THE NEGRO
IN AFRICA AND AMERICA

BY

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PREFACE.

The present study does not claim to be an addition to human knowledge. One familiar with the writings of travelers and ethnologists on the negroes of West Africa, is acquainted with most of the books out of which the first few chapters have been woven; one acquainted with the history and present condition of the race in the United States, has met most of the statements and arguments embodied in the later portions of the work. The merit of the book, in my judgment, is to be found rather in the fact that it brings together two lines of investigation which have hitherto been kept asunder. The rapidity with which an uncivilized people may be lifted, or may lift themselves, to the plane of an advanced civilization is still undetermined. To realize that many characteristics of the American Negro are part of his inheritance from Africa, and were bred into the race there through long generations, may perhaps strengthen the patience and forbearance of those who seek to expedite his progress. To realize that many faults often attributed to the debasing effects of American slavery, are faults which he shares with his African ancestors and contemporaries, may suggest a juster and more impartial view of the merits and demerits of the economic system which crumbled as a result of the Civil War. That a southern white man, the son of a slave holder, should have selected this subject for investigation, have pursued his work at a northern university, utilizing for the purpose a library, the nucleus of which in this field is a large

anti-slavery collection, and have reached results, the tendency of which seems to me in the main eirenic rather than controversial, is a noteworthy sign of the times, suggesting how both sections and both races are coming more and more to coöperation of effort and harmony of conclusions regarding our great problem. The work of Mr. Tillinghast has given me much light upon a question in which for years I have been interested, and I believe that many others of his readers will share my judgment.

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THE NEGRO IN AFRICA AND AMERICA.

INTRODUCTION.

It will serve to reveal both the author's point of view and the objects aimed at, if the reasons which led to the study herein presented are stated at the outset.

In a self-governing republic like ours, some homogeneity of citizenship is vital. By excluding the Chinese we have avoided one threatening phase of heterogeneity. But unfortunately no African exclusion act was passed in the days when such action might have delivered us from the black peril, consequently, the homogeneity of our national society, especially in one great section, is dangerously broken. Our nine millions of negroes to-day constitute an ethnic group, so distinct from the dominant race, that we are threatened with inability to assimilate them.

The problem before our country, therefore, is how to reduce the divergence in character between its white and black populations. Obviously the first step toward a solution, if one be possible, is to get a thorough understanding of Negro character, otherwise, we are but groping our way, liable at every step to costly blunders. There is only too much reason to fear that misconceptions in this direction have already led to serious errors in our policy toward the nation's "ward".

Now, character is a product of two fundamental factors, *i.e.*, heredity and environment. The endowment of each generation at birth is dictated by heredity, but all that it acquires subsequently is the gift of environment. Matured character, therefore, is a subtle compound of the two elements.

Through choice or control of environment, deliberate human agency may accomplish much toward influencing the ultimate compound. Of two negro infants, let one be brought up in the African jungle and the other amid the best American culture, and very divergent results would certainly follow. But men cannot manipulate heredity. From generation to generation this mysterious force operates in isolated independence, and we cannot touch it.

Yet heredity is not a fixed unchanging force. By slow and infinitesimal degrees it may be modified through selection, which tends to accumulate advantageous variations in offspring and to eliminate unfavorable ones. Inasmuch as the experience or attainments of one generation within its own life-time affect but slightly, if at all, the physiological germs, through which heredity is transmitted, nothing we can do of set purpose for the parent will decidedly improve the birth-endowment of the child. Its later inheritance through example and home training may be improved, and this is of immense significance. But that is another question. The point now being emphasized is, that heredity proper cannot be manipulated by purposive human devices. If it were open to us to exercise deliberate selection among our own kind, as stock-breeders do among brutes, then the case might be different. We might then modify hereditary force with rapidity, but, as it is, we must wait for Nature to do her work in her own infinitely conservative way. No ethnic group, with its inborn nature moulded for ages in an undisturbed environment, can be radically transformed within ten or twenty generations.

All of the considerations just cited have a deep significance in the problem that faces our country. They have, of course, become very familiar to us in some con-

nections, but they have never been properly recognized and applied in our efforts to comprehend the present character of American negroes.

United under our flag are two streams of racial heredity; the one had its origin and development in the north temperate zone, the other in the torrid zone. Before meeting here, the one had evolved an hereditary endowment, delicately adjusted to the highest civilization recorded in history; the other remained in benighted savagery. We have never for a moment dreamed that the nature of the Caucasian element in our population could be understood, if its long career in Europe were ignored. Infinite pains have been taken, therefore, to trace and interpret its history from the beginning. But what of the African? How many of us have definite ideas regarding the conditions which moulded him through and through, long before we took him in hand? How many of us have in mind accurate data, by which to distinguish hereditary survival from acquired character? Yet, unless we can do this, we have no measure of his real progress under American tutelage, and therefore, no basis for estimating his probable future. We are left to deal with a compound, the proportion of whose elements we do not know.

To say that the Negro in Africa was a "savage" tells little, for there are many species of savage, and many degrees of savagery. The Indian is a savage, but he differs widely from the native of Africa. Each race has deeply implanted peculiarities of temperament and aptitude. A dismissal with the generic term "savage" does not serve the purpose. We might as well ignore all Teutonic history, previous to the landing of the Mayflower, and consider it sufficient to say that our European progenitors were "civilized."

But it may be questioned whether the African life of the Negro has been completely neglected. As a matter of fact, occasional notice has been taken of it, yet in a manner quite useless for modern purposes. In Philadelphia, as early as 1789, a little book was published by Anthony Benezet, entitled, "Some historical account of Guinea". In it one finds a compilation of facts regarding the natives of West Africa, but the author evinced a strong bias in his selection and grouping of these facts, it being his philanthropic desire to show that the negroes were a much higher people than those interested in the slave-trade represented them to be. A contrary bias is revealed by one Josiah Priest, who published at Albany, in 1844, a work with the title, "The origin and character of the Negro race." This sounds promising; but the fact that an entire chapter is devoted to proving that "the curse of Noah on the race of Ham, as a judicial act, is endorsed by the law of Moses,"[1] reveals its general spirit. Again, "The Negroes in Negro-land, etc," put forth in 1868, by Hinton R. Helper, as a protest against the pending proposition to enfranchise the freedmen, is simply a catalogue of verbatim quotations from works on Africa, regardless of the region our negroes came from, and selected with a view to prove them as low as possible. In his two volume work, "A history of the American Negro," Geo. W. Williams, himself a mulatto, discusses in an introductory part, the West African natives, but the execution is thoroughly unscientific; for example, his opening chapter relies almost solely upon scripture texts to prove the unity of human origin, no use being made of ethnological data. He hurries over this part superficially, giving attention principally to the race history in

[1] See p. 89, *et seq.*

America, and here he seems to have done conscientious work of permanent value.

This list, while not exhaustive, is thoroughly representative. We remain without such a knowledge of West African society as we need, in order to understand correctly our own negro population. We have been content to make occasional vague allusions to a former condition of savagery, straightway proceeding to seek explanations of negro nature and character in terms of American environment, chiefly that of slavery.

The institution of slavery has loomed so large on our horizon that it has completely overshadowed what went before it in African history. At every mention of negro inefficiency, improvidence, or immorality, it sufficed to recall slavery, and the characteristic was deemed explained. But it is time that we seek a truer conception of the forces that have made the American negro what he is.

To make a beginning in this direction has been the object of the investigation whose results are presented in the following chapters. The negro's heredity and environment, each helping to interpret the other, are studied as found in West Africa, then under American slavery, and finally during free citizenship in our Republic.

PART I.

THE NEGRO IN WEST AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

WEST AFRICA.

The continent of Africa is a vast plateau. It has been compared to an "inverted plate" of irregular shape.[1] On almost every side the high lands approach the coast-line, then slope rapidly to the sea, sometimes by a gently terraced formation, sometimes by a succession of rugged escarpments. Regarding the continent as divided by parallel 4° north latitude, it is found that the continental plateau is thereby roughly marked off into two halves, of which the southern has an average elevation of from 3,000 to 3,500 feet, while the northern averages only about 1,300 feet. Hence it is that Africa, although considerably smaller than Asia in area, has nevertheless a larger volume of earth above sea-level. It is now becoming usual to designate the northern plateau, stretching from Cape Verde to the Red Sea, as the Sudan, which is again divided into West, Central, and East Sudan. These divisions correspond roughly with the Niger, the Chad, and the Nile basins respectively. We shall hereafter confine ourselves to West Sudan. Similarly, of the southern half of the continent only the western regions in more or less proximity to the Atlantic will call for attention. The portions thus defined are commonly given the general title of West Africa.

West Sudan lies within that vast bulge described by the western coast-line in sweeping around from the

[1] See Stanford's Compendium of geography, "Africa", pp. 5, 277.

Strait of Gibraltar to the Niger delta, with Cape Verde as its extreme westerly point. In this region the great table-land extends to within a short distance of the ocean, then breaks down in escarpments so sharp and rugged that they long were called by mariners, the Kong Mountains. The drainage to the west is principally by the Senegal and Gambia rivers, which reaching the sea by a series of rapids are not navigable to any distance from the coast. To the south, drainage for the most part is through numerous short coastal streams. The Niger, however, rising not far from the head-waters of the Senegal and Gambia, flows easterly toward the interior for hundreds of miles, gradually sweeps round in a great curve, and finally opens into the Gulf of Guinea, through many mouths. Its Delta was a chief market for negroes in the days of the slave-trade.

In southwestern Africa we find the same general characteristics of an inner plateau, extending to two hundred miles of the sea or less, and then sinking rapidly to the shore. Here, too, the drainage of the coast is through many small and rapid streams, while far inland behind these rises the majestic Congo, which at last bursts through the mountain fringe and reaches the ocean down a series of rapids. One other river should be mentioned, the Ogowe, which drains a large area lying between the Upper Congo and the ocean, and empties through a delta about four hundred miles north of the Congo month.

Our present interest in West Africa is confined to the region whence negroes were taken for the American slave-trade. There were three principal markets, about the mouths of the Senegal and Gambia, the Niger, and the Congo. These places were preferred because of the advantage they afforded for loading and unloading ships

and for reaching the interior. But the trade was not confined to them; all along the coast between the Senegal and the Congo wherever cargo could possibly be landed, it went on briskly.[1] It will be convenient to divide this strip of coast some four thousand miles long into Upper Guinea, or all that portion lying between the Senegal and the Niger Delta, and Lower Guinea or that which stretches south from the coast-angle just east of the Niger Delta down to and including the lower Congo region.

The depth from the coast of this slave-yielding belt cannot be determined with any accuracy. The white traders merely touched the periphery of the continent, and neither knew nor cared about the geographical origin of the slaves. That many were brought from far inland cannot be doubted. Wadstrom tells us how the Moors and Mandingans of West Sudan captured many negroes from about the head waters of the Senegal and Gambia, and took them down stream to the coast.[2] Yet the demand for slaves in northern Africa was such as to take off most of the interior supply, so that relatively few are thought to have reached the distant West Coast. DeCardi learned, too, that a good many of the slaves found along the Lower Guinea coast had come from a distance inland.[3] Still, there is every reason to believe that the overwhelming majority of those negroes, destined for the Atlantic trade, were secured from the more densely populated coast countries and fertile river valleys within two or three hundred miles of the sea. The kings of Ashanti and Dahomey,

[1] For an outline of the slave-trading region see "An historical account of Guinea", by Anthony Benezet, Philadelphia, 1771, pp. 6–7. Also "La traité de Negres", T. Clarkson, Paris, 1789, pp. 15–6.

[2] "Observations on the slave-trade", London, 1789, pp. 1–3.

[3] Kingsley, "West African studies", London, 1889, p. 480.

living within one hundred miles of the sea, captured and sold whole tribes dwelling in contiguous territories, and their example was followed by numerous other petty kings all along the coast. It is known that before the close of the slave-trading era numerous districts along the West African coast had been practically depopulated. Hence the conclusion seems fairly justified that the vast majority of negroes exported from Africa to America came from a belt of coastal territory of immense length, but only a few hundred miles in width.

A brief mention of the countries usually given distinct names, and constituting the divisions of Upper and Lower Guinea, is necessary. First on the north is Senegambia, which includes the Senegal and Gambia valleys and all the intervening region. Next to the southeast lies Sierra Leone, which has long been under British control; and then the so-called republic of Liberia. At the southeast corner of Liberia is Cape Palmas, from which point the coast line takes an almost due easterly course, stretching over 1,200 miles till past the Niger Delta, when it turns southward toward the Cape of Good Hope. Until the more recent establishment of European spheres of influence, this long east and west strip was usually divided into the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast, names indicating the commercial article once distinctive of each region. That the Slave Coast exported more slaves, and that the trade was maintained there longer than anywhere else, was due to peculiar facilities it possessed for smuggling and for evading the cruisers sent to suppress the traffic.[1]

Beyond the vertex of the angle that enclosed the Gulf of Guinea, Lower Guinea begins. First is the Cameroon

[1] See Reclus, "Universal geography", vol. xii, p. 256.

country, which includes Old and New Calabar, now under German administration; then French Congo, which takes in the country drained by the Gaboon and Ogowe rivers, and finally the Congo mouth and to the south of it, Angola.

The dominating climatic facts affecting this long seaboard are two: (1) it lies entirely within the torrid zone, extending from about 18 degrees north latitude to 10 degrees south latitude; and (2) it is subject to pronounced wet and dry seasons, the former so far predominating as to occupy nearly or quite three-quarters of the year. A tropical temperature therefore prevails continuously, and the humidity is excessive for the greater part of the year. Hence the terribly debilitating effect of the climate upon foreigners. All testimony on the subject abundantly supports the following statement of Du Chaillu:

"The climate of the west coast is sickly and exhausting, not because of its extreme heats, but because of its high *average* temperature and moisture, and the universal presence of malaria. Owing to the prevalence of a sea-breeze [during the day] the mercury is rarely higher than 90° in the shade; but then it rarely falls below 80° for nine months in the year, and even in the remaining three (the dry season) it never gets below 64°." [1]

He mentions here, but does not emphasize, the element of humidity, which, combined with the high temperature, absolutely prohibits any considerable or prolonged

[1] "Explorations and adventures in equatorial Africa", by Paul Du Chaillu, New York, 1868, p. 370. By observations taken along the coast of Upper Guinea, Sir James E. Alexander found that at sea-level the barometer ranged between 29.50 and 29.85 for several months at a time when the height of the wet season was well passed. This gives a suggestion in numerical terms of air-pressure conditions, indicating great humidity. See his "Excursions in West Africa", London, 1840, pp. 116, 120, 149, 237. The annual rainfall throughout the West African coast reaches the height of from 100 to 150 inches—an enormous total compared with that of the great majority of countries. See Stanford's "Compendium", "Africa", p. 317.

exertion. This fact and its bearings will be discussed more fully later.

Some idea of the humidity that prevails during the wet season, is conveyed by this description of its effects. MacDonald says: "So great is the humidity particularly along the coast, that all descriptions of wearing apparel rapidly spoil, that which is not destroyed by the ravages of moth and cockroach being very quickly attacked by mildew and rust." [1] Miss Kingsley also repeatedly alludes to the great difficulty of escaping mildew, one of her emphatic expressions being, "that paradise for mould, West Africa".[2]

During the briefer dry seasons, however, when the Harmattan wind blows out of the far northern interior every night from sunset till after sunrise, the air becomes so extraordinarily dry as to be very trying to man and beast. Says MacDonald:

"This wind blows with a peculiar effect, drying and parching the skin and drying up the vegetation. A fine dust comes with it, and during its continuance its progress is marked by the creaking of Madeira chairs and sofas, the cracking of veneered articles, and the curling up of papers and the covers of books. . . . The air becomes hot and dry, with very cool mornings and evenings, which to the European are very beneficial, though not so to the natives. . . . . Table salt, which at all ordinary times is in a semi-liquid state, owing to the extreme humidity of the air, becomes solid and hard, and glasses have been known to crack and fall to pieces as they stood upon the table." [3]

Similar effects are described in great detail by Robert Norris, who made a journey to the capital of Dahomey, in 1772.[4] A little after sunrise each day the Harmattan ceases to blow, and there is a calm, during which the

[1] "The Gold Coast: past and present", pp. 65–6.

[2] Travels in West Africa", p. 33.

[3] "The Gold Coast: past and present", pp. 64–5.

[4] See his "Bossa Ahadee, King of Dahomey", London, 1789, pp. 114–15.

heat is stifling, but about 11 o'clock a gentle breeze from the sea rises and lasts nearly till sunset, giving a slight relief during mid-day. This singular alternation of winds within each twenty-four hours, "goes on with the regularity of clock-work." [1]

With regard to the wet and dry seasons, Du Chaillu explains: "Both the time and duration of the seasons depend upon the latitude and longitude of the place." [2] Whenever the sun is approaching the zenith with reference to a given country, the rainy season commences and continues till it is well past the zenith. As the sun is at the zenith only once each year over countries lying near either tropic, there is but one long rainy season, followed by a shorter dry season while the sun is farthest from the zenith. In the northerly portions of Upper Guinea, which are near to the tropic of Cancer, these conditions prevail. In strictly equatorial regions, however, the sun passes the zenith twice, so that there are two wet seasons, succeeded by brief dry seasons. Such is the case in Lower Guinea. A rainy period is always introduced by a number of terrific tornadoes, which appear suddenly with little warning and tear their way through the jungle, leaving death and destruction behind them. In a few days all the streams, which fall very low during the dry season, rise many feet, and often become very dangerous for navigation.

One factor influencing climatic conditions has not yet been mentioned, viz., altitude. This comes into play on the slope of the plateau. As the average height thus gained, however, in Upper Guinea is not 1,500 feet, the

[1] Reclus, "Universal geography", vol. xii, b. 216.

[2] *Op, cit.*, p. 366. As Du Chaillu will be frequently cited hereafter, it may be well to say that, while his reliability has been denied, recent exploration has shown that he was truthful and accurate.

result is only to secure slightly cooler nights, with greater heat by day, from the sun's direct rays. In Lower Guinea there are greater altitudes, which sometimes have a night temperature as low as 55°, yet these are little inhabited by the scantily clothed natives, to whom such temperatures are disagreeable. They prefer the coast lands and river valleys, under truly tropical conditions. The desire for communication by water also leads them to prefer the lowlands. Thus, altitude does not decidedly modify climate.

West African climate has proved uniformly disastrous to the health and stamina of white men. Numerous are the mournful records that tell of its ravages among Europeans coming under its sway even for brief periods. Sir A. B. Ellis says:

"Although the Government European officials, both civil and military, remain but for a period of twelve months at a time on the Gold Coast, and then proceed to the United Kingdom for six months to recruit their health, the death rate amongst them is abnormally high. . . There are no colonists, for no one could hope to live in such a climate. Unfortunately there are no statistics kept by the local government from which the death-rate might be computed. It came within my own experience, however, that in one year, and that a not unusually unhealthy one, in a town in which I resided, five deaths occurred and six persons had to be invalided to England out of a European population averaging twenty-four in number. And it must be remembered that in this population there were no aged or infirm persons, no women and no children—all were men in the prime of life."[1]

To the same effect are all available accounts of this region. In Lower Guinea where truly equatorial conditions prevail, it is even worse.

Nor do other alien races seem to enjoy any greater exemption than the Caucasian. In July, 1897, sixteen Chinese laborers were imported into the Gold Coast to

[1] "The Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast", London, 1887, p. 5.

work the mines, situated in the higher country. By December, although none had died, yet "many of them had been at all times very ill," and they were soon removed, the experiment having proved a failure.[1] The importation of Chinamen and of West Indian negroes, themselves the descendants of West African natives, have both been tried by the Congo Free State, but in each case the "mortality has been terrible—more than the white mortality, which competent authorities put down, for the Congo, at 77 per cent., and the experiment has therefore failed."[2] The French, too, tried to work Annamese prisoners in the French Congo, but in spite of most careful treatment they died with appalling rapidity, one gang of a hundred losing seventy within a year.[3]

While it does not follow, as a matter of course, that because aliens are thus debilitated by the climate, the natives should be affected in like manner, yet the facts indicate that they too are injuriously influenced. Ellis is of opinion that the natives, while far less liable to the destructive diseases caused among aliens, are by no means exempt from them, and in any case are subject to the powerful influences against mental or physical energy and progress.[4] It is by no means infrequent for whole villages to be swept away by disease.

The natural resources and productions of West Africa are rich and varied. As the entire region is within the torrid zone, its indigenous fauna and flora are altogether tropical. To these some few additions have been made by Europeans, but most attempts to introduce plants and

[1] Geo. MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 8–9.

[2] Kingsley, "Travels in West Africa", p. 657.

[3] Kingsley, "Travels in West Africa", p. 657.

[4] "Tshi-speaking people, etc.", pp. 5–7.

animals from the north temperate zone have proved unsuccessful, owing to the change of climate and other circumstances.

West Africa has a fauna of the greatest possible interest to the zoologist, but our concern is only with what affects human life. The native is affected both favorably and unfavorably by the animal life that surrounds him, *e. g.*, wild beasts furnish him food, yet they often endanger his life. For food he finds elephants, hippopotami, buffaloes, crocodiles, gorillas, and other powerful denizens of jungle and river very serviceable, when he can overcome them. But his weapons being very inefficient at best, he may be himself destroyed. For religious reasons certain venomous snakes, which cause not a few deaths, cannot be touched. Leopards are everywhere much feared, and are difficult for the natives to destroy. There are several species of food-animals, however, which are not so perilous to hunt, such as antelope, small monkeys, and hares. Some of the tribes rely largely upon these for meat. Elephants have been of immense economic importance to the whole country as the source of ivory, but so rapid has been the slaughter of them, that ivory no longer belongs in the first rank as an article of export.

West Africa abounds in smaller animals and insect life. Most of this is harmless, but there are some species that are serious enemies to the welfare of man. The tsetse fly in many localities renders it out of the question to keep horses. The mosquito, now charged with being the medium of disease-contagion in the case of dreaded tropical fevers, swarms along the coast. One other small pest, the driver ant, demands special attention. There are several species of these ants, which are held in

wholesome respect by man and beast. Du Chaillu tells us that

"In the forests of this part of Africa are found vast numbers of ants, some of whose tribes are so terrible to man, and even to the beasts of the wood, from their venomous bites, their fierce temper and voracity, that their path is freely abandoned to them, and they may well be called lords of the forest." [1]

Writing on the same subject Miss Kingsley gives the following vivid account:

"I will not enter into particulars about the customary white man's method of receiving a visit of Drivers, those methods being alike ineffective and accompanied by dreadful language. . . . . The native method with the Driver ant is different; one minute there will be peace in the simple African home, the heavy-scented hot night air broken only by the rythmic snores and automatic side slaps of the family, accompanied outside by a chorus of cicadas and bull frogs. Enter the Driver—the next moment that night is thick with hurrying black forms, little and big, for the family, accompanied by rats, cockroaches, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and hugh spiders animated by the one desire to get out of the visitors' way, fall helter skelter into the street, where they are joined by the rest of the inhabitants of the village, for the ants when they once start on a village usually make a regular house-to-house visitation." [2]

These active swarms of ants frequently devour weak or sick persons about a village in a few hours, and they clear out all vermin more efficaciously than human agency could do it.

The sea and all streams emptying into it throughout the entire coast afford a great variety and abundance of fish. Among these may be mentioned herring, mackerel, mullets, soles, and eels.[3] Herring in particular provide a staple article of food, not merely for the coast tribes, but also for many inland peoples, who purchase dried fish from the former.

Very few domestic animals are seen in West Africa.

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 359.

[2] "West African studies", pp. 27–8.

[3] MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 76. See also John Barbot's "Description of North and South Guinea", London, 1746, p. 222.

"The only indigenous domestic animals are the ubiquitous dog, the common variety somewhat resembling the European greyhound, but of coarser build, the cat, the ass, and poultry".[1] Of these the ass is found, however, only in northern Upper Guinea, where there has been contact with the Moors. Goats are kept by some tribes, but are a later introduction by Europeans, and little is made of them. In fact, the climatic conditions and the hostile insects of West Africa seem to be as hard upon the domestic animals known to us as upon our race itself.

As to the flora it is both varied and luxuriant. Many portions of Upper Guinea seem less favorable to arboreal than to herbaceous growth, so that while in some parts extensive forests are found, in others the country is open and prairie-like. From Senegambia to and including the Gold Coast most of the land is covered by dense forests, but in the Slave Coast region the woods are mainly confined to the river valleys and low-lying spots. In Lower Guinea the vast equatorial forest of central Africa extends westward to the Atlantic, a dense jungle thoroughly typical of a fertile and well-watered tropical country.[2] Scattered far and wide are the little villages of the natives, connected only by difficult footpaths or in some cases by streams, navigable with canoes.

The most valuable of all the trees is the "oil palm", which grows wild in all wooded localities. The nuts from this tree yield abundantly a rich oil, used by the natives for food and as an unguent. It has become a prime article of export, since the breaking up of the slave-trade and the threatened exhaustion of the ivory

[1] Stanford, "Compendium", *op. cit.*, p. 327.

[2] Paul Du Chaillu, "A Journey to Ashango-land", pp. 406-7.

supply. Another palm supplies "palm-wine", a drink highly prized throughout West Africa. These palms, also furnish materials for huts, boat-rigging, and other uses.[1] The plantain bears huge bunches of a coarse sort of banana; the cocoa and cola-nut palms both yield food. Magnificent ebony and mahogany trees are found at many points, though they were never valued by the natives till the rise of foreign trade created a demand for the timber. A species of large vine grows luxuriantly in the forests, the milky juice of which makes fine rubber. This was formerly of no use to the natives, but since they have learned its commercial value an ever increasing quantity is now produced for the foreign market.

With regard to cultivated plants the advent of Europeans brought about the introduction at an early date of Indian corn and rice, while millet seems to have come in still earlier from Mohammedan sources. But these excellent cereals are grown chiefly in certain favorable parts of Upper Guinea, and are little known elsewhere. Says Barbot:

> "It is positively asserted, that before the Portuguese came to this coast, the natives neither used, nor so much as knew of bread, made of any sort of corn: but only such as they made of yams and potatoes [manioc roots], and a few roots of trees." [2]

The West African population therefore, before the foreign invasion, was confined to a few vegetable roots for bread material, and had no cereal food. This is still the case with the immense majority, who rely upon familiar indigenous plants, either through ignorance of

[1] John Barbot, *op. cit.*, p. 196. He gives a most detailed and satisfactory account of West African plant-life.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 197. These cereals were in more or less use as early as 1695, when the Sieur Froger visited Upper Guinea, for he mentions them in his "Voyage under Gennes", p. 31.

any other or inability to overcome inertia and repugnance to new things.

The yam is "a root which grows in the earth like carrots, commonly twelve or thirteen inches long, and as much in circumference." It is of a reddish yellow color, when ripe. What Barbot above calls "potatoes" are not at all the vegetable we know by that name, but "manioc roots" as they have now come to be called. The manioc resembles our dahlia more than any plant, perhaps, familiar to us, both in root and foliage, though the former are larger than dahlia-roots. The "tapioca", now widely used in American households, is a preparation derived from manioc roots. As to fruits, the pine-apple and pomegranate are indigenous, and are much used by the natives.[1] One or two varieties of beans, cabbages in some parts, and in others a kind of squash, are frequently to be seen. Curiously enough it is the seeds of the squash which are used, rather than the vegetable itself.

What the potential mineral resources of West Africa may be, is unknown as yet. The only metals ever secured from the earth, and actually utilized by the natives have been gold, iron, and copper. Gold has long been supplied by the Gold Coast country, as its name implies, but is not found elsewhere on the West Coast. Superstitious scruples and ignorance of proper methods prevent the natives from mining for any metal, but they have long procured gold by washing out the sands and gravels of the streams. They pick up the ores of iron and copper where rich veins crop out along the broken escarpments of the great table-land.[2] The amount of

[1] MacDonald, p. 69–70.

[2] See Bosman's "Guinea", in Pinkerton's "Voyages and travels", vol. xvi, pp. 369–375. Also Barbot, *op. cit.*, p. 191 and pp. 227–234. Du Chaillu, in his "Equatorial Africa", p. 122, tells how iron ore is found and smelted.

metal secured under such circumstances and worked up by the extremely crude methods in vogue, is insignificant compared with what civilized men might obtain. There seems to be little doubt that even such metallurgy as is known among the true negroes of West Africa was acquired from northern or northeastern peoples of superior civilization, and not self-developed.[1]

[1] See p. 21.

CHAPTER II.

ETHNOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY.

The primal origin of the Negro still remains undetermined. But definite knowledge on this point is not essential to the present inquiry. We know with certainty, that the Negro race has inhabited Africa for thousands of years, and that its character during countless generations has been moulded by the influences and conditions peculiar to tropical Africa. It is known, also, that for centuries there has been a migration westward and south-westward across the continent. Superior peoples, developed in the drier, cooler climate of the northeast, and improved by mixture of blood with Semitic races invading Africa by way of Suez, have driven inferior tribes before them, across the continental interior. Brinton says :

"The general tendency of migration in central as in southern Africa, so far as it can be traced in historic times, has been westerly and southwesterly. The densest population has been near the Atlantic coast, as if the various tribes had been crowded to the impassible barrier of the ocean." [1]

This is why Keane declares that "the very worst sweepings of the Sudanese plateau" [2] seem to have gathered along the coast lands of West Africa, and Ellis speaks of the West Coast natives as "the dregs and offscourings of Africa."

This movement is going on to-day, and several tribes, themselves driven onward, have arrived on the West Coast within recent times, displacing slowly the existing occupants. For example, the Dahomey people were an

[1] D. G. Brinton, "Races and peoples", pp. 176–7.
[2] A. H. Keane, "Man : Past and present", p. 54.

inland tribe at the time of the earlier visits of Europeans to West Africa, but by the conquest and wiping out of the Whydahs in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, they reached the sea. So, too, the Fans were in the interior when visited by Du Chaillu in 1856,[1] whereas Miss Kingsley found them, in 1893, wedging themselves rapidly down to the seaports.[2] She observes: "In this part of the world (Ogowe River), this great tribe is ousting the older inhabitants of the land." As this process has been going on for centuries, it is obvious that the negroes living along the western verge of the continent at any given period have not been the best specimens of their race. This is a fact of the first importance to us, because the slaves brought to our country were taken from these peoples.

Fixing our attention, now, upon this West African population, we find that ethnologists are generally agreed in dividing them into two slightly different types, the Bantu, inhabiting Lower Guinea, and the Sudanese of Upper Guinea. While Keane thinks that,

> "The specialised Negro type, as depicted on the Egyptian monuments some thousands of years ago, has everywhere been maintained with striking uniformity . . . Nevertheless considerable differences are perceptible to the practised eye, and the contrasts are sufficiently marked to justify ethnologists in treating the Sudanese and the Bantus as two distinct subdivisions of the family." [3]

The chief reliance for distinguishing the two is the fact that the Bantus all speak slightly differentiated dialects of a common language, whereas a great diversity of language exists among the Sudanese. Miss Kingsley says that the Bantus keep their villages cleaner than do the Sudanese; that they prefer to have their slaves

[1] "Equatorial Africa", *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[2] "West African studies", *op. cit.*, p. 399.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.

live apart in separate quarters, whereas the latter do not, and that female gods predominate among the Bantus, while the Sudanese have male gods principally. [1]

But one may read the accounts of West African native life and character, as seen from Senegambia to Angola, without discovering, unless forewarned by ethnological experts, any significant differences. It would seem, therefore, that the distinction above drawn, has little relevancy to the present investigation. That which the negroes throughout West Africa have in common, includes all important race characteristics, and it is a knowledge of these we are seeking.

A short résumé of the principal tribal groups, with their geographical location from north to south, may be of assistance. In Senegambia dwell the Wolofs, with the kindred sub-groups of Jolofs and Serers, all speaking dialects of one tongue. They are reputed to be the blackest and most garrulous of negroes. The name "Wolof," indeed, signifies "talker." They are a tall, well-built people, and in Peschel's opinion, "the finest of negro races," physically speaking.[2]

South of the Gambia are found the Felups, "an utterly savage full-blood negro people", of whom there are many tribes. It was chiefly from these and the Wolofs that superior Moorish warriors once took hundreds of slaves and sold many at the mouths of the Senegal and Gambia rivers. Still farther to the south near Sierra Leone are the Timni, who occupy a considerable territory. The Sierra Leonese and Liberians have been so changed by intermixture with miscellaneous freed slaves, that they must be excluded from consideration. Mention should be made, however, of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 422.

[2] See Peschel, "Races of man", pp. 464–5.

Krus, a tribe which has somehow kept itself tolerably pure. It furnishes still the best labor available anywhere on the coast, the "Kru-boys", as they are called, being relied upon at every sea-port for loading and unloading cargoes.[1]

The remainder of Upper Guinea from Liberia eastward is inhabited by three prominent groups of tribes, ethnically related. These are the Tshi-speaking peoples, who occupy the Gold Coast region; the Ewe-speaking peoples, who occupy the western half of the Slave Coast; and, finally, the Yoruba-speaking tribes, including those of Benin, who inhabit the rest of the Slave-coast. Between the Tshis and the Ewes a remnant of the Ga-speaking people remain, but they have long been of minor importance. All are pure negro in type, and differ only in language, and in the fact that there has been a slightly greater development of organization among the Ewes and Yorubas. According to their traditions they all once belonged to a single group, and lived in an open grassy country to the northeast—evidently the inner Sudanese plateau.

The population of Lower Guinea is made up of numerous small tribes. Their names being unfamiliar we may here conveniently designate them by their geographical location, *e. g.*, the Bonny natives and the Cameroon natives. Prominent among the peoples of this equatorial region may be named the M'Pongwes, the Bakalai, and the recently arrived Fans. It will, however, seldom be necessary to mention particular tribes, because they are all nearly alike in character and manner of living.

No one general term will correctly describe the kind and degree of civilization found among the West Africans. They are not pastoral peoples, for they have no

[1] Kingsley, "West African studies", pp. 54–5.

cattle, sheep, or beasts of burden. In fact, they live under conditions which practically prohibit this mode of life. Only a small portion of their subsistence is derived from hunting, and they cannot be accounted good hunters. Those who live near the sea are good fishermen in their way, and even secure a surplus of fish, which they sell to inland peoples. Mainly, however, they depend for food upon agriculture of a very crude type, supplemented by the free gifts of nature. Yet they are not a fully settled people, cultivating the same lands for long periods, for they move their villages freely hither and thither, when impelled by superstition or temporary danger. They have private property in women, slaves, and movables, but not in land. While they trace kinship still through the female line, yet there are unmistakable signs of a change to kinship through the male line. In view of all these considerations, perhaps we can scarcely do better than to say, that they are in a confused state of transition from the stage of purely nomadic savagery to that of settled agriculture.

But though we may call this a transition stage, there is little evidence of any progress within historic times. Keane declares, indeed, that the West African negroes "have made no perceptible progress"[1] for thousands of years. They seem to have suffered an arrest of development, when driven from more favorable conditions in the north and east. At any rate their culture is on a very low level, and very unprogressive. They have no letters, art, or science; their industries are confined to very elementary agriculture, fishing, a little hunting, and some simple handicrafts. Cannibalism formerly prevailed almost everywhere, but has largely

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

disappeared, especially in regions under European influence. Human sacrifice, and executions for witchcraft, are still practically universal, except in regions under the immediate control of white officials. Religion is "grossly anthropomorphic," all natural phenomena are explained by reference to spirits, mostly ill-disposed towards man. Language is in the agglutinative state; only suffixes are used among the Sudanese, but prefixes, alliteration, and suffixes are used among the Bantu.

Physical and psychic characteristics are substantially uniform, only trained observers being able to detect a few differences here and there. The West African negro is usually rather above the average human stature, with arms disproportionately long, and slender legs. He is erect and easy in carriage, and has a well-developed physique. The color varies from a dark chocolate to a deep black, the hair is invariably black with elliptical transverse section, causing it to be "woolly." The face has markedly prognathous jaws, thick, everted lips, a flat nose, and large prominent eyes, always black with yellowish cornea.

The psychic nature of the West African exhibits most of those immaturities so common among uncultured savages, and analogous to childish thought and emotion in more developed races. Ellis says:

> "The negroes of the Slave Coast have more spontaneity and less application, more intuition and less reasoning power, than the inhabitants of temperate climates. They can imitate, but they cannot invent, or even apply. . . . . They are usually deficient in energy, and their great indolence makes them easily submit to the despotism of kings, chiefs, and priests, while they are as improvident as they are indolent." [1]

In temperament, says Keane, they are "fitful, passionate, and cruel, though often affectionate and faithful"

[1] "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 10.

They are sensuous, and possess little sense of dignity and little self-consciousness; "hence the easy acceptance of the yoke of slavery."[1] In one profoundly important particular they seem peculiarly deficient, *i. e.*, in that strength of will which gives stability of purpose, long staying power, and self-control in emotional crises. There is here a striking contrast with our American Indians in several aspects. Finally, it may be added, that a passionate love of music and rhythmic motion dominates them to a remarkable degree.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

CHAPTER III.

INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY.

The natives of West Africa live under conditions adverse to the growth of industrial efficiency; indeed few regions are more hostile to such a development. Their physical environment deprives them of many motives to labor. The weather is never so cold as to necessitate substantial dwellings or clothes. Less food is required than if they lived in a temperate or frigid climate. So abundant is nature's provision for food and other wants, that with little effort they obtain what is needed. The staple artificial drink, palm-wine, is secured merely by tapping a palm of a variety which grows wild everywhere, and fermenting the juice.[1] Palm-oil, a prominent article of diet, is pressed from nuts produced abundantly by another wild palm. Du Chaillu says of Lower Guinea: "The forests abound in wild fruits and nuts, some of which are eaten. For instance, the pineapple grows wild in all parts of this region and is a delicious fruit".[2] The waters teem with edible fish and the forests with game. Such materials as are needed for simple huts and meagre furniture are everywhere in profusion. It is common for a village to be removed and reconstructed in four or five days.

In the case of cultivated produce, the fertility of the soil and the climatic advantages are such that very large returns are yielded to slight labor. Speaking of grain crops along the coast, Bosman

[1] See Bosman's "Guinea", *op. cit.*, p. 453. He gives a good account of this palm and its manifold uses to the native, aside from its wine-producing capacity.

[2] "Equatorial Africa" p. 46.

said: "It were to be wished that corn were to be produced in our country (Holland) with as little trouble as here;" and of rice along parts of the Upper Guinea coast: "It grows in such prodigious plenty that it is easy to load a ship with it, perfectly cleansed, at one penny or less the pound".[1] The plantain, a large coarse banana, is a prime article of food, and few cultivated plants yield more food for less labor than the banana. Describing a field of plantains, Du Chaillu says, that the small palms are set about five feet apart, and each tree bears a bunch of plantains weighing from forty to one hundred and twenty pounds. "No cereal could in the same space of ground give nearly so large a supply of food".[2]

Previous to the appearance of Europeans, the extreme west coast of Africa was completely isolated from the outside world; its inhabitants lived in scattered villages buried in the forest, and remained in dense ignorance of any other desirable objects than the necessities of their own savage life. Among the forces which have helped to civilize other peoples has been the stimulus to effort arising from newly conceived wants, quickened into being at the discovery of commodities, first brought by strangers.

The appearance of Europeans with new and attractive commodities, produced a great effect. To get them in exchange for native products, thousands of negroes were moved to unwonted exertions, while foreigners taught them new and better methods of production. All this, however, has been comparatively recent, and for ages the negroes were without such incitements to industry.

The direct influence of the West African climate is

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 458.
[2] "Journey to Ashango land", p. 119.

adverse to persistent effort. Where high temperatures, and low humidity prevail, the rapid evaporation from the body cools it, and permits considerable exertion, as is the case in Egypt. Great humidity, combined with a low temperature, as in the British Isles, has no bad effect. But West Africa enjoys neither of these advantages, it swelters under a torrid heat combined with excessive humidity.[1] Such conditions deaden industrial effort. The white man, whose capacity for energetic and prolonged labor in most circumstances is so great, whose wants are numerous and insatiable, finds himself irresistibly overcome. Rich rewards await those who can put forth a little effort, yet as Ellis says, so intense is the disinclination to work, that even the strongest wills can rarely combat it. In fact, the very will itself seems to become inert.[2]

We are now prepared to appreciate the workings of the vitally important factor of natural selection. It is obvious that in West Africa natural selection could not have tended to evolve great industrial capacity and aptitude, simply because these were not necessary to survival. Where a cold climate and poor natural productiveness threaten constant destruction to those who cannot or will not put forth persistent effort, selection operates to eliminate them, and preserve the efficient. In torrid and bountiful West Africa, however, the conditions of existence have for ages been too easy to select the industrially efficient, and reject the inefficient.

In fact, climatic conditions being such as to make severe and prolonged effort actually dangerous to physique, it is plain that the possession of great energy must be dis-

[1] See Herbert Spencer's "Principles of sociology", sec. 16, for an illuminating discussion of the influence of climatic factors.

[2] "The Tshi-speaking peoples, etc.", p. 4.

advantageous. It may seem at first sight that, as it is the tendency of selection to adapt a species to the environment it lives in, the negroes should have become exempt from this danger. But Nature is economical. Why should the Guinea natives be carefully adapted to perform heavy labor in spite of climate, when by reason of that very climate such labor was never required? Hence, very little power for energetic and persevering effort was evolved in the race. Just a modicum of such power suffices the main purpose, and during seven or eight hours of maximum temperature each day, all the animal world, man included, seeks an effortless existence in shady places.

The character developed through ages of selection amid these conditions, whatever else it may contain, is not likely to include the elements of high industrial efficiency. Indeed, measured by the standard of northern civilized peoples, the Guinea native's easy-going indolence, heedlessness, and improvidence seem incredible.

The industrial régimé which actually obtains among the peoples under investigation shows well the consequences of these conditions. The economic development of a people is marked by a progressive specialization of industry, the gradual creation of labor-saving apparatus, and the accumulation of property. Let us see where the natives of Guinea stand in these respects.

Division of labor has proceeded but a very little way. The most striking instance of it to civilized observers is that which assigns all agricultural and menial labor to the female sex. Of the region explored by him, Du Chaillu says: "The women not only provide all the food, but they are also the beasts of burden in this part of the world".[1] In allusion to the rubber-gathering industry, he adds: "Even here I noticed the laziness of

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 76.

the black men, and the cruel way in which the women are obliged to work ".[1] Describing life near the Congo, Proyart says, " We have spoken elsewhere of agriculture, it is the women who carry it on. . . . The men, besides an universal prejudice, founded no doubt on their indolence, would think they degraded themselves if they tilled the ground."[2] The men are in part occupied with war, hunting, or fishing; for the rest, their great delight is in endless talking and smoking, accompanied incidentally by what Miss Kingsley touches upon as " that great African native industry—scratching themselves ".[3] Their love of tobacco and their noisy garrulous companionship, which cause the hours to pass by unheeded, are brought out again and again by all writers on West African native life.

Still, a few handicrafts are known among them, and in most of the higher tribes are carried on by a small artisan class. Bosman describes some of the Upper Guinea tribes as having " a very few manual arts ", and mentions as examples the making of wooden or earthen cups, troughs, and the like, arm-rings of gold, copper, or ivory, the weaving of small narrow strips of cloth, and crude blacksmithing.[4] Of the lower Congo natives Proyart says, " Almost all of them are hunters and fishers. . . . . There are also smiths among them, as well as potters, weavers, and salt-makers."[5] Du Chaillu, Miss Kingsley, and others tell of tribes, however, who have never developed any handicrafts, depending upon their more well-to-do neighbors for a few articles, obtained by barter.

[1] *Idem.*, p. 78.

[2] " History of Loango ", by the Abbe Proyart, Paris, 1776; found in Pinkerton's " Voyages and travels ", vol. xvi. See p. 574.

[3] " West African studies ", p. 97.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 390.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 574.

The number of handicraftsmen in any given tribe is small, and their special skill is jealously withheld from the common herd. In some instances, indeed, the population at large regard these men, especially the blacksmiths, with half-superstitious awe. These simple folk exist somehow on an incredibly meagre supply of implements and weapons. Even in the manual arts women are compelled to do all the drudgery of collecting raw material, etc. All these facts reveal how the great mass of male population escapes distasteful toil.

The development of labor-saving apparatus and of skill in its use is on a very low level. So little appreciation do the natives have of such things, that Europeans have found it extremely difficult to persuade the natives to utilize even the most obvious means of saving time and labor. To work at something, which merely promotes in some obscure way an ulterior object, seems to the average Guinea native an incomprehensible policy. Even when he has been made to see that a little more care and effort at first, may save much time and trouble, his aversion to exercising care and his innate happy-go-lucky temperament lead him to neglect such a method.

As illustrating this trait it is said that the natives seem utterly oblivious to the fact that the more crooked a path is the more time and labor will be required to traverse it. As MacDonald puts it:

"A road, which need not be more than two miles in length, is frequently more than three on account of its windings. The native seldom troubles to get over an obstacle in his path, he goes round it like the ant, and the time lost is of not the slightest value to him, and in this respect he is quite at a loss to understand the haste of the European." [1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 81. On one occasion a missionary, en route from Sierra Leone to the United States, gave the writer a very impressive description of the infinite trials of patience to which white men are subject in West Africa owing to the negro's utter indifference to the value of time or the importance of economizing labor.

Ellis somewhere remarks that the white man's "at once" is always interpreted by the natives to mean any time from an hour to a week.

All transportation is effected by canoes, if any sort of water-way is available, or else by head-carriage, *i. e.*, by carrying packs on the head. Sometimes the pack is carried on the back, partly supported by a strap passed over the head. Overland transportation is by human pack-trains, each porter bearing from forty to a hundred pounds. Alluding to these native porters, Bosman says that, "with a burthen of one hundred pounds on their heads, they run a sort of continual trot, which is so swift that we Hollanders cannot keep up with them without great difficulty, though not loaded with an ounce weight."[1] Robert Norris, describing a journey from the Whydah coast to the capital of Dahomey, speaks of the porters, who bore him in a hammock, jogging "on at their usual rate of about five miles an hour."[2]

Water carriage, however, is very much depended upon, and to this end many tribes seek to locate their villages near navigable water. The natives along the sea-coast and river-banks seem very expert canoe-men and fine swimmers. Their canoes are made out of large logs by a rude process of hollowing and burning out. Some are of surprising size. Du Chaillu saw a M'Pongwe canoe sixty feet long, over three feet wide, and three feet deep.[3] But this is exceptional, for usually they are hardly thirty feet in length. In these small craft some of the most daring occasionally take considerable coasting voyages at favorable seasons of the year. Neverthe-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 479.

[2] "Bossa Ahadee, King of Dahomey", p. 66. Norris was thus carried on one occasion over forty miles in one day.

[3] "Equatorial Africa, p. 167.

less, even at its best, this canoe carriage is extremely unsafe and vexatiously limited in compass. Du Chaillu and Miss Kingsley again and again lost valuable instruments and goods through the capsizing of canoes. Many lives, also, are annually lost in this way.

In agriculture the implements used are exceedingly simple and inefficient. West Africans have no domestic draught animals, and are ignorant of the plow.[1] Du Chaillu says of the Fan tribes :

"Their agricultural operations are very rude, and differ but little from those of the surrounding tribes. Like them, they cut down the trees and brush to make a clearing, burn everything that is cut down, and then plant their crop in the cleared space. The only agricultural instrument they have is a kind of heavy knife or cutlass, which serves in place of an axe to cut down trees, and for many other purposes, such as digging the holes in which they plant their manioc or plantains. After the clearing is made, the women go around among the burned logs and tree-roots, and stick in their roots and shrubs wherever they can find space ; and nature does the rest." [2]

Again, Barbot tells us that the Upper Guinea peoples,

"Till or dig the ground with an iron tool, made in the shape of a shoemaker's knife, fixed at the end of a small staff. . . . During the time the work lasts, they are never without a pipe in their mouth, and continually talking to one another ; so that they do not advance much in a day, being very averse to hard labour." [3]

The Congo natives "have no other instrument of tillage than a little pointed spade, much like the trowels of our masons", says Proyart.[4]

The tools used in their handicrafts are likewise of a simple character. The outfit for working iron is practically the same everywhere. It comprises an anvil of stone or iron, formed roughly into a block, a pair of tongs,

[1] Waitz says : "Der Pflug ist so wenig im Gebrauch als die Benutzung von Zugvieh zum Ackerbau oder zu anderen Zwecken." See his "Anthropologie", bk. ii, p. 80.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 125.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 39–40.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 574.

curiously rigged bellows, and a hammer, shaped and used, however, like the pestle for a mortar. The substantial similarity of these tools throughout West Africa, appearing at wide intervals among tribes which have had no intercourse for centuries, though influenced alike by superior peoples of the interior, suggests that iron-working may have been not an indigenous development, but acquired from external sources.

In pottery-making only the bare hands are used, one hand moulding the wet clay, while it is being revolved by the other. For weaving, among such tribes as have learned the art, they have very primitive forms of the loom, which permit strips only a few inches in width and two or three feet in length to be woven. Some of the Upper Guinea tribes are spoken of by Bosman and others as producing considerable quantities of cotton cloth, owing to better appliances and more skill, derived from Mohammedan sources. In Lower Guinea their raw material consists of grass or the thin cuticle stripped off the leaves of a certain palm, "which is then twisted, and becomes a tolerably firm yarn".[1] Many tribes, however, have no looms, but do a little weaving by hand alone. Proyart describes the textile art of the Congo natives as follows:

"The weavers make their cloths of a grass about two feet high, which grows untilled in the desert plains, and needs no preparation to be put to work. The length of the grass is the length of the web; they make it rather narrower than long. This cloth is woven like ours, but they make it on their knees, without shuttle or loom; having the patience to pass the woof through the threads with their fingers. . . . The best workmen do not make more than the length of an ell of cloth in the space of eight days." [2]

There are many tribes who know nothing of weaving

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 462. They are able to dye this yarn in two or three colors, and the colored cloths are highly prized.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 574.

in any manner, and either do without cloth or secure small quantities by trade.

The West Africans love nothing better than trading. The earliest explorers found the coast tribes exchanging surplus fish with their inland neighbors for game or vegetable food, the gold of the Gold Coast region found its way to distant tribes, and iron implements have been seen in use among peoples who knew nothing of metallurgy. Thus inter-tribal trading has always gone on.

This exchanging is carried on mainly by barter. Hence intending travellers or explorers burden themselves with heavy supplies of tobacco, salt, beads, guns, ammunition, cloths and the like, as the only means of paying their way. They often experience infinite vexations, owing to the difficulties of barter.

Rude forms of money, however, have come into use at many points. Cowry-shells seem to have attained the widest currency, and are mentioned as being in common use in Upper Guinea. They have long been employed for this purpose.[1] Much more local in range are such coinage equivalents as "macutes," or "pieces of cloth made a yard long," found among the Loanda natives in 1666,[2] and the "manilla", a bracelet of alloyed copper for some time in use along the Ivory Coast, but now "sinking into a mere conventional token." Even slaves were passed from hand to hand at roughly fixed valuations. Du Chaillu says on this point:

"No better illustration could be given of the way in which the slave system has ingrafted itself upon the life and policy of these tribes than this, that, from the seashore to the farthest point in the interior

[1] Waitz remarks: "Nach seiner weiten Verbreitung zu schliessen, muss der Gebrauch der Kauris in Africa sehr alt sein." See "Anthropologie", ii, p. 103.

[2] See "A Voyage to the Congo", by Angelo and Carli, in Pinkerton's "Voyages and travels", vol. xvi, p. 157.

which I was able to reach, the commercial unit of value is a slave. . . If a man is fined for an offense, he is mulcted in so many slaves. If he is bargaining for a wife, he contracts to give so many slaves for her." [1]

One needs only to note the character of these several forms of currency to see at a glance how poorly they serve as tools of exchange, and why as a matter of fact, they are little relied upon. Direct barter, still greatly predominates.

What are the results of the West African's industrial régimé? The conditions are such that with anything like steady industry and the exercise of a little foresight, his food supply might be ample and varied. But just these qualities he has never developed. The consequence is that thousands live much of the time on the verge of famine. Barbot says: "It is very strange that the blacks should ever know any scarcity and sometimes famine, but it is occasioned by their sloth, they being generally careless, void of foresight, and never providing for casualties." [2] The very ease with which they can collect food at one season tempts them irresistibly to put off the labor of providing against worse times. The preservation of meat or even vegetable food is rendered very difficult by the moist, hot climate. The insecurity in which many tribes live continually, by reason of war or natural phenomena, increases the difficulty of producing and maintaining a full food supply.

Certain staple articles of diet are found nearly everywhere, while less valued articles vary from country to country. The plantain and manioc furnish the most universal bread equivalents. The plantain is eaten like bananas, or "cut in longitudinal strips and fried", or rolled in leaves and baked. Miss Kingsley speaks of

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 380.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 196.

two varieties of manioc, one of which is but little cultivated because it yields poorly. Of the other she says,

"The poisonous kind is that in general use, its great dahlia-like roots are soaked in water to remove the poisonous principle, and then dried and grated up, or more commonly beaten up into a kind of dough in a wooden trough. . . . The thump, thump, thump of this manioc beating is one of the most familiar sounds in a bush village." [1] As to its dietary value, she remarks: "It is a good food when it is properly prepared, but when a village has soaked its soil-laden manioc tubers in one and the same pool of water for years, the water in that pool becomes a trifle strong, and both it and the manioc get a smell which once smelt is never to be forgotten." [2]

Hence it is that a disease, known in native parlance as "cut him belly", is very prevalent. Livingstone considered manioc to be of poor sustaining quality, for "no matter how much one may eat, two hours afterward he is as hungry as ever".[3]

Perhaps the next most important vegetable food, in point of universality and of quantity used, is the yam. Palm-oil is very much used to cook vegetables in or as a sauce for meat. The universal drink is palm-wine, of which the natives are excessively fond.

By no means so widely known, but constituting a part of the food supply in one locality or another, are rice, maize, millet, squash-seed, and a few vegetables, such as cabbage and beans. Rice is known only in the lowlands of some parts of Upper Guinea. Maize, recently introduced, is still unknown to interior tribes, away from contact with the whites. Millet is confined to relatively few localities. It is quite evident, at any rate, that the West Africans need not lack for a good and varied diet.

For flesh the chief dependence of most tribes is fish.

[1] "Travels in West Africa", p. 208.

[2] *Idem.*, p. 209.

[3] See his "Travels in South Africa", pp. 326–7.

Even the inland peoples, not living near streams, get supplies of so-called "dried fish" from their better situated neighbors. Wild game is also drawn upon so far as their very crude methods permit. They are quite indiscriminate in their choice of animals, eating snakes, monkeys, and any other creature that falls in their way. They derive, however, only a most uncertain and meagre supply of food from this source, and when a windfall does occur they proceed to devour immoderate quantities, until famine again threatens. As Miss Kingsley puts it: "The gorge they go in, for after a successful elephant hunt is a thing to see—once".[1]

Some tribes, of a more settled and peaceable character, such as were the Whydahs previous to their conquest by Dahomey, keep small stocks of goats and poultry. But these are apt to be so limited in supply, that they are reserved for special occasions. On the whole, it seems that flesh diet is largely a matter of haphazard.

Their method of "drying" fish is to lay them out in the sun, where they dry up a little, and quickly begin to putrefy. Miss Kingsley says that meat is often "just hung up in the smoke of the fires, which hardens it, blackening the outside quickly, but when the lumps are taken out of the smoke, in a short time cracks occur in them, and the interior part proceeds to go bad, and needless to say maggoty".[2] Nowhere do the natives make any distinction between the flesh of animals properly slaughtered and of those which have died of disease. They eagerly fall upon the carcass of a hippopotamus, which has been dead for days and lying under the torrid sun.

[1] "Travels it West Africa", p. 211.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 210. See also MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

A summary of this phase of our subject, may be quoted in the words of Miss Kingsley:

"The food supply consists of plantain, yam, koko, sweet potatoes, maize, pumpkin, pineapple, and ochres, fish both wet and smoked—and flesh of many kinds—including human in certain districts, and snails and snakes, crayfish, and big maggot-like pupae of the rhinoceros beetle and the *Rhyncophorus palmatorum*. For sweetmeats the sugar-cane abounds, but it is only used chewed *au naturel*. . . . . Out of all this varied material the natives of the Congo Français forests produce dirtily, carelessly, and wastefully a dull indigestible diet." [1]

Next we may consider the character of their houses and furniture. During the pouring rains of the wet season there is much need for a roof, while the nights are sometimes cool enough to make shelter comfortable to a scantily clothed people. But these needs can be met by simple construction with coarse materials.

The style of habitation varies with the locality. MacDonald describes the Gold Coast huts as made of bamboo splits or wattle work, tied securely to a double row of sticks planted all around the intended house-space, and having the interstices of several inches between the two rows filled with loose gravelly clay, thus forming thick impervious walls. The roof has gables, and is made of a frame-work of bamboo into which a thatch of leaves is laced.[2] Du Chaillu describes the huts in the equatorial region, as built of upright poles, to which broad strips of bark are lashed, and roofs of the same material added. Many tribes have round, conical shaped huts, thatched with grass or leaves. Waitz remarks that there is little variety in West African habitations. The difference between those of rich and poor, king and subject, is not one of size and elaboration, but merely of number, the rich having many huts for their

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 208.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.

many wives, and the poor having but one or two.[1] Not only the warmth of climate, but the great insecurity in which most of the tribes live, discourages any further architectural development.

Ordinarily a village consists of two rows of huts, lining the sides of a street. Here and there a town may be found, with two streets crossing at right angles, and a large public square at the intersection. Very rarely is the aggregation of houses and population large enough to be dignified with the title of city, as in the case of Coomassie, the capital of Ashanti. But the structure of the huts remains uniform throughout, with an exception in the case of royal "palaces," so called. Even in such cases, the palace is distinguished merely by slightly greater size, and by multiplication of rooms in the form of adjoining huts, the whole being sometimes enclosed in high walls. Such was the case with the residence of the King of Dahomey.

There is very little furniture. "In entering a hut," says Proyart, "you perceive a mat, which is the master's bed, his table, and his seat, some earthenware vessels, which constitute his kitchen tackle, some roots and fruits, which are his belly-provisions."[2] Sometimes one finds rude stools and benches. Miss Kingsley when travelling through the Ogowe River country, was usually compelled to choose for a bed between a long, low bench and the floor.[3] A wooden trough in which to beat up the manioc, an earthenware or iron pot, some calabashes

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 88. He says: "Der Arme und der Reiche unterscheiden sich in Rücksicht ihrer Wohnung meist nur dadurch, dass der eine mehrere, der andere wenigere solchen Hütten besitzt, der Anzahl seiner Weiber entsprechend, und selbst mit den Königen ist es oftderselbe Fall." This is corroborated by more recent writers on life in West Africa.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 566.

[3] For example, see her "Travels in West Africa", pp. 178–9.

(a species of large gourd), and, among some tribes, baskets, constitute the outfit of the average native home. Thus, their equipment in furniture and utensils is so meagre, that the West African housewife would be dumbfounded if introduced to even the limited equipment of an average Negro cabin in the United States.

The obtuseness and heedlessness of the Sudanese in all sanitary matters, and of the Bantus in many points, have long been the despair of European administrators. Speaking of the various causes of unhealthiness in Upper Guinea, Bosman says:

"The stench of this unwholsome mist is very much augmented by the Negroes' pernicious custom of laying their fish, for five or six days, to putrefy before they eat it, and their easing their bodies round their houses and all over their towns." [1]

MacDonald and others comment on the fact that they "build their villages without the least regard to situation or pleasantness." Their custom of burying their dead in the earthen floors of their own huts is one which the whites have found it extremely difficult to suppress. Among none of the true negro stocks, from Senegal to the Niger Delta, does there seem to be any appreciation of cleanliness or of the danger of unsanitary conditions.

But the Bantu tribes show some inclination to maintain cleanliness about their villages. The drying of fish, keeping of corpses for days after decomposition has set in, and other proceedings, very offensive to civilized noses, go on as everywhere, but the villages and individual huts are kept cleaner and neater than in Upper Guinea. Miss Kingsley gives "street cleaning" as one

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 382. All travellers in West Africa find it necessary very soon to accustom themselves to most noisome odors of many kinds, and to all sorts of revolting uncleanliness.

of the distinguishing characteristics of the Bantu peoples.[1]

In regard to clothing, two factors enter, not hitherto requiring mention, viz., the love of personal adornment and the sense of modesty. In the torrid zone clothes are worn not primarily to keep the body warm, but to adorn it and to meet the demands of decency. If warmth were the only consideration, most West Africans would never take the trouble to provide clothing at all. As it is, however, even the cannibal Fans and like tribes have some sort of meagre loin-cloth, a fringe of beaded cords suspended from the waist, or a small apron of leaves. How little this is for protection is shown by the fact that children, up to the age of about ten, run about naked. At the age of puberty, however, some covering is assumed, but usually no more than the loin-cloth, fastened around the hips and reaching down nearly or quite to the knees.[2]

Whether their modesty or their inordinate delight in self-decoration counts the more as a motive in this, it would be hard to determine. Waitz, indeed, declares unhesitatingly that modesty for the most part figures far less than vanity (Eitelkeit) among the negroes.[3] For this opinion there is much evidence. Innumerable instances like the following might be given. Du Chaillu says of the M'Pongwe women :

[1] See her " West African studies ", p. 425.

[2] The best way in which to get a notion of the costumes worn in West Africa, is to examine the illustrations in the books of Miss Kingsley, Du Chaillu, and MacDonald.

[3] He says : " Die Schamhaftigkeit ist est freilich meist weit weniger als die Eitelkeit und die Liebe zum Putze, die den Neger hierbei bestimmt. Die Putzsucht und Prachtliebe ist überhaupt eine seiner hervorstechendsten Eigenschaften." See the " Anthropologie ", ii, p, 87.

"On their bare arms and legs they delight to wear great numbers of brass rings, often bearing from twenty-five to thirty pounds of brass on each ankle in this way. This ridiculous vanity greatly obstructs their locomotion, and makes their walk a clumsy waddle." [1]

Bright cotton cloths, beads, looking-glasses, gaudy umbrellas, silk hats and a variety of such incongruous, but to the African very ornamental, articles are the main stock in trade of European traders there.[2] So strong is the motive here exemplified, that it has brought about considerable industry among many tribes, which never could have been persuaded to work otherwise.

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 33.

[2] An invoice of goods given by Atkins, in his "Voyage to Guinea", pp. 160–1, includes all such articles as those mentioned in the text. See, also, an extensive and amusing list given by Matthews, in his "Voyage to Sierra Leone", (1788), p. 144.

CHAPTER IV.

WEST AFRICAN RELIGION.

Religious beliefs and practices in West Africa are not altogether uniform, though in essentials there are few variations. Most of the statements of earlier writers are too unsystematic and superficial to convey a correct understanding of the subject. Fortunately, however, the recent careful and thorough studies by Ellis, of the Upper Guinea peoples, and by Miss Kingsley of the Lower Guinea tribes, supply the requisite knowledge. Taking these as a basis, the observations scattered through the older authors may supply illustration and corroboration at many points.

The religion of the tribes of Senegambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia has been so modified by Mohammedan and Christian influences, that it is hardly worth while to pause long over it. The Wolofs, Felups, and other groups in Senegambia, or in the country south of it, have long been subject to a growing influx and intermixture of peoples from the interior, chiefly the Mandingans. They are in reality border tribes, situated between Negro-land proper on the south, and Moorish countries on the north and northeast. They came earliest under European influence. Thus it has come about, as Keane puts it, that most of them

"profess themselves Muhammadans, the rest Catholics, while all alike are heathen at heart; only the former have charms with texts from the Koran which they cannot read, and the latter medals and scapulars of the 'Seven Dolours' or of the Trinity, which they cannot understand."[1] He adds further that "Many old rites still flourish, the household gods are not forgotten, and for the lizard, most popular of tutelar deities, the customary milk-bowl is daily replenished."

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 45,

Among the Felups there is some notion of a superhuman being, "vaguely identified with the sky, the rain, the wind, or thunder-storm." Everywhere the medicine man is feared, courted, but inwardly detested. In Sierra Leone and Liberia are found similar hybrid religions of peculiar and confusing character. The original heathen beliefs persistently survive, as shown, for example, by the universal use of "gree-gree bags," or charms. Miss Kingsley states that she never saw a native there "in national costume without some, both around his neck, and around his leg, just under the knee."[1] These charms are supplied for a substantial consideration, by the medicine men or priests.

Such then, very briefly, is the religion of this region. But as the influence of two great religions, alien to that of the natives, has been at work for several centuries, we may infer that at the beginning of slave-trading times the religion was similar to what is found among the Guinea negroes further south.

Ellis is of the opinion that among the Tshi, the Ewe, and the Yoruba-speaking peoples the rate of development has not been uniform, but that it has been somewhat greater in the east among the Ewes and Yorubas than in the west among the Tshis. This he attributes to the open character of the easterly countries, permitting easier intercourse and exchange of ideas. The Tshis of the Gold Coast have always lived in isolated villages, separated by dense forests. But as one goes eastward the forests dwindle, and the obstacles to overland travel are reduced.[2]

This greater freedom of communication seems to have promoted especially unification and higher organization

[1] "Travels in West Africa", p. 19.

[2] See his "Tshi-speaking peoples", pp. 8–9.

of religious beliefs and practices. While the religions of all rest upon the same foundation, and in outcome are practically the same, yet in passing from west to east an advance is observed in fusing insignificant local gods into greater gods of more extensive reach and power while the priesthood in the west is found to be more organized, until among the Yorubas it is a compact and powerful order, having a large share in government. The root of all West African religion, however, from the Gold Coast to the lower Congo, is the same, and may now be explained once for all.

So admirable is the brief summary given by Ellis that we cannot do better than to take it as a starting point. It is as follows :—

"Partly through dreams, and partly through the condition of man during sleep, trances, and state of syncope, the Tshi-speaking negro has arrived at the conclusions—

1. That he has a second individuality, an in-dwelling spirit residing in his body. He calls this a '*kra*.'

2. That he himself will, after death, continue his present existence in a ghostly shape. That he will become, in short, the ghost of himself, which he calls a '*srahman*.'

No. 1 has been very frequently confounded with No. 2, though they are essentially distinct. The kra existed before the birth of the man, probably as the successive kra of a long series of men, and after his death it will equally continue its independent career, either by entering a new-born human body, or by wandering about the world as a '*sisa*', *i. e.*, a kra without a tenement. The general idea is that the sisa always seeks to return to a human body, and become again a kra, even taking advantage of the temporary absence of a kra from its tenement to usurp its place. Hence it is that any involuntary convulsion, such as a sneeze, which is believed to indicate that the kra is leaving the body, is always followed by wishes of good health. Usually it only quits it during sleep, and the occurrences in dreams are believed to be the adventures of the kra during its absence. The srahman, or ghost-man, only commences his career when the corporeal man dies, and he simply continues to exist in the ghost-world or land of dead men. There are, therefore, in one sense three individualities to be considered, (1) the man, (2) the in-dwelling spirit, or kra, and (3) the ghost or srahman, though in another sense the last is only a continuation of the first in shadowy form." [1]

[1] "The Ewe-speaking peoples", pp. 15–16.

Having once conceived these ideas, the natives of West Africa assisted by the medicine men and priests follow them to their logical consequences. All the amazing practices that so dumbfound the foreign visitor, all the apparently silly and inconsequential notions and customs, are in reality the outcome of apparently necessary inferences from their premises. Miss Kingsley says:

"It may seem a paradox to say of people who are always seeing visions that they are not visionaries, but they are not. . . . He is not a dreamer nor a doubter; everything is real, very real, horribly real to him." [1]

If men have their ghosts, then animals must have theirs, and plants, and even inanimate objects, such as weapons and clothes. Therefore, "acting logically upon this belief, he releases these ghosts, or souls, from their material parts, for the ghost-men in Dead-land".[2] Thus, at the death of the head of the house, more particularly if he be wealthy or of royal family, wives and slaves are killed, that there may be companionship and service for the deceased in Dead-land. In the case of poorer men, these things are done on a scale proportioned to their status. At the death of a king of Ashanti hecatombs of victims die to furnish a suitable retinue for the royal ghost. When King Kwamina died about the year 1800, the funeral ceremonies were repeated weekly for three months, and on each occasion two hundred slaves were slain. At the funeral of the mother of Tutu Kwamina in 1816 three thousand victims died.[3]

The funeral obsequies over a deceased king are called "The Grand Custom," but in addition to these there are the "Annual Customs," when the honors due

[1] "West African studies", p. 124.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 17.
[3] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 164.

to the dead are again celebrated in less costly style. During the reign of Bossa Ahadee, King of Dahomey, Robert Norris witnessed one of these periodical celebrations. He says:

"The court was engaged in the celebration of a grand festival, which continues several weeks, and is called the 'annual customs', when the king waters the graves of his ancestors with the blood of many human victims." [1]

He then gives an account of what he saw—a revolting picture of horrible bloodshed. He relates also how, on the death of a king, all is confusion, and how the wives fall to killing each other that their spirits may accompany the king. When Bossa Ahadee died after a long reign, "two hundred and eighty-five of the women in the palace had been murdered, before the announcement of a royal successor to the throne could take place." [2] The same thing on a smaller scale occurs when men of less distinction die. Even where a man is so poor as to have no wives or slaves a goat and some fowls will be killed at his grave. Everything the deceased valued, his weapons, his ornaments, his trophies, together with a stock of provisions, are buried with him. Ellis says in this way no small portion of their wealth disappears continually, the loss at the burial of a single distinguished person running up to many hundred dollars.

Since every object in nature has its kra, the various occurrences, that take place in connection with it, must in the absence of other explanation, be attributed to its miserable spirit.

"Some day a man falls into a river and is drowned. The body is recovered, and is found to present no external injury which in the experience of man would account for death. What then caused the death? asks the negro. Water, alone, is harmless; he drinks it daily,

[1] "Bossa Ahadee, etc.", *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[2] *Idem.*, pp. 129–30.

washes in it, uses it for a variety of purposes. He decides, therefore, that water did not cause the death of the man, and having an entity, a spiritual being, ready at hand to whom to attribute the disaster, he concludes that the river's kra, its indwelling spirit, killed the man." [1]

When a bolt of lightning kills someone or sets fire to a house, when a tornado tears through the village, or a pestilence silently destroys it, in short, when anything unusual happens, the native's instant explanation is that some spirit did it.

So literally true is this that the Guinea negroes have no conception of "natural death" or of "accident." All diseases, deaths, or bodily injuries, are supposed to have been caused by man or by some spirit. The distinction between deliberately intended injury to another's person or property and a purely accidental one is not recognized. And so these untaught people go through life dominated at every step by the belief that every success or misfortune is solely due to the mysterious operation of unseen personal agencies.

Inasmuch as men's afflictions make a more lasting impression than their satisfactions, and as the West African's environment is one filled with imposing and dangerous natural phenomena, to him it seems that the malignant ill-disposed spirits are vastly in the majority. Hence, he must propitiate them; he must flatter them; appease their avarice; atone for any insult to them; and thereby keep them complacent toward himself. Out of this there has arisen much ceremonial, a priesthood, the use of charms, and—most costly delusion of all—witchcraft.

Quite distinct from offerings made to the ghosts of deceased persons are those made to the fetish spirits. The former provide for the comfort and satisfaction of

[1] "Ewe-speaking peoples", pp. 21–2.

the departed ones, but the latter are intended to win the good will of the kras of ocean and river, wind and lightning. A few concrete instances will reveal clearly this deeply ingrained belief and habit of the people.

Du Chaillu gives the following typical example of the way in which disease is dealt with:

"The Camma theory of disease is that Okamboo (the devil) has got into the sick man. Now this devil is only to be driven out with noise, and accordingly they surround the sick man and beat drums and kettles close to his head; fire off guns close to his ears, sing, shout, and dance all they can. This lasts till the poor fellow either dies or is better." [1]

This is the universal West African method of treating sickness. When it fails (and of course it is well calculated to fail) it is felt that the disease-god has triumphed, and so great is the fear engendered thereby, that it is very common for the entire village to move away. Frequently this is done several times within a year.

Ellis says:

"In time of peace, human victims are sacrificed to the gods whenever their assistance is required in any matter of importance. For ordinary affairs fowls, sheep, or bullocks are sacrificed, there being a regularly ascending scale of sacrifice, according to the urgency of the need of protection or assistance, which culminates in the highest and most costly sacrifice of all, that of a human life." [2]

Not merely, however, are offerings made thus in anticipation, but subsequently in case of success they are repeated as thank-offerings; in case of failure, still they are repeated to mollify the anger of the gods. Snelgrave witnessed in Dahomey the slaughter of four hundred captives in honor of a victory over a neighboring enemy, by which "above eighteen hundred captives

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 282.

[2] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 170.

had been taken and brought to the capital ".[1] He tells further how

"The king at the time we were present, ordered the captives of Tussoe to be brought into the court; which being accordingly done, he chose himself a great number out of them to be sacrificed to his fetiche or guardian angel, the others being kept for slaves for his own use or to be sold to the Europeans."

Human sacrifices, however, are not equally common throughout West Africa, for while they are extremely frequent in Upper Guinea, they are comparatively rare in Lower Guinea. In the latter region Miss Kingsley tells us that the value of the sacrifice is proportioned to the favor desired:

"Some favors are worth a dish of plantains, some a fowl, some a goat, and some a human being, though human sacrifice is very rare in the Congo Français, the killing of people being nine times in ten a witchcraft palaver." [2]

To deal with the world of spirits a special class of men exists, variously called medicine men, witch-doctors, or priests. They are the professional experts, well versed in mysterious ways of reaching the spirits, and mediating directly with them. Among the Ewes and Yorubas the original multitude of individual spirits have become fused into type-gods, *i. e.*, instead of every stream having its own particular kra, there is one god of all streams; instead of every tree having an indwelling spirit, there is a god of the forest, and so on. Along with this there has been a parallel development as to those who negotiate with the gods. Among the Tshis all the priests profess to handle all matters indifferently, be it a case of illness, drowning, or any other misfortune. But among the Ewes and Yorubas the priesthood is an organized body, differentiated into those who serve *Wu*,

[1] "A new account of Guinea", by Capt. Wm. Snelgrave, London, 1734, p. 37.

[2] "Travels in West Africa", p. 451.

the god of the ocean, those who serve *Mawu*, the god of the weather, etc. The priests of *Wu* dare not trespass upon the special sphere of the priests of *Mawu*, and so a native goes to one or the other according to the nature of his trouble. There are also priestesses who serve the phallic deities, and whose chief business is prostitution. "Properly speaking", says Ellis, "their libertinage should be confined to the male worshippers at the temple of the god, but practically it is indiscriminate. Children born from such unions belong to the god."

From the humbler medicine men, found in every village, up to the compactly organized and powerful priesthood of Dahomey, the functions of all are essentially alike, *i. e.*, to cure disease by driving out the evil spirit, to fend off threatening calamity by appeasing the wrath of an offended deity, to secure victory in war, good harvests, good catches of fish, to detect witches and direct their proper execution, etc. Priests are present and officiate invariably at every birth, marriage, and death, they conduct the annual festivals, and set the dates for them; in short, nothing in West African affairs can proceed safely or prosperously without their ceaseless intervention.[1]

Another inference made by the native from his belief in kras, is that his priest can attract certain good spirits into little objects, which may then be worn on the person or hung in the hut, and thus afford protection against the manifold ills that flesh is heir to. Wherever travellers have penetrated Africa, the natives are

[1] For fuller details as to the priesthood, see Ellis, in "The Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 119, and "The Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 139; Kingsley in "West African studies", p. 168, *et seq.*; and Waitz in his "Anthropologie", ii, p. 196, *et seq.*

found to believe implicitly in the efficacy of "gree-grees" or charms. Anything serves for the purpose, antelope horns, snail shells, nut shells, so long as some priest has properly doctored them. Into these are put "all manner of nastiness, usually on the seacoast a large percentage of fowl-dung."[1] Countless instances might be given of the eager desire for good charms; one may be cited from Du Chaillu:

"I noticed that they very carefully saved the brain [of the gorilla he had shot], and was told that charms were made of this—charms of two kinds. Prepared in one way, the charm gave the wearer a strong hand for the hunt, and in another it gave him success with women."[2]

On a large scale they have charms to protect a plantation or village, not alone from unseen powers, but from thieves, human or brute. As Miss Kingsley says:

"Charms are not all worn upon the body, some go to the plantations and are hung there, ensuring an unhappy and swift end for the thief who comes stealing. Some are hung round the bows of the canoe, others over the doorway of the house to prevent evil spirits from coming in—a sort of tame watch-dog spirits."[3]

Norris tells that, when the Dahomian invading army was about to make the passage of a river, which could easily have been defended, "the infatuated Whydahs contented themselves with placing the fetiche stake in the path to oppose the oncoming army."[4] It was disregarded in this case, and the Whydahs were ruined with fire and spear. In smaller affairs, however, so absolute is the faith of the negroes in the power of these charms, and such is their dread of them, that any house or plantation known to have a charm of the proper kind in charge of it, is seldom molested by thieves or petty

[1] Kingsley, "Travels, etc.", p. 446.
[2] "Equatorial Africa", p. 101.
[3] "Travels in West Africa", p. 450.
[4] "Bossa Ahadee, etc.", p. 69.

marauders. Thus is their superstition strangely utilized for the protection of property.

But the feature of their primitive religion that strikes all civilized observers with the deepest horror and gloom is witchcraft. Writing in the early fifties, Du Chaillu said: "The greatest curse of the whole country is *aniemba*, sorcery, or witchcraft. . . . At least seventy-five per cent. of the deaths in all tribes are executions for supposed witchcraft."[1] He was again and again horrified and sickened by seeing poor wretches slain in tortures for this reason, while the utmost persuasions known to him were powerless to arrest the proceedings. Forty years later Miss Kingsley adds her testimony in these emphatic words: "The belief in witchcraft is the cause of more African deaths than anything else. It has killed and still kills more men and women than the slave trade."[2] Under its terrible infatuation whole villages have been known actually to dwindle and disappear through executions of members in a frenzy of superstitious terror.

To the West African a witch is a man or woman who has somehow obtained control of evil spirits, and is using this agency to cause disease, ill-luck, or even death amongst fellow-tribesmen. To raise the suspicion of witchcraft is fatally easy, but for the accused to disprove it, is well-nigh impossible; hence the condition of affairs so well described for us by Miss Kingsley:

"At almost every death a suspicion of witchcraft arises. The witch-doctor is called in, and proceeds to find out the guilty person. Then woe to the unpopular men, the weak women, and the slaves, for on some of them will fall the accusation that means ordeal by poison or fire, followed, if these point to guilt, as from their nature they usually do, by a terrible death: slow roasting alive—mutilation by degrees be-

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 386.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

fore the throat is mercifully cut—tying to stakes at low tide that the high tide may come and drown—and any other death human ingenuity and hate can devise." [1] She adds later: "I have seen mild gentle men and women turned by it, in a moment, to incarnate fiends, ready to rend and destroy those who a second before were nearest and dearest to them. Terrible is the fear that falls like a spell upon a village when a big man, or big woman is just known to be dead. The very men catch their breaths, and grow gray around the lips, and then every one, particularly those belonging to the household of the deceased, goes in for the most demonstrative exhibition of grief. Long, long howls creep up out of the first silence—those blood-curdling, infinitely melancholy, wailing howls—once heard, never to be forgotten."

Then the witch-doctor is hastily summoned, arrives looking mysterious and very wise, goes through certain ceremonies, and pronounces guilt. Instantly a frenzied mob rushes for the victim, and presently the death-roll again has been increased. There may be more than one victim, for any number may be accused of collusion.

To quote again from Du Chaillu, who saw scores of executions:

"As usual I heard a harrowing tale of witchcraft in the course of the day. Few weeks pass away in these unhappy villages without something of this kind happening. A poor fellow was singing a mournful song, seated on the ground in the village street, and on inquiring the cause of his grief, I was told that the chief of a village near his having died, and the magic Doctor having declared that five persons had bewitched him, the mother, sister and brother of the poor mourner had just been ruthlessly massacred by the excited people, and his own house and plantation burnt and laid waste." [2]

Such are the religious thought and belief of the West African natives, and some of the consequences flowing therefrom. On every side, and in every detail their lives are touched and influenced by these delusions. They attribute every misfortune to evil spirits, and for success in every move they rely upon friendly spirits. They sacrifice large portions of ill-spared goods, and even human blood is poured forth. Verily, to the Guinea

[1] "Travels in West Africa," p. 463.

[2] "Journey to Ashango-land," p. 110.

Negro his religion is no sham or mockery, but the most vividly real and oppressive fact conceivable.

"In every action of his daily life he shows you how he lives with a great, powerful spirit world around him. You will see him before starting out to hunt or fight, rubbing medicine into his weapons to strengthen the spirits within them, talking to them the while; telling them what care he has taken of them, reminding them of the gifts he has given them, though those gifts were hard for him to give, and begging them in the hour of his dire necessity not to fail him."[1]

Yet, in spite of this, his religion has nothing to do with his social morality. It tends to control his conduct toward the gods, but not his conduct toward fellow men. This is a fact of the first importance.

Ellis tells us that in West Africa:

"Religion is not in any way allied with moral ideas," and that the only sins, properly speaking, are "first, insults offered to the gods; secondly, neglect of the gods."[2] And as he says further, 'Murder, theft, and all offenses against the person or against property, are matters in which the gods have no immediate concern, and in which they take no interest, except in the case when, bribed by a valuable offering, they take up the quarrel in the interests of some faithful worshipper. . . . . The most atrocious crimes, committed as between man and man, the gods can view with equanimity. These are man's concerns, and must be rectified or punished by man."

Thus the African's code of behavior toward the gods is a matter quite aside from considerations of social morality, and conversely his religion has nothing to do with relations to men.

In reality the West African's religion is simply his science of nature. Civilized peoples have for the most part differentiated their religion from their science. They have certain entities called "forces of nature", which sufficiently explain all natural phenomena. But the conception of an impersonal force, such as gravity or electricity, is utterly foreign to the Negro's mind.

[1] Kingsley, "West African studies," p. 130.

[2] "Tshi-speaking peoples," pp. 10–11. See also the statements of Waitz in his "Anthropologie," ii, pp. 190–1.

Anything that is done must have required the volition of a being, visible or invisible. Hence his multitude of spirits, and his methods of dealing with them. Whereas we have life-saving stations along the sea-coast, a weather bureau, and boards of health, the African casts human beings into the sea, offers sacrifices so that the medicine man may predict or bring good weather, and buys charms to protect him from disease. His purpose is the same as ours, but his science is false, and his expenditure futile. With us it is partly the role of religion to control conduct toward our fellow men ; with the African it is to guide him safely through the multitudinous dangers of life arising from the hostile action of countless unseen spirits.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL LIFE AND ORGANIZATION.

We shall next consider the institution of marriage and the family, the ceremonials attending various significant events in the life of the individual, and the attitude of individuals toward their fellowmen.

The fundamental fact which determines the social position of women, is that they are property, owned by the men precisely as are slaves or material goods. Upon this fact rests every custom regulating their existence. Women are bought and sold, their virginity is valued solely as a marketable commodity, adultery is simply trespass upon the husband's property rights, seduction or rape is a violence to the parents' property in daughters, and wifehood is but enslavement to the husband's will. Of course, many artful and strong-minded wives manage to get their own way with weaker spirited husbands up to a certain degree. Miss Kingsley remarks on this in her usual vein: "Many a time have I seen a lady stand in the street and let her husband know what she thought of him, in a way that reminded me of some London "slum scenes."[1] But in times of real domestic crisis the husband is apt to reassert his rights in ways more forcible than delicate, and in so doing he is supported by public opinion, including that of other wives in the community.

Polygamy prevails universally, and so deeply rooted is it in the whole social fabric that missionaries have found it scarcely possible to bring over their converts to monogamy. "Polygamy," says Miss Kingsley, "is the

[1] "Travels, etc.", p. 225.

institution, which above all others, governs the daily life of the native. . ."[1] The more wives a man has the more wealthy and distinguished he is, and the greater is his labor-supply. A reason everywhere assigned for plurality of wives is the existence of a custom which forbids a wife to receive her husband during pregnancy or while she is suckling a child, this being continued until the child is two or three years old.[2] While this custom could not have given rise to polygamy, being evidently a concomitant development, yet once established it now operates powerfully against the decline or abolition of that institution.

Nor must it be supposed that the women dislike polygamy. They are only too well satisfied with it, the missionaries find, and resist monagamy with discouraging vehemence. The more wives, the less work for each, say they. Furthermore, there is social distinction in being the wife of a man who has twenty other wives, and such a woman looks down with contempt upon her lower class sisters, who share conjugal rights with only three or four co-wives. Little friction seems to arise among these plural wives. In explanation of this fact, however, Ellis says: "No jealousy prevails among the women, because their affection, if they have any for their lord and master, is quite passionless, and borders on indifference."[3] Waitz thinks that another reason for the absence of domestic disorders is seen in the fact that there is always a head-wife, to whom all the rest are subordinated, and whom in the absence of the husband

[1] "Travels, etc.", p. 212.

[2] Ellis, "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 206; Kingsley, "Travels, etc.", p. 212.

[3] "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 207.

they obey.[1] The custom which requires the husband to live for a time with each wife in succession in her own hut, also furthers the maintenance of peace and conjugal fidelity.

Adultery among these people can only be defined, says Ellis, "as intercourse with a married woman without the consent of her husband, for the men can and do lend their wives, and the latter do not seem to have the right to refuse compliance."[2] Many times was Du Chaillu embarrassed by the earnest proffer of wives by chiefs along the route of his journeys, this being done in strict accordance with their rules of hospitality. He relates how on one occasion his friend, Quengueza, in a fit of generosity, unable to prevail upon his distinguished guest to accept a wife during the time of his visit, actually turned over all his wives to Du Chaillu's men, and they by no means had their white employer's scruples.[3] Nor did the wives on such occasions feel any other sentiment than a kind of chagrin at their rejection by the white guest, his explanation being wholly beyond their understanding.

In fact, these peoples have no conception of chastity as a virtue in itself considered. Ellis says:

"An unmarried girl is expected to be chaste because virginity possesses a marketable value, and if she were to be unchaste her parents would receive little or perhaps no head-money for her. . . . A man who seduces a virgin must marry her, or, if her parents will not consent to the marriage, must pay the amount of the head-money. In the latter case, her market value having been received, any excesses she may commit are regarded as of no consequence."[4]

In purchasing wives the substance of the transaction is everywhere the same. On the Gold Coast, for in-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 110.

[2] "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 202.

[3] "Journey to Ashango-land", p. 76.

[4] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 286.

stance, the fact of purchase is veiled under a form of present giving. According to MacDonald, when a young man desires a girl for his wife, he makes known his wish to her parents. If they agree she is given to him. But the man must then give a number of "presents," so-called, to the parents. In Sierra Leone, three cows and a sheep, or their equivalent, are expected.[1] Further south, where there are no cattle, the presents consist of various articles such as decorative ornaments, weapons, provisions, etc. As a general thing, however, wives are secured by purchase outright, accompanied, in many cases, by all the higgling of the market, though custom usually fixes a rough average price. Thus a man may have as many wives as he can pay for and look after. Ordinarily there are from two or three up to ten or fifteen, except in the case of a big chief or king, who is likely to have scores of them. The king of Ashanti counted his wives by the hundred, and in the court of Dahomey there were several thousand.

According to the native code of morality it is only the wife who can commit adultery, the husband being at liberty to do as he pleases. The adultery of a wife is punished with varying severity, from the infliction of a beating (most common among the masses), up to expulsion and death. The latter is rare, and only occurs among those of rank and wealth. Frequently the nose or a hand is cut off.[2] The paramour is punished by having to pay a fine, or if the wife belongs to a distinguished chief, is liable to death. If unable to pay a fine, the culprit may be sold as a slave in order to raise

[1] Waitz, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[2] *Idem*, p. 115. He says: "Da die Frau durch die Ehe ganz Eigenthum, ein Vermögenstheil des Mannes wird, ist die Ansicht natürlich dass nur sie, nicht aber der Mann strafbaren Ehebruch begehen kann."

the amount. Hence has risen a curious practice, which still further illustrates the laxity of West African notions. "Many husbands," says Ellis, "encourage frailty on the part of their wives, hoping to profit by the sums they may be able to exact from their paramours." [1] This practice extends throughout all West Africa, and is quite common. Women of the royal family in Ashanti and Dahomey are permitted to intrigue with men of fine physique, "in order that their kings may be of commanding presence." Miss Kingsley states that among the Bantus the laws against adultery are severe, but their enforcement is lax.[2]

Clearly, then, sexual purity among the Guinea natives does not rest upon any regard for chastity as such, but merely upon property ownership. The man must be compensated for any liberties taken with his wives or daughters. This done, the matter is ended. The student of West African life finds in the writings on this subject abundant evidence, which need not be repeated here, that very little restraint of the sexual proclivities is exercised. Indulgence commences at an early age, and continues thereafter with but little impediment.

For this state of things there is probably a good reason. The mortality in West Africa is frightful. Wars, slave-raids, executions for witchcraft, pestilence, famine, ignorance and neglect in the care of young children, etc., all combine to make the annual drain upon population by untimely death an appalling percentage. To maintain existence there must be a proportionately high birth-rate. For hundreds of generations therefore, those tribes among whom fertility was greater have tended to sur-

[1] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 286. See also Waitz, *op. cit.* p. 114.

[2] "Travels in West Africa", p. 497.

vive in the ceaseless rivalry with those less characterized by such traits. It seems likely, therefore, that selection has developed in the race exceptionally strong reproductive powers.

Herein seems to lie an explanation of certain problems of morality, which are to-day the despair of well-wishers of the negroes. It has surprised some that the negroes thrive and multiply, wherever transplanted within warm climates, in spite of close contact with superior civilization—an experience that seems fatal to most other races of low culture. If strong sex instincts and great fecundity were essential under African conditions to the preservation of race, it is only to be expected that these traits should prove excessively developed when civilized conditions of life are substituted. In questions of race preservation the issues are so vital that Nature is not to be turned hither and thither even at the demand of civilizing reformers.

The family relations are those usually obtaining among peoples of very backward development. The father and his children are bound by very weak and uncertain ties, while the mother's affection, though much stronger, declines as the children reach full maturity and independence. The description given by Bosman of the way children are brought up in West Africa, is possibly a little strong in coloring, but in the main accords with the general idea conveyed by all other writers that touch upon the matter. He says :

"Let us see how they educate their children, with whom the men never trouble themselves in the least, nor the women much, indeed : the mother gives the infant suck for two or three years, which over, and they are able to go, then it is—turn out, brats ; if it be hungry she gives it a piece of dry bread, and sends it abroad wherever it pleases, either to the market, or to the sea-side to learn to swim, or anywhere else. Nobody looks after it, nor is it anybody's business to

hinder its progress. These children are as well contented with dry bread as ours with all manner of delicacies; they neither think of nor know any delicacies, nor are their mothers troubled with them, but do their business undisturbed; when, on the other hand, if our children can but go alone we are continually perplexed with thousands of fears of some or other accidents befalling them." [1]

The contrast here drawn between the easy-going indifference of African parents and the constant sense of care and solicitude on the part of civilized parents reveals a most significant fact.

There is one singular and striking exception, however, to the general absence of deep affections between family relatives; that is the mutual love of mother and son. This by comparison with all other ties is, as Miss Kingsley states, a strong and enduring one. Either will support the other as long as able to do so. No explanation of this anomaly is vouchsafed. The Rev. Leighton Wilson says:

"Whatever other estimate we may form of the African we may not doubt his love for his mother. . . . He flies to her in the hour of distress, for he well knows that if all the rest of the world turn against him she will be steadfast in her love, whether he be right or wrong." [2]

Miss Kingsley cites this, too, with approval.[3]

The bearing of children involves little inconvenience or deviation from routine daily life. A few hours after her child has been born, the mother usually goes to the nearest water to bathe. It is a custom widely prevalent in West Africa, that children born with teeth already cut, or twins, are thrown into the bush to die. In some parts the mother of twins is driven out to perish in the jungle. When a mother dies, Miss Kingsley tells us that "very young children they do not attempt to keep, but throw them away in the bush

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 388. See also MacDonald, p. 39, and Waitz, pp. 122–3.
[2] "Western Africa," p. 116.
[3] "West African studies," p. 373.

alive, as all children are thrown, who have not arrived in this world in the way considered orthodox."[1] Du Chaillu somewhere tells of coming across the emaciated body of a young woman in the forest, who, it was explained, had been driven out from her village for some superstitious reason.

Among the Bantu tribes, the practice prevails of

"helping the old and useless members of the village out of this world by a tap on the head; their bodies are then carefully smoke-dried, afterwards pulverized, then formed into small balls by the addition of water, in which Indian corn has been boiled for hours; this mixture is allowed to dry in the sun or over fires, then put away for future use in the family stew."[2]

Lacking the cannibalistic feature, this practice of getting rid of burdensome individuals, is found everywhere, particularly in times of military stress or threatened famine. This holds true to less degree of rich families, since they are better able to sustain all of their members, yet even they are none too scrupulous under pressure.

Beyond the immediate family relations, the West African recognizes few obligations in control of conduct.

"The individual is supremely important to himself, and he values his friends and relations and so on, but abstract affection for humanity at large or belief in the sanctity of the lives of people with whom he is unrelated and unacquainted, the African barely possesses."[3]

Within his own village, persons and property are protected after a fashion by customs amounting to law, but beyond the village all such protection vanishes. A stranger is fair game, wherever met, unless it may be that his tribe is feared as a powerful and dangerous enemy. And even within the village circle, affliction

[1] "Travels, etc.", p. 471. See also appendices to the same, pp. 487, 538, 557.

[2] *Idem*, Appendix I, by M. De Cardi, pp. 565–6.

[3] Kingsley, "West African studies", p. 177.

and suffering rarely elicit any sentiments of pity or sympathetic benevolence.

Descriptions of West African life abound in illustrations of these characteristics. All travelers there find it necessary to guard portable articles very closely, or suffer certain loss. Speaking of the Slave Coast natives, Bosman said: "The Negroes of the Gold Coast are very thievish, but are not to be compared with these. They are acquainted with an hundred several ways of stealing, which would be too long to relate here. I shall only add that no person can provide against them."[1] And of the Lower Guinea natives, Miss Kingsley says that stealing is "a beloved pastime—a kind of game in which you only lose if you are found out."[2] Du Chaillu was frequently well nigh at his wits' end to prevent the steady disappearance of his goods, as they were being carried daily by native porters or canoe-men.

Deception is even more common than theft. Ellis sums up this matter well, when he says that they

> "rarely go straight towards the end they wish to attain, but seek to compass it by subterfuges and devious methods. Concealment of design is the first element of safety, and as this axiom has been consistently carried out for generations, the national character is strongly marked by duplicity. The negro lies habitually; and even in matters of little moment, or of absolute indifference, it is rare for him to speak the truth."[3]

Of the Lower Guinea people, Du Chaillu says: "Lying is thought an enviable accomplishment among all the tribes, and a more thorough and unhesitating liar than one of these negroes is not to be found anywhere."[4] Cheating in trade is universal and cannot be prevented. This is one of the most serious drawbacks to doing

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 482.
[2] "Travels, etc.", p. 312.
[3] "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 11.
[4] "Equatorial Africa", p. 437.

business with the natives. Bosman is moved often to speak of "the villainous rascality" met with in attempting to trade in Upper Guinea. The rubber brought down to the coast to sell throughout Lower Guinea is almost invariably adulterated. In a word, the natives do not understand any such thing as commercial morality, and so they instinctively seek every opportunity to get something for nothing by lying, stealing, cheating, browbeating, or adulterating. Yet it has been noted in many instances where the white man has firmly asserted an ascendency over a few personal attendants or employees, and followed every delinquency with swift and unerring discipline, that the natives, instead of becoming sullen and cunningly vindictive, came to have the greatest respect and attachment for him, and exhibited a fidelity to his interests never otherwise secured among West Africans. Du Chaillu found that as long as he was merely kind and considerate with his porters, they cared less for him and his fate than when he assumed an attitude of despotic power, asserted his will with decision, and brooked no dilly-dallying or deception, on pain of death on the spot. They then seemed to have a sort of pride in their master, boasted of the very qualities in him which compelled their obedience, and parted from him with sorrow at the end of a tour. It is always the strong-minded, uncompromising, governor or officer along the coast who becomes the most popular with the natives, and is most heartily sustained by their public opinion. Otherwise they are only contemptuous, and they cheat, steal and make trouble.

There is little regard for the life and freedom of those not members of the same village. We have seen how, even within the village itself, the lives of the weak are

very little valued. When it comes to outsiders, any excuse is good enough for making away with them. Traders from the interior bringing goods down to the coast are in ceaseless danger of their lives from the intervening tribes; and when robbery occurs no adverse witness is ever left alive.[1] The universality of the custom that the host should taste food and drink before offering it to a visitor, or the wife before giving to her husband, reveals in a startling manner the frequent use of poison. It has been said that "the most prevalent disease in the African bush comes out of the cooking pot," meaning that victuals are poisoned.[2] All this, and more besides, takes place in time of peace, and the horrors of their warfare well nigh surpass description.

To a European witness of native fighting, the destruction of life is appalling. Whole villages are swept out of existence, and their inhabitants either slain on the spot or reserved for sacrificial purposes or slavery. The march homeward of a victorious army or maurading party is, for the captives, an ordeal which words fail to picture. Several missionaries, who saw the return of the Ashanti army with its spoils of war, mostly prisoners, describe the scene as follows:

"The men, who were tied together in gangs of ten or fifteen by ropes round the neck, and presented a pitiable spectacle, were followed by the women, young and old, some with infants on their backs, and others leading little children by the hand, who crouched in terror at their mothers' sides, and were threatened and struck by the cruel spectators. On the day of their arrival fourteen Wassaw men were sacrificed at Bantama to the manes of the former kings of Ashanti." [3]

In another Ashanti war of conquest, as Ellis states,

[1] Kingsley, "Travels, etc.," p. 315.

[2] *Idem*, Appendix I, by De Cardi, p. 560.

[3] Ellis, "A history of the Gold Coast", p. 291.

thousands of men, women and children were slaughtered. The conquest of the Whydahs by the king of Dahomey did not mean their subjection as tributaries, but their utter extinction. The massacre continued for many days, and then large droves of them were driven to Dahomey to survive till such time as they were wanted for the sacrifice.[1] These conquests on a large organized scale are seen only in Upper Guinea, where are found the only strong consolidated kingdoms among West Africans. But among the scattered tribes of Lower Guinea, each including a few villages, an intermittent warfare consisting of forays, marauding expeditions or fights between small groups, goes on constantly.

We are prepared to believe that the African has almost no sensibility to suffering in others, nor compassion for them. Such refinements of the social spirit have never been developed among these peoples. Ellis thinks that their constant familiarity with bloody scenes of torture and death in connection with religious ceremonies or witchcraft executions, has rendered them exceptionally callous and pitiless in the presence of human agony and pain. The exhibition of sentiments of pity by white persons is a standing puzzle to them. After a description of some of the frightful cruelties practised upon war prisoners, Ellis tells that

"the Ashantis were much surprised that the missionaries should exhibit any emotion at such spectacles; and, on one occasion when they went to give food to some starving children, the guards angrily drove them back." [2] He adds further: "Nor is it to prisoners and aliens alone that such barbarity is exhibited by the northern tribes, for an equal indifference is shown to the sufferings of their own people. Servants or slaves, who may fall sick, are driven out

[1] Capt. Wm. Snelgrave, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–19.

[2] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 173.

into the bush to die or recover as best they may: and the infirm or helpless are invariably neglected, if not ill-treated. In the village of Abankoro the missionaries saw an orphan boy about five years old, who went about unnoticed and reduced to a skeleton. He was thus neglected because he could not speak, and was regarded as an idiot. He cried for joy when some food was given him, and the kindness of the missionaries to him astonished the people." [1]

Such incidents might be cited almost without end from the various accounts of West Africa.

The lowest level of unsocialized feeling and practice is seen in cannibalism, which once prevailed almost universally, but is now confined within certain tribes. It is noticeable that new arrivals upon the coast from the unknown and isolated interior regions, *e. g.*, the Fans and Dahomians, are cannibals. De Cardi says it was a common thing to see human flesh offered for sale among the natives of Old and New Calabar, before the practice was stamped out under British administration.[2] It survives in disguised forms here and there throughout Lower Guinea, but has practically disappeared in Upper Guinea outside Dahomey, and even there is declining under foreign influences.

It must be added in fairness that an impulsive kindness often lights up somewhat the gloomy picture. Occasionally is met an instance of deep and permanent affection, and sudden fits of benevolent good will are frequently seen, for the race is after all a good humored one when fear or cupidity are not aroused. The pages of Du Chaillu, Miss Kingsley, Livingstone, and others afford not a few examples of unexpected kindness and fidelity, but they also are full of stories of profuse protestations of love and good intention, afterwards wofully

[1] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 173.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 557–8. Miss Kingsley says that "sacrificial and ceremonial cannibalism is nearly universal."

belied by actions. Fickle and unstable, the moods of the West African are seldom to be trusted long. The attitude taken toward white aliens is hardly a good test, in any case, of the normal state of feeling among themselves.

Passing to the consideration of the more important occasions for social ceremonial, the first in point of importance and universality among the festivals is that of the "Yam Custom", celebrated every year as soon as the priests have pronounced the yams ripe. Yams are a dangerous food until thoroughly matured, hence the custom that none may eat them till the priests have word from the gods that they are ripe. Obviously this is in the nature of a sanitary law. When the restriction is removed, there is great rejoicing and a desire to celebrate the occasion. The ceremonies usually last a week, the priests officiate as principals, and the kings or chief men assist. Human sacrifices are certain to be offered, and this festival, says McDonald, "furnishes the opportunity for the wildest exhibitions of native license and passion. Theft, intrigue, and assault are all forgiven during the continuance of the feast." [1] This description of the Yam Custom, to judge from other accounts, is none too strong, for it seems to be everywhere a time when public opinion winks at anything, and the whole population gives itself up to an orgie of sensual indulgence.

At the "Annual Customs" the kings or chiefs of tribes do honor to the manes of their departed ancestors. [2] Again human sacrifices, proportioned in num-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 50. See also De Cardi, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

[2] See Ellis, "Ewe-speaking peoples", pp. 129, 168–9; also Kingsley, "West African studies", pp. 146–8.

ber to the wealth and power of the ruler, are in order, and offerings of food and valuables of all kinds are made besides. At this time tributary tribes, if there are any, are expected to send representatives to make fresh acknowledgements of submission, and bring tribute. Any cases for judicature, appealed to the king or head chief from lower officials, are brought forward and settled.

Besides these larger public festivals, there are lesser celebrations on the occasion of the three chief events in every individual life, birth, marriage, and death. Livngstone says that "the chief recreations of the natives of Angola are marriages and funerals."[1] These are times for gathering together in crowds and making an inconceivable hubbub. The African's love of noisy demonstration is alluded to frequently by all travelers in West Africa, sometimes good humoredly, but sometimes resignedly, as if they had been worn out with it. Miss Kingsley is moved to exclaim: "Woe to the man in Africa who cannot stand perpetual uproar! Few things have surprised me more than the rarity of silence and the intensity of it, when you do get it."[2] Du Chaillu was often tormented almost to distraction with the bedlam of noises kept up all night long.[3] Moonlit nights are a time for white people to avoid their villages, for then the whole population remains up till long after midnight, shouting, singing, dancing, and having an uproariously jolly time. MacDonald remarks, philosophically: "It is a

[1] "Travels in South Africa", p. 446.
[2] "West African studies", p. 62.
[3] "Equatorial Africa" pp. 134 and 237; "Ashango-land", p. 283.

part of West African nature; nothing can be done without noise." [1]

The ceremonies connected with birth, while showing local variations in details, in substance are everywhere the same. Ellis thus describes them:

"As soon as a woman discovers herself to be pregnant she offers sacrifice to the tutelary deity of the family, and a priestess binds charms about her wrists, ankles and neck, at the same time invoking the god to avert ill-fortune. . . . . During the act of parturition she remains seated on a country stool, surrounded by a number of female visitors, before whom it would be considered exceedingly disgraceful to utter any cry of impatience or pain. . . . The child, after having been washed, has charms bound round it to avert misfortune." [2]

The mother is considered unclean for a week afterwards, but at the expiration of that time she resumes ordinary life. At the end of three months she again makes offerings to the tutelary deity, and then dressed in her choicest ornaments and accompanied by a band of singing women, she visits her neighbors, and there is much rejoicing over her safe delivery.

"Eight days after the birth, the father of the new-born child proceeds with some of his friends to the house where the mother is, and they there seat themselves in a circle in front of the entrance. The child is then brought out and handed to the father, who returns thanks to the tutelary deity." [3]

Often he names the child at this time, but in some parts it is the priest who gives the name. Until very recently it was the custom in some tribes to bury a woman's tenth child alive, while the mother was obliged to isolate herself completely for a year.

A marriage ceremony is a still more elaborate affair. Marriageable age is determined solely by physical development, and is usually between the twelfth and four-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 227.
[2] "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 232.
[3] Ellis, "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 233

teenth years. At that age the girl is taken to the waterside and washed; offerings are made to the phallic gods, she is attired in the best that her family can afford or borrow, and accompanied by singing girls, is conducted through the village with all possible publicity. Thus her availability as a wife is fully advertised, and it is seldom that suitors are long to be waited for. A suitor having been accepted, he pays over the price agreed upon or sends presents, and the marriage takes place. In preparation for the marriage festival, the groom sends to the bride's home a stock of intoxicants (palm-wine usually), tobacco and pipes, as well as food for a feast. The coming event is heralded abroad with all possible noise and pomp. Finally the feast takes place and is shared in by all the relatives of both parties, "who keep up an orgie," as Ellis terms it, "for many hours." If the husband finds that his wife has been unchaste, and chooses to reject her, he may do so, and demand the return of all that he paid for her.[1]

Still more attractive than marriages in the eyes of the natives are funeral rites. There seems to be about such an occasion a morbid excitement and interest which is fascinating to the negroes. If the deceased person is of any consequence, the entire village takes part in the ceremonies attending the event. Miss Kingsley says:

"To provide a proper burial for the dead relation is the great duty of the negro's life, its only rival in his mind is the desire to have a burial of his own. But, in a good negro, this passion will go under before the other, and he will risk his very life to do it. He may know, surely and well, that killing slaves and women

[1] For marriage ceremonies see MacDonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–5; Ellis, "Tshi-speaking, etc.", pp. 234–7, "Ewe-speaking, etc.", pp. 155–7.

at a dead brother's grave means hanging for him, when their Big Consul hears of it, but in the Delta he will do it. On the Coast, Leeward and Windward, he will spend every penny he possesses, and on top, if need be, go and pawn himself, his wives, or his children into slavery to give a deceased relation a proper funeral." [1]

This willingness to reduce themselves to beggary, and even to slavery, rather than seem delinquent in furnishing a thoroughly stylish funeral to any member of the family, is a fact attested by all observers in West Africa.[2]

The natives find it very difficult to realize and admit the presence of death or to distinguish death from sleep or some form of temporary insensibility. The consequence is that, in spite of the warm humid climate, they unfailingly retain the corpse unburied until decomposition has proceeded so far as to give no possible escape from the conviction that death has occurred. If a person is dying or insensible from any suspicious cause, endeavors are made, by the most violent methods, to keep the spirit from leaving the body, or else to recall it.

"Pepper is forced up the nose and into the eyes. The mouth is propped open with a stick. The shredded fibres of the outside of the oil-nut are set alight and held under his nose, and the whole crowd of friends and relations, with whom the stifling hut is tightly packed, yell the dying man's name at the top of their voices, in a way that makes them hoarse for days, just as if they were calling to a person lost in the bush or to a person struggling and being torn or lured away from them. 'Hi? hi! don't you hear? Come back—come back? See here. This is your place', etc." [3]

As soon as it is certain that the person is dead, the ceremonies begin. They last from two or three to seven or eight days, according to local habit and the rank of the deceased. The family abstain from food as long as possible, but may drink as much as they like, and usually do drink immoderate quantities of palm

[1] "Travels, etc.", p. 491.

[2] See Livingston, *op. cit.*, p. 466, *et seq.*, and Ellis, "Ewe-speaking, etc.", pp. 161–2.

[3] Kingsley, "Travels, etc.", p. 471.

wine. They shave off the hair. Moanings and weird wailings proceed continually from the crowded hut, where the body, after being washed and dressed in full costume, ornaments and all, is propped up in a sitting posture on a stool, and receives the visits of numerous friends and relatives. They address the corpse again and again, reproaching the spirit for having gone away, and giving vent to the loudest lamentations. At intervals the hubbub is hushed, while some female relative offers food to the corpse, beseeching it to take and eat. All watch eagerly, and upon its failure to comply, the lamentations break out afresh. During all this there is a crowd outside as well, sitting about, smoking and talking. Presents to the visitors are always expected, and this renders the occasion very expensive to the family.

At last, when restoration to life is found hopeless, and due honors have been offered, the body is buried. The coffin is large enough to contain various articles valued during life, as well as food and drink. The grave is dug in the earthen floor of the hut itself, and there the coffin is lowered, the earth filled in, and all is smoothed over as before. While widely prevalent, this is not a universal custom, for Du Chaillu found that certain tribes in equatorial Africa had cemeteries at a little distance from the village, where the coffins were merely placed on the surface of the ground, never interred.[1] These native cemeteries present a gruesome spectacle. The custom of burying corpses under the floors of dwelling places is being strenuously put down by European administrators, but only with exceedingly great difficulty.[2]

[1] "Ashango-land, etc.", pp. 132–3. See also Kingsley, "Travels, etc." p. 481.

[2] MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

Some of the tribes, as for example, the Fans, have neither coffins nor graves for the reason that their corpses are disposed of as food. Where there are scruples against eating the body of a fellow-villager, it is sold to another village or exchanged for another body from elsewhere. In comparatively minor details there is much variety in funeral rites from one locality to another, and many of the customs are curious and interesting, but not germane to our present subject.

CHAPTER VI.

GOVERNMENT, LAW, AND MILITARY SYSTEM.

Political development in West Africa is on a par with the low stage attained in all other directions. The population, for the most part is in a thoroughly unintegrated condition politically, the largest units of government, with two exceptions, embracing only a few neighboring villages, united by ties of blood. Outside the states of Ashanti and Dahomey, the natives have not risen to the conception of holding conquered enemies as tributaries, thus building up large political units. The vanquished tribes are extinguished by slaughter or held as slaves.

Of the state of affairs in Lower Guinea, where the least governmental development is found, an excellent description in brief form is furnished by M. De Cardi :

"A tribe is composed of a king and a number of chiefs. Each chief has a certain number of petty chiefs under him. Perhaps a better definition of the latter would be, a number of men who own a few slaves and canoes of their own, and do an independent trade with the white men, but who pay to their chiefs from 20 to 25 per cent. as tribute. . . . This collection of petty chiefs with their chief forms what in Coast parlance is denominated a House." [1]

The head of "the house" usually lives in some central village; branch villages are under the immediate control of petty sub-chiefs. In many respects this organization is patriarchal, the semi-nomadic character of the people heightening the resemblance.[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, 475.

[2] Waitz says: "Bei den meisten Negervölkern zeigen die politischen Einrichtungen in mancher Hinsicht einen patriarchalischen Character." See his "Anthropologie". II, p. 127. Also Du Chaillu, "Equatorial Africa", p. 377.

The privilege and authority of the chief depend largely upon personal force or wealth. While the office is to a certain extent hereditary, "the right of succession vesting in the brother of the reigning chief or king," yet the heir must maintain his leadership, for should another of more force arise, the people may desert or grow restive. If a chief is strong-minded and shrewd, he may rule with a high hand, particularly when he secures the support of the priests or medicine men. The latter have much to do with all government in West Africa, and in many regions[1] are feared by both chiefs and subjects. There are scores of tribes where the chief is in close collusion with the priest, and together they have everything their own way, no common man daring for a moment to complain, much less resist.

There have not been wanting, however, instances of governments almost republican in form. Bosman describes one or two such existing in his day (latter half of the seventeenth century) along the Upper Guinea coast. He says:

"The government of Axim consists of two parts, the first whereof is the body of Carboceros, or chief men; the other the Manceros, or young men. All civil or public affairs which commonly occur are under their administration; but what concerns the whole land, and are properly national affairs, such as making peace or war, the raising of tributary impositions to be paid to foreign nations, that falls under the cognizance of both parts or members of the government; and on those occasions the Manceros manage with a superior hand, especially if the Carboceros are not very rich in gold and slaves, and consequently able by their wealth to bring over the other to their side." [2]

But the significance of these rare and small examples of

[1] For a good illustration, see the story of Ja Ja, King of Opobo, told by De Cardi, *op. cit.*, p. 528, *et seq.*

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 405.

primitive self-government is very slight. In population and importance, the single kingdom of Dahomey would far outweigh them all combined.

In the exceptional cases of Ashanti and Dahomey, are seen crudely developed states with tributary peoples. The kingdom of Ashanti consists of Coomassie, the district in which the conquering tribe lived, and a number of tributary provinces, divided in turn into sub-provinces of a few villages each. These are ruled by chiefs and sub-chiefs respectively, all of whom owe allegiance to the king at the capitol, Coomassie, and pay tribute to him. Ellis says:

"The power of the king is curbed by a council. . . . It is composed of the king, the queen-mother, the chiefs of Bekwae, Djuabin and Mampon, the general of the army, and a few of the principal chiefs of Coomassie. This council possesses absolute power, and rules the entire kingdom. In important matters the provincial chiefs of the second rank are summoned to Coomassie for consultation, but this is really a nominal concession, for the council is so much feared that no individual would venture to vote counter to its known wishes." [1]

The government is in reality an oligarchy, kept very exclusive, and without limits to its power over life and property. The people of the tributary provinces are often harshly treated.

Land is held under a crude feudal system. "The land of a tribe as a whole is attached to the stool [throne] of the king, and cannot be alienated from it." [2] By the king it is parcelled out among the chiefs, and by them in turn is allotted to the free men, the latter being obliged in return to answer every call to arms. Ellis says:

[1] "Tshi-speaking peoples", pp. 276–7.

[2] *Idem*, p. 298.

"The military organization is the same amongst all the Tshi-speaking peoples, the whole of the men capable of bearing arms being divided into town companies. The companies are under the direct command of the captains, whose office is hereditary and the captains owe direct allegiance to the chief of their district." [1]

Each soldier on the mobilization of the army is expected to provide his own commissariat.

Among the peoples next east of the Tshis, *i. e.*, the Ewes, political organization is much like that just described. But Dahomey is, in several respects, worthy of particular notice. It presents a case of unusually developed irresponsible despotism. Snelgrave and Norris tell us that the people there were cowed into abject servility.[2] Under foreign influence matters have improved, but formerly it was the theory that all property belonged absolutely and immediately to the king, who could at any time dispose of it as he chose. The person of the king was so sacred that he was regarded as a demi-god. "The king", says Norris, "never eats in public; it is even criminal to suppose that he ever eats, or that he is so much like other mortals as to want the refreshment of sleep." [3] In approaching him even his chief officers crawl on the ground and kiss the ground repeatedly. Every day in the year must show fresh bleeding heads at the entrance gates to the palace, in order to impress all with the power of the king. His revenue is largely derived from direct taxes and from imposts on trade, from numerous gifts always made by the chiefs and others at the festival of the Annual Custom, "when all the provincial chiefs, the head men

[1] "Tshi speaking peoples", p. 299.

[2] "New account of Guinea", ch. i; and "Bossa Ahadee", first section.

[3] "Bossa Ahadee", p. 105.

of villages, the heads of families, and traders, must attend at the capital and bring presents proportionate to their condition."[1] All prisoners of war belong to the king and are disposed of at his command; also the property of all persons condemned to death or slavery reverts to him. Yet these legitimate revenues do not suffice him, and every device is used to extort more from an unresisting people. For example, it being unlawful for any one to wear cloth of the particular kind worn by the king, he frequently comes out sudddenly in some style of cloth (supplied now by Europeans), which is being innocently worn by many subjects, whereupon they are seized and made to pay fines. In short, the King of Dahomey is a thorough-going despot, ruling without other limitation than the patience of an awed and spiritless people.

The Dahomian military system has interesting peculiarities. A standing army is maintained, consisting of two parts, a male corps, and a female corps, commonly known to Europeans as the "Amazons."[2] In case of need this force is supplemented by all males capable of bearing arms. The Amazons number nearly 3,000 and the male corps about 5,000, but when the entire available military force is called out it reaches 15,000 or 16,000. Dahomey women, accustomed to heavy work and hardship, make nearly as capable soldiers as the men. War is the chief pastime, as well as means of constantly recruiting the supply of victims for sacrifice and slaves. Whenever the king wishes to take the field against some out-lying tribe, he sends for his chief military officer and says, "My house needs thatch",

[1] Ellis, "Ewe-speaking peoples", p. 170.

[2] Ellis, "Ewe-speaking peoples", pp. 182–3.

meaning that the skulls which line the inner walls of the palace must be replaced by new ones.[1]

The methods employed in wars, whether large or small, throughout West Africa are substantially the same: to worst the enemy by stealth and treachery. Having decided with all possible secrecy to attack a certain village, the assailants fall upon its sleeping or unsuspecting inhabitants, slaying instantly all who resist or cannot move rapidly, and taking captive the remainder.[2] More courage to fight in the open is displayed by Ashanti and Dahomian warriors, but the treatment of captured populations is everywhere the same. After the ruthless slaughter of every individual, too old, sick, or defective to be of value, the homeward march begins; little or no food is supplied the captives, and all who faint by the wayside are despatched or abandoned to die.

Since the natives possess no form of writing, even of the most primitive sort, no such thing as written laws or records is known. In reality, law is a misleading term to use in connection with these simple folk. What one finds is merely a few customs and usages, having nothing of the precision of written law. So accustomed are we to a highly developed legal system and judical procedure, that it is difficult to refrain from projecting into our notions of primitive law and judicature a definiteness of structure and function not really found there. De Cardi makes the suggestive remark:

"One often hears people who know a little about West Africa talk about native law, but they forget to mention, if they happen to know

[1] Ellis, "Ewe-speaking peoples," p. 188.

[2] Their warfare is well described by Du Chaillu, "Equatorial, etc.", p. 57, *et seq.*

it, that in a powerful chief's house there is only one exponent of the law, and that is the chief himself; for him native law begins to have effect only when it is a matter between himself and some other chief or combination of chiefs, whose power is equal to or superior to his own." [1]

Thus in every case among the common people the chief may interpret the law and the facts almost to suit himself.

The principal customs regulating property and personal relations after a crude fashion may be presented in brief space.[2] There is no private property in land. In Ashanti and Dahomey, to be sure, there is a sort of feudal system, but elsewhere, semi-nomadic habits still prevailing, land is hardly thought of as property. Wherever a village is located for a time, the people use the land in communal fashion. Some tribes, which have become fairly settled and populous, have a few simple regulations with reference to land holding, such as the rule that where a man can get access to his plot of ground only by passing through that of another, the latter must be paid a small consideration for the right of way.

The African's sense of proprietorship in some other things, however, is keen enough. He counts his wealth chiefly in women and slaves, with other things as subsidiary. Yet, curiously enough, wives and slaves may themselves hold property in their own right. If a wife becomes involved in a "palaver," she and her family alone are held responsible, not the husband. By a "palaver" is meant a trial before any native court, *i. e.*,

[1] *Op, cit.*, p. 536.

[2] For detailed information see Kingsley, "West African studies", chap. xviii; "Travels, etc.", pp. 485–500; Ellis, "The Tshi, etc.", pp. 280–305, "The Ewe, etc.", pp. 199–228; Bosman, *op. cit.*, p. 404; Waitz, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

before a chief. In West African annals the word "palaver" occurs with extreme frequency, for the people are very litigious.

Thieving is punished by a fine, and the stolen goods or their value must be restored. Occasionally, when the theft is large or accompanied by exasperating circumstances, the punishment is death. As to the collection of debts, Miss Kingsley says:

"The methods employed in enforcing the payment of a debt are appeal to the village head-man or village elders; or, after giving warning, the seizure of property belonging to the debtor, if possible, or if not, that of any other person belonging to his village will do. This procedure usually leads to palaver, and the elders decide whether the amount seized is equal to the debt or whether it is excessive." [1]

Interest is always charged and at enormously high rates, owing to the great insecurity of credit. From 25 to 50 per cent. is the ordinary rate, calculated on brief periods of a few months. Interest is charged also on stolen goods for the time elapsing till their restoration, a custom which often leads losers by theft to delay prosecution.

The succession of property is through the female, a survival of the time when paternity was too uncertain to be relied upon in tracing blood kinship, as it still is for no small portion of the population. The children of one mother belong to her and go with her in case of separation from her husband, a small payment for each being made to him by the wife or her family. A man's property is inherited by his uterine brother, or failing a brother, then by the eldest son of his oldest sister. If there is neither brother nor nephew, then, in some tribes, the property goes to a son, in others, to the principal native-born slave. In Dahomey, however, and one or

[1] "West African studies", p. 435.

two other cases, among the nobility only, primogeniture has become the rule.

Slavery, having existed from time immemorial, is bound up with the whole social and economic organization of West African society. There are, broadly speaking, three kinds of slaves: those captured in war, those purchased from outside the tribe—usually from the interior,—and the native-born slaves. All alike are mere chattels, and by law are absolutely subject to the master's will without redress. But in practice a difference is made, for obvious reasons, between native-born slaves and captives taken from hostile tribes. The latter are numerous, and the severest forms of labor fall to their lot. They are treated with constant neglect and cruelly punished on the slightest provocation. Their lives are at no time secure; they serve as victims for the sacrifice; when sick they are driven into the jungle; in times of scarcity they starve.

Native slaves are those born in slavery, or are tribe members sold into slavery for debt or non-payment of fines, or are children sold by their parents—a frequent practice among the poor. Much more consideration is shown for the native born slaves. They are even accorded the privilege of holding property in their own name, so long as they behave with proper humility toward their masters. Implicit obedience being at all times required of the slave, he can never be held accountable before the law for any action. It is the owner alone who is responsible to others. As the owner, however, has the power of life and death over all slaves, he is apt to deal harshly with any slave who gets him into trouble.

The pawning of persons for debt is exceedingly common. If the debt is never paid in full, the pawn and

his descendants become slaves in perpetuity. Meantime the services of the pawn count nothing toward the discharge of the debt. Neither parent may pawn a child without the consent of the other, and in the case of the wife, her relatives also must be consulted. A woman pawned to a man becomes a concubine, and her children belong to him. Not the master of a pawn-slave, but he who put the person in pawn, is responsible for his actions.

Crimes against the person are usually punished by fine. Murder involves the forfeiture of life, unless the criminal or his family can pay the compensation fixed and demanded by the relatives of the murdered person. To be successfully accused of any species of witchcraft, means certain and horrible death. No distinction is made between injury caused unintentionally and that resulting from deliberate purpose. This fact reveals in a striking manner the primitive nature of West African ideas regarding law and judicial procedure.

It may be well to warn the reader against interpreting the above description too rigidly. Europeans, it is said, require years of residence to learn that their precise ideas of law and administration have no existence in the native mind. They find that native justice is a travesty, that witnesses lie with marvelous facility, that the wealthy bribe freely, and that the judges, *i. e.*, ruling chiefs, are actuated in giving judgments by all manner of private considerations. The necessity of conveying notions of primitive human societies through the medium of a vocabulary associated in our minds with things found only amid advanced civilization, is in many ways unfortunate for the accuracy of our conceptions.

CHAPTER VII.

PSYCHIC NATURE.

The discussion of so subtle and complex a theme as the psychic nature of a race, requires the utmost caution. Still, the more significant mental traits, those which are distinctive, may be detected with a fair degree of accuracy. Where many independent observers have received the same impression regarding any point, we may accept that as likely to be correct. So intimately correlated is a people's outer life with its inner constitution, that in describing the former many revelations of the latter are given. From the external life we can infer the psychic nature, just as students of extinct peoples are able to learn much from surviving remains of language, literature, etc. In the foregoing chapters, however, the references to this subject have been too scattered and incidental to give a rounded, complete conception.

On surveying the low culture of West African natives for significant mental products, the first and most striking facts noted are of a negative character. They have no writing, and nothing more than the rudiments of pictorial art, out of which writing is a later development. The nearest approach to a representation of form and color is seen in the idols, kept in fetish huts, and worshipped by some of the Lower Guinea tribes.[1] The goldsmiths of the Gold Coast exhibit considerable ingenuity

[1] Du Chaillu, "Equatorial Africa", pp. 183 and 278-80. These idols are made of wood, rudely shaped into something like human form, and sometimes smeared with color in true impressionist style.

in the fashioning of rude ornaments, and several tribes have produced ivory carvings of curious patterns. Among many tribes one finds not even the traces of a notion of pictorial or plastic art. The musical temperament of the natives has led to greater development in that direction. On the whole, however, it is clear that they have made scarcely a beginning in the arts.

Does this extreme backwardness reflect an inherent deficiency in psychic endowment, or is it due rather to the lack of education and incentive? The latter view is held by many, who believe that civilization may be communicated to such races by the same educational process as is used in training up the rising generation of a civilized people. According to this view, races differ but little in potential capacity, and nothing but wise education is needed to accomplish within a few generations, what the slower process of self-development requires many centuries to achieve. But the widening knowledge of mankind, which anthropology in all its branches is now supplying, the numerous instances of decay and extinction among backward peoples, suddenly called upon to accept civilized life, and a better understanding of the way in which great capacity is brought into being by evolution, are rendering it constantly more difficult to accept this view.

Rather does the evidence from many sources tend to show that psychic nature is developed in close correlation with external conditions, and is unable to respond quickly on the advent of new and highly exacting conditions. Disintegration of the lower culture sets in, but is not replaced *pari passu* by sound development of the new ideas and institutions. The rise of complex industry, of written literature and science, of the fine arts, means the appearance of new criteria or agencies of

selection; these, reacting upon a people, fit them by slow healthy progress for still higher things. The entire absence of these agencies in Africa probably means something deeper, therefore, than a mere lack of education for the living generation. It implies that the psychic nature has never been enlarged and refined by selection in response to a progressive environment, and so remains inferior to that of peoples long subjected to the stress and struggle of rapidly advancing standards. Let us proceed to consider the characteristics they present.

Our knowledge of certain of the relations between the mind and its physiological basis in the brain may be taken as fairly established. Although some have set much store on comparison of brain weights, it is felt by conservative anthropologists that the difficulties of using this criterion are too great for it to be of much value.[1] Cranial capacity, however, offers one not so open to objection. It has been found that in this respect the Australian aborigines stand lowest, Africans next, Mongolians next, and highest of all, Caucasians. Reference to tables given by Topinard, shows that while the cranial capacity of the European ranges from 1,550 cubic centimeters upward in the male, and 1,350 in the female, that of the West African ranges from 1,430 and 1,251 respectively.[2] Tylor quotes figures from Professor Flower, giving a mean cranial capacity of 79 cubic inches for the Australian, 85 for the African, and 91 for the Caucasian.[3] Nowhere is it questioned that the

[1] See Topinard, "Anthropology" p. 313; Keane, "Ethnology", pp. 42–3.

[2] *Idem*, p. 230. See also "Precis d'Anthropologie", by Hovelacque and Herve, pp. 239–42.

[3] "Anthropology", E. B. Tylor, p. 60.

Negro possesses less cranial capacity than the Mongolian or Caucasian.

But more significant than this, perhaps, is the qualitative comparison of structure and texture in the brain. Topinard says that in the African the secondary convolutions are less complex and rich in minute structure than in the European.[1] Professor A. H. Keane cites with approval the dictum of Waitz: "That the convolutions in the negro brain are less numerous and more massive than in the European appears certain."[2] Keane himself reaches the conclusion that mental energy and capacity depend most intimately upon "the sinuosities or convolutions of the inner white substance, and especially upon the cellular tissue of the thin outer cortex or envelope of grey matter, which follows all the inner convolutions, with which it is also connected by an exceedingly complex nervous system."[3] It is in these structural differences that the greatest significance no doubt lies.

One other factor greatly affecting ultimate mental development, is the length of the period of immaturity, during which the mind remains plastic. Keane says:

"The development of cellular tissue, with a corresponding increase of mental power, apparently goes on till arrested by the closure of the cranial sutures. All the serratures are stated to be more complex in the higher than in the lower races, and their definite closing appears to be delayed until a later period in life amongst the former than amongst the latter. This physiological character . . . . . has recently been noticed by two intelligent observers, Col. Ellis among the Upper Guinea peoples, and Capt. Binger among the West Sudanese generally. 'The black is a child', says this writer, 'and will remain so'; and the sudden arrest of the mental faculties at the age of puberty is attributed to the closing of the sutures."[4]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 309.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 46.
[3] *Idem*, p. 44.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

There seems much probability, too, in the opinion of some, that the marked development of sexual activity among West Africans, with the arrival of puberty, absorbs energy at the expense of mental force. Ellis whose opinion is referred to above, writes as follows:

"In early life they evince a degree of intelligence, which, compared with that of the European child, appears precocious; and they acquire knowledge with facility until they arrive at the age of puberty, when the physical nature masters the intellect, and frequently completely deadens it. This peculiarity . . . . has been attributed by some physiologists to the early closing of the sutures of the cranium, and it is worthy of note that throughout West Africa it is by no means rare to find skulls without any apparent transverse or longitudinal sutures." [1]

The fact that African children learn easily until the age of puberty, but fail to progress after that time, may be due to another consideration apparently overlooked by the above writers, viz., the difference in the character of knowledge to be acquired in earlier and later stages of education. In the earlier stages it is chiefly the perceptive and imitative faculties, together with memory that are required, but relatively little of the higher faculties of abstract reasoning. These conditions become gradually reversed, however, as the student advances into highly elaborated realms of knowledge. That the African begins to halt on reaching this later stage of acquisition, may be owing to the want of a quality of mind not to be found in brains of coarser texture.

What Captain Binger says, writing contemporaneously with Ellis, but quite independently of him, throws so much light on the point under discussion, that it is well worth quoting in full.

"L'Enfant, par suite des travaux multiples et fatigants auxquels la mere est forcée de se livrer, est bien en retard sur celui des pays civilisés. Porté sur le dos jusquà l'âge de deux à trois ans, époque a

[1] "Ewe-speaking peoples", pp. 9–10.

laquelle il est sevré, le bébé ne peut rien apprendre, le mere ne lui causant jamais, de sorte qu'il ne commence réellement à parler qu'à trois ans et demi ou quatre ans. A partir de cette époque, son intelligence se developpe avec une rapidité surprenante : il a une mémoire extraordinaire et il est capable d'apprendre tout ce qu'on lui enseigne ; il est aussi bien doué que les enfants européens de son âge. Malheureusement, aussitôt qu'il attient l'âge de la puberté, tout developpment intellectual cesse. Cet arrêt complet se produit presque brutalement ; non seulement son intellect reste stationnaire, mais je dirai qu'il diminue ; le memoire s'en va ; d'eveille et d'intelligent qu'il etait, il devient sot, méfient, vaniteux, menteur, dans cette periode, qui quelquefois dure deux ou trois ans, il n'est assimilable qu'à un etre tout a fait inférieur. A cet arrêt intellectual doit correspondre, dans ces regions, la soudure de la boite cervicale, le developpment du crane s'arrête et empêche le cerveau de se dilater davantage." [1]

In whatever aspect, therefore, we consider the physiological basis of mental power, whether as to size of brain, or its inner structure, or the length of its plastic period, the natives of Guinea are at a grave disadvantage in comparison with the Caucasian.[2] The low stage of their culture can hardly be deemed the accidental effect of external conditions, for it has its counterpart in the inner constitution of the race. This is what we should expect, knowing that selection operating through many generations brings about a close physical and psychical adaptation of the organism to its environment. We have seen what the West African environment is, and it is obvious that no great industrial system, no science, and no art could be self-developed there in the first instance ; but it is also plain that without the rise of these secondary agencies of selection, the psychic nature could never be adapted to grasp

[1] "Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée", Paris, 1892, t. 2, p. 246.

[2] Miss Kingsley, it is true, cites the crafty shrewdness of the adult African as somewhat belying this. But crafty cunning is not the same as high intellectual capacity. See her "Travels, etc.", p. 672.

such attainments. The consideration of the general laws of biologic evolution would thus lead us, aside from the evidence above adduced, to believe that the mind of a lower tropical race is unfitted to assimilate the advanced civilization of a strenuous and able northern race.

Yet it would be hasty to conclude that the West Africans are incapable of progress. Though below the modern Caucasian in capacity to master vast knowledge, to handle intricate machinery, and to carry on self-government, they may be able to profit from judicious education and to respond to new stimuli to exertion. With the advent of new standards of efficiency, selection would operate to bring forward those best fitted to the new régime, provided that competition of abler peoples did not enter upon the scene so soon as to overthrow and crush all alike. As for obvious reasons this seems unlikely to happen in torrid West Africa, its inhabitants may have a creditable future before them. Where portions of the race have been removed into other regions, and placed in the midst of able and strenuous competition, the case is altogether different.

The temperamental qualities of the race present some marked and interesting peculiarities. In common with all peoples of low culture, the West Africans are unstable of purpose, dominated by impulse, unable to realize the future and restrain present desire, callously indifferent to suffering in others, and easily aroused to ferocity by the sight of blood or under great fear. More peculiar to themselves are a pronounced aversion to silence and solitude, a passionate love of rhythm in sound and motion, an excessive excitability, and utter lack of reserve.

Nothing so well reveals high development or is so vital to the welfare of a great society as the power to bridle passion, steady the emotions, and keep fixedly to a definite purpose. Infirmity of will means weakness at the root of life. Now, the West Africans give evidence of a marked deficiency in will power throughout every phase of their existence. Their intense emotions, their strong sexual passion, their cupidity, their erratic impulses, are continually breaking control, even at the cost of immediate disaster. The white man from the north, far-seeing, sure-footed, and iron-willed, at first witnesses their infatuated rashness with exasperated amazement, but in the end with resigned patience.

Illustrations of this weakness are strewn thickly through all works on West Africa. A pen-picture of store-keeping in that region is given by Miss Kingsley:

"Whether the native is passing in a bundle of rubber or a tooth of ivory or merely cashing a *bon* (a local check on the store) for a week's bush catering, he is, in Congo Français, incapable of deciding what he will have, when it comes to the point. He comes into the shop with a bon in his hand, and we will say, for example, the idea in his head that he wants fish-hooks—'jupes' he calls them—but, confronted with the visible temptation of pomatum, he hesitates, and scratches his head violently. Surrounding him there are ten or twenty other natives with their minds in a similar wavering state, but yet anxious to be served forthwith. In consequence of the stimulating scratch, he remembers that one of his wives said he was to bring some lucifer matches, another wanted cloth for herself, and another knew of some rubber she could buy very cheap, in tobacco, of a Fan woman, who had stolen it. This rubber he knows he can take to the trader's store and sell for pocket handkerchiefs of a superior pattern, or gunpowder, or rum, which he cannot get at the mission store. He finally gets something and takes it home, and likely enough brings it back in a day or so, somewhat damaged, desirous of changing it for some other article or articles. Remember, also, that these Bantu, like the negroes, think externally in a loud voice; also, like Mr. Kipling's '*oont*', 'he smells most awful vile', and . . . accompanies his observations with violent dramatic gestures; and let the customer's tribe or sex be what it may, the custo-

mer is sadly, sadly liable to pick up any portable object within reach, under the shadow of his companions' uproar, and stow it away in his armpits, between his legs, or, if his cloth be large enough, in that." [1]

The difficulties encountered by Du Chaillu every time he started from an African village with his train of porters are thus described:

"When all was arranged—when everybody had taken leave of all his friends, and come back half a dozen times to take leave over again, or say something before forgotten—when all the shouting, and ordering, and quarreling were done, and I had completely lost patience, we at last got away." [2]

Here we have the violently excitable, demonstrative negro, garrulous to the last degree and absolutely heedless of time. Wherever a number of them are together, and they are never seen otherwise, they raise "a perfect word-fog," as Miss Kingsley calls it. Every emotion finds instant and unreserved expression. In joy, in grief, in anger, it is always the same—infinite and unwearied volubility. Tylor notes the perplexing fact that, with no great differences in climatic or physical environment the Indian of Brazil is dull and stoical, while the negro of West Africa overflows constantly with "eagerness and gaiety." [3]

This impulse to a lively, noisy sociability, moulds the racial habits in many ways. Regardless of temperature, there must invariably be blazing fires at night in each village, around which the crowd may gather and make merry. Bright moonlight is always the signal for all-night carousals, accompanied by infinite noise in the shape of tom-tom beating, gun-firing, native music and dancing, etc.

It is but another phase of inconstancy that the West African is never long weighed down by sorrow or mis-

[1] "Travels in West Africa", p. 204.
[2] "Equatorial Africa", p. 76.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

fortune. His cheerfulness seems irrepressible. He is incapable of nursing long the feelings of anger or revenge, let the provocation be what it may. Barbot remarks that the natives seem "very little concerned at misfortunes, so it is hard to perceive any change in them," and he goes on to say:

"When they have gained a victory over their enemies, they return home dancing and singing, and if they have been beaten and totally routed, still they dance, feast, and make merry. The most they do in the greatest adversity is to shave their heads and make some alteration in their garments: but still they are ready to feast about graves, and should they see their country in a flame, it would not disturb their dancing, singing and drinking; so that it may well be said, according to some authors, that they are insensible to grief or want." [1]

At the first news of death or disaster there is an outburst of demonstrative grief, but in an amazingly brief time none could tell that anything gloomy had happened. In the moment of discovering a great wrong or injury, there is an outburst of fierce anger, which in a few hours or days, at most, subsides into the habitual easy-going mood.

They are passionately fond of music, and it exerts a very great influence upon their lives. They have several kinds of rude musical instruments. Easily first among them all is the tom-tom, a drum made of a hollow section of log with a skin stretched tightly over one end. The tom-tom accompanies the army to the field, the corpse to its grave, the bridegroom to his wedding, the royal embassy on its journey. Not a festival of any kind can proceed without it. Beaten in rythmical fashion, and with an art that to the native expresses definite ideas, its power over him seems irresistible.[2] Du Chaillu says:

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 235–6.

[2] See Ellis, "Tshi-speaking peoples", pp. 326–7; Kingsley, "Travels in West Africa", p. 181.

"It is curious what a stirring effect the sound of the tam-tam has on the African. It works upon him like martial music does upon excitable Frenchmen; they lose all control over themselves at its sound, and the louder and more energetically the horrid drum is beaten the wilder are the jumps of the male African, and the more disgustingly indecent the contortions of the women." [1]

They have other instruments, horns made of elephant tusks, hollowed out and with holes flute fashion, so that various notes can be blown; also complex instruments, consisting of calabashes of different sizes, with orifices tightly covered with stretched skins; and a few other devices of similar character for producing musical notes.[2]

Music is used, says Ellis, "with three objects, *i. e.*, to stimulate the religious sentiment, the military spirit, and the sexual passion. In the first case the priests have early seen its influence, and have applied it to their own purposes; chiefs and rulers utilize it in the second case, and the youth of the towns and villages in the third, when the drums sound for moonlight dances." [3] Their numerous dances are invariably accompanied with music and singing. The religious dances, performed by the priests and their special devotees, are wild rythmic leapings and movements of the body, accompanied by facial contortions, expressive, in the eyes of the people, of possession by a spirit. The popular dances chiefly appeal to the sexual nature. Barbot thus describes them:

"The men and women who are to compose the dance divide themselves into equal numbers and couples, opposite to each other, and forming a general dance, they meet and fall back again, leaping, beating their feet hard on the ground, bowing their heads to each other, and snapping their fingers, muttering some words at times, and then speaking loud; then whispering in each other's ears, moving now very slowly and then very fast; men and women running against

[1] "Equatorial Africa", p. 236.

[2] For more detailed accounts of their musical instruments, see Barbot, *op. cit.*, pp. 264–5; Kingsley, "West African studies", pp. 64–6; and Ellis, chapter on "Music" in his "Tshi-speaking peoples."

[3] Ellis, "Tshi-speaking peoples", p. 326.

each other, breast to breast . . . . clapping their hands together, throwing their elephant's tail at one another or clapping it about their shoulders." [1]

Somewhat refined of its grosser features, this dance survives on American soil as the modern negro "cake-walk." In West Africa, however, these dances exhibit all degrees of sex suggestion, and to civilized whites they appear indescribably indecent. Du Chaillu found himself irresistibly moved to depart from the scene of more than one dance especially given in his honor, although he ran serious risk of offending his hosts. No description of the dances could be ventured in his books.[2] These facts are further evidence of the great power in this tropical race of sexual instinct which dominates even the most public festivals.

The racial existence of the Guinea native for ages in the jungles of torrid Africa has given time for the processes of adaptation to do their full work undisturbed. Physical or mental energy have never been exacted or favored by the conditions, nor a genius for searching out labor-saving devices; foresight and self-mastery have not been vital amid prodigal nature and loosely organized society; and so, the Negro in his original habitat has been bred to a happy-go-lucky, improvident existence. For him life is to be taken light-heartedly, never minding the disaster of yesterday or forecasting to-morrow's trouble. He is attracted irresistibly to music and uproarious gaiety, and the more sex suggestion in it the better. When anger or fear arises, the tiger in him is out in a flash and somebody dies a bloody death. At all times and under all circumstances, he carries his emotions on his face and tongue, passionately loves companionship, and forgets each day's sorrow with the sunset.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

[2] See "Equatorial Africa", p. 110 and pp. 176–7.

PART II.

THE NEGRO UNDER AMERICAN SLAVERY.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL NATURE OF THE CHANGE.

The foregoing study of West African life indicates the nature of the stupenduous task to which our country, during colonial days, was slowly committed. With a continent before them to conquer, our fathers were so in need of labor that they could not be particular in their choice; mere unintelligent muscle, if subject to their direction, would serve the purpose. When the slave trader appeared, offering brute muscle from Africa, economic pressure triumphed over humanitarian scruples, and continued, for over two centuries, to pour into Caucasian society a stream of African barbarism.

"Previous to the year 1740", says Bancroft, "there may have been introduced into our country nearly one hundred and forty thousand; before 1776, a few more than three hundred thousand."[1] The census of 1790 revealed the presence of 756,208 blacks, about 17 per cent. of the aggregate population. By 1850, there were 3,638,808, constituting slightly over 16 per cent. It would appear, therefore, that during the period of slavery, about one-sixth of our entire population were West Africans, by birth, or but a generation or two removed.

It must be noted that the importation of negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, less than forty years ago.

[1] "History of the United States", Centenary ed., vol. ii, p. 551.

Prof. W. E. B. Du Bois has shown that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."[1] In 1836, the consul at Havana reported that "whole cargoes of slaves fresh from Africa were being daily shipped to Texas, . . . that the rate was increasing, and that many of these slaves could hardly fail to find their way into the United States."[2] During the fifties, as Du Bois shows, the trade increased in volume, and thousands of raw Africans were smuggled into the country every year. These facts are confirmed by John R. Spear, who shows, largely from naval records, that the efforts to stop the contraband trade were utterly inadequate, and many streams of black humanity trickled into the country at various points till the fall of the Confederacy.[3] The present writer has heard an eye-witness describe vividly a group of natives, just from Dahomey, seen near an Alabama town shortly before the war. It is a matter of common knowledge in the South that negroes were not infrequently met at that time who could not speak English.

If importation had entirely ceased in 1808, as provided by the Constitution, matters would have been very different. Two generations of negroes would have grown up uncontaminated by fresh infusions of savages, and we should have escaped the burden of assimilating after 1863 no small number of negroes so recently from Africa that they were totally unprepared for their new privileges and responsibilities. They were a bad leaven mingled with the more Americanized negroes.

[1] "The suppression of the slave-trade", New York, 1896, p. 199, *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

[3] "The American slave-trade", by John R. Spear, New York, 1900.

But, in any case, the task of civilizing the population drawn from Africa was a truly gigantic undertaking. Both destructive and constructive work was required. It was necessary to uproot and destroy polygamy, bloody religious rites, and the like, but it was vital that these things should be replaced by monogamy, Christianity, and other civilized institutions. Opposed to the accomplishment of this profound change were two forms of resistance, viz., physical heredity and post-natal or social heredity. By the latter is meant the transmission of ideas and habits from parent to child by example and teaching. The overlapping of generations secures the continuity of this external inheritance, and while it may be modified far more easily than physical heredity, its resistance to change is very great.

Between the inner constitution, transmitted physically, and the outer habits of life, transmitted socially, there arises during a thousand generations of undisturbed existence a delicate adjustment. When, therefore, the attempt is made to replace one stream of social heredity by another infinitely more exacting, the inner nature controlled by physical heredity cannot respond successfully to the new demands. This sudden readjustment, however, the African on our soil has been called upon to make, at first under compulsion, then by pursuasion and assistance. Yet his physical heredity could not possibly be modified on demand to suit the new requirements. While he was a slave the white man could suppress the uprising proclivities, born of other conditions, but could not entirely uproot them. In two ways only could an inner transformation be wrought: (1) by the slow operation of selection, and (2) by race amalgamation.

But the Negro's social heredity was immediately and powerfully affected by the change of environment undergone. When missionaries endeavor to civilize savages the difficulties are greatly heightened by the fact that a change in manner of living is demanded, while the environment remains the same. But the negroes transplanted to this country no longer moved amid the accustomed sights and sounds of their native land. That deeply rooted association of ideas and habits with the background afforded by nature in West Africa, was broken up violently. This rendered much easier the abandonment of traditional customs and the fading from memory of former teachings. This process was greatly accelerated by the complete disappearance on American soil of all tribal differences. The individuals newly arrived from Africa could not understand each other's language or minor habits.

The negroes were promptly subjected in this country to positive and constructive forces of two kinds: (1) the deliberate efforts of the slave owner to enforce new habits by discipline, and (2) the unconscious influences of example and suggestion, calculated to act with peculiar power upon an imitative and susceptible race. It was not alone what the master did with express intention or what the slave did under compulsion, which tended to alter the latter's character; indeed, it is likely that the healthiest development achieved by him grew out of what passed into his life from above by unconscious processes, which were therefore natural rather than artificial.

CHAPTER II.

SELECTION.

In voluntary migrations, like those of Europeans to America, there is a process of selection, whereby the new region receives a population slightly above the original average in force of character. Only those who have initiative, strength of purpose and courage, will leave the land of their birth for unknown parts. Physically, too, such persons are likely to be sound and full of energy. The push, efficiency, and daring temper of Americans are by many believed to be due in part to this fact. In view of this, it becomes interesting to ascertain how the case stood with those who came from Africa.

The method by which Africa was drawn upon to supply the American labor market led to the most drastic selection that the world has ever seen. Of every thousand natives captured in the jungle only a handful of the hardiest lived to put foot on American shore. This fearful "elimination of the unfit" was due in part to the attitude and methods of the slave-traders, and in part to the African's utter indifference to human suffering and death. In all history there are few passages to equal this in gloomy horror, but it is necessary for us to examine it, for its results abide among us.

With insignificant exceptions the first work of gathering slaves was done not by white men, but by negroes themselves. With no sense of race solidarity, and perfectly callous, the West Africans felt no compunction in selling off their own kind into foreign slavery. They were accustomed to enslaving their enemies, to selling fellow tribesmen for debts or fines, and to pawning or

selling their wives and children. On the appearance of the white man, offering many tempting commodities in exchange for these war-captives and slaves, a brisk trade sprang up. But as the demand for slaves rapidly outgrew the supply thus provided by the older methods, there developed far and wide a system of deliberate slave-hunting. The powerful tribes overwhelmed the weaker ones, petty kings or chiefs conducted forays against isolated villages, and bands of slave-catchers lay in wait at every path and plantation to entrap unwary stragglers. We have noted above on what a scale the kings of Ashanti and Dahomey carried on such work.

When a village was captured, all who were judged non-salable to the white trader, *i. e.*, the aged, the infants, the sick, and the defective, were at once slaughtered. This was in accord with former custom, but the selection was harsher. On the march to the seaside, little food was given, and the captives were pushed forward with all possible speed. Every one becoming weak or ill was promptly killed or abandoned. By the time the slave-ships were reached, all who fell below a certain rude standard had been eliminated.

Next ensued the expert sifting done by the "factors" or middlemen, who bought from the native sellers either as agents, or on their own account in order to sell again to the ship captains. They were far from accepting all the human material offered. By long experience they had become expert in detecting unsoundness or defects, and they subjected every individual, male and female, to minute examination and shrewdly devised tests; in the end there were several classes to accord with a scale of prices, and all who fell below the minimum standard

were rejected.[1] These soon found a grievous end. We are told that "an African factor of fair repute is ever careful to select his human cargo with consummate prudence, so as not only to supply his employers with athletic laborers, but to avoid any taint of disease, . . ."[2] No ship company wanted to load its vessels with "perishable freight," if it was avoidable.

After the thorough sifting before embarkation came the "middle passage," a test of such severity that a cargo rarely reached America without losing a heavy percentage.[3] Densely crowded together, fed just enough to keep body and soul linked, depressed with vague terrors of the unknown future, only the hardiest could endure till the end. All weakness or disease that had eluded the vigilance of the buyers in Africa, was sure to be eliminated during this ordeal.

In view of these facts, it is probable that the negro stock landed in America was physically superior to the average of that left behind. No doubt many were permanently broken in health, but it could not have been so with any large proportion, or the trade could not have flourished as it did. It is probable that the great majority, being by nature the soundest and strongest, quickly recovered and transmitted to their offspring their congenital qualities. The conclusion seems justified that the Negro began his American career with an important advantage, secured, however, at frightful cost.

But it would be easy to exaggerate this advantage. Consideration of this process of selection shows that it

[1] See "Capt. Canot. or twenty years in a slaver", by Brantz Mayer, New York, 1854, p. 94, *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[3] See the "Abstract of evidence taken before a select committee of Parliament on the slave-trade", London, 1791, pp. 38–45. Also "The American slave-trade", by John R. Spear, New York, 1900, chap. vi, pp. 68–81.

led to physical improvement alone. At every sifting the criteria of selection were those of physique. Mental and moral qualities could not be taken much into account. If in voluntary emigration there is a selection of bold and able characters, in this enforced African emigration it was the bold and able who were most likely to escape capture. In West Africa those who had initiative and energy were likely to become the hunters rather than the hunted.

To appreciate the net result of this extraordinary selection, let us imagine the entire West African population divided into four classes, and consider each in turn. First, those below normal, both physically and mentally; and second, those below par physically, though above it in mental force, would be effectually eliminated. Third, those well above the average, both physically and mentally, were apt to elude capture, and become themselves the captors. Fourth, those above average in physique, but ordinary or even under average in mental force, would, under the peculiar methods of the slave-trade, constitute the major portion of the slaves successfully shipped to this country.

In America the race came under other, though less drastic, selective forces, both artificial and natural. Inasmuch as the slaves were property, absolutely ruled by the will of their owners, the latter could largely control the relations of the sexes with a view, more or less deliberate, to securing rapid improvement of the race. In other words, they could encourage or command marriages or unions of selected partners, and discourage or prohibit unions manifestly contrary to the interests of heredity. Dr. Paul B. Barringer, of the University of Virginia, than whom few could be found better acquaint-

ed with the facts of the old regime, has laid much stress upon this significant feature of American slavery. He says:

"In a virgin land of incomparable fertility strong laborers were, of course, extremely useful, and hence much valued. Being valuable they were allowed to multiply, but under a careful selective process of breeding, which outstripped nature itself. Docility, decency, fealty, and vigor were desired, and the slave man having these attributes, with his master's 'pass', scorned the rural 'patroller', and roamed at will to replenish the earth. This selective propagation . . . . not only caused the negroes to increase in numbers, but to improve in kind. . . . . The laws of breeding obtained through centuries of experience with the lower animals had here found a wider and higher field." [1]

This statement is confirmed by a much earlier authority, who wrote on the conditions of slavery as found during the decade immediately preceding the war. Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted,[2] who journeyed through the seaboard slave states about 1854, gives this unmistakable evidence of the fact asserted by Dr. Barringer:[3]

"A slave holder writing to me with regard to my cautious statements on this subject in the *Daily Times*, says: 'In the states of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, as much attention is paid to the breeding and growth of negroes as to that of horses and mules."

It would be easy to overstate the extent and deliberateness of this policy, but that it existed in sufficient force to constitute a very important factor in adapting the race to our civilized environment, cannot be doubted.

[1] See his address in the "Proceedings of the Montgomery conference on southern race problems", May, 1900.

[2] Olmsted's books are to-day perhaps the best sources of information to be had on the subject. His sound common sense, sanity of judgment, and remarkable freedom from prejudice, together with keen powers of observation, rendered his studies of peculiar value in view of the all but universal unreliability of other contemporary literature relating to the subject.

[3] See "A journey through the seaboard slave states", New York, 1856, pp. 55–57.

The internal slave trade during the first half of the nineteenth century, led to another form of selection. During the earlier stages of this trade, and continuing with gradually diminishing force to the end, there was a moral repugnance to it sufficient to cause some excuse to be sought for "selling negroes south." This excuse was usually found in the troublesome character of the individuals thus sold. Hence the incorrigibly indolent, unruly, or criminal negroes would be selected. They were shipped to the far south, placed under the gang system of heavy labor on immense plantations, and quickly broken of their unsatisfactory habits, or else—soon eliminated. This process must have tended to improve the average moral quality of the negroes throughout the border states, and to improve the negro population as a whole, in so far as the harder conditions and more unscrupulous discipline of the far south made for the elimination of bad characters.

In West Africa the negroes had been subject to death-dealing agencies of a harsh and wasteful nature: ceaseless warfare, famines, pestilence, religious sacrifices, witchcraft executions, etc. In so far as these were favorably selective, they tended to evolve physical qualities of strength and endurance, along with a psychic nature suited to existence amid scenes of bloodshed and suffering. To meet the enormous mortality, a powerful sexual instinct and great fecundity had been developed. Not living in large compact societies, where delicate social sensibilities and refined virtues have a part in aiding survival, there had been little or no tendency to develop such characteristics.

Transplanted to America, however, the man who had special talents for killing and stealing was likely to be speedily eliminated. Such characters were now subject

to master-hands in discipline. On the other hand, he who could best adapt himself to a peaceful, industrious, and self-controlled existence, met with favor. He had decidedly the best chance to survive and propagate his kind. Thus, irrespective of the white man's intentional efforts, this kind of selection must have tended to diminish the savage and increase the civilized elements of the African race nature. But this process is a slow one, and we cannot assume that, independently of artificial agencies, it has accomplished much within the brief career of the race on our soil.

The several processes described in this chapter are such as remould a race. They do what the wisest and most strenuous education can never achieve, since this cannot touch the fundamental endowment, transmitted by germ heredity. The interval to be traversed, however, in passing from West African savagery to American civilization was so immense, that we must beware of losing true perspective in our view of the problem. Allowing the utmost that could reasonably be expected from these selective processes, there still remained at the end of slavery, a wide interval between the Negro and the Caucasian in hereditary racial character.

CHAPTER III.

AMALGAMATION.

We are accustomed to think of but one kind of amalgamation in connection with American negroes, but there have been in reality two kinds. The one was always illegitimate, did not affect the entire mass, and was of doubtful benefit, viz., the crossing of white with black. The other was legitimate, universal, and probably beneficial, viz., that which resulted from the intermingling on our soil of many tribal strains of blood, originally distinct in Africa.[1]

In our Negro population as it came from the western coast of Africa, there were Wolofs and Fulahs, tall, well-built, and very black, hailing from Senegambia and its vicinity; there were hundreds of thousands from the Slave Coast—Tshis, Ewes, and Yorubans, including Dahomians; and mingled with all these Sudanese negroes proper, were occasional contributions of mixed stock, from the north and northeast, having an infusion of Moorish blood. There were other thousands from Lower Guinea, belonging to Bantu stock, not so black in color as the Sudanese, and thought by some to be slightly superior to them.

On our shores, however, all faint ethnic differences were quickly lost. The readiest means of distinguishing one from another—language, customs, and manners—disappeared, and interbreeding proceeded freely. At the close of the period of slavery, this amalgamation had brought about approximate homogeneity. The keenest

[1] Dr. Paul B. Barringer calls attention to this in his address, above cited.

and best informed observer would have found it scarcely possible to distinguish with certainty those of Sudanese from those of Bantu descent, or Tshis from Dahomians.

The conditions of slavery were peculiarly favorable to the other kind of amalgamation. So rapidly have conditions changed that it is difficult for the younger generation, even in the old slave states, to realize clearly what they were. Under the anti-bellum régime[1] nearly every household kept a superfluity of "house negroes," the number of these frequently exceeding that of the whites by half or more. Between the two groups existed an intimacy, born of the peculiar relations which bound them together. Slaves could not shift their location and occupation at will, and many lived from cradle to grave in association with the same masters and mistresses. The same house servants, year after year, witnessed with demonstrative emotions every domestic event, whether joyful or sad, and were themselves part of the household life. Their children played with the white children, and all grew up together, thoroughly acquainted with each other, and having many ties of mutual sympathy, in which on the one side there was always a matter-of-fact assumption of superiority, and on the other an equally matter-of-fact recognition of inferiority. Such relations are impossible under the shifting system of free labor.

While this intimacy was favorable to the imparting of the civilization of the white to the black, it also tended in certain ways to react unfavorably upon the white. A writer in *The Southern Cultivator* for June, 1855, says:

[1]It is necessary to anticipate here slightly. The full discussion of the conditions under this regime is taken up in later connections.

"Children are fond of the company of negroes, not only because the deference shown them makes them feel perfectly at ease, but the subjects of conversation are on a level with their capacity; while the simple tales and the witch and ghost stories, so common among negroes, excite the young imagination and enlist the feelings.[1] If, in this association the child becomes familiar with indelicate, vulgar, and lascivious manners and conversation, an impression is made upon the mind and heart which lasts for years—perhaps for life." [2]

This remark applied particularly to the children of overseers and poor whites, who mingled freely with the children and youth of the field-negro class.

In connection with this personal intimacy, consider the facts that the sensual negro mind turned incessantly to lacivious thoughts and impulses; that a regard for chastity had never been developed in the race, and that the negro female, even had she under the circumstances been able to refuse compliance with any demands, too often did not desire to do so. In view of this intimacy, the sympathetic relations, and the temptations presented by the presence of a subject race, itself prompted by strong impulses scarcely controlled by a moral sense, it is clear why illicit relations came into being under slavery, became wide-spread, and important in their results.

It is impossible to measure exactly the extent of this amalgamation between white and black, for the hybrid variety thus created, shaded off imperceptibly into either pure race. So far as Olmsted could observe and ascertain by inquiry, the proportion of mulattoes to pure negroes in Mississippi and Louisana just before the war,

[1] In her "Journal of a residence on a Georgia plantation", Fanny Kemble says on this point: "All the southern children that I have seen seem to have a special fondness for these good-natured, childish human beings, whose mental condition is kin in its simplicity and impulsive emotion to their own, and I can detect in them no trace of contempt or abhorrence for the dusky skin." See p. 194.

[2] Cited by Olmsted, "Seaboard slave states", p. 403.

was about one to three.[1] The proportion varying from one locality to another, probably lay somewhere between a fifth and a third of the whole colored population.

It remains to ascertain as far as may be, what were the effects upon the race. Mr. F. L. Hoffman, discussing this subject in his "Race traits and tendencies of the American Negro," says:

"It is an open question whether crossing leads to the improvement or deterioration of races. There is no agreement among high authorities. Gobineau maintains that intermixture of different races leads to final extinction of civilization. Serres and others maintain that crossing of races is the essential lever of all progress. Topinard holds that crossing of races anthropologically remote does not increase fecundity; while M. Quatrefages holds the contrary opinion. Nott, Knox and Perrier hold that intermixture of races would lead to decay, while M. Bodichon declares the era of universal peace and fraternity will be realized by crossing. The latter opinion is shared by Waitz, Deschamps and many others."[2] Mr. Hoffman adds: "I have failed to find in any of the works on Anthropology a statement of facts, which would warrant definite conclusions one way or the other."

Mr. Hoffman has, however, overlooked one eminent authority, who has thrown a flood of light upon the effects of race-crossing. Dr. Paul Broca, in a masterly treatise entitled "The phenomena of hybridity in the genus homo,"[3] does much toward clearing up the confusion, so well stated in the foregoing paragraph, and further makes a special contribution on the subject of Negro-Caucasian crossings.

The trouble has been, as Hoffman points out, that "past inquiries have been directed rather to establishing one theory or another as to the unity or plurality of the human race, than to the more important end of proving in a scientific way whether a race has actually been benefitted intellectually, morally, or physically by cross-

[1] See his "Journey through the back country", p. 90.

[2] See p. 178.

[3] London, 1864.

ing.[1] The anthropologists, says Broca, have been playing fast and loose with the term "race." This term may be used to denote strictly the primary types of mankind, *e. g.*, the white, the black, etc., or indiscriminately extended to secondary ethnic types, *e. g.*, Teutons, Slavs, and Semites—all of which are of one "race" in the wider sense. Seizing upon facts that go to prove infertility in crossings of the primary types, the polygenist argues specific differences and a plural origin for mankind. The monogenist, on the contrary, finding that crosses between the so-called Teutonic and Slav "races," for example, are prolific and sound, concludes that only varietal differences exist among men, and that they have a single origin. Until this unscientific looseness in the conception attached to the term "race" is cured, declares Broca, we need expect nothing but confusion.

Mindful of this cause of error, Dr. Broca reviews the evidence relating to human hybridity, and reaches the conclusion that crossings between *some* ethnic groups, not widely differentiated, are certainly self-perpetuating, *e. g.*, that of the Celts with the Kimri.[2] He cautiously points out, however, that it still remains to be proved that *all* similar crossings are equally sound and fertile. Now the interbreeding of different tribal stocks from Africa was an amalgamation of very closely related ethnic branches. That in this case a perfectly fertile race resulted, cannot be questioned, and this accords with Broca's principle, above stated. As it is well known that continued inbreeding tends to deterioration, so on the contrary it seems probable that the occasional remixture of slightly differentiated ethnic branches

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 179.
[2] *Op. cit.*,, pp. 21–4.

tends to improvement. If this is the case, the American negroes must have benefitted by their intertribal amalgamation on this side of the ocean.

But admitting the soundness and fecundity of such crosses as those between Celt and Saxon, or between Sudanese and Bantu, it does not at all follow that crosses between Negro or Indian and the Caucasian must be the same. Broca takes up the case presented by the mulattoes in the United States, and offers some very significant facts in relation to it.

Mulattoes born of unions between white women and negroes are so rare that they would merit slight attention here, but for the evidence cited by Broca, showing that they are exceptionally unfruitful. This conclusion from direct observation of a small range of cases is supported by certain facts revealed by the anatomists.[1] In unions of white males with black females, however, no anatomical difficulty exists and they are freely fertile.

Broca cites Jacquinot's statement that mulattoes in the European colonies containing negroes, are not self-perpetuating or vigorous in physique. He then reviews the conclusions of Dr. J. C. Nott, a Southern physician and anthropologist of wide reputation before the war.[2] As the result of many years of observation and record, in the state of South Carolina, Nott maintained the following propositions: (1) that mulattoes are the shortest lived of any class of the human race; (2) that they are intermediate in intelligence between the blacks and the whites; (3) that they are less capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship than either pure race; (4) that

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 28–9.

[2] These will be most easily found in a compilation, "The types of mankind", by Nott and Gliddon, Philadelphia, 1871, chap. xii, pp. 372–410.

mulatto women are delicate, distinctly infertile, and have weak children; (5) that when mulattoes intermarry they are less prolific than when crossed with either pure race.[1] Subsequently, having moved to Mobile, and then to New Orleans, Dr. Nott observed that the creole population in those districts were approximately normal in vitality and fecundity. Pondering over this inconsistency in the evidence he recalled that the creoles were a cross between Spaniards, Portuguese, and French on one side, and negroes on the other, whereas mulattoes were a cross of Negro and Teuton. The peoples of Southern Europe with their dark skins, black hair and eyes, and mercurial temperament, might have more affinity with the Negro type than the Teutons, with their fair skin, light hair and eyes, and more phlegmatic temperament. Herein Dr. Nott believed he found the explanation of the greater infertility of mulattoes as compared with creoles.[2]

Examining this opinion critically, Broca inquires whether other considerations might not enter into the problem. Might not the Gulf climate be more favorable than that of South Carolina to a people originally from the torrid zone? But the fact that the pure negro stock multiplied and throve quite normally in South Carolina and even further north, indicated that this could not account for inferior stamina in the mulattoes. As Broca could detect no condition peculiar to the mulattoes, and not affecting the pure blacks equally, Dr. Nott's hypothesis appeared to be the only available explanation. Remarkable confirmation of it is found in the fact that the mulattoes of Jamaica, colonized by Englishmen, are declared by Edward Long, in "History

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 373.

[2] See "Types of mankind", pp. 374–5.

of Jamaica",[1] to be under-vitalized and very infertile, whereas those of Cuba, Hayti, and Porto Rica, colonized by Spaniards, are reported healthy and prolific. Jamaica is closely similar to West Africa in climate, and pure negroes thrive there. Such facts, unknown to Nott, and derived from authors unacquainted with his theory, are very significant in its support.

Examining other instances of crossing between the primary types of mankind, and finding much corroboration for the view that such hybrids are of low stamina and fecundity, Broca reaches the following conclusions:

"That mulattoes of the first degree, issued from the union of Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) race with African negroes, appear inferior in fecundity and longevity to individuals of the pure race"; also, "that it is at least doubtful whether these mulattoes, in their alliances between themselves, are capable of indefinitely perpetuating their race; and that they are less prolific in their direct alliances than in their recrossing with parent stocks, as is observed in paragenesic hybridity." [2]

We are now better prepared to appreciate the force of certain facts, different from those utilized by Broca and Nott, and well brought out by Hoffman. He shows that it was the almost unanimous opinion of the army surgeons who examined negro recruits during the war, that the mulattoes were inferior in "vitality and general physical condition." [3] Dr. Gould in his "Statistics of the Sanitary Commission," gives an average chest circumference of 35.8 inches for whites, 35.1 for pure blacks, and 34.96 for mulattoes; a lung capacity of 184.7 cubic inches for whites, 163.5 for pure blacks, and 158.9 for mulattoes; and a respiration rate of 16.4 per minute for whites, 17.7 for pure blacks, and 19.0 for mulattoes.[4]

[1] London, 1774, vol. ii, p. 235. This is alluded to by Broca.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 60.
[3] "Race traits, etc.", pp. 182–3.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Negro-Teutonic hybrid is more or less degenerate in physical vigor and fertility. It is true that in the foregoing discussion no account has been taken of economic and social conditions, and these often affect profoundly a matter of the kind in question. But in our country, mulattoes and pure negroes share equally in any economic and social conditions that are peculiar to the race, or at any rate, if there be differences, they are so slight as to escape detection. Immorality doubtless prevails a little more among the mulattoes, but it is a question whether this is not offset by an economic advantage, for their quicker intelligence enables them by a sort of selection to obtain better paying employments. Thus, it seems fairly safe in this particular case to accept the conclusions based upon biological data.

Amalgamation has not only physical effects but doubtless very important psychic results as well. The mulatto tends to approximate the Caucasian in cerebral structure. Hence, he exhibits more intellectual capacity and nervous energy; he is more alert and deft in movement, and has more of the Caucasian temperament. Olmsted found that slave-owners preferred pure blacks for heavy, monotonous labor, requiring only brute strength; but selected mulattoes largely for work involving intelligence and skillful hands.[1] The proportion of them seen among house servants and in positions of some responsibility was much greater than among the field hands. The same thing is to be seen to-day. The writer has observed that the porters, cooks, and waiters on a Pullman train are usually mulattoes, while the laborers in

[1] "Journey through the back country", pp. 90–1.

the gang on the road-bed outside are nearly all black. Similar examples might easily be multiplied. Hence, there is much reason to believe that among the prominent and successful colored people of our day, mulattoes constitute a much larger proportion than they bear to the colored population as a whole. Accurate information on this point, unfortunately, is wanting. The general capacity of the negro race at large for acquiring civilization is certain to be misconceived, if they are credited with the achievements of men who share in Caucasian heredity. Misconceptions of this sort are serious if they lead to mistaken policies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHANGE IN PHYSICAL CONDITIONS.

In the two preceding chapters we have been investigating the forces that act directly upon germ heredity, determining what the individual shall be at the moment of birth and what he shall transmit in turn to his offspring. But once in the world, he immediately becomes subject to the powerful influences of his physical and organic environment, enveloping him from cradle to grave. The nature and probable effects of the changes undergone by the negroes in passing from West Africa to America we have next to consider.

Let us first get an idea of where West Africa finds its latitudinal parallel in the New World. Senegambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia are in the same latitude as Central America; the Slave Coast with Venezuela and Guiana. Lower Guinea is opposite to Brazil, both regions lying directly under the equator. The Niger and the Orinoco, the Lower Congo and the Amazon, flow alike through territories luxurious with a tropical flora and fauna. The delta of the Mississippi lies some 1,750 miles further north than that of the Niger; an equal distance north from New Orleans carries one well into Manitoba.

To realize the contrast in climate between West Africa and the eastern portion of the United States, recall the leading facts regarding the former: the uniformly high temperature, the monotony of eternal summer, varied only by excessive humidity during three-fourths of the year and excessive dryness during the remainder. With this compare our own country. The annual

mean temperature of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and southern Texas ranges about 65°, with a mean temperature of about 80° for July and from 40° to 50° for January.[1] The isotherm indicating 55° anuual mean temperature passes through Washington, Cincinnati and St. Louis; that of 50° passes through or near to New York, Pittsburg, and Omaha. To get roughly the corresponding temperatures for July and January add and subtract respectively from 20° to 25°. The climate does not display well-defined periodic wet and dry seasons, nor extremes of dryness or humidity. Normal barometer readings, anywhere between the Gulf and the Lakes, average about 30.09 inches, as against 29.75 to 29.90 for West Africa.[2] The summers have now and then very close sultry weather, but usually a thunder-storm soon relieves that condition of atmosphere. Mildew and mould cause little trouble.

Only in the Gulf states during the hottest month of the year is a temperature experienced equal to that of West Africa, and even then the much drier atmosphere renders the heat far more tolerable to man and beast. In the more northerly tiers of states during any season the difference is very great. Further comment is unnecessary, so obvious are the many points of contrast. We know that even men from northern Europe have

[1] See charts ix, xiv and xv, in part vi of the report of the United States Weather Bureau for 1897–8.

[2] See the report of the United States Weather Bureau for 1891–2, part vi, pp. 438–443, and compare with Alexander, "Excursions in West Africa", pp. 116, 120, 145, etc. The barometrical readings cited for this country were "reduced to sea-level" pressures. Those of Alexander, having been taken at sea-level on board ship in West African seaports,are not very satisfactory as data for comparison with the accurate work of our weather bureau, but the writer could not find any other barometrical observations for West Africa.

found our climate peculiarly favorable to vigorous life and energetic activity, and to those from West Africa its stimulating character must have been immense. The northern states of our Union present so great a contrast for people of tropical origin, that it is possible they may never thrive there. But we have no reason to suppose that the transfer to our southern states had, so far as climatic influence is concerned, other than beneficial effects on the health of the negro. Prolonged and energetic activity, whether of body or mind, while an impossibility in West Africa, is here for a large part of the year positively incited by conditions that render a lethargic existence distasteful. It seems reasonable to think also that the variety of season, with its successive changes of natural background and associated activities, industrial and recreative, must have exerted a mild and helpful stimulus, particularly to the psychic life.[1]

Human energy bears a very direct relation to the quantity and quality of nourishment obtained. It is affected by matters of clothing and housing. Finally, much depends upon the maintenance of the body in good working order, its freedom from disease, or effective cure when disease is incurred. In all these points there was a radical change in the condition of the negroes on their transplantation to this country. That this deeply influenced the race we cannot doubt.

The negroes soon became differentiated with the progress of slavery. The "house-servants" and the "field-hands" were two very distinct classes throughout the slave-holding region. The latter again may be divided into those found on the small plantations and farms of the interior and more northerly slave states,

[1] The writer does not remember ever to have seen this point brought out anywhere, but it is surely of some significance.

and those of the great plantations of the Atlantic and Gulf seaboard region. The circumstances of these classes were distinct in many respects.

No measurement of their relative numerical importance is possible. It seems likely that the proportion of slave labor retained for service in or about the household was considerably larger under the slavery régime than is now the case under a free labor system. Under the former all menial work was avoided by the whites as much as possible, and this tended to increase the amount of slave labor reserved for that purpose. The inefficiency of this labor necessitated the employment of more individuals to get a given volume of service performed. Many expressions of astonishment from northern and foreign visitors at the number of negroes used for domestic and personal service throughout the south might be cited. "The number of servants usually found in a southern family of any pretensions", said Olmsted, "always amazes a northern lady. In one that I visited there were exactly three negroes to each white, and this in a town, where they were employed solely in the house."[1] The census of 1890 showed that under recent conditions 22 per cent. of all our negro population were then employed in "domestic and personal service." We should perhaps not err very far in estimating that something like a fourth of the slaves were withdrawn from the fields for work of one sort or another connected with the white household or on the premises. How many of the remaining three-fourths were upon the small plantations, and how many on the great tobacco, rice, cotton, and sugar plantations, it is impossible to ascertain. We know only that either of

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 195.

these groups was large enough to constitute a very important portion of the field hand class.

The house-servants generally enjoyed much the same diet as the whites, a distinction being made in the place and manner of serving it. What was left over from the table of the whites went by custom to the kitchen for the servants, and the cooks looked well to it that a surplus was provided, either openly or surreptitiously. Where the servants were put on "rations", they were, nevertheless, pretty sure, with the connivance of the cooks, to get sundry odds and ends from the planter's profusely supplied table. To prevent this would have required an excess of vigilance beyond the patience of most masters and mistresses, and many did not pretend to attempt it. Favorite servants were sure to be indulged in this respect.[1]

The diet of the field negroes was very different. It was based upon certain fixed rations, dealt out once a week or oftener. From a peck to a peck and a half of meal, with from two to five or even six pounds of bacon, according to age, sex, and severity of labor required, was the most widely prevailing ration. But in wheat-raising sections flour would replace meal, or rice in the rice-growing section. Similarly fish, oysters and beef were a prominent element of diet where they could be cheaply furnished. To this ration as a foundation were added other articles of food, varying with the seasons and with different localities. Save on very poorly managed plantations (of which there were of course not a few) there were regular allowances of vegetables in season: sweet-potatoes, Irish potatoes, "roasting ears",

[1] With regard to house-servants, see for example "White and black under the old régime", by Mrs. V. V. Clayton, pp. 38–9; also Olmsted, "Seaboard slave states", p. 421.

cabbages, beans, and peas. The addition of molasses was widely prevalent and the negroes were especially fond of it; coffee was allowed in some localities, especially during the season of heavy crop-work; and milk was supplied in many places.[1]

It was an almost universal practice to allot to each cabin a small plot of ground, from a quarter to a half acre usually, to the use of which the occupants were exclusively entitled. Thus the opportunity was given to raise vegetables and fruit according to their own choice. Frequently the privilege was given of keeping pigs and sometimes even a cow. It was the exception for plantation negroes to be without poultry. In many cases, however, indolence, thriftlessness, or weariness after hard labor prevented the use of these various opportunities. Still more commonly the negroes sold their produce for money instead of consuming it themselves, a good indication that they got enough to eat free of effort on their own part. On the whole, the carefully formed conclusion of Olmsted on this matter of dietary can scarcely be very far wrong:—"I think the slaves generally —no one denies there are exceptions—have plenty to eat; probably they are better fed than the proletarian class of any part of the world".[2] Certainly the contrast is striking between this diet and that of the race before its removal from West Africa.

Not only did the climate of our country render complete covering of the body necessary, but our civilized

[2] For definite accounts of slave dietaries, see *De Bow's Review of the South and Southwest*, vol. x, pp. 325–6; vol. xiv, p. 177; vol. xxiv, pp. 324–6. Also Olmsted, "Seaboard, etc.", pp. 108–9, 431–2, and 659–60; "Journey through the back country", pp. 15, 50, and 74. The writer should perhaps state that, being a resident in the South, he has secured much information used in this and the next three chapters from persons of whose reliability he is convinced.

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 108.

standard of decency demanded it. Hence the Negro met here with a new experience. Great differences, however, in respect of dress were seen—differences more striking than any others, perhaps, to the casual observer. These were partly due to difference of function, as between house-servants and field-hands, and partly to differences of climate between the far southern and the more northerly slave states. No such marked differences, it may be remarked, existed as regards the amount of nourishment supplied.

House-servants as a rule were neatly and substantially dressed. Being constantly in the presence of the white household, and expected to perform direct personal services they were required to present a good appearance. On the smaller or less prosperous plantations the costumes were very plain, but rose to elegance among wealthy families in town or country. Servants always received cast off clothing and favorites received other gifts in dress. Love of display led many to spend all extra earnings or gifts of money upon dress.[1]

A stated outfit of clothing was given out twice each year to the field negroes. The kind of clothing supplied depended upon climate and the financial status of the master. In the colder states heavy woolen goods were used, in the far south cotton goods were more suitable. At a minimum the semi-annual outfit for a man would be one suit of coat and trousers, two or more shirts, one pair of shoes, a felt or straw hat according to season,

[1] For detailed accounts of slave outfits, see *De Bow's Review*, vol. x, p. 326, vol. xiv, p. 177; Olmsted, "Seaboard slave states", pp. 112, 432, 688, and "Journey through the back country", p. 80; Fanny Kemble, "Journal of a residence, etc.", p. 58. In regard to this matter the writer has also made many careful inquiries of persons well acquainted with the domestic economy of ante-bellum days.

several pairs of socks, and not infrequently, underclothes. The women were supplied correspondingly, and usually received one or two gay colored handkerchiefs to tie about their heads, as was customary, particularly on Sundays or festive occasions. From the above minimum the generosity of allowance varied upward, custom requiring in many localities duplicate outfits at each distribution. Blankets were usually supplied to each cabin every second year. Among this class, too, nearly all money earned by extra work or the sale of produce was spent for articles of dress.

It was exceedingly difficult to have the field negroes maintain a satisfactory appearance. They were everywhere very hard on their clothes, partly owing to the character of the work they had to do, and partly to their heedless indifference, save on special occasions when it was desired to make a show. The art of saving wear and tear in clothes was one which this race had never acquired, and it was inevitable that they should proceed most of the time in unconscious thoughtlessness of their clothing. Seeing no clear connection between their own labor and what they received, they could not realize the cost of that which they consumed, and were without motives to avoid wasteful destruction. In consequence of these facts, unless ceaseless oversight was kept up, and supplementary articles of clothing were given out occasionally, the field hands were likely to become dirty and ragged before the next semi-annual distribution came round. This was particularly true where large gangs of them were working under relatively little attention, but not of those on smaller well-managed plantations.[1]

[1] See Olmsted, "Back country", pp. 79–80; Kemble, "Journal, etc.", p. 52; Harriet Martineau, "Society in America", vol. i, p. 226, etc.

From the one extreme of neglected, ragged field-hands on the great plantations to the other extreme of refined and elegantly costumed house-servants in the wealthiest families, there were many grades. It is clear, however, that, taken as a whole, the negroes had in the matter of clothing made a long step toward civilized standards. Clothing exercises a subtle influence upon character, and it is likely that ninety per cent. of the negroes, at least, would, if called upon, in 1863, to go back to their ancient habit of three-quarter nakedness, have felt as strange as they originally felt in a full costume of hat, suit and shoes.

In the matter of house-shelter we find similar improvement over any former known racial experience. Where brick or stone were to be had cheaply, the houses for slaves would be made of such material, but the typical habitation to be seen almost everywhere was the "log cabin." This was built of hewn logs, with the cracks plastered or boarded up, a clapboard or shingle roof, a chimney with a large fire-place, and frequently a porch at the front or back. Usually the cabins were ranged along one or both sides of the main road leading from the "big house," and distant from it a quarter of a mile or more. These miniature villages, suggestive of the bush villages in the African jungle, were always called "the quarters." On prosperous well-managed plantations the cabins were kept white-washed and clean and the premises were kept neat; where there was slovenly management and poor returns these matters were neglected. It is probable that the proportion of the one to the other was about the same as that of efficient to inefficient farming or business management to be seen in any industrial society. Of the better type of cabin quarters Olmsted said: "They were as neat

and well-made as the cottages generally provided by manufacturing companies in New England to be rented to their employees";[1] while Fanny Kemble tells of others which were very dirty and unkept.[2]

Every cabin contained one or two rooms of varying size, and very often a "loft" overhead. By way of furniture there would generally be found in each cabin, on a good plantation, a few "split-bottom" chairs, a bedstead, a plain table, a little tinware with possibly a few pieces of coarse crockery, and the utensils for fire-place cooking, with some exceptions on large plantations where the cooking for the whole quarters was done at a single place. In the far south, where the climate was very mild, the negroes had very little more use for their cabins than for their huts in Africa; they were mere sleeping places and shelters during heavy weather. Fuel was freely allowed, though the negroes went without it often enough, rather than to take the trouble to get it from the woods. Still, here as in Africa, they loved few things better than hot cheerful fires, and generally had them except where they were overdriven with work, which was not common save in a region where artificial heat was little required, *i. e.*, in the Gulf states.

In the matter of medical care and sanitation the contrast with West African conditions reaches its climax. The attempts to prevent and cure disease by futile practices resulting from the belief in malignant spirits were, under the American slave-master, put down with a strong hand. With the greatest vigilance and discipline it was a difficult thing to do, for such beliefs are

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 659. See also *De Bow's Review*, vol. ix, p. 325.

[2] "Journal, etc.", p. 30.

among the most tenacious of all elements in uncultured human nature. Yet the white man knew that unless something of his own superior knowledge regarding such matters was put in practice among his negroes, it meant temporary, if not total, loss of his laborers. An epidemic of fatal disease at the quarters involving certain and grave losses, every plantation making the least pretense of fair management had rules and regulations relative to cleanliness about the cabins, the prompt reporting of sickness to the overseer or master, and the care of patients. In serious cases a physician was called in to prescribe, and members of the white family helped in the nursing. On large plantations it was usual to select some exceptionally intelligent and trustworthy woman to remain at the quarters permanently to look after the sick, the infirm, and lying-in women. She had to report daily, and the master or overseer went the rounds each day to see that there was no evasion or secret practice of superstitions in place of the right procedure.[1]

Despite the wisest rules, unless ceaselessly watched, the negroes would relapse into the old easy-going way, let filth accumulate, and disease go unattended. Fanny Kemble tells how she strove to get the negroes on her husband's plantation in Georgia to keep their cabins and persons clean and neat, but found it desperate work. They were always good-humored enough about it, and profuse in their protestations of willingness and good intentions, yet if left to themselves there was invariable

[1] See, for example, *De Bow's Review*, vol. xxiv, pp. 321–6. This account of the medical and sanitary care of the slaves is a summary of information gathered from many scattered sources, personal and documentary. Olmsted gives numerous incidental observations on the subject.

backsliding.[1] And so it was everywhere. Any laxity or inefficiency of control led speedily to a happy-go-lucky state of things about the quarters, well enough suited to the tastes and inclinations of the dwellers there, but calculated to create upon civilized eyes and noses something like the impression that is caused in West Africa by shoals of fish "drying" under the tropical sun. When the maintenance of good sanitary conditions and proper care for the sick exacted so much unremitting watchfulness and discipline, there were beyond question many who failed to carry theory into efficient practice; but as compared with the medical practice and hygiene of the Guinea Coast, it is obvious that the negroes experienced an immeasurable gain in these respects through their transfer.

The experience which the American scion of the African race underwent was on the whole one which made for better things in all directions,—better as judged from our civilized point of view, at any rate. That the tremendous readjustment required of the race as managed under slavery was not too much for it, was demonstrated by the one great fact that it multiplied as rapidly as the better conditioned white race. Other peoples in other lands have melted away on contact with civilization. The negroes were brought suddenly into the midst of a strenuous civilization, yet they throve mightily and at the end of two centuries had increased many fold. This is after all the most reliable evidence we have that the race in its American environment met with conditions quite favorable to its survival.

[1] "Journal, etc.", pp. 30–1 and 52. A prominent Mississippian, writing in *De Bow's Review*, vol. iii, p. 420, said: "Left to themselves they will over-eat, unseasonably eat, frolic half the night, sleep on the ground, out of doors, anywhere." West Africa still lived in them!

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER SLAVERY.

More rapid, at least in its superficial action, than any of the influences hitherto discussed, was the personal influence and discipline of the white man. The social inheritance of ideas and habits, determined by ages of savage existence, dissolved and gave place to, or rather combined with, a profoundly different inheritance derived originally from northern Europe. The resulting compound was a curious and interesting one.

In a society like ours the egoistic and anti-social impulses are controlled by a marvellous mechanism of refined, unobtrusive, and spiritualized agencies, to the influence of which the members of our race are capable of responding. For every overt offender against our written and unwritten law there are thousands who go through life obedient to the subtle suggestions and dictates of public opinion, as expressed through many conscious and unconscious agencies.[1] To this standard of thought, feeling, and action, an exalted one relative to that of undeveloped societies, the individual in American society must accommodate himself or suffer.

But all our ordinary means of exerting social control over the conduct of individuals would have been without effect upon the raw population we received from the Guinea Coast. What to them were our traditions, our industrial standards, our religion, our literature and art, our monogamic family ideals, in a word, our most valued social inheritance? They had a tradition of their own,

[1] See "Social control", by Edward A. Ross, for an illuminating analysis of this general subject.

industrial standards, religion, polygamic family ideals. Appeals to their slightly developed social sensibility could elict no response in action. They could be made to relinquish their own ancient tradition and usages and adopt the new only by force—the unremitting pressure of open, palpable, and resistless force. It might do to wait upon the slow process of missionary effort, unbacked by force, so long as the objects of such effort were far away across the sea. But with thousands of them among us, such a waiting policy involved too serious consequences.

In effect, American slavery was a vast school, in which a superior race drilled an inferior one into useful civilized life. The motive for this astonishing enterprise lay in the fact that all the pecuniary profits were to go to the teachers. Without some such strictly business motive, the teachers, though perhaps willing to help a few missionaries over in Africa, would have left the negroes undisturbed in their native habitat. They were disturbed, they were brought here, they were handed over to the American civilizer to be remodeled, on the understanding that he should receive all surplus material product above net cost—not that there was any conscious bargain to this effect, but in the outcome it amounted to this.

Without the possession of thorough mastery over the physically mature but mentally and morally childish people committed to his charge, he could not have dared to receive them into his community. Hence, these two features, profit and control, were fundamental in the system of slavery, yet they inevitably led to many defects and positive evils. Many of these the thoughtful slave owner realized as keenly as any one, and many he did not. On the other hand, he came to

know some things by long experience, which were never rightly comprehended by others not similarly experienced. We are not, however, interested primarily at present either in his point of view or that of his critics, but in that of the negroes themselves. What did it all mean eventually to them?

In his motherland the Negro received a very poor heritage of industrial knowledge and habit from the society that enclosed him. He was acquainted with but few labor-saving tools, and did not comprehend the principle of reaching ultimate ends by indirect means, greatly economizing labor. He never saw people hurry to save time. He was accustomed to make women do all inglorious drudgery. In the day of plenty he gorged himself, and trusted to luck to escape in the day of scarcity. In short, he was the very antithesis of the strenuously energetic, ingenious, and thrifty American.

Yet it was this indolent child of the tropics, of all people in the world, whom an ironical destiny cast into the midst of a great industrial society. It was a critical experience for the race, and probably only the fact that the white man's self-interest led to the protection and training of his Negro property during a transition period of several generations, preserved the latter from fatal consequences. As it was, the negro's industrial deficiencies did not bring upon him the results which most probably would have occurred under free individual competition. What happened was that these evil results came to inhere in the industrial system as a whole, of which his labor was made the basis, and made it weak in competition with that founded on efficient white labor.

The negro's incompetency was by no means the only weakness of American slavery, regarded as an institu-

tion for the production of wealth, or as a great industrial school for the negroes. In failing to proportion reward to effort, and offering little incentive to labor except fear, it was unfavorable to the inner development of character. Whether other incentives, powerfully felt by white men, would have proved efficient in urging the negroes to overcome their distaste for steady labor, may be questioned. Still, their absence seems an unfortunate feature of slavery. These incentives were to some extent furnished by the custom of allotting small patches of ground to families for their own use and benefit, and by the fact that a slave might retain all money earned by extra work, after completing the quota required by his master, or that he received for produce, poultry, eggs, etc., raised by himself. Many profited by this fact.

A grave industrial defect in slavery was the absence of any motive in the slave to economize in consumption or to handle tools with care. It seemed of no consequence to the negroes if things were rapidly worn out or recklessly destroyed. This fostered the heedless habits of the race. The only counter-check to this lay in those privileges already mentioned, which provided them a marginal opportunity to earn some money of their own, and so become interested in preserving it carefully.

The industrial evils of the system, above alluded to, were certainly fundamental and militated strongly against the sound improvement of race character. Nevertheless, some remarkable results were attained, so that the negroes were incomparably better prepared for free competition amid our people in 1863, than when they left the slaver's deck.

All those slaves reserved for domestic and personal service about the master's household enjoyed exceptional advantages in being constantly under the direct personal supervision of the whites. The kind of work assigned to them, too, requiring the exercise of intelligence, skill and alertness, tended to develop those qualities.

The female servants employed were cooks, with their assistants or apprentices, house-maids, nurses for the young children, sewing-women engaged in making up the large quantities of clothing required each season, dining-room waitresses, etc. In wealthy households it was common enough for the blacks to exceed the whites in number. It may seem that with so much help at hand the life of a white mistress must have been an easy one. In reality it was far otherwise. The organi zation and daily direction of all this labor-force usually was a sore burden to the mistress. She had to give out daily provisions to the cook, cut out clothing and supervise the making of it, and instruct the new hands. Dozens of pairs of socks and stockings were to be knitted before the semi-annual distribution; quantities of fruit had to be put up for winter use; the sick and ailing were to be looked after; and throughout all this there were the countless difficulties that arose out of the indolence and thoughtlessness of those under direction. Mrs. V. V. Clayton tells in homely detail of how the mistress of a large household, including a large staff of servants, went through her daily routine at different seasons of the year. There was cutting out and sewing, putting up fruit, "hog killing time," nursing the sick, and ceaseless regulation of numberless other details. Obviously it required no little executive ability to manage such a domestic economy efficiently, and many failed of the best results. Still, the outcome of this

training school in domestic work for negro girls was to produce a large class of servants who would perhaps compare favorably with the similar class in any country.[1] Many male servants as well, were employed in various capacities about the house. They enjoyed the same general advantages, and many became as satisfactory in their trained service as any like employees to be found anywhere.

The conditions with field negroes were very different. Except on very small plantations, where the owner looked after his own agricultural operations, and had few hands to direct and train, field negroes had little contact with whites. They were handled in groups, and did not receive careful individual attention. Most of the work assigned to them was simple and monotonous, exacting little intelligence or expert skill. At the height of the crop season, the labor was long and severe, inducing great weariness. The inevitable tendency of these conditions was to deaden intellectual activity, and unfit them for work requiring alert wits and deft hands. This was particularly true on the immense plantations in the rice, cotton and sugar growing sections, and was less and less so as the scale of operations became smaller. A certain amount of this dullness of mind and clumsiness of movement is seen among all agricultural laborers of the lower class, being an inevitable effect of the hard outdoor labor they perform. But the absence of independent will, the subjection to forcible pressure, and

[1] See Mrs. V. V. Clayton's "White and black under the old regime", pp. 38, 39, 50–1, 59, 114–15. See also Olmsted, "Seaboard, etc.", pp. 195–6 and 421; Fanny Kemble's "Journal, etc.", pp. 23–4; Miss Martineau's "Society in America", vol. i, p. 224.

the original density of ignorance of plantation negroes,[1] all helped greatly to emphasize such characteristics.

This description, however, applies only to the lowest class during the crop season. With the advent of winter, the plowing, hoeing and harvesting had to give way to occupations that brought in an element of variety and enlivenment. During the slack time there were fresh clearings to be made, fences and out-buildings to be repaired, fuel to be got up, and various left-over jobs to be disposed of.

Not all the negroes outside the house-servant class were mere field laborers. There were two intervening groups of great importance, the mechanics and the sub-overseers. In the ante-bellum days the population of the slave-states was so scattered and the difficulties of transportation so great, that it was impossible to distribute many kinds of manufactured articles, save at prohibitory cost. At the present time when northern and western products can be laid down at almost any point in the south very cheaply, we find it not easy to realize how different it was formerly. The rise of many towns and villages, serving as distributing points, has also facilitated matters greatly for rural districts. Before these great developments, however, the vast majority of plantations had to be nearly self-sufficing. On every large plantation and within every group of small ones there were to be found selected negroes, who had been trained as blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, coopers, shoe-cobblers, etc. These men frequently became first-class mechanics, and they were the main dependence for getting all sorts of serviceable home-made manufacturing done. They made and re-

[1] See Olmsted, "Journey through the back country", pp. 81 and 48–9; "Seaboard slave states", pp. 668–9.

paired tools, both wooden and iron, put up buildings, turned out plain furniture, and in many ways rendered the plantation independent of importation from without.[1]

Many thousands of negroes were employed in miscellaneous occupations connected specifically with some local industry. They were relied upon for the labor supply in tobacco factories, sugar mills, cotton gins, saw mills, steamboats, coal and iron mining, extensive coast fisheries, turpentine production, and the like. The workmen in all such industries as these gained an insight into useful forms of production, and had a drill in habits of labor. The class of stupid, densely ignorant field negroes, while large, was far from including all below the relatively aristocratic class of house-servants.

Another class remains to be considered, small numerically, but in some respects more important than any other. It was very common for a master to entrust the management of minor operations to one or more of his negroes who had shown exceptional capacity and trustworthiness. Very frequently, instead of employing a white overseer, a master exercised general supervision himself, and relied upon negro overseers as assistants. Sometimes they were employed in the capacity of stewards, and carried the keys. A typical instance of this is given by Olmsted in his ovservations on a large rice plantation near Charleston :

"We were attended through the mill-house by a respectable looking, orderly, and gentlemanly-mannered mulatto, who was called by his master 'the watchman.' His duties, however, as they were described to me, were those of a steward or intendent. He carried, by a strap at his waist a very large number of keys, and had charge of all the stores of provisions, tools, and materials of the plantations, as well as of all their produce before it was shipped to market. He

[1] See Fanny Kemble's "Journal, etc.", p. 27, and Olmsted, "The back country", pp. 76–8; "Seaboard slave states", pp. 47, 337–47, 351–4, 564, 668–73.

weighed and measured out all the rations for the slaves and for the cattle; superintended the mechanics, and himself made and repaired, as was necessary, all the machinery." [1]

Here we have, no doubt, the very best type; but in various lesser capacities it was quite common to give able negroes similar opportunities to prove what was in them.

Valuable as they had always been, the members of this small class of selected and trusted negroes, trained to carry responsibility and to manage plantation operations, became indispensable during the civil war. In that struggle the great disparity in white population between the North and the South compelled the latter to call out more and more of its able-bodied white men, until thousands of plantations were stripped of all the whites save women and children. Many a plantation was then conducted for several years by the negro overseer and steward, under no other authority or advice than that of his white mistress.[2] This well known and remarkable fact is a striking indication of the extent to which the "fittest" descendants of that raw population, drawn from Africa, had acquired industrial qualifications under the training of Americans.

In review we may say that the almost homogeneous mass of totally benighted savages unloaded from the slavers and landed on our soil, had gradually differentiated. By 1863 had been evolved at least four classes,—(1) the field-hands proper, (2) the artisans, factory-hands, etc., (3) the house-servants, and (4) the foremen, stew-

[1] "Seaboard slave states," p. 426.

[2] Mrs. V. V. Clayton says that, during the absence of her husband for four years as a general in the Confederate service, she and her four young children were the only white persons on their Alabama plantation. "Old Joe" managed plantation affairs meantime, and was even left in sole charge, when she went to visit her sick husband at the front. "White and black, etc.", p. 116, *et seq.*

ards, etc. Lowest of all were the field-hands, who had acquired the habit of working long and steadily at simple monotonous tasks, under the constant direction of superiors. Otherwise they remained as unenlightened as before; but the habit of labor was something gained for them, since the race never had it before. It is altogether probable also that under the action of selection this class contained many left behind in the evolution of the three higher classes, and innately incapable of much progress. Every race has individuals under, as well as above, average. Among the negroes the former moved slowly in the rear of their race, while the latter progressed more rapidly in varying degrees.

In the second class named, a very marked industrial progress had been attained. Out of a people to whom Du Chaillu's instruments were gods of marvellous power, there had come forth men who worked with or about machinery unburdened with fear, who could handle keen edged tools with good effect, and produce the simpler manufactured articles very successfully. The third class, having enjoyed the greatest advantages of environment and specific teaching, had reached relatively a high level of intelligence of skill in certain phases of industry, and of refinement. But those last mentioned, who, in spite of adverse circumstances, worked their way up to positions of trust and executive responsibility, may be set down as the picked men of their race at the time in question. In them really did the hopes of the negroes lie, for they demonstrated what the race could bring forth at its best. They bore the same relation to all the rest that the entrepreneurs and captains of industry in the dominant race bear to the mass of population.

The industrial progress of the negroes under the tuition and discipline of the American slave-owner, if meas-

ured in terms of West African standards, was of enormous importance. There had been positive and constructive achievements, such as placed the American branch far ahead of its contemporaries in the mother land. And yet, so immense had been the distance to be covered before equality with the Caucasian could be reached, and such had been the defects of slavery as an industrial school, that emancipation found the race far behind the whites in competing power.

Olmsted, during his itineraries through the slave states, endeavored particularly to ascertain wherein the negroes were inferior. He found that in amount of work done the average negro did not compare favorably with the white workmen in the free states. The negro never put himself into his work with vim and earnestness. It was his constant study to do as little as possible, consistent with escape from punishment; and so there was formed a deep-seated habit of shamming in every conceivable manner. One prominent Virginia planter said that his negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." Upon this Olmsted remarks: "This is just what I have thought when I have seen slaves at work; they seem to go through the motions of labor without putting strength into them. They keep their powers in reserve for their own use at night, perhaps."[1] Rarely were they too tired for a night frolic, with fiddling and dancing, or a coon and 'possum hunt. Many of them showed that they had plenty of reserved strength for their own projects in spare hours. Olmsted, endeavoring to get at some quantitative comparisons of negro with free white labor, compared the amount of wheat usually harvested by an

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 91.

equal number of negro and free white cradlers and binders. As a result of this and other calculations, he reached the conclusion that slaves were hardly one-half as efficient as free laborers. Where the "task system" prevailed, as in South Carolina and eastern Georgia, each negro being assigned a definite task to be accomplished each day, they worked "rapidly and well." But, says Olmsted: "These tasks would certainly not be considered excessively hard by a Northern laborer; and, in point of fact, the more industrious and active hands finish theirs often by two o'clock."[1] Evidently such a task would not pass as a good day's work according to our ordinary standards of industry.

Another cause of the inferiority of slave labor was their heedless indifference, clumsiness, and wastefulness. The lightest and best tools could not be given them, owing to excessive breakage or wear and tear. Even with the simplest and stoutest implements, the annual loss in capital was enormous. Further, it was all but impossible to introduce new and improved implements and tools. They were regarded as inconvenient and hateful innovations, and were quickly destroyed, owing partly to shrewd, wilful manipulation to that end, and partly to natural inability to effect readjustment to unfamiliar things. There was no interest to lead to the necessary effort. Nor could fine live stock be introduced, for the same carelessness, and a callous disregard of brute welfare besides, led almost invariably to losses too serious to be borne. Olmsted says:

"When I ask why mules are so universally substituted for horses on the farm, the first reason given, and confessedly the most conclusive one, is, that horses cannot bear the treatment they always must get from negroes; horses are always soon foundered or crippled by them,

[1] "Seaboard slave states", pp. 203–4, 435 and 667.

while mules will bear cudgeling, and lose a meal or two now and then, and not be materially injured, and they do not take cold or get sick if neglected or overworked. But I do not need to go further than to the window of the room in which I am writing, to see, at almost any time, treatment of cattle that would insure the immediate discharge of the driver by almost any farmer owning them at the North." [1]

Finally, there was wide-spread and incessant shamming of sickness among all classes of the negroes in order to avoid work. This evil was one that sorely taxed the patience and resources of every slave-owner. Olmsted states that he rarely failed to find on any plantation, supporting as many as twenty negroes, some that were not at work owing to sickness or injury, real or counterfeited. "It is said to be nearly as difficult to form a satisfactory diagnosis of negroes' disorders as of infants', because their imagination of symptoms is so vivid, and because not the slightest reliance is to be placed on their accounts of what they have felt or done." [2] Everywhere masters and mistresses were constantly between two embarrassing alternatives. If they were lenient and gave the negro the benefit of the doubt, there quickly followed an increase of ailments so great as to be manifestly counterfeit in great part. On the other hand, if they refused to believe in the sickness, they were liable to injure some that were really ill. In the end the masters often made the former mistake and sometimes the latter. Especially common was it for women to get release from labor on grounds of a nature that did not admit of effective investigation. One planter put the matter thus: "They don't come to the field, and you go to the quarters and ask the old nurse what is the matter, and she says, 'Oh, she's not well, master; she's not fit to

[1] *Idem.*, p. 47.
[2] "Seaboard slave states", p. 187.

work, sir,' and what can you do?"[1] Not merely was there shamming of sickness, but the utmost ingenuity of the negroes was exercised to invent excuses for procrastination, dilatory movements, and all manner of evasions of real effort. With such a labor-foundation the institution of slavery would inevitably have fallen by the way sooner or later in the modern struggle of competition.

We must beware, however, of being misled regarding the actual results of that system. Notwithstanding its constructive effect on the industrial character of the negroes, they still revealed many serious deficiencies. Was slavery the cause of these? If so, then with its abolition, we have a right to expect the disappearance of its effects after the rise of several new generations, subjected to different and opposite forces. If, however, there lay at the root of these deficiencies another powerful cause, quite apart from any human institution, then we are dealing with an altogether different problem. The true relation of slavery to the industrial inferiority of the negroes is, therefore, a matter of deep practical concern to us.

The question is: did American slavery develop in the negro his indolence, carelessness, brutality to animals, and aptness in deception, or did it merely fail to eradicate them as well as some better devised system might have done? Every characteristic just named we know to have been an integral part of the West African's nature long before any slaver ever touched our shore. He was indolent, reckless, and improvident, even when he himself immediately suffered the consequences, instead of an American master. He was inconceivably cruel to his own fellowmen, not to mention dumb brutes.

[1] *Idem.*, p. 190.

In a word, he was as a native of the Guinea Coast far worse than as an American slave, even in those particulars usually thought of as peculiarly the evil products of slavery.

In the face of this patent fact we must conclude that while our institution of slavery was ill-adapted in some ways to root out these elements of undeveloped character, yet it did not bring them into existence. That they persisted was due to the mighty force of race heredity, obscurely but irresistibly dominating Negro life at every point. Environmental influences, whether for good or evil, may effect much, but what we have just seen is a revelation of man's powerlessness to set aside a fundamental law of nature. With this law must reckon the American Negro, and the nation of which he is a part.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

In no direction, perhaps, was the readjustment required of the African immigrant more difficult than in that of religion. In every object, animate and inanimate, the Guinea native sees a spirit. To prosper in this life he has to keep on good terms with these spirits. But having attended well to this, his religious duty is done. As to his conduct toward fellowmen, the gods care nothing. His religion has nothing to do with moral conduct. In his thought there is no inconsistency between his piety towards the gods and cruelty or crime against human beings.

Imagine, then, the untutored negro, striving to lay aside these beliefs, rooted in the depths of his soul, and to rise to the comprehension of an exalted monotheistic religion. The conception of a single unlocalized Deity, whose attributes express the loftiest ideals attained by the white race, had never been grasped by the African mind. Instead of attributing every incident, trivial or serious, to concrete personalities, he must explain them in terms of abstract mechanical forces, expressing in indirect manner the will of the one Great Spirit. The negro was told that this Great Spirit is not satisfied with material sacrifices and humble homage, for these, if unaccompanied by obedience to a refined moral code, constitute abominable hypocrisy. He was told that to meet the requirements of the new religion, he must be chaste, truthful, honest and merciful in all human relations. In short, a more profound revolution of thought and conduct than was here involved can scarcely be con-

ceived. Yet nothing less than this was to be achieved, if the negro was to become fit for American society.

Our question is—in what ways and to what extent did the negro's experience under American slavery bring about this readjustment? Human thought and action are moulded by conscious and unconscious agencies. It is questionable whether the deliberate efforts of the dominant race to Christianize the slaves were as effective as various less purposive influences. The transfer from Africa had a strong negative effect. In the utter confusion of tribal distinctions and organization, the former notions and practices tended to disappear. The negroes were thereby released from the domination of their native priesthood, and heard no more of their teachings. The very languages in which all their former religious ideas had been couched were speedily lost. Many of the natural phenomena with which their religious beliefs and rites had been associated, were left in tropical Africa. Human sacrifices, witchcraft executions, licentious orgies at annual festivals, and the like, with all the thoughts and emotions cultivated by them, fell out of use and rapidly faded from memory.

Yet it is easy to overestimate the completeness of this negative experience. If the negroes had been taken in infancy from their native land, before becoming saturated with the native religion, and if they had been so scattered in this country as to give them no opportunity for a separate group life, the new environment would have given almost a *tabula rasa* on which to write new religious ideas. But such was far from the case. The transplanted negroes were adults, already imbued with their native religion. The field-hands living in the "quarters," had much opportunity to pre-

serve by tradition their former ideas. Hence, much of the ancient heritage, handed on by social heredity, survives even to this day.

More constructive influences also were acting upon the race. As the negroes learned how superior was the knowledge of their white master, they were profoundly impressed by the latter's attitude towards accidents, disease, and all occurrences affecting man's welfare. They saw the sick cured by nursing and medicine, without a suggestion of diabolical agencies. When a person was accidentally killed, when lightning destroyed property, or a crop was ruined by adverse weather, they observed that the far-seeing white man reckoned with no malignant spirits, but explained such incidents on other grounds. These facts showed that when their master reprobated their superstitions as delusions, he was sincere. Thus, as the negroes acquired confidence in the white man's ability, this silent influence over their thoughts grew more effective. Thus independently of any effort to instruct them, or force them to act in harmony with the white man's theory of things, they underwent a great change of thought and habit. Affecting first the more capable and alert minds of the race, these influences of example and suggestion worked downward throughout the mass.

But the dominant race did not rely solely upon the agencies just considered to uplift the negroes. Superstitious practices were strictly prohibited wherever the results were likely to be injurious or conflict with better methods known to the white. Not merely did the master provide proper methods for the cure of disease, but he would tolerate no resort to traditional modes of treatment. Wherever the latter were detected, they were suppressed on the spot. The weird and frantic

ceremonies at a death, the dangerous retention of a corpse till decomposed, the burial of it under the dwelling, and of valuables along with it, were incontinently done away with. Such customs usually are clung to with desperate persistence, and administrators in West Africa to-day find it well nigh impossible to suppress them, even in the districts most fully under their power. But in this country at the close of slavery few vestiges of them remained. The whole sacrificial economy of the former religion was effectively destroyed, and along with it many implied beliefs became lost to memory.

While this destructive work was going on, there was much constructive effort in the shape of religious instruction and exhortation. In hundreds of instances conscientious masters and mistresses made, or encouraged, earnest efforts to enlighten their negroes and impress upon them at least the simpler elements of Christianity. Except in few places, it was customary to have religious services and instruction on Sunday, conducted by the local white clergy, or in remote rural districts, where church facilities were wanting, by negro preachers of more than ordinary intelligence and character.

These humbler ministers of religion performed an important function. Olmsted gives an account of them, based on wide personal observation. He says:

"On almost every large plantation, and in every neighborhood of small ones, there is one man who has come to be considered the head or pastor of the local church. The office among the negroes, as among all other people, confers a certain importance and power. A part of the reverence attaching to the duties is given to the person vanity and self-confidence are cultivated, and a higher ambition aroused than can usually enter the mind of a slave. The self-respect of the preacher is also often increased by the consideration in which he is held by his master, as well as his fellows; thus, the preachers

generally have an air of superiority to other negroes; they acquire a remarkable memory of words, phrases and forms; a curious sort of poetic talent is developed, and a habit is obtained of rhapsodizing and exciting furious emotions, to a great degree spurious and temporary, in themselves and others, through the imagination." [1]

Mrs. Clayton describes the negro preacher, Uncle Sam, on her husband's plantation, as one who exercised a a most valuable influence upon all the negroes, commanding their respect as well as that of his master. He held weekly services in a little "chapel" built for the purpose, and also Sunday school for the younger people.[2]

The religion thus transmitted to the masses was unquestionably crude, often sadly distorted, and yet it is probable that the instruction and stimulus thus received were generally as good as the simple hearers were able to assimilate. Thus the ministry may have been more effective than one purer and more elevated that would have overshot the mark.

Missionary efforts on the part of the churches to provide for Christianizing the heathen population from Africa, were made very early in colonial times. The favorable opportunities for this work under American slavery had been one of the considerations prominently put forward as an excuse for that institution, and went far to reconcile the clergy to its adoption. The "Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts", incorporated by William III at London, in 1701, had for one of its objects the Christianizing of the negroes in the American colonies.[3] Accordingly

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 450.

[2] "White and black, etc.", pp. 23–4.

[3] See "The religious instruction of the negroes", by the Rev. Charles C. Jones, of Savannah, 1842, p. 8, *et seq.* In this work will be found an excellent account of the work of this society and of the American churches in the religious instruction of the negroes.

missionaries were sent and the regular colonial clergy were urged to care for the spiritual welfare of the slaves. Masters and mistresses were addressed directly and urged to promote Christian belief and conduct among their negroes. The Bishop of London, for example, in 1727, addressed a long and earnest letter "to the masters and mistresses of families in the English plantations abroad, exhorting them to encourage and promote the instruction of their negroes in the Christian faith."[1] The Moravian Brethren were particularly active in several of the colonies, and accomplished much. The Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches, named here in the order of their inception and development in the colonies, also made provision for the religious teaching of the negroes. But the last two denominations succeeded in enrolling the largest number of converts, and seem to have looked more than any of the other ecclesiastical organizations toward the securing of negro converts.[2] Their great success was largely due to their methods of evangelization, which strongly appealed to the simple minds and emotional temperaments of these people.

In these ways an immense force was brought to bear, tending to transform the negroes' religious life. That the light failed to reach all is certain. Some masters were indifferent, and a few opposed instruction of any kind, but the better order and more civilized manners of negroes controlled by correct religious motives, were too patent to most slave owners to permit them to make any objection. Rather did this consideration lead some

[1] *Idem.*, pp. 16–18, the letter being quoted in full.

[2] *Idem.*, p. 53, *et seq.* According to Jones, when the Union was formed there were some 73,471 Baptists and 12,884 Methodist communicants among the negroes, and the number in each case was growing fast.

who were themselves indifferent to religion, to encourage religious work among their negroes.

It was inevitable that much of the religious teaching should be so little digested as to be without appreciable effect upon the conduct, and it must be admitted that even among the most intelligent and thoroughly instructed of the race, the lofty ideals and exacting moral code of Christianity were but feebly grasped and carried out in life. Nevertheless, when we compare their religious condition in West Africa and at the close of slavery, it is plain that they had made a great step toward something less gloomy, futile, and appallingly wasteful, than their former faith. It is true that their social heredity was not entirely cut off, and the inertia of race habit caused the survival of many superstitions. Belief in the efficacy of charms was still all but universal; a rusty nail wrapped in red flannel was highly valued as a protection against all sorts of ills; belief in witchcraft survived as faith in the power of evil persons to "put a spell" on one. These beliefs were a prolific source of trouble to the owners. "Conjerors", in essence the survivors of the former priests, made a business of selling charms, removing "spells", etc. If a rabbit ran across a path, it was abandoned; a lightning-struck tree was never used for fuel. These things, though harmless compared with what went before, must not be overlooked, for they reveal mental conditions. All in all, however, no small part of that profound readjustment in religious life, defined at the opening of this chapter, had been effected in our negro population by virtue of their experience under slavery.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Let us consider some differences between the petty tribal groups in Africa from which the Negro came, and the great, organic nation for which they must be socialized. Now and then some West African chieftain of unusual ability conquered a number of tribes, but experience has shown that these embryo kingdoms soon fall to pieces. Among the unharmonized village groups perpetual hostility exists. Under such conditions the individual is conscious of membership only in his own small group, and even there his sense of social obligation is little exercised. He has acquired little of that power, fundamental to enlarged social existence, of restraining the desires and passions destructive of orderly coöperation. Killing, torturing, theft and duplicity, are so often virtues to him, that even in his own group they seldom seem disreputable and receive punishment. His sense of family and neighborly obligations—in a word, his psychic nature, has been adapted to social life barely enough to permit of a narrow, turbulent tribal existence.

Our race, which in Europe had developed large national societies, had developed the mental and moral qualities necessary to survival under such conditions: foresight; ability to harmonize freedom of individual initiative with efficient social organization; self-restraint combined with self-assertion; stability combined with adaptability. Respect for life and property, sympathy, integrity, regard for family and fellowman,—these make possible a society progressive and at the same time orderly and conservative.

These subjective adaptations, while to a large extent matters of education, have their limits fixed by innate capacities and instincts. These are determined by heredity, and are not to be reshaped save by the slow processes of selection. A remoulding of the Negro's psychic nature was required to fit him for membership in American society. How far had the Negro character, while subjected to American slavery, been thus socialized? The degree of socialization may be tested in two ways: by the conduct shown in family relations, and by that shown in relation with men in general. In a word, the test of a people's social refinement is found in the moral standards recognized and maintained by it.

We may recall here what was said regarding the loose sex relations and reckless licentiousness of the West Africans. Clearly the task of the slave-owner, coming into possession of such people, and undertaking to regulate them according to white conceptions of chastity and monogamic marriage, was one of superhuman difficulty. Certain exigencies of the institution under which they were held prevented slave marriages from being as inviolable by law and as sacredly respected as was the case among the higher race. The Rev. C. C. Jones said truly enough:

"The married state is not protected by law; whatever of protection it enjoys is to be attributed to custom, to the efforts of conscientious owners, and to the discipline and doctrine of the churches, and also to the correct principle and virtue of the contracting parties." [1]

There was nothing to prevent masters from parting a couple for "incompatibility of temper", or in a division of property, or for any other reason. That only too often they did this, was a serious fault of slavery at a vital point. Yet such parting of slave couples was ex-

[1] "The religious instruction of the negroes", pp. 132–3.

ceptional, few masters resorted to it without strong reasons, and on most plantations many years would pass without any such occurrence. Particularly was it avoided in the case of the house-servants and well-behaved negroes, whose appreciation of the sacredness of monogamic marriage was so much greater. Among the field-hands, much less removed from their original status, strong attachments between husband and wife were, as in Africa, comparatively rare, and separations meant to them neither greatly wounded feelings nor the breach of a sacred contract.

Marriages among the field negroes of the larger plantations were attended with scarcely any ceremony, and thus were not calculated to make much of an impression as really solemn occasions in life. But in the case of negroes on smaller plantations, more intimately known to their owner in person, and especially among house-servants everywhere, marriages were celebrated with considerable ceremony. Says Olmsted:

"When a man and woman wish to live with each other, they are required to ask leave of their master; and, unless there are some very obvious objections, this is always granted; a cabin is allotted to them, and presents are made of dresses and house-keeping articles. A marriage ceremony, in the same form as that used by free people, is conducted by the negro preacher, and they are encouraged to make the occasion memorable and gratifying to all by general festivity. The master and mistress, when on the plantation, usually honor the wedding by their attendance, and, if they are favorite servants, it is held in the house, and the ceremony performed by a white minister." [1]

Undoubtedly it is important thus to magnify an occasion, when the individual enters into new responsibilities, so that these will be better realized and remembered.[2]

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 448.

[2] This point is forcibly brought out by Edward A. Ross in his "Social control", p. 253.

The influences tending toward marital fidelity and chastity among the field negroes failed of securing amongst them a sexual morality even approximating that of civilized peoples. This was due in part to the indifference of masters, and this in turn, in no small degree, to the hopelessness of the task. Reasonable quiet and order in the quarters seemed as much as could be hoped for under the circumstances. In part the failure was owing to strong passions and weak self control, and a lack of any feeling of dishonor in breaking marriage vows or being unchaste. These matters were much better regulated among the house-servants. Not only were they under closer supervision, but they imbibed unconsciously from the whites more of the sentiments and ideals that make against immoral conduct. Probably a distinct majority of the negroes lived out their lives in proper monogamic marriages. In any case it is certain that the negroes on the average had left West African standards far behind by 1863.

It seems probable that there was less advance in parental care for children under slavery than in any other direction, The West African father felt little concern in his children; the mother, while showing impulsive affection for them at times, had no idea whatever of systematically correcting and training them. Thus, at the time the negroes came to this country there had not been developed in the race strong and enduring parental affections nor more than a very slight sense of responsibility for careful bringing up of children.

Now, such were the conditions under slavery that this phase of family life, supremely important in civilized societies, could be very little cultivated. The evil conditions were more aggravated and wide spread

than among white working classes of the lower grades, where both father and mother, going out to work, are compelled daily to leave their children. On every plantation the younger children shifted for themselves at the quarters, or were left in charge of one or more older women, entrusted with that duty. These carelessly looked after the little swarm of black children, doing only what was necessary to keep them out of danger and correcting only flagrant disobedience.[1] The parents while about their cabins paid little attention to their own children, save to beat them if exasperated by some unusual misconduct.[2] Parental care was much better in the case of the house-servants, who had the example of the white household constantly before their eyes, and were better able to appreciate the importance of early training.

As might have been expected, the mutual attachments among members of the same family were seldom as deep and lasting as is the case among whites. The capacity for such feeling is a matter of slow growth, and could not possibly be developed suddenly within half a dozen generations. Fanny Kemble was astonished and perplexed by the fact that on the death of a child among her husband's negroes, the parents, nurse, and others "all seemed apathetic and indifferent to the event." [3] Olmsted found that it was so common for negro couples to tire of each other and wish for separation, or else to show no great concern upon separation, that the planters thought nothing of it.[4] Usually, after

[1] Olmsted, "Seaboard slave states", pp. 423–4.
[2] Jones, "Religious instruction, etc.", p. 113.
[3] "Journal, etc.". p. 95.
[4] "Journey through the back country", p. 112.

the loss of any relative by death or separation,[1] there was an outburst of demonstrative lamentation, very soon followed by returning indifference and cheerfulness. Lack of affectionate concern for the nearest kin was shown often in neglect of them during illness, thus making it necessary for the owner to watch such matters closely.

From our standpoint all this sounds anything but encouraging. But recall how little time had elapsed since the forefathers of these people had lived in complete savagery where selling of relatives or children into slavery, even into foreign slavery, was a commonplace that aroused no protest. At their worst, the American negroes have never witnessed or taken part in scenes of callous cruelty such as were too frequent in West Africa to give occasion for surprise or comment.

In the recognition of wider social obligations considerable progress was made, although the standard attained on the average was still, of course, very low. The Guinea native's propensity to steal, and his remarkable facility in lying, persisted. Just as the officers

[1] Olmsted cites, for example, as not inconsistent with his own impressions, the description of a slave auction by a writer in *Chamber's Journal*, Oct., 1853. This writer was much surprised at the absence of emotion among the negroes concerned: "the change of owners was apparently looked forward to with as much indifference as hired servants might anticipate removal from one employer to another. . . . This does not correspond with the ordinary accounts of slave sales, which are represented as tearful and harrowing. My belief is none of the parties felt deeply on the subject, or at least that any distress they experienced was but momentary. . . . One of my reasons for this opinion rests on a trifling incident which occurred. While waiting for the sale, a gentleman present amused himself with a pointer dog, which stood on its hind legs and took pieces of bread from his pocket. These tricks greatly amused the row of negroes . . . . and the poor woman, whose heart three minutes before was almost broken, now laughed as heartily as any one." "Seaboard slave states", p. 37.

and travellers in West Africa were incessantly exasperated by these traits of the negro, so were the American slave-owners. Deploring the inveterate habits of the slaves along the lines in question, Jones said :

"They are proverbially thieves. . . . They steal from each other, from their masters, from anybody. Cows, sheep, hogs, poultry, clothing—yea, nothing goes amiss to which they may take a fancy; while corn, rice, cotton, or the staple productions, whatever they may be, are standing temptations, provided a market be at hand, and they can sell or barter with impunity." [1] He adds: "Duplicity is one of the most prominent traits in their character. . . Their frequent cases of feigned sickness are vexatious. . . . The number, variety, and ingenuity of the falsehoods, that can be told by one of them in a few moments, is most astonishing."

The ancient lineage of this trait is familiar to us in the strikingly similar language of Du Chaillu and Ellis as to the source of many trials to the white man in Africa.

To overcome, to any great degree, these weaknesses of an immature development, was manifestly impossible within the period of slavery. Still, many negroes came to be entirely trusted by their owners in responsible positions, and there can be no doubt that the class of honest and reliable characters was steadily growing. Other elements of social character were being slowly acquired; violence to life and property was comparatively rare; there was a growth of sympathy, and of a sense of obligation to those in need. Though much of this refinement was essentially artificial and of shallow rootage, the American negroes had put off their more grossly anti-social customs, together with many associated ideas and sentiments, and had become beings of a higher social grade.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

CHAPTER VIII.

PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT.

Of all phases of human character, perhaps the most subtle and difficult to understand in their causal relations are temperamental qualities. Why one race is inclined to be phlegmatic, reserved, and stoical, while another is excitable, garrulous, and demonstrative, is a question for which as yet there is no convincing answer. The West African people are emphatically of the latter type. They are exceedingly fond of music and dancing; quickly recover good humor after provocation; are heedless amid misfortune, and love the communal group life rather than that of the family.

These characteristics largely remained with them as slaves in this country. It is true that the very lowest class of field-hands, worked severely in large gangs on the greater plantations and rigidly held in a monotonous routine, tended to become depressed and stolid. In all grades above this, however, the average negro's excitability, love of fiddling, singing and dancing, his readiness for a frolic, his delight in a "crowd" where plenty of talk and gaiety were going on, his unrestrained demonstrations of grief or joy, were proverbial throughout the slave states. Travellers usually were surprised by the exhibition of prevailing cheeriness and good humor where they expected to find sullen despair. Not knowing the natives of Guinea they were not prepared to understand why a negro was not affected by slavery and misfortune in the same way a Caucasian would have been.

Olmsted observed on various occasions that when one

might have expected with good reason to find low-spirited melancholy, such was by no means the case. During a voyage from Mobile to New Orleans, he watched the cargo of slaves, of whom some were going to be sold in the latter city and some were accompanying emigrants to Texas. Disconsolate individuals were the exception, and as a crowd they appeared to have a jolly time, there being "a fiddle or two among them," and plenty of singing, dancing, and continual talk.[1] Similarly he was surprised to find that, on the Louisiana sugar plantations, the negroes looked forward with pleasure to the "grinding season," and preferred it to any other, despite the fact that it involved the hardest labor of the year, requiring at its height eighteen hours a day of both black and white. Inquiring of the negroes why this was so, he found that it was because things were lively, strong coffee was given without stint, and there was abundant noise and "go" about every thing done. Thus, many peculiar propensities of the negroes were gratified.[2]

A typical "ball," as seen on a large cotton plantation of eastern Georgia among the field negroes, is described by Fanny Kemble, as follows:

"At our own settlement I found everything in a fever of preparation for the ball. A huge boat had just arrived from the cotton plantation at St. Simon's, laden with the youth and beauty of that portion of the estate who had been invited to join the party; and the greetings among the arrivers and welcomers, and the heaven-defying combinations of color in the gala attire of both, surpass all my powers of description. The ball, to which of course we went, took place in one of the rooms of the Infirmary. . . . Oh, my dear E———, I have seen Jim Crow, the veritable James; all the contortions, and springs, and flings, and kicks, and capers you have been beguiled into accept ing as indicative of him are spurious, faint, feeble, impotent—in a word, pale Northern reproductions of that ineffable black conception.

[1] "Seaboard slave states", p. 571.

[2] *Idem.*, pp. 681–2.

It is impossible for words to describe the things these people did with their bodies, and, above all, with their faces, the whites of their eyes and the whites of their teeth, and certain outlines, which either naturally or by the grace of heaven, or by the practice of some peculiar artistic dexterity, they bring into prominent and most ludicrous display. The languishing elegance of some, the painstaking laboriousness of others, above all, the feats of a certain enthusiastic banjo player, who seemed to me to thump his instrument with every part of his body at once, at last so utterly overcame any attempt at decorous gravity on my part that I was obliged to secede." [1]

This side-light upon one aspect of plantation life brings into view many characteristics, attesting the persistence of racial heredity.

A high degree of intelligence is incompatable with enslavement as a general thing, and consequently the slave-owners forbade literate education among their negroes. Hence, with negligible exceptions, the mass of them remained totally illiterate until after emancipation. This does not imply that they made no progress in intelligence. It is not likely that lack of schools was as serious a drawback as has been commonly supposed. It is never safe to assume that what is good or bad for a highly developed race is equally good or bad for an undeveloped one.

Literary and scientific culture is the last term in a long series of developments. It is a recent achievement

[1] "Journal, etc,", pp. 96–7. As a companion piece with this scene among the lower class of field negroes, it may be well to give Olmsted's account of how balls were managed among the slave aristocracy: "During the winter the negroes, in Montgomery, have their 'assemblies' or dress balls, which are got up regardless of expense in very grand style. Tickets are advertised 'admitting one gentleman and two ladies, $1', and 'Ladies are assured that they may rely on the strictest order and propriety being observed.' Cards of invitation finely engraved with handsome vignettes, are sent, not only to the fashionable slaves, but to the more esteemed white people, who, however, take no part except as lookers on. All the fashionable dances are executed; no one is admitted except in full dress; there are regular masters of ceremonies, etc." See "Seaboard slave states", p. 554.

of our own race, and rests upon foundations which it required centuries to build. Before it came to flower and fruitage, civilization had first to strike deep roots into the soil. Without sustentation life cannot grow, which means that without mastery over the processes of production no society can progress. The first lesson for a people to learn is that "labor is the first price, the original purchase money,"[1] that must be paid for all things. No less important is the lesson how to consume with such foresight and self-control as to get the maximum benefit from the products of labor. When these lessons have become part of the character of a people, they are ready to grasp and use a higher culture to advantage. They are then in no danger of losing their equilibrium, for they can then appreciate the true function of literary training.

We are prone to assume that what is good for us must be good for all men. Yet it is not true, for example, that because democratic self-government suits us admirably, it is therefore the best form of government for every people. Because from the high level already attained by us further progress is conditioned upon literary and scientific education, it does not follow that these factors are equally necessary to progress from the level of the Guinea natives. They have yet to learn the elementary lessons of civilization which our race acquired before five per cent. of its members could write their names.

Miss Kingsley's discussion of the attempts in West Africa to civilize the natives through reading and writing is very illuminating. Having shown that, contrary to the supposition of some, polygamy and drink

[1] Adam Smith, "Wealth of nations", London, 1893, p. 23.

did not suffice to explain the degeneration revealed by the simi-civilized natives, she says:

"Well! if it is not the polygamy and not the drink that makes the West African so useless as he now is as . . . . a means of developing the country, what is it? In my opinion it is the sort of instruction he has received, not that this instruction is necessarily bad in itself, but bad from being unsuited to the sort of man to whom it has been given. It has the tendency to develop his emotionalism, his sloth, and his vanity, and it has no tendency to develop those parts of his character which are in a rudimentary state and much want it, thereby throwing the whole character of the man out of gear." [1]

By way of explaining the basis of this opinion she says further:

"The great inferiority of the African to the European lies in the matter of mechanical idea. . . The African's own way of doing anything mechanical is the simplest way, not the easiest, certainly not quickest; he has all the chuckle-headedness of that overrated creature, the ant, for his head never saves his heels. Watch a gang of boat-boys getting a surf-boat down a sandy beach. They turn it broadside on to the direction they wish it to go, and then turn it bodily over and over, with structure-straining bumps to the boat, and any amount of advice and recriminatory observations to each other. Unless under white direction they will not make a slip, nor will they put rollers under her. Watch again a gang of natives trying to get a log of timber down into the river from the bank, and you will see the same sort of thing—no idea of a lever, or anything of that sort; and remember that, unless under white direction, the African has never made an even fourteenth-rate piece of cloth or pottery, or a machine, tool, picture, sculpture, and that he has never even risen to the level of picture-writing."

She then points out that most of the education given to the natives has been of the literary kind only. The native

"sees the white man is his ruling man, rich, powerful, and honored, and so he imitates him, and goes to the mission-school classes to read and write, and as soon as an African learns to read and write he turns into a clerk. Now there is no immediate use for clerks in Africa, certainly no room for further development in this line of goods. What Africa wants at present, and will want for the next 200 years at least, are workers, planters, plantation hands, miners, and seaman;

[1] "Travels in West Africa", pp. 668–9.

and there are no schools in Africa to teach these things or the doctrine of the nobility of labour save the technical mission-schools. Almost every mission on the Coast has now a technical school, just started, or is having collections made at home to start one." [1]

This very recent movement to lay the main stress in education upon manual training and discipline in labor is the result of the experience described by Miss Kingsley. Her opinions are fully corroborated by other authorities. M. De Cardi says:

"Thus you will understand me, when I point out to you the weak spot in nine-tenths of the mission effort. They have been trying to look after the negro's soul and teaching him Christianity, which in the native mind is cutting at the root, not only of all their ancient customs, but actually aims at taking away their living without attempting to teach them any industrial pursuit which may help them in the struggle for life, which is daily getting harder for our African brethren, as it is here in England." [2]

The principle of relativity has been overlooked and it has been assumed that the needs of the white man and the savage are the same.

All this does not prove that literary education is in itself bad for a raw people, but it demonstrates that mere schooling in matters of intellect will not of itself transform indolent savages into efficient members of a civilized society, and that literary knowledge must be used only as one of the means to the end sought. Amongst ourselves each new generation acquires, independently of schools, invaluable knowledge and habits that the lower races do not possess at all. We gain them during youth as unconsciously as we do our mother-tongue. Precisely for this reason we forget what immense toil and struggle it costs an uncivilized people to attain the same ends.

[1] "Travels, etc.", pp. 669–71.

[2] Miss Kingsley, "West African studies", appendix i, p. 561. See also MacDonald, "The Gold Coast", chap. xii, pp. 316–338.

If the grave mistake made in West Africa had been made here, the disastrous results deplored by administrators in that region probably would have ensued here. We have no reason to assume that our people, in the days of slavery, understood the problem before them any better than the Europeans in West Africa. The facts above cited indicate, therefore, that what the slave-owner did out of pure self-interest, was not so serious a hindrance to progress among the negroes, fresh from Africa, as at first glance it seems.

Notwithstanding his continued illiteracy, the transplanted Guinea native was making progress throughout the period of slavery along the lines most significant to him. He was at school learning the primary lessons of civilization. He was getting rid of ideas and usages incompatible with life in a modern society. He was acquiring a new and superior language; he was being won over little by little to Christianity; he was contracting the habit of labor and becoming familiar with new productive processes; and he was being refined in social feeling and conduct. So far from remaining in a state of arrested progress, he was steadily acquiring those rudiments of character essential to all further development.

PART III.

THE NEGRO AS A FREE CITIZEN.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL NATURE OF THE SECOND CHANGE.

With the close of the civil war the negroes experienced another alteration of conditions, but one less profound and complete than the first. Many forces that had acted upon the race before emancipation continued in unbroken operation. Let us note them briefly in passing.

It was difficult for the negroes to realize what had befallen them, when their title to freedom was read and explained. There came no sudden change of scene; the same climate with its familiar seasons enveloped them; they moved amid unchanged natural phenomena; they were encircled by the same civilization; they continued in the same occupations; in a word, the environment which enclosed them remained substantially unchanged. It was the nature of their relations to that environment, so far as human law could regulate them, that had been altered. These elements of environment constitute a large proportion of the influences that mould human progress. Favorable to progress before emancipation, they continued favorable after it. Our climate, for instance, has helped steadily to stimulate tropical indolence into northern activity, and the constant influence of a civilized model has tended to substitute American civilization for African barbarism. Unless we bear in mind that these forces persisted, we shall lose perspective, and

exaggerate unconsciously the real place of newly introduced forces.

Likewise, heredity continued, changed but slightly with each generation. As under slavery it resisted remoulding influences, so it continued to do under the régime of freedom. The slight tendency to improvement, due to artificial selection of slaves by their owners, came to an end. Since 1863 the hereditary qualities of the race have been subject to natural selection only. There is reason to believe that recent developments are tending to reduce steadily the amount of intermixture between the two races.[1] Thus, it would appear that the racial heredity has undergone improvement (from the standpoint of Americans, of course) with less rapidity since emancipation than before.

So much for the forces that survived with unbroken continuity the abolition of slavery and the cataclysm of war. Others came into operation for the first time with Lincoln's proclamation.

To the negroes emancipation meant objectively the removal of compulsion, and subjectively the rise of new incentives to progress. Very soon came literary education, and, to many, also political power. Gradually has followed a segregation of the negroes, so that they are tending to develop a distinct community within the nation, one having its own public opinion, standards of conduct, and peculiar interests at many points. Both for the negroes and the nation at large, this may prove in the end the most fateful development of all.

We should understand clearly what the removal of compulsion involved. To the freedmen it seemed for a time that all control over them had ceased. In reality,

[1] This statement is here made in advance of a fuller discussion, which occurs in the next chapter.

however, there had been merely a transfer of authority from the person of the master to the community at large. It was still as necessary as ever that conduct should be controlled in accordance with civilized order. There was no release from the obligation to earn self-support by labor, to respect life and property, to honor the several relationships of the monogamic family, and, in short, to obey the written and unwritten law of the land. It is not simply that the public authority will enforce such conduct, acting through conscious channels: behind formal law stands a power even more relentless. If the individuals of any class, living in the environment of a strenuously progressive civilization, cannot adjust themselves to its requirements, they must succumb. From this there can be no escape under the law of struggle for existence.

The inertia of habit, once moulded under the discipline of the slave-owner, kept the mature generation of freedmen in the beaten path. It was only among those of the younger generation and its successors that the new conditions could work their full effects for good or evil. It will be for us to investigate these effects throughout the remainder of this study.

The subjective influences of freedom were very powerful for good, yet they were accompanied by grave dangers for the race. On the one hand the negroes now had every motive to put forth real effort in production, to avoid habits of careless wastefulness, and to exercise control over present desires in the interest of future welfare. On the other hand, if they proved wanting in these respects, the consequences were no longer borne by their employers, but by themselves. Personal liberty has, in most cases, been attained by the mass of men in

a community only after a severe struggle. Where it has been self-developed it is almost secure; if it has been a gift from others, the inner qualities needed to maintain it are far less likely to exist. Social existence is impossible unless the conduct of the individual be controlled and ordered according to certain fundamental principles. If the individual has such command of himself that he is able to regulate conduct from within, then for him great personal freedom is safe; but if not, the regulation must be from without. Unregulated action in response to egoistic desires and passions is in no case to be permitted. As a native of the Guinea Coast the negro had very slight self-command; as a slave in America he had no opportunity to cultivate this power. When, therefore, he became a free citizen of the United States, it was an extremely critical experience and the outcome is yet to be seen.

Neither education in letters, which became possible to the freedmen, nor manhood suffrage in self-governing states, which they suddenly acquired, ever had been known to the Negro race. The white man had slowly and painfully achieved them, and he thus had learned their functions and limitations. But such privileges came to the negro all at once, and found him totally unprepared for their wise use. Laws of growth cannot be contemptuously overridden. Literary culture, not reinforced by industrial training, was productive of mixed results, but the gift of political privileges proved to be almost wholly evil. Where a gradual, conservative introduction to political functions might have been effected with beneficial results, the method actually tried had deplorable consequences. Perhaps the most serious of these was to hasten and aggravate

the alienation of the two races. This, however, was probably inevitable sooner or later. (Two groups of men differing in color, temperament, and historical development, as registered in social ideals and sympathies, can not intermingle freely and maintain undifferentiated group life.) All theories of abstract rights, all generous hopes to the contrary, must go down before this stubborn law of human affinities and repulsions. Society may find some way to accommodate matters to the law, and thus secure ultimate ends, but the law itself must stand.

CHAPTER II.

INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS.

The progress of any people must depend in the long run upon the efficiency of the individuals as producers and accumulators. The progenitors of our present negro population were indolent and wasteful, lacking mechanical ability, foresight and will in the pursuit of distant objects. But, shielded from individual competition with the whites until four decades ago, the negroes made considerable progress toward American standards of industry. Yet emancipation found them far from equalling white labor in efficiency, and the economic system dependent upon their labor was steadily falling behind in the national development.

Nothing seemed easier to explain than this discrepancy between white and black labor. The black was a slave, with no higher motive to exert himself than fear of punishment; the white was a free man, with abundant incentives to work and accumulate. So clear and dramatic was this contrast that other possible factors in the situation were overlooked. Remove the slave's disabilities, (it was said), give him the incentives of the freeman, and he will presently recover from the ill effects of slavery. The argument seemed sufficient and conclusive. In reality, it was very far from it. The foregoing chapters show that the lack of industrial qualities in the negroes was not due to enslavement alone, but to the effects of an environment enduring for unnumbered generations. So much of their inefficiency as was due to the adverse conditions of slavery might be expected to disappear in the later generations enjoy-

ing free citizenship. But so much of it as had its root in hereditary constitution should not be expected to give way before new conditions for centuries. It is in the nature of the case impossible to measure accurately the proportion of inefficiency due to enslavement or to heredity. Some would magnify one, some the other; but certain it is that the importance of the factor of heredity must be more fully recognized than it has been.

Sufficient time has elapsed since slavery passed away for a new generation to come upon the scene. It should be possible for us to ascertain what new traits they are developing as freemen, and what is the significance of these for the future of the race. The industrial capacity our black population is exhibiting to-day, and the progress it is making, are matters of the greatest interest.

A word may be said relative to the scope of the generalizations presently to be made. A large majority of the negroes are still ordinary agricultural or mechanical laborers,[1] constituting practically a single type for the purposes of this investigation. Whenever, therefore, general statements are made it will be this class that is referred to, unless a wider extension is explicitly stated. It will be recognized that there are other classes, small as yet, which must be excepted from many generalizations applicable to the masses of the race. These classes are made up of individuals exceptionally able and forceful. Among their number, too, are many with Caucasian blood in their veins, who thus are not truly representative of African heredity. If the race holds its own, these classes probably will survive and do well, or if it succumbs, they will be the last to go.

[1] See p. 178 for census figures.

To ascertain the industrial efficiency of a people, we may observe directly what traits they reveal, or we may note the occupations they tend to engage in, and the use habitually made of what they earn. Let us proceed to apply each of these tests as fully as the available data will permit. On the threshold of the subject of the negro's capacity as a workman, we are met by a puzzling divergence of opinions. "The difficulty", says Hoffman, "in deciding as to the comparative efficiency of white and colored labor is enhanced by the conflict of opinion, even among those most competent to judge of the negro as an agricultural or industrial worker."[1] He quotes the late Gen. Armstrong as saying: "I know of no subject on which you hear such diametrically contrary opinions as you do about the colored people." Some employers of negro labor declare that it is very satisfactory, while many pronounce it thoroughly disappointing and not to be compared with white labor. No one appears to have made an attempt to reconcile and explain this conflict of opinions.

An explanation, almost self-evident as soon as pointed out, is found in the differences in the employers and industries, taken in connection with the industrial traits of the negro himself. Some employers have not the temperament fitting them to rule fellowmen with an iron hand, and they lack the disposition or patience to exercise minute supervision over heedless and unreliable workmen. Again, irrespective of the character of employers, there are industries of such a nature that a large measure of trust and dependence upon the individual laborer is absolutely necessary. In either of these cases it is evident that

[1] Race traits and tendencies, p. 251.

workmen not up to a certain standard of self-reliant skill and steadiness would be declared unsatisfactory. Other employers prefer docile, easily managed laborers, such as can perform hard and comparatively unskilled work, and will submit without friction to thorough subordination. There are industries, though the number is steadily decreasing with the progress of our industrial evolution, in which relatively little independent efficiency is required, or which easily admit of close supervision. Workmen who, under the other conditions above cited, might be counted worthless, might here be considered quite acceptable.

In the light of these distinctions, the apparently inconsistent opinions of negro labor may be harmonized. Those who consider such labor satisfactory, reveal incidentally, by certain adjectives, why they think so. They say, for example, that "the negro is the most docile and tractable of all laborers, and under proper management the most contented and profitable";[1] that he is "eminently successful when directed by intelligent supervision";[2] in other words, that negroes are valuable laborers because they are first-rate muscular machines, submissive and manageable. Those, however, who prefer white to black labor, say either that it is because negroes as a class are unreliable, require too much supervision, and take little pride in doing good work; or that the nature of the industry is such that workmen of independent spirit and trust-worthiness are indispensable. This explanation implies the industrial inferiority of the negroes as compared with whites, save in a narrow range

[1] Mr. Massey, of Friar's Point, Miss., cited by Hoffman in his "Race traits and tendencies of the American Negro", p. 252.

[2] Mr. Killibrew, formerly commissioner of labor in Tennessee, cited by Hoffman, p. 268.

of low-grade employments. Much evidence upon this point must be furnished, however, before we can accept it as final.

A singularly forcible illustration of the points just brought out may now be considered. In 1899, at the town of Fayetteville, N. C., a silk mill was established by an able mulatto, Mr. T. W. Thurston, acting as agent for the silk manufacturing interests at Paterson, N. J. Within a short time there were 400 operatives at work with 10,000 spindles. It was avowedly an experiment with negro labor, and it "has proved a signal success."[1] Let us note carefully the conditions upon which success has depended. A correspondent of the New York *Journal of Commerce*, writing under date of October 27, 1900, says: "Mr. Thurston, who is evidently a man of ability and strong character and well educated, has a theory of his own in regard to the way in which a negro mill should be managed, and it is of a somewhat startling character."[2] He then quotes Thurston, who, after stating that his operatives have proved quite satisfactory, adds:

"But no one can make a success of a mill by applying white methods to colored people. With the latter there is but one rule to follow, that of the strictest discipline. Call it military despotism, if you will. There are no indulgences in this mill. Kindness would be construed as weakness and advantage taken of it to the detriment of our work. Faults and irregularities are severely punished."

The correspondent then drew out the fact that this discipline takes the form of whipping.

"The punishment is not light; it is severe; anything else would be a waste of time. It is upon this system that we have to rely to secure

[1] A very full and interesting account of this mill was given by a correspondent of the *Charlotte Observer*, a leading daily of North Carolina, in its issue of Feb. 11, 1901. The writer has heard other accounts from eye-witnesses, and these accord fully with the printed sources of information used in the text.

[2] See the *Journal of Commerce*, for Nov. 1, 1900.

a proper performance of duty. All the help engaged here, under twenty-one years of age, are put absolutely under my control, by certificates from their parents or guardians, from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night, and I am free from all responsibilities as to the course I pursue towards them during that time. No one desires more than I do to see the position of my people improved; but I have no false ideas as to the present condition of the majority of them. They lack the sense of responsibility, and are like children where money is concerned. . . . My methods may be decried by humanitarians, but I am proving their success."

When the mill was first opened this rigid discipline did not exist. The result was that the operatives "were indifferent to their work and behavior, and it was necessary either to correct or discharge them. They preferred the latter, and Thurston, feeling that if he did not have power to discipline the young operatives, he would be compelled to give up," finally resorted to the system already described. This experience illustrates the fact, elsewhere pointed out, that, even under present conditions, the negroes do not feel the same incentives to work, or respond to them as efficiently as the whites. In this case there has been a partial reversion to a former method of securing steady work from an indolent people. Mr. Thurston is clearly of the conviction, founded upon hard experience, that it will not do to rely upon the ordinary incentives in the case of a majority of negroes. Indeed, he says plainly: "Forty years ago they whipped [white] boys in mills, as some of the successful manufacturers of to-day can testify from painful experience, and we are beginning just so many years behind." He attributes the failure of other mills operated by negro workmen to the attempt to treat them like white labor. We have here an instance of an employer, who might well say that his negro operatives are satisfactory and his enterprise a success, but only on condition that he wields a power of discipline over them, such as no body of white workmen would brook for a single day.

Prof. W. E. B. Du Bois, who has made himself an authority upon matters relating to his race, says that "the Negro is, as a rule, willing, honest, and good natured; but he is also, as a rule, careless, unreliable, and unsteady." [1] Mr. Philip A. Bruce, in his careful study of the Virginia plantation negroes, describes them as "steady, docile, and active" only under conditions where they are kept closely under the management of whites. Otherwise, they are restless, continually shifting employment, too heedless to be entrusted with costly agricultural machinery or fine live stock, cheerful and complacent under any conditions of life, and strongly averse to restraint.[2] Reporting from a typical Louisiana sugar plantation, Mr. J. B. Laws states that "the negroes as a rule do not work any harder than is necessary to keep their families alive." [3] He notes the significant fact that Italians are coming in to displace them, because Italians will work steadily as long as wages are paid, whereas the negroes habitually stop work as soon as a little money is paid them, and take a holiday till it is spent. Mr. Alfred H. Stone, after showing that an immense amount of work has been accomplished in the Yazoo-Mississippi delta, tells us that "the capital, the devising brain, the directing will, constitute the white man's part; the work itself is the negro's." [4] The entire paper from which this is quoted witnesses to the fact that negroes can become valuable

[1] "The Philadelphia Negro", Publications of the Univ. of Pennsylvania, No. 14, p. 97.

[2] "The plantation Negro as a freeman", pp. 176–192.

[3] Bulletins of the U. S. department of labor, No. 38, on "The negroes of the Cinclare central factory and Calumet plantation, Louisana."

[4] "The negroes of the Yazoo-Mississippi delta", Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the American Econ. Ass'n., p. 240.

producers, but only on condition that they are thoroughly managed by white men.

Let us examine now certain facts relative to the great staples produced mainly by negro labor. After pointing out the expert care and close application required by tobacco at various stages of its production, Bruce states that

"in all those counties of the tobacco region of Virginia, in which the tobacco crop is cultivated entirely by negroes there has been a notable decline in the quality of the staple as well as in the character of its manipulation, now that the majority of the hands, who were trained for many years under the eye of their master or his overseer, are fast dying off." [1]

Hoffman shows that, taking five representative counties of Virginia, whose total negro population much exceeds the white, there was a decline in the tobacco production from 30,504,090 pounds in 1859 to 12,123,264 pounds in 1889.[2] According to statistics furnished by Prof. Du Bois regarding the production of Prince Edward County, Virginia, there was a falling off between 1850 and 1890 of over one-half in corn, 23 per cent. in wheat, one-half in oats, and a third in tobacco.[3] In the greater staples, therefore, this county shows a heavy decline, although hay increased from 487 to 2,513 tons; Irish potatoes from 7,700 to 12,737 bushels; and butter from 47,932 to 133,511 pounds. Yet the white population was only 4,770 in 1890 as against 9,924 negroes.

Exhaustion of the soil accounts for a part of this decline, and possibly the migration of negroes into towns for another part. But since 1860 population has greatly increased, more soil has been brought under cultivation, and better methods of agriculture have be-

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 183.

[2] "Race traits, etc.", p. 254.

[3] See tables in his study of "The negroes of Farmville, Virginia", Bulletins of the U. S. department of labor, No. 14, pp. 2–3.

come known. In another Virginia county, Pittsylvania, where the white population exceeded that of the negroes, and had increased more rapidly, the tobacco production rose from 7,800,000 pounds in 1859 to 12,300,000 in 1889.[1] In four counties of Kentucky, which contain less than five per cent. of negro population, the production of tobacco rose from 90,338 pounds in 1859 to 10,044,856 pounds in 1889.[2] Fresh soil in Kentucky might account largely for this, and yet this state has long been settled, and it is questionable whether new land was available for any considerable portion of this enormously increased tobacco-culture. In any case, the great contrasts revealed are of no little significance in the present connection.

Hoffman cites evidence going to show, though it does not prove conclusively, that the production of rice and cotton, once peculiarly dependent upon negro labor, is shifting slowly into white hands. He finds that "with less than one-half as large a colored population as Mississippi, the state of Texas produced in 1894 almost three times the cotton crop of the former state."[3] Even more significant is the fact that "with almost twice the colored population of 1860, Mississippi in 1894 produced less cotton than 34 years ago."[4]

To the same effect is the strong evidence brought out by Prof. Walter F. Willcox, in a careful study of the causes of negro criminality.[5] Speaking of the year 1860, he says: "It would probably be a conservative statement to say that at least four-fifths of the cotton

[1] Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", p. 254.
[2] *Idem.*, p. 255.
[3] *Idem.*, p. 261.
[4] *Idem.*, p. 261.
[5] See an address delivered before the American Social Science Association, Sept. 6, 1899, on "Negro criminality", pp. 9–13.

was then grown by negroes; at the present time probably not one-half is thus grown." He finds that tobacco-culture is "evidently tending to center in Kentucky and yet it is the only Southern state in which the number of negroes decreased during the last decade." Similarly the culture of sugar-cane and rice, according to facts set forth by him, is concentrating into white hands. Summing up, he says:

"From all the evidence obtainable it seems clear that southern agriculture is become increasingly diversified, and is demanding and receiving a constantly increasing amount of industry, energy and intelligence,—characteristics which the whites more generally possess or more readily develop."

We may with yet more certainty attribute to the inefficiency of the negroes the fact that they are giving place to the whites in many occupations. This is particularly true of the skilled trades, requiring long and patient apprenticeship, followed by steady application. Bruce says:

"Indeed, one of the most discouraging features in the character of the negroes who have grown up since the war, is their extreme aversion to the mechanical trades. . . Many who might have been carefully instructed, relinquished the opportunity opened to them as soon as they were old enough to support themselves, at which time they emigrated to a distance and sought employments more congenial to their tastes. The explanation of this antipathy on their part is easily found; such pursuits constrain them to conform more closely than they like to a steady routine of work, which is more arduous and trying on the whole. . . Above all, the laborer is not tied down to one spot; if he grows weary of one locality, he can find occupation elsewhere. But this is not the position of the young mechanic; his success is largely dependent upon his remaining in one place; he secures patronage by winning a reputation for assiduity and skill in his trade, and it is not possible to earn such a reputation as long as he yields to his inclination to wander." [1]

In these observations are expressed accurately some of the most serious weaknesses of the negro. The writer, in common with others well known to him, has found

[1] "The plantation Negro, etc.", pp. 232–3.

nothing more destructive of industrial arrangements than the irrepressible inclination of the younger negroes to shift employers and employments. They are forever in search of some "easier job." The most satisfactory employment, from their standpoint, seems to be one which will afford a bare subsistence and a wide margin for idleness and local migrations.

An able newspaper correspondent in North Carolina recently declared, after carefully looking into the matter, that there is now an unmistakable tendency for "the negro to leave the barber's chair and become a shoe-shine; to lay aside the bricklayer's trowel and carry the hod; to quit the carriage seat and shovel manure; to drop the carpenter's saw and take up the hand-spike."[1] After seeing this statement, the present writer made a number of inquiries and observations along the same line, and the result was a complete corroboration of the correspondent's declaration. In 1894, Prof. Hugh M. Browne, during a speech to a negro audience, said:

"White men are bringing science and art into menial occupations and lifting them beyond our reach. In my boyhood the household servants were colored, but now in the establishments of the four hundred one finds trained white servants. Then the walls and ceilings were whitewashed each spring by colored men; now they are decorated by skilled white artisans. Then the carpets were beaten by colored men; now this is done by a white man, managing a steam carpet-cleaning works. Then the laundry work was done by negroes; now they are with difficulty able to manage the new labor-saving machinery."[2]

Very important and valuable is the testimony upon this point of one who certainly knows whereof he speaks, and whose natural inclination would be against making any grave admission of weakness in his people. With admirable frankness, Booker T. Washington says:

[1] See correspondence of the *Charlotte Observer*, (North Carolina), Jan. 27, 1901, signed H. E. C. Bryant.

[2] From the A. M. E. Zion Church *Quarterly* for April, 1894; cited by W. F. Willcox, in his address on "Negro criminality", p. 12.

"The place made vacant by the old colored man, who was trained as a carpenter during slavery, and who since the war had been the leading contractor and builder in the southern town, had to be filled. No young colored carpenter, capable of filling his place, could be found. The result was that his place was filled by a white mechanic from the North, or from Europe, or from elsewhere. What is true of carpentry and house building in this case is true, in a degree, in every skilled occupation; and it is becoming true of common labor. I do not mean to say that all skilled labor has been taken out of the negroes' hands; but I do mean to say that in no part of the South is he so strong in the matter of skilled labor as he was twenty years ago, except possibly in the country districts and smaller towns. In the more northern of the southern cities, such as Richmond and Baltimore, the change is most apparent; and it is being felt in every southern city. Wherever the negro has lost ground industrially in the South, it is not because there is prejudice against him as a skilled laborer on the part of the native southern white man; the southern white man generally prefers to do business with the negro mechanic rather than with a white one, because he is accustomed to do business with the negro in this respect. There is almost no prejudice against the negro in the South in the matter of business, so far as the native whites are concerned; and here is the entering wedge for the solution of the negro problem. But too often, where the white mechanic or factory operative from the North gets a hold, the trades union soon follows, and the negro is crowded to the wall." [1]

Here are attested the facts not only that there has been an inexorable displacement of the negroes as skilled workmen, but that this has not been due to prejudice against the race in industrial connections. The net result of Prof. DuBois' study of the Philadelphia negroes was to the same effect, save that he is disposed to attribute much to white prejudice against them.[2] It appears that the negroes that were able to hold their own, were trained under slavery. Those that have been free to pursue their own bent, have not followed in the footsteps of their fathers, but have sought less exacting occupations.

The census figures of 1890 showed that 85 per cent. of negro males engaged in gainful occupations were in

[1] "The future of the American Negro", pp. 78–9.

[2] See "The Philadelphia Negro", p. 126, *et seq.*

agriculture and domestic service. Of negro females, 52 per cent. were in domestic service and 44 per cent. were in agriculture, leaving 4 per cent. in all other occupations. "Summing up," says Gannett in his paper on this subject, "it is seen that in the matter of occupations the negro is mainly engaged either in agriculture or in domestic service. He has, in a generation, made little progress in manufacture, transportation, or trade."[1] The results of twelfth census on this question are not yet available.

In the qualities so important to economic welfare, those of self-control and wisdom in the expenditure of earnings, the original African was notably weak, and under slavery the instincts of thrift did not develop. We expect to find, therefore, that the mass of the race is marked to this day by the ancestral traits in these regards. Regarding the Louisiana plantation negroes, we are told by Laws that they

> "as a rule never save any money, although there are a very few exceptions. They do not know what economy is, and will buy anything that anybody will sell them on credit. . . No thought is given of durability or appropriateness in the purchase of dress or other articles, but only showiness. . . They will not provide in advance for any contingency."[2]

Booker T. Washington tells of finding often a sixty-dollar organ in a scantily furnished cabin, "sewing-machines which had been bought, or were being bought, on instalments, frequently at a cost of as much as sixty dollars, or showy clocks for which the occupants had paid twelve or fourteen dollars."[3] In some cases the owners could not tell the time of day; rarely could any play a tune on the organ, and comparatively few could

[1] "Occupations of the negroes", by Henry Gannett, J. F. Slater Fund, Occasional papers, No. 6.

[2] "The negroes of Cinclare central factory, etc.", p. 117.

[3] "Up from slavery", p. 113.

use the sewing-machine. Of the Virginia plantation negroes Bruce says: "A brief study of the masses of the race reveals that they have many qualities that stand directly in the way of their material improvement, even in the narrowest sense of the term. . . . The most unfortunate of these qualities are carelessness, improvidence, and destructiveness."[1] They will incur debt without other limit than the creditor's caution.[2] Commenting on the fact that the city negroes of Philadelphia had accumulated much less property than might have been expected of them, DuBois says:

"Much of the money that should have gone into homes has gone into costly church edifices, dues to societies, dress and entertainment. If the negroes had bought little houses as persistently as they have worked to develop a church and secret society system, and had invested more of their earnings in savings banks and less in clothes, they would be in far better condition to demand industrial opportunity than they are to-day."[3]

The present writer's personal observations and inquiries in other localities than those above represented,[4] have elicited information fully in accord with the foregoing evidence.

It is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusion, therefore, that the masses of the negroes are still, like their recent ancestors, unable to realize clearly the future and to sacrifice present gratifications in order to provide for it. They spend their earnings upon impulse, injudiciously and wastefully. They exhibit still an inordinate love

[1] "The plantation Negro, etc.", p. 193.

[2] *Idem.*, p. 196. See also "Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Amer. Econ. Asso.", pp. 251, 253.

[3] "The Philadelphia Negro", p. 185.

[4] Chiefly in the Carolinas and Washington city. To give a single illustration: During the summer of 1901, an agent for some music house did a thriving business at Morganton, N. C., selling cheap organs to negroes in the surrounding country—negroes who lived in humble cabins and could not play a single tune on the instrument.

for ostentatious display, reckless of consistency and appropriateness.

It would be very misleading, however, to leave the impression that the foregoing facts apply to the entire race. There is a minority, small as yet, which must be excepted from generalizations based upon those facts. They are "the flower of the race," as Bruce puts it, "who alone in the vast swarm of negroes that darken the country like an ominous cloud, give us the least confidence in its capacity."[1] Thousands of negroes have shown themselves possessed of no mean industrial ability. In one vocation or another they have proved their ability to win success, often in spite of great disadvantages. A new class of negroes has made its appearance, a class of small entrepreneurs.[2] Grocery and cigar stores, restaurants, undertaking establishments, brickmaking, upholstering, and enterprises of like character are what negroes are at present attempting. How far this new development will go it is impossible to predict, but there is considerable promise even in its present status. Many negroes, too, have entered, or are trying to enter, professional callings, chiefly those of teaching and the ministry. A few have entered the civil service and clerical positions. The number of doctors and lawyers is slowly increasing.[3]

With regard to the accumulation of property, the census of 1890 showed that of 549,632 farms occupied by negroes, 22 per cent. were owned by them. Of those owned,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 216,

[2] See "The Philadelphia Negro", pp. 115–126; also sections headed "Occupations" in "The negroes of Farmville", "The negroes of Sandy Spring, Maryland", Bulletins of the U. S. dep't of labor, Nos. 14 and 32.

[3] "The Philadelphia Negro',, pp. 111–114; "The college-bred Negro", Atlanta University Publications, No. 5, p. 64.

10 per cent. were incumbered with debt. Of the 861,137 homes occupied by negroes, 19 per cent. were owned, of which 13 per. cent were incumbered.[1] In Philadelphia DuBois found that between 5 and 6 per cent. of the negroes were home-owners.[2] It is impossible to get at the aggregate value of property owned by negroes, though it is known to be very considerable. In three states only are separate data for whites and blacks available—Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. On the basis of tax assessments, it appeared that in 1890 negroes owned 3.1 per cent. of taxable property in Virginia, and 3.5 per cent. in Georgia; in 1891 they owned 3.3 per cent. in North Carolina.[3] The total taxable property of the whites in the three states amounted to $978,000,000 as against $32,000,000 owned by blacks. This gives a per capita of $322 for whites and $16 for blacks. The close agreement of the percentages for three Southern states suggests that the figures may be fairly representative. In any case, it is clear that a small minority of negroes have become owners of property. The aggregate value of this to-day is two or three hundreds of millions of dollars.[4]

This fact appears inconsistent with the various considerations brought out in earlier paragraphs. How are we to harmonize such contradictory evidence? Certain further considerations will help us to an explanation. Increased value does not necessarily imply increased saving, owing to the "unearned increment," as Hoffman rightly points out.[5] A further consideration is that, being a propertyless class at the start, the negroes could

[1] Gannett, "Occupations of negroes", p. 16.
[2] "The Philadelphia Negro", p. 184.
[3] Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", p. 298.
[4] See Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", p. 287.
[5] *Idem.*, p. 306.

buy only the cheapest real estate in sight—marginal no-rent land. While indefinite appreciation was, therefore, possible, no considerable depreciation could take place. Since the war thousands of whites have lost heavily because of depreciation, while others have become wealthy through appreciation of real estate values. During the same period many negroes have also gained, but scarcely any have lost.

Again, we must make a distinction between the elder generation trained under slavery, and the younger generation. Many of the former were skilled artisans; others had managed plantations as overseers; and all had been accustomed to steady work and plain living. Thus, they had been drilled into habits favoring humble thrift and accumulation. But their children may not be doing as well as their parents did. Bruce has observed that while many of the ex-slaves acquired land, relatively few of them under ten years of age at the close of the war have done so, save through inheritance.[1] The belief that this is true prevails widely in the South, but after careful examination of the insufficient data available, the present writer was unable to reach a definite conclusion.[2] There seemed, however, a strong probability that Bruce's statement contained much truth.

But, irrespective of the above comparatively minor qualifications, it is quite possible to grant that some hundreds of thousands of negroes are altogether successful and prosperous, without in the least contradicting the conclusion toward which we are led by the main body

[1] "The plantation Negro, etc.", p. 224.

[2] There is a great deal of information to be had regarding negro property owners and the amount of their holdings, but extremely little is said by way of indicating the age of these owners. Hence, it is impossible to separate owners old enough to have been slaves, from those grown up since emancipation.

of evidence. As was elsewhere stated, among nearly nine millions of negroes it is perfectly normal for thousands of exceptionally endowed individuals to appear, who are able to far outstrip the racial average. Caucasian blood also has entered as a factor in the case.

The general conclusion we reach, then, is to this effect: that an overwhelming majority of the race in its new struggle for existence under the exacting conditions of American industry, is seriously handicapped by inherited characteristics. Economic freedom has not developed a sense of responsibility and a persistent ambition to rise, as many hoped to see. As a race the negroes are still wanting in energy, purpose, and stability; they are giving way before the able competition of whites in the skilled and better paid occupations; and they fail to husband resources so as to establish economic safety.

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

We shall discuss under one heading the social and religious life of the Negro, although they have heretofore been discussed separately. Since the American negroes became free, there has been a peculiar development tending to combine their social and religious life on a common basis of organization. To discuss either without frequent reference to the other is impossible.

When our colonial forefathers began the importation of Guinea natives, they little dreamed that these people, so manifestly inferior at the time, would ever become free American citizens. This event which took place with abrupt suddenness soon after 1865, illustrated how powerless is legislation to dictate the attitude and action of men in many of the aspects of life. It was impossible to compel the dominant race to receive the negroes as equals, and mingle with them in social and religious activities. In the parlor, at the table, in the pew, whites and blacks will not to-day associate as one people. As for intermarriage and mingling together around the same hearthstone, the very thought is not permitted.

But a social and religious life of some kind the negroes must have; indeed, they are a people whose temperament calls for abundant sociability and religious excitement. There is but one thing for them to do, that is to withdraw to themselves and develop their own organization as a distinct social group. They may vote in common with the whites; they may sue and be sued in the same courts; but they cannot (where numerous)

share the same schools, churches, or social recreations. In all these things they are obliged to act separately.

This cleavage between the races does not, as is often supposed, arise from a mere unreasonable prejudice. Individuals cannot find satisfaction in associated life if there be too much diversity in their appearance, tastes, and traditions. But deeper than the contrast between the whites and blacks in physical features is the difference in temper and instincts. The kind of religious services acceptable to most whites does not attract most negroes. The race tradition which is the root of comprehension and sympathy among the whites, means nothing to the negroes. Only yesterday one race was the slave of the other, and the old caste feeling of the master race persists and will persist for generations. In the light of these facts, the lack of affinity between the two races appears natural and inevitable, and it becomes clear how impossible it is for whites and blacks to mingle as a homogeneous people.

Hence it is that a most significant movement has been going on since emancipation. Under slavery the organization of society was such as to keep the negroes widely distributed and in close contact with the whites. For every one of the thousands of small groups of slaves there was a white family, whose example and forcible discipline operated continuously to bring the lower race into line with our mode of life. The significance of this to a very imitative people, striving, in spite of hereditary weakness, to take on highly civilized life, can hardly be estimated. But with the passing of slavery this link between the two races was broken, and each was free to go its own way. Then set in the movement of segregation, so that to-day the negroes are largely isolated from

the whites. No longer is there a gathering of dusky faces, beaming with delight, when a wedding occurs among the whites; nor is there any attendance of whites at a negro wedding. When there is a death among the whites, there is now no group of family negroes, hovering about in awe-struck grief; at the negro's grave there are no whites expressing a sympathetic sorrow. In their joys and in their sorrows, in their daily life and conversation, the races live apart, and know but little of each other's inner existence. Thus the negroes are forming a second group within the nation, enveloped by white society, but divided from it, and, in most respects, ever less subject to its influence.

There is a marked tendency also for the negroes to segregate geographically in the "black belt" of the South and in the "negro quarters" of cities and towns.[1] Wherever this begins, the whites move away, thus rendering the isolation of the negroes more complete.

Consider now the consequences of this steadily growing cleavage between two groups, compelled to live together as one nation. On emerging from slavery the negroes had but partially assimilated our civilization. Their adaptation to meet the heavy demands put upon them was hardly adequate. They were making painful progress in learning the primary lessons of our civilization, when, with emancipation, all direct control and discipline vanished. And now they are fast losing the powerful stimulus of immediate contact with the superior civilization they are expected to acquire. To offset all this they have gained the privilege of education in letters. This for the vast majority of them means only a few hours of instruction daily, in a poorly equipped

[1] See Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", pp. 9-31; also Willcox, Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, p. 155.

school-room, during a few months of the early years of childhood. Even if the educational facilities were the best possible, the limitations of class-room training are such that it can never outweigh the other education, which every individual gets from the home and society in which he lives. Obviously the negroes of to-day have before them a desperate struggle, if they are to hold even their present position in American society. The question arises: What are they actually doing?

Monogamic marriage and a sense of parental responsibility for the bringing up of children, are parts of the heritage of the Caucasian. About the home and family have developed an atmosphere of tradition, sentiment, and domestic law. But the negroes have only for a short time been acquainted with monogamic marriage, under slavery they practiced it very imperfectly and mainly under compulsion. Refined, chivalrous sentiments toward the weaker sex, deep abiding affection in the family relations, and a keen sense of responsibility for the distant future of offspring, are late products of a long evolution. At best these higher elements of character had been but crudely developed among the negroes by 1863; yet they must rapidly make good these deficiencies or be undone. The evidence now coming to hand from many sources goes to show, however, that the race is unequal to the tremendous task laid upon it.

In a passage well worth quoting at some length, Bruce describes clearly the change of conditions since emancipation and the results observed to follow:

"Although the institution of slavery did nothing to raise the dignity of marriage or to improve the relations of the sexes, it restricted illicit commerce among the negroes to some extent, because it restrained their general conduct. . . They were especially discouraged from wandering about at night or mingling in large congregations; thus their opportunities of falling into lewd habits were diminished,

although the inclination to do so remained unchanged. The personal independence of the present day shows how powerful this inclination was, in spite of the check that was put upon it by the systematic repression of slavery. It is not now reined in by circumstances at all, and the consequence is it is gratified to such a degree that lasciviousness has done more than all other vices of the plantation negroes united, to degrade the character of their social life since they were invested with citizenship. It is in this direction that they seem to be tending most toward a state of nature, and many influences are hastening that event." [1]

That there is little, if any, exaggeration in Bruce's strong statement there is abundant proof. We are told concerning the Calumet plantation negroes that "the families are all broken up by the continual swapping of women going on among the men. The negroes do not want children, and use all manner of means to prevent birth;" also that "there are numerous children known by all to be illegitimate, and yet this condition of affairs is considered and spoken of as a matter of course."[2] The Rev. D. Clay Lilly, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of colored evangelization, relates:

In one county in Mississippi there were, during twelve months, 300 marriage licenses taken out in the county clerk's office for white people. According to the proportion of the population there should have been in the same time 1,200 or more for the negroes. There were actually taken out by colored people just three." [3]

After an investigation among the "oyster negroes" in the vicinity of Litwalton, Virginia, no less than thirteen per cent. of the children under ten years of age were "reported" as illegitimate.[4] This is believed to be an understatement of the truth, owing to the tendency to conceal illegitimacy. In Farmville, Virginia, it was

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 178.

[2] "The negroes of the Cinclare central factory, etc.", pp. 102 and 115.

[3] "Proceedings of the Montgomery conference on race conditions and problems in the South", p. 119.

[4] "The negroes of Litwalton, Virginia" by Dr. W. T. Thom, Bulletin of the U. S. dep't of labor, No. 37, p. 1141.

found by Prof. Du Bois, that fifteen per cent. of all the negro children under ten years were illegitimate,[1] and of a large negro element in Philadelphia, he says: "There is much sexual promiscuity and the absence of real home life."[2] Regarding the negroes of Sandy Spring, Maryland, where a careful investigation was made, we are told that,

> "it is the distinct impression among the older white members of the Sandy Spring community (some of whom have for half a century been doing what they could to help the negroes) that the average moral condition of the negroes is below what it was prior to 1865, and this opinion is shared by a number of the elder conservative negroes."[3]

In the city of Washington, where "the colored race has had exceptional educational and religious opportunities," the percentage of illegitimate births rose steadily from 17.6 in 1879 to 26.5 in 1894. During the same period the percentage among whites never exceeded 3.6 and in 1894 was only 2.56.[4] The conditions elsewhere seem to be nearly the same. In Mobile and Knoxville "the rate of illegitimacy is about 25 per cent. of the total births, against an average of about 2.5 for the whites."[5] Another significant phase of this tendency is revealed in Washington by "the finding of ninety-eight dead infants (negro) in 1888, seventy-one in 1889, sixty-nine in 1890, seventy-five in 1891, and ninety-seven in 1892." A number of living infants were abandoned each year.[6] Much more evidence might be cited, but would only be cumulative in effect.

[1] "The negroes of Farmville, Virginia", p. 19.

[2] "The Philadelphia Negro", p. 192.

[3] "The negroes of Sandy Spring, Maryland", by Dr. W. T. Thom, Bulletin of the U. S. dep't of labor, No. 32, p. 60.

[4] Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", p. 235.

[5] *Idem.*, p. 237.

[6] The negro in the District of Columbia", by Edward Ingle, Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies, vol. xi, p. 101.

The crime of rape, directed against white women, has come into existence since the war. The perpetrators of this crime are overcome in many cases by primitive savage passions, which master the criminal's whole being. A great fear is present which impels to murder.

Where sex relations are ill-regulated and unstable, as shown above, there can be but a mockery of monogamic family life. We should hardly expect under such conditions much improvement in the strength and permanence of parental and filial affection. What we might thus infer *a priori* is strongly supported by facts. The swapping of women by the men on Louisiana plantations clearly implies the absence of true conjugal affection and of established parental and filial relations. Dr. Thom found it impossible to get satisfactory statistics of the "economic family"[1] in his investigation of the Sandy Spring negroes, because of a too great fluidity of relationships, too much coming and going under the external form of a family group. One of his difficulties, for example, is thus described: "When small boarding members of a family were traced to their real maternal source, the discovery was sometimes made that the possible family did not have now and had never had visible heads enough."[2] In his report on "The negroes of the black belt," Prof. Du Bois describes a typical rural family as being a numerous, disorderly, quarrelsome, and neglected looking lot, among whom scarcely a spark of real affection was evinced. He then goes on to say, speaking of the district investigated in Georgia:

"In some respects this family is exceptionally bad, but several others are nearly as barbarous. A few are much better, and in the stone-cutter's five-room house one can find clean, decent family life,

[1] The economic family is defined as including "all persons related and unrelated, living in one house under conditions of family life."

[2] "The negroes of Sandy Spring", p. 86.

with neatly dressed children and many signs of aspiration. The average of the communities, however, is much nearer the condition of the family first described than that of the better one." [1]

Bruce says in substance of the Virginia plantation negroes that they are quite unable to maintain systematic discipline among their children, because steady watchfulness, temperate correction of small faults, and prompt action in disagreeable matters, are precisely what they are incapable of by nature.[2] Plainly the transition from the polygamic family of West Africa, where women are bought and sold, and family members are pawned into slavery, to the strictly monogamic family life of America, is a journey fraught with enormous difficulty to the transplanted race.

The consequences of the extremely elementary socialization of the West African are revealing themselves among his American descendants. Under the instant and relentless discipline of slavery, anti-social proclivities had small opportunity to manifest themselves. Aside from petty theft and insignificant crimes there was little trouble with the negroes previous to emancipation. But with the liberation of the negroes their obedience to law came to depend upon their voluntary self-restraint, and the weakness of the race at this point has begun to reveal itself to an alarming extent. This phase of the subject has already been so ably and fully treated by Willcox, Hoffman and others, that it does not seem necessary to enter largely into it here. The main facts may be set forth, however, for the present convenience of the reader.

Professor Walter F. Willcox has shown that according to the eleventh census, "in the southern states there

[1] "The negroes of the black belt", Bulletins of the U. S. dep't of labor, No. 22, p. 403.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. —.

were six white prisoners to every ten thousand whites, and twenty-nine negro prisoners to every ten thousand negroes," while "in the northern states, in 1890, there were twelve white prisoners to every ten thousand whites, and sixty-nine negro prisoners to every ten thousand negroes."[1] Again, in the South the negro prisoners to ten thousand negroes increased 29 per cent. between 1880 and 1890, whereas the white prisoners to ten thousand whites increased only 8 per cent. In the North "the white prisoners increased seven per cent. faster than the white population, while the negro prisoners increased no less than thirty-nine per cent. faster than the negro population." The positive conclusion reached by him is that "a large and increasing amount of negro crime is manifested all over the country."[2]

An important point brought out by this writer is that the attitude of the negroes toward crime by no means coincides with that of the whites. After discussing the lynching of the negro incendiaries at Palmetto, Ga., in 1899, and of Sam Hose shortly after, Professor Willcox says:

"The white Caucasians of the Philippines regard a *juramentado* (a Malay Mohammedan fanatic, who slays Christians as a religious duty) as a peculiarly fiendish individual; many of the brown Malays regard him as a saint and emulate his deeds. The white Caucasians of Georgia regard Sam Hose as a peculiarly fiendish individual; many of the black Africans, I fear, regard him as an innocent man and a martyr."[3]

[1] See "Negro criminality", an address delivered before the American Social Science Association at Saratoga, Sept. 6, 1899. Also Hoffman, "Race traits, etc.", pp. 217-234, and a part of Dr. Paul B. Barringer's address before the Montgomery conference on "The sacrifice of a race", "Proceedings", pp. 187-9.

[2] "Negro criminality", pp. 5-6.

[3] *Idem.*, p. 20.

It is of course impossible to determine how far such divergence of opinion between the whites and blacks exists, but as far as it goes nothing could well be more serious and significant.

In the religious life of the American negroes we meet with interesting instances of the survival of racial customs and traits. We have seen that in West Africa the communal life of the village is everything, the private home life, nothing. The African temperament finds no enjoyment in anything unless there are many present and much excitement. Under slavery the propensity of the negroes for the communal group life was almost entirely suppressed. After emancipation the old pastimes were not possible, because too greatly in conflict with the usages of civilized society. But in one direction an opportunity was offered to gratify their instincts without offending the surrounding community, viz., through their church organization. Taking the line of least resistance, they have rapidly developed a church life that resembles in its main outlines the group life of West Africa. In this respect the best class of negroes is not to be distinguished from the average of the race, save in the degree to which refinement and luxury is introduced.

Professor Du Bois, one of the best authorities in this connection, says:

"The Negro church is the peculiar and characteristic product of the transplanted African, and deserves special study. As a social group the Negro church may be said to have ante-dated the Negro family on American soil; as such it has preserved, on the one hand, many functions of tribal organizations, and, on the other hand, many of the family functions. Its tribal functions are shown in its religious activity, its social authority, and general guiding and coordinating work; its family functions are shown by the fact that the church is a centre of social life and intercourse; acts as newspaper

and intelligence bureau, is the centre of amusements—indeed, is the world in which the negro moves and acts." [1] Later he adds: "Without wholly conscious effort the Negro church has become a centre of social intercourse to a degree unknown in white churches, even in the country. . . . All sorts of entertainments and amusements are furnished by the churches; concerts, suppers, socials, fairs, literary exercises and debates, cantatas, plays, excursions, picnics, surprise parties, celebrations." [2] To quote another peculiarly significant sentence: "In this way the social life of the negro centres in his church—baptism, wedding and burial, gossip and courtship, friendship and intrigue—all lie within these walls." [3]

In other words, there is a markedly distinct preference for the recreations where many can meet, rather than for the private pleasures of home life. Professor Du-Bois notes that there are few family festivals; little notice is taken of birthdays and such occasions for quiet home celebrations. That he misses the underlying reason for this, however, is revealed in the following words of his discussion: "The home was destroyed by slavery, struggled up after emancipation and is not exactly threatened, but neglected in the life of city negroes".[4] How could slavery destroy a home life that had never existed for the race? It is not the negro "home" that has "struggled up after emancipation", but the ancient racial habit of gregarious communal life, and this is growing to-day at the expense of private home life.

Among the rural negroes these tendencies are not so marked, owing to the greater difficulty of coming together. After stating that the negro churches at Cinclare central factory and Calumet are always well attended, Mr. Laws tells us that "the negroes are naturally a social race and the large attendance at church at both

[1] "The Philadelphia Negro", p. 201.
[2] *Idem.*, p. 203,
[3] *Idem.*, p. 205.
[4] *Idem.*, p. 196.

places is easily explained aside from religious attraction, as it is the only place where they get together and talk things over ".[1] Bruce's description of religious activity among the Virginia plantation negroes shows clearly that churches are remarkably well attended simply for the social recreation thus afforded.[2] The present writer has noted how the town and country negroes of North Carolina seek through their churches the social pleasures, which, among the whites, are provided in private homes. It seems clear, therefore, that this singular movement among the negroes is general. An impulse from within, working with other forces, is sending the race along lines divergent from those of our national development as a whole.

The inability of the negroes to see the relation between religious profession and moral conduct has perplexed many. Bruce's statement of the case is admirable:

"The divorce between religion and morality in the life of the negro fills the observer with astonishment, for it seems impossible that he can be both devout and depraved at the same moment; but if he is suspected in the beginning of hypocrisy, that suspicion is dispelled after a brief association with him. . . . He cannot be charged with religious cant and pretence, however immoral or criminal he may be." [3]

No, it is not necessary to suppose him a hypocrite when he is fervidly religious at church and grossly sinful in his secular life. It is a case of survival. Never in the previous history of his race has morality been associated with religion. For rules of conduct to become interpenetrated with religious associations and sanctions requires a development through an immensely longer period than that of Negro life in America.

[1] "The negroes of Cinclare central factory, etc.", p. 118.
[2] "The plantation Negro, etc.", pp. 108–9.
[3] "The plantation Negro, etc,", p. 110.

The manner in which religious services are conducted in the rural churches and open camp-meetings, reveals once more the dominance of heredity. The writer has witnessed many religious meetings of negroes and has heard descriptions of many more. In superficial details they differ here and there, but not in essentials. The account given by Mr. Laws of the average church service on the Calumet plantation, would fit perfectly thousands of others to be seen throughout the South :

"The elder (or preacher) usually prefaces his sermon with the remark that he is not feeling very well, sticks more or less closely to the text, speaking very quietly for a few minutes, but gradually drifts into a vivid description of various thrilling Biblical scenes, as that of Daniel in the lions' den, or of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, etc., reaching the climax in seeing the New Jerusalem with the four and twenty elders, or something akin. He moves rapidly from one side of the platform to the other, goes through various facial contortions, perspires freely, 'hollers', and when the whole audience is swaying, moaning, surging, and shouting under intense excitement, the preacher drops his voice for a sentence and sits down exhausted." [1]

Compare with this a West African religious service. The priest dances, gesticulates, "goes through various facial contortions," mumbles and shouts alternately, growing more and more wrought up. Suddenly he sees the spirit or spirits whom he represents. While he fervently calls upon them to support him and his people, all around him the densely packed circle of natives become more and more excited, "swaying, moaning, surging, and shouting under intense excitement," until they are in a half-demented state. Have we not evidence here that the same force is preserving unchanged the color of skin, and the psychic nature? Or rather, to be more accurate, we should say, not an unchanged nature, but one changing only by infinitesi-

[1] "The negroes of Cinclare central factory, etc.", p. 119.

mal degrees, so that ages will be required to accumulate decisive modifications.

Superstition survives to a remarkable degree in negro life. The Guinea native's emotional temperament and imaginative mind, developed for ages amid supernaturalism, easily cause the visionary to appear as the real. Under the influence of music, oratory, and the hypnotism of a crowd, any group of negroes can quickly work themselves into a state of mental exaltation, when the real world dissolves from view. This is but an extreme expression of a cast of mind, which under the stimulus of fear, moves insensibly over the hazy line that divides the natural from the supernatural, and falls under the spell of immaterial images. Hence it is that to-day it may be said:

"plantation negroes, in a convenient distance of churches, schools, and railroads are found to have as firm a belief in witchcraft as the savages of the African bush. . . There are communities of negroes in the tobacco belt of Virginia, to-day, that so far resemble an African tribe as to have a professional trick-doctor, a man whose only employment lies in the practice of the art of witchcraft, but it is probable that he is an unconscious empiric as a rule." [1]

The present writer, although familiar from boyhood with the fact that the belief in "conjurers," witches, spells, the efficacy of charms, etc., prevailed everywhere among the negroes, was surprised to learn from personal inquiries, the extent to which it exists. In the city of Washington there are numerous "doctors," so called, who thrive upon the superstitions of their people, professing to remove "spells," to detect and punish those who have "put spells on" others, to furnish valuable charms, etc. Inquiry in regard to Richmond, Baltimore, and New Orleans, has elicited similar facts. During the summer of 1900 a report got out among the negroes of a community in North Carolina that the ghost of a person

[1] Bruce, "The plantation Negro, etc.", p. 115.

whose death had occurred under unusual circumstances, was "haunting" a certain road. The negroes along the road could not be induced to travel it by night, preferring to go to town by a roundabout path. Such occurrences are common throughout the South. Negroes in rural districts will not use a lightning-struck tree for fuel. A rusty nail or a darning-needle, with red flannel wrapped about it, is worn by thousands of American negroes at this moment as a charm to fend off misfortune. Thus, West Africa survives on American soil.

To avoid misunderstanding it must again be remarked that there are many thousands who have risen far above the average of their race, who constitute an intelligent, civilized aristocracy, in the better sense of that term, and who must be excepted from the generalizations enforced by the foregoing evidence. But they cannot be cited as arguing a capacity in the mass of the negroes to attain American civilization at a pace in harmony with our national progress. Prof. John R. Straton has well said:

"We must not confuse the rapid development of exceptional individuals with the evolution of the race. Picked individuals, strengthened often in mental vigor by infusions of white blood, may grow rapidly; but the evolution of the race comes slowly—a part of each new element of strength being transmitted by the laws of heredity from father to son, and so on to succeeding generations; and so, slowly and painfully, a race advances. It is not a matter of decades, but of centuries. The Negro race as a whole, however, may go forward higher yet in outward forms, but still deep down beneath these things may lie the tendencies which give color to the fear that they are a decaying people." [1]

[1] See the Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, p. 149.

CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

Reversion to type takes place where the artificial conditions by which a species has been modified in form and habits, are removed. The system of slavery served as a means of holding the inferior race to at least a semi-civilized mode of life, despite any propensities to the contrary. After the war the negroes, loosed from familiar restraints, were incapable of appreciating the more refined ones in a highly civilized society. It was the belief and dread of many slave-owners that the negroes would revert to savagery; it was the belief and hope of most anti-slavery advocates that the freedmen would attain to the standard of American civilization. The slave-owners failed to realize the inertia of habit, which would prevent in any case, an immediate relapse into savagery. But were they mistaken in their opinion that the Negro was not even potentially a Teuton under a black skin? The abolitionists, moderate and extreme, were right in feeling that slavery was a hideous anachronism, but did they realize adequately the problem to be faced after emancipation? The sword finally determined which body of opinion, and what national policy toward our African population, should prevail. This policy was a natural recoil from the institution held responsible for the freedmen's low status, while less obvious factors in the situation were overlooked in the passion of that period. Those who saw that slavery had failed to give the negroes sufficient incentives to progress, and had denied them education and a voice in

government, believed that freedom, education and the ballot, would be effective means of elevating them to the standard of American citizenship.

Formerly the term "education" in ordinary speech meant nothing more than the acquisition of literary knowledge, including, in advanced stages, the classics, higher mathematics, and the natural sciences. If morals and industrial efficiency were thought of at all, it was assumed that young people would acquire them in the home and work-shop. With the advent of kindergartens, manual training, and other additions to the old curricula, we are becoming familiar with a broader conception of education. It includes the training not merely of the intellect, but of the heart and hand as well.

At the time the negroes were freed, the narrower conception prevailed. Hence, in the great effort then inaugurated to educate the negroes, only literary training was supplied, in the belief that this of itself would work wonders for the race. Little thought was given to the fact that the negro child did not have the Caucasian home, and that behind the literary schooling of the white had always existed the nurture of the civilized home; yet without the home no great development of ideals, morality, habits of industry, can be expected. It was forgotten or discredited that the negroes and whites had fundamentally different aptitudes and needs. On this point Dr. J. L. M. Curry has put the truth in few, though emphatic words:

"The curriculum was for a people in the highest degree of civilization; the aptitude and capabilities and needs of the negro were wholly disregarded. Especial stress was laid on classics and liberal culture to bring the race *per saltum* to the same plane with their former masters, and realize the theory of social and political equality. A race more highly civilized, with the best heredities and environments,

could not have been coddled with more disregard of all the teachings of human history and the necessities of the race." [1]

Nor was it realized how immense and difficult a task it would be to provide educational advantages at once for four and a half millions of people.

The census of 1860 showed 4,441,830 negroes in the country, of whom 226,216 were in the north and 4,215,614 were concentrated in the south, where ruin and chaos were presently brought on by war. 151,245 free negroes were reported able to read and write, this being three per cent. of the negro population. Among the slaves a few were able to read and write, but probably ninety-five per cent. of the negroes were illiterate.[2] Clearly, with the South exhausted, and millions of whites still in need of education, the providing of satisfactory education for the blacks within two or three decades was absolutely impossible. Illiteracy among the rapidly increasing black population was nevertheless reduced to less than 80 per cent. by 1870, to 70 per cent. by 1880, and to 56.8 per cent. by 1890.[3] In 1900 44.5 per cent. remained illiterate, while a very large proportion of those counted literate had but the smattering of an education.[4] As Dr. H. B. Frissell says:

"Fair provision is made for the city children, but in the great country districts, where 80 per cent. of the southern people live, there are in many localities miserable schoolhouses, school terms that do not average more than three months, and school teachers who are often but poorly equipped for the important work that has been given them to do." [5]

[1] Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, etc., p. 109.

[2] In appendices to his "Southern sidelights" Edward Ingle gives much information on this subject in conveniently tabulated form.

[3] Report of the U. S. commissioner of education, 1897–8, vol. ii, p. 2486.

[4] Twelfth Census, vol. 2, p. xcviii.

[5] Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, etc., p. 87.

If education is to be regarded as the great reliance to prevent the negroes from reverting to lower conditions, it would appear (1) that it was poorly devised and inefficient, and (2) that, after a quarter of a century of earnest effort, nearly half the race remained untouched by it. Hence, though we must deplore, we can hardly be surprised at, the situation described in the two preceding chapters. Nor should we blame the generation just past. We have here an instance, not of human fault, but of human limitation.

A wiser policy may guide us in the future. The conception of education as including training of the heart and hand, is being widely recognized. From the foundation of the celebrated Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, in 1868, the methods have been based upon this conception.[1] Dr. H. B. Frissell, the present principal, describes the work done there as follows:

"The Hampton school has its workshops as well as its schoolrooms, its farms and saw-mills as well as its church. It is really an industrial village where a thousand young people are being trained in life's industries. Commencing in the kindergarten the children are instructed in the use of the wash-tub and the ironing-table, the hoe and the rake, as well as in music and reading. The work habit—love for the labor of the hand—is created and cultivated throughout the whole course. Every boy is taught agriculture, work in wood, iron, and tin, as well as history, geography, mathematics, and other English studies."[2]

[1] The founder, Gen. S. C. Armstrong, was born in Hawaii, his father being an American missionary and minister of public instruction. Thus young Armstrong became familiar with the methods adopted for the Hawaiians. He tells how his early impressions influenced him in developing Hampton Institute: "Illustrating two lines of educational work . . . were two institutions: the Lahaina-luna (government) Seminary for young men, where with manual labor, mathematics and other higher branches were taught; and the Hilo Boarding and Manual-labor (missionary) School for boys. . . . As a rule the former turned out more brilliant, and the latter less advanced, but more solid men. In making the plan of the Hampton

[2] Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, etc., p. 95.

In Tuskegee institute substantially the same methods are pursued, its organizer and present manager, Booker T. Washington, being a graduate of Hampton. In these institutions the fact is frankly recognized that, however, it may be with whites, the negroes need to be severely drilled into the habit of labor and inspired with a higher standard of morals than exists in their present racial atmosphere. Literary education is not denied; indeed, it is given as freely as practicable, but only as the complement of more vital attainments.

The wisdom of this method of instruction for the negroes has been abundantly proved by results. On this point Dr. Frissell says:

"Scores of letters from southern county and state superintendents bear witness to the industry and thrift of these young people, and their kindly relations with the southern whites. If one will go into the black belt of Virginia he will find scores of Hampton graduates and graduates of other institutions, engaged in the industrial and agricultural leadership of their people, and commanding the respect and confidence of the best men of the white race. He will find a wonderful increase in land holding among the blacks, and a corresponding decrease in crime." [1]

This is not an exaggerated statement of the results achieved at Hampton.[2] Had instruction by this method been given from the beginning to a majority of the race, doubtless the evils never would have gained great headway, and even might have been overcome. If

Institute, that of the Hilo School seemed the best to follow." Graduates of the more pretentious school, where literary culture was attempted rather than manual training, "had frequently been disappointing", while graduates of the mission school turned out more uniformly successful in a practical sense. See "Twenty-two years' work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute", pp. 1–2.

[1] Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, pp. 95–6.

[2] The writer speaks from information furnished by persons well acquainted with the work being done by Hampton graduates in Virginia.

widely employed now would it suffice to arrest the degeneration of the negroes?

An affirmative answer implies the belief that because a few schools of this type have accomplished excellent results with a few pupils, similar results could be achieved for the race generally by multiplying the institutions. This depends upon whether the material with which Hampton works, fairly typifies the mass of raw material to be improved.

Opening a catalogue of that institution and examining the terms of admission, we discover that it works only with stringently sifted material. Following are extracts from the catalogue, printed as in the original:

"SOUND HEALTH, testimonials of GOOD CHARACTER, and intention to remain through the course, are required of all applicants. Candidates for admission coming from common schools or from other institutions, must present letters of honorable dismissal and of recommendation. . . .

Able-bodied, capable, young men and women of good character are encouraged to apply for admission on the following terms:

1. To work steadily all day for at least an entire year from the time of entering (usually October 1st), and attend night school for two hours five nights a week.

Note.—No one need apply who is not well and strong and capable of doing a man's or woman's work. None under seventeen years need apply. . . .

3. The first three months are probationary . . . .

The utmost economy is expected from the students, in order that they may accumulate money for their expenses in the day school." [1]

Note the severely selective effect of such conditions. Sound health, good character, stringent economy, and great industry make a combination of conditions for

[1] See catalogue for 1896–7, pp. 9–10. One of old date was purposely used here, since we are discussing results gained by past work. The conditions of admission to Tuskegee are similar, but hardly as exacting in detail as those quoted. See any recent catalogue of Tuskegee Institute.

entrance which thousands never can meet. If the youth of the race generally were qualified to enter Hampton on its own terms, the problem would be already half solved. The results attained at Hampton therefore fail to prove that like results could be secured amongst the negroes at large.

Let there be no misunderstanding of the attitude here taken. Under the conditions confronting Hampton and similar institutions, the policy of carefully selecting the students seems thoroughly sound. A maximum of good is thus achieved with the funds available. The method of instruction is probably the best yet devised for uplifting the negroes. And although Hampton methods could not achieve for the race indiscriminately the same results now gained with picked material, yet a general application of these methods to the negroes, with compulsion if necessary, would improve their condition and at least retard degeneration.

The difficulty of a speedy and general application of these methods is not mainly one of finance. Without easing the rigid discipline maintained at Hampton, (and this certainly never should be permitted), it would become difficult to secure general and steady attendance, as soon as the masses began to be reached. There may be as yet many more individuals than can be provided for, ready and anxious to pass through Hampton or Tuskegee on any terms, but such exceptional material would soon be exhausted upon the inauguration of an extensive system. Hence, nothing short of a vast expenditure of money in multiplying Hamptons and Tuskeegees, coupled sooner or later with compulsory attendance, will avail to arrest the steady reversion to type, now exhibited by the American branch of the race.

That the alphabet and Arabic numerals do not furnish a magic key to civilization has been only too well shown by experience. That efficient, moral, industrial and literary education suffices to civilize picked negroes has been demonstrated. That its general application would be of great benefit to them we cannot doubt. Wisely directed education may largely control character in spite of heredity, but it is well to remember that while efforts toward education often miss their mark, heredity is persistent and unerring.

CHAPTER V.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUMMARY.

The assumption was made after the liberation of the negroes, that if they were given constitutional rights they would be ensured against political evils. Fearing that they would be practically re-enslaved under forms of law, unless given an equal share in government with their former masters, the party in power endowed the freedmen with unrestricted suffrage. The experience of the negroes in thus passing almost at once from slavery to full-fledged citizenship, hardly has a parallel in the political annals of mankind.

Neither in West Africa nor under American slavery had the negroes had any opportunity to exercise self-government. Certainly there was nothing in the experience of the natives of the Guinea coast, living in petty despotisms, to develop political capacity or civic virtue. During their enslavement in this country they were never called upon to give a thought to matters of public welfare, and they did not control even their own personal and family affairs. It is true that in so far as they became more civilized, learning to understand and live in harmony with our institutions, they were by so much the better prepared to enter into our political life. But the specific development in political capacity, required for the successful conduct of republican government, the slaves entirely missed. Thus at the close of the war the negroes were still, as when they left Africa, infants in political development. Utterly ignorant of our governmental organization, they were unfitted to acquire rapidly a knowledge of it. They had not even the ele-

mental qualities of character necessary to wise self-government—foresight and self-command.

In this condition they were suddenly given as much political power as the most intelligent citizens of our land. The responsibitities thus laid upon them prematurely, are well expressed by Dr. Curry :

"We are trying . . . to govern upon the theory that every man is a political expert, entitled to have an opinion upon all economic, social, and political questions, and that a majority told by the head, whether that head be covered with hair or wool, is the voice of God. The principle is that one man's opinion upon the most important national and international questions, finance, currency, coinage, tariff, territorial expansion, imperialism, is as good as another's, and that the voter has sufficient knowledge and patriotism to make it safe to trust to him the most important of all human business." [1]

When we consider in the light of this the mental and moral condition of the freedmen, there can be no surprise at the disastrous results that quickly followed their enfranchisement.

Certain conditions, left by the war, affected the negroes particularly. When the negroes received the right of suffrage there was but one issue that they could understand, viz., whether they were to remain free or not, though this was then a dead issue. For them there were but two parties, one of which was identified with the power that had freed them, the other with the power that had sought to keep them in slavery. They ranged themselves in a solid mass on the one side, and have remained there ever since. Not understanding the issues that have arisen in the interval, they have clung to the one issue they could comprehend.

This disregard of real issues, and the rejection of the leadership of white men in their own section, whose interest it was to maintain good government, had an un-

[1] Proceedings of the Montgomery conference, p. 111.

fortunate result. Adventurers from the North, and demagogues at home, who had no interests at stake in the defeated states, presently acquired the leadership of the negroes, and received their political support *en masse*. Partly owing to the fact that negroes were in excess of whites in many localities, and partly because many whites were excluded from the ballot by temporary disqualification,[1] a revolution ensued that placed the former slaves with their new leaders in charge of state and local governments throughout a large portion of the South. A greater misfortune could hardly have happened to the negroes than to have received their first political lessons under such leaders.

A foreigner's view of the state of affairs during reconstruction, may perhaps be more impartial than that of any writer in our own country. Mr. Lecky, the English historian, says:

"The enfranchisement of the negroes added a new and enormous mass of voters, who were utterly and childishly incompetent. . . For some time after the war the influence of property and intelligence in the South was completely broken, and the negro vote was ostensibly supreme. The consequence was what might have been expected. A horde of vagrant political adventurers from the North . . . . poured into the southern provinces and, in conjunction with the refuse of the mean whites, they undertook the direction of the negro voters. Then followed, under the protection of northern bayonets, a grotesque parody of government, a hideous orgie of anarchy, violence, unrestrained corruption, undisguised, ostentatious, insulting robbery, such as the world had scarcely seen. The state debts were profusely piled up. Legislation was openly put up for sale. The 'Bosses' were in all their glory, and they were abundantly rewarded. . . . At length the northern troops were withdrawn, and the whole scene changed. The carpet-baggers had had their day, and they returned laden with southern booty to their own states. Partly by violence, partly by fraud, but largely through the force of old habits of obedience and command, the planters in a short time regained their ascendancy. Sometimes, it is said, they did not even count the negro votes. Gen-

[1] By act of Congress, March 23, 1867. See U. S. Statutes at large, vol. xv, p. 3.

erally they succeeded in dictating them, and by systematic manipulation or intimidation, they restored the South to quiet and some degree of prosperity. A more curious picture of the effects of democratic equality among a population who were entirely unfitted for it has never been presented." [1]

It was in effect a revolution by force that put the ex-slaves in power. The counter-revolution that restored to power the only residents in the South capable of bringing order out of chaos, was effected by every means that a desperate people could invent. Meantime the impression left upon the minds of the Southern whites was to the last degree unfortunate for the negroes. "Negro domination" became a synonym for all that men of English descent have stubbornly refused to tolerate in government for a thousand years. Unable to protect themselves by legitimate means, because subjected to the federal law, in the making of which, they for the time, had no voice, the whites were compelled to resort to illegal methods. Against an able and politically experienced race, the negroes could not prevail, even in sections where they were much in the majority. Thus, after a brief period of power, the negroes quickly were deprived of it, and have since exercised political rights only on sufferance.

But the danger and dishonor of deliberately ignoring constitutional and legal provisions was keenly felt by the very class that resorted to intimidation and fraud to preserve their civilization. As time went on and the atmosphere became clearer, they began to search for some means by which to effect their object by legal methods. Inasmuch as the states have power to regulate the suffrage so long as they keep within the broad limitations prescribed by the federal constitution, a

[1] "Democracy and liberty", by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. i, pp. 93–4. See also "Union and disunion", by Woodrow Wilson, pp. 263–4.

movement began about the end of the eighties to secure the main end in view by state constitutional amendments.

In 1890 the state of Mississippi set a precedent by amending her constitution so that after Jan. 1, 1892, no person could vote unless "able to read any section of the Constitution" or "to understand the same when read to him and give a reasonable interpretation thereof."[1] The payment of a poll tax was also required. South Carolina followed in 1895 with an amendment, the effect of which was to require that every voter should be able to read and write any section of the Constitution, or show that he owned and had paid taxes upon property assessed at $300 or more.[2] Louisiana, in 1898, passed an amendment substantially the same in effect as that of South Carolina, but with the addition of a "grandfather clause", which admits illiterate or propertyless whites to the ballot by excusing from the limitations of the amendment all descendants of men who voted previous to the war.[3] North Carolina took similar action in 1900, excepting that no property qualification was required, while the payment of a poll tax was.[4] Alabama and Virginia have very recently passed amendments to the same general end. It is probable that all the states having a large proportion of negro population will ultimately pursue this policy.

It is here no concern of ours to discuss this action as regards its wisdom or justice. It seems to those having to face the problem, to be one of those necessary compromises between ideal principles and actual conditions

[1] See the Annual cyclopedia, vol. xv, pp 559–60.
[2] *Idem.*, vol. xx, p. 705.
[3] *Idem.*, third series, vol. iii, p. 409.
[4] *Idem.*, vol. v. p. 444.

with which our history is full and without which our federal Union never could have existed. But the immediate effect is to disfranchise a large majority of negroes till such time as they can become an intelligent property-owning class, with some appreciation of actual present-day issues and with some interest at stake. Under these circumstances a strong motive is given them to advance themselves in intelligence and material prosperity.

But as the capacity for political self-government is an integral part of general character, the ability to command a proportionate share of governmental power against able competition can hardly exceed the ability to develop industrial importance. In foregoing chapters, however, we have seen that the negroes do not at present give evidence of a general advance in morality or industrial efficiency. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, therefore, that they are not destined at any early date to regain political power proportionate to their numbers.

Nor can we be surprised at this. Forty years ago the negroes were as little children in political development. To have acquired within forty years what has required the whole range of English and American history for the whites to develop, would have been a marvel without precedent.

Let us glance back over the career of the Negro as we have traced it from his earlier home in Africa. We saw that there the negroes were a semi-nomadic people, living, partly by primitive agriculture, fishing and hunting, and partly upon the free gifts of nature. They had a poor and fluctuating diet, were very scantily clothed, and lived in very simple huts. Their women were made to perform all the drudgery. The value of time and of labor-saving appliances was but dimly appreciated.

They were controlled by present impulses and made no provision for the future.

They dwelt in little village communities and had no regard for life and property outside of these. Even within the village they thought little of destroying the sick or useless, and could not comprehend sentiments of compassion. A large portion of their population was enslaved. Polygamy prevailed, women were bought and sold, and chastity was valued only as a salable commodity. Parental and filial affection, with the exception of that between mother and son, was weak and transient. Social morality was not supported by religion, the gods being supposed to have no interest in the conduct of men toward men.

Their religion was a dark and cruel fetichism. They attributed all events to spirits, to propitiate whom they offered sacrifices, including very often, human victims. They wore charms for protection. Many victims were killed on the charge of witchcraft, and many to supply companionship and service for the departed great in the land of the dead.

With the exception of two or three petty kingdoms, founded upon conquest, the village or group of related villages was the largest political unit known to them. These units were ruled by chiefs in accordance with a few simple customs, interpreted in each special case as the chief might please. Intertribal warfare for slaves and plunder prevailed almost everywhere, and was characterized by horrible cruelties and enormous waste of life.

Such was life along the Guinea coast when Shakespeare was producing his dramas, when Bacon was writing the Novum Organum, when English explorers were sailing

every ocean, and English colonists were laying the foundations of our Republic. By a strange destiny the Caucasian and the Negro came to live together under the same flag in North America.

In the course of removal from Africa the negroes were subjected to a drastic selection, which eliminated physically inferior individuals. During slavery a mild form of artificial selection went on. By these experiences the race probably made a gain, which was registered in heredity. The amalgamation in this country of slightly differing tribes was probably beneficial, while that of black with white seems to have resulted in psychic improvement but physical deterioration. The change to a temperate climate, a more steady and substantial diet, and intelligent medical care, was favorable to vigor and energy. Thus the American negroes must have become rapidly superior to their West African contemporaries.

Under white discipline the negroes learned to work more efficiently. The former indolent life of the men was quickly changed into one of useful production, and both sexes acquired skill in many occupations. There gradually appeared at least four classes, viz., the unskilled field-hands, the mechanics, the house-servants, and the sub-overseers and stewards.

The grosser ideas and practices of West African life were soon dropped. Polygamy was forbidden and destroyed as an institution. Monogamy was substituted in form and by thousands was accepted in good faith. Among those more closely associated with the whites, family life became of a much higher type than was ever before known to the Negro race. Christianity was accepted, and though the new religion was debased by many mis-

conceptions and thinly disguised superstitions, it was infinitely superior to the old. The negroes acquired in the English language an improved uniform medium of communication, and along with this their general intelligence was much increased.

At the close of their experience under slavery the negroes had made, therefore, an immense advance in the direction of civilized life. While this was in part founded securely upon a natural basis, it was no doubt due in part to an artificial, forced development. In any case, however, they were still far behind their masters in every element of fitness for highly developed social life. In view of this it was a critical step for them when they ceased to be slaves and became direct competitors of the abler white race in the struggle for life. Since emancipation this competition has relentlessly advanced.

No longer controlled by external force, the negroes have depended for a generation past upon their own self-command. But from time immemorial they have been weak in self-command, they have been dominated by impulse, and inclined to an indolent semi-nomadic existence, and they have possessed an extremely primitive code of morality. Under slavery they were kept widely distributed, in close contact with the whites, so that example and discipline could be very effective against hereditary inclinations. When liberated to follow their own bent, they began to gravitate together until to-day they live isolated, for the most part, from white society. Thus they have lost the stimulus of example, as well as the direct training and discipline, given by the superior race. The strain required to maintain life on the level of the whites is driving the negroes to develop a society of their own, with easier

moral standards, better fitted perhaps, to their peculiar temperament. This movement is symptomatic of a dangerous weakness, while at the same time directly contributing to aggravate it.

According to the balance of the evidence now available, it appears that the negroes of the younger generation are restless, unsteady at labor, and impatient of restraint; that they are yielding place to the whites in many of the better paid employments, and that they are excessively fond of spending for display or other economically unsound purposes. It also appears that in their sexual and family relations there is increasing looseness and instability. Following their strongly gregarious instincts, they are rapidly developing the communal group life afforded through church organization, rather than the private life of the home. Their imperfect socializiation is revealing itself in their criminality, which is increasing at a much greater ratio than the negro population.

Confronted by these facts, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the heavy task laid upon the American Negro, after liberation from slavery, has proved too much for him, and that this people, considered as a whole, is slowly but surely tending to revert. Seized and transplanted unwillingly, forced sharply into new and severely exacting habits of life, held for a time in this condition of strain, and then suddenly released, the Negro finds it surpassingly difficult to suppress the hereditary instincts that do not harmonize with American social organization. He is finding that two or three centuries are all too brief a period in which to compass almost the entire range of human development.

There is nothing in this conclusion to surprise the

student of evolutionary phenomena. But no right-minded citizen can help deploring it, and hoping that some means may be found of preventing reversion with its inevitable consequence—elimination. Many believe firmly that the magic of education affords the requisite means. Experience has amply demonstrated that mere literary culture will not serve to transform a savage into an efficient member of civilized society. But experience has equally shown that a thorough education of heart and hand, as well as of intellect, will with selected material give valuable results. Applied to all the race, this method could not yield results proportionately great, though a vast amount of good would be done. Meantime, however, only a few thousands are to-day receiving the kind of education critically needed by all the negroes, and almost a half of their number have never received any education at all. In this case a vast educational system is necessary, and under human limitations this cannot be brought into existence and perfected within a brief period. It is not to be forgotten that there are millions of untaught whites also to be provided for. Whatever else happens, hereditary forces, for a time suppressed, will steadily continue to reassert themselves. Obviously, heroic measures are required to reach the millions of negroes.

Surveyed broadly, the outlook for the American negro is not bright. From the native of Guinea to the modern Afro-American is certainly a long step, but from the Guinea natives to the Caucasian builders of our Republic is a yet longer step. It is the hard fate of the transplanted Negro to compete, not with a people of about his own degree of development, but with a race that leads the world in efficiency. This efficiency was

reached only through the struggle and sacrifice prescribed by evolutionary law. There are many who believe that a shorter path to greatness exists, since the science of education has been developed. But so long as the powerful conservatism of heredity persists, scarcely admitting of change save through selection of variations, it is to be doubted whether education has the efficiency claimed for it. Time, struggle and sacrifice have always hitherto been required to create a great race. If these are to be exacted of the Negro, he must traverse a long road, not in safe isolation in a country all his own, but in a land filling fast with able, strenuous, and rapidly progressing competitors. Under such circumstances his position can with difficulty be regarded as other than precarious to the last degree.

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