to kill.
 Hwe, a residence with a plantation.
 Hwe, a fish.
 Hwisuh, a dagger.
- ITE-D'-AI, the clapping salutation, 143.
- JA, come here.
 Jabwa, the custodian of the Dido.
 Jai, beads.
 Jaja, go out.
 Je, go.
 Je, salt.
 Jegbeh, Gelelé's palace, 423.
 Jegoh, to tuck up or fold.
 Jeh, on.
 Jeh, to wait for.
 Jen, to fall.
 Ji, sky.
 Jibewheton, the lieutenant of the left wing in the Fauti Amazons, 456.
 Jih, afraid.
 Jin, to live.
 Jo, wind.
 Joh, born.
 Joji, a string of azan.
 Josusu (wind luck), a gallows with a bird or other offering to ensure prosperity.
 Jotosi, drummers.
 Juju, fetiche in general, 199.
- KAFU, the iron Bo fetiche preceding the king in state parades.
 Kago, calabashes for food, 195.
 Kayan, to dance.
 Kajih, the finest cankie.
 Kaka, very much.
- Kakopwe, the Kangbodeh's assistant, 215, 446.
 Kan, a rope.
 Kanaema, an evil deed.
 Kangbodeh, the eunuch chief of the night-guard, 215, 446.
 Kana-gbo-nun, the Kana main gate, 114.
 Katake, a war stool, 261.
 Kan, the throat.
 Kechi, the N.E. market in Abomey, 391.
 Kentin, the head singer, 279.
 Khe, a bird.
 Khesin, to fear.
 Khetungan, the Amazonian Gaou, 456.
 Khevyosoh, the God of Thunder, 10, 468.
 Kho, old.
 Khoguduh, the backyard, 187.
 Kini, a leopard.
 Kini-kini, a lion.
 Kini-kini-kpo, a stick or sceptre with a lion carved upon it, 147.
 Klan, jesters, 173.
 Ko, the earth.
 Kodide, the dirt-shovelling salutation, 143.
 Koh, master.
 Koh, a marsh or swamp, 103.
 Kohun, to beat a drum.
 Kohwe, the courses in a wall, 496.
 Kokoaji, one of the captains of the night-guard, 446.
 Kokolo, a fowl.
 Kokolohuwu, sacrifice of poultry.
 Kokolosi, eggs.
 Kon, upon.
 Konun, to laugh.
 Kosi, a legal prostitute, 283.
 Kpate, the Whydah man who first called Europeans there, 473.
 Kpa-kpa, a duck.
 Kpase, Kpate's assistant, 473.
 Kpo, a hill.
 Kpo, a leopard; also the fetiche, 473.
 Kpo, a stick.
 Kpofensu, the captain of blunder-busseers and head-jester, 250, 394.
 Kpogoeji, a street between the Uhunglo market and the Coomassie palace, 406.
 Kpoji, a singer's staff.
 Kpon, hump-backed.
 Kpon, to look at.
 Kposi, a leopard-wife, 165.
 Kposu, the field-marshal of the left wing, 292, 445.
 Kpota, a hill.
 Kpotah, a swelling.
 Kpwa-kpwa, the Kakopwe, 128.

Kpweh, plenty.
 Kpwen, a horn, the watch from 9 to 12 P.M., 172.
 Kra-kra, rattles.
 Kra kra, an irritating cutaneous disease.
 Kraveh, a brown monkey which makes the gun burst if it sees it before the hunter.
 Kuku, or huhu, dead.
 Kum, to die.
 Kutomen, Deadland, 461.
 Kwabna, Tuesday.
 Kwain, to sprinkle.
 Kwe, old, worn out.
 Kweh, perspiration.
 Kweh, year.
 Kweh, sweet.
 Kweho, an umbrella, 193.
 Kweho-sonu, an umbrella-bearer, 10.
 Khwetanun, the annual Customs, 179.

LALI (half-head), one of the Eunuch troops, 249.
 Letlleflo, the fetiche temple of Letle, a Nago deity, 157.
 Legba, the Dahoman Priapus, 469.
 Legbamban, a pot for Legba's offerings.
 Legba-nun-dudu, offerings to Legba, 188.
 Legba-si-gohn, the toll-gate of Legba, 149.
 Leh, a Whydah fetiche, the crocodile, 472.
 Leopard-wives, the actual wives of the king.
 Lin, to stand.
 Lio, a bitter kind of cankie, 491.
 Lisa, the sun, 472.
 Lisa-ji, sun-sky (the east).
 Lisa-no (sun-mother), the chief priestess of Lisa, 261.
 Lisch, a cashew nut, 380.
 Logoza, the tortoise god, 111.
 Logun, an alligator.
 Logun, a tail.
 Logun-aizan-li, a fetiche grove of Aizan, 153.
 Logunsinsi, the Tail Dancers, 263.
 Loko, the poison tree, 467.

MA, a knob or club.
 Ma or mo, not.
 Mah, do not.
 Makpo, a knobbed stick carried by officers, 129.

Match, the god who has charge of the ocean, 152.
 Matro, Gelelé's half-brother, the lieutenant of the Gaou, 249, 445.
 Mau, the moon, also the moon fetiche 473.
 Mau, God, 461.
 Mauno (moon mother), the chief priestess of Mau, 261.
 Mau-ji, moon-sky (the west).
 Mban, a pot.
 Men, in.
 Men, to make.
 Men, a person.
 "Menaiye," we will go.
 Menaiye Kpon Menhuwu-nhunglo-akhie, the seventh section of the king's So-Sin Custom, 249.
 Menduton, the state cannibals, 367.
 Mengoten, or Menjoten, the head caboceer of Alladah, 88.
 Menho-blutoh, the Braggadocio company, 214.
 Menhuwu, human sacrifice.
 Men-sané-attob gbe Gelelé, the fourth section of the Attoh Custom, 379.
 Mensino, a childless woman.
 Mentadokamen, calabashes with skulls, 260.
 Menta pwe, the stool with twenty-seven skulls upon it.
 Menta-zinkpo, Gelelé's war stool, 261.
 Mesch, we hear.
 Melokih, the second market day held at Kana.
 Meu, the prime minister of the Left, 445.
 Meu-huwu-gbe, the sixth section of the Attoh Custom, 359.
 Mi, our.
 Minh, all.
 Mino, our mothers, one of the titles of the Amazons.
 Minokaynan-gbe, the fifth section of the king's So-Sin Custom, 228.
 Mino-zohu-wa-gbe, the fifth section of the Attoh Custom, 357.
 Mnan, the madcap company, 343.
 M'num, a face.
 Mon, as you stand, just so.
 Mpengula or Mpengala, the sixth monarch, 451.

NADUDEAGOH, the Amazonian Avogun.
 Nah, I.
 Nanyin, to allow to go, to "pass."

- Namyinkpo, a royal stick, against which there is no opposition, 147.
- Nateh, the keeper of the fish in the sea, 473.
- Naureo, a Krooman.
- N'daboh, silence, 168.
- Nennu, okro soup, 492.
- Neptunes, large brass pans.
- Nesu, the tutelary deity of Abomey, 206, 472.
- Nesu-hwe, a Nesu temple, 206.
- Ningan, the prime minister, 444.
- Nkoveh, a marsh in Mahi, 335.
- N'lan, an animal.
- No, within.
- No, mother.
- Nonpwento, one of Gelelé's brothers, 291.
- Notoh, a courtyard, 287.
- Nquahshu (Ashauti), we compliment you, 134, 249.
- Nquaveh, the caboceer of Ampasim, 318.
- Nu, a thing.
- Nuage, one of Gelelé's brothers, 291.
- Nukon, before.
- Nukun, the eye.
- Nun, mouth.
- Nun, a man.
- Nun, side.
- Nundudu, fetiche offerings.
- Nun-kpon-gbe-Addokponton, the first section of the Bush king's So-Sin Custom, 272.
- Nunpwe, an under-cloth, 487.
- Nunu, a cloth.
- Nunupweto, the omnipotent cloth, 215.
- Nunupweto-hun, the all-powerful drum, 217.
- Nutobé, Gézu's Bush king's mother, 266.
- Nyan, to sneeze.
- Nyekpleh, a razor.
- Nyekpleh-hentoh, razor-women, or Blue-knives, 195, 254, 456.
- Nyesinsyn, the "strong names" of a person, 208.
- N-ye-un, okro soup in Whydah.
- Nyi, a proper name.
- Nyin, a sneeze.
- Nyisyensyen, *see* nyesinsyn.
- N'yoh, good, 197.
- N'yohia, bad.
- Ocoh, a knobbed stick, 164.
- "Oko-dhu," I compliment you, 91.
- Okoo, alive.
- Okro, *Hibiscus esculentus*.
- Oku, immortality.
- Owuh, the body.
- Owu-chyon, a body-cloth, 70, 488.
- Owutunun, the officers of the household, 446.
- PAKHEY, a fetiche place near Kana, 149.
- Panigan, a gong-gong or cymbal, 19.
- Palaver, a debate, dispute, suit, or argument.
- Panigān, the watch from 11 till noon.
- Paniganafwan, the watch from 3 to 6, A.M., 172.
- Panigan-hunto, a state herald, 19.
- Patinsa, Aho's gate in the Abomey palace, 391.
- Pitto, native beer, 494.
- Pwe, the shed before a palace gate, 89.
- Pwe, small.
- Pweh, able.
- QUINUX, the chief trade captain, 446.
- SAN, to throw.
- Sapatau, the small-pox god, 471.
- Sau, yesterday.
- Saw, to-morrow.
- Sayan, the thunder shrub, to protect from fire.
- Se, to listen.
- Senune, Agongolu's mother, 266.
- Sevi, an evil-doer.
- Si, a tail.
- Si, or asi, a wife.
- Sigi, dice.
- Sigi-toh, a game like backgammon.
- Sin, to tie up.
- S'u, water.
- "Sin-diyye" "Sin-koh," a salutation, 91.
- Singbo, a storied house, 88, 385.
- Sò, thunder.
- Sò, a horse.
- Sogan, the Horse captain, 197, 446.
- Soghaji, the English quarter at Whydah, 45.
- Soh, bring.
- Soh, a stick.
- Soh, a hill.
- Soh-daho, a mountain, 303.
- Sohwe, a fetiche post with a blood-stained top, 353.
- Soomah, a trap.
- Sosinghe (Horse-tie to-day), the first section of the king's So-Sin Custom, 186.

Sosoton, Ningan's Lieutenant, 439.
 Srah, the slaves' quarters.
 Sûn, to grow.
 Sundehgbwe, a Mahi salutation.
 Susu, luck.
 Swish, earth, especially when tempered for building purposes, 9.
 TABL, a tambourine.
 Tabla, a fetiche hat, with looking-glasses on the flaps.
 Tah, the head.
 Takpwonun, the hippopotamus fetiche, 473.
 Tansino, fetiche priestesses who represent the ghosts of the deceased king's mothers, 208.
 Tavosa, Akabah's mother, 408.
 Tavosagbonun, Tavosa's gate, 408.
 Te, small.
 Tegbwesun, the fifth monarch, 450.
 Ten, in the place of.
 To, the sea.
 — a town.
 Toh, a canoe.
 — he does.
 — father.
 Tohunbonun, the gate of Tohun, 406.
 Tokpo, the assistant Matro, 456.
 Tokpodun, the alligator fetiche, 473.
 Tokpon, a state pavilion, 353.
 Tometti, Gelelé's brother.
 Ton, it is.
 Ton (an affix), belonging to.
 Tononun, the chief eunuch for Gézú, 446.
 Tro, a philtre.
 Tun, the noise of a hammer.
 Twin-irons, crescent-shaped iron instruments used in the Bo-fetiche.
 U, that.
 Ugoh, shea butter.
 Ugoli, the large shea butter-tree near Abomey, 156.
 Uhon, gate.
 Uhon-nukon, the open space before a gateway, 64.
 Uhunglo, the second market day, held in the Uhunglo market, hence its name.
 Uhunglo market, between the Coomasie and Abomey palaces.
 Uhwaweh, a district near Abomey, the first station of Daho, 86, 152.
 Uzun, to charge.

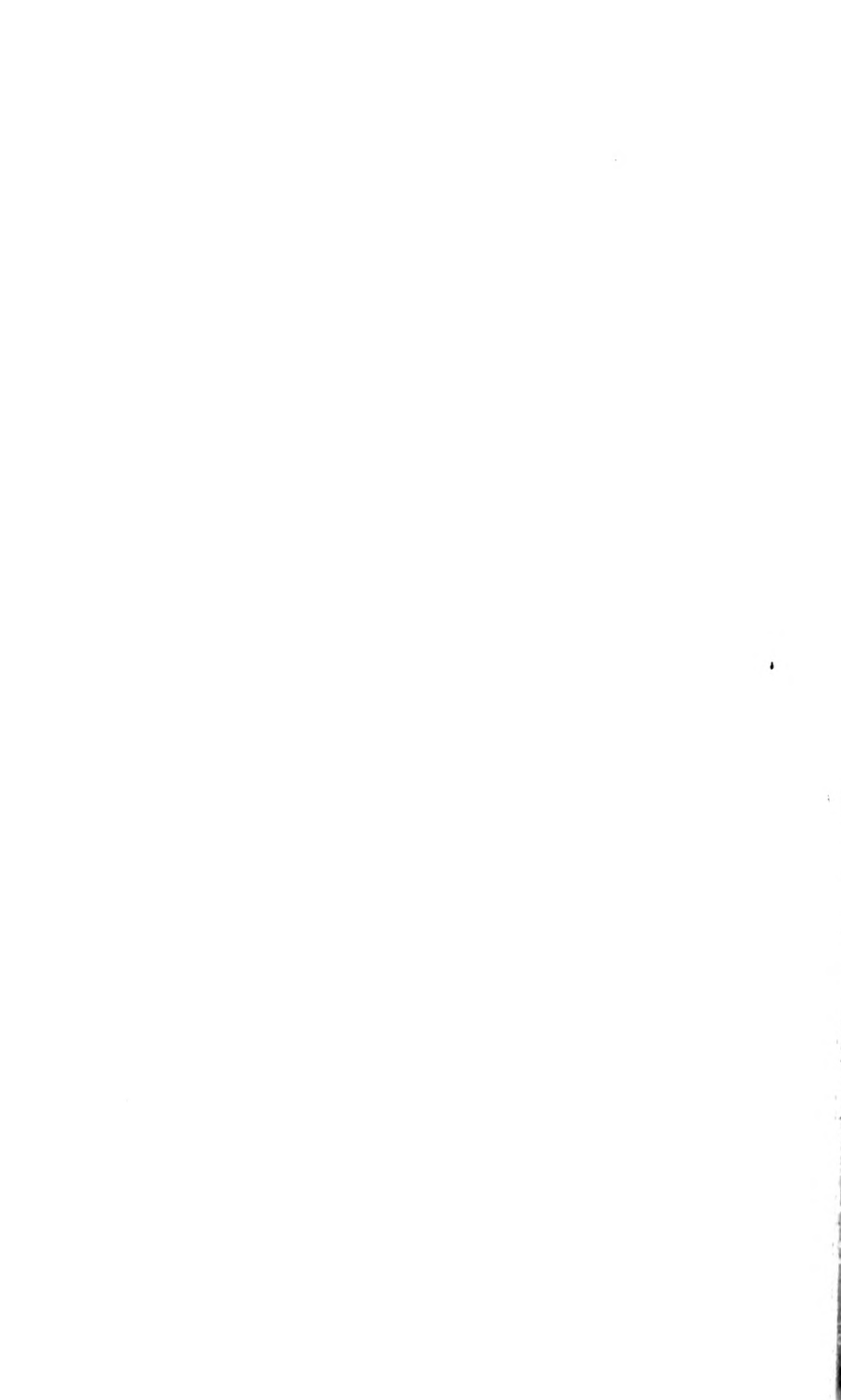
VATEN, a cloth bag.
 Vedoh, to think.
 Vi, son of.
 Videkalo, the Amazonian treasurer, 234.
 Vie (Ashanti), to come.
 Vie kpo (Ashanti), the king comes, 195.
 Visetigan, the lieutenant of the Yavedo, 213.
 Vo, red or ripe.
 Vodoh, one of Gelelé's brothers, 291.
 Vodun, fetiche in general.
 Vodunkpo, a fetiche stick.
 Vodunnodemen, the shrine of Mahi fetiche, guarding the chastity of the king's wives, 154.
 Vu, a lie.
 WA, a shark.
 — doing or making.
 Wae! yes, or I am here.
 Wan, to live.
 Wemeh, or Wimch, the watch from noon till 3 P.M., 172.
 Wemeh, a flute, 172.
 Wenou, one of the caboccers of Akpweh, 132.
 Whe, the sun.
 Whiegbo, a town near Akpweh, 97.
 Whenukdotoh, singers, 170.
 Whohau (Ashanti), I accept it, 134, 249.
 Wi, black.
 Widuhé, a camp.
 Woh, a pudding, 491.
 — a river, 309.
 Wonh, a portentous event.
 Wuleh, shining.
 Wul-leh oo-och! the military salute, 21.

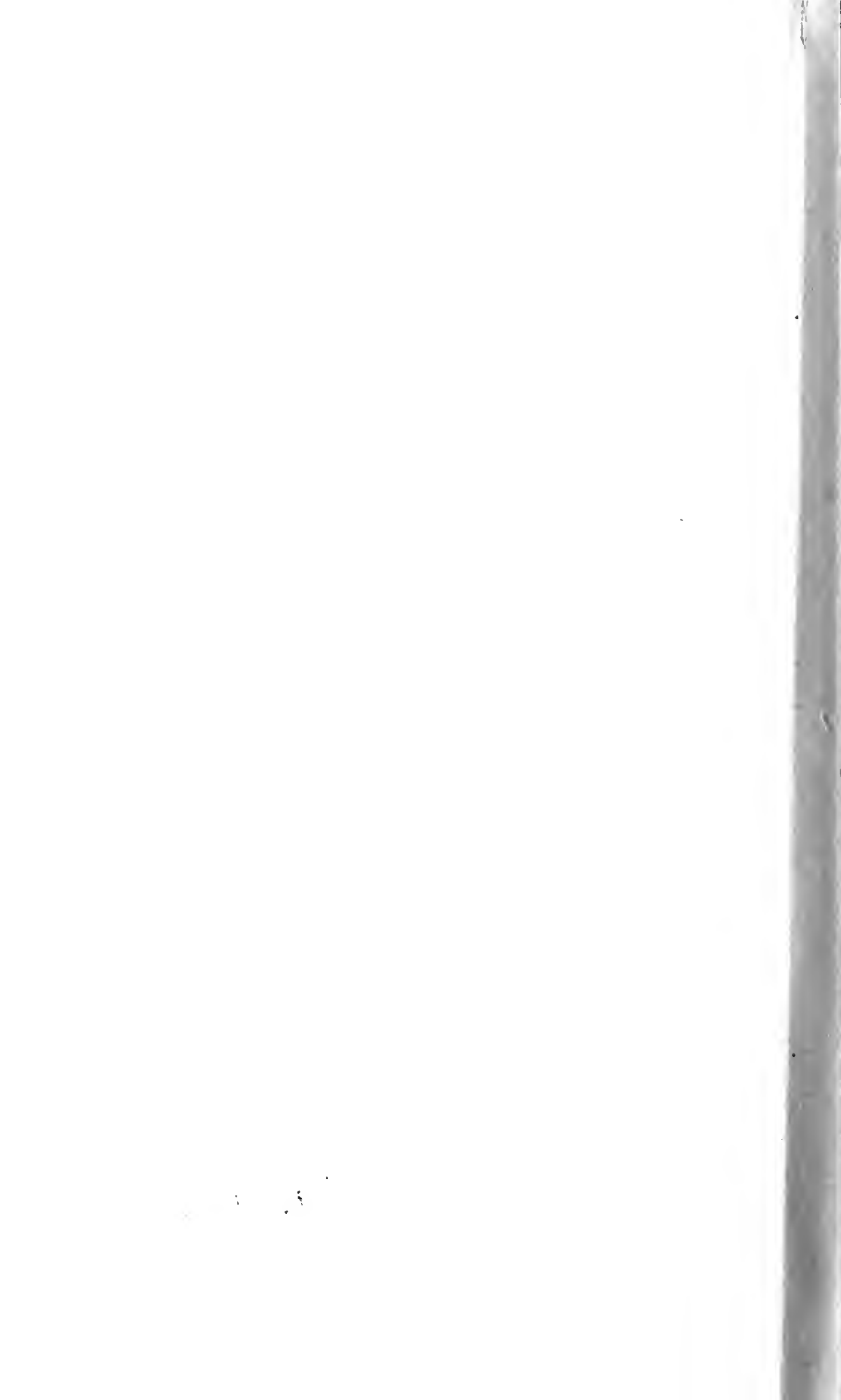
YAH, they.
 Yavedo, the chief eunuchess, 213.
 Ye, a shadow, omen.
 Yegeeh, hallo! oh! (surprise or pain).
 Yeou, the Harmattan, 39.
 Yeovoh, or Avo, a white man, 211.
 Yeovohe, white man's birds, canaries.
 Yewo noh, a missionary, 60.
 Ye-whevi, a mulatto.

ZAHO, a storeroom, 496.
 Zan, night.

- Zankuku, the fetiche for the king's ghost, 290.
- Zan men huwu wonh, the sixth section of the king's So-Sin Custom, 233.
- Zan men huwu wonh addokpon, the fifth section of the bush king's So-Sin Custom, 285.
- Zeigan, to lift up.
- Zen, a pot.
- Zenmen-toh, a potter.
- Zenweh, fetiche captains, the Boro.
- Zin kpo, Ashanti (daybreak) the signal for the finish of the king's drinking, 144, 241.
- Zinkpoh, a chair.
- Zò, the rainy season.
- Zó, fire, also the god, 471.
- Zobemi, the principal market at Whydah, 45, 56.
- Zoghodo, the tuft of hair on the top of a woman's head.
- Zogbodomen, a town near Aglimé, and the name of a market day, 109.
- Zohuhun, one of the regiments, 447.
- Zohu, to walk.
- Zoindi, Gelelé's mother, 265.
- Zomaihiemen, the market in the N. W. quarter of Whydah, 27.
- Zun, the hedge defending a town, 389.
- Zuru, a heap.

THE END.





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