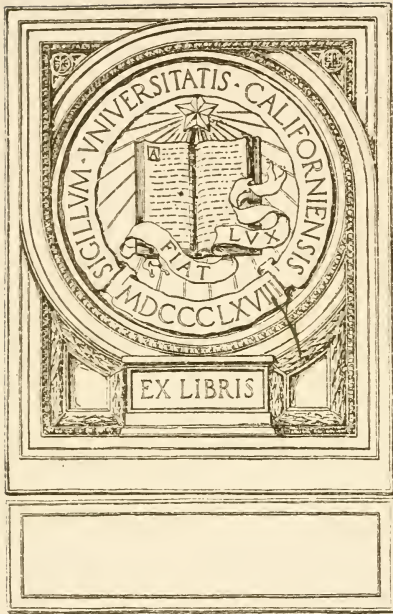


# CHIEFS AND CITIES



OF CENTRAL  
AFRICA - OLIVE MACLEOD







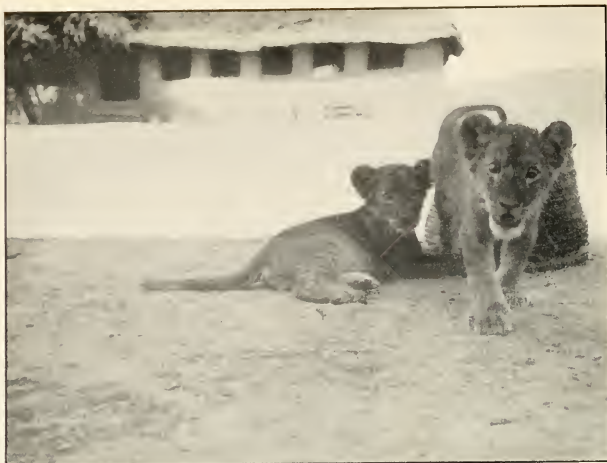






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Kuseri and Lamy.



Mastaba giving the Zakoki Chop.

# Chiefs and Cities of Central Africa

Across Lake Chad

By Way of British, French, and  
German Territories

BY

OLIVE MACLEOD

William Blackwood and Sons  
Edinburgh and London

1912





## PREFACE.

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I AM told that it is expected of the writer of a book of travels to set forth clearly and concisely the objects with which his or her journey was undertaken and the results achieved. I must beg leave to be excused from so business-like a proceeding, and further ask my critics not to read on if they expect more than a simple unexaggerated narrative of travel through little-known regions.

In the course of our journey, which lasted from August 1910 till May 1911, my companions, Mr and Mrs P. A. Talbot, and I passed through countries under French and under German administration, where the Residents of both nationalities invariably showed us the utmost consideration. Nothing could have surpassed their generous help, and as we had come without notice or introduction, I cannot express too strongly our gratitude for their spontaneous kindness. To Herr von Raben, Commandant Maillard, and Captain Facon we are particularly beholden.

We also received much kindness and assistance from many British officials.

Mr Morel has admirably described, in a series of

articles lately published in 'The Times,'<sup>1</sup> the anxious and responsible work discharged by the Government officials in the Nigerias, and also the privations and dangers under which it is carried on, for what seems an inadequate guerdon.

As it was one of the things that struck me most in the course of our travels, perhaps I too may be permitted to add a comment on the extraordinary good fortune of our country in securing the services of so many able men, who deliberately risk their lives and health in the administration of West Africa.

I am advised that it may be of interest to some of my readers to know that a selection of those curios collected on our journey, and mentioned in this book, have been presented to the British Museum, where they are on exhibition in the Ethnographical Department. In this connection I should like to add an expression of particular thanks to Mr T. A. Joyce, who has given me most generous help; as also to every official of the British Museum with whom I have come in contact.

<sup>1</sup> Republished in 'Nigeria: its Peoples and its Problems.'

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# CHIEFS AND CITIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE NIGER AND BENUE.

(AUGUST 10-SEPTEMBER 29.)

A FLAT, long coast heavy with forest, and in the middle a brown plain of muddy water racing to the sea.

Thus did the Niger appear from the deck of a little paddle-boat as it throbbed its way up the river.

Thick jungle grew on either side, broken by plantations of yams, cassavas, and bananas. Cotton-trees and palms rose up from amongst them, interspersed with forest trees that flamed with brilliant scarlet blossoms. Creepers hung in a matted tangle, and exquisite orchids amongst them. Dead trees, their bare limbs white with a cloud of egrets, lent variety to the scene; for at this season of high flood little wild life was visible except an occasional fish-eagle or pelican.

Amid these sights and sounds it was hard to realise

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that only a few weeks before we had been sitting in an English garden discussing whether or not the journey should be undertaken. When one wants anything enough one usually gets it, and so it was with me: it was settled that we were to go.

My companions were experienced travellers, and as they knew exactly what to get, and where, the preparations were soon made, and in a fortnight's time we embarked from Liverpool on s.s. *Dakar*, with no graver misfortune than the loss of a few dresses and some boots. It is true that I had foolishly packed my films in a hold box, and, as I longed to practise photography, which was to me a new art, I bought some more in Liverpool. While so doing the last required touch of sentiment was given, without which no such expedition is complete: the shopman begged me to turn back, even at this eleventh hour, from the dangers of West Africa, where, he assured me, I should almost certainly lose my life.

Once on board, I settled down, with unrewarded optimism, to the study of a Hausa grammar. Mrs Talbot was too wise to spend her time in a like occupation, but her husband, who knew the language, helped me in my task.

Mr P. A. Talbot is a District Commissioner in Southern Nigeria, but before joining the service he had already experienced the fascination of Africa. In 1902 he served on the Liberian Boundary Commission; and in 1904 joined the Alexander-Gosling Expedition for a year, when, together with Lieut. Boyd Alexander, he was the first Englishman to navigate Lake Chad. Mrs Talbot, after living the first few years of her married life in England, accompanied her husband to his

bush-station in 1909, and at once developed a keen love for their adventurous life. We three were now on our way to West and Central Africa, and Mr Talbot had undertaken in the course of our journey to survey by theodolite and plane-table in Northern Nigeria, and his Government, with the approval of the Colonial Office, had given him special service leave for six months.

We had set sail on August 10, and ten days later, as we were nearing the African coast, a turmoil in the water aroused our attention. It was caused by a sperm whale, whose huge black bulk was seen from time to time above the white foam, and ever and anon three giant tentacles waved ominously above it. A kraken had embraced the whale in a deadly grip. The ship passed on, and the combatants were lost to sight.

Another day four porpoises played together within 100 yards of us. One raised his whole bulk perpendicularly out of the water and gaped his jaws wide open, as he is represented in children's picture-books before swallowing Jonah. But I will not chronicle these glimpses of the deep at length, for when I did so in a letter the recipient replied that seeing was believing but that hearing was not.

On the 28th of August we arrived at Forcados, a dull, swamp-surrounded station at the mouth of the Niger. There we trans-shipped to a paddle-boat that was to take the mail to all intervening stations between Forcados and Lokoja, our immediate destination, and in accordance with instructions from the Colonial Office the Governor kindly gave us passage on her.

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From that moment we no longer led an ordinary life on an ordinary boat, for on the *Sultan* bedsteads were the only furniture provided, and we sat on our own chairs, and ate our own food cooked by our own boys, of whom we had engaged three during our few hours' wait at Forcados. Before leaving the *Dakar* we laid in a stock of steamer foods, and amongst them a huge salt ham, for though we knew we didn't like it, it was the last time for many months that we should be able to get such civilised fare. That and cooking butter swizzled into temporary firmness were our two greatest luxuries, and they were certainly an invaluable preparation for what was to come: when even a dish of onions was a welcome dinner, though hitherto I had hated them.

My Hausa grammar was thrown aside at once, for as the *Sultan* throbbed its way onward one sight followed another in quick succession, and all was new to me. We passed by thickly populated banks, where at frequent intervals rectangular huts with palm-leaf roofs are clustered together in small spaces cleared from the great forest. In the forefront are little meeting-rooms that consist of a low roof with no walls, and each village has its ju-ju house that contains some object of worship—a carved fetish or a piece of cloth. Some of these are built right out on to the river for the fishermen. The people seem as much at home on water as on land. Indeed they do not get much opportunity of walking, for the jungle is so dense that a narrow track to a neighbouring village is all they can attempt to clear. They manage their canoes with marvellous dexterity, and it is picturesque to see them in their primitive



dug-outs beneath large-brimmed straw hats that serve to shelter them from rain and sun. The children spend hours in the water, and swim about in complete indifference to peril from hungry crocodiles.

With so much to watch, the deck was an attractive place, but it was barely warm enough to sit out without coats, for the sky was often overcast, and it rained a good deal in a determined Britannic fashion. Whether it did or not we seized the opportunity of going ashore whenever the *Sultan* stopped for mails or firewood, as we were keen to see everything, and also to start our natural history collections. The very first time we landed a black mamba wriggled out from between Mrs Talbot's feet as she walked, and a centipede was pointed out to me. Henceforth we adopted the precaution of wearing long boots, which are invaluable for protection against mosquitos as well as snakes.

Mr Talbot is a member of the Linnæan Society, but his wife, who is also an experienced botanist, undertook the flower collection. It gave her a lot of work, as it is, of course, necessary to change the paper in which the specimens are dried, and as their number amounted to many hundreds the task was no light one. She also made detailed drawings of those that had any special interest.

Mr Talbot, who is both a Fellow of the Zoological and Anthropological Societies, was fully occupied with birds, beasts, and insects; and I was deputed to collect grasses, an easy but somewhat unrewarding task, for their distribution is so wide that those of commonest growth in Africa are also of commonest growth in England. We were all three keen on

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collecting curios, and each new market was full of possibilities. Disappointingly many, however, had nothing but food-stuffs for sale: peppers, chillis, ground-nuts, wee tomatoes, &c.; and there were places where the goods were so unattractive that throughout one whole afternoon we saw no purchase made, nor did the vendors seem to expect it.

Some of the natives wore brass anklets, to which large round shields were attached that necessitated their standing with feet wide apart, and in walking one leg had always to be raised higher than the other. We wanted to buy some for our collections, but their owners refused to part with them, and we quite understood that it could be no ordinary motive that made them submit to such acutely inconvenient ornaments.

As we went northward the character of the scenery changed, the forests became less dense, and hills were visible on the horizon. The style of architecture altered too, and the huts, instead of being rectangular, were round in shape, which was characteristic of the regions through which we passed until once more we neared the coast.

One evening we had the excitement of a battle, though unluckily it took place when Mrs Talbot and I were in bed, where we prudently remained. Missiles of firewood, ready stacked for the use of steamers, were hurled at our crew, who responded with such success that they captured a prisoner and only lost a stern rope. The captain, however, was obliged to cast off hurriedly, and we drifted rapidly down with the current till such time as steam could be raised; for the river is too dangerous to navigate



The Niger from Idah.



Mount Patti and Lokoja from the Niger.



in the dark, and we always tied up for the night. The question then arose of how to deal with the prisoner, who turned out to be the local policeman. It was finally decided to drop him overboard when we were opposite the village, so that he might swim ashore. This was done, but our approach was received with a fresh storm of missiles, and both parties yelled imprecations at each other till the policeman had landed and we were out of sight.

So we proceeded, each day bringing with it some fresh thing to see: long-limbed natives, wonderful insects, or a distant mountain-range; and it was all too soon that we reached Lokoja. It is a pretty, spreading town, situated beneath a wooded hill, and looks out across the river to where the Benue adds its large volume to the Niger. At the quay Mr Elliot of the Marine Department, and Mr Byfield, the resident Magistrate, kindly met us, and took us up to Government House, which the Governor had been good enough to put at our disposal, and which Mr Byfield had made gay with cut flowers. Its accommodation consists of two large bedrooms, one on either side of a living room, all opening on to a verandah that encircles the whole. From it a sandy road led past the white men's bungalows, lawn-tennis courts, golf-course, and polo-ground to the native town beyond. Above this rises Mount Patti, and from its slopes we heard the barking of baboon, the howl of hyenas, and the haunting cry of the chromatic bird, which sings its song in descending semi-quavers from dawn to sunset. I longed to climb the hill and see the beasts, and each fresh person that we met added to my desire, for he said that

baboon live there in such numbers and are so daring that they often hold the road, and a single man, though armed, dare not press past, for they are very fierce, and should he wound one of their number the whole pack would fall upon him. Mr Stone, one of the Police Commissioners, who had told us much about the baboon, very kindly arranged a hunting expedition for us. Accordingly, one early morning we all set forth up the hill, and picnicked in the bungalow the Governor has had made as a sort of week-end residence at the summit. This day's outing entailed an immense deal of preparation,—insatiable thirst was foreseen and provided against, books were brought to read during those hours when it was too hot to be out, and chairs were carried behind us, for ants make short work of any one who attempts to sit upon the ground. It was a very successful day—the woods were lovely and the view wide. The rock is of ironstone and lightning there is dreaded, but no tornado burst to mar our peace. In the cool of the afternoon we set forth upon our hunt, scrambling over sharp rocks, breaking through thick grass that waved above our heads and enclosed our view, but nothing more material rewarded us than the penetrating odour of baboon. We reached the bottom hot and depressed, mopped our heated brows in the towels which it is the height of courtliness for a man to offer a woman out walking, and shook the dust of Mount Patti off our feet.

Our unsuccessful expedition led to a very terrible result, by causing Mrs Talbot and me to realise that we had neither of us brought suitable hunting costumes. We defied vanity, and went to the store,

where we bought some khaki of a strong military texture, and sent out a demand for tailors to come and make it up. After a long interval an extremely filthy person arrived in a frock-coat; he declared himself proficient, and, fearful that there was no other, we intrusted him with the stuff, together with a pattern white skirt and shirt, which came back besmirched with grime, and had evidently served no useful purpose, for the new garments were wholly original. Like barbaric handicraft they were devoid of symmetry, and what part to make front, back, or side, was a matter for daily choice. Our shopping was for the most part less personal, and far more amusing, for it was done at the market, where the vendors squat beneath rows of low stalls, their merchandise suspended from the low roof or laid out on the ground in front of them. They were very nice to deal with, for selling seemed to give them as much enjoyment as buying did to us, and the results of bargaining were as impossible to foresee as a game of chance. The one thing they all thought would appeal to us was English calico, marked with the name of the Niger Company in red ink.



SCENT-BOTTLE.

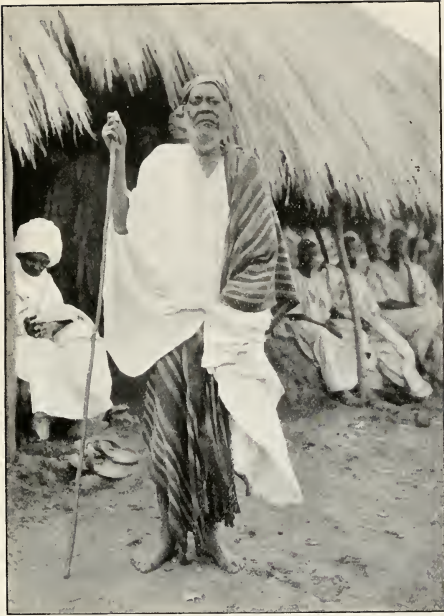
We visited the Chief, Abbiga, who has his house near by. He had accompanied Barth and Overweg upon their travels, was with Overweg when he died, and buried him "deep-deep," so that he might rest safe from the depredations of wild beasts. He had been to Europe, and told us of his visit to Queen Victoria, who had given him a present of £40, and each lady he shook hands with left 2s. 6d. or 5s. in his palm.



He had seen the late Kaiser Wilhelm also, and had been much impressed with a dinner to 200 people at the palace. He spoke English fluently, and remembered clearly the various places he had visited, judging them by their wealth of produce. He was courtly in manner, and appeared really interested in Mr Talbot's projects, but Mrs Talbot and I counted for exactly nothing at all.

On our return from the market one day we lunched with Mr and Mrs Stone, when our conversation was interrupted by a loud noise from the servants' quarters. We all hurried round, to see one boy balancing on a stick, another on a dresser, both in abject terror because they had seen a large cobra in the kitchen. Unluckily it had made good its escape, and though we went in pursuit, armed with polo sticks, we failed to find it. Mr Talbot was annoyed with me for having joined in the search, and, though perhaps on this occasion he had reason on his side, I foresaw that more serious difficulties might arise when it was a question of big game shooting. I therefore determined to learn how to handle a rifle, an art of which I was completely ignorant, and Major Rose, who was then in command of the battalion, very kindly volunteered to teach me. We went up to the range every morning, and on the first day, out of ten shots, I hit the target twice and got a bull's-eye once—to my overweening triumph. My instructors did less well, and it was explained that after a while the climate affects the eye: the climate is the proverbial cat of Africa. They were sad, but resigned; and it was only at my next lesson, when the crack marksman came and failed to do better,





Abbiga, Chief of Lokoja.



Lokoja Market.



that they tested the rifle and found its sighting false. I have never seen men brighten with such relief, though for me the discovery was humiliating.

Major Rose not only gave me the lessons, but lent me a light rifle to take on our expedition. I had not brought one out, as I did not intend to shoot, but it was safer to have one should emergencies arise, and I soon got to place an unreasoned faith in its possession.

Our immediate destination was Yola, the most distant British post on the Benue, and, as she was taking the mails there, we were again given passage on the *Sultan*, for whom we felt by now a real affection. The mail was five days late, and, in spite of the unbounded hospitality we received, we were glad when she came and a start was possible. We now recommenced a life very similar to that we had spent in ascending the Niger, and Ibi was the only place of importance at which we called. We were kindly welcomed there by Mrs Ruxton, whose husband (the Resident) was away with the Governor. We stopped long enough to pay our usual visit to the market, where we saw some of the celebrated Munchi pagans, whose name originated, it is said, in the days when Allah paid a visit to their country. Not seeing the other tribes who lived in the neighbourhood, he demanded news of them. The response was "*Mun chi*," which being interpreted is "we have eaten." Certainly they have earned a bad reputation in the past, and are still looked on with suspicion, though they are no longer cannibals. They hate Europeans, and prefer to trade with extortionate middlemen of their own colour rather than gain

higher profits by direct dealing with the Niger Co. They show a certain inconsistency, however, in that they go to white doctors for treatment for their eyes. They suffer a great deal from diseases of the eye, and it is said that the inhabitants of whole villages are blind.

The Benue was very broad, over a mile, and in some places as much as two, and its water was clearer than that of the muddy Niger. The vegetation was not so dense, nor were its banks so thickly populated. That was a loss for us, for the people were getting to adorn themselves more and more extravagantly, and it was amusing to see them. They no longer confined themselves to patterns tattooed into their skins, but would colour their cheeks with yellow and blue paint, and the women wore a white bead in one nostril. They put henna on their nails, and during the process their arms were bound in long wooden tubes up to the elbow. Mr Talbot got a photograph of one, but I was too slow and the victim fled. Most people were afraid of our kodaks, and the only plan was to focus something in the opposite direction and then flash round and take the object unaware; but it made success rather unlikely.

We reached Yola on the tenth day, though the usual reckoning is from 12 to 14 days for a steamboat and 35 to 42 for a canoe. The Resident very kindly offered to turn out of his house for our accommodation, but we would not hear of it, and took up our quarters at the rest-house. It consists of a circular space enclosed by a mud wall, above which is an interval of about a foot for air, and then a conical thatched roof, which stretches far enough over to make a shelter for the boxes outside—a style of rest-house architecture with which we



Woman with her Arm in a Case (Lokoja).



A Barber Shaving his Client at Ibi Market.



became very familiar. Outside was a large baobab-tree, probably 1000 years old, which offered tempting shade when we wished to emerge from our frog-frequented hut; but some bees had made it their home, and we were warned not to risk disturbing them. There was also a hornet's nest in the roof of the rest-house, but, in spite of two recent experiences belying the statement, we were told they did not sting.

Mr Holst, of the Niger Company, made many arrangements for our comfort, and kindly put two rooms at our disposal in the store near by, for which luxury we were truly grateful.

The white men's quarters are nearly three miles back from the river, looking on to beautiful hills, and beneath lies a swamp that divides them from the native town of Yola. The neighbourhood is still unsettled, but it is the unfortunate traders who suffer. Two black merchants had been recently murdered on the main road from Yola to Maifoni, and had we wished to go there direct, an escort would have been sent for our protection. As it was, we had only time to add a few more boys to our staff before journeying on to Garua.

Our retinue now consisted of a Hausa interpreter, who received 33s. a-month for wages, and of whom the less said the better; Mastaba,<sup>1</sup> our headman, who possessed every attribute but that of his calling, namely, the power of management. We became attached to him, and in later days he took advantage of it, for when deputed to keep with me on the march, he used often to ride up and tell me, "Massa say please no go so quick," and I obediently hung back, to discover later that Mr Talbot had sent no such message,

<sup>1</sup> His name is properly Mustafa, but he Anglicised the pronunciation for our benefit.



but that my pace had been too fast to please Mastaba. Then we had an excellent cook, who always went by the title of his profession, with the addition of one syllable, without which no one knew of whom we were speaking—cookoo. He received by far the biggest wages of the party, 50s. a-month, and he deserved them, for however long the march, and whatever the scarcity of utensils, he never failed to cook us a good meal. Situ was the Admirable Crichton of the establishment, and did everything that we required personally, with the assistance of Small Boy, who is an invariable adjunct of every household. Ours was a pleasant, sharp little fellow, and a favourite with every one. Once we were asked to name our retinue for official purposes, and summoned the lad to answer for himself, but he only knew himself as "Small Boy," and was troubled when we pressed him for another name. He received the modest wage of 10s. a-month. These three remained with us to the end, and are still with the Talbots in Southern Nigeria. Kukaua, an ex-soldier, was engaged as gun-boy for 25s. a-month. His home was at Maifoni, where he wished to return, and he brought his piccan with him from Lokoja, a very small girl of philosophical disposition. She had been scuffled on board the *Sultan* at the last moment without leave, and now at Yola it seemed unsuitable to expose the child to our long land marches. Her father, however, pleaded so hard that he was given permission to bring her if he would engage a man to carry her. Thus peace was restored, but not for long: the interpreter came raging to ask if it was indeed our wish that he should carry the child, for Kukaua had given her to him with that announcement! A cook's mate and washerman completed the party. The latter, a





Mastaba, Washerman, his Wife, Situ, Cookoo, Small Boy, Mandara, Moussa.



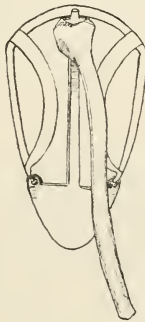
A Village on the Benue.



good fellow, brought his wife with him,—a cheerful, kindly woman, who contributed greatly to the boys' comfort.

To all this party Mr Drewitt, of the Pagenstecher trading firm, very kindly gave a passage to Garua. He was himself making the trip on the Company's steamboat, the *Nigeria*, the fastest on the river ; and it was the last of the year, for tornados had begun, and precluded the approach of the dry season. We were more than grateful to Mr Drewitt and to his comrade, Mr Hendrich, for their kindness and hospitality, as without their assistance we should have found it difficult to proceed.

We embarked early one morning and steamed quickly up the rapidly narrowing Benue, where the banks were so close that we could see dog-faced baboons and long-tailed monkeys on both sides at once. The margins were swampy, and we saw but few habitations, while, throughout the whole morning, only one canoe passed us. In twenty-five hours we reached our destination.



NUPE HOE.

## CHAPTER II.

## GARUA AND THE NORTH KAMERUN.

(SEPTEMBER 29—OCTOBER 14.)

GARUA lies on the west bank of the Benue, and as we approached the quay was busy as a Liverpool dock. One small Niger Company steamboat was alongside the wharf, and men were hurrying to and from her, for she had only just come, and her goods were being unloaded: the last stores, together with those from our boat, that would be received that season. No more steamboats would attempt the passage of the upper Benue for another eight or nine months, for the water was falling fast, and each day sandbanks recently submerged became more and more visible.

The shore was black with men busied in the construction and repair of steel canoes, for a French officer was expected to take over a consignment of wires that had come for the new telegraph line between Fort Lamy and Bangui, on the way to Fort Archambault, and he had to arrange for their transport. They were to be taken up the Benue, the Mao Bulo, and so to Léré, in these canoes, and but few days remained when there would be sufficient water to make this route possible.

In the foreground women stood knee-deep in the

water washing clothes; others wrung them out upon the shore; others again were bathing, and swam with a splashy, over-arm action; while the path was dotted with girls who, with easy, graceful poise, carried on their heads big water-pots, which they came to fill at the river. Farther on horses were being watered, fine animals in splendid condition. They were supplied to the German fort by the Chief of Garua, who takes back each horse by arrangement, as it gets past the perfection of its strength, for great importance is attached to their speed and fitness for gun practice.

Numbers of British, French, and Germans were at the wharf directing operations; and when the *Nigeria* steamed up, and they saw that she had ladies on board, they instinctively raised their helmets. This imprudence brought before our eyes a vision of sun-struck men, stretched dead and dying on the beach; however, they not only survived, but came on board to greet us. We pressed Mrs Talbot forward as linguist of the party, but she brought dumbness on us all by addressing a fluent German sentence to a man who unluckily proved to be French, and ignorant of all but his mother-tongue. He seemed much distressed to be the cause of our confusion, and hastened to relieve it by the statement that his Government were sending an officer to meet us, who was expected to arrive next day. Filled with wonder, we pointed out that our visit to Garua was unpremeditated and that we had made no tryst; but he politely informed us that our coming had been foreseen for many weeks.

Our first act was to call and report ourselves to the military resident. A short, steep incline brought

us into a broad, straight, sandy road that led through the heart of the town, past the Sultan's palace, by the school, where superior black boys laboriously learn German, and past the market-place to the fort. It is a magnificent and imposing building, made of bricks from the local kiln, whitened with lime from a marble quarry near-by. A deep trench and orderly shrubbery separate it from the road, which, as I have said before, runs straight to the river. Captain Schwarz came out to greet us, welcomed us to the fort, and took us in to tea. The place is homely, and is furnished with a simple taste that lent the hospitality we received there an additional attraction. Flies were the only drawback, and they buzzed round with unwearying persistency. There were house-flies, some of which bite; large flying-ants that shed their wings without compunction; globulous, slug-bodied insects that entangled themselves in our hair; sharp, hard-bodied little beetles that slipped inside our dresses; and sand-flies that have driven men mad. These are almost invisible, like wee midges, and bite with a ferocity that is out of all proportion to their size. In a very short time our hands and faces were covered with lumps, like a bath-bun with granulated sugar, the result of their assaults. These attacked us by day, and mosquitos by night—though the latter came almost as a relief, for when they were in such numbers as to be unbearable we could take refuge from them behind mosquito-nets. Herr von Ranke, the doctor, kept toads, which sat upon the table and shot out greedy tongues that worked havoc amongst the insect tribes.

After tea a carriage-and-pair swept round to the door, followed by a dog-cart, and we were taken for a

drive along another broad and excellent road, planted with a young avenue. It stretches, we were told, some seven days' march, and is drivable all the way.

The station was only occupied in 1904, and it seems miraculous that so much could have been done in the time. I commented on this to my companion, Lieut. von Scheffer, who replied that while the British seek popularity the Germans aim at progress.

Gold has been found in the vicinity, but no attempt has been made to work it yet, though a few enterprising men have pegged out claims.

The country itself is beautiful. Sharply outlined ranges lie to north, east, and west, and the Benue winds in and out in great silver loops; while the undergrowth, though at first glance uniform, is composed of myriads of varieties of flowers and grasses—a collector's paradise, though few were of an individual beauty to catch the eye. It is a pastoral district, and herds of small humped Fulani cattle and droves of shaggy goats feed on the lowland pastures. No one dares ascend the hills, for they are occupied by unsubdued tribes, who were driven from the plains by the all-conquering Fulani at a time when capture meant slavery, and they have not yet realised that now the white man has come, danger is at an end. They are a continual source of menace, and often creep down to perform some act of piracy in the valleys, carrying their loot back to the uplands where no armed force can follow them.

Circles of stone remain at intervals in the road to mark their occupation, for in the days when they still inhabited the valleys these were places of worship,

enclosed in the most important compounds, but now they lie open and exposed.

From time to time we bumped across some channel in the road, cut by water as it raced down from the hills in the wet season; but on this occasion we did not drive far, for dusk was approaching, and we had yet to take up our quarters at Messrs Pagenstecher's stores, where, by the kindness of Mr Hendrich, two large rooms were put at our disposal throughout our stay at Garua. He was an excellent host, was always to be found, made every arrangement for our interest and comfort, and yet gave us the sensation of as much freedom as we could have had in our own



ALIGATA.

quarters. In the stillness of that first night, as we walked back from dinner at the fort, we heard a sound that was very familiar to me. It was the skirl as of the bagpipes. In a moment it had seized my senses with the magic that the pipes hold—excitement, yearning, and a madness for action. Short notes preceded the accent, the compass was limited, and the illusion would have been complete had it not been for the lack of the drone. Still the music played on and on, and presently we came upon the player, a dim figure huddled in a heap upon the ground. His instrument was a wooden one shaped something like an oboe, with a reed, which is bound tightly or loosely according to the pitch desired. He did not pause, and for a few minutes we watched



and listened; then we turned, the spell unbroken, and walked quietly away.

We told Mr Hendrich how much we had enjoyed this experience, and he kindly arranged for us to hear a full band of three aligatas, for so the instrument is called, and five drums. These latter were doubly beaten, by sticks held in one hand, and by the fingers of the other. The performers wore long, loose-flowing robes, which lent grace to their movements as they swayed to and fro—now forwards, now back; now in swift advance, then in slow retreat; now twisting and turning with deliberate decorum; then with wild gesture and an abandonment of excitement breaking into a furore of sound, that by its very insistence would bring a man back from the threshold of the dead. There could be but two results—the auditor hates it, or is held enthralled. As music it is monotonous, even ugly, for the tone is harsh, nor is it always true; yet it expresses something which perfect harmony and pure melody lacks. It is extempore, and both auditor and performer contribute alike to the composition, for by some subtle instinct the exponent intensifies and gives vent to the emotions of his audience. He plays for the listener, he expresses the listener, it is the listener who dictates, he is interpreter, and for the moment they are one. The leader of the band played the aligata, and never once did he pause throughout the whole half-hour of the performance. The instrument requires a lot of breath, and the cheeks are so much distended that it is hard to believe there is no artificial inflator inside. This virtuoso was not only inexhaustible, but possessed such perfect control that he could play at every angle,

and would point the aligata aslant, straight up in the air, or downwards into the earth, with equal efficiency, and at the same time accompany the playing with gymnast feats. He would twirl round and round, and down to make a cheese, like our children love to do; or he would squat on his heels and jump, in curious similarity to the old Scottish dance of Kircuddie.

I was anxious to see how long it was physically possible for him to keep it up, but my companions craved for silence, and the ear did tire very soon of a composition that admitted no rests, and where graduation of sound was only attained by the performer's advance and retreat. The rhythm, though marked, was irregular, and could not be divided into time values; and the notes were reiterated without attempt at tune or harmony.

It is curiously trying to hear music that subscribes to no musical laws, that observes key no more than time, and therefore never resolves to the tonic or dominant, for which European peoples instinctively crave.

The excerpt herewith was taken from aligata players in N. Nigeria, and can at best give but a rough idea of the style of music, for the intervals do not correspond with those of our notation.





Fulani Musician.



The Pagan Band, Garua.

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CALIFORNIA

The Germans were very good to us, and amongst many other invitations came one to attend some military manœuvres. Of course we went, and through the drenching rain saw some excellent practice with a galloping maxim, which white officers alone are allowed to fire. The speed with which the black soldiers got it under way was remarkable; and they gave, too, an impressive display of infantry drill, which ended with the attack and capture of a brick-kiln. Most of the soldiers are imported from the coast, for the Germans do not recruit locally for fear of treachery in time of war. It amused us to hear the commands given in English, which the officers have to learn for the purpose, for the natives will not attempt German. Indeed they all regard English as the white man's tongue, and are utterly amazed if they come across one who does not know it. Their ignorance has its compensations, no doubt; for, as Herr von Scheffer said, he and his comrades are able to talk with the utmost freedom before their "boys," conscious that not a word is understood.

He was alone in command on the occasion of the review, for Captain Schwarz was preparing to go northwards on a punitive expedition, and two officers were in hospital with blackwater fever.

Fever seemed no uncommon thing at Garua; but then the period of service is long—eighteen months as a minimum. The doctors there recommend a different system of quinine-taking to ours. An Englishman is supposed to take 5 grains each day; a German varies his quantity,—some days he will go without, and on others take as many as 15 grains.

One of our first visits was to the market-place, at the outskirts of which oxen were tethered awaiting slaughter at the demand of a customer, for in that hot climate butchers cannot kill before an immediate sale is certain. It was too evident, however, that there had recently been some such demand, for fragments of raw meat thickly covered with flies were on sale at the stalls. A good deal of it was skewered on thin sticks, like crystallised sweetmeats are at home; and sometimes these are stuck in the ground in a small circle round a fire, and thus the meat is cooked. There was little besides food-stuffs for sale, mostly vegetable; but butter, too, was to be found in large pails, which is a rare luxury in this part of Africa — though Mastaba restrained us from buying it, as he declared it to be unfit for a white man's food. The smell was overpowering, and millions of flies made the place unbearable; so we took long breaths at the end of each line of stalls, and nearly suffocated ourselves in the effort to survive on as little air as possible. We were determined not to miss any treasures, and did not shirk at all; but the only nice things were thick ivory bracelets that we bought for the sum of 2s. 4d. a-piece. There is more ivory to be had, and at a much cheaper rate, in the Kamerun than in Nigeria, owing to the double fact that in Nigeria the minimum legal weight of tusks is 25 lb., compared to about 2 lb. in the Kamerun; and that the tax the British have imposed upon every tusk has driven the trade out of our territory.

Our plans were much under discussion. Captain Schwarz did not wish us to go north, on account



Hangman (Garua).



Natives Cooking Lozenges of Meat, which are Skewered on Small Sticks and placed round a Central Fire.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



of his expedition; and we did not want to re-enter British territory, for it was facing away from Fort Lamy, which had become our immediate objective. On the other hand, were we to venture into French Ubangi without further information, we might find the country so unsettled that retreat would be necessary. Guidance was, however, at hand. A storekeeper rushed up to Mr Talbot to tell him that a stranger had come, and, in the French tongue, had asked for tobacco. He felt sure it was the officer in charge of the telegraph line, and had come straight to summon Mr Talbot. The two returned together to the store and surveyed Captain Lancrenon with increasing satisfaction, though, as their minds were full of bigger things, they gave him no answer to his repeated demand for tobacco. Then they came to Mrs Talbot and me, and told of his advent with triumph. Our hopes for days past had been centred round him, for he could tell us all about the route, and we begged them to go and invite him to see us. He, poor man, had thought that their strange behaviour was prompted by the wish to find an interpreter, and was thoroughly mystified by the time he was led into our presence. Captain Lancrenon, as we learned later, is a man of courage, energy, and resource. He had made record marches, and on this occasion was, as usual, only attended by two boys, who bore all his stores. It was lucky for us that he was such a man, for it never occurred to him to judge others by a different standard. He said that there was a good deal of water on the road, but that he had got through it, and so could we; and he never once threw our sex in our teeth, for which reticence he

earned Mrs Talbot's and my undying gratitude. It was arranged, therefore, that we were to follow that route; but we had to curb our impatience to start for a few days longer, till Ramadan was at an end.

The inhabitants of Garua are mainly Fulani and Mahommedans, who, of course, observe this fast, which forbids eating and drinking between the hours of dawn and sunset. No man would willingly miss the orgy that they hold to celebrate its close, and it was impossible to get carriers before the celebration was over. There was not long to wait; but we did not want to remain the whole time in Garua, so we decided to spend our days of forced inaction in a country where Mr Talbot could hunt.

Bogolo, a small village on the south side of the Benue, was recommended to us for this purpose, perhaps because it lay sufficiently high amongst the hills to be raised out of the swamps by which the plain lands were still submerged. It was only just across the river, and as there was no difficulty in getting day labour, we hired a steel canoe, paddled by ten incompetent Nupe polers. They worked fore and aft, with no connection between each other, and bumped us into every bush in the river—not only once, but again and again; and it was a matter of pure good fortune if we got near enough to pick any particular grass that I coveted for my collection. It was two o'clock on a blazing hot afternoon that we made this traverse, and our only shelter was a squalid rag, which let down over the sides low enough to flap into our hats and faces and obscure the view, which was made exciting by a basking crocodile and the trail of a giant python.

When we landed, our belongings were carried for some considerable distance up a narrow track, through thick rank grass, with the aid of village women. The tents were pitched beneath a huge tree, outside a large open enclosure which proved to be the mosque; and night and morning we heard men calling upon the name of Allah. This camp was a memorable one for me, as it was the first time I had ever slept beneath canvas. The first time, too, that I had a loaded revolver beneath my pillow, and we heard the distant howls of hyena and leopard and the grunt of baboon. Quantities of frogs entered my tent, and from the shelter of a mosquito-net it was quite fun to watch them jump. They set themselves an obstacle to surmount, some four to six inches high—often the back of the lamp; and this they attempted again and again on the tiddliwinks principle. I should not have watched them so complacently had I realised they had come in pursuit of insects, with which my clothes were covered, and that in the morning, as I shook them out, my hand would again and again touch the clammy, squelchy body of some bloated and well-fed frog. Nor did I realise, either, that even as the frogs came in pursuit of flies, so would snakes come in pursuit of them; and it was an unpleasant shock to see a dust-coloured snake emerge quietly from under my bed and slither away into the open.

Morning and evening we went out hunting; but though we saw the tracks of Senegal hartebeeste and heard rumours of lion, the thick grass prevented our seeing anything. It grew to five or six feet in height, and brushed into our eyes as we walked; but

expectation kept us happy. I always had a '303 in readiness; and Mrs Talbot carried a revolver, for her wrists were not strong enough for a rifle. She laid great store by this weapon, which was to be used should lion appear, and carried a small tin box of ammunition with it. During our walk she had cause to open this, and found nothing but peppermints inside! The two boxes were identical, and had been interchanged.

To avoid the marsh ground below we generally made our way to the tops of the peaked ironstone hills, and from their eminence gazed down on the prairie lands beneath us. The landscape was desolate, for high brown grass covered the bare rocks and stunted trees, and even blotted out the hamlets that nestled in tiny clearings in its midst. The hills, though low, were mountainous, and by their sharp outlines and jagged peaks gave the impression of much greater height than their 300-500 feet warranted. This, together with the delightful fact that the peak one has ascended looks just as high as its neighbours, is characteristic of mountains in this part of Africa.

The sport was poor, but Mr Talbot shot a good many birds, though but two of the number reached home in safety. In Southern Nigeria his sister-in-law had helped him to skin them, and it was only too obvious to me that I ought to take her place. I had determined not to be squeamish about anything, so I volunteered in hardy accents, and sat down to my task with set teeth, resolved not to flinch. The result was that my initial cut was far too deep, and Mr Talbot implored me to trust more

to my nails than to the knife, which counsel I disobeyed as much as I dared. He was kind, and did the difficult parts for me, but somehow the impression left was that the prospect of my becoming any good was very remote. However, he accepted the suggestion that I should practise daily on the fowls we were to eat for dinner—a rash offer that I lacked the energy to carry out. Only once more did I offer to help him—that was later on when we were on the march, and he had not got time to do them all himself. He accepted, and gave me a hideous grey bird, which at once repelled me. As it was dark and we had to work by lamp-light, millions of insects were attracted, and our hands were too filthy to brush them away, so they literally preyed upon us. In my misery I failed to find the shoulder-bone, which I had been told to sever, and it still eluded me in a wealth of flesh when Mr Talbot finished his birds, which were pretty, and came to relieve me. He never asked me to help him again, nor did I volunteer to do so; and since Mastaba learnt how to do it I felt less self-reproachful, though still ashamed.

Not many days passed before the tiny silver crescent of the new moon gave us the signal for departure, for with her advent ended the fast of Ramadan. In the morning files of men, boys, and girls passed by our camp on their way to “pray God” at a spot appointed in the neighbourhood for all to meet, while we eagerly awaited the polers, who were to fetch us back to Garua in time to participate in the larger rejoicings there. Alas! they consulted their own convenience rather than ours,

and it was not till the great celebration—a horse-play—was over that they came to fetch us. It was disappointing, but after a water transit of over 1000 miles we were too much excited in our first land march to repine. Our start was preluded by bustle and confusion: the horses had not come, there were too few carriers, and the seventy-five there were raised pandemonium. They were a weakly lot, but displayed a certain measure of strength in ousting each other from a stand in front of the most likely looking boxes. Everything hinges, for them, on the first start, for each man stands by a load, and after the signal for departure is given he has to carry that particular burden, and no other, on the top of his head until the destination is reached. The head-man has, of course, the power of adjusting weights or even exchanging them; but few carriers, and certainly not ours, were ready to do more than need be. They were to accompany us to Golombe, a town in German territory, where carriers under French jurisdiction were to meet us—sent by Captain Lancrenon. Had we taken them over the border we should have been obliged to pay £5 a-head to the German Government in guarantee of each man's return. Visions floated across our minds of seventy-five abscondee, and a consequent loss of £375.

Golombe was only some forty miles distant, but the regulation marches are short, and we obediently slept at three rest-houses on the way. All three camping-grounds were on an extensive scale, prepared no doubt with a view to military expeditions. Good mud houses are supplied for white men and their boys, a regular little village for the carriers, and





Mrs Talbot and I on the Garua-Golombe Road.



Fulani Cattle in the North Kamerun.

70 1911  
ANNALS



plenty of stabling. They are well situated near water and under shady trees, and are far enough from the village to avoid inconvenience of smell or noise, but are easily supplied thence with food. One of the inhabitants is appointed by Government as camp caretaker, and receives the regular fee of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per carrier.

The land is little cultivated, for the people are pastoral, and it was difficult to get a sufficient supply of corn for so large a party as ours. In fact, the chiefs were decidedly stingy about it, but when they received a *dash* (a present) in addition to payment their liberality increased. We required two or three extra carriers to supplement our knock-kneed lot, and they came without a murmur, but to our astonishment fled in the night without payment rather than risk being asked to come on another march.

Mr Talbot headed our little procession, and behind him walked Aji his horse-boy, Kukaua his gun-boy, and Momo the interpreter; then Mrs Talbot, with Jimba Giri her horse-boy pushing or thrashing her sedate steed from the rear; and I, followed by Moussa my horse-boy, whom I checked from the same offices because I felt sure my pony was weak from famine and not from ill-will. Moussa was the youngest of the party, and proved to be an excellent fellow, whose one weakness was vanity. He frankly adapted his standard to that of the natives through whose country we passed, and was alternately be-decked with bead necklets or gorgeous robes, as their taste demanded.

Jimba Giri, Mrs Talbot's boy, had many evil

qualities, but was withal moved to such touching penitence on each occasion that he was found out, and became so quick to gather the flowers that Mrs Talbot wanted for her collection, that he remained with us till we were nearly at our journey's end. Then the sudden demise of his mother caused him to return home with all speed, that he might take his share of the worldly goods she had left behind her. Jimba's besetting sin was conceit. He had taken great trouble to go about from house to house and bring back with him curios for our approval, and Mr Talbot thought that he deserved a reward. So did Jimba, and he pleaded for the present of an old coat in which to make himself fine. European clothes were valuable, so, though Mr Talbot granted the request, it was with the stipulation that he should demand it back were Jimba to weary in his activities. For many days Jimba lorded it in that coat, to the admiration and envy of all who beheld him. Then we saw it rarely, and at last no more; and as his energy flagged in curio-hunting he was sent for, and Mr Talbot asked to see the coat. It was as he suspected: Jimba had first hired it out, and now had sold it.

Mrs Talbot and I had not realised that, because they served us women, our horse-boys were accounted lesser people than Aji, who served Mr Talbot. In fact, so ignorant were we that, though I liked Moussa, I exchanged him for Aji on the second day because Mr Talbot thought it better that I, as an inexperienced rider, should have a well-trained boy, which Aji was. His misery was apparent at once: never have I seen so dejected an attendant, and he was clever enough

to become very stupid and fail to understand anything. He, a soldier who had fought under Rabeh, the African Napoleon, to be subject to a woman! To know was to sympathise, and I soon persuaded Mr Talbot to restore him to his former dignity. He was a little fellow, and brave, and always amusing to watch. Later on he was promoted to be gun-boy, and marked his appreciation of this rise on the very first day by turning Mahommedan.

The country through which we passed was lovely. Sharp outlined hills lay to the north and west, from which streams ran down and crossed our road at no infrequent intervals. They were no longer the tempestuous torrents of the rainy season, but in appearance somewhat resembled our Scottish burns. Foliage trees with brilliant blossoms grew by their banks, but the soil was sandy and, in general, the vegetation thin. Big-girthed baobab, their squat grey trunks shadowed with purple, dominated the landscape, and thickets of golden-flowered mimosa skirted the road. Gaily coloured convolvulus romped over everything, and there were many varieties of flowers and grasses. Some of these attained to a height of twenty feet, and a soft fluffy one that shaded from white to delicate pinks and reds lent grace and colour to the scene.

As we turned off the main road we left the civilisation of an occasional sign-post and of milestones every five kilometres, and debouched into a path so overgrown that it was little more than a track. Here Mr Talbot had a severe fall from his horse, which, in the course of a headlong gallop, slipped in a half-hidden ditch and threw him on his head

with a violence that must have killed him had his helmet not broken the force of the blow. Luckily we were not far from our destination, and as we neared Golombe deputies from the chief rode out to give us welcome: but why do I say us, for again Mrs Talbot and I were ignored, even as we had been at Garua? This time there was compensation, for the natives all shook hands with Mr Talbot, which is an honour he likes to reserve for very big men; but both Germans and French have instituted it as a general custom throughout their dependencies.

On our arrival the Lamido<sup>1</sup> (chief) himself came to salute us, and gratified us by his fatherly interest. He asked if we were both Mr Talbot's wives, and how many piccans we had, and showed a kindly amazement at hearing me repudiated. He took us to the rest-house, whence the view of the Kaa Chiu and Herri hills was lovely. Star-shaped beds of bare earth in the foreground prepared us for the squalor of the building, which consisted of two dark and fusty rooms, thickly populated with frogs and mosquitos, separated by a tiny dark corridor six feet in width.

Here we passed two quiet days, as we had to wait for new carriers, which was just as well, for we considered Mr Talbot an invalid, and at first attempted to treat him as such. The day of his accident Mrs Talbot busied herself in the preparation of an immense bowl of Benger's Food for him, and in addition a cherry tart for us. He did not fall in with this scheme, however, and rôles were

<sup>1</sup> A Fulani word derived from Arabic.

reversed: she frugally ate the Bengier, while Mr Talbot ate the tart. Some of both dishes were left, and were put away in the canteen, together with half a chicken, for next day's lunch, but in the night a hungry thief repaired to the chop-box and ate the chicken. He tasted the Bengier and tart, but left them both,—a comment on their lack of excellence that relieved us of the necessity of finishing them ourselves, of which we were glad, for the pastry had been made on a lumpy board, with a bottle for roller, and was not good.

Our principal occupation was the manufacture of a khaki shirt, which Mrs Talbot cut out, and which we worked at with zeal, despite the fact that there was a bright red trade-mark with the No. 430 on one sleeve, and that there was not enough of the same material to complete the other. Our domesticity was ended by the arrival of Mundonng carriers—a black wild-looking lot of men, though one was humanised by lovely ringlets all round his head and a plentiful supply of yellow bead necklaces. Their advent put a full stop to our work, and I had to fall back upon the Lokoja-made shirt, which henceforth I wore as a sack-coat.

## CHAPTER III.

THROUGH FRENCH UBANGI, SINCE CEDED  
TO THE GERMANS.

(OCTOBER 14-25.)

FOR the next six weeks we travelled through territories some of which have since been ceded by France to Germany, and others by Germany to France, as a consequence of the recent Moroccan negotiations.

The accompanying map will show how, a few miles north of Golombe, the German Kamerun juts eastward, roughly speaking along the 10th latitude, which forms the lower edge of the so-called duck's beak. This boundary will now be altered. The German dominion is to be extended to the south and to the east, embracing Léré and the Tuburi lakes, by which we passed. The cession comprises also large districts to the south, but with these we had no concern. North of the 10th latitude the Logone is to form the boundary, and the Germans will give to the French that portion of the Kamerun that lies between the Logone and Shari rivers.

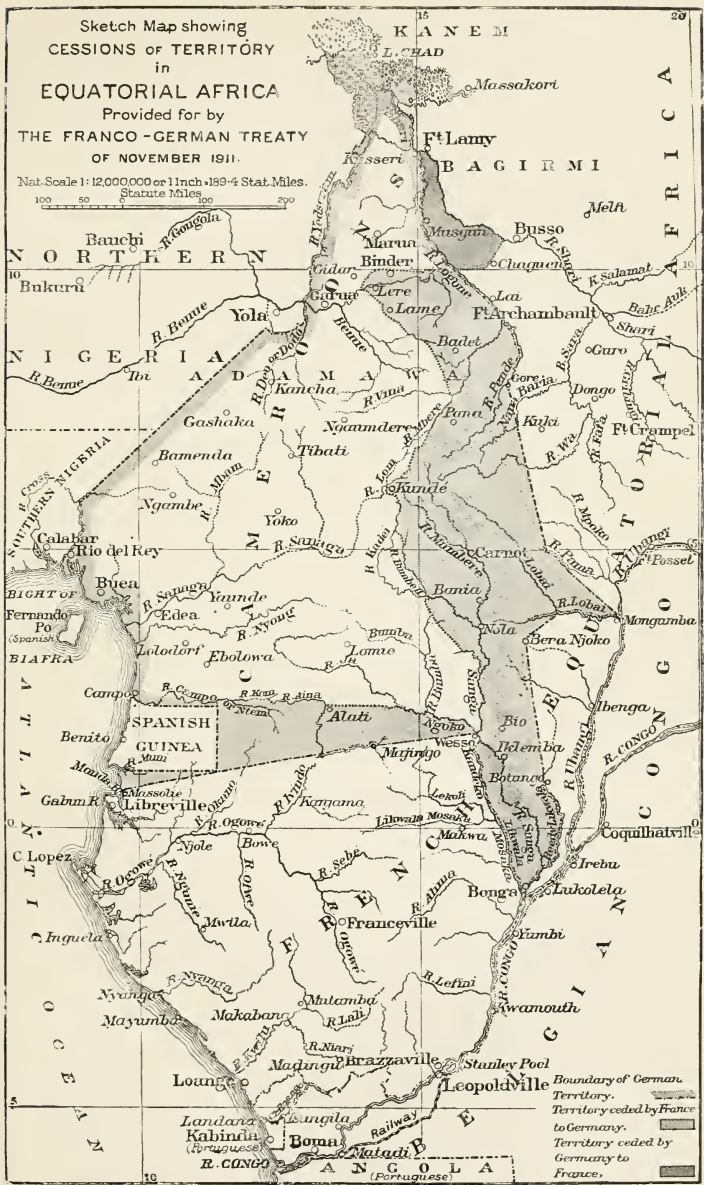
The land may be described generally as Sudanese in character, and heavy crops of guinea-corn and millet are raised there. The inhabitants are mostly pagan.



Sketch Map showing  
**CESSIONS OF TERRITORY**  
 in  
**EQUATORIAL AFRICA**

Provided for by  
**THE FRANCO-GERMAN TREATY**  
 OF NOVEMBER 1911.

Nat. Scale 1:12,000,000 or 1 inch = 199.4 Stat. Miles.  
 100 50 100 200  
 Statute Miles



Boundary of German Territory.  
 Territory ceded by France to Germany.   
 Territory ceded by Germany to France.





In 1909 the French first made commercial use of a waterway from the Atlantic Ocean up the Niger and Benue rivers, which are, by treaty-right with Great Britain, open to foreigners for commercial purposes, then through the upper reaches of the Benue and its tributaries, by arrangement with the Germans, to Léré, the most westerly French station. The waterway from Léré continues, almost without a break, by way of the Tuburi and Tikem lakes to the Logone; though a short land portorage is necessary immediately after leaving Léré.

By this route it is possible to travel from France to Léré in less than two months, whereas the Congo-Ubangi route necessitates a long land march, and takes from four to six months, according to the season. Despite the enormous gain in time, it must be remembered, however, that the waterway is only passable for a few weeks, after the rains. Though this important territory, from and including Léré to the Logone, is to be ceded to the Germans, the French have retained the use of the waterway. To quote 'The Times' of November 4, "A very important provision is that which gives France free transit along the Mao Kabi river, . . . through German territory, to the Benue." "No duties can be imposed on goods passing through the new German territory along the rivers Benue and Mao Kabi. France will further obtain "enclaves" of land to the extent of 50 hectares each on the Benue and the Mao Kabi, and also in the direction of the Logone river, which will enable her to establish revictualling posts and stores. It is even provided that if France desires to construct from the Benue to the Logone a road or a railway she

will obtain leave to do this. . . . All merchandise passing through the ceded territories and by the Benue-Mao Kabi route is free from any impost."

It was through this ceded territory that our route now lay, and conducted by its gentle, uncivilised inhabitants, the Mundonng carriers, we set forth from Golombe.

The village street led into the Mao Bulo (mao = river), and one after another our horses splashed through it; but the water had already fallen so much that by keeping our legs well tucked up we hardly got wet at all.

The boys carried the horses' tails, which in my ignorance I imagined to be for the sake of the animals, so, when I saw some carriers disappear into holes in the bottom of the next stream, I directed Moussa to abandon this custom and lead my horse. He did so, and its tail hung unsupported in the water: when we emerged it was swished from side to side, covering me and my skirt with stripes of liquid mud. On the farther side we walked into a tangle of rank undergrowth, through which, though we could not see it, there was a path. It was hard going, the grass met above our heads, and its seeds flew into our eyes. Even so I preferred walking, because my horse had many of the characteristics of a mule, and invariably sidled into some pitfall, or, at best, into a prickly acacia. Every few hundred yards, if not before, a marshy piece of ground would necessitate remounting, though the swamps, which increased in length and depth as we entered French Ubangi, were never so bad but that our horses could take us through them.

Whenever the neighbourhood of a village was



Bush-Road and Dum Palms.



Fording the Mao Bulo, the Kaa Chiu Hills in the Background.



reached the ground was cleared, and gave place to acres of guinea-corn and millet. It was closely planted, and the size and height of the stems were similar to those of bamboo, so these fields presented a serious obstacle to the miserable carriers. The track, once more visible, gave bare room for a man to pass, and as we rode along it our knees cracked against the thick stalks.

By a tributary of the Mao Lui, the boundary of French and German territory, a Senegalese sergeant awaited us. He had brought a charming letter of welcome from M. Bertaut, the military resident at Léré, and had come to accompany us thither, together with four soldiers whose popularity with the natives was striking. We spent one night upon the way, at Bipare, where we arrived at mid-day. There was no rest-house, nor was there any tree to give shade in the neighbourhood. The heat was unendurable, and the only two places of escape were either the porch of the chief's compound or the village clubhouse. The latter was already full of exhausted carriers, but in a trice the sergeant had turned them out, and we crawled beneath its low matting-roof very thankfully, though its height was designed to meet the needs of people who sat upon the ground.

Bipare is a Mundonng town of considerable size, composed of little hamlets in close juxtaposition. The architecture was peculiar and most picturesque, for in the same building, and alternating with the dwelling-places, were granaries with high-domed roofs. The grain is poured through large round holes in the side of these, and is protected by a covering of thick

woven matting. The amount of storage provided proves the agricultural wealth of the country.

The people were much interested in us and were very friendly, so we paid visits to some of their huts, and also to the chief's compound, which is entirely surrounded by a wall with one entrance. On the inner side is a network of apartments radiating from it, and a yard that contains another building which forms a rough division between the men's and women's quarters.

Out in the yard women were squatting upon their tiny stools, laughing and talking as they busied themselves over their various domestic occupations. Each wife possesses her own apartments, and these consist of an outer and two inner rooms, leading one through the other, and dependent upon the outer one for light, though each has a shaft to the roof for ventilation. The larger room is naturally that lived in, and contains a quern for grinding corn, and, in two cases, a wicker bedstead, shaped like a huge bottle-tray turned upside down. In the inner closets water-pots are stored, and young kids stabled with their mothers. Indeed, goats and fowls wander everywhere, inside and out, with equal freedom. The African chicken is a small bird, with no chance of becoming large, for it scrapes together a meagre existence on what it can find, and no one troubles to feed it. It is carried by the legs, and when there is any distance to go the fowls are tied together and hung over a stick, by which means a large number are carried with ease. It seems barbarously cruel, but they suffer extraordinarily little from the treatment. The eggs are small, and a

varying, but large, percentage bad by the time they are presented to the white man.

It is customary for a chief to make a present—or “dash” as it is called in pidgin English—to every visitor, varying in amount according to his and their importance, and of course he in return receives a still larger gift from the white man.

At Bipare the Chief, or Lamido as he should be called, gave us a kid, eggs, and honey. The last is always liquid in Africa, and often so ill-collected that what consistency it has is due to the presence of bees' bodies. Cookoo always prepared it for our consumption, and even then it was often not fit to touch. Honey that is not quite right has the same agonising effect that pie-crust has when the steam has not escaped.

The next day's march again led us through highly cultivated country, interspersed with stretches of swamp. The trees were scattered and so stunted that few attained the height of guinea-corn, and there was a great deal of scrub mimosa. The flowers were inconspicuous, except for bright petunia-coloured convolvulus, which trailed over the ground in masses.

Presently a forest of palms rose dark and austere before us, and, away through their straight stems and sombre leaves, the gay blue water of Lake Léré sparkled and shone like some brilliant sapphire. The trees were laden with fruit, but it was pithy, and the only taste was the rather pleasant acidity of unripeness. It is reputed to have a flavour like gingerbread, but we were not lucky enough to come upon any that resembled such a good thing either now or later.



My horse was obstinately deliberate, I had long ago given up the effort to impose my will upon his, and, as I disliked being scraped against the bushes, had dismounted and walked on. I was some considerable way in advance of the beast, when the sounds of an aligata band arrested me. It could proceed but from one cause, and as quick as thought I turned round, ran back to my steed, and was hardly mounted before a large body of horsemen appeared on the brow of a hill, headed by the Lamido, Chief of all the Mundonng. Horses and riders were magnificently apparelled. The robes were of every hue—red, blue, purple, green, and yellow; the saddle-cloths were worked with gold and silver threads, and, united to the sheen of horse-armor and the glint of spears, the effect was one of magnificent glittering confusion. They thundered down on us at a gallop, pulled up within a horse's length of where we stood to receive them, saluted, and wheeled round to escort us in triumph to the town—the whole party riding to the spirited strains of a drum and aligata band.

This charge is the ordinary form of salutation, but it was the first Mrs Talbot and I had seen, and it needed all our resolution to stand our ground in the face of it. It was once practised with a view to war, and still, at all the fantasias, or displays of horsemanship, a man's skill is judged by his quickness to pull up when riding at great speed. It was a splendid reception, but, alas! through me the glory of our entry was marred. My pony was without pride, and refused to quicken his lagging gait, so that the distance between ourselves and our escort became increasingly great, and when, at the outskirts of Léré, M.



Bertaut, the Military Resident, met us, we were humiliatingly far behind.

In a few more minutes we had reached the big central square; it was thronged with people come to do honour to the Chief and to ourselves, and the Lamido's horse- and foot-men were drawn up in a glittering phalanx to receive us. He himself was on foot, and as we dismounted he shook hands with each of us. It was a solemn event, for neither he nor his forebears had ever before shown public recognition of a woman. A hush of breathless excitement ensued, broken by the shrill rattling sound of feminine applause.

It is sad how one fails to realise the great occasions of life. We knew only that we had condescended to shake hands with a black man, and were in complete ignorance that we had participated in a revolutionary act, which was to stir every man, woman, and child throughout the Mundonng Kingdom.

Himself *boulevardé* by the honour done us, M. Bertaut took us straight to the native compound he had had prepared for our accommodation. It was surrounded by a wall of zana matting, or plaited straw, intended to secure privacy. The Mundonng, however, were very curious, and men and women alike climbed upon the neighbouring roofs, and for the first twenty-four hours we were under close observation. It was the harder to escape their gaze as the entrances to the rooms were without doors, and both our bed- and sitting-rooms had two doorways. Outside these there was a little courtyard which led to a small room, where Mr Talbot slept; and on to another of the usual series of ever-darkening closets, which contained a

population of parasitic insects that proved the recent habitation of goats. We had hardly arrived before a poor woman came, bringing a little offering of salt—the emblem of welcome—and this was the precursor of a large number of dashes. Mr Talbot showed great ungraciousness over one, a present of meat, which he handed back to its giver, saying that he did not want it. I reproached him, and he explained that the donor had no more wish to give than he to receive, but that the boys were in the habit of intimating that the white man would like whatever they most wanted themselves, and they were fond of large meat meals.

We dined that night with M. Bertaut at the Fort; he had two other guests, M. Bouhaben, who was there on a road-survey, and M. Loyer, who had come to relieve the Resident. The ordinary term of service is two years, and M. Bertaut had already exceeded his time by three months, and was immensely looking forward to his return home, though the journey through the French Congo takes four to six months to accomplish. Poor man, his term of service was destined to be still further extended, for news of the reverse in Wadai reached him when he got to the Shari, and no man could be spared from the territory at such a juncture. Léré is not a healthy place, and he had been weakened by an accident to his leg, which had necessitated his travelling to Fort Lamy to see the doctor, a journey of about a fortnight's duration.

In the whole military territory of Chad, where there are twenty-three posts, there are only three doctors. They are Government servants, and may receive no fees for attendance on either white men or black.

They are not bound to attend natives, though they are recommended to do so, and if they undertake the work receive an extra yearly allowance of £60. Medicines are provided free of charge in all cases.

We dined out of doors, by the light of the moon, and a tame kob came up and talked to us as a dog would at home. We were a very merry party; it was two years since M. Bertaut had seen a woman, and there were many jokes as to our presence, for all three men had thought Captain Lancrenon was trying to take them in when he said women were on the way there. But since M. Bertaut had made certain that we really were coming he had spent much time in explaining to the Lamido a white man's point of view about women, and was enchanted at the result, which had far exceeded his utmost expectations.

The station at Léré had been made in 1905, and its occupants have had a hard time. The Government only allows sixteen carriers to bring stores that have to last for two years, and the Resident has had to make the house and all the furniture. Luckily it is a country where food is easily obtained, and service, too, is cheap; the two small boys, for instance, who waited on us at table received a maximum wage of five francs a-month.

The progress in the settlement of the country is remarkable, and the work very hard. M. Bertaut hears and judges every case of justice that the natives bring him, for which they pay no fee. The majority are complaints brought by women against their husbands, and are usually prompted by a desire to marry someone else, for in no single case has any cruelty been proved against the man.

Though the Lamido himself is too great to acknowledge publicly the existence of women, they hold a higher position in the social scale than is the case amongst most tribes. The Lamido's mother is chieftainess in her own right of a certain town in her son's dominions, and on the shores of Lake Léré we came upon another woman who had succeeded to this dignity. The Mundonng address M. Bertaut as their father and mother, which in itself denotes an inclusion of the female sex.

All through the following day we were on view from an early hour. The Lamido came first, when Mrs Talbot and I were still engaged in dodging out of sight of the roof-gazers as we performed our toilettes. He came on foot, surrounded by his retinue, from whom he was distinguished by the kingly emblem of ivory bracelets.

Hardly had he gone before a number of Senegalese soldiers' wives arrived. They wore metal rings round the rims and lobes of their ears, and those who could not afford metal wore loops of string instead. Windif women followed, some of whom spoke Kanuri, some Fulani. They had thick beads affixed to one side of the nostrils, and sometimes in the lobe of the ear, though one of them had adopted the more savage ornamentation of wild beast's teeth, and some who did not possess the requisite beads had prepared the cavities all the same. This so touched Mrs Talbot that she sacrificed a necklace of her own, and the happy recipients filled the gaps there and then.

Then came some Bagirimi and Mundonng, and then the male population of the neighbourhood—Pagans from Kumbra; Senegalese, whose wives we had just



A Munding.



A Munding.

NO. 1110  
ANNAPOLIS

received ; and deputations, including the five cooks of Léré ; followed by a heterogeneous and never-ending collection of men and women, who came singly, in twos, or in threes.

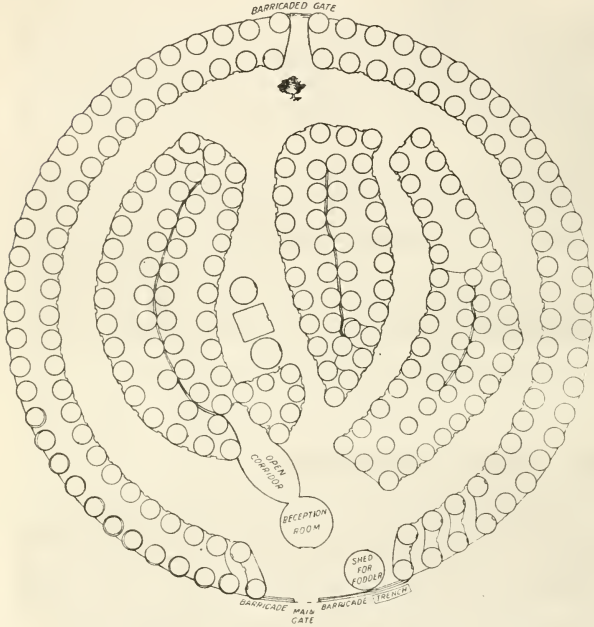
It was, no doubt, flattering to be the object of so much attention, but before the ten hours of our inspection was over we longed for a few moments of rest.

The next day we returned the Lamido's visit, and on reaching the palace passed beneath three bells— emblems of chieftainship—that hung over his gateway. He met us at the threshold, and conducted us to his audience-chamber. The walls were hung with spears and bows, and duiker horns that acted as pegs. Two immense pillars, blackened with the juice of some tree, supported a canopy, though the only seat, a hard divan, was at the other side of the room. A European rug of garish red, stamped with a giant yellow tiger, covered it ; and on it the Lamido seated himself, a copy of 'The Sketch' laid with obtrusive carelessness by his side. His retainers squatted or lay beside him on the sandy floor, and he chatted with them while Mr Talbot made a plan of the building. Meanwhile a beautiful young slave entered, and, with bent head and downcast eyes, sank on to her knees before the Lamido. She raised a calabash of water to his lips, and three times he rinsed his mouth and solemnly spat out the contents. She then presented to him a long wooden pipe, and as he smoked she held the bowl, and tended its contents with a small metal blade attached to the stem by a tiny chain. When he had done she brought more water, and her lord again rinsed his mouth three times.



# 48 CHIEFS & CITIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA

The audience-hall is the one state apartment, and to such august precincts the female sex are denied



Scale 1 inch = 20 feet

*P.A. Talbot*  
1911

Ground Plan

Lamido of Lere's Compound

Outer rows represent dwelling-rooms and granaries  
Inner blocks represent dwellings, stables, store-houses etc.

entrance, with, of course, the exception of the humble attendant of the pipe. The general meeting-ground is just outside, in the inner yard. Here the Lamido comes and sits, his retinue on one side, his wives on





Interior of Lamido's Compound (Bipare).



The Lamido of Léré with some of his Children.



the other, while his children and a patriarchal ram wander between the two.

We had previously expressed to him our wish to visit his wives, of whom he keeps some 250, but, unluckily, there was a shortage of a couple of score or so, which perhaps accounted for his unwillingness to spare the remainder from their allotted tasks. Any way, there were none ready to receive a formal call, and we had to rest satisfied with watching them at work—preparing soup, boiling bark for dye, or pounding grain. Little sentiment is lavished on these ladies, who are kept busy in the fields or in domestic occupations, nor can their somewhat sparse attire of loin-cloths and beads cost much in wealth or care. Despite the fact that he has so many wives, the Lamido has only twenty children, ten of each sex; but of these, two boys alone have claim to the succession. Each wife owns a separate series of three or four rooms, built into the outer wall, and the compound is therefore very large. It contains a network of streets, stables for horses, sheep and goats, as well as further human habitations.

A great deal of the life of the place is lived on the roofs, which are made accessible by means of palm-trunk ladders with branching arms. Niches are cut in them for foothold, and, once up, it is easy to spring across the narrow streets from one roof to another, though there is danger of a sudden fall, for the thatch-covered mud crumbles perilously at the edges. We spent a long time wandering about the palace precincts, and were about to take leave of our royal host, when our attention was arrested by the reiteration of weird noises. On inquiry, we learnt that

each period of the year has a different style of music allotted to it, and the performers gather every evening to play outside the palace. This was the season of the small tom-tom, and on going out we saw a man soberly beating a little drum that stood about four feet high on a pedestal. He was surrounded by a circle of men,

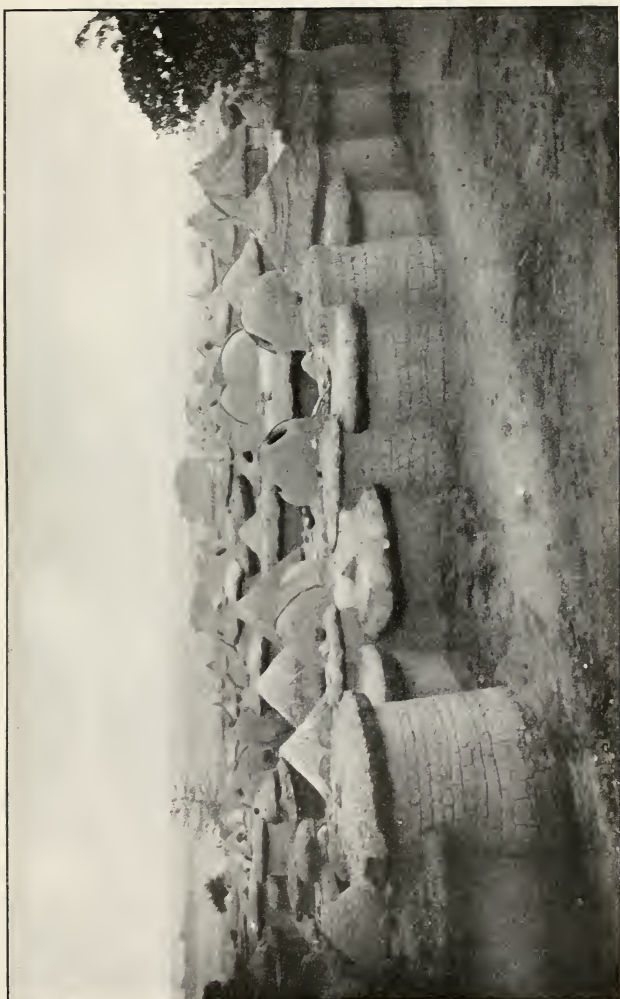
many of whom were blowing flutes that had four or five stops, and were gyrating slowly round and round him. The tone of these pipes was impure, probably owing as much to the thickness of the negroid lips as to the imperfections of the instrument, and the whole effect was dreary and monotonous.



MUNDONGG FLUTE.

That night the moon shone clear and radiant, and filled us with a restlessness that demanded action. Without word spoken, we wandered into the quiet city, that seemed in the white light and deep shadows as if it were some fairy kingdom. Silence was over all, and mystery. Habitation after habitation lay bare and tenantless, but outside still forms were stretched in sleep, though sometimes a figure, crouching over the glowing embers of a wood fire, would rise to add a log, that crackled and blazed as it started a new flame into life.

At the summit of a gentle eminence we found ourselves suddenly free of houses, in a clear space of unshadowed moonlight, where fields of maize rustled in answer to the murmuring breeze, and in the shelter of their stems crickets chirruped. The river gleamed mysteriously as it wound in great



Iéré.



silver loops through the distant valley, now visible, now invisible, on and on, casting a spell of mystical enchantment, till the bright line merged in the magic waters of Lake Léré.

We had a few days at our disposal while a messenger went on to Fort Lamy to make the necessary arrangements for our transport on the Logone river, by which route we intended to travel to that post.

We confided to M. Bertaut our desire to visit the lake meantime, and with his help all was made easy for us. He added fuel to the flame of our curiosity by telling how three expeditions had been there to make a scientific survey, but on no occasion had the sounding line proved sufficiently long, and each one had failed to plumb the depth. It is a curious challenge to the laws of geology, for the lake is but some thirty miles in circumference, and the neighbouring hills are little more than 100 feet in height; but Africa is a country of contradictions.

We procured the use of a steel canoe, then at Léré in connection with the French transport service, and within a short time of our embarkation slipped down the placid current of the Mao Kabi and were on the lake. To the south low hills slope steeply down, and on them domed villages nestle in undisturbed solitude. Beneath was a black ridge of rock, and then a dazzling sheet of blue water, shot with many coloured tints as the wind swept a ripple across the surface, and wafted myriads of bright-hued dragon-fly, perched on their rafts of dancing cockle-shells.

On the northern shore the land is flat. In the distance a shadowy forest of palms is sometimes to be seen, and between it and the lake are reaches of broad



grass and rush that grow to the very edge of the low sandbanks. Here shells lie, and the tiny footprints of myriads of birds are to be seen, and every now and again the deep narrow line made by a crocodile or iguana, as it draws itself on to the shelving bank or across to the muddy swamp that lies beyond.

It is along here that during the short period of high water white men's canoes pass, for it is almost in a straight line that the Mao Kabi debouches into the lake from Léré, and finds its way out at the western end, beneath the high range of the Kaa Chiu, where it adds its waters to a great branch of the Benue, and so to the river Niger and Atlantic Ocean.

There are three islands on the lake. They are small, and there is no human habitation on them, so they are the home of many wild things: hippopotami gather there, sure of solitude, and their passage is marked by the torn and broken bushes that they have trampled down on their way to the swampy depressions where they love to wallow. Yet it is only for a short space that the beauty of the scene is marred, for flowering shrubs and creepers grow up quickly to blot out the damage done, and once more the thicket seems impenetrable.

On the sandy shore amaryllids burst their sheaths amid black rocks of mica, and the thick shell of the water-snail contrasts with the translucent tints of its more fragile brethren.

We made our way to the nearest island, and landed to find ourselves amongst a dense population of millepedes. For the sake of those happily ignorant, I may explain that these creatures are of the length and rotundity of a sausage, and of the consistency



of an unshiny, dry, dead slug. They lay so thickly on the ground that it was hard to avoid treading on them, and disfigured the branches of the thick bush as would the excrescences of a black fungus. Dislike of them deterred us more effectually from exploration than did the brambles that laid hold of our hair and clothes, and wrung cries of pain from our soldier gun-boy Kukaua. We pulled off our shoes and stockings and sought refuge in the water, where at least we were safe from seeing the perils that surrounded us. We paddled to a depth that made us deliciously wet, though the usual penalty for nice things had to be paid when we scrambled back with bare feet on to the burning hot, blister-raising canoe.

Daylight was on the wane as we paddled across to Due on the mainland, and even as we left, geese, duck, and heron winged their way to the lonely island. The chief greeted us with the utmost cordiality, and, though he had taken the precaution of denying the existence of cows, large calabashes of milk soon appeared in obedience to our demands.

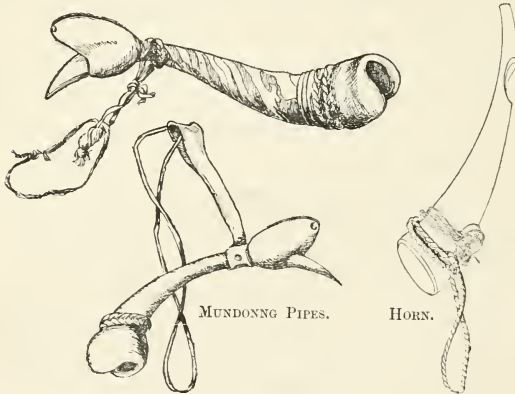
We went up to the village, and found it built in the usual Mundonng style—the variations consisting in the number of inner rooms and in the degree of dirt endured by its inhabitants, which in some cases was very great. Goats and fowls had the freedom of the compound, and a considerable number of horses were stabled in the innermost chambers, where fires were lit to save them from the murderous attack of tsetse flies. Lumps of dung were plastered on the house-walls to dry in the sun for use as fuel—dried stalks of the dum palms being practically the



RAZOR.

only alternative. The doors were of zana matting, held in place by hinges of twine passed through holes at the sides of the entrances, which, besides serving their ordinary purpose, formed a receptacle for oddments such as hairpins and razors, some of which we bought.

The furniture consisted of comparatively high, well-ornamented stools, and plank-beds more or less uneven and always narrow, which, for the occupation of the great, were raised from the ground by tiny two-inch legs. Almost every house contained some



MUNDONGG PIPES.

HORN.

instrument of music, generally a pipe, and often a



GUITAR.

kind of guitar. We offered to buy one of these, but the owner refused to sell it, because, while he played

it, as our interpreter explained, "Anger no fit to catch him."

The people showed us a simple friendliness, very different from the ferocity which is attributed to them—probably on no more substantial ground than their nakedness. The women wear nothing more than a strip of cloth, or a blade of guinea corn, which is just as effective and much prettier, though sometimes a bunch of stalks or the dried leaves of the dum palm are preferred. Some of them were engaged in making pots out of plastic clay, which they moulded and ornamented without other utensil than a piece of shell—of particular interest to us, as it was of a similar species to that originally discovered by Mr Talbot on Lake Chad in 1904. A finish is sometimes given to the pottery by a glaze obtained from a mimosa.

As we passed down the path that led from the village to the lake, we noticed a little lamp that lay half-hidden in thick grass, placed there for the use of the spirits of the dead.

We found our tents had been erected on a narrow strip of sand, with but a few feet between us and the water, from which manatees raised their round heads, and fish splashed as they leaped to escape a crocodile's jaws. Mr Talbot played St George to their dragon and killed a monster, in the confident hope that he would retrieve its body in the morning; but its brethren gathered overnight and celebrated a different form of funeral rite. They held their wake close to us, and one thrust his snout against the flap of Mrs Talbot's tent, while another almost overthrew mine by a clumsy trip over the pegs. Barricades of

chairs and tables had, however, been erected outside our doors, to give us warning should they inadvertently walk in, and Mr Talbot kept guard all night armed with his mightiest weapons.

Our days were spent paddling peacefully about the lake on our way from one township to another, and wherever we went we received the same welcome. Our reputation as buyers had evidently preceded us, for at one place the women had removed temptation from their husbands and from us by the concealment of all treasures. We gazed at the ceilings and doors and all the usual places to no avail; but as we turned away in despair, our head-man descended from the roof in triumph, with a mass of objects under his arm. An iron poker was among them, and as pokers are rarely found amongst primitive peoples, we could not resist buying it, at a price, however, which seemed amply satisfactory to the vendor. We also bought a bird-snare of attractive simplicity, made of a long



BIRD-SNARE.

string of vegetable fibre, to which loops of hair are attached at intervals, each attachment being hidden by a small clay pellet squeezed on the string. When set, grain is placed near by to tempt the victim to destruction, — as it hops away the leg becomes entangled in the line, which at once pulls taut and holds it captive. Another curious article consisted



Poisonous Snake caught in a Cleft Stick.

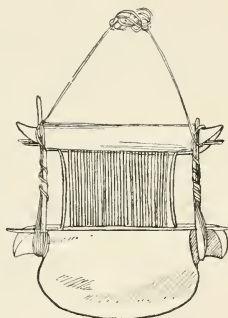


A Munding Woman (Pegamé).



of two oval rings attached to opposite ends of a short piece of string, which was itself weighted in the centre with a piece of metal. The owner said it was part of a bridle, which it obviously was not, and refused to sell it; but Mrs Talbot suggested that it might be an instrument of torture for the ears, as she had seen something similar among other tribes. Amongst our purchases was a small loom used for weaving cloth, but this we did not see used.

We walked back to the boat across the hills, and on our way a mud-coloured snake with a cut-away tail and dark diamond markings struck at one of the boys, who deftly caught it in a cleft stick—fortunately, for it was of a kind to deal death in ten minutes.



LOOM.

We had left all in peace, but to peace we did not return, for washerman and cook had fallen out and were engaged in a fight, which we interrupted. Neither of the combatants wished to bring their case into court, but Mr Talbot insisted on sitting on it judicially. Iron, milk, knife, and blow were words that came very frequently into the story, which, however, remained unintelligible to me. Whether Mr Talbot understood the rights of it or not I do not know, but in summing up he refrained from reference to the case in point, and merely gave utterance to biblical maxims about not striking back, and then ended with the assertion that he was master, and reserved to himself all decisions as to right or wrong.



Why this should have been effective has puzzled me ever since, but the fact remains that the combat has not been renewed.

Iguanas basked on the rocks and manatees sported in the waters, and Mr Talbot, inspired with the lust to kill, started off in a native canoe, undaunted by the knowledge that to turn round for a shot must overturn his craft. His awkward position prevented his seeing a manatee that followed him for a considerable distance, lifting its head for minutes together to look and ponder on the strangeness of his appearance. A manatee is sometimes called the African mermaid, and its chief claim to this appellation is that it carries its young in its arms. To me its large round head gave more the appearance of a seal than a mermaid, and its skin, in a dried state, is as hard and thick as the hide of an elephant or rhinoceros.

Our Mundonng waterman was very restless, and evidently a fatalist to boot, for though the water literally teemed with crocodiles, he jumped from the plank seat that rested on and over the sides of the canoe to the bottom and back again, as if the vessel were as motion-proof as an ocean steamer. We so little appreciated this practice that, after intrusting our persons to his care for a short while, we returned to exchange him for another. Alas! this other was decking himself for shore fun, of which we suspect he had already tasted, for his unwillingness to come was only equalled by his gaiety when he did. His mirth was uninfertious, and all we could do was to sway in exact opposition to his movements, and thus preserve some semblance of balance, for he blandly



refused to go ashore, and more active measures would have brought instant disaster. Mr Talbot's anxiety was for his new gun, but mine was for our own safety, and I wondered whether we should survive long enough to count how many crocodiles fed off us. Suddenly our boatman consented to land at some rocks, and after this deliverance Mr Talbot took charge of the canoe himself, and we devoted ourselves to the truly peaceful occupation of fishing. Not even a bite disturbed our quiet, though we tried the long line, short line, and harling. It was tantalising, for fish of all sizes jumped round us, and, indeed, they appear mostly to live their lives on the surface. The natives fish when hunger drives them, but they prefer to do so in the dry season, when the lake falls some thirteen feet.

There are three different methods of fishing, the principal of which is with a long bag-shaped net that the fish enter with ease, but the meshes of which close round the fins as they try to back out. The second is by unbarbed hooks and a short line attached to a light calabash float, which is probably dragged for miles through the water ere a big fish can be landed. The third way is with barbed spears, but this is not very effectual, for the distances thrown are small, and the aim cannot be accurate from a wobbly perch on a canoe roughly hewn from the trunk of a tree.

Our time was up, the canoe was requisitioned; and the good-nature of Captain Speeding, who, as representative of the Niger Com-



60 CHIEFS & CITIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA

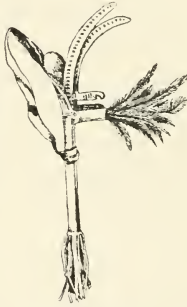
could no longer be trespassed upon. We returned therefore to Léré, where M. Bertaut laid before us a scheme that turned our thoughts in eager anticipation to the near future.



CEREMONIAL  
THROWING WEAPON  
(WOODEN).



CEREMONIAL  
THROWING  
WEAPON.



THROWING WEAPONS  
AND SHEATH.



CEREMONIAL  
CLUB.



THROWING  
WEAPON.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SEARCH FOR THE FALLS ON THE MAO KABI.

(OCTOBER 25-NOVEMBER 1.)

THE Falls of the Mao Kabi have long been known to exist, and are of considerable importance, for they constitute the sole obstruction to canoe navigation between Léré and the Tuburi lakes. Indeed, in the whole distance from the Atlantic Ocean to the Shari and Lake Chad they are the one insuperable barrier to water-transport, for beyond the lakes canoes can pass even now at the height of the wet season, and their passage will be further facilitated when the canal that the French Authorities have in view has been constructed. The territory in which they lie has now been ceded to the Germans, but it retains all its importance as a commercial route.<sup>1</sup>

It has been a matter of much speculation as to whether the water of the Mao Kabi might not be led round the Falls, into some quiet channel capable of navigation. This idea has stimulated exploration, and many efforts have been made to find the Falls, but never with success. Those who have gone upon

<sup>1</sup> Since writing this I learn that the French prefer to bring their trade-goods to Fort Lamy and other Chad stations by the Niger river, the Baro-Kano railway, caravan to Zinder, and thus on through the French Sudan.

the quest have heard the roar of tumbling water, and some claim to have got so close as to feel the spray as it rose in drenching clouds from the basin below ; but an impenetrable thicket was ever interposed between them and it, and no sight had rewarded the most ardent seeker.

The natives believe that a devil lives there, and that a terrible doom is in store for any one who intrudes upon his privacy. Nothing therefore would induce them to go near a spot so haunted. White men are not deterred by such a fear, but the Djinn has other means of guarding his abode. Beasts come and drink of the waters of the river, and in return they do him service. Baboon, lion, elephant, all help to distract the explorer from his task ; but giraffe are peculiarly the guardians of the Falls, and if a man should near the goal one will come to lure him away, so that when the chase is ended the hunter finds himself far from what he seeks. M. Bertaut and M. Bouhaben had both gone on the tantalising quest, but they are sportsmen, and what more need be added.

Now that the time of his leave was approaching, M. Bertaut had resolved to attempt the exploration once again, and, aware of its main difficulty and steeled against temptation, was confident of success. He asked Mr Talbot to join him, but the invitation did not include us women. Mrs Talbot and I were pained and frightened. It would be dreadful to be excluded from such a thrilling expedition, and we both suffered acutely. We tried, however, to be calm and unselfish, and laid so much stress on the happiness in store for our companion, that at last M. Bertaut expressed regret that the expedition was too hopelessly fatiguing for us to come too. He

said that the Falls lay in a tsetse-fly region, where no horse could live, so the whole journey would have to be made on foot, and the camping arrangements would only be of the roughest possible kind. These words excited hope once more, and, trembling lest I might be combating an excuse and not a reason, I volunteered the opinion that a woman was always capable of doing what she wanted to do. Heaven bless him! M. Bertaut said he hoped that we did want to come, and would do so, but that he had not liked to suggest it at first, as the conditions of the journey would be so trying. Thus it was settled: but the risk we took was enormous, for had the expedition proved unsuccessful Mrs Talbot and I should always have felt that the men thought they would have done better without us; though, as a matter of fact, both were so chivalrous that such a thought would probably never have occurred to either of them.

We started the very next afternoon, passing by the beautiful little lake of Tréné, and sleeping the night at a village of the same name; the following night at Fuli, where M. Bertaut joined us.

Our united expedition began next day with the passage of the Mao Kabi. The current is strong, crocodiles swarm there, and it is said that hippopotami attack the boats. The natives fear these dangers so much that they keep no canoes upon its waters, and make the passage as seldom as possible.

The previous year two Europeans had been upset and were never seen again, but as they were traders, travelling with much merchandise, and their loads were also lost, it is just possible that the hippopotami were not solely responsible.

Canoes, roughly hewn from tree-trunks, had been brought all the way from Léré for us, and we crossed two by two, squatting on their leaky bottoms. When we reached the main stream, the current again and again swept us into the rushes of a back-water, while M. Bertaut exhorted us to courage by the oft-repeated words, "N'ayez pas peur." At last success crowned our efforts, but we had barely landed before a scrimmage and shouts from the rear revealed some misfortune, and we each conjured up before us the greatest loss we could severally sustain. Mr Talbot was in consternation lest it might be the box that contained his bills and accounts. Providence was good to him and spared them, though its protection did not extend to our chairs and cushions, for it was these that had fallen in, and they were only rescued after a great deal of agitation and bother. This was the only casualty, but it took a long time to get everything over, after which we had a short march of eleven miles without meeting a single person. Usually people came running out to see us, but all this time neither man, woman, nor child appeared. We confidently hoped to come upon some village where we could rest during the mid-day heat, and at last one was seen, but when we reached it each house lay bare and tenantless. We pushed on, wondering what could be the cause of this desolation, for fields of maize and guinea-corn proved recent occupation, and crops of pumpkins were strewn about the ground. Presently we came to another township, but it too was deserted. We asked M. Bertaut what the explanation might be, and he told us that the people had fled the tsetse-fly, after losing first their cattle, then their

goats, and even their dogs. They had suffered, too, a yet more terrible scourge, for wild beasts ravaged the neighbourhood, and from the village where we then stood seven women and ten children had been carried off.

We pitched our camp in the bush, and through the hum of insect life, borne on the fitful gusts of the night wind, we heard the dull boom of falling water that told us we were nearing the object of our hopes.

Next morning a two hours' march brought us to our base. As we approached it our excitement rose, for the path led across water-courses, mostly dry at this season, except for deep pools connected by a mere trickle, and in their beds were the tracks of all sorts of beasts,—monkeys, bush-cow, leopard, lion, rhinoceros, elephant, hippopotamus, and giraffe,—and as we crossed, baboon grunted from either side. The thick grass, however, reduced the chance of sport to a mere hazard.

We were carried over those larger streams that still contained a good deal of water on a black man's shoulder, which we tried to sit with a simulation of ease. This the bearer seldom permitted us to maintain, for he jerked us steadily backwards till it became a question of knee-grip and endurance. M. Bertaut saw and took pity, and lent me an enormous Sénégalais sergeant,<sup>1</sup> whose gentleness and strength robbed the passage of its horrors. His comrades say of him that when a bull causes him annoyance he has merely to remove it by the leg, and the animal recognises the power behind and says nothing. M.

<sup>1</sup> Two months later this man was killed in an insurrection of Senussi of Ndelle against the French.



Bertaut suffered for his generosity, and was almost dropped into the water by his less skilled carrier—as Mr Talbot was quite; but the former hastened to reassure us by the words, “Moi je n’ai pas eu peur.”

Our camp was pitched on a narrow strip of ground raised out of a swamp that encircled three sides of it, while the fourth side was girt with a clear shallow river that ran swiftly over a rocky bed. It was an ideal place for paddling, and a little islet tempted us to go there, but the current was strong and the water unexpectedly deep, so we rested content with a seat on a rock, and dabbled our feet till the sun had lost its power and we could start on a preliminary search for the Falls.

M. Bertaut led the way, but showed great courtesy, for he paused that we might all be together whenever he thought that it was possible to light upon some discovery. His consideration was all the more generous, for the natural wish to be the first to discover the oft-sought Falls must have been intensified in his own district, and also we were of different nationality. Together we broke through high spiky grass, which concealed sharp granite rocks, and picked our way in and out of scattered mimosas and low scrub in pursuit of the sound of water. We struck the river at a point where two streams joined and swirled in wild precipitancy down some rapids. On the opposite shore trees crept down to the river’s brink. We followed its course until, at a sharp bend in the banks, a tributary from the other side added its waters to the main stream, which thus united in the form of a St Andrew’s cross. To a daughter of Scotland





Mundong Canoes on the Mao Kabi.



Bush round the Mao Kabi.



such a symbol at the outset must needs be of good augury, though, had we never seen the Falls, these rapids in their beauty and interest of position would have rewarded a far more arduous journey.

We renewed our search the next day, when our party was sadly diminished, for Mrs Talbot had strained her leg in the scramble, and M. Bertaut was, unfortunately, obliged to return to Léré.

Our plan was to follow a more distant tributary than that which we had just explored till it joined the Mao Kabi, and then walk right up to the St Andrew's cross, so as to put beyond doubt whether it was by a series of rapids, or by a big fall, that the water reached the lower level.

We set out very early, for we knew that our day would be a long one, and that we should be wise to use every minute of daylight before the sun attained its full power. We had hardly reached the point where our search was to begin when we heard hoarse grunts, first from one side of the dry stream then from the other. Instinctively we crouched and waited, and presently saw a baboon race by on all fours. In a second Mr Talbot gave chase, and I sank down to await his return, wondering what temptation the Djinn of the Falls had prepared for a woman who didn't shoot. It was evident that baboon had been there in large numbers, for the big parasites that feed off them were crawling over the ground, and it required unceasing watchfulness to keep free of them.

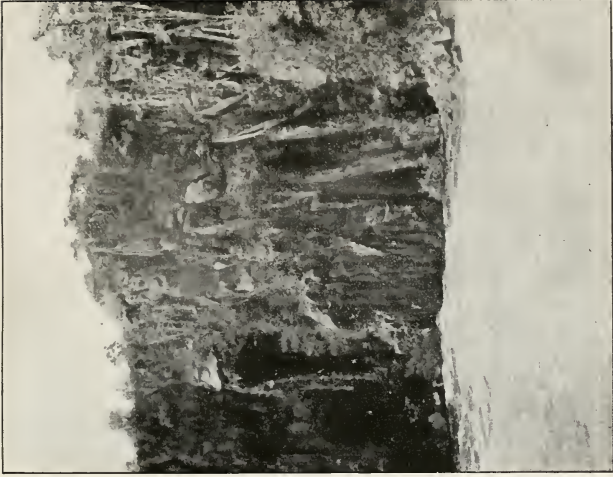
The sun recalled us to the business in hand, and thenceforward Mr Talbot steadily resisted temptation to hunt, though it assailed him from every quarter. We made our way down the river-bed, through scenery

that recalled some Scottish glen; but the stones and boulders lay bare, for the water had already dried, except where it had collected in some deep cup, and here the reflection was so bright and clear that it was easy to imagine the mirrored picture reality. By these still pools were gathered tracks of many beasts, but steadily we averted our eyes and walked on, looking rather at gay, star-shaped pink and blue flowers that grew along the banks; and it was pleasant walking, for thick foliage trees branched overhead, having gained height and luxuriance from the moisture below. Presently we came to a series of four sheer walls of rock, one immediately below the other, like giant's steps, each 20 to 40 feet in height. In the time of the rains, when the torrents sweep down from above, the effect must be very grand. It was evident, we thought, that at the bottom of these we should find the main stream, and we scrambled down with little difficulty. But disappointment awaited us, the Mao Kabi had spread into an immense swamp that extended as far as the eye could see. It was a desolate spot, and there was stillness all around. No bird moved, nor any beast, for the sun was already high in the heavens, and all living things sought shelter from its hard rays.

It would have been a senseless waste of time to skirt the morass, and very difficult, so we determined to climb the nearest brae, in the hope that from its eminence we might gain a view that would direct our course. It was two or three hundred feet high, and precipitous, and the scrub that grew along its sides, while thick enough to impede our progress, was not high enough to give any shade. When we reached



A Pool, showing Reflection.



A Pool on the Mao Kabi.



the top a series of steep stony cañons, such as the one we had just mounted, stretched before us, but neither sight nor sound of water. It was evident, however, that the Falls were above, and to fortify ourselves for the prolonged scramble that now lay before us, we called for the water-bottle, but it had sprung a leak, and not a drop remained. Then began a time of real hardship, for we had to force our way through grass that left its dust in our eyes and noses, and its spiked barbs in our legs and bodies; over granite boulders that caught and reflected every ray of sun, till the heat was like that of a furnace, and our feet and hands swelled, and face, eyes, and lips blistered, while our throats became so parched that we could hardly swallow and grew sick. We slithered and scrambled on in desperate effort to reach the river, torn by mimosa thorns, and barely able to resist the desperate temptation to grasp the poisonous cactus lianes that hung alluringly down, as if to offer a support which, if accepted, would irritate the skin beyond all endurance. We were almost at our last gasp when Mr Talbot remembered that he had brought a tin of apricots for luncheon, and in a trice that tin was open and its juice gulped down. He was heroic, and insisted on my having the lion's share. I was not heroic, and accepted it. What it meant to us no words can ever say! Assuaged, though not satisfied, we pressed on, for we knew well that the sweet sticky juice could not give us relief for long.

At last, from the brow of a hill, we saw the river lying some 400 feet below, and our hearts leaped with joy. A man was sent for water at once, but after half an hour he returned empty-handed. The cliff



was precipitous, and he had been unable to climb down it. However, we had found the water, we could see it, and even as we rose and proceeded on our way a noise like distant thunder smote our ears.

Presently Aji, who had gone on ahead, came running back with the news that it was now possible to reach the stream, and we had not long to wait before our thirst was quenched. Meantime we pressed through the low trees in search of a spot that would command a view of the river below, and suddenly the coarse vegetation, that had hitherto surrounded and almost overwhelmed us, gave way to bare rock. There, at a great distance below, was a still quiet pool, girt in on either side with rugged cliff. Fish-eagle circled over it, and hippopotami crashed through the bush that grew upon its brink; and, echoing round its mighty walls, came from above the sound of rushing water.

With light hearts and eager steps we again pressed on, to slither down and scramble up precipitous gorges, two or three hundred feet in height, but the sharp grass and jagged rocks could not deter us now, for we heard ever louder and louder the roar of the Djinn of the Falls. His dwelling-place was no longer to be surrounded with mystery. His guardians had failed him, and the end was already near. Dense bush barred our way: we pushed through it and saw the river beneath us racing turbulently between high granite walls, till of a sudden the ground broke, and with a roar the mass of water vanished. On the farther side rose another wall of rock, like to the one on which we stood, and away to the horizon stretched a green wooded landscape. The cruel force of the sun had





The Mao Kabi.



The MacLeod Falls (60 feet high).



lessened, and its radiant beams lit up and flushed the dying leaves with the glowing tints of autumn.

We sought a way down the cliff. As we climbed a strong smell of baboon betrayed their lair, and two big snakes glided away on our approach. Whether it were the sheer descent, with nothing between us and the seething torrent below, or the anger of the Djinn of the Falls that he feared, Kukaua lifted up his voice and wailed in very terror. The reverberation between those mighty walls of rock was tremendous, but we held on till we reached the depths, and presently crept out upon a ledge of rock and sheltered behind a huge boulder whence we could look up.

With a velocity gained from the succession of rapids above, large volumes of water leapt into the dark pool below. A mass of rock jutted out from the face of the cliff down which it swept, and against it the torrent lashed itself into greater fury. Spray rose in drenching clouds, and from above a beam of sunshine pierced the glistening drops, and through them shone a rainbow-messenger of peace in that stormy strife of waters. Full of the wonder of the scene and the magnitude of its grandeur we walked back to camp, passing on our way the St Andrew's Cross. One regret, however, there was to mar our contentment: it was that Mrs Talbot and M. Bertaut had not been there to share our final success.

M. Bertaut has kindly expressed his wish to name the Falls after me—*les chutes MacLeod*—and as Commandant Maillard, then acting for the military territory of Chad, confirmed his suggestion, I can only say how greatly I appreciate the honour they have done me.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE TUBURI LAKES.

(NOVEMBER 1-9.)

M. BERTAUT had advised us to camp once more in the bush on our way to Sulkando, which was now our immediate destination. The carriers, however, developed sudden energy, and said they would rather do a two days' march in one, and, as a canoe was to meet us on the Tuburi lake next day, we were only too glad to acquiesce and keep our appointment. Mrs Talbot's leg was almost well, and she declared herself quite equal to the long walk, and, as a matter of fact, it did not overtire her; neither her husband nor I was ever able to persuade her to rest, if it were at the expense of a day's or even half a day's march.

The guides, however, brought serious news. Swamps covered the path to such a depth that when they had been to test it the water reached to their necks. The only thing to do was to cut across country, and to make this possible the carriers fired a passage through the long thick grass. Of course this scattered the game for miles, and when we saw innumerable tracks of beasts and realised what sport we had missed this made us very sad.

For the first few miles our walk was delightfully easy, but as the day advanced the sun became very scorching, and by midday we were glad indeed to rest beneath the sparse shade of some scrub-trees. We were aroused from our siesta by a rustle and stir. Kukaua said it was some "nama"—animal; but, when he found that his unwary speech was likely to lead him a long journey in Mr Talbot's wake, he hastily corrected himself to "small, small nama," in the hope that our excitement would abate. It did, but for a different reason. The noise increased, the grass crackled and popped, and clouds of smoke rose in the still air: the carriers were busy firing a track further through the stiff, coarse vegetation.

Occasionally streams obstructed our way, over which we were carried, and as we neared the Tuburi depression swamps could no longer be avoided. The first one we came to looked short, and, as it did not seem worth getting wet for that little way, we decided to be carried. Mastaba was my bearer, and at first all went well; but the marsh was a considerable one, and after one hundred yards my perch on his shoulder became increasingly precarious. He evidently thought so too, for he gave a heave, which, though meant to be helpful, precipitated my downfall. With an effort I still sat upright, but it was knee-grip and endurance that did it, not balance. After a while the position became unbearable, and I said I would get down and walk; but Mastaba's pride was in it and he would not let me, pleading that Mr Talbot had ordered otherwise. The muddy bottom became more slippery and the water increased in depth. It reached to Mastaba's waist, and he hitched up the lowest parts of my person to keep me

dry. It was too much. I heeled over helplessly and lay athwart his shoulders, clutching at his head in my insecurity. Thus he bore me for the rest of the way. That he got me over without further disaster was a considerable feat, for the swamp must have extended quite 400 yards.

Mrs Talbot meanwhile was carried by Kukaua, who greatly disliked the task, and again and again threatened to drop her. She had no wish to get wet, implored him to continue, and was finally reduced to offering all sorts of bribes. He had stopped to groan in the deepest part when Mastaba, having landed me, saw Mrs Talbot's plight and at once started back to help, and carried her himself for the rest of the way.

The swamps succeeded each other quickly, and next time I waded. We were on the verge of one, 500 yards across, when two naked men met us. They were mounted on horses sent out by their Bamm (Chief) for our use. This swamp was a continuation of the Tuburi Lake, and he thought we might not like the crocodiles that frequented it. It was a true thought, and Mrs Talbot and I mounted. Then a hippo was heard, surging through water a few yards away. In one second Mr Talbot was in pursuit. I cast myself off my horse and followed after, while Kukaua carried the second rifle behind me. We had some minutes of breathless excitement, expecting the creature to burst upon us, for we heard it and others crashing and grunting all round. We were standing in water from three to four feet deep, and quick movement was not possible in the slimy bottom, so we listened to Kukaua's pitiful entreaties and consented to climb up a tree that stood in the water. Kukaua

was terrified, and he did not wait for the permission to be repeated. He brushed me aside, thrust the rifle into my hands that he might climb the quicker, and, in a shorter time than it takes to tell, had shinned up that tree and was in its topmost branches.

I was glad enough to have the rifle, for I did not trust Kukaua's marksmanship in a moment of danger, and besides, a crocodile had swum slowly by the spot where we had been standing. Mr Talbot climbed too, to where he could get a clear view and shot, and I stood on a low bough just out of the water. I prepared my rifle for defence against infuriated hippo or stealthy crocodile, as need might arise, and then, strung up to the highest pitch of expectancy, we waited. Twilight closed in on us. The hippo had scored—they were there, all round us, and yet we had to go without shot fired. Thoroughly disheartened we waded back to the path, and then through 500 yards of swamp, where we again saw the dark ridge of a crocodile's back.

Insult was added to injury, for when, after a dismal tramp, we rejoined Mrs Talbot, she said a hippo had doubled back to the path and had held up the carriers for some minutes.

The boys had by now reached the town and pitched our camp, and I must admit that we found some pleasure in the prospect of spending the next day in idleness in a canoe. When we awoke, however, and saw the chief, a very distressing fact came to our knowledge—to wit, that we were not at Sulkando at all, but at a little place called Cherijamm, two hours away from it. The perfidious guides had all along meant to make it a two days' march, but, as



they had had their fill of lonely bush-camps and wished for the bustle of town life, they thought it well to deceive us.

There was nothing for it but to pack up and go on, and we were much touched to find that the Bamm (or Chief) of Sulkando had walked all the way to Cherijamm to escort us back. Mrs Talbot was tired, and rode, so I was the one who profited by his chivalry. He cleared every thorn from the path as he passed along, and cut down even a maize-stalk if it had bent so as to cause us inconvenience.



TUBURI PIPE.

As we neared the township gay music greeted us, and men and boys played merry scraps of melody upon their pipes.

It was high holiday, with the joy of harvest, the first cutting of the maize, and its gladness was infectious.

Mr Talbot had stopped behind to hunt. We waited for him under a tree. A woman saw us from her cottage, and brought our boys a mat to sit on and calabashes of water to drink—even though it entailed a longish walk for her. It was our first acquaintance with the Tuburi, and, sorry though we were to say good-bye to the gentle, courteous Mundonng, it was evident that we had only passed from one kind people to another.

Sulkando was reached: the canoe came to meet us, and in a few minutes we were crossing the lake to M'burao, where the rest of our loads and boys were awaiting us.

The Tuburi and Tikem lakes merge one into the



other, Tuburi to the west, Tikem to the east. On the surface water-lilies and lotus float, colouring the heaven-reflecting waters with whites, pinks, mauves, and blues. Humbler flowers grow amongst them, tiny golden blossoms each supported by its own bladder, and the graceful water-violet. Tall grasses invade the lakes, and the watermen, when they seek some fish-trap in their midst, throw their paddles out on to them and then walk quickly from one paddle to the other, for the stems support the long wooden poles for a fraction of a minute. From a little distance the effect is as if they were walking on the water.

The high, nodding rushes are beautiful to look at, but mosquitos breed there, and the pain of their bite and the perpetual tang of their buzz drove us near distraction.

We had been told that it is the female who carries the malarial poison, and that she bites silently, while the male makes an offensive noise but does no serious damage. Whether it be true, or a traveller's tale, I can only say the story destroyed any peace of mind I may have had, for it made silence as dreadful as noise.

I soon learnt, however, the lesson that my companions already knew: that it recked little what one thought or what protection one sought, for after dark none was to be found.

If the boys have been able to make one's bed before sundown, and one is quick and careful about getting into it, and allows neither hand nor foot to touch the curtains, then there is safety. If, however, it is worth staying up, which it always is, even a mosquito-proof tent is of little avail, except to keep out flying-ants, who drop their wings into the soup. The only

plan, and that needs self-control, is not to add to present irritation by thoughts of future pain.

The land was flat for miles around, but at the mysterious point where the Tuburi lake becomes Tikem a hill stands. It is not high, and it is very bare, but it dominates the whole district, and is visible a great way off. The eye rests upon the change of level with relief, for it brings new courage and hope.

Every day the harsh cry of the trumpet-bird or crowned crane is heard. Once Mr Talbot had shot one. It was as darkness fell, and all through the night its mate flew round and round the tree where it had died, uttering cries that tore our hearts.

On the shores of Lake Tikem the polers brought us three eggs they had taken from a crowned crane's nest. We put them on the table, ready to blow when we had a few moments of leisure, and went out. When we came back to camp Situ met us. He pointed to the sky, and there above us two birds circled, uttering a wailing cry. They had seen the eggs below, and had hovered above the camp for many hours. We cursed ourselves for our thoughtless cruelty, and took the eggs and carried them back and laid them amongst the sand and grasses, hoping that it was not too late and that the parent birds might again be made happy. Our movements had been watched, and when we were nearly out of sight a great greedy crow flopped down, cracked the eggs, and gobbled them up.

Two very black races live on the shores of the lakes—the Tuburi and Wadama. They are both fine, well-made peoples, and both uncivilised. The Tuburi bear the same name as the country where they dwell,



Harvest Festival Dance.



The Bamm's (Chief's) Daughters at Yué.



The Chief's Daughters, Yué.



and their land has only recently come under the effective occupation of the white man. It is the new use of the waterway for transport that has hastened this result, and as there are more goods than can be brought by canoe, the natives are asked to become carriers.

A sergeant was stationed at Yué to collect men for this purpose, but the people do not care for the work, and they resent being pressed to do it. Why should they like it? They have no use for money. They have no markets, and their needs are very few. They grow, or hunt, what they eat, and their clothes are scanty.

The men wear a loin-cloth, made of some skin or hide, which hangs behind, and has in the centre a whisk of fur, like a tail, for adornment. The women fasten long bark strands round the waist by a string, so that it hangs in a mass at the back. They then pass some of it between the legs and through the string in front, so that it falls again in a fringe that reaches to the knee. The unmarried girls have a thick, patterned, blue-and-white bead apron, four or five inches in depth, whilst behind two tiny bead lappets hang on either side of the usual fibre dress.

Some of the women wear lip-discs, and one had the four corners of her mouth studded with nails in addition.

Both sexes are fond of finery, and wear bracelets, ear-rings, armlets, necklets, and anklets. In fact, they care just as much about personal appearance as any Parisian belle. They pay elaborate attention to their complexions, and both men and women grease the skin to make its blackness blacker.

We discovered this to our infinite pain and grief at M'burao, where the canoe grounded long before dry land was reached. The Tuburi polers sprang into the water, eager to carry us to the shore, and as there was no other choice between that and unpleasant wading, we accepted their offer. Mrs Talbot bravely balanced on her waterman's shoulder, but he looked unaccustomed to the task, and the distance to traverse was long. I hesitated, turned coward, and paid for it, as the fearful always do in Africa. I mounted pick-a-back. We had barely started before my hands felt wet. There could only be one cause, and I glanced nervously first at the poler's glistening shoulders, then at my glove. It was not only wet through but coal black. I leant backwards and my shirt bore the same disgusting marks. When dry land was reached, and I sprang to the ground, my worst fears were realised—and my skirt was filthy. An indescribable but penetrating odour also attached to me, and I felt like the proverbial dog with a tin bucket tied on to its tail.

Mrs Talbot had only suffered one small patch of dirt where she had sat, and she was spared the nauseating smell that hung round me. Courage was indeed rewarded.

I detested M'burao. The horrible place was swampy, and it seemed an eternity before we found a dry spot on which to camp. Then our tents had to be brought and put up, and it was a very, very long time before I was able to retreat to their shelter to change my loathsome garments and to wash.

I had learnt a lesson I shall not readily forget, and that is never to let an unclothed man carry me.

Masses of goods were waiting at M'burao, and

it was necessary to hurry them on at once, while there was still enough water in the Logone for the steamer to come up and bring them down to Fort Lamy. There were only two canoes available, and M. Helling, who was in charge of the transport on behalf of the trading company Ouhamé et Nana, was there, and also wished to press on. It was settled that he was to join us, and we four managed to pack ourselves, our attendants, and our boxes in somehow; and, by dint of not having extra long days, got through without being actively the worse for cramp.

We camped twice more in Tuburi villages, at Yué and Fianga. As I have already mentioned, Yué was temporarily occupied by a sous-officier, and he told us that on the previous night he had witnessed a dance held in celebration of the harvest festival. It was evident, therefore, that this feast had been kept on the first day of the new moon, just as at Sulkando, and we marvelled by what means the natives made such accurate astronomical observations as to foretell its exact rise.

We were anxious to see the dance repeated, and promised gifts to those who would do it. The Tuburi do not like white people, but they were curious to see Mrs Talbot and me; and, after some deliberation, they replied that they would dance, but only for that reason, and for the sake of our gifts—not to give us pleasure.

It was very dark when they arrived, and they came so quietly that we hardly realised they were there. The central figure was a musician, a man with a clumsy wooden horn. It was over-blown, and had only one stop, which he worked with the right hand.



The instrument rested on the same arm, and the left hand was free. He was the Master of the Ceremonies, and remained in the centre of the dancers, who formed two or three broken circles round him.

Men, women, and children danced together, but they were divided into groups according to their sex and age. They had chosen a big tree for their background, and it enhanced the mystery of the scene, for the only light was from our lamps. Their eyes shone brightly, and, from whatever position they were in, their gaze was always curiously fixed on us.

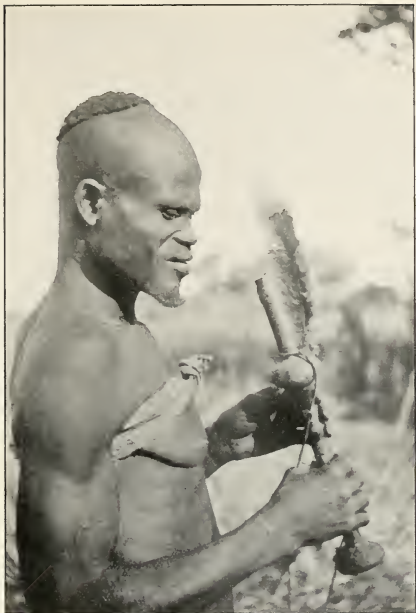
The sound of the horn and the three shrill pipes that formed its complement, and the savage accompaniment of clanking metal from bracelets and anklets, as their wearers leapt from darkness into light, added to the supremely weird effect. Each dancer bore some emblem of the harvest, usually maize or guinea-corn. The hair was a favourite place to wear it, and one man had his head so covered that it seemed as if he wore a green wig.

The dance was of a cake-walk character, and the performers would often go backwards, but the formation remained the same, though there was great variety in the steps.

At the end, four girls, the Bamm's daughters, danced a very intricate step, a little like the Highland Fling. It required much rhythmic clashing of their anklets, and they performed it with graceful precision.

These girls are of great value in the marriage market, and the Bamm demands no less than 10 bullocks, or 4 cows, for each one.

Mrs Talbot's and my hair was the chief subject of



A Tuburi Flautist.



Tuburi Musician, Yué.



interest to the Tuburi. She suggested that we should let it down, that they might see the full mystery of its length. The sous-officier begged us not to, lest they should think we were devils, and treat us accordingly. They seemed to be shrewd observers, for they remarked it was evident that the Talbots and I were of different race. Their hair is darker, but their eyes are blue like mine, and the Tuburi must have detected the subtle difference between English and Scottish.

The contract was complete: they had danced, and in the morning we gave our gifts. The difficulty of giving suitable presents at home, where we all have countless wants, is great; but at Yué, where there were none, it was a problem indeed. In vain we turned over our stores of rich and gaudy stuffs,—all were rejected with a look of puzzled scorn; but at last beads, dark blue and white, were produced. Then a smile of content spread over the black faces. Here was something they valued, something they could use.

In the morning we went up to the village, hopeful that the people, now that they knew us, might give us a friendly reception. The first place we visited was the Bamm's compound. Outside it stood a huge drum, nine feet high, which the player reaches by means of steps that lean up against it. It was sheltered beneath a roof of zana matting. Ordinarily some obliging native would have moved it for us, so that we might get a photograph, but on this occasion cold, suspicious eyes watched, and their owners obviously resented our curiosity. The Bamm was away, they said, and nothing could be done without him. They would neither show us their houses nor sell us anything.

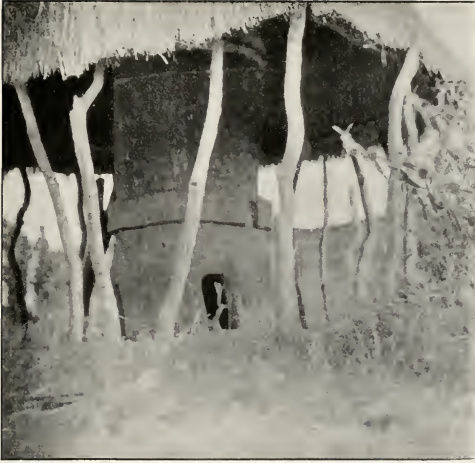
They had danced for us the previous night, as a matter of business, and we had paid; there our connection was to cease. They did not like us, and they saw no reason to conceal their feelings. It made us very sad, but, as we could not convince them of our merits, there was no use in remaining, so we turned back to the shore and re-embarked.

Another day of peace and contentment was before us, and we paddled lazily along the lake, with the drip of the water, as it splashed off the poles, lulling the senses into drowsy enchantment.

That night, on landing, Mrs Talbot and I went a stroll together as usual, but in a few minutes her husband joined us. He had brought his rifle, greatly to our astonishment, and he begged us to keep within sight of camp. It appeared that there had been recent fighting at the neighbouring township, for the chief of Fianga had forbidden any one to work for the white man. In defiance of this order two of the villagers had served as carriers, and on their return to Fianga the chief had beaten them. They ran away and complained to the French, who sent a black sergeant and three soldiers to remonstrate. This little party was soon put to flight, and three out of the four were wounded.

Everything seemed peaceful now, however, and the only shot fired was at bats, which had clustered so thickly in the branches of a tree that twelve fell to one shot, and the rest circled about us in so dense a cloud that light could not be seen through it.

The night passed without sign of hostility, and next morning we visited the village, where the people, though timid, showed no unfriendliness. The women



Big Drum, Yué.



A Village on Lake Tikem.





and children had all gone. Perhaps they feared reprisals, or the misconduct of our boys or polers; however, as for centuries past it has been from among the pagan tribes that slaves have been raided, it has long been the custom to send the women and children away to some hiding-place on the approach of strangers. The men stay to fight for their homes, unless the numbers against them are overwhelming, in which case they too fly until the danger is past.

On our way up to the town we noticed that the fields were carefully cultivated. Furrows were made by big wooden hand-hoes, and maize and guinea-corn were sown between the ridges, so that they might catch the moisture.

Every house had its plot of garden, and tobacco-plant was grown in each. The natives use its flower for cleaning their teeth.

In the midst of the town is a big thorn-fenced circle, where the cattle are gathered in time of danger. Many of the compounds are enclosed in spiked zaribas, and one in particular was very beautiful. It was a hedge of lovely bright pink blossoms, that flowered on seemingly dead stems, from which a lanceolate leaf springs later. We picked some for Mrs Talbot's collection, and a thick juice exuded from the stem. Her finger smarted, and she sucked it instinctively, but, from the internal pain that immediately overtook her, we judged the plant to be intensely poisonous. There is considerable danger in handling unknown plants, and Mrs Talbot learnt to be very careful, especially if her skin chanced to be open from any scratch.

The huts are made of thatch or matting, and are small and round in shape, with low entrances that vary

from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet in height. Immediately inside, a low semicircular mud wall screens the interior, and in it are two or three hollows, where lamps or other small objects are laid. Goats live in the houses in a sort of mud kennel.

The men watched our explorations with amusement, at a distance that gradually lessened as their confidence increased. At last Mr Talbot persuaded one young brave to face the dangers of the camera, and he took his stand boldly till, at the crucial moment, he, together with the onlookers, abruptly fled. The cause was not far to seek. M. Helling's boy had walked up, carrying a large and ancient gun. We were disgusted, and after he had gone our friendly overtures had to be renewed for a long while before our timid friends would once more accredit our good intentions. However, by the aid of an old hag, who knew Fulani and could interpret, we persuaded them to come back and show us some of their treasures. This old woman, the only one of her sex to remain, was as ugly as her years were many. She wore a small disc in her lip, and her short grey hair and coarse wrinkled skin made her extraordinarily repulsive to look at. Through her good offices one of the warriors was induced to don his war attire, so that we might photograph him. The corselet is made of thickly woven grass, the shield of reeds, and the helmet is surmounted by goat's skin. To complete the outfit he should have had leg-armour, like cricket-pads, made of straw bound round with leather.

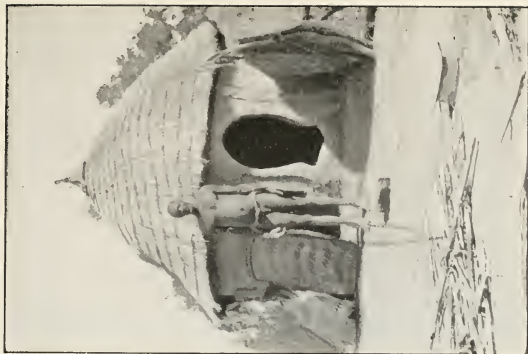
To stand in the sun, amidst unpleasant smells, and to crawl in and out of the low huts, was tiring, and we promised ourselves ten minutes' idleness before we returned to the overcrowded boat. It was not to be.



A Wadama Bec-Hive, Kerra.



A Tuburi Warrior.



Wadama Chief by his own House, Kerra.



There were many bees in Fianga, and when we tried to rest our jaded persons by taking a humble seat on a tree trunk, "them small honey-fly that live for bite" descended in wrath, and we did not dispute their right to eject us.

All was so peaceful that we doubted whether it could have been at Fianga that the Tuburi had defied French rule. The people, however, are clever enough to appreciate and mark the difference between irresponsible travellers and officials who come to enforce regulations.

It was our last experience of the Tuburi, for that night we slept at Kerra, amongst the Wadama. They are an intensely black race, blacker even than the Tuburi. They, too, are unclothed, for the skin that hangs from the back of their loins is not a scanty garment, as we had at first imagined, but a seat, carried ready for use in the most handy fashion. It is a luxury not owned by all.

The Wadama are a tall, finely-built race, and they are armed with great staves, which add to their imposing appearance.

Again the women and children fled at our approach, and even male forms scurried off before us. Once we had pitched camp, however, and our peaceful intentions had become apparent, the dusky warriors slipped down in little groups. They gave each other courage, and gradually came closer and closer, till they commanded an excellent view of the open tents and of ourselves. Then they sat down and watched.

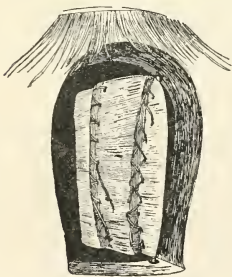
Presently Aji went across, for the boys wanted to buy corn for their food. The Wadama received his approaches doubtfully, but Aji, who is very small, seized the biggest man, wrestled with and threw him. This made all the others laugh, and his point was

gained. He passed his arm through his victim's and led him off in triumph to the village.

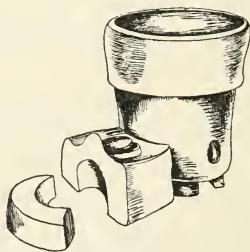
We followed in the morning, by which time we were above suspicion, and the people took us to visit house after house.

An egg-shell is universally the symbol of fertility, and many superstitions have grown up around it. We have them in England, so has the African, and here on Lake Tikem nearly every house had a bit of shell suspended from the ceiling.

The beds are raised from the floor on legs, and some are slightly sloped from head to feet. Many had logs of wood thrown on either side, which are used as seats, and the bed becomes a table. We had grown so unaccustomed to tables that it really gave us quite a shock to see such a luxury amongst our primitive friends. The entrances, too, are superior. Usually



WADAMA DOOR.



FIRE-OVEN.

they are covered only with a piece of zana matting, if covered at all, but some of the Wadama have real wooden doors. The planks are sewn together with hide, and they have hide hinges. The fire-ovens and fish-ovens are particularly fine.

The men take great trouble about their personal appearance, and, where metal or beads fail, cord and even wood is pressed into the service for anklets, bracelets, and necklets.

The front teeth are filed, but this custom is dying out, and is no longer practised by the youth of the tribe.

We bought a good many things from them, and in return cloth was enthusiastically accepted. We wondered whether, like Adam, they had become conscious of their nakedness, but the doubt was soon removed, for instead of using it for clothing they spread it over the roofs of their houses to make them fine.

Old bottles and tins were valued, and here again they were put to unexpected uses. One man, for instance, tore the inner sheeting out of a tin of digestive biscuits and fastened it to his hair, where it glistened and flashed gaudily in the brilliant sunshine, giving great satisfaction to himself and his comrades.

Salt was, however, the thing they coveted of all others; but we had not got an unlimited store out of which to supply their wants, and as our last tin was already broken into, Mrs Talbot and I begged that no more should be given. Our wish was disregarded, for Mr Talbot's scientific mind was imbued with an overmastering desire to measure the Wadama for the Anthropological Society, of which he is a fellow. They, however, looked upon the proceeding with suspicion; and when the little instrument was produced to measure the nose, chin, forehead, ears, and every other facial member, they simply ran away. Then Mr Talbot pointed out to us that his



efforts would be in vain were not the powerful inducement of salt offered. Very few words settled the matter. Had we come out with eyes and ears shut until we reached our destination? If not, why did we bar the study of the natives? We had not come out expecting to enjoy food—well, why couldn't we sacrifice a little salt? So, thoroughly ashamed of our selfishness, we took that tin of salt and laid it on the table, so that the fearful might be tempted.

Then Mr Talbot summoned Mastaba and measured him, so that the Wadama might see no suffering was entailed. Presently the Bamm was induced to come, and after he had retired with a rich reward of salt his people crowded round. One after another they presented themselves; and as the salt sunk lower in the tin, so did our spirits flag. Mr Talbot's were high, however, and we fixed our thoughts on the enrichment of the world's knowledge. I do hope the Anthropological Society really appreciate the measurements they ask for. Mrs Talbot and I often wondered how much they do, for, to our untrained feminine minds, it seemed that general observations were just as effective as measurements.

The process proved to be a great bond of friendship, and the intimacy it brought about encouraged the sick to approach, and to demonstrate by appropriate gestures where they felt pain.

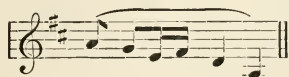
Mr Talbot dealt out simple but potent remedies, and the reaction from the sufferings these produced won him great respect and gratitude. The native likes his medicines strong, so that he can feel the result whether for better or worse. One old and very poor man brought a fowl as thank-offering, and

hobbled away quickly to show he did not wish for payment.

Our popularity spread rapidly, and a neighbouring chief crossed the water and brought a ram as tribute, though it is no pastoral country, probably on account of tsetse-fly. This young man was a great blood, and he alone of all his race was able to play a long flute composed of four gourd sections, fitting one into the other, and increasing in diameter from the mouthpiece downwards. The sections are fastened together by means of cane pegs, and the joints are rendered air-tight by an external plaster of mud and cow-dung, or a layer of some mucilaginous compound (decayed rubber?): in the latter case the joint is further concealed by a covering of hide. The mouth-piece is a hollow piece of wood, similarly secured with pegs and hide. The tone is bass and throaty, and capable of little variation; but to sound a note at all is an achievement. The common instrument is a small over-blown pipe. It has a sweet tone; and on the first night of our arrival we heard the beautiful melody out of "Fingal's Cave" in the Hebridean overture—



WADAMA FLUTE.



repeated over and over again. The Wadama are really musical, and a man habitually carries his instrument attached to a string round his neck. They have no

form or time as we understand it; but grace-notes and appoggiaturas play a large part in their music, and their all too short airs are often repeated.

The surface of the soil is sandy, but fairly good crops are raised, and the trees, though few, sometimes grow to be big. The lake is girt in by a tangle of rushes, and here vast herds of hippo make their home. It was owing to them that we stayed two days at Kerra. We heard them in close vicinity to the camp as we dined, and were a little nervous lest they might lumber into our tents at night. We therefore strolled out afterwards to see whether by any unlucky chance we had pitched camp across one of their trails. Very soon we were in the midst of grunts, and first one, then another, massive form loomed close in the darkness. We were down wind and full of ambition to get closer still, so we sank down against the blackness of a tree. Suddenly Mr Talbot gave a cry, and sprang to his feet. He had been bitten by a snake. We hurried back to camp, and were there in two minutes; but by the time he had got his boot off, the leg, where he had been bitten, was hard and swollen. Two red dots showed where the fangs had entered. He cut them twice with his knife, but no blood flowed. We rubbed in carbolic acid, applied ligatures, and put hot-water bottles to his feet. Mrs Talbot poured black coffee and two-thirds of a bottle of whisky down his throat, but nevertheless his pulse weakened. He almost lost consciousness, and as a last measure we prepared to inject strychnine. Thus an hour passed. Then his pulse gradually became stronger and steadier, and we got him to bed. In the course of the night our

fears were reawakened, for, though practically unconscious, he was seized with palpitations of the heart. Next day, however, he seemed perfectly well, though his leg was painful from the pressure of the ligatures.

Had it not been for his leather boot and trousers, which arrested much of the poison, he must inevitably have died. We never knew what the snake was, though we found its hole just beneath where Mr Talbot had sat.

We parted from M. Helling in the morning; for none of us felt inclined to start at 6 A.M. after such a night, and he could not afford the time to wait. He took one of the canoes, therefore, and went on his way alone, while we sat down at Kerra to await its return. He promised to send it back for us with all possible speed, and he did; but the polers did not think the same rapidity necessary when a white man was out of the boat as when he was in it.

I was glad of the delay; for I enjoyed our stay amongst the Wadama, and had a lingering hope that the women might return and that we should see them. But I was doomed to disappointment.

We should have got to Pogo easily on the second day after leaving Kerra, but when we left the lake and entered the river Kebbia the current was strong against us. For a space the polers struggled against it; but then they found a rest advisable, especially as Mr Talbot's eyes were closed, and when he opened them again the distance we had so laboriously gained had all been lost. Steering was difficult: fishing-nets were stretched across the river,

and only a narrow angular way was left for boats to pass through. Baskets were placed there too, with necks so narrow that the fish that swam in could not turn to get out again; and one we passed by was almost full. Our interest in river scenery was on the wane, for it had been a long day and we were eager to reach Pogo. The polers wanted to stop, so as to make a third day's work; but we were in a hurry and would not let them. Furthermore, we did not see why they should be rewarded for laziness, and, as there was a moon, we still had some hours of light before us. The order was given to continue.

The river was full; there were many half-concealed snags in it, and great eddies whirled and rushed round some big trees caught in mid-stream. It needed hard work and cautious navigation, yet again and again the boys failed to make a spurt where a spurt was necessary, and we presently found ourselves tightly wedged in the branches of a tree. The second canoe glided past us while we were thus entangled, regardless of the law that we were never to be left. By the time we got free the moon was on the wane, and it was decreed best to land at the nearest bank and pitch camp there; but we could not, for there was no land. It was all marsh and swamp. The polers said we were still two or three hours from Pogo, and the dangers of the river were certainly too great to be faced in the dark. There was nothing for it but to sleep in the boat, and then it was that we missed the second canoe. We had no bedding with us, no blankets,

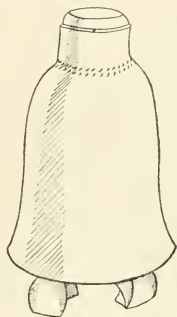
and, above all, no mosquito-nets. Oh, how we cursed our cruel fate! and how we hoped the polers did so too! I think they did; for at that eleventh hour they suggested continuing, but Mr Talbot thought the risk unjustifiable. There were twenty people and three chickens crowded into that narrow space, and the only live things that knew happiness that night were mosquitos. They descended upon us in swarms, and had a regular feast. Mrs Talbot put a towel over her face, Mr Talbot a coat, and I from time to time my handkerchief; but on the whole it seemed better to be merely bitten than to be both bitten and stifled. My companions bore it with real stoicism; but I turned and tossed and yielded to the temptation of retaliation, though I knew it would be ineffective. The chief result was that Mrs Talbot got a good many clouts from my elbows; but I daresay the change of pain helped her to bear it. Anyway, she never murmured.

All through the night we heard the boys slapping their bare flesh as the mosquitos attacked them, and the buzz of the enemy sounded in our ears with all the realism of a nightmare.

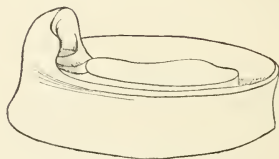
We three had lain down at the bottom of the boat, with the chickens at our toes, so closely wedged that there was only just room to turn on our own axis.

I don't think dawn can ever have been so cordially welcomed as it was by us, and the moment it was light we were on our way. In half an hour's time a disconcerting sight met our eyes. It was our tents, erected on the Pogo shore, and within them

our comfortable beds beneath sheltering nets! It is better not to describe our feelings towards the polers. I will only say that they did not get an extra day's pay.



POT (TUBURI).



QUERN (TUBURI).

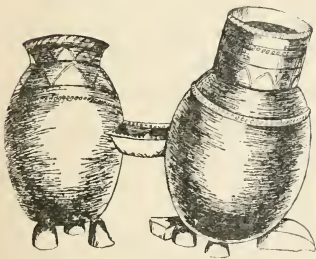


## CHAPTER VI.

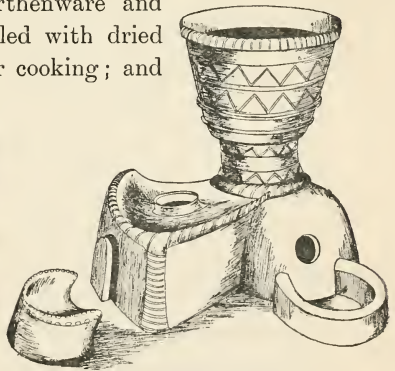
## DOWN THE LOGONE RIVER.

(NOVEMBER 9-25.)

WE remained at Pogo during the heat of the day, and, as soon as carriers had been collected, set forth for the Banana village of Gumun, where we arrived as the moon set, more asleep than awake. It was not therefore till day broke that we realised how attractive were our surroundings. The crude mud-huts, with their thatched roofs, were many of them covered with big-leafed, bright-blossomed pumpkins; calabashes of earthenware and gourds lay about half-filled with dried leaves, or grain ready for cooking; and



BANANA WATER-JARS.



BANANA FIREPLACE.

inside were large highly ornamented water-jars of different colours and fireplaces of elaborate design.

Both sexes had the same lack of apparel as those from whom we had just come, and in the case of the women this was even more marked, for they had not even an ornamental fringe. They were really hideous to look at, for they wore lip-discs and some had shaved their heads. It was only three months since white men had first invaded the quiet of their country, having come to arrange for the transport of goods from Pogo to the Logone river. Carriers were needed, and, by Government regulation, had to be paid in money at the rate of one shilling a-day. The work was uncongenial, and the Banana found no reward in the possession of coins for which they had no use. At first they melted the metal down to ornament their pipe-stems. There their wants ended, and they would have refused to do any work had not the *Compagnie de Ouhamé et Nana* stepped forward, and, by opening a store on the river-side, enabled the carriers to exchange their pay for large blue and white beads, which they value above everything. It was to this store that we now proceeded, and the route we had to traverse was so swampy that Mr Talbot soon had to dismount from his strong, sure-footed little Lakka pony and wade most of the way. Hammocks were provided for Mrs Talbot and me, and the Banana bearers took great care of us. Seven times one or other of my men slipped and fell in the muddy bottom, but never once forgot to stretch his arms at full length above his head that I might be held out of the water—and, if his fall were too complete, he let go altogether while the other three sustained me. They were always cheerful, and came up from each dip with a laugh, though as three hours

out of the six spent on the march were in a morass, it was exhausting work for them. Nearly every man carried a small pipe, suspended round his neck by means of a chain, and by playing some little air he could always summon a comrade to his assistance. In most places the swamp was some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, but every now and again a man would disappear in a hole up to his neck, and have to be pulled out. And the strains of music we occasionally heard from front or rear usually meant that some man was in distress.

Our immediate destination was a quaint little village called Ham, perched on a narrow ridge that rises steeply out of the river, and which is surrounded by stagnant water except in the height of the dry season. The huts are clustered so thickly together that there is barely room to pass between them, and tiny plots of tobacco-plant fill up any space there might otherwise be.

The neighbourhood is full of game, and gazelle came to feed within shot of the town. We rejoiced at the prospect of a few days' hunting, for we had time to spare, as the canoes that were to meet us had not yet arrived. It was not to be, however, for Mr Talbot struck his head against a beam, unfortunately in the identical place where he had injured it when thrown from his horse in the Kamerun, and the result was delirium and several days of bed.

His craving, as an invalid, was for sardines, and these, after anxious consultation of the medical chapter in 'Hints to Travellers,' we decided would be bad for him. Situ therefore had to be enlisted on our side, and forbidden to comply with any food orders without first consulting Mrs Talbot. She, however, fell sadly in his opinion, for her standard of wifely decorum

proved far short of his. We had agreed together that she or I must always be on sick-nurse duty, and, accordingly, the night of the accident I had dinner alone. When I had finished I went to relieve her, having told Situ to keep dinner, but by the time she came out it had been removed. She called him and told him to bring it, but with voice trembling with reproach he replied, "Massa ill." "Yes," she said, "but Miss MacLeod is with him now. Bring my dinner, quick." "I see Massa live to hurt his head," repeated Situ. She persisted, and for some time after he marked his disapproval of her callousness by giving her disagreeable baths and all sorts of small but potent punishments.

One night we noticed a wide nimbus round the moon, and this among many tribes is the signal for a "great medicine." Some medicine men claim to bring it about. They draw a large circle on the ground, over which they mutter incantations, and when they do it "proper" a nimbus appears in the sky, and the moon is retained for a long while high in the heavens. Whether or not medicine was made on this occasion there is no doubt that great festival was held. As we sat that night under the starry sky the river wound its way towards the great lake in waveless peace, and the shadows of the huts stood black against the brightness of the moon—but no sound broke the stillness, and it seemed an enchanted city. Suddenly, in the distance, a flame shot up into the sky, and another, and another, till a circle of blazing, leaping fire revealed a restless group of heaving humanity. Then, fitfully on the soft breeze, sounds were borne as of men in sorrow, singing a low chant

that spoke of human acquiescence ; but a stronger note throbbed through it, that of man's power and ultimate mastery. It was a wake held, we were told, in honour of "one big man."

Mr Talbot was better, the canoes had come, and next day we continued our journey. Our route now lay through territory that belonged to the Germans. That to the right bank of the Logone has since been ceded to the French, and it was on this side alone that we landed during our passage down the river, until we came to the Kotoko capital of Logone Birrini. In the afternoon we heard sounds of distant chanting, and, determined to see what was going on, ordered the polers to draw into shore. Mr Talbot landed, with the injunction to his wife and me to stay where we were, unless he sent to say it was worth our while to come. On this point, however, we considered ourselves better judges ; so when a boy returned for his rifle we added ourselves to the party, and some fifty yards from the shore became witnesses of a peculiar scene. Five hundred Banana were gathered together, each holding in his hand an enormous wooden club, from which—like the Cyclops—they are never parted. They are a tall, well-formed race, and very black. As a fair complexion is valued in a white person so is a dark one among blacks, nor do they hesitate to bedaub themselves with grease to heighten this effect—and for them perfection of colour is more important than for other races, as they are practically naked. When we arrived they were in a vast circle, executing a war-dance to the sound of a rhythmic chant, but when they saw us panic seized them. Some stole away into the bush, though the vast

majority remained, restless and uneasy, like a nervous dog who does not know whether to fly or to attack. Mr Talbot glanced round to see what was so affecting them, and it was evident that our appearance worried him; however, the dance was resumed, its chief theme being for one man to chase another away from the circle, which he did with bent body and crafty leopard-like tread, till the victim turned and pursued his aggressor back again. This remarkable movement was performed with so much intensity that an eerie feeling of dread crept over us. The game might at any moment cease to be a game, and one swift spring and a blow with the great club would end all for the man who had his back to his foe. It was no new sensation, that terror of the pounce and chase, and in a flash memory had carried me back to old hide-and-seek days, and the sloping bank of grass dotted with great clumps of rhododendron where we used to play. How long the abstraction lasted I do not know, but when it lifted an uncomfortable feeling was borne in on me that the Banana were less intent upon their dance than they were upon us.

A large open space was the scene of the gathering, and close by was a big tree, under which we stood. Behind us was a tiny pond, to which the natives sometimes repaired to suck its water through a long rush the height of a stick. Behind that again lay the river, concealed from view by thin bush. Instinctively I glanced round to assure myself there was nothing between us and it. There was nothing, but every now and again a man who went to drink did not return. It was absurd to indulge suspicions; there was no reason to fear hostility, and indeed every sign denoted



friendliness. Then a man came up to clasp our hands in his filthy greasy ones ; then another ; then it seemed as if they would all come, not only once, but again and again. I left the shade to stand with the Talbots, who had taken up a position in the open, and were themselves the centre of an eager throng. The revel seemed at its height, and the chant rose ever wilder and wilder. The voices of the Banana swelled and trembled, their fine shoulders heaved, their lithe limbs were covered with beads of perspiration, and their eyes, aglow with excitement, were fixed on us. Then the circle broke, and a crowd of warriors pressed in on us, but an orator began to speak, and quickly the people gathered round him. All this while Mr Talbot had kept his face towards them with calm confidence ; but he now directed us to retreat with all possible speed, though any appearance of flight might, he warned us, precipitate a crisis. The spokesman was gaining power over his audience ; short sharp exclamations had changed to a howl of approval ; they swayed round him in eager excitement. It was evident that we were the subject of his discourse, but what was the gist of it—what did he want ? We were soon to know, for our headman understood the language, and worked his way quietly to our side. “They mean to keep the ladies,” he whispered. We had turned, and were already a few yards on our road before our disappearance was noticed. Then a knot of men ran by as if to cut off our retreat. All fear had left us, and we felt an almost impersonal interest as to whether or not the too friendly Banana would effect their capture. There they were, before and behind us ; they could not have helped winning, yet they took no action. Perhaps they im-



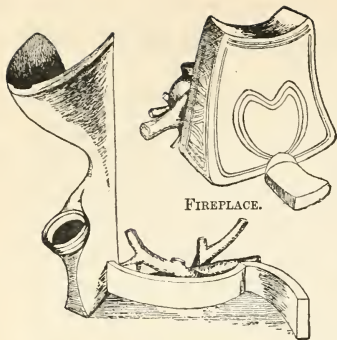
puted our calm to confidence in some great ju-ju, to a witchcraft we could exercise in our defence, and which would sweep them all to the evil Djinns of the river; or perhaps each party waited for the other to take action first. However that may be, their indecision saved us. Another moment and we were past them, in the canoe, and out in mid-stream. As the current swept us onwards shouts of anger and disappointment were raised, and till the bush closed thick upon the shore and concealed them from our sight, swarthy savages ran down the banks brandishing their clubs.

Our satisfaction in being safely on board a canoe in the centre of a broad stream was very considerable, and we felt no desire to land again until we reached the German Fort of Bongor. We arrived there by moonlight, and found two officers peacefully drinking coffee on a broad esplanade by the river-side. They received us hospitably, and we did not recount our adventure lest they might ask us to refrain from landing in future. Perhaps the precaution was unnecessary, for the Resident himself warned us that they could not depend upon the friendliness of the natives, but thought it unlikely they would attack so large a party as ours. We continued on our way with no overweening confidence, and Mrs Talbot and I took care not to extend our walks on shore beyond sight and sound of our camp.

On four consecutive days the same festival was held, and on each occasion the natives said it was a wake for "one big man." It seemed likely that the ancient custom of making human sacrifice in propitiation to the harvest-god might still be practised. Any-

way, it was a period of feasting, and our boys thought the position none too safe, and never allowed us to be parted from our revolvers. The disagreeable, however, that befel us was very different from that we had anticipated. It was due to an excess of cordiality, for the moment the natives found we had encamped in their neighbourhood they flocked up to greet us, and shook hands again and again. There was so much grease exuding from their persons that we found it necessary to sit with a basin of disinfectant beside us, in which we repeatedly washed.

The chief warned us that should our boys visit the village they might be speared, but he took us round himself, and for the first time we saw the 30-foot high conical buildings, with rough-ribbed ornamentations, which we were to find in their perfection at Musgum. They were interspersed with palm-trees, and it seemed as if the æsthetic sense of the people had prompted them to adapt their tall narrow architecture to nature. The low doorways were of considerable thickness, and were richly ornamented on the inside by impressions made in the soft mud by finger-tips. Above were pockets, or pouches, deep enough to store small pots or other household properties. Elaborate fireplaces stood inside, sometimes connected to high shafts, in which corn for immediate consumption was stored. There were mud bedsteads, too, which served a double purpose, for goats were penned in the hollows beneath them; and a quern was used as a cradle when not required for grinding corn. We found various treasures in the houses, which the people consented to give us in exchange for cloth and beads. Some leg-armour of plaited straw and



FIREPLACE.

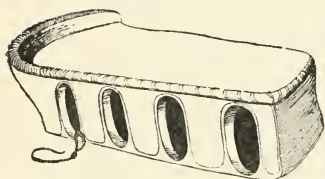
FIREPLACE.



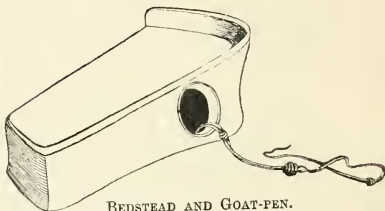
QUERN.



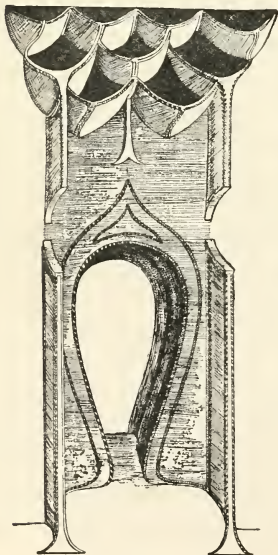
LEG-ARMOUR.



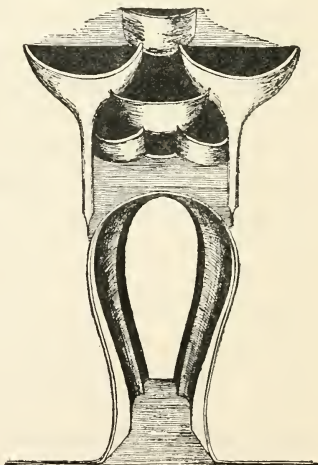
BEDSTEAD AND GOAT-PEN.



BEDSTEAD AND GOAT-PEN.



BANANA DOORWAY.



DOORWAY.

leather, shaped like a football pad; also small bags of reed or rush, which had belonged to women now dead. Each woman owns one, and if she were to part with it she would die, for her life is woven into its meshes.

It was lucky that the people were so well disposed to us, for Kukaua tried their nerve to the uttermost. When cleaning the guns he moved the catch from safety, and, not having troubled to unload, in due course forgot, and suddenly let it off by accident. By the mercy of Providence the boys had just come out of my tent, where



WOMAN'S BAG.

they had been making the bed, and the shot went harmlessly through its canvas; but the accident might have been very serious and have brought a swarm of armed Banana upon us. From that moment Kukaua was degraded from his status of gun-boy and became a mere labourer. Aji succeeded him in that high office, and, feeling that more was now expected of him, he became a Mahommedan.

Our canoeing days were very delightful, and as we paddled down stream we saw innumerable birds and beasts. The sandbanks were a living mass of birds—egrets, plovers, waders, crowned-cranes, jabirus, pelicans of many kinds, some with lovely flesh-pink

breasts; geese, herons, fish-eagles, fish-hawks, and duck that rose in clouds of 1500 to 2000 at a time, and out of which some dozen would fall to a single shot. There were many others that remain nameless to us, for though Mr Talbot shot and skinned them and sent them home to the Natural History Museum, they were detained at Yola for so many months that beetles got in and destroyed them utterly. Dust, a few feathers, and rapacious insects were all that reached England. Indeed, their arrival at the Natural History Museum was immediately followed by a telegram asking whether I wished to see the *débris*, or whether it might instantly be burned. It was very bitter, for the birds had died in vain, we might have been saved much labour, and the carriers need not have carried. Mr Talbot did the skinning, but we all suffered from the sight and smell, and in the narrow confines of a canoe there was no chance of escape for any one. If by any chance he could not overtake all the work in one day the penalty was heavy indeed.

We passed such large numbers of hippopotami that there was grave danger of our getting *blasé*, and we almost had to force ourselves to take an interest in them as we paddled by. Once we saw nine together in apparently shallow water, where it would have been an easy matter to retrieve their bodies. Mr Talbot shot four of them, and they all nine sank out of sight, but five rose again, and, with the glitter of vengeance in their eyes, swam straight for our canoe. It was an unpleasant moment, for, though two rifles, Mr Talbot's and mine, were ready to repel the attack, the polers, in a panic of terror, had flung themselves

to the bottom of the boat, and the bark was therefore without guidance. Their fear was evidently caused as much by me and my rifle as it was by the hippo, but we exhorted them to courage, for had we been washed on to a sandbank our position would have been precarious indeed. We escaped this danger, and the current whirled us down stream with such rapidity that our pursuers lost courage and resigned the chase. The next question was how to profit by the kill, for the reader must not imagine the shooting to have been prompted merely by a lust for blood. Our polers and "boys" seldom tasted meat, and to them, as to the natives along the bank, it was a great and rare luxury. We therefore proposed to land and walk back, but the headman of polers implored us to attempt nothing so hazardous, nor was it the hippo he feared, but the natives who live along that shore, and who had but recently murdered two white men. There was no hope of concealing our presence, for a number of them had seen us pass, and had flung themselves into the water in terror at the sound of the rifle. It was therefore decided to relinquish our quest, and, vexatious though it was to leave the hippo, one of our purposes at least had been fulfilled, for the natives knew where they had fallen and someone would enjoy a feast.

In the evenings we generally used to go on some collecting expedition while camp was being pitched. Sometimes it would be to a sandbank after birds, when a boy would carry us through the stream. On one occasion rivalry caused my downfall, for Mrs Talbot's bearer was a long way ahead and was nearing the shore across a distant but shallow channel. My boy



could not bear them to be in front, and thought we might cut off a corner and catch them up, so he attempted a crossing of greater depth. I felt he was unwise, but was as ignorant of his tongue as he was of mine, and I did not want him to believe that white women were fearful, so I sat tight and said nothing. The bank shelved unexpectedly steeply, and very soon he and I were sitting together at the bottom of the Logone. After that I changed my clothes and warmed myself up by a hippo hunt. Heat was induced by excitement more than exercise, for our part was to sit very still in a likely swamp and watch. Aji and Mandara were on the look-out a little farther off, and their abrupt flight gave us notice that a hippo was near. We stalked it, and looking over the brow of the bank found ourselves within four yards of one. It was on the brink of deep water, and we could not have regained the body, so it was no good shooting, and we were left aglow with excitement to speculate whether if it came farther ashore a shot would drop it before it reached us. The point was never put to the test, for darkness fell and it swam away.

Our native guide was a particularly nice man, and curious about us and our way of life, to which he evidently compared his own. His one adornment was a skin, the embryo seat afore-mentioned, and he was full of chagrin that we were so much better off than he; however, he determined to make the most of his possessions, and when he faced us he wore it to the front, when he turned round he moved it to the back. On our way back to camp he trod on a fish. It had swum up a narrow passage, dug for the purpose, and could not turn round to escape again. He felt about





A Banana Woman  
(Kumi).

Our Banana Guide (Muguna),  
with two Compatriots.



A Banana Piccan.



for it with his hands, and presently pulled it out and carried it back to his hut.

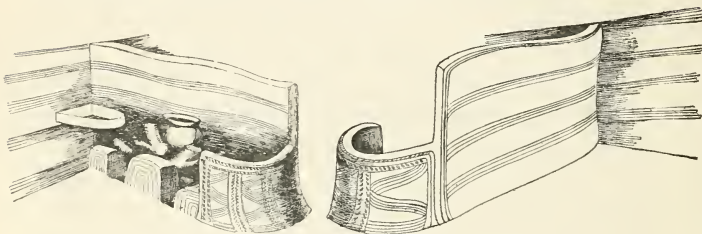
As at Lake Léré, the natives use baskets with such narrow necks that a fish, having once entered, cannot turn to get out again. Another method of fishing is by a series of nets along the banks, which being raised from time to time are found full of fish. Sometimes the natives walk the river in line dragging a huge net, somewhat on the trawl principle.

As we floated down the river one peaceful afternoon a large walled city came into sight, occasional palms and foliage trees peeping above the high mud wall. Only a few feet of land lay between it and the Logone, and, as we approached, this was darkened with figures of men, many of whom were clad in skins that hung over the shoulders both before and behind. We had come to Musgum, famous for its beauty. It is about two miles in circumference, and is enclosed in a 40-foot high wall. We stepped inside the gateway and found ourselves in a narrow street that skirted the edge of a water-meadow, green with a plant that is used for fodder for the cattle. Behind it rose the mud wall, built in tiers, so that the thickness grew ever less and less towards the top, constructed thus so that the defenders might be in a good position to repel attacks from hostile raiders.

Tall, picturesque houses tapered upwards, and women and children peeped from behind them, or gathered in the enclosures to gaze at us strangers.

In a large open space cattle were gathered for the night, and farther on the street degenerated into a series of byways, where there was only just room to pass between the houses. One hut had become a

ruin, but half the shell still stood, and we wondered at the skill that had achieved a perfect dome of thirty feet out of thin mud alone. Since my return to England Mr Percy Waldram, who has seen some of my photographs, has published an account of them in his book on Structural Mechanics. In a letter to me he wrote: "These huts form the most striking example which I have yet discovered of the true theoretic form in thin dome construction, containing minimum thickness with maximum strength. The



DETACHABLE FIREPLACE.

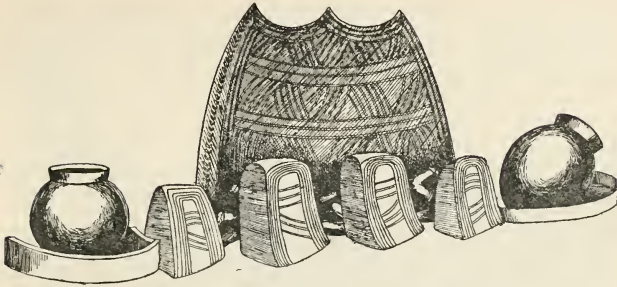
external ribbing, apparently only ornamental, is also excellently designed to minimise the risk of local injury as distinct from general failure." It is also put to a further use by the inhabitants, who run nimbly up and down the walls. The interiors are



FIREPLACE.

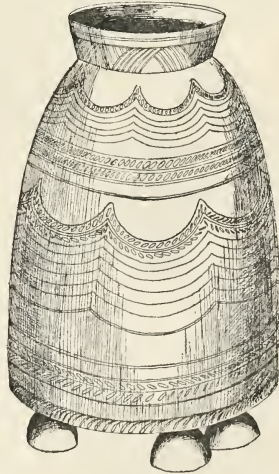
decorated also, though the ornamentation shows a curious decadence from that found in the neighbouring villages, the porches over

the doors and the beds being particularly inferior. Many of the fireplaces were fine, and Mrs Talbot



FIREPLACE.

set to work to draw examples of them; as also a water-pot, and in particular of some paintings on the walls of one or two houses, done with white chalk and black and red paint obtained from reeds. In the design produced on next page it will be noticed that the riders not only have both legs on the same side of their horses, as is, I believe, common in primitive art, but that they are on the farther side, which is less usual. The owner was very proud of his fresco, and he and his friends sat round on the low mud rail which encircled the wall as a goat-pen, and watched Mrs Talbot draw.



WATER-POT.

He could not tell us the names of all the animals represented, but the figure directly above the white man in a tall hat is that of a woman milking a cow.

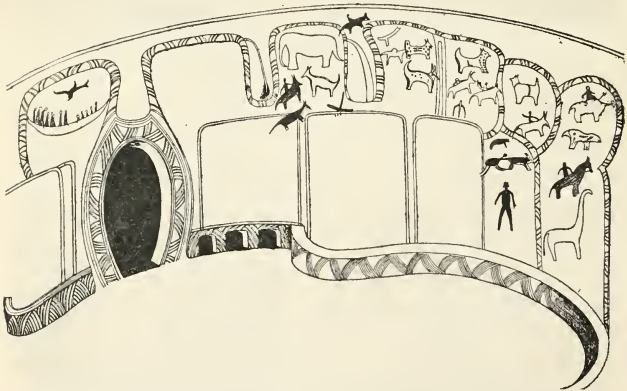
A giraffe, elephant, black cat, sheep, ostrich, and a canoe full of people are clearly discernible, but the tail without a body must not be be missed. The low



MURAL PAINTING.

entrances to the apartment beyond are designed for goats.

Mr Talbot and I searched for curios while Mrs Talbot



WALL DECORATIONS, INTERIOR OF CIRCULAR ROOM, MUSGUM, R. LOGONE.

drew, and we were rewarded by the discovery of a corselet of roughly cured hide, cut from a single piece. It wrapped round the body, overlapped in front, and had a projecting flap at the back to protect the back of the head, and the edges were sewn with leather thongs. Also head-dresses of woven vegetable fibre





A Square in Musgum.



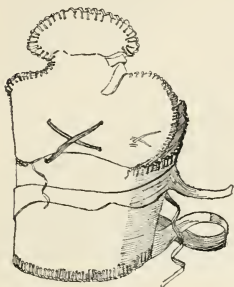
Ruined Hut.



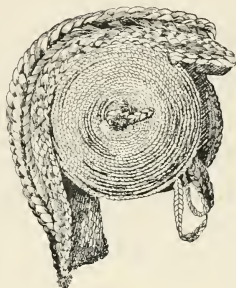


string, with circular ear-flap and a ridged crest; and likewise some leg-armour.

The inhabitants of Musgum have recently adopted

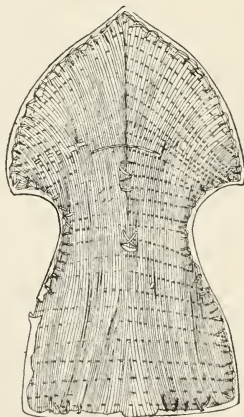


CORSELET.



HELMET.

the Mahommedan faith, but they used to be pagans, and as such were exposed to constant slave-raids. The Bagirimi attacked them from the East and the Bornuese from the North, and the slaves of their tribe were passed on to many parts of Africa. Denham, in his journey of 1822-24, saw a Musgu woman in Bornu, and commented on the plug she wore in her lip, the size of a shilling, to make room for which her front teeth had been taken out. Since then the barbarism has increased, and women now wear plugs nearly three inches in diameter.



REED-SHIELD.

As little girls, between eight and ten, the outer skin of their lips is slit open, and light metal discs, approximately circular, with rounded groove encircling

the rim,—like the rim of a bicycle wheel,—are inserted between it and the flesh. This is done both in the lower and upper lips, and often in the lobe of the ear as well. Their size is gradually increased, and the women learn to use them as a sort of sounding-board, over which they clutter their tongues in terrible shrill wails that curdle the blood. Pronunciation is so distorted that their own people often find it hard to understand what is said, and, most disgusting of all, a steady stream of saliva dribbles from the unclosed mouths.

We hardened our hearts, and in the interests of science offered to buy some spare discs, and immediately one woman after another took these grisly objects from her lips, leaving visible a gaping fissure and a loosely hanging half-wheel of skin.

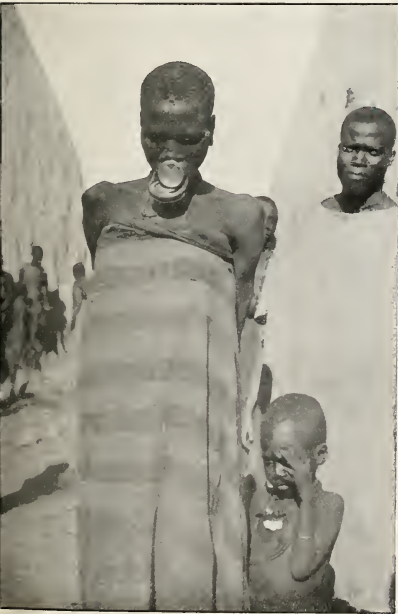
We could bear no more, and turned to go with our eau-de-Cologne bedrenched handkerchiefs held tightly to our noses, so that they might conceal an expression of disgust we did not care to show. It was fortunate we still had a bottle of eau-de-Cologne, and we carried it with us, for, besides being the loveliest, Musgum is also the dirtiest city one can imagine. It has never occurred to its inhabitants to use the river as a drain, and the stench that everywhere permeates the air is unutterably nauseating. In spite of our precautions, we were all three more or less actively the worse for our visit.

We were invited to camp inside the town, and were told that Germans had done so; but we could only admire their greater powers of endurance, and ourselves fly to a spot half a mile to the windward side of the town, where we could escape the smell.

Our respite was short, however, for the wind changed, and nauseating odours were once more wafted over us.



Interior of House at Musgum, showing Pouches above the Door and Decorated Wall.



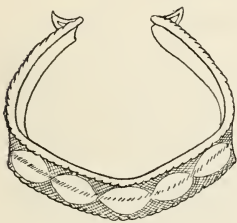
Banana Woman, wearing Lip-plugs.



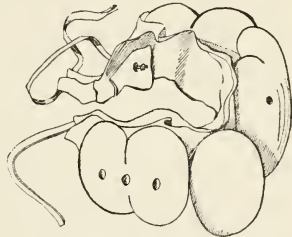
A Street at Musgum.



We had already prepared for bed, but sleep would have been impossible, so we wrapped ourselves up in our dressing-gowns and took to the canoe. In it we crossed to an island in mid-stream, where we tied up, and spent at least a healthy night, lulled by the lap of water as it washed against the boat, the peace broken only by an occasional quacking of duck, as one of their number fell victim to a crocodile.



SHAPED ANKLET.



BEAN ANKLETS, WORN BY DANCERS.

The next day we paddled on. A vast swamp separates the Banana from their Kotoko neighbours. It is the breeding-ground of water-birds, and regularly at dawn and sunset we heard a rushing sound as of wind, and looking upwards would see high in the heavens flights of geese and duck as they winged their way to or from the marsh up and down the Logone river. Roan antelope and gazelle stood on the bank, gazing at us as we floated down stream, and baboon would swing themselves down from branches and grin as we went by. Sometimes the temptation was more than we could resist; then we would land, to find almost invariably a wealth of spoor, and every now and again a big black hole in the mud, the home of some crocodile. A few cactus-like lianes hung from scrub-trees. Red-stemmed mimosas, covered with a wealth of golden

blossom, scented the air with a delicious fragrance; and brilliant petunia convolvulus trailed along the ground or climbed some bush, to fall again in gay festoons. The swamp was half-disguised by thick grass, which for hundreds of yards together waved above our heads and enclosed us with a terrifying completeness. We knew we could break through it and trample it down, but there is no sense of direction where there is no landmark, and bush-cow or lion might be watching us perhaps only two or three yards away. There was no path, only tracks made by wild beasts, and we often heard a trampling of feet, the rustle of parting grass, and the suck, suck of the bog as it closed over the footprints of some herd we could not see. Instinctively Mr Talbot would bring his rifle to his shoulder and pause and peer, but it was seldom that he caught sight of more than waving grass. If he had the good fortune to see an antelope or wild boar, it was not often that it escaped with its life.

Sometimes we had to track a beast for half a mile or more, tracing it by the blood-marks on the rank reeds as it pushed its way into obscurity,—for even when the wound was mortal the tenacity of life was extraordinary. It was necessary to follow up a wounded animal, for its fate in that country of preying beasts and ants and other insects would be unthinkably horrible. For this reason I did not myself attempt to shoot, and my forbearance gave satisfaction to one of my correspondents, who wrote begging me “not to irritate the animals.”

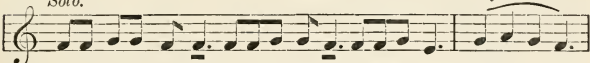
Hunting was difficult in this country of marsh, for the water was up to our ankles, if not to our knees; and it was hard work to follow up each shot with a



run, as we were expected to do. Water-hog, boar, gazelle, bush-cow, and lion abounded, and uncertainty as to what we should find added greatly to the excitement of the hunt. It needed real resolution to quit their haunts and re-embark once more in pursuit of our journey.

The headman of the polers had brought his wife with him, and she used to chant recitatives almost by the hour together, supported at brief intervals by a chorus from the polers. They were not songs, nor was there much air, yet, though the effect was repetition, each phrase varied in some tiny particular. I listened and puzzled over these ditties, but they went fast, and there was no chance of hearing the exact thing repeated, only something very like it; but rough though it is, I jotted down a few notes, which at least give the general impression. Perhaps the most striking part about them is their very limited compass.

*Solo.* *refrain*



In ya velle bongor ta va ta to i ta va ta taa. ah ah ah eh.

*solo* *refrain* *solo* *refrain*



ay a di ta di-ta ah, ah, ah, eh ay a di ta di ta ah, ah, ah, eh.

*Solo. Staccato and very quick. Chorus slower.*



Ta ra wa jetu jala ye - i ayali gia

*chorus* *chorus* *chorus*



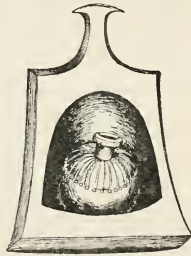
One night we had been tempted to hunt till dark, and the village in the vicinity of which we found ourselves proved to be a mere hamlet perched on a narrow ridge above the swamp, so we arranged to pass another night on board. In this remote spot our surprise was great to see another steel canoe approaching and inside it a white man—a German in charge of the carrier-pigeon department. A year before he had brought the birds from Germany, and was training them to make the flight between Kuseri and Garua, a distance of some 200 miles as the crow flies. They travel at the rate of about 30-40 miles an hour, and are so fast that they can out-distance any bird of prey; and throughout the year there have only been three casualties, and these from other causes. By the use of the pigeons the Germans hope to avoid the necessity of the telegraph. Four pigeons were sent to Kuseri to warn the Resident of our approach. Messages on thin paper were tightly rolled and placed in tiny clips fastened round the birds' legs. When they were freed, the birds rose in the air, circled round two or three times to get their bearings, and flew quickly away. As they went a hawk darted in pursuit, but the pigeons eluded it with ease, giving us a remarkable illustration of their supreme rapidity of flight.

We had entered Kotoko country almost directly after leaving Musgum, and the difference was very striking, for here we were among fully clothed Mahommedans living in two-storeyed houses. They are an industrious people, and their handicraft has reached a high level. They have long been famous for the texture of the cloth they weave; and the

currency here, as in many other parts, is in *gabigas*, or lengths of cloth, some three inches broad and a good yard long.

In the streets, or squatting at the threshold of their houses, we saw men and women engaged in every stage of this industry. One woman would sit pulling out and cleaning cotton stored in a grass basket by her side. It was in rough dirty lumps just as it had been gathered, and she, after pulling it out in an elementary way with her fingers, would place it upon a board and press it with a small iron roller. This done, she would spin it into one continuous thread by means of a bobbin with a weight attached to the end, which span as she worked. Later on these threads would be passed round and round some stick a great many yards away from the loom, and there fastened; and men would sit in the village square, usually some two or three together, and weave it into cloth. Most villages contained dyeing-pits, and indigo was the dye almost universally used, giving a deep or light shade according to the number of times the stuff was dipped. In the more northerly part of the Kotoko dominion a red dye was sometimes obtained from an acacia.

The Kotoko make a great deal of pottery, which they shape by means of moulds. Hitherto the pots we had seen had all had rounded bottoms, so that they could not stand upright unless holes were scooped in the ground to contain them. Here, however, three little legs were



NICHE IN WALL.

sometimes added, which, of course, gave the necessary stability; and wooden bowls are also used for culinary and other purposes.

Fishing is a great industry, and fish large and small are scattered on the ground or raised on matting to dry in the sun, preparatory to barter with inland peoples. The larger fish are speared with long three-pronged instruments, the smaller are caught in nets. Many of the fish are excellent eating, and especially the *giwan rua*, or elephant of the water, which is delicious.

We were bound for Birni (or walled) Logone, the capital of that part of the Kotoko country watered by the Logone river. It has sometimes been called Karnak, but that, the natives told us, is merely their word for "great." It is walled, and so effectually that access to it is by no means easy. This we discovered to our despair, for our reception was to be very magnificent, and a canoe-load of Kotoko grandees had ascended the river for many miles to make us honourable escort. It was impossible to effect a landing at the water-gate itself, and the boys, standing in a few feet of water, lifted us across to a narrow ledge of caked mud that skirted the wall. It was touch and go whether we could swing ourselves round the jutting porch in safety, but one by one we accomplished the perilous feat, to find ourselves face to face with the Sultan or Mai and his magnificently robed retinue. A night on board the canoe and close juxtaposition to skinned birds all day had not conduced to the freshness of our frocks, while our hazardous arrival robbed us of dignity; but our royal host had swagger enough for



The Water-Gate, Logone Birni.



Men Weaving Cloth at the Kotoko Village of Kolem.



all, and after shaking hands he preceded us to our quarters in a big square outside his palace. The streets were thronged with onlookers, all gazing eagerly at us, and, except that some of the women wore beads in their nostrils and had dyed their lips green, they seemed to us representatives of supreme civilisation. Once in the square the Mai shook hands with us again, and, amid the acclamations of his people, we all sat down. He himself was faultlessly apparelled, but unfortunately marred the effect by wearing white canvas sand-shoes without any laces.

Some 300 men surrounded the square, many of them soldiers armed with rifles, and the greatest among them wore brilliantly coloured cartridge-belts. A considerable band was playing, led by an aligata, whose two assistants took a minor *rôle*, mercifully, for a few seconds was enough to prove a hopeless disaccord between the instruments. There were three big side-drums, and a couple of kettle-drums of different pitch, played by a man who squatted on the ground before them. Four trumpeters had long tin instruments, 7 feet in length, capable of variation in note, and somewhat like a trombone in tone; but one was of a deeper pitch than the other three. These large trumpets, or frum-frums, are peculiar to royalty. The band was completed by an instrument similar in shape, but covered with leather. While they played, four men holding brass pitchforks stood by the Mai. It is their business to run before him when he rides and clear the branches from his path. One of them had other duties too, for he was a jester and





raconteur, and chanted praises of the Sultan almost unceasingly. He spoke of the grandeur of past generations and the splendour of the Mai's forebears, but only in order to contrast them with the still greater magnificence of the reigning Sultan. We too came in for praise, and were described as the "three biggest white men." The flattery seemed excessive, but it was due, as we were told later, to Mr Talbot being the only European who had ever brought his wives with him. After the chief had retired the band returned to play to us, and when Mr Talbot gave them a dash their music became deafening, so that the Sultan and all the people of the town might know, they said, the greatness and the generosity of the white man.

The Mai sent us an enormous present—two sheep, a calf, fowls, eggs, butter, honey, and so much food for the boys that they left bowls of it behind them,—a remarkable fact, for they consider it a duty to eat all they can possibly contain, and their power in that way is not to be despised.

A dear little lioness, three months old, was brought for us to see; and a baby wild pig ran about freely, but, though it amused us at first, it was a nuisance having the creature wandering about our tents at night.

The next morning we paid a visit of state to the palace, and were met at the threshold by the Mai and his band. A giant umbrella, a symbol of kingship, stood there, and some large drums, together with other lesser treasures; but we passed rapidly into an outer hall, where four terracotta-coloured mud pillars of modern structure supported a rafter ceiling. They were ornamented with blue lines painted across them,



Logone Birni.



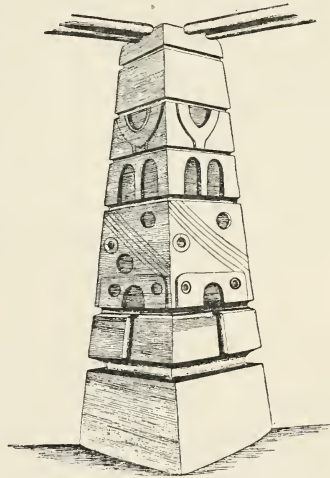
Audience Hall at the Mai's Palace.



and were different from anything we saw in the course of our travels. The palace was scented with a delicious perfume, which the Sultan had bought from a trader the previous day to do us honour. Beyond a small vestibule, with a single pillar, was a rough staircase of uneven, sloping mud steps, which led to a broad flat roof, whence we could survey the town. Here we all seated ourselves on deck-chairs provided for the occasion, and conversed through two interpreters and in three tongues.

The Sultan comes of a great line. He is the ninth chief in direct succession, and is fully aware of his own importance. After some discussion of his power

and the extent of his dominions, he took us to see the women's quarters. His ten principal wives were not confounded with the rest, but received us each in her own apartment. They were of different races, and there was only one Kotoko amongst the whole number, nor was she the principal wife, that honour being temporarily enjoyed by a Shua Arab. He showed them off much as a man in England shows his hunters, nor did he refrain from making personal remarks. In the presence of one poor lady he said



MUD PILLAR.

that though she had once been his favourite, her health had not been good, and she was so no longer. His many lesser wives he summoned out in batches of fourteen or sixteen, so that we might photograph them. They huddled humbly together, walking with bent carriage and downcast eyes, not daring to look at their lord, though they shot many furtive glances at us. The Talbots persuaded me to let down my hair for their benefit, as of course its length and fineness was very wonderful to them. The Sultan was immensely struck by it, and at once volunteered his wish to have an English wife, who should take precedence over all the rest. His remarks were received in scornful silence, but undaunted he asked whether Mr Talbot could procure him one. On being told he wanted the impossible, he accepted the rebuff, and gallantly offered me an enormous and beautiful straw hat, evidently as a reward for having shown my hair. We asked to see his son and heir, and a superb little personage of six years old was carried before us, his mouth muffled in a turban, and his rich brocade dress standing out stiffly round him, like the model of a Van Dyck portrait. He was the first son born after his father's accession to the Sultanate, and therefore took precedence over his elder brothers.

On leaving the palace we took a walk through the town, and penetrated into some of the houses, through a network of dark halls and entrances that, in case of attack, must have made each one almost impregnable. A fair sprinkling of houses had two storeys—the upper room, approached by an outer staircase of mud, being used as a sleeping apartment. Little plots of onions were grown here and there, and sometimes we came upon smooth-surfaced mud basins scooped in



Some of the Mai's Lesser Wives.



The Mai and his Son and Heir.







A Two-Storied House.



Children Playing with Nuts.

100 1000  
1000 10000



Fantasia at Logone Birni.



The Mai's Horses.



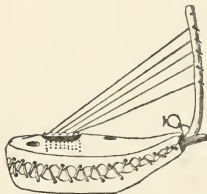
the ground. Their purpose was soon revealed, for a group of children had gathered round one, and were playing a game with different-coloured nuts, each of a special value. They threw these into the basin, and scored according to the colour that was nearest the centre at the end of each round.

The Sultan was anxious that we should remain to see an exhibition of horsemanship, or fantasia as it is generally called, in his capital. He proposed to summon his country chiefs, and to make it a regular function. We could not stay, however, but he would not forego the scheme, and, though he had only a few hours for preparation, succeeded in making it a magnificent spectacle. Brilliantly caparisoned horsemen gathered in the square, which was lined with infantry. Every man carried a spear that rested on his broad shovel-shaped stirrup. The wooden saddles were peaked and high, before and behind, and were completely covered with worked leather. Each man had an elaborate saddle-cloth, bridle, and chest decorations, with the usual powerful, cruel bit. The horses themselves were fine animals, and together with their gaily dressed riders, remarkable for their stature, made a gorgeous and beautiful sight. The Mai and his little son were there, both very magnificent, and four of the Sultan's best horses were led in the procession. They were completely clad in trousers, and their cloths were of sheepskin. In every other fantasia the feature of the entertainment was, as at Léré, the quick gallop and sudden halt; but here it was the magnificence of rider and of beast, and the glittering *tout-ensemble*. Only as we left did the younger knights break out from slow stately walk into the more ordinary and amusing trials of skill.

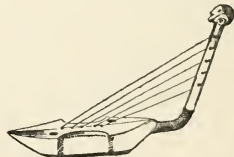
In great style we were escorted to the water-gate, but our polers had been enjoying the good things of town life, and one or two were the worse for pito, the native liquor. We made a start, but could not go far, and took comfort in the thought that at least they were removed from further temptation.

Next day we paddled amid flowering acacias and trees festooned with convolvulus, the home of brilliant birds and many monkeys, till we reached the deserted shore and high banks of Kuseri.

Once it was a large town, but now the German post is surrounded by but few houses, and the large massive fort seems almost out of place in its loneliness. The Commandant, Herr von Raben, gave us the most cordial and delightful welcome, and we immensely appreciated the luxuries he had provided. Our rooms were furnished with a bed with sheets and pillows, a washing-stand with china basin and soap, a chest of drawers, chairs, tables; and in the dining-room tea was ready laid, with rusks and cake, and a bowl full of limes. Experience had taught him how much a traveller values the attributes of home, and he and Dr Treppe together won very warm feelings of regard from us for their kindness and consideration.



HARP WITH HORSE-HAIR STRINGS  
(FORT LAMY).



HARP WITH WIRE STRINGS  
(HAM).

## CHAPTER VII.

## AT FORT LAMY.

(NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 5.)

WE did not, however, remain long at Kusseri, for we were eager to see the French Commandant. The two posts were so close as to be visible from each other, and within half an hour from our embarkation we arrived at Fort Lamy.

Captain Lancrenon, our Garua friend, met us ; but he had grave news to tell. Three days before our arrival a runner had come from Wadai with letters that told of a terrible disaster to the French force at the battle of Doroté, in Dar Massalit. Out of a total of 310 native troops, 73 men were wounded and 31 killed ; and the white officers had suffered yet more heavily. Eight out of 20 were wounded and 8 killed, amongst them Colonel Moll. His loss was a national calamity. He was in the prime of life, beloved by all who knew him, and his ability and capacity as an administrator were beyond those of other men.

It was only recently that the French had attempted the effective occupation of Wadai. In June 1909 they had entered Abechir in force, and had expelled the



reigning Sultan, Moude Mourra, the lion of Mourra, and appointed his half-brother, Assil, in his stead. Moude Mourra's cruelty and licentiousness had made him unpopular with his people, so that few gathered in his defence. Unluckily, however, he made good his escape, and ever since, together with the neighbouring chief of Dar Massalit, has given perpetual trouble.

In the hitherto uncivilised regions of Wadai and Dar Fur white rule is dreaded, for the big men owe their riches to the slave-trade, and will resist its destruction to the last. That they can raise large armies is beyond dispute, for at Doroté, according to the official report, 5000 Arabs had taken part in the engagement. Despite the heavy losses of the French, the natives had on this occasion received a serious check—600 had been killed, and amongst them the Sultan of Dar Massalit.

The battle had taken place on the 9th of November. It was the 23rd before the news reached Fort Lamy, and by that time the engagement might have been followed by another more disastrously decisive. Only a few troops were left to hold the country. There were perhaps 200 in or around Abechir, and Captain Chauvelot remained in Massalit, the scene of the disaster, with some 100-200 men. It was a mere handful in the midst of thousands.

It was certain that other chiefs who had hitherto acquiesced in European rule would take advantage of the white man's weakness to rise also, did they believe success to be within their grasp. On the next action hung, perhaps, the fate of the whole French Central African dominion.

The responsibility of command now devolved upon Commandant Maillard, successor to Colonel Moll. He was sorely needed at the front, yet there was much important work to do at headquarters. Reinforcements had to be arranged for, and, when serious risings might occur in that very district from which some of the garrison had been taken, it was hard indeed to know how to act for the best. Transport alone required much organisation, and in a place where news could only travel slowly, decisions had to be made without possible knowledge of what the conditions might be in neighbouring districts.

It seemed, however, that the immediate need was in Wadai, and thither Commandant Maillard settled to go. Captain Facon, military resident of Fort Lamy, was left in control of the situation there, and it could not have been in more efficient keeping. The work of administration was made trebly difficult by the fact that Colonel Moll's secretaries had all been killed at Doroté.

Captain Lancrenon now introduced us to Commandant Maillard and to Captain Facon. They at once put aside their grave anxiety and personal distress to assist us, and, in order that they might do so more fully, asked us to come and stay, so that we might have further opportunity for discussions with Commandant Maillard before he left for the front. Accordingly, though we returned to Kuseri for that night, we took up our quarters at Fort Lamy the following day.

It is an unpretentious town, situated on the Shari, just below the confluence of that river with the Logone. The houses are made of mud and thatch, like the native buildings, and are clustered amongst and behind

the trees that shade the river-bank. They are simple and homelike, and many have carefully cultivated gardens, where lettuce, tomatoes, and even cabbage are grown. The zinnia is the flower that is successful beyond all others.

The Commandant's is the one big house of the place. There one room leads from another in almost European luxury of accommodation. The tree-shaded garden, broken by many beds of flowers, slopes down to the Shari as does a riverside lawn in the Thames valley. Perhaps it is too close to the water to be very healthy, but it is the site where M. Gentil landed on the first French expedition from the Congo, down the Shari to Lake Chad, and under that tree where he pitched his first camp. A sentiment therefore attaches to the spot, though since that day the river has crept up the low banks, bringing increasing dampness with its proximity.

Ordinarily twenty-five white men live at Fort Lamy, but when we came sixty were posted there, and room was consequently scarce. Herr von Raben had kindly suggested that we should remain at Kusseri, but as there was a great deal to talk over with the French it seemed simplest to be on the spot. A large, round hut was placed at our disposal. Its outer wall was surrounded by a zana shelter, six feet wide, within which space our stores were stacked and we used to sit. A tent outside provided further sleeping accommodation.

Our house stood in its own grounds, a domain of thick sand. On three sides were roads, and on the fourth the prison, whence came sharp cries of command and the sound of clanking chains. The pris-

oners make great play with their showy fetters, especially when marching through the streets, so that the women may pity them. The ladies are inclined, however, to suspect their husbands of a wish to go to prison, where they enjoy regular food, pleasant company, and not overmuch work. In this belief they make unkind remarks, which the men find very painful.

The utmost hospitality was shown us. Commandant Maillard himself took us to see the town, and he insisted on our having every meal with him and Captain Facon, despite the press of business with which they were almost overwhelmed. He gave me a parting gift, which I very greatly value—a beautiful giraffe, who was captured as a baby and now leads an independent life. Her name is Joséphine, and she was then three years old. Every day she roams out into the country and crops the trees, but at night she returns to the town to seek shelter from the wild foes of her kind. She has superb confidence in her white friends, and often, as we sat outside in the evenings, would walk up to exchange greetings, and to demand a handful of salt or tobacco, of which she is particularly fond.

She likes to join an expedition to the country, though her companionship is not always welcome. A man generally sets out with the hope of sport; but Joséphine, though she allows him to carry a gun, objects to his raising it to fire. If he persists she strikes at him with her fore feet, and there is something unpleasant in the prospect of a blow from those long legs. Also from Joséphine it would bear the nature of a rebuke, and no man could persist against

her decree without a humiliating sense of having been naughty.

I valued her far too much to subject her to the long trek to the coast and the sea-voyage home. Also her charming personality seems bound up with Fort Lamy, and the place and those who live in it would suffer an irreparable loss were she to leave them. Therefore she remains, and some day I hope I may visit her again, and once more feel her soft muzzle in my hand as she bends her long neck to accept an offering of salt, and again see her beautiful soft eyes and ungainly but fascinating form.



NATIVE CASTS OF AN OSTRICH, HORSEMAN, AND "JOSÉPHINE."

We had arrived at Fort Lamy on the 26th of November, and on the 28th Commandant Maillard started on his dangerous mission. We lunched together first, and all strove to be gay. Jokes and laughter echoed round the table, but tears were not very far behind. It was impossible not to think of the losses already sustained in that fatal country, and we knew that our friend was going with his life in his hand. He spoke very simply of his fear of defeat and death, and of the check his reverse would mean to the glory of France. He was a brave man, but he was too human not to count the chances of failure, and life was dear to him.



Joséphine.



Commandant Maillard and his Caravan starting for the Front.



The Zakoki.



Lamy embracing Mr Talbot.





Two hours later we all gathered in the great square to see him go. There was little in the scene to remind us of a start for the front as we Europeans know it, and we sought in vain for martial sight or sound. Groups of ragged Arabs were loading up the transport camels. Some of the beasts were kneeling, others had risen and were being led away by cords passed through their noses. Near by were a few oxen, also bound on transport service. Some were docile throughout, but others waited till the two loads were balanced on either side and their rider mounted before remorselessly shaking off all three. The weirdness of the scene was enhanced by the strange cries of the camels, a sound that baffles description in its high, quavering eeriness. Poor beasts, they had a hard time before them, for the rainy season was not so long over but that great swamps in the vicinity of Fort Lamy lay between them and their destination. Their big rounded feet are fitted for the desert, and they slither and fall in the soft mud-bottomed marshes. But, of course, the transport service cannot be left for dryer conditions, for after the first few days desert country is reached, and by February it is difficult to obtain sufficient water to drink.

Everything seemed in utter confusion when Commandant Maillard arrived. He called the little cohort into order, and soon the scene was changed. Gradually the square became deserted, till but a few belated drivers remained to deal with refractory animals. Then they, too, went. A little group was left, however, almost alone in the empty space. They were the soldiers, all that could be spared from Fort Lamy, who, together with one white officer, composed the

entire military force. Fifteen Sénégalais, that was all; but their record is superb. They are not smart in appearance, and in barracks they are sometimes undisciplined, but on the field they are beyond all praise. Their love once given to a white officer is his for always, and no Sénégalais has ever been known to desert while his master remained alive. Their wives were with them, and, without parade, this little band marched quietly out from the big square into the narrow streets of the town, and so on their road to Abechir.

Commandant Maillard did not go with them, for an impressive ceremony still lay before him. The Sherif of Fort Lamy, his chief Mallam beside him, and some sixty headmen, came to wish the Commandant God-speed. As the title Sherif denotes, the chief lays claim to be a descendant of the Prophet. He is an old man now and has seen much trouble, for the redoubtable Rabeih harried his kingdom, and he is grateful to the French for the security they have brought his country.

The exiled Sultan of Fort Archambault was there also, though his feelings can hardly have been as loyal, for he had given trouble in his country, and was banished to Fort Lamy, where he now lives as a prisoner of state.

They stood together in a long row facing the Commandant. The Mallam had folded his hands within his cap, and his lips never ceased from moving in silent prayer. Presently he prayed aloud, and the whole company joined with him. The familiar word "Amen" recurred again and again, but it was the only one we could understand.

As the Sherif joined his hands in prayer his cap fell



Commandant Maillard.



Commandant Maillard saying Farewell to the Sherif of Fort Lamy.



from off his head. It was returned to him in a second, but the people believed it to be of evil augury. The prayer ended, he stepped forward, took Commandant Maillard's hand within his and raised it three times to his forehead. He was followed by the exiled Sultan of Fort Archambault, but though he, too, took the Commandant's hand, he let it go before raising his own to his forehead the three ceremonial times. The farewell returned, Commandant Maillard came to say good-bye to us, then turned to leave. His horse was a spirited animal, fretted with waiting, and, as he mounted, it reared and threw him: we all shuddered at the omen. He never let go of the reins, and was on its back again in a second. He had overcome the difficulty, and we called out "la première victoire" as he rode slowly away, turning to wave to us before he passed out of sight.<sup>1</sup>

The same day that Commandant Maillard left us two new friends arrived. They came from Kuseri in a little basket, and when they were lifted out proved to be two round, fluffy, kittenish lion-cubs. Zakoki, as the boys called them—zaki being the Hausa word for lion. We, however, gave them individual names—those of the two towns with which they were so closely associated—Lamy and Kuseri. They were only three weeks old and could barely walk, but from the first they showed a lofty spirit of independence. Sometimes my heart would be filled with pity for Lamy when he

<sup>1</sup> The enemy did not dare face Commandant Maillard, and, despite his masterly leadership, he failed to force an action upon them. It was as he feared, the victory that would have promised future security evaded him. His efforts, however, were not in vain: in the autumn of 1911 the great leaders of revolt—Am Doko of Massalit and Moude Mourra of Wadai—tendered their submission to the French.

struggled unavailingly to climb into Mr Talbot's chair, and I would lift him in. Without hesitation he would flop out once more and begin his struggles all over again.

Herr von Raben had sent them, knowing we should feel sad that day—one for Mrs Talbot, the other for me,—with a charming letter in which he expressed the hope that the little lions might enjoy the ladies. I hope and believe they did. Anyway, we both sacrificed a great deal to that end: Mandara became their nurse, and a milch goat was bought for their benefit—though even from the very first we were told to give them meat as well as milk. I do not think it can have any effect in making them savage. Our cubs had, as I say, raw meat from the moment they were big enough to eat it. A very little later they caught pigeons and chickens for themselves. Later still, when their tongues had become very rough, they licked me till the blood flowed, but their sunny tempers never seemed the least affected.



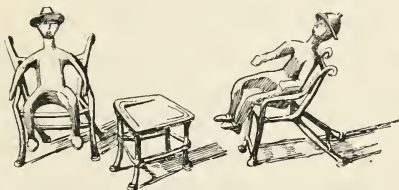
BRASS-CAST OF  
CHICKEN.

Kusseri was the smaller and weaker of the two, but he was the first to kill. He caught a pigeon, and Mr Talbot, who wished to teach him better ways, smacked him. The baby would not let go his prey, and Mr Talbot boxed his ear. The little fellow turned quite ill. He could hardly move, and dragged himself a few yards as if his limbs were paralysed. Mastaba seized him by the wounded ear, raised him from the ground and shook him violently. My scream of anger at this apparent cruelty died away on my lips, for little

Kusseri was walking off completely cured—very angry and hurt, but well.

We were expecting important despatches from Maifoni, and also we were very busy writing, so that we remained at Fort Lamy for some time. Everyone was most good to us, and nothing could have exceeded Captain Facon's kindness.

Each night we dined out or had some of our friends to dinner with us, and each night the same plates, glasses, cups, and chairs were carried round, for no one person is able to contribute enough for the needs of a



NATIVE BRASS-CASTS OF THE FRENCH DOCTOR AND RESIDENT.

whole party. In fact, we were no longer able to provide enough for ourselves, and at one point in our journey the same broken cup had to do service for tea, for lime-juice, and as a toilet tumbler.

Captain Facon generously gave us a present of two cups and saucers, which saved us from the dreaded hardship of drinking out of enamelled mugs.

Perhaps the untravelled reader will think, as I did at first, that china and glass were almost unwarrantable luxuries. Luckily, however, Mr Talbot was both experienced and firm. He knew that after a little while we should get to hate the fresh shiny surface of enamel,



in which rough black marks would inevitably appear where chips had come out. They would add to the ordinary disinclination to eat that overtakes most people in a hot climate, where abstinence is dangerous. Delicious tempting morsels are more needed in Africa than by invalids at home.

It took me four or five months to realise how right he was. By then I had got to loathe my enamel toilet basin with an increasing hatred, and a nice fresh china one was the luxury I valued most on my return to civilisation.

Captain Facon provided us with many extras for our dinner-parties, and it was Situ's duty to see that they were returned. On one occasion their owner came round to say that everything else had come but not a coffee-grinder. We sent for Situ and asked the reason why. Situ looked mysterious and much troubled. Then he drew Mr Talbot aside and murmured in his ear that he thought it would be useful for us to keep it. We quite agreed with him, but pointed out that the reflection, though a just one, was not morally possible.

A good and faithful "boy" will often collect little extras for his master that he thinks might come in useful — a shirt here, some cigarettes there, or any other oddment.

Captain Facon gave us a pretty little harnessed antelope, but, alas! it had been taken too young from its mother, and it died. Then a tiny kob came. It was small, of dark mouse colouring, and with tender brown eyes. It was friendly, and we readily fell victim to its graceful movements and pretty ways;

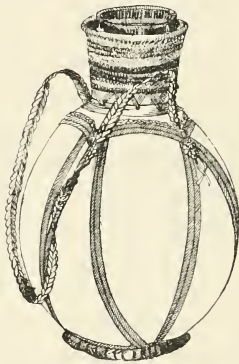
but Mandara, in broken English, said that if we kept it the zakoki were fit to die. Naturally we assumed that he meant reverse-wise,—that the cubs would kill it. However, he remained much disturbed, and summoned Situ to act interpreter. Situ cast one glance at the little beast and then he too became grave. Yes, that was a nama (animal) that had bad ju-ju for head, and was fit to kill everything. First the zakoki, then us. It had the power of assuming all sorts of shapes, that of a snake or any other animal, and we should surely die. Nothing could kill it except a dog specially prepared for the purpose by magic; however, it was mortal, and could die.

We felt little doubt that it would, with extraneous aid, were we to disregard these warnings, so we mournfully refused it our hospitality.

Captain Facon gave us another present,—a little tiger-cat of extreme beauty but equal fierceness. She was very tiny when she arrived, but swore and scratched and bit, and would not be comforted. The boys were afraid of her, and as she grew older we, too, refrained from forcing our blandishments upon her. She would not have it, but our hearts went out in pity for the solitary little beast who knew no friendship and who could not believe in kindness.

Later we sent her to Maifoni by land, under the charge of our headman. She could not have crossed Lake Chad with ourselves and the zakoki in the narrow confines of a canoe. When we rejoined her, her hind legs were paralysed, and as she showed no signs of recovery we killed her rather than subject her to the long march to Kano. Probably the boys had feared to

let her out of the travelling-cage, and thus the injury to her limbs set in. Had we been with her all the time it might have been different, but soon after her arrival we set out for Tchekna, and our prolonged absence proved disastrous.



OSTRICH EGG CONVERTED INTO POT.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE BAGIRIMI.

(DECEMBER 5-12.)

TCHEKNA is the capital of the Bagirimi, whose Sultan, Gauaronga, has led a chequered life. As a child of seven he was carried captive by the Wadaians to Abechir. That was in 1870, when the Wadaians, who claimed suzerainty over the Bagirimi, swept the country to enforce their supremacy. According to local tradition 30,000 Bagirimi were killed or enslaved on that occasion, and their chief city, Massénia, was razed to the ground.

The little Gauaronga was an exile for many years before he was permitted to return to his kingdom. When he did so it was on the understanding that he was to send tribute every three years to Abechir; and to forego the ancient rite, hitherto practised by the Sultan of the Bagirimi, as by the Sultan of Wadai, of blinding his brothers on his accession to the throne. Henceforth he was only allowed to put out one eye of a prince.

On his return, as liegeman of the Sultan of Wadai, he rebuilt Massénia, but in 1893 he was attacked by Rabeh, the mighty conqueror, who in his restless

ambition had played the part of an African Attila. This man, one of the greatest characters known to Central African history, had raised himself by sheer personal force from the status of slave, son of a slave, to the master of tens of thousands of men and vast tracts of land, including finally the great kingdom of Bornu.

Tradition states that the Mahdi—our enemy of the Egyptian Sudan—once invited Rabeh to visit his court. Rabeh was then in the Bahr el Ghazal, and set out upon this journey, but rumours of treachery reached him, and he turned westwards, conquering as he went. There is proof, however, of some connection between the two men, for Rabeh fought under a banner bearing the Mahdi's name, and after his death a seal was found on his body with these words engraved upon it: "Rabeh, Emir of Bornu, in the name of the Mahdi."

Rabeh began his attack on the Bagirimi by laying siege to the town of Manjaffa, on the Shari river. After a brilliant defence, lasting five months, Gauaronga was forced to evacuate it and to retreat on his capital, Masénia. Rabeh did not follow him, but raised the siege and marched on Bornu. He swept the country and then established his headquarters at Dikoa, where the fruit of an avenue of lime-trees that he planted is now appreciated by Europeans. His kingdom extended both south and west of Lake Chad, and for hundreds of miles his name brought terror to all who heard it. On the maps of Northern Nigeria a section of country south of Gashegeur is marked "uninhabited." Before Rabeh's advent it was as thickly populated as other parts, but here he received a temporary check, and his consequent vengeance did

not stop short of utter extermination. All through that waste human bones are to be found, barely covered by the thin soil, and in the bed of the Yo river heaps of skeletons lie as the corpses were thrown then, one on the top of the other. Such was the position when, in 1897, a French expedition, under the command of M. Gentil, penetrated to the Bagirimi kingdom, on a voyage of exploration down the Shari to Lake Chad. His object was to enter into alliance with the chiefs of important peoples, and Gauaronga was only too glad to make a treaty which promised him protection against Rabeh. The French, however, were not in sufficient force to wage a campaign there and then, and in due course returned to France to organise a suitable expedition.

But none of these manœuvres had escaped Rabeh, and no sooner was Gentil gone than he took vengeance on all the native tribes who had shown friendship to the white man. Foremost in importance and first to meet his anger was Gauaronga, who, realising his impotence to defend the country against his all-powerful foe, himself burnt his capital of Massénia rather than that it should fall into the hands of his enemy.

Together with his large retinue and armies Gauaronga fled down the Shari to Kouno, where for two years he and his people lived in ever-increasing misery. Rabeh had devastated the country round, and for that reason raids on neighbouring pagan tribes, once Gauaronga's main source of wealth because of the unlimited supply of slaves taken there, were now unproductive. Famine ensued, and many of his subjects, particularly the foreign element of Tripolitans, Fezzanese, and Wadaians, hated Gauaronga

for his dallings with the French, to which they attributed all their misfortunes. His position became more and more insecure, till he could only count on the personal loyalty of a few eunuchs and slaves.

At last, however, in the summer of 1899, Bretonnet arrived from France in command of an advance force. It consisted of 5 Europeans, 44 Senegalese regulars, and 2 Arabs;<sup>1</sup> but, small though the numbers were, they inspired confidence in the Bagirimi, who again gathered round their sovereign, and Gauaronga, keen to avenge his losses, once more raised the standard of defiance. Rabeh immediately advanced upon Kouno, for he knew that his ultimate security depended upon the instant extermination of the white man.

The allies retreated to the most favourable position they could find in the Togbau hills, but, though the Bagirimi at first fought bravely, they were powerless to withstand the force of Rabeh's onslaught. They broke and fled, and in the confusion of the rout Gauaronga, who had received two wounds, made good his escape together with the remnant of his men. As for the small French force it was utterly exterminated. The sole survivors were three Senegalese, who, early in the battle, had been too severely wounded to fight to the death like their comrades.

This disaster cured the Bagirimi of any further wish to revolt against Rabeh's overmastering power, and when, in the autumn of 1899, Gentil arrived with a small force, the Bagirimi stirred neither hand nor foot to help in his attempt to reduce Rabeh to submission. The action consequently was indecisive.

Meanwhile, however, two other French expeditions

<sup>1</sup> 'La Chute de l'Empire de Rabah,' par M. Gentil.



were converging on the stubborn conqueror, the one from Senegal, the other from Algiers under Commandant Lamy. Two of the invading armies joined, and with renewed confidence Gauaronga once more led the Bagirimi against the dreaded foe. A seer had foretold that Rabeh's hour was at hand, and the rumour spread amongst the people. Daunted by the approaching force of enemies, and perhaps influenced also by these general forebodings, Rabeh renounced resistance for a time and retreated down the river. In April 1900 the invading armies overtook him at Kusseri, where the prophecy was fulfilled: the battle was bloody but decisive, Rabeh's forces were annihilated, and the fate of the king himself was long in doubt. Commandant Lamy, anxious if possible to see his famous opponent yet alive, wandered among the wounded asking each man if he were the king. He had put the question many times in vain, when at last in answer a great figure sprang from the ground, and, with a cry of "I am Rabeh," drove a dagger through the Frenchman's heart. The other officers immediately avenged their chief; the vanquished king, pierced with a dozen swords, fell lifeless at the feet of his dead conqueror.

In recognition of his alliance and services throughout the war, the French gave to Gauaronga the full rights of an independent sovereign, though, for international reasons, they induced him to resign that part of his kingdom that lay in German territory. For some years he was allowed full liberty of action, but it was found that he used it to prosecute an immense traffic in slaves: some 5000 of these wretches would be carried each year from the neighbouring

pagan territories for sale in Cyrenaica. Three French posts have consequently been established in his kingdom, and these, at the time of our visit, were under the charge of Captain Lucas. Three non-commissioned officers assist him, of whom one constantly travels between the forts, in accordance with the French system that no one man should be left long alone.

Before coming out to Africa officers are often consulted at headquarters as to whether they would like any particular sous-officier to accompany them to their districts. This plan answers extremely well, and the advantage of allowing those in command to choose their subordinates is obvious.

Captain Lucas, the first permanent Resident in Tchekna, took up his duties there in 1910. He acts as councillor rather than dictator, and Gauaronga invariably accepts his suggestions, though he does not consult him unnecessarily often. Sometimes the people appeal to Captain Lucas for redress, as in the following instance. A man was convicted of adultery on the accusation of an old woman, and, though protesting his innocence, was fined ten thalers by the Sultan. He came to the Resident, who, on looking into the case, found no shadow of proof against him, and accordingly suggested to Gauaronga that the fine should be remitted. It was done, but as the Sultan does not care to disburse money, he, without pretence of further investigation, merely transferred the fine from accused to accuser, and the old woman paid.

The founders of the Bagirimi race came from the East. It is written that a large number of men travelled together from Yemen six hundred years



A Bagirmi Peasant.



Type of Black Fulani.



ago, some of whom remained in Bagirimi, while others went on to Bornu, and others again to Fika; but though it is certain that many words in the Bagirimi and Bornuese languages remain the same, this is not the true story of their origin. For the Sultan, father of his people, tells how five men of great stature and prowess came out from the East, stopping nowhere until they reached a fair mountain city. Here they paused, and the citizens greeted them with great acclaim, and begged that they would remain and rule over them. So it was: the five strangers dwelt there, and held lordship over the people; and they took to themselves Fulani wives, who bore them children of rare endowments. Thus was the Bagirimi race founded. To this day Melfi, the mountain city, is honoured above other cities; and each year the Sultan sends some kingly gift in homage to the birthplace of his race.

There are few pure-blooded Bagirimi now, for they have intermarried with other tribes, and the population is mixed. It includes Fulani and Bornuese, and very many Arabs and Pagans. With them the advent of the French is very popular, for they have been ground down by their Bagirimi over-lords, have suffered heavy exactions and gross injustice.

When in 1909 "the Great Chief," as Gauaronga is called by the natives, journeyed to Fort Lamy to salute the French Commandant, he travelled for five days through his own dominions. During this time he would call at the neighbouring towns and suggest to a chief that the office could not remain his did he not prove his loyalty by substantial gifts to the royal exchequer. Or, where a vacancy had occurred,

he would play off one candidate against another, intimating to each that his claim would be strengthened by a well-timed present, till both were practically ruined—and several towns left without rulers.

On the other hand, the action of the French in checking the slave trade, together with other raids and exactions, has fallen hardly on the ruling classes. It has put an end to the only means of livelihood they have ever known, and, though the restraint is exercised with great tact, it appears to them little less than robbery.

An important feast was about to be held at Tchekna, that of Déé, to use the native word, or, as the French called it, “le fête des moutons.” It had originated in some pagan ceremony, and had become incorporated in the Mahommedan religion as practised in Central Africa. The feast was not confined to Tchekna alone, but was also celebrated in the great sultanates of Dikoa, and of Gulfei, in the Kamerun. Vast concourses of people gathered from all the country round to share in the festival; and we, too, were keen to witness it.

Captain Facon kindly arranged our visit for us, and he insisted on sending an escort of six men with us. Three were mounted, and all were armed: nominally in order that Mr Talbot might borrow their rifles and shoot whenever he saw game, but, as he had three of his own, we think it was really to ensure our obedience should we feel inclined to err and make a dash for Abechir, as our friends at Fort Lamy were convinced we meant to do.

One of the six was the Resident's interpreter, Mohmaduba, a magnificent personage, who brought

his beautiful wife, and a retinue suitable to his grandeur. Appearances cannot be kept up on nothing, and Mohmaduba let no chance slip to acquire the necessary money, and neither he nor his wife was impeded in the task by over-scrupulous notions of honour.

A poor woman in the neighbourhood of Tchekna came to us with a pitiful tale of how she had given Mrs Mohmaduba hospitality for the night, and how in the morning 8 dollars—her whole fortune—had disappeared. She went to the Resident at Tchekna to complain, but his interpreter told her that she could not see him, and had better carry her cause to Fort Lamy. Thither she went, 120 miles, on foot, but Mohmaduba took good care that her case should never reach Captain Facon's ears, and the wretched woman's journey was taken in vain. This is no uncommon instance of how interpreters exercise their power, for it is rare to find a black man in a position of responsibility who has any sense of honour, as we understand it.

We used oxen for transport, and they are admirable for the purpose, doing twenty-seven miles a-day, our average rate of march, at a speed of little under four miles an hour, without difficulty. It is an idiosyncrasy of these animals that they will not move unless they are ridden, and they each carry two loads, as well as a rider. It is a cheap mode of transport, for the ox and boy cost 1 franc a-day, out of which they get food for themselves and the animals.

For three days our road led through a country of bush, interspersed with long mud-bottomed swamps, into which our horses sank up to their withers, and the oxen, whose weak point is their want of balance,



floundered so badly in the sticky bottom that they sometimes had to be unloaded before we could proceed. The loads on the smaller oxen were submerged on each occasion, and when Mrs Talbot and I unpacked our things at night we invariably found them covered with liquid mud.

We had one river to cross, and it was no inconsiderable task to get our loads over in one tiny dug-out, hollowed from the trunk of a tree. The horses and oxen had to be induced to swim. The water is still, like some long pool, and all but a narrow passage is thick with rushes. There is no apparent peril in the crossing, for the current is slight, and there is no great depth, but as we embarked a prayer was offered up and the name of Allah was incessantly invoked until we had set foot in safety on the opposite shore. Our curiosity was awakened, and presently the natives told us that the river is inhabited by a djinn, who allows nothing living to share his home—no fish exists there, nor any crocodile. Should a man fall in he is doomed, for though he may swim to the bank, and land, and think himself in safety, the djinn stretches out a long arm and draws him back to death.

The river is independent of the seasons, and if the djinn so wills it, he can make the water rise even though there be no rain. The natives say he can turn it black, white, or blood-red as he wills; in any case, when we passed the water remained clear as crystal. However, as we were about to enter an arid region, we filled our water-bottles, but when the time came to drink we found that the djinn had proved his might and had turned it thick and black, so that we were forced to go thirsty.



Mohmaduba and his Wife.



A Djinn's Home, the Bahr Alienya.



A practically uninhabited tract of flat desert country stretched before us. Patches of coarse grass from six to eight feet high concealed our view, and gave an almost stifling feeling of imprisonment, which was accentuated by the dancing haze of heat. Fortunately in many parts the grass had been burnt, but that, too, had its drawbacks, for powdered ash rose to choke us, and our clothes were soon covered with long stripes of dirt where they had touched the blackened stems. The withered, sapless growth on the yellow sand was monotonous, and, where swamps had dried up, the dreariness was emphasised by a caked surface of varnished grey mud. Yet, even in the merciless glare of midday there was a certain beauty; and the sober background made a splendid setting for the gaily coloured birds. Electric-blue jays, with tails twice their own size, perched and strutted on the ground; and gaudy little scarlet and emerald birds flashed by in the sunshine. Palms stood out in dark relief, and their dull brown tasteless fruit hung in immense clusters, while young offsets grew close beside the parent stem. Round green and red fruits were scattered over the earth, and sometimes it was covered with bright golden patches where the blossom had fallen from mimosa-trees. These scented the air with a heavenly fragrance, and each night their red stems stood out brilliantly as they were lit up by shafts of light from the setting sun. They were of scrub growth, and grew so thickly that it was often necessary to stoop low in the saddle to dodge their thorny embraces, or careless riding was punished by a scratchy branch in one's face, while others clung to one's clothes as the horse walked resolutely onwards.

Occasionally we came upon an oasis, where from afar the size of the trees and the brightness of the foliage and grass showed there was water at no great depth. There are two lakes or depressions where it lingers longer than elsewhere. They lie in deserted bush-country, and are frequented by innumerable varieties of birds and beasts, for it is one of the best hunting-grounds in the world. Crowned cranes, egrets, and sacred ibis are always there, and night and morning herds of game come to drink. We often saw the long necks and archaic forms of giraffe. They are timid beasts, and are amongst the most difficult of all wild creatures to approach; but here we were at close quarters with them. Once as many as ten together, and at another time seven, drank within hail of Mrs Talbot. Bush-buck, gazelle, hartebeeste, and kob were there in numbers, and they were followed by scores of carnivori. To judge by their spoor, rhinoceros were plentiful, and ostrich were also to be found. Sometimes a wild dog would spring across the path, or a tiger-cat stop to gaze a second at our cavalcade before it bounded away—and Mrs Talbot and I both saw a dark-grey animal of the height of a zebra with a black mane.

Our tents were pitched each night in a circle of fire, and the boys heaped up walls of leaping flame that might well have encircled Brünnhilde. The precaution was a wise one, for leopards and lions roamed round our camp, and once I saw the powerful head of a lion half-concealed in a clump of grass, with its glittering eyes fixed on us, as we filed by at the distance of a few yards.

On one long waterless march I was tired and con-

sented to hammock. Mr Talbot cleverly constructed a litter out of our tent ground-sheets: with a light heart I climbed into it, and there learnt a lesson by which I hope others may profit. Unless hammock-bearers are accustomed to the work, it is rash for any but the strongest of travellers to attempt this mode of transport. In any case he will suffer supreme discomfort. He will find himself in close proximity to four odorous bodies, whose owners breathe and groan heavily and often do far worse, regardless of the helpless form a few inches from them. Then they all show independence as to step and direction; some rest the poles on their shoulders, while others keep them on their heads. No position is adopted for longer than two minutes together, and between each change they shake the hammock as a housemaid does a mat. It does not often happen, but once I was dropped heavily on to my shoulders, and while the back carriers were-cursed for their carelessness the front ones showed their efficiency by keeping the poles on their heads.

The escort addressed many hard words to the delinquents, and they all talked a great deal, but I was left to my fate, till at length I managed to free an arm from the tangle of hammockage on the ground and indicate that I wished either to have my feet laid down or my head raised up.

Mr Talbot used to dismount now and again to see if he could do anything for me, and on one occasion when he had ridden on ahead our cavalier guide thought it time to make this inquiry. He had watched narrowly and was of an imitative mind. Accordingly he alighted, laid his hand on the ham-

mock, and gazed earnestly at me; then put his arm round me, lifted me up, rearranged the cushions, and departed, satisfied that he had done all, and more than all, that Mr Talbot had ever done.

That march was over thirty miles, and next day was devoted to recovering from it. The recollection makes me smile grimly when people at home innocently suggest that Mrs Talbot and I were carried most of the way in litters.

It was here, at the Arab village of Maaishé, that we received our mail, a runner having been sent on from Maifoni with it. It was the first news we had had from home for three and a half months, and our excitement was intense. Every line was welcome, even those devoted to the enumeration of the previous excellent letters begun and never despatched, or those of the regulation four sides sparsely filled with the correspondent's conjectures as to whether or not a letter would really arrive. All passed; and stale political news was devoured with genuine excitement.

There ought to be a mission started for writing letters to those abroad—the pleasure it would give would be enormous,—for the mere fact of an envelope addressed with one's own name restores that rather flattering sense of individuality which is apt to disappear in the bigness of untrodden spaces.

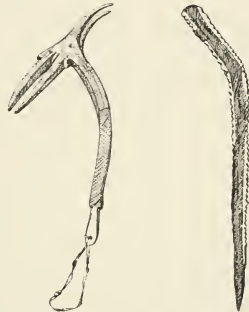
Next day we continued our march and entered Bagirimi territory. Mrs Talbot was ahead when we reached the boundary, and was met by a deputation from Gauaronga sent to bid us welcome. They turned to escort her to the village of Ngama, but she wished that we should share her entry, and accordingly indicated that a Baturi, the native expression for



white man, was behind. They repeated "Baturi,"—counted quickly on their fingers, and threw open their hands with a gesture that denoted supreme indifference to such ordinary beings,—then pointed one finger first to their eyes and then to her, and said, "Baturi Madamē," with an expression that left no doubt as to their interest in the first white woman they had ever seen. It was only when they learnt that a second Baturi Madamē was with the Baturi that they consented to leave her and came to meet us with every expression of joy.

At Ngama, an Arab village close by a Bagirimi settlement, a Punch and Judy show was going on, performed by a man and his assistant. The puppets and their actions seemed very similar to our own street shows, though there was no Toby; but our presence was evidently disconcerting both to showman and audience, so we did not succeed in learning much about it.

Between Ngama and Tchekna the country was thickly populated, and flocks and herds took the place of wild beasts. The narrow tracks were thronged with men, all on their way to join in the great feast of Déé. There were chiefs with escorts of headmen and slaves, and ragged, poverty-stricken



CEREMONIAL  
THROWING-WEAPON.

WOODEN  
THROWING-WEAPON.

Arabs armed with spears or throwing-weapons. These latter they would occasionally hurl, for practice,

as they marched along, 30 or 40 yards being the ordinary distance covered. They are hung over the left shoulder, and there are three methods of throwing them. By one the bearer has only to raise his right hand and fling the weapon forwards, across his body, while some throw underhand, and others as if they were shying.

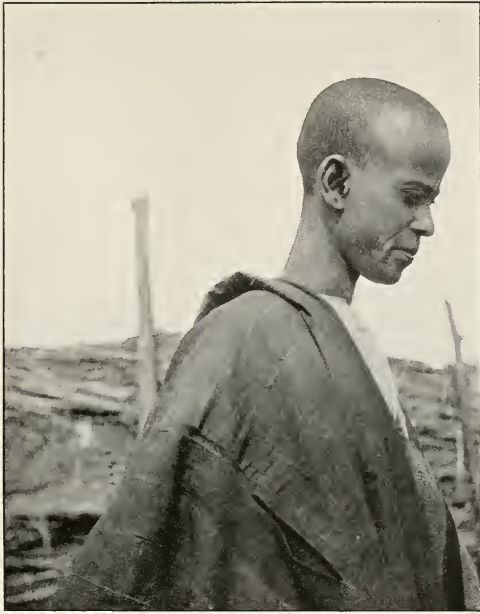
Sometimes we passed big caravans of Arabs on thin worn nags, many of whom had come long distances. Others were on foot driving before them sheep and goats required for the festival, for those who could not hope to be the Sultan's guests brought their own food with them.

The road led straight through the site where the ruined city of Massénia once stood. Now a modern village lies to the north of its crumbled walls, and there is no relic of past glory.

Tchekna is fifteen miles farther south, and as we approached it we saw women carrying calabashes full of locusts, which when fried are considered a great delicacy.

Captain Lucas rode out some miles to greet us, and not far behind him came a large body of native troops. They rode up to us at full gallop and saluted, having come to give us greeting from their Royal Master.

Thus escorted, we rode down a broad, sandy road, and into an enclosure, at the edge of a great plain. Two little huts, at either end of a roofed passage, stood inside it, and these were kindly placed at our disposal by Captain Lucas. Here we spent eight days of supreme interest, though we cannot claim that they were the happiest of our lives.



Type of Arab.



Arab Summer Village, showing Pot raised on Pole to feed Pigeons.



## CHAPTER IX.

## GAUARONGA, THE GREAT CHIEF.

(DECEMBER 12—JANUARY 18.)

WHEN we awoke there was excitement in the air. It was the first day of the fête, and even in our quiet retreat, a mile from the town, there was a sense of bustle and movement. We dressed ourselves in our very best to do honour to the occasion, and found after all that we had done wrong, for we had made it unsuitable to ride. When Captain Lucas joined us later, he was far too gallant to go on horseback while we were on foot, and yet it was the first time that the equestrian Bagirimi had seen a big man walk. We had not appreciated the enormity of this, or we would have risked slits in our dresses and falls from our horses, or anything else—as we did later—not to lower white prestige.

We were fully resolved to miss nothing of the ceremony, and were much grieved to hear that the Salaam to Allah was already being made, a mile beyond us, in a vast plain on the farther side from the town. No doubt we had been told the wrong hour on purpose that we unbelievers might not be there, so we had to content ourselves with mental pictures of the Great Chief, first paying homage himself to Allah, and then

receiving it as His earthly representative from thousands of men who had gathered together from all parts of the country.

Our chairs were taken out into the road, and there we sat waiting for the procession to return. A handful of black soldiers came first carrying the French flag, and behind them over 1000 horsemen, flanked with infantry—some of the Sultan's regulars. Big chiefs of state and war rode by, each with his retinue, which in the case of the war chiefs was very large. Representatives from neighbouring kingdoms were there, the Sultan's married daughter, his two eldest sons, and in front of all, with men walking on either side, rode a figure shrouded in a long black veil. It was the Magira. On him devolves the honour of representing the Sultan's mother, even though she be dead, and in her name he takes precedence over all, even over the Great Chief himself. As Mastaba eagerly whispered to me, "He live to be Sultan's mother though he be man." As he passed slowly round the bend in the road that now led straight to the Palace, Gauaronga appeared in state upon his war-horse. A huge tent-like umbrella, symbolic of royal power, was held over him. He was magnificently mounted, and jewels flashed from his high native saddle. This was of silver, covered with *repoussé* work in acanthus pattern on a *diamanté* background. Cabuchon garnets, aquamarines, topaz, pale amethysts, and turquoises were powdered over it, and the bigger stones were all framed in tiny turquoises. It was impossible to judge of the man, for his mouth was shrouded in a turban that came down over his forehead to where large black goggles continued the



The Mbang Ngoolo (= Great Chief) returns from making Salaam to Allah.



Tchekna.





concealment. His figure is very thick, and his gorgeous robe was set off to little advantage.

When he reached us he stopped, and we stepped forward to return his salute. He gazed fixedly at the first white women to enter his kingdom, and we exchanged long, curious glances. Then he turned and rode slowly on, greeted by shrill cries of applause from his subjects.

He stopped outside his palace to watch the fantasia for a little while, and sitting thus, he continued to receive the salutes of his people. The crowd was motley—here a prince or some great chief mounted on his favourite horse, there a group of Arabs clad in rags that seemed as if they could not hold together. Splendid high-spirited stallions jostled with emaciated ponies. Among mingled crowds of Bornuese, Kanuri, and Wadaians came a line of men, waving ostrich-feather fans above their heads and dancing forward, to make an escort for the Princess Royal. Gauaronga only remained a few minutes to share in the rejoicings of his people. When he had gone we too returned to camp. On the way there Captain Lucas told us about Gauaronga and the customs of his court. Every person of position in Tchekna is sent food from the royal table—the French post receives it regularly, and twice a-day throughout our visit ten or twelve henchmen brought us calabashes full of provisions. Sometimes they were ready cooked, delicious pigeons or honey-cakes, or some less appetising farinaceous food; but always an ample supply of meal, eggs, honey, and live-stock for ourselves and the boys.

A milch cow was sent up for our use, and an ox; goats, fowls, and pigeons arrived frequently, so

that our compound was turned into a regular farm-yard.

This munificence is not practised towards the poorer inmates of the town; in fact, a beggar only receives alms if a crowd of spectators is there to witness the generosity of the royal donor. Gauaronga likes to feel that all are dependent on him, the supreme monarch,—the birds of the air, as much as the men and beasts of the earth. Every week one or two oxen are slaughtered outside the Palace, that the vultures may come and feed. All this was very well in the rich days, when the Sultan could afford to be lavish, but now lean years have come upon him. His coffers are empty, and as slave-dealing is checked, and exactions made more difficult by the presence of his French friends, Gauaronga finds it hard to raise the necessary funds.

One day he hit upon a brilliant expedient, and issued a proclamation to the effect that the Father of his people found it a grave menace to morality that women of marriageable age should remain unwed—he therefore, in his great goodness and kindness, arranged marriages for all. Those who were grateful for the Sultan's interest in their welfare would naturally wish, his agents pointed out, to express their sense of his goodness by some gift worthy of his acceptance—while those who did not like the partners selected for them used the same means to get let off.

In the afternoon we paid a formal call upon this astute personage, and were received in an inner court, approached through two yards kept by immensely tall sentinels who guard the Palace gates, though their badge of office, a bracelet, is hardly symbolical of

their duties. We rode into the first court, walked through the next, and were then divided from the Royal presence only by a flashing gate. It was made of tin, and the size of the sheets was that of biscuit-tins.

It was thrown open: before us sat the Great Chief on a deck-chair. His turban and goggles concealed just as much of him as before, and his figure looked no slimmer for a broad green dummy-cartridge belt that encircled it. He rose to greet us, and motioned with his hand to where two more deck-chairs had been placed opposite him. Mrs Talbot and I, of course, sat down, leaving the men to stand. Our host seemed for a moment mysteriously overcome. Then followed an awful pause. His whole court, too, stood fixed and rigid, and a shudder ran through them. However, in a moment additional chairs were brought, our companions seated themselves, and the conversation began, without any suspicion on our part of the solecism we had committed. For later on we learnt that the Sultan, in sending apologies to Captain Lucas, said he was sorry that a sufficient number of chairs had not been provided, but he had always believed it impossible for women to sit in the presence of men. In fact, had we noticed it, we were being offered at that very moment a lesson in what a woman's deportment should be. For Mohmaduba's wife had accompanied us, to act as interpretress before the queen, whom we hoped to visit. And she, with averted head and downcast eyes, had meanwhile crept against the most distant wall, as if in effort to efface her miserable person before one so mighty as the Great Chief.

To our great joy we were then allowed to go in and

see the queen. We were the first white people to enter her presence, for the Sultan keeps his wives in strict seclusion, and not even the Resident can form an idea of what goes on in the harem. We were conducted thither by two eunuchs, who carried chairs behind us. We passed through several courts, in some of which children were playing, while slave-women were busied in domestic occupations: in others goats, fowls, and duck wandered, and the only sign of grandeur or display was in a rather fine copper and brass water-basin, overlaid with some white metal, which was let into the earth for the live stock to drink out of.

Presently we came to another gate of tin, and in a moment more we were in the presence of the Gumsu, Gauaronga's Queen.

She was squatting on a Persian rug, under a zana mat shelter, and was dressed in a beautiful robe of blue brocade. Her hair hung in tight brown ringlets all round her head, and was adorned with richly chased ornaments of gold and coral. She was old and ugly; she was also very shy, and kept her hands before her face, so that we could not really see her features. She acknowledged our presence in no other way than by thus covering her face. The remarks we addressed to her were answered by one of her attendants, but it is not easy to think of things to say when they receive no response, and especially when they have to be framed in French words of one syllable, such as Mrs Mohmaduba could understand. Mrs Talbot was wonderful at it, but we were both glad when the moment came to say good-bye.

Before we took our leave we looked into the Gumsu's bedroom, which was divided into two parts by a big



Guaronga, the Mbang Ngolo, or Great Chief.



The Gumsu, Gauaronga's Queen.





curtain. One half was empty, for here the handmaids bring their sleeping-mats and curl themselves up for the night; on the other side is the queen's bed, a huge divan covered with Persian rugs and big leather cushions.

The queen is a Wadaian, and married Gauaronga when he was a captive at Abechir. She is now very unattractive, and has never borne him any children, but in gratitude for the past he retains her as his principal wife. The others bear the lesser title of Leli—princess.

It was to the Leli Bondigul we now went. Her name is that of the town or district which she owns, from whence the subsidies come by which she maintains her private purse.

She was a pleasant, intelligent woman, and seemed really pleased to see us, and her women made no secret of their interest. Her dress was a gorgeous cerise-coloured robe of Arabic work, and she glittered with jewels. She was sitting in a quaint little circular vestibule, with a long, narrow passage off it. There was just room for her and us and her two principal attendants, while her suite crouched outside, some eight or ten women, in the best place of vantage they could get.

She has no child to bear her name, as is the custom among the princesses, for each own son takes the name of his mother's estate. Her one son is the heir-apparent, and he bears a title equivalent to that of our Prince of Wales, Churoma. Though only a boy of seventeen, he had been to France, she told us, where he had spent six months; he had told her much about French ladies, and particularly of the wonderful nature

of their hair. The hint was broad, and Mrs Talbot was remorseless in her wish that mine should be exhibited, so down it came—by then, indeed, the hot climate had left me little to display, but the mere fact of hair reaching to below the waist was enough to give the wool-owning black people a real thrill, and to see it rolled up again with British hairpins in the space of one minute was a further marvel. When one remembers that their own elaborate coiffure takes hours to arrange, and is left standing for two or three moons, the contrast must seem miraculous.

Gauaronga's wives occupy themselves in the manufacture of finely-woven white burnouses, with which their lord and master practises an inexpensive generosity. Occasionally one is given to a beggar—the Great Chief clothes the naked; or he gives one to an honoured guest—one was given to us. A still more frequent use is for one to be brought, together with the Sultan's condolences, to a house of mourning, so that the dead man may be buried honourably in this fine raiment.

The Agid, or messenger who brings it, points out to the bereaved family that they must make some acknowledgment of this mark of the Sultan's sympathy, and he returns to his royal master laden with all that he can lay hands on—sometimes the man's whole fortune.

This custom was told to the Resident with bitter complaints and appeals for his help. He spoke of it to Gauaronga, who opened his eyes wide with astonishment. "How could I tell," he exclaimed innocently, "that what my people offered to me was not given willingly in gratitude? Is it possible that it is not so?"

The fact that they are his wives does not save the

Lelis from more direct impositions from the Sultan—he will fine them for any slight or misconduct, and they are obliged to send out to their property and raise money as best they may.

When we returned to the men's quarters, and the biscuit-tin gate had clanged behind us, shutting the women into isolation, we found Captain Lucas and Mr Talbot slowly munching kola-nuts, which they both disliked very much, but felt obliged to eat lest a refusal might displease their royal host.

Nothing was offered to us, our sex debarring us from the privilege. This was a sad disappointment, for great hopes had been held out to us at Fort Lamy, and we had pictured ourselves nibbling delicious pigeons skewered on a stick, one end of which we should have held delicately in our fingers.

Churoma and Ngarh Moriba, his half-brother, came in to look at us, and the respect with which they approached their father was very impressive. At first he paid no attention to them, and they stood quietly in the background till with a wave of his hand the Sultan gave permission that they should be seated on the ground.

Churoma has an unpleasing face. He is an unintelligent, heavy youth of about seventeen, and seems suspicious of everyone. Perhaps this is due to his six months' visit to France, where he has learnt to deride his own people and their customs without getting a clear idea of anything better. Moriba, on the other hand, looks full of life and spirit, and as sharp as a needle.

Gauaronga showed some pride in his possessions, and was easily persuaded to show us two fine suits

of chain-armour, one of which had loose leggings. They were evidently of old workmanship and very good, but their weight is colossal,—the one without leggings weighs 34 lb. It is this that he wore himself in his old captive days, and he told us he had seen 500 men together thus accoutred in Abechir before Rabeah came with firearms to disprove their worth.

He used to wear a fifteenth-century Persian helmet, ornamented with a raised steel pattern picked out in bronze. All this armour is now in our possession, for, to the great surprise of the Resident (though with his consent), Gauaronga exchanged these and other treasures for a sum of money and a rifle of Mr Talbot's, with which he was delighted, for a rifle in Central Africa is almost priceless.

Our visit ended with an invitation from the Sultan to come back next morning and witness the levée he was to hold.

It was a very great occasion, and two or three thousand people were present. The chiefs came and made their bows one by one, each attended by as many followers as he possessed, down to quite tiny naked boys, all of whom knelt at a respectful distance while their masters made obeisance. They then retired to squat in a semicircle on the ground on either side of the throne, if that distinguished name may be applied to a folding-chair set on rugs. The canopy, however, at least was there, represented by a big tent.

I have begun at the end, though, when the people had arrived; but there was a long beginning, when Gauaronga sat in state, and we sat under a shelter



The Levée.



Gauronga's Slave-Women waving Ostrich-Feather Fans.



to the side, and the troops and gatekeepers and officials were all there, but nobody came to pay court. I felt there must have been rather a bad bungle, probably about the time, though various little side-shows began to take place. A man came in dressed up as a woman, and fooled about, but nobody laughed, and the most one could say for him was that he was very good-natured to try and amuse us. Then we had a solo on a small sweet-toned pipe—



till the whole band cut in and drowned it. Behind them danced some 120 women, waving stiff ostrich-feather fans. They were mostly old and invariably ugly, but they were interesting none the less, for they are Gauaronga's slaves and accompany him everywhere, even into battle, where their duty is to taunt cowards to an assumption of courage.

My sympathy with their neglected sovereign had meantime been banished by Captain Lucas, who said that the delay was complimentary. It was due to a certain high dignitary, the Bata Kuji, Keeper of the Palace, who has the privilege of being the first to present his homage, and for this one occasion takes precedence even of the Magira, Incarnate Ghost of the Queen-Mother. He is, however, so conscious of

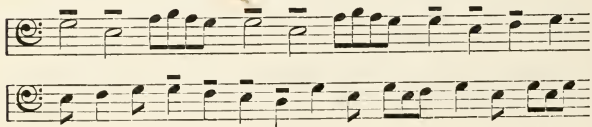


his own unworthiness to enter the august presence, that he remains at home until the Sultan has sent for him many times.

On this occasion he was very unworthy, or particularly aware of it, for a great many messengers were despatched before he would come—so many that Gauronga had time to advance and fire a pistol into the air as a salute to his people. Then a quaint figure advanced. It was a woman clad in long, trailing garments. Her face was shrouded beneath a heavy veil, but the texture was not so thick as to wholly conceal the gaunt, withered features of Miramiza, aunt both of the deposed and reigning sovereigns of Wadai. She was attended by her women, and paid the Sultan her duty with considerable dignity. She had not found life easy in her native land, and lived here in Tchekna, the grateful recipient of Gauronga's hospitality.

Two horsemen in chain-armour next tilted against each other with their long spears, and then a stir at the door gave warning that the Keeper of the Palace was at last without. His entry was worthy of the wait. It was heralded by numbers of retainers walking backwards before him; next followed eleven men playing vast, long, wooden trombones, and in the midst of them was the Bata Kuji himself, playing a like instrument made of white wood.

Slowly they advanced, and twelve distinct times they paused to play the following theme—





The Bata Kuji, Keeper of the Palace, pays Homage to the Sultan.



A Dthaliama, a Knight in Chain Armour, who made Joust before the Sultan.



Miramiza, Princess of Wadai.



with slight variations, chiefly due to the voices being sometimes in unison, sometimes in parts, in 3rds and 5ths. This musical salute completed, each man waved his dagger or spear aloft, while the Bata Kuji dropped to his knees and crawled to the Sultan's feet, prostrating himself in the dust. Then, as soon as the ceremony was over, he seated himself humbly on the edge of the rug beside the Sultan.

The Magira passed immediately after the Bata Kuji, and then the representatives of all the Sultan's wives and sons and daughters. Curiously enough, the princes themselves took no part in the ceremony. The representatives—Kata, as they are called—are all men, whether they represent the male or female sex. It is not so in Bornu, where the customs are so far similar that each royal personage has his own representative; but there the Magira, impersonator of the queen, is a woman high in rank, and each woman is represented by one of her own sex. Captain Lucas told us who all the dignitaries were, and the number was something amazing.

In a prominent position were the great religious chiefs, and the three chiefs of war, whose office, because it is of such vast importance, aptly illustrates the law of impermanence. Once the second war-chief fled from battle. It was at the Togbau hills, where Bretonnet was killed and Gauaronga twice wounded, so if ever there is excuse there surely was then. None who had showed such lack of courage might continue to hold the post, however, so the war-chief was deposed; and not only that, his nose was slit and his eyes torn out, so that he might be a shame and a warning to all men for all time. However,

despite his mutilations and disgrace he has worked his way back into comparative favour, and is now chief of one of the river towns.

These war-chiefs, and others who hold posts of authority, are usually slaves by extraction, for the Sultan fears to give an office of power to men whose birth and position might tempt them to intrigue against him. Indeed, he takes still further precautions. Most of the court officials and eldest sons of influential fathers are eunuchs.

The Fatcha, first in importance, is an exception, because he was good to Gauronga in the days of his captivity, and the Sultan does not let old friends go unrewarded. The Fatcha is unfortunately addicted to peto-drinking, and were his position at court not so privileged would be held unfit for work.

When a chief is deposed, the penalty includes the loss of slaves, servants, and horses, which are all forfeited to his successor.

The Kadi, or Alcali, is chief judge, and as he went by Captain Lucas illustrated his practice of law and his value to the Sultan with this story: a woman struck her husband so severe a blow in the stomach that he died from its effects. By native law her family was responsible, and the deceased man's son brought an action against them. When it came before the Alcali, he decreed that ten cows must be given in compensation. He then addressed the accuser, and said that three of these must be paid as tribute to the Great Chief, three to himself for his conduct of the case, whilst five others were to be made over to five men who had given him legal assistance. As will be seen, the total of cows awarded was ten and of

cows exacted eleven, so the poor son, though he got nominal compensation, lost a cow.

The other chiefs followed quickly now: the very great ones advanced right on to the carpet to salute their sovereign, but the ordinary man had his obeisance acknowledged by a court official. No one might approach or even look at the King with his right arm covered, and it is the custom for every man holding the Sultan's commission to bare his right arm as a badge of office.

Several men are deputed to look after guests of different nationalities. Thus one man entertains Kanuri visitors, another Arabs. One is in charge of the royal farms, another of cattle, another of corn. There is a master-of-the-horse and his grooms. There is an architect, an official in charge of the repairs to the Palace walls; another who sees that it is kept clean. A doctor, a librarian, tutors to the royal children. A crier of Muezzin in the Palace. A chief of the market, who sees that animals are killed in accordance with the Koran.

The levée lasted about three hours, and ended unceremoniously in a rush for the door, while Gauaronga remained to watch the exit. Not many years ago there was always bloodshed at a court, for the chiefs would fight each other for precedence, and perhaps that is why each man still brings all the retainers he can muster, from chamberlain to scullion.

The entertainments that celebrated the feast of Déé lasted a week, and every afternoon the big market-place outside the Palace was filled with men on horseback, who had come to take part in the fantasia. Each day there was a different president—the Magira

first, the princes next, and then chiefs; but as the days went by the attendance got less and less good, for the food-supply was limited, and men had to go as their stock of provisions became exhausted.

We went on the first afternoon to see the Magira preside, as to do so was considered a compliment to him, though I am afraid, even had it been looked upon as the reverse, we should have found it very hard to stay away. The Great Chief himself performed this act of courtesy, and it was a curious sight to see his august person riding the few yards from the Palace walls across the square, followed, not only by mounted courtiers and suite, but by nine men on foot carrying boxes on their heads. These chests hold the Sultan's treasure, and wherever he goes they must always accompany him—to the French post, a mile distant, across the square, or on a long journey: the law is immutable. They contain State papers, and also tea, sugar, and soap.



FLUTE.

The fantasia itself did not differ from any other we had seen, and we were glad to turn our attention to the tom-tom that was going on to one side of the square. It is a dance to the accompaniment of music, which in this case included drums, eleven of the long wooden trombones we had seen that morning, and a clarinet-like instrument. I believe the technical name for all over-blown instruments is flute, and this was one of them, but in shape and tone it much more closely





The Magira, Representative of the Queen-Mother.



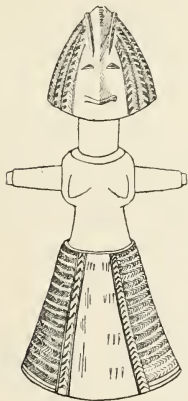
A Dance at Tchekna.



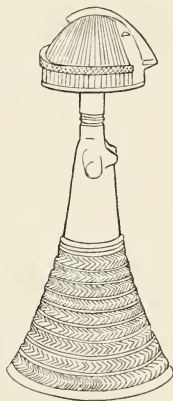
resembled a clarinet. It was made "fine" with two bulbs of indiarubber encrusted with cowries—one near the mouthpiece, the other at the bottom end. These belonged to Gauaronga, who was justly proud of them, and made some difficulty about giving one to us, but the thought of our money prevailed, and he received a rich reward.

A circle of about 120 men danced languidly round an inner half-circle of old women. It seems pitiful that they should have to wait till age has wizened them before they may take part in public amusements, and there is something almost revolting in worn, drawn faces engaged in such youthful pursuits.

A good many Wadaians were there, easily distinguishable from the Bagirimi by the light brown ringlets that



WADAIAN COIFFURE.



BORNESE COIFFURE.

hang right round their heads and faces. The sketch illustrates this and one other style of coiffure. They are drawn from wooden models shown by an Arab

hairdresser in the neighbourhood of Tchekna, which Captain Lucas very kindly procured and gave to me. Besides these Bornuese and Wadaian ladies, types of Furians,<sup>1</sup> Bagirimi, Arabs, and Kurdi are also exhibited. These latter are Pagan and completely shaven.

The dance seemed aimless, and men and women would join or rest as the inclination seized them; but presently its character changed. Two lines were formed, circular in shape, and each man faced a woman. From a little distance they gradually approached nearer and nearer together till, when they were quite close, the women wheeled as if coy, but were still followed by the men. When they were almost touching they too turned away, and the whole thing began over again.

The Wadaians are said to have a dance where the partners revolve round each other somewhat as they do in the Swedish dance. Another of a very different character was performed at the same time by some Bagirimi, all of whom made merry over it. Twenty or thirty women formed a circle, from which one presently detached herself and ran into the centre; then fell backwards into the arms of her friends, who jumped her into the air, after which she ran laughing back to her place to take her share in the throwing. The higher the jump the heartier the applause, but the standard was sadly low, for agility is not the attribute of a Bagirimi woman.

The town stretches for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile along the Bahr el Erguig, tributary of the Shari, which, though navigable for big canoes for four or five months in the

<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of Dar Fur—"country," or literally "house," of Fur.

year, becomes so low in the dry season that a man may cross it dry-shod.

The Palace is the central building of the town; it occupies the whole length of the great square, and is enclosed in a high mud wall. At right angles to it stands the mosque. The sandy square is shaded by some big trees, and in their grateful shade women pause to exchange greetings as they bear heavy water-pots on their heads to and from the river. Men, too, gather here to rest and talk, for this is the market-place. Streets debouch into it, flanked by zana zaribas, which surround the low-thatched huts; but every now and again the zaribas are replaced by high mud walls, which denote the dwelling-place of some great man.

The only house that abuts on to the central square belongs to the Princess Royal, and thither Mrs Talbot and I went one day that we might make acquaintance with the Sultan's married daughters—Maiarami, as is their official title. These Princesses have gained a great deal by marriage, for in their mother's zenana they led strictly secluded lives, and now they have not only comparative liberty, but have complete power over their husbands. Each has her own house, which the husband is not allowed to share. He has his own next door; and Galadima, husband to the Princess Royal, has their two little sons to live with him. The Princesses send for their husbands when they want them, but the man has no right to enter his wife's presence unasked. This inhuman relationship is made still more unendurable by the fact that it is unsolicited by the man. Gauaronga chooses his sons-in-law from among the great families of free men according to the

wealth that will accrue to his own exchequer from the connection.

It is an honour so much dreaded that he who thinks it likely to be conferred upon himself will often fly from the country for some years, and trust that time will soften his sovereign's resentment or provide another husband for the lady. To be already married is no safeguard to a man. He is obliged to divorce his other wives, and live for ever after with the Maiarami as his sole wife.

The Princess Royal is an unattractive lady, and outraged us by having no seat brought, nor did she exchange a single word with us. We marked our displeasure by leaving her sitting there upon her mat while we went in to visit her house, the only one with an upper floor in Tchekna. The mud staircase is outside, and leads to two rooms with a good view on to the market-place, where the Maiarami can observe what goes on without herself being seen. Her sister cannot vie with such splendour, nor indeed is her house situated in the square, but she has a tent in her enclosure that commands the admiration and envy of humbler folk. The Princess Royal enjoys a yet more important privilege, for she rides out in state on horseback, as we saw her on the occasion of the great procession; while the younger Princess, the Maiarami Lamina, may only ride upon a man. She is a bright, cheerful girl, very like her mother, the Leli Bondigul, and she at once had a new mat brought for us to squat on. She showed us the jewels with which she was covered, particularly some immense plaques with gems set in, and in return demanded to see my hair, the fame of which had reached her. Both she and the



The House of the Princess Royal.



The Maiarami Lamina.





Princess Royal acknowledged our visit by sending some eighty eggs as a parting gift, though, as seventy-nine of them were bad, we felt little gratitude, and grudged having to make a return present.

We paid one more visit to Miramiza, Princess of Wadai. Her house was a tiny little hut, and contained no furniture but a blue and white earthenware teapot. The place was so thickly infested with flies that we could with difficulty see that or anything else. She was, however, very much pleased to see us, and her eyes glistened and voice quavered with excitement as she besought us not to enter Wadai. "Don't go, don't go, don't go," she repeated, and when she paused to listen to our assurance that we did not mean to do so, she patted us on the shoulder, shook both our hands, and showed immense relief. What did she know to make her think it so unsafe? She too asked to see our hair, and alas for our pride, we showed it. The old lady stroked it in silence, then she sighed, and said that she had hoped to see long hair, like French women have, who, the Resident told her, could wrap their toes in it. We refrained from comment to her, but when we reproached Captain Lucas, he had the grace to blush as he said, "*Mais, Madame, elle exagère.*"

Before leaving the subject of hair, it may be worth while mentioning that the electricity in the air was so strong that Mrs Talbot and I hardly dared brush our hair, so much did it crackle and flash. When we got into bed our blankets literally gave out a sheet of flame; indeed, we had terrifying visions of being burnt alive should we fidget in bed in our sleep. We were far more subject to it than her husband.

The town was thronged with people, and though there was nothing one could take hold of as definitely friendly or not friendly, we had a very strong impression of hostile feeling towards the white man. It is natural that the Bagirimi should resent his intrusion, for he has brought curtailment of their power and riches—though from all appearances the Resident himself is liked. He exacts and acknowledges respectful salutes from all whom he passes, but the stricter Mahommedans in the streets were careful not to include Mrs Talbot and me in their salaam. Sometimes we pretended to take it for ourselves, and made a return gesture, upon which they would drop their hands and turn away with an expression of utter disgust.

In a certain measure it was our misfortune to incur the Sultan's anger, for he put pressure on Mr Talbot to induce him to sell our remaining rifles, which of course we refused to do, and he was not accustomed to being gainsaid. Also, though he had given his chain-armour and helmet for a price, he sorely grudged parting with them. Captain Lucas expressed very great astonishment that he had offered to do so, and we were prepared, therefore, for some devoted subject to try and bring back these treasures to him. We distributed them very carefully amongst our own clothes and personal baggage; for we knew that the Bagirimi regard skilful theft as a virtue, and, should any confusion arise, less guarded loads might disappear without any of us being the wiser.

Whether it was in anticipation of any such attempt, or merely as a guard of honour, I do not know, but soldiers were on guard round our rest-house all day

and all night, and none of us ever stirred without the matter being instantly reported to the Resident. The Fort was within sight, and only a few yards away, so help, if required, could have been easily obtained; but all the same we took care to sleep with our loaded revolvers beneath our pillows.

In the evenings our table and chairs were moved from beneath the shelter to the free air of heaven. Nothing could be more delightful than those first cool hours after sundown, when we sat idly exchanging our experiences of the day, with glasses and lime-juice beside us. One night we were sitting thus as usual. The lamp was on the table, the one bright spot in the compound, when Mr Talbot sprang to his feet and shouted, "Run away." I obeyed with promptitude, and as I did so my eye lit on something moving. A dull grey cobra,<sup>1</sup> about five feet long, crawled from beneath the table. It brushed past Mr Talbot's foot, but fortunately did not strike him. No weapon was at hand, so he called for his gun. The boy delayed, and the reptile, moving rapidly, made straight towards the hut where his wife was dressing for dinner. There was no time to lose; Mr Talbot seized a tent-pole and struck the snake, but an unpliant stick is a dangerous implement. The cobra reared up and spat venom straight into his eyes. The pole came down on it once more and broke its back, but already Mr Talbot was in intolerable agony. The pain was as of something burning right into the very brain itself. We bathed his eye with salad oil and boric acid, but otherwise there was nothing to be done.

<sup>1</sup> *Naia nigricollis*.

Captain Lucas and his comrade hurried over within a few minutes of the accident, and both assured us that permanent blindness does not result from snake poison, and they were right, though we have since heard of cases where the eyesight was destroyed. After three days Mr Talbot was able to open his eye and see; but the pain had been continuous, though steadily lessening, and his eyelid so swollen that till then it was impossible to test the power of sight. It was a matter of time and care before the recovery was complete.

It was unlucky that the snake should have come, for they are not common there. And that it should have wriggled in at an entrance through the zana matting and made its way straight to the one spot of light in the place, seemed almost uncanny. It seemed so remarkable that we could not help wondering whether it had come by chance, or whether there had been an evil agency at work; but our boxes were secure, and we repressed our speculations as unjust.

The days slipped by, for though we were in a hurry to be back, and anxious to spend Christmas altogether round Herr von Raben's tree at Kusseri, as also to see the zakoki and Joséphine, we dared not start before Mr Talbot had regained his sight. When that glad day came our preparations for departure were made, and on the morning of our start we were delighted to see Gauaronga's emissary, who brought another cowrie-bedecked clarinet and a long wooden trumpet,—kingly treasures reserved for the Sultan's musicians alone, and which, hitherto, with one exception, had been denied us. We paid the price asked and joyfully added them to our baggage.

Captain Lucas and Mr Talbot were to go together on a ceremonial visit of farewell to Gauaronga, for they hoped that greater privileges would be accorded them when they were without us women. So it was, they were received in the audience-chamber instead of in the yard, as we had been ; and, greatest honour of all, the Sultan removed his huge goggles. They sat in friendly converse, mutually pleased with each other, and presently the Sultan invited them to have a cup of tea with him.

Before the men had started some instinct had prompted Mrs Talbot and me, each severally, without word spoken to the other, to beg Mr Talbot not to accept anything to eat or drink from the hands of his royal host. He accepted our warning, but thought it absurd. Gauaronga produced from his chest, and put into the pot, equal proportions of tea and sugar and some slices of fresh lime, after which there was very little room for the water. However, they all drank and pronounced it a surprisingly excellent mixture.

The visit was a long one, for they were interested in hearing of each other's countries and habits of life, and it was late before Mr Talbot returned to us. When he did so he had brought in his pocket some dates, which he thought it would interest us to taste, though they were not indigenous to the place, but had come across the desert. We all took them : Mrs Talbot ate three ; and, as I do not like the fruit, I tasted one only, out of curiosity. We had first, however, taken care to ask whether they were perfectly safe, and were fully satisfied with the answer that Gauaronga and Captain Lucas had also

had some. In fact, we were very much ashamed of the carefully concocted emetic that we carried with us to force on our unwilling companion, should we find he had been exposed to any risk.

We started that very afternoon, and Captain Lucas rode out with us, and held out the hope that we might see him again in Fort Lamy before many days had elapsed. Our ride was a short one—only eight miles—to the village of Bageri. It was dark when we got there, and no one came to greet us; so we made our way through the quiet streets unremarked, advancing towards a bright fire, the flames of which leapt high into the air. We thought that it must be our camp; but when we got there we heard sounds of chanting, and found a school of little boys gathered round it in a circle, one of whom would continually jump up to add twigs or straw to the flames, while the others continued their lesson. A *mallam* was squatting by them; a prayer board, on which some verses of the Koran were written, was in his hand, and he intoned them for the children to repeat. It was a picturesque scene, and we stood and watched for some time unnoticed; then a man rose from the background and walked quickly away. As he went fresh fuel was added to the fire, and, by the light of the leaping flame, I recognised an agent of the Sultan's—one with whom we had had dealings, and whom we knew to be in the confidence of his royal master. We took care to have the boxes placed close round our tents that night, and the thought of our acquaintance and his rapid disappearance troubled us no more.

The next day we had a long ride to Abugher, once



the capital. I felt ill and cross, and rode alone most of that day, unable to keep up with the fast walk of Mr Talbot's Arab, and not caring to trot, nor even to dismount and walk. When we reached Abugher—a big, somewhat dirty, Arab town—we pitched camp beneath a huge spreading tamarind, not far from the city well. The moment the beds were made Mr Talbot went to have a rest—a thing his wife had never known him do in all their married life. We concluded, however, that the glare from the fierce sun on the arid scorching ground must have tried his weakened eyes and given him a bad headache.

Next day he seemed quite well, and again we proceeded on our march; but this time Mrs Talbot separated herself from us and lagged behind, and at length admitted she was feeling very ill. We were glad, indeed, when the morning's march was ended and we were able to take shelter in an Arab house at Ngama. It was midday when we reached the town, and she lay exhausted on a native wooden bed and begged us to leave her alone, for she hoped to get rest enough to continue on a further three hours' ride that afternoon. Ngama was a border town, the last on Bagirimi territory, and we looked forward to sleeping that night at Maiashe, a village outside Gauaronga's jurisdiction.

Mr Talbot and I went outside and took counsel together; and as we talked, Mohmaduba, the interpreter, came up and told us the water at Maiashe had dried up, and that we must remain where we were. We were surprised, for there had been plenty of water when we had come through ten

days before; but we were glad enough of the excuse to tell the invalid that it was not on her account that we were forced to stay.

Mr Talbot spent our leisure in taking measurements of both Arab and Bagirimi citizens; but there were not enough of the latter to make up the full twenty he always tried to get. Suddenly a well-known figure stood before us. It was Gauaronga's emissary. "I will complete your number," he said. We were surprised—surprised to see him there, and surprised that a man of influence should join with the commoners of a mere village. However, Mr Talbot took him at his word and measured him, and offered him payment as he had to all the rest. It was refused—a circumstance that was still more extraordinary. We asked him why he was there; for when we had said good-bye to him at Tchekna we had little expected to see him again so soon. He smiled queerly, and replied that he had come to act escort to a great stranger at the bidding of the Sultan. We knew that the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg was expected to visit Tchekna, and assumed he was to go there immediately: as a matter of fact, he did not do so till after we had crossed Lake Chad. That night we had an uncomfortable feeling of being watched. Justly, or unjustly, we felt ourselves in the land of enemies, and we longed to get our precious boxes well away to Fort Lamy.

Mrs Talbot was rather better next day, and keen to be gone. We started early; and when we came to Maiashe, behold a pool full of clear water. Even then Mr Talbot, who was less suspicious than I, could not believe Mohmaduba had told a lie to which such flat

contradiction would be given, and said it was only a mirage. He almost walked into it, and a flock of sacred ibis rose scared from its waters before he admitted that the interpreter had indeed lied.

Beyond Maiashe lies a long arid tract—a steppe of the lower Sudanese desert—which for long months lies waterless and desolate. Even by December the two pools of Bokkoiyu and Bamboiyu were drying into fetid swamps. It was this country that we now had to traverse. We hoped to reach Bokkoiyu that night, and, by a very long march next day, the Bahr Alienya, the ju-ju river; after which we should again be in a well-populated country. Mrs Talbot declared herself well and anxious to continue, for, though we were now out of his territory, we should hardly be beyond Guaronga's reach until we had passed the uninhabited desert and were in the populous districts near Fort Lamy. As the afternoon drew on, it was all Mrs Talbot could do to sit her horse; and in fact it seemed touch and go whether she would not fall, and we made the boys walk on either side of her in case she did.

It was late and pitch-dark when we reached the water-hole. Wild beasts were roaring in its vicinity, and there could be no more drear and desolate spot; but to us it was a haven. A few inches of dirty water, stretches of sand, brown sapless grass, a few scrub-trees, and that was all; but it meant rest. In a few minutes the tents were up and Mrs Talbot in bed; and the moment we had dined I, too, went to mine.

When I awoke, my first thought was for the invalid, of whom a favourable report was given, though

it was thought wiser to rest—at least that morning. The advantages of the scheme presented themselves before us, for kob were seen drinking within a few yards of our camp, and the opportunity for a hunt was magnificent. I pointed them out to Mr Talbot; but he made no response, nor even turned his head to look. A few minutes later he asked leave to lie down in my tent, that he might not disturb his wife. With sinking heart I asked what was the matter, and he replied the symptoms were those of dysentery.

From that moment a terrible time of grave illness ensued, and, curiously enough, the symptoms were identical with those from which his wife had suffered; but they were not altogether those of dysentery. Hunt as we might in our two medical books, no disease fitted them. His heart was weak, and he suffered internal pain right up his body. Could it be due to poison? The idea made us more anxious still, for we could not tell how the case should be treated. Ought he to have stimulant? or might it give rise to inflammation? Ought he to have much or little nourishment? We knew nothing. In despair, we sent back to Maiashe for cows in milk, and they were driven out to us in the desert. There was no tree of size to give us shade, and Mr Talbot lay in a tent covered over with three canvas coverings, with spaces for air between each; but nothing could keep out the merciless sun, and by day the atmosphere was like a furnace. At night we had cool breezes, but no quiet; for the boys had to gather in close around us, within a sheltering circle of huge fires, and they did not dare all sleep, lest the flames might die down and lion or

leopard penetrate. Therefore the wakeful chattered together all the night through.

Thus three days passed; but when Christmas morning dawned our hearts beat high, for Mr Talbot was better,—a runner brought our mail from Fort Lamy, and all was very well. For the first time I went out for a little walk, promising that I would keep within sight of camp, which was visible a long way off in that bare country. Mastaba, however, joined me, and would not let me be alone. There was no apparent cause for fear; but perhaps he had seen something or heard something—anyway, he was there. That afternoon Mr Talbot had a relapse, and once more the illness seemed grave.

There was no doubt that it was no ordinary disease, and looking back on all that had passed we bethought us of the dates. Mr Talbot had eaten about ten, and he was very ill; Mrs Talbot three, and she had been ill too, though mercifully only for a short time; and I, who had eaten one, had also felt indisposed for a few hours. The coincidence was strange. We told Mr Talbot of our suspicions, and when he recalled the scene, he remembered that the Sultan had handed him dates from one end of the box, while he had taken those for Captain Lucas and himself from the other end.

Next day Captain Lucas himself came riding by, on his way to Fort Lamy, and was much astonished to find us there. We said nothing to him of our doubts, but asked him how he had been, and he assured us of his perfect health since we had left. Mr Talbot was better again, and we hoped soon to follow him, and this time our good-bye was really short. On the 28th we too set out, meaning to march only in the morning as far

as the next water at Bamboiyu, but when we got there the water was foul, milk unobtainable, and Mr Talbot worse; so we pushed on again to the Bahr Alienza, where he obtained the necessary rest. Here we were within reach of Fort Lamy, and indeed were able to get there for New Year's Day. Mr Talbot was now convalescent, and our friends gave us so cordial a greeting that we felt it was like coming home.

The zakis were pleased to see us too, and played with us, and a few days slipped by very happily before we proceeded on our way to Lake Chad. We did not care to tell Captain Facon or Captain Lucas our ideas about the dates, but none the less we harboured them, and put the dates carefully by in a tin till we should get home and we might have them analysed. This is the result—

*November 21, 1911.*

DEAR MISS MACLEOD,—There is no doubt that there is some poisonous substance in the dates, but I cannot identify this as any poison with which I am familiar.

The dates may have become poisonous from decomposition by fermentic changes.

On the other hand, I am quite prepared to admit that there are native African poisons which cannot be identified by any ordinary chemical tests, but only by the physiological harmful effects which I have found.—

I am, yours sincerely,

W. H. WILLCOX.

#### REPORT.

On August 28, 1911, I received from Miss Olive MacLeod by registered Parcels Post a tin box containing in grease-proof paper some dried dates.

Contained in the box were two whole dates with stones in them respectively.

Two halves of dates with no stone in them.

One date which had no stone inside it.

The dates were in a dried condition.

I have carefully examined these dates for the presence of poison.

I find no mineral poison present, and none of the common poisonous alkaloids or common vegetable poisons are present.

I have performed physiological experiments with the dates.

Fifteen grains of a piece of date were given to a healthy mouse as food; this caused illness, followed by collapse and death in thirty-six hours. The symptoms were not characteristic of any of the common vegetable poisons with which I am familiar.

The dates were also tested as regards their action on the heart, and I found that the poison present had a marked slowing action on the frog's heart.

The conclusion I have formed is that the dates contain some poison; but it is possible that this poison may have been produced by some natural change due to decomposition occurring in the dates from some fermentative process.

I cannot say that any poison has been intentionally added to the dates.

W. H. WILLCOX, M.D., F.R.C.P. (London),

*Senior Scientific Analyst to the Home Office.*

ST MARY'S HOSPITAL,

LONDON, W., Nov. 21/11.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE SHARI.

(JANUARY 15-23.)

IT was with real regret that we set out from Fort Lamy, and parted with our French friends; but the prospect before us was a pleasant one, for we were now bound for Lake Chad.

The big Kotoko city of Gulfei, in the Kamerun, was our immediate objective, and we rode there along the right shore of the Shari, as there were reported to be very bad swamps on the other side.

It was the zakis' first march. They travelled both together in the little wicker cage with a wooden floor, on which they had habitually played "King-of-the-castle." Mandara, their nurse, carried them, and they accepted the position quite philosophically, looking out with wondering eyes at the incidents of the road and then falling asleep curled up against each other. The bush camps amused them immensely, and the moment they were liberated they would start off to explore, usually in opposite directions—for they were afraid of nothing. We had to keep a close watch on them lest some village cur might not respect the little lords, or lest they might pick up a few chickens for their

evening meal. At night they slept side by side with Mandara, round huge fires, for there was danger from leopard and jackal for those little babies.

The country was beautifully green, and we passed through regular forests of acacia and mimosa. One of the former contradicted itself, for its leaves, though on the same stem, were totally unlike. I thought I had made a discovery, but my learned friends told me it is the habit of acacias. The bush itself was beautiful, for it was covered with seed-pods which, when they break open, disclose a pyramid of white silk, clear and clean.

We had been misinformed as to distances, and were agreeably astonished to find that we had arrived so soon at a dilapidated little village just opposite Gulfei itself. Masses of rotting fish were gathered in heaps over the ground, proof of the industry of the inhabitants. We sincerely wished they had been a lazier people, for it seemed impossible to elude the smell that resulted from their occupation, and we were obliged to sit and wait till the Sultan, or Jëggara, of Gulfei, as he is called, graciously permitted canoes to be sent to fetch us over. There is great jealousy between the peoples on the opposite banks, for the rival jurisdiction of French and Germans has set a barrier between them. The miserable little village where we were waiting had suffered sorely: from a once thriving town it had dwindled to a mere hamlet, and though the people are allowed to fish near their own banks they do not dare to cross the Shari.

In due course two superb canoes came out from Gulfei to bring us thither. They were made of many pieces of wood sewn together with hide, and the interstices were filled up and made watertight with

grass and rush. The bow was square, but the stern was high and shaped somewhat like the prow of a Venetian gondola. In the bow fishing-nets can be attached to two large poles that, from an upright position, are lowered to either side, spreading the net out wide, and thus looking like the wings of some mighty bird. They are dipped into or raised from the water by a central pole, to which a weight is attached. The canoes thus equipped for fishing float side by side across the river, and the fish are driven down into the lowered nets by a line of beaters, who walk the river much as we walk a turnip-field for partridges. When in ordinary use the apparatus is taken out, and the canoes, from 30 to 45 feet in length, are picturesque and beautiful.

The crossing was soon made, but the Jēggara was not there to receive us in person, owing, it was alleged, to his ill-health. Outside the city wall, where we landed, is the market-place, but it has lost its erstwhile importance as a commercial centre. A few poor houses belonging to fishermen were clustered by the banks, and behind them a tall mud wall encircled and protected the city. The houses, both in Gulfei and farther down the Shari, are made of mud, with thatch roofs, the thatching being continued in some cases right down the walls for the sake of coolness. The roofs are high, and are supported by a pillar in the centre of each hut. The doorways are sometimes shaped like a waist, and on entering there is a step down and another up before the true floor is reached. It is made of such hard, smooth mud that it looks like concrete. The walls are surrounded by pots, laid one upon the other in tiers.



Kotoko Canoe in the Process of Construction.



Kotoko Canoe fitted with Fishing-Nets.

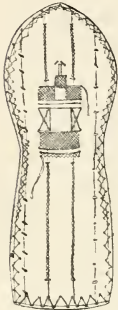


We were escorted to the "barrackee," a one-roomed building, surrounded by a verandah, and reserved for the use of German officers.

A white sergeant was in Gulfei at the time of our visit, having come to collect the usual poll-tax; but though it was assessed on 30,000 inhabitants he had only succeeded in raising it from 2000. The Jēggara, despite his reputation for great wealth and the recognised fact that he possessed a million sheep, immediately declared himself to be a poor man, ruler over a pauper people. He acted up to his statement by giving us a far smaller "dash" than was customary; and also by laying aside, as his principal gift to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, from whom he was warned to expect a visit, an aligata worth about 3s. 6d., and a parrot. It was amusing, for in 1905 he had given to Lieutenant Boyd Alexander richer gifts and a more kingly welcome than had any other chief.

The Jēggara used to be vassal to the Sultan of Dikoa, and as such he fought for Rabeh; but when Rabeh was overthrown he accepted from the French conquerors a present of guns, on the understanding that he was to become their ally. A little later Gulfei was occupied, together with the rest of the North Kamerun, by the Germans; and the Jēggara, unwilling to move his city across the Shari to French territory, kept the guns and remained where he was, on condition that his new suzerains should release him from allegiance to the Sultan of Dikoa. Therefore, though he did his utmost to oppose the coming of the white man, he was astute enough to gain guns from one nation and dignity from the other, in return for a submission that he could not well deny.

In the afternoon the Jēggara came to pay us a visit of state, the first time he had left the palace for many weeks. He is enormously tall—6 feet 5 inches—as is characteristic of his race; for the Kotoko, his people, are descended from giants. The size of their water-pots and other possessions bears testimony to this fact. We saw few men under 6 feet in height, and some were as tall as 6 feet 7 inches.



SHIELD, NEARLY  
6 FT. HIGH.

We went out to greet the Jēggara in the courtyard, where he sat in state upon his horse. It was caparisoned in gay trappings, which effectually concealed all but its legs. He himself was clad in loose trousers, burnouse and gorgeous mantle, and over him was held a bright pink parasol. His retinue were few in number and soberly clothed, fit spectacle for the eyes of a tax-collector; and the sight was made more piteous by old worn women, slaves of the Jēggara, dancing slowly and wearily before him, as tramps might round a barrel-organ. Presently he dismounted and came in and sat with us, attended by one courtier only, who acted as interpreter. We craved permission to visit the palace, which the Jēggara granted readily; but still he sat on, conversation flagged, so in default of anything else to say we offered him the hospitality of tea, as an offer of spirit might, we thought, be taken as an insult by one professing the Mahommedan faith. Instantly he rose and took his leave, and Mastaba told us he had been frightened and had said to his companion, "Why do the English wish to kill me? why do they offer me grass?"





The Jēggara.



Gulfei.



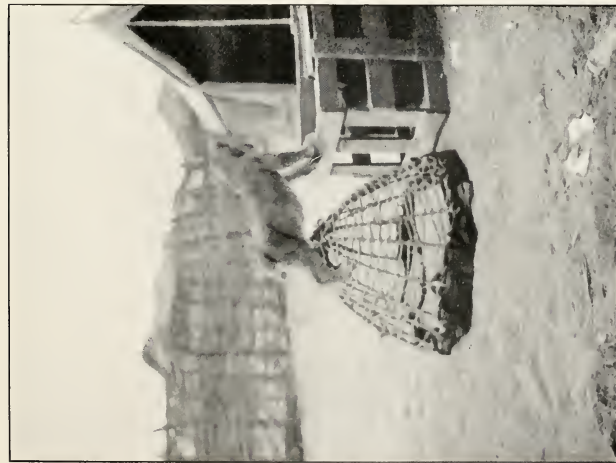
Whether his suspicions eventually calmed down or not, he received us next day with cold civility at the gates of the lesser palace, where his new Queen resides. She is but a bride, the young daughter of the Shehu (King) of Bornu, who gave her in marriage to the Jēggara with great pomp and many gifts. The audience-chamber, where Mrs Talbot and I visited her, was a long, narrow room. Directly facing the door, the bride sat, cross-legged, upon a divan, her attendants gathered round her on the floor. It was very dark, and we could make out little more than the outline of the fresh young face and brilliant eyes that were fixed on us: she never broke silence, though a smile of pleasure gleamed out suddenly when we praised two painted chests, the only furniture her room contained. The walls were hung with tin plates and dishes, supplemented by others made of earthenware. This seemed a favourite form of mural decoration, for when, by her permission, we entered her two bedrooms, we found one plastered with a dado of cowrie-covered plates with tin pots below — and in the other earthenware pots heaped one upon the other from the floor upwards. Hanging from above were beautiful trappings of leather, or of woven straw, stitched over with cowries, part of her marriage dower.

When we rejoined Mr Talbot, our host the Jēggara took us to his principal palace, and escorted us to his treasure-house, passing through many courtyards, one of which contained a large bed made of maria wood, shaped like a tortoise. The room was small, with lines stretched across it and clothes hanging upon them, as we see on laundry-greens at home. Two brass trumpets (German), an old pistol, a big

hat, a brass throwing-weapon, and a bag containing many MSS. hung upon the wall, and amongst them were two cotton sunshades that could never have cost more than 2s. 6d. in the first freshness of their youth at Berlin. The Jēggara cast his eyes from one object to another, in apparent triumph at being possessor of such riches; but the German sergeant had followed us, and the display may have been meant to produce a different impression upon him. After half an hour the comedy palled upon us, and we suggested that he had other wives. He took us at once to a large yard, full of mud and dirt, where turkeys wandered about, and here he summoned some 60 or 70 of his 200 wives. A few armfuls of straw were brought for them to sit upon, and they came, in twos and threes, humbly, with bent bodies and averted eyes, crouching against the farther wall. The Jēggara himself sat a few yards off and watched us apathetically, until, to gratify feminine curiosity, I unrolled my hair and let it down for them to see. He then sprang to his feet and came forward to examine it, while the ladies emitted little gasps of breathless excitement.

In the course of our visit the Jēggara granted our request that we might have the use of the two canoes that had brought us across the river to take us down the Shari. We did not think it wise to tell him then of our wish to take them right across Lake Chad, for no native canoe, other than their own, had ever been allowed by the Buduma to venture on its waters; and, did there seem real cause for fear when we reached the river's mouth, we should have been obliged to wait ourselves until we could obtain Buduma canoes.

We were the more glad to have his consent to this



Lamy on his Travelling Cage.



Type of Kotoko Woman.



Type of Kotoko Woman.



arrangement, and so save the fatigue of riding, for that night Mrs Talbot was stung by a scorpion, which caused her such anguish that she fainted away. The wound was in her arm, which swelled up; it continued to pain her for several days, and for the first few hours it seemed unendurable. One of our French friends, who had previously described to us a similar accident to himself, said it was the worst pain he had ever known, and that if he had not been a man he should have cried.

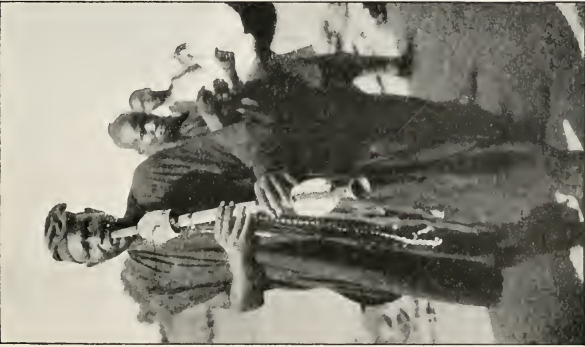
After leaving Gulfei we spent two nights upon the way to Mani, getting exercise and dinner alike by short hunts for gazelle and boar, while the boys pitched camp. On one occasion we attempted to walk during the business hours of the day, those devoted to solid progress, and we got out on to the bank and told the canoes to proceed, for we would rejoin them lower down. For the first hundred yards we congratulated ourselves on our enterprise, for sitting cooped up in a canoe was tedious, and a walk was pleasant, but soon we were confronted by a tangle of bush that looked more penetrable than it was. We tried skirting it, but after a short while our progress was again barred, and we were forced to retrace our steps as best we might to the shore. By the time we got back the canoes were almost out of sight. We pulled off our shoes and stockings and waded out beyond the bushes, but presently the bank shelved steeply, and we did not care to take any risks amongst the huge Shari crocodiles; so we retreated once more, and fired the rifle to summon succour. It was very ignominious, and we felt crestfallen indeed when the polers reached us and we re-embarked.



The zakis were much puzzled by the water, and jumped into it again and again to test its nature, though they always expressed a strong disapproval of its wetness when they had done so. We allowed them to indulge their curiosity by the shore, but when the canoe was in mid-stream fear for their precious lives kept us busy hauling them down from the sides of the boat, so that they might not leap over.

Mani is a Kotoko town on the right bank of the Shari, and is therefore under French influence. It is situated on a high bank, which rises so steeply from the river as to make its ascent a real scramble. Some of the houses boast a broad mud step up to the doorway, and there is every sign of prosperity. The people were unusually pleasant and civil, and the chief combined a simple dignity with an entire lack of ostentation, qualities that are rare in Africa. He is said to possess a great many guns, but he was not a rich man, for when we offered to give him a big dash out of which he was to pay his people for some things we wanted, he said he had no money to give them, and would rather we paid direct.

Our purchases were of musical instruments, which might not be played or parted with except by permission of the chief, though each one belonged to the musician who played it. Amongst them was a clarinet-like instrument, encrusted with cowries on rubber, such as those we had seen in Gauaronga's court. There were four clarinets and three long thin drums with a decided waist, which were struck by the hand. These seven formed one section of the band, while another consisted of three aligatas of varying sizes, and four big round drums; and a third was



A Kotoko Musician.



A Female Musician playing a Calabash Rattle.



Kotoko Drummers.



represented by one snake-skin guitar, hung round with cowries, and two rattles made of calabashes, played by a woman—the only one of her sex whom we ever saw play.

The combination of sounds, played without any heed of each other, was as direful as a brass band and hurdy-gurdy when played at the same moment in some London square. The musicians were perfectly friendly and contented with each other, however, and we could not make out whether they considered there was a connecting link between them, or whether they performed in amicable rivalry. The zakoki protested strongly against the infliction: they fled to the blackest corner of their hut and refused to be comforted, though whether their disgust may in fairness be attributed to a musical ear, I hesitate to say, for they always showed the keenest objection to any music.



SNAKE-SKIN GUITAR.

## CHAPTER XI.

## HAJER-EL-HAMIS—THE PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE.

(JANUARY 23-25.)

HAJER-EL-HAMIS—the place of pilgrimage—is situated on the south-eastern shore of Lake Chad, within a day's journey from Mani. We had heard much of its beauty and interest, and were determined to go there, so the chief sent two boys to guide us. The march was a long one, through flat sandy country, for we were on the verge of the desert. In the afternoon we saw a good deal of game, and when on one occasion Mr Talbot had gone off to hunt Senegal hartebeeste, his wife, while waiting for him, sought cover in the shelter of some bushes. Suddenly the glint of spears arrested her attention, and as she watched—herself unseen—she saw that their movements depended on her husband's. When he walked forward their bearers did the same, and when he turned they dropped down in the long grass, but each time the distance between them was lessened.

It was a curious pursuit. Of course it was possible they merely meant to share the excitement of the sport, but why did they take such care to sink out of Mr Talbot's sight? Surely as huntsmen they would

wish him to know just where they were. She cast about for other motives, and presently it struck her that a white man, quite alone, as he seemed to be, would appear to the natives an easy victim; and she remembered how the French authorities had warned us not to go farther east than Hajer-el-Hamis. Every year one or two white men to the east of the lake had been murdered, and perhaps the recent fighting in Wadai had aroused fanatical tendencies farther west.

I had ridden on ahead, and all this while Mrs Talbot was alone, but now I returned to join her, and she told me what she had seen. Frankly nervous, we chanced her husband's wrath and rode forward to seek him, for by this time both he and his pursuers were out of sight. We found him coming towards us, in complete ignorance of what had occurred, and no more was seen of the suspicious huntsmen.

We persuaded him not to hunt again while in that neighbourhood, and we all kept together, for as we rode we heard the beat of drums tapping out the news of our approach from one village to another, and the few people we passed were surly and unfriendly.

The character of country now changed, and from open tracts we passed into low tangled woods that shut from our sight the hills of Hajer-el-Hamis, which, when we first saw them in the dim distance, we had taken for a cloud of smoke rising above the trees.

The mimosa wood closed in, and branches stretched out from either side, and caught hold of us as we forced our way along the narrow path that traversed

its dense growth. Suddenly the thicket ended, and we saw a smooth sheet of water lapping lazily on sandy banks, where water-birds settled ere they sought shelter for the night in a fringe of reeds. A bar of glittering beams flashed on its surface where the setting sun touched it with his golden rod, and across the little bay the hills of Hamis stood black in the shadow. It was the Lake—Lake Chad!

The Spirit of the Lake is Loneliness, and she is clad in grey. Her spell is over all: in the shallows, and the depths; in the sunshine, and in the darkness; in the tracts of water that stretch to the horizon, and on the sandy islands. There is nothing that does not yield allegiance to her sway.

This mysterious inland sea, fed by the waters of East and West, and surrounded by unknown peoples, has drawn the adventurous of all nations. For centuries the lake has been the lode-star of African explorers. They have come, they have seen, they have spoken; but in no wise has the shroud of enchantment been lifted from the Lake, for what she reveals one day she obscures the next; and the riddle of her shallow waters, of her landless islands, of her rushy fastnesses, and even of her timid, wayward inhabitants, will perhaps never be known.

We marched on by her waters, and presently pitched camp in open ground of sand, dotted with asclepias. A few palms were scattered here and there, but there was no tree to give us shelter, and we did not care to go close to the village. We were hardly seated in our chairs before a penetrating tang warned us that Chad mosquitos were about to come and feast upon us. A smoky fire was hurriedly lit, and as we never



ceased to slap our hands and faces the worst extremity of torture was averted.

Meanwhile we heard distant shots, and as some of the boys were behind concluded they had lost the track and were in need of help. A rescue-party was despatched with lamps, and after a long interval voices were heard returning. The flow of language and emphasis of utterance steadily increased till Mastaba reached us, and, with much gesticulation, demonstrated how they had been held up in the narrow path by a hippo. He had a rifle, but was no shot, so he prudently abstained from pointing at the beast, lest he might wound without killing it, and thus incite it to reprisals. Instead he fired into the air, in the hope that the noise would frighten it away, but it only wandered a few yards from the track and returned whenever the boys prepared to pass. Finally they were forced to accept their defeat and break and cut their way through the prickly bush as best they might. Poor things. They were greatly perturbed at their adventure, and came in torn and dishevelled.

Dawn found us at the edge of the lake, gazing out across the little bay at Hajer-el-Hamis, which, though actually but a few hundred feet in height, seems a veritable mountain in that sandy plain, where for several days' journey these rocks are the only eminence. One hill, the highest, stands alone, and it was here that the Ark rested when the Flood subsided. If there are any sceptics who demand proof thereof, let them go to Hajer-el-Hamis with eyes open to the evidence of birds and beasts, for these could hardly have found their way there in such variety and number had it not been for their historic origin.

The name of the surrounding country, too, bears its testimony to the past: Bornu, Bur-Noah = the land of Noah.

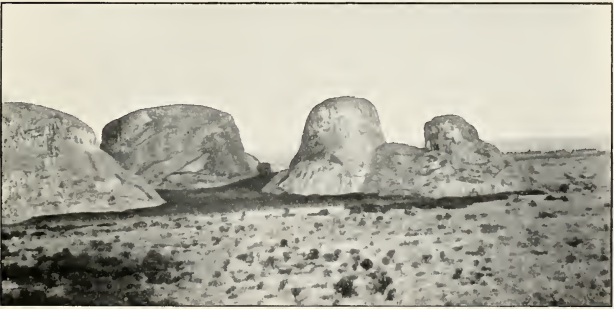
As the name Hajer-el-Hamis denotes, it is a place of pilgrimage, and for centuries men have travelled thither to make sacrifice,—sacrifice that was once of human beings, though humbler offerings are made now, the chief assured us. Once certain pilgrims, who lived not far from Chad, journeyed to Mecca, and when they had come there they made plaint before the Mallam, saying, “See how far we have come, and what we have suffered on the way.” The Mallam made answer, “You had no need to come thus far. In your own country there is a holy mountain where you may worship,” and they retired discomfited.

Till comparatively recently Lake Chad surrounded the hills, and there are traces of water action as high as 50 feet upon them. Therefore the pilgrims made sacrifice in a cave that lies midway towards the summit of one of the three lower peaks which stand in a group apart from the Noah’s Ark hill.

In old times, when a river flowed through the now dry sandy depression of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, pilgrims coming westward would have approached the rocks from thence, landing perhaps not far below the cave itself; but there was peril on the journey, for the Buduma, the reed-men of Lake Chad, brooked no intruders by their shores, and they would sweep down in big fleets of canoes to carry away captive any such strangers. Now the lake has receded, and not only the high lonely peak where Noah first set foot, but the group of rocks with the sacrificial cave, stand in a desert of sand. We approached them therefore by



Hajer-el-Hamis across Lake Chad.



Hajer-el-Hamis taken from the Highest Peak. The entrance to the Holy Cave may be seen to the right.



Entrance to the Sacrificial Cave.



the same way that pilgrims follow now, from the little village half a mile away from the sacred hills.

Nothing grows on the thick sandy soil except high spiky grasses and pale grey fleshy-leaved asclepias. At the base of the hills boulders and tiny stones carpet the ground, and among them small antelope shelter so fearlessly that they did not move till we were close upon them.

The rocks are magnificently rugged. The effect is of irregular fluted columns, intersected by many caves. These are inhabited by strange fluffy owls and millions of blue pigeons, the descendants perhaps of that messenger dove who brought the olive branch to the Ark.

Suddenly the guide pointed to the first of the hills, and there on a shoulder of jagged rock we saw gaping wide the entrance to a vast natural chamber. It was the sacrificial hall. There was no path to it, and we each chose our own way through the wilderness of stone, scrambling from one boulder to another till the ledge was reached. Here we found ourselves opposite an alcove in the rocks, with high seats on either side of a huge window, as one might see in some ancient fortress. The sacred temple lies beside it, large, lonely, and empty. It is light, for there is a narrow slit in the rock, like some bastion window, and at the farther end a broad arch opens wide to the day; but there is no exit, only a small round ledge of rock, and then a sheer drop into space. Slowly we turned and left the cave, retracing our steps till we reached the valley, and then, our minds still filled with pictures of the past, we wandered on amidst the hills.

Suddenly I found myself alone on the rise of a gorge,

where a broad even road led into the heart of a hill. It passed between two great balustrades of rock, and through a vast archway supported by columnar pillars; then a wall of stones barred the passage, stones that had been gathered there by human hands, for here too sacrifice was once made. Beyond them the path bent inwards, and ended in an immense circular hall, walled by sheer cliffs, and roofless. A high tiered balcony ran half round the arena, and on the farther side a shelf of rock jutted out, the canopy to some god's throne. In its splendour and majesty it was a veritable Walhalla, fit setting for the Nibelungen Ring. From the waters of Lake Chad the Rhine-maidens might well have called for their lost treasure; Froh's wondrous rainbow might have bridged the space between one hill and another; and the Walküre assembled with the heroes in that mighty hall. Now it remains glorious in the desolation of the Götterdämmerung.

The Talbots meanwhile had climbed one of the group, and found it burning hot to the touch, and smoke rose from it. Volcanic action was impossible, and probably the strange effect was produced by dust from the burnt grass.

By the time they rejoined me, and we had together completed our survey of the group, Mrs Talbot felt tired, and yielded to her husband's wish that she should go back to camp and rest. He and I, however, were bent on climbing the single peak, the highest of the four.

The natives told us it was impossible, and that no man, white or black, had been rash enough to attempt it, though French scientific expeditions had been there,





One of the Sacred Hills of Hajer-el-Hamis.



Entrance to vast Natural Hall. The rock is about 300 feet high.





and Denham, too, mentions having seen the rocks. We commenced operations by walking round in search of a likely place. Our progress was impeded by the hard, sharp, vicious burr grass that gripped us with a thousand tentacles. It is one of the pests of Africa, and flourished here abundantly, and as its height was far greater than ours, we were thankful when at length we found a spot where ascent did not look wholly impracticable. As it was obviously unnegotiable with boots we took them off, and prayed that the adders might flee before us. After we had scaled two-thirds of the height with comparative ease, foothold ceased. We had already come up smooth faces of rock, but now the gradient was steeper, and it looked so hazardous that we decided not to attempt it. We descended, therefore, put on our boots, and continued our exploration—picking up an occasional porcupine quill as we went.

To the south we started all over again, at a place that looked so hopelessly difficult at the bottom that we concluded—reverse-wise—it must be easy at the top: a very false conclusion, and we slithered, and slipped, and scrambled, and struggled, and had to use every part of our persons, hands, arms, feet, legs, body, and head, to win our way up at all.

Luckily for me, a sheer slope is no place to argue, though had Mr Talbot known how difficult the climb was going to be, he would no doubt have tried to persuade me to give it up.

Perseverance was rewarded, however, and we got to the top. The summit was very narrow, and on the pinnacle was a perched rock, supported at the corners by small stones. Though this formation is not unusual

in Northern Nigeria, there was no similar example in these hills; and, as it looked like an ordinary cairn, I supposed that some one must have preceded us there. The natives, however, adhered to their statement that no man had ever climbed the peak. From very ancient times stones have been considered the symbol of stability, and it will be remembered that Jacob and Laban erected a cairn in commemoration of their covenant in Gilead.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, after all, Noah and his sons had made one here in honour of their landing!

The sun was setting over the lake, whose open waters stretched away into the distance, while soft, mysterious lights played over the surface and contributed to the spell. On the eastern horizon a dark line of islands was just discernible, but these were so low that they hardly broke the level, and whether it was across water or boundless desert that one looked, no hill rose to dwarf it into scale.

Time passed, and we dared not linger lest darkness should overtake us. Our hard-earned experience taught us to avoid the part where we had ascended, and for the first twenty or thirty yards we had reason to rejoice in our cleverness. Then our difficulties began, and two or three times it seemed impossible that we could continue, but there was no time to remount and seek an easier way. The prospect of spending the night where we were had little to recommend it, for not only should we be exposed to hunger and cold, but

<sup>1</sup> Genesis xxxi. 44-46: "Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap."

also to mosquitos, and Mrs Talbot would be very anxious. The thought spurred us to fresh efforts.

Two emissaries from the Chief of Mani had alone dared to accompany us, and it was to the marvellous sure-footedness of one of them that we owed our safe descent. In the worst places he would manage to fix his toes in some crevice and lean his knee against the rock above, and, one after the other, we would hang from Mr Talbot's coat, held by the other boy as far as it would reach, then drop on to his knee, and so reach the ledge beside him. Once as I jumped I heard him entreat me not to do so, but it was too late, and I thought I should sweep him to a horrible doom; but with wonderful luck he recovered his balance, and a moment later we were both in safety.

The bottom was reached, but it was none too soon, for the sun had already set and we were in darkness.

## CHAPTER XII.

ACROSS LAKE CHAD.

(JANUARY 25 - FEBRUARY 7.)



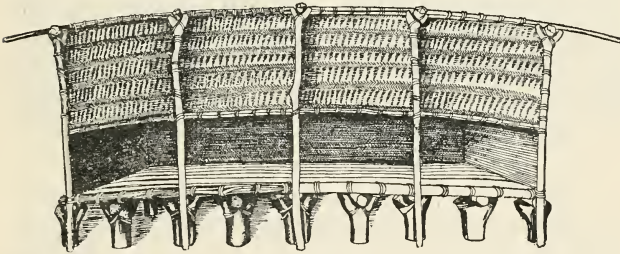
OUR KOTOKO CANOE.

OUR canoes awaited us at Jintilo, a Shua Arab town on the mouth of the Shari, and it was thither that we now bent our steps.

The ride was a dull one, through a country of small depressions, a continuation of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, but the district is full of game, and we heard lions roaring all through the evening. Every now and then we passed large mounds of ash where the natives had burnt the salt plant, which grows in the vicinity. In one place there were so many of these heaps that from a little distance we took them for the ruins of some village.

The Chief of Jintilo is a young fellow, who was elected to that dignity as a child, in honour of the memory of his father and brothers, who had fought

heroically against Rabeh and had lost their lives in so doing. He conducted us to a house that contained a vast bed, the pillars of which are black, and which is made to accommodate eight people. On three and a half sides it is surrounded by fine black woven matting, the mesh of which is small enough to make it mosquito-proof. The remaining half-side is protected by a long piece of cloth, which is pulled down and tucked in after the occupants are in bed. We thought it must be the possession of some great dignitary, but learnt next day that it is an habitual article of furniture. Except for



BEDSTEAD.

the Buduma on Lake Chad this was the only place where we saw natives resort to any such protection against mosquitos; everywhere else a fire in the room was considered sufficient.

A Buduma settlement lies close beside the town. The houses are dotted about without attempt at streets or method, and any big space between them is utilised, either for weaving apparatus made from carved pieces off the canoes, or for the drying of fishing-nets.

There is so much similarity in structure between these and the Arab houses that we strongly suspect the people of having adopted their neighbours' customs.

The fireplaces consist of holes in the floor lined with a special clay, and as the logs of wood are thrust into them from above, a splendid blaze is attained.

The people were delightfully friendly, but their one rather tedious idea of fun was to summon Mr Talbot to shoot huge green-backed crocodiles that crawled out on to a sandy bay just opposite the town. This and the fact that the zakis were in constant danger from big dogs that prowled about our premises, made us glad to end our visit, which had been protracted by icy gales that stopped all river traffic.

When we started for the lake the skies were still grey and overcast, and a bitter wind swept through us, painfully reminiscent of an easterly haar on the Scottish coast. It was the harmattan, which in Nigeria is looked forward to with despair, for it fills the atmosphere with dust, though there is compensation in the coolness brought by a veiled sun and steady breeze. These conditions recur regularly in Nigeria, but in the Southern Chad territories the French experience them so slightly that an official for some years resident at Fort Lamy had never even heard of the harmattan. We shivered with cold as the canoe was paddled down a mouth of the river, past thickly wooded banks, where creepers hang from the boughs in rich luxuriance, especially one with a small white and wine-coloured flower and a green plum-like fruit, flecked with purple. A great mass of grasses grow along the banks, including a tall fluffy species that crocodiles eat; also quantities of papyrus at least twenty feet high. Various strange birds flitted about, and sometimes a little bay would be covered with them. Behind was the blackness of dense thicket, and, from the top of a tree





A Kanembu Woman.



Guria Buduma Man.



Buduma Girls, Jimtilo.



distinguished by its large red flowers, a big grey baboon watched us out of sight.

As we drew nearer to the lake the vegetation changed, and the character of country became more and more swampy, till a marsh engulfed everything.

Presently we came upon a tiny elevation where the land was dry, and this we found occupied by an encampment of Buduma, who were storm-bound on the shores of the lake. It was the only dry ground, so we too landed.

The place was carpeted with fish-scales, out of which an occasional big, hideous, flat head peeped, with eyes so far apart that it seemed as if they must belong to two fish instead of one. Nets were hung out to dry on wooden posts, and against them shields were propped, behind which men cowered for shelter from the biting wind. Oval wooden frames covered with matting stood beside them. These were Buduma beds, designed as a protection against mosquitos, for the matting is turned in and sand heaped over it after a man has crawled inside. He has to lie in a curled-up position, as five feet by three feet is an outsize for a camp-bed.

Our camp companions were Kanembu and Buduma, who had taken potash—or horse salt, as they call it—to barter at Mani, and were now on their way back to the lake, but owing to the strong wind were unable to quit the shore.

They had had a bad market, for three out of four canoes were still full of potash, and only one had exchanged its load for pots and bowls.

The great mass of potash comes from the mainland to the east of the lake, and the Dugu tribe collect

and sell it to the Buduma, who take it to the markets of Northern Nigeria and the Shari. They hold a monopoly of traffic on the lake by virtue of the terror they inspire, and they would mercilessly pillage any other native craft that ventured upon its waters. They told our Kotoko polers such awful tales that they came and entreated Mr Talbot to let them "live" and return to their own country. As this permission could not be granted and we were afraid they would go without it, he took the precaution to seize their poles and paddles, so that escape was impossible.

The Buduma showed us a personal friendliness that was really remarkable, for while the boys occupied their wind-screens the zakis promptly fell to upon their fish and played with their nets, none of which familiarities did they resent. No doubt we owed this good feeling to the three Buduma who acted as our guides. They had been trading at Mani a few days previously, where the chief detained them to do us service, and luckily they liked us. Otherwise we should not have received the welcome they invariably accorded to us, for it is impossible to believe that the bold and independent Buduma would have been materially influenced by any consideration of gain or loss.

The wind at night amounted to a gale, our tents were nearly blown away, and they could not have stood had we ventured to keep the entrances open. As it was, we fastened everything, though even so the air rushed in at every crevice and beneath the canvas, and we shivered under three blankets.

In the daytime there was a thick mist, and we

shivered also, despite an elaborate wind-screen compiled from our tent ground-sheets; and the poor little lions sought warmth in our beds and baths. These latter, it must be explained, contained a light wicker-basket where we kept our clothes, and this was a favourite spot for the zakis, who there found a soft couch, warmth, and plenty of chewing material at one and the same moment. We felt some reluctance about indulging this taste, for great holes were crunched out of the blankets, and my helmet was nipped through in so many places that it had to be covered with a motor veil, which gave it a more smart than suitable appearance. Later on, when I had carefully hung it high above them, they jumped persistently till they reached it down, and a perforated crown and fragments of pith brim were all that was left. Mrs Talbot was more resourceful than I, for while I sat in helpless despair she turned resolutely to, sacrificed the lining of her tea-gown, got some cotton-wool, which was usually devoted to stuffing birds, and in a trice a respectable helmet was returned to me. I wore it for the rest of the journey, though it required deftness in handling and much cunning to keep it from the clutches of the zakoki.

We were storm-bound on that dismal spot for forty-four hours, unable to walk more than a few yards without getting wet, for though the camp itself was upon sand the surroundings were more or less deep swamp. Hippo groaned and grunted without intermission, the ground was covered with spoor of leopard and antelope, and each evening Mr Talbot went out shooting.

It was difficult country to hunt in, for despite the flatness great clumps of papyrus and rushes concealed the view, and we had to climb on to ant-hills eight feet in height to get a chance of spying. It needed some care, too, to avoid getting seriously bogged, and the mosquitos were beyond all endurance, especially at dusk, when they rose in such clouds as literally to cover us with a black veil. They are a large and hungry species, with all the tenacity of a bull-dog, and are far more formidable than their fine needle-shaped brethren of Hajer-el-Hamis.

The first night Mr Talbot got a water-buck and doe, but we failed to find the doe's body in the marsh: Aji, the gun-boy, prophesied that next day there would be a large gathering of her kind come to mourn her. We scoffed at the idea, but nevertheless hunted in the same direction the next afternoon. As we approached the spot a herd of kob sprang away startled, and as they ran others too took warning. There was, in truth, a large number of game collected round the body.

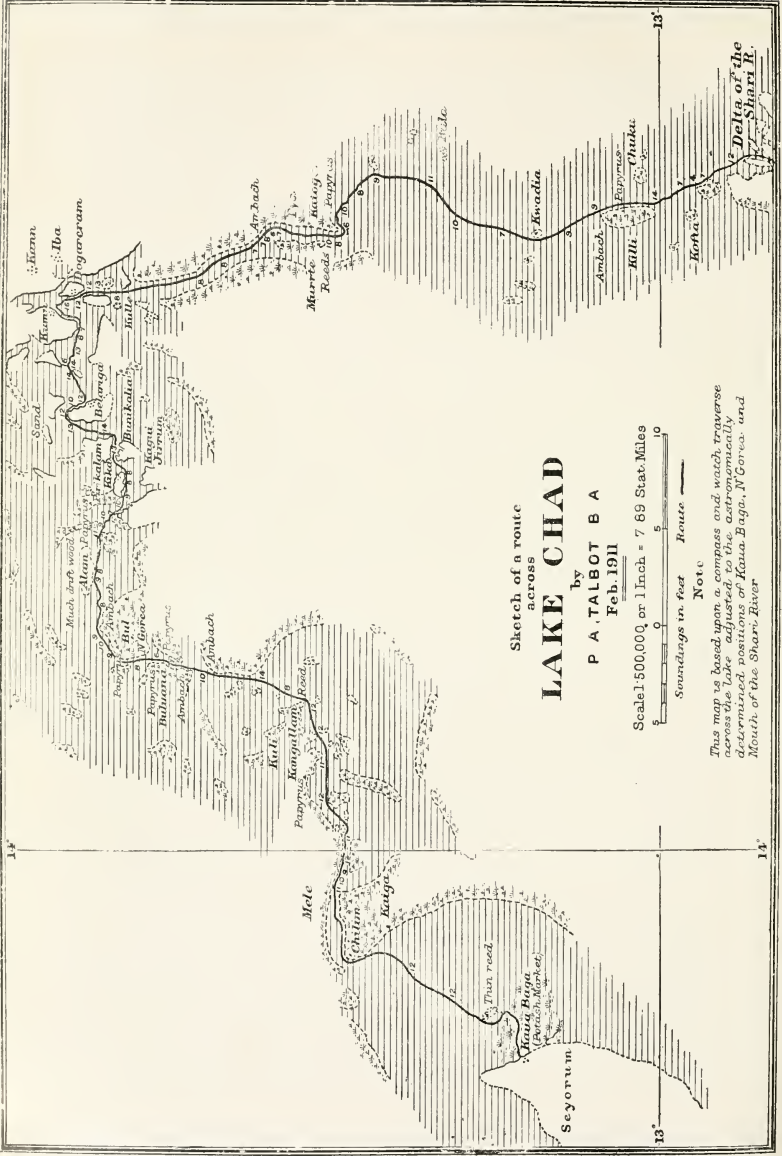
Meantime our Buduma friends had not been idle. In the evening they laid their fishing-nets, and in the morning raised them, to find some ten or eleven fish, averaging 25 to 30 lb. in weight apiece,—a catch with which they were discontented, attributing its poorness to the stormy weather.

There were five different kinds.<sup>1</sup> We collected them together, and photographed a specimen of each. The one to the left was remarkable for its immense teeth, in the middle was a narrow-headed, red-

<sup>1</sup> Some Chad fish are of Nilotic origin, while others come from the western rivers.



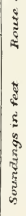




Sketch of a route  
across  
**LAKE CHAD**  
by

P A TALBOT B A  
Feb. 1911

Scale 1:500,000 or 1 Inch = 7.69 Stat. Miles



Note

This map is based upon a compass and watch traverse across the lake adjusted to the astronomically determined positions of Kausa Baga, N'Gores, and Mouth of the Shari River

scaled monstrosity, and next it a cat-fish with huge whiskers. None of these was recommended as delicate eating, but the other two, of the king-fish type, were excellent.

The task we had set ourselves was to traverse the southern portion of Lake Chad. When Lieutenant Boyd Alexander explored the lake in 1904-5 he discovered that it was divided into two distinct parts, and that the barrier of fifteen miles of shrub and rush between one portion of the lake and the other was practically impenetrable. The northern basin is fed by the Yo river. It is smaller, shallower, nowhere more than four feet in depth, and so silted up with mud and rushes that progress is very difficult. The people are shy, and have no intercourse with their southern neighbours.

The southern part of the lake is fed by the Shari. It is bigger and deeper, and in some places the depth is sixteen feet. Our intention was to cross to Kaua Baga on the Northern Nigerian shore—not by the shortest route, but by one that would enable us to visit some Buduma islands on the way.

On the third day the wind had abated a little, and we emerged from the mouth of the river to the open waters of the lake; but we were premature, and breakers swept in on us. Our Kotoko polers had no experience of heavy seas, and as their canoes would sink were they to ship any water, we tied up to some rushes on a tiny sand-bank.

At noon the wind went down, and we set out again, though the pitching was still considerable, while at times the waves ran so high that destruction seemed imminent.

Our lunch had to be limited to what we could hold at the same time as we ate, and we longed for the luxury of fiddles on the table.

We were now well on our way across the mysterious shallow lake that stretched boundless to the horizon,

and, looking back, the land became dimmer and dimmer. Once it was out of sight there was nothing to give point to our progress, except wide-spreading clumps of marea, papyrus, or rush. Where they grow there is no land, and they shake their heads and rustle and nod as the wayfarer passes by.

The marea<sup>1</sup> is a sensitive plant that grows out of a depth of from 6 to 14 feet of water, and varies in height from 16 to 30 feet, its upper branches overtopping the giant rushes and papyrus below. The



MAREA.

delicate grey-green leaves fold up when they are touched, and the flower is like that of an acacia, save that it grows on a single stem and is bigger. The

<sup>1</sup> *Herminiera Elaphroxylon*. Marea=Buduma name. Ambach=Arab name.



The Kotoko Canoe in which we crossed Lake Chad.



Papyrus on Lake Chad.



Some Chad Fish.



blossoms are of a brilliant apricot-gold in colour, and as they fall transform the dull waters beneath.

Our canoes were the only moving things, and the solitude was unbroken even by birds. The Spirit of the Lake had laid her spell over us too, and we paddled onwards, still passengers on that quiet, lonely sea.

When night fell we tied up in a clump of bushes, and we were glad indeed that it was there to give us shelter, for the wind rose once more, and great waves would have swept over us had it not been for the protection given by that little forest of marea.

We were barely settled in the harbourage before a hippo came to dispute it with us, and for a long time we stood, rifle in hand, ready to meet its charge. The "boys" were terrified, for the Shari and Chad hippo are fierce, and one of our polers had had his arm permanently injured in a previous encounter.

The second canoe sought safety by our side, thereby adding grave discomfort to our night, for it contained both drying skins and boys' food, which mainly consisted of rotten fish, for which they have an inexplicable passion.

The hippo seemed content with the annoyance it had inflicted on us and withdrew, but our night was not passed in luxury, for though there was room for us three to lie in a row under the protection of a mosquito-net, water oozed in below and beside us, and Mr Talbot was drenched through twice over. His wife and I were on a little island of straw, dry and happy, but the clothes we had laid at our feet were soaked, and worse still, so were the boxes that contained the botanical collection. The boys had to bale



at constant intervals through the night, and the stench of bilge-water as they did so was overpowering.

We awoke to find the wind too high to admit of our continuing the passage, but when it abated we left our shelter and passed another day and night without sight of land.

Our boat-load consisted of twelve men, our three selves, and several boxes. The two lions spent the day with us, but the night with their personal attendants in the other canoe.

There was an awning over the middle of the boat, and under this there was room for our three chairs and a small folding-table, which was put up at meal-time. Here we sat all day and lay all night.

Our food was little trouble, for we had tinned meats, and vegetables, and bottled fruits for lunch and dinner; sardines, biscuits, and native honey for breakfast—our jam was finished; and hot tea and coffee were the only items that required cooking. Water was easily heated, for cook had a portable fireplace on board, and the only disagreeable from it was when the smoke blew into our faces.

We dined very early, so as to dispense with lights, for we did not dare attract insects into our beds by using lamps, and directly the meal was over blankets were hung from either end of the awning, so that Mrs Talbot and I could wash and undress in privacy. Then we huddled on to the boxes outside, while a bed was made in the middle, and early in the morning the same process was repeated.

All this while we had seen no living thing, but on the third day, at sunset, we reached the island of Kumu, and then the joy of setting foot on land made





Looking through the Doorway of a Buduma House, Kumu.



View from a Sand-Dune on the Island of Kumu.



us, for the time being, insensible to the sharp, scratchy burrs<sup>1</sup> which adhered to our clothes and spiked our persons, and made life a burden to us and to the zakis.

We camped beneath a tree on a slope of the shore, in default of any firmer ground. Had a wind arisen the tents must have collapsed, for our tenure was no more secure than a house of cards, as the pegs had no purchase in the thick sand.

Behind us lights flickered, showing where the township lay, but stillness was over all, and even the headmen who came down to give us welcome seemed more like shadows than human beings.

The following morning we awoke to see a sand-dune, some 60 feet in height, above us. It took us by surprise, for we had pictured the islands as a dead level of flatness, over which the waters were driven by the force of the wind. The view it enabled us to obtain showed, however, a similar rise and fall in the surrounding islands, and on the rare occasions when the lake floods the towns, retreat is always possible to one of these eminences.

Little else but grass, asclepia, the native salt-bush, and the karraka is seen in these long stretches of sand. The latter, though scrub in character, is the largest tree that is found in the islands of Lake Chad, and is worshipped by the Buduma, probably on account of the shade it affords them from the heat of the sun. They will neither cut nor burn it, and its leaves are used to make important medicines. When a man wants either wives, children, or cows, he gets the medicine man to grind some corn in a bowl, to which

<sup>1</sup> Cenchrus.

he adds milk, and then buries the whole in the ground under the sacred tree.

We went down to the village, where widely scattered, low, thatched huts stand in a desert of sand. Wind-screens, made of rush or straw, or both, surround them. They overlap at the entrances, so that no point may be exposed to the direct blast of a storm. In each of these enclosures is a sun-shelter, open all

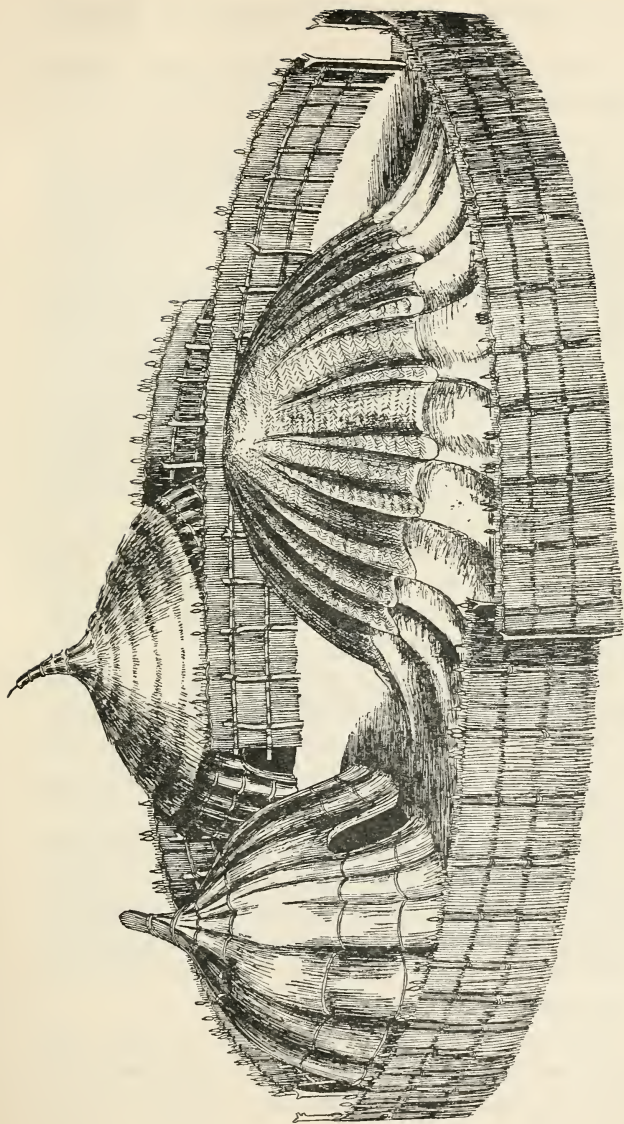


BUDUMA COMPOUND.

round. Beneath it people squat, and on it is kept an assortment of calabashes and other household gods. Near-by is the matting-covered sleeping-place, already described, though here, where they are permanencies, they are bigger than in camp.

In the dry season, however, people do not use them, for mosquitos are not so numerous.

We visited many of the houses, despite the difficulty of getting in and out. The doorways, which slope slightly inwards, are only two or three feet in height,



BUDDHA COMPOUND, SURROUNDED BY WIND-SCREEN.

so that, though one can, by exerting great agility, pass through them on one's feet, it is more comfortable to crawl on hands and knees. As the place is spotlessly clean, there is no drawback to this method. Inside is another wind-screen, close to the doorway, or, more commonly, by the bed, to which it gives privacy as well as shelter.

There is little to be found in the houses except grass-pots, so closely woven that milk is kept in them as well as grain. When a girl intends to propose she weaves one of these with elaborate patterns, and sends it to the man she wishes to marry. If he accepts it, they are regarded as an engaged couple. In one house there was a tiny pot that seemed too small for possible use. This, we were told, was a milk-bottle for a piccan when it was weaned. It is the custom for the mother to live with her mother until the child is of an age to feed itself, when they return to the father's house.

The Buduma are a fine people, tall and well-made, and their length of reach is especially remarkable. The women are good-looking, but the men are not, though perhaps it is their habit of shaving the head that makes them so unsightly.

They wear long robes, often almost dropping off with decay, and each man has an amulet in a little leather case which hangs on his breast. He often wears a single metal ring in the form of a crescent in the left ear; while the women hang as many rings as is possible in both ears.

Both sexes wear bracelets of iron or brass; the latter are of peculiarly fine design, and look as if they were studded with vast nails. Numbers of bead





Framework of Mosquito-Proof Bed.



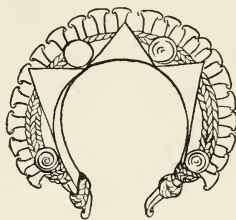
Buduma Hut.





necklaces are worn, many of which are of Venetian make.

The Buduma are divided into three races — the Guria, with whom we then were, a pastoral people; the Madjagodia, with whom we spent the following day, and the Maibulua, both fisher-folk. They come of common ancestors, speak the same language, and intermarry — a Buduma woman never marries outside these tribes, but a man will often have a Kanembu wife on the mainland, though she may not accompany him back to the islands.



BRASS BRACELET.

Though they call themselves agricultural and pastoral, none of the Buduma trouble much over any industry, for their slaves do the hard work and the distant fishing.

These “niggers,” as a slave is called in pidgin-English, are kindly treated, and form part of a man’s household, generally as his servants, though sometimes he will marry one. Though a poor man may be without any slaves, the average citizen owns two or three.

Our Buduma guide told us that they have a regular trade with the Kotoko, who capture and retail the natives of Ham, Niellim, Sara, and the country still farther south — sending them down the Logone and Shari rivers to the Buduma on Chad.

It is understood that no Kotoko, Arab, or Fulani may be enslaved.

The Buduma himself is a regular dare-devil buccaneer, and obtains much wealth from raids on the main-

land, principally on the Northern Nigerian shore, whence he carries off goats, cattle, and slaves. His principal victims, the Kanuri, do not dare to venture on the lake, but retaliate, when this is possible, on shore.

It is agreed, however, that for the purposes of trade the market of Kaua Baga shall be neutral ground.

When we left the lake we asked one of our Buduma friends to accompany us a few miles inland so that he might make us some models of papyrus canoes. He came after stipulating for our protection both there and back, and it was amusing to see the insolent swagger with which he walked the town of Kaua, as much as to say to the disgusted citizens, "Curs, you long to lay hands on me, but you daren't,"—and he loved to watch their expressions of hate and disgust.

Even were the Kanuri a water-folk it would be no easy task to conquer the Buduma. A large fleet would be required, properly victualled—they would have great difficulty in finding a passage through the thick sedge and mud near the shore; and, being ignorant of the intricate waterways, they would be in constant peril of ambush from behind the tall clumps of marea and papyrus. Were they to light upon a Buduma town in sufficient force to destroy it, even then they would have inflicted but little damage, for its inhabitants could easily elude pursuit, and, when the enemy had gone, return to repair the damage done.

So great is the feeling of security in the isolation of Lake Chad that refugees from the mainland come regularly to the islands—mainly from the north and east.

By religion the Buduma are half Fetichist, half Mahomedan. They say that the first people came out



Guria Buduma Mother with her Children.



A Kanembu and Guria Buduma.





Madjagodia Buduma Women, Bulariga.



Madjagodia Buduma, Bulariga.





of the ground at Chad, and probably this belief owes its origin to the Arab legend of the landing of Noah's Ark on Hajar-el-Hamis. They have little second-sight, and that only in dreams; but they are very superstitious, and make medicines from the skins and parts of the bodies of goats and fowls. They also have love-philtres, of which there are two kinds, one that is rubbed on the skin and another that is drunk. They are most careful after cutting their hair and nails to hide the *débris* in the ground, lest an enemy should find and use them to make bad medicine against their erstwhile owner. Equal care is taken to perform the same office for a man after death, when he is washed in hot water and dressed in white garments, and for one day the women make ceaseless lamentation for him. A hole is then dug in the ground, which is surrounded with boards, and he is laid in it on his side, with his hands between his knees. They believe that after death all men go to the sky.

The elder son inherits the greater portion of his father's wealth—from a rich man as many as ten cows—his biggest spears and shields, &c., while the residue is divided among the younger children.

The wives always go to the brother of the deceased, who also inherits part of the fortune—amounting to one half if a man dies before his children are grown up.

It is not perhaps odd, under these circumstances, that divorce is frequent, and all the deserted husband exacts from the successful lover is the value of what he has paid for his wife. The law, however, is strict, and if a child is born out of wedlock it is drowned, in order to propitiate the deity—otherwise “the crops will not yield good harvest and the cattle will not bear

young." The bridegroom has to pay a good deal on marriage. He gives the father of the bride two oxen and two cows, the mother five dollars, and the bride herself one cow in milk. She gets from her parents "two robes, two trousers, four mats, and two small women niggers." A man gives his wife a cow at the birth of each child, and at the birth of twins prayers are offered and there is great rejoicing.

A wealthy man will own four or five wives. A big play is held for three days to celebrate a marriage, at the end of which the wife goes to her husband; there is much feasting, but no mention is made of spirituous drink, and in the course of our visit we found no trace of it.

The Guria people told us that the French had landed at Kumu eight years ago, and that since that time they had seen no white man. Evidently they had treated them with official reserve, for they do not wish to encourage intimacy with their suzerains. Their relations with us were, however, very cordial, and a man who, by gesture, clasped us to his heart, was indicative of the welcome we received generally. It was even more enthusiastic after we had crossed the dark waters of Amai Silim, where at the Madjagodia town of Bulariga the people organised a dance for us. The men and women stood in rows opposite each other, and the women swayed to and fro, clapping their hands softly together to give rhythm to the reiterated interval of a third, sometimes major, sometimes minor, which they hummed as a sort of accompaniment. The men meanwhile held their long robes in their hands and danced and leaped mightily. It is a curious fact that this primitive humming is the only music known to the



A Madjagodia Buduma Dance.



Buduma Cattle.



Buduma. They "no savee" singing, nor do they possess an instrument of any kind.

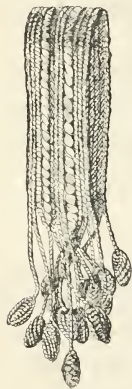
Passage is peculiarly easy between the islands, for both men and women use floats made from the ambach wood. These are about eight feet in length, as thick as a man's leg, and a great deal lighter than cork. One end is curved, and acts as a prow; it rises a few inches out of the water and cuts through it at great speed. The Buduma bestrides and propels it with an over-arm action, at the rate of a fast runner. It is said to require great nicety of balance, and the novice finds it extremely difficult to retain his seat, though, like bicycling, once the art is acquired it is never lost.

This custom is not confined to the Buduma: one hears of it on the Upper Nile and on the sacred lake of Dahomey, and it will be remembered that Homer described how "Odysseus bestrode a single beam, as one rideth on a courser, . . . and fell prone into the sea, outstretching his hands as one eager to swim." The Buduma avails himself of the lightness of these ambach floats to carry one with him as his constant companion, so that he may "walk for water" or land at will; nor does he refrain from fear of crocodiles. There are some in the lake, but they do not seem to molest humans, and we neither saw one nor heard of any accidents. The danger is from djinns 100 feet long, for if a man should inadvertently set eyes on one, the djinn slaps him in the face, so that he dies.

There are countless waterways in this part of the lake, between island and island, making it like a gigantic Venice. It seems curious that the Buduma

have no method of signalling from one to the other of the islands, particularly as the system of signalling is in general use throughout this part of Africa.

Despite the fact that some of the compounds contain tiny plots of kitchen-garden where tobacco is grown, the sandy soil affords little nourishment to plant or beast. The cattle are therefore sent for pasturage to cow-towns—*islands* that have richer vegetation, probably because they are flat and therefore more exposed to inundation. They are uninhabited, except by herdsmen, who come occasionally to stay in tiny little shielings. These stand but 4 to 5 feet in height, and face south-west, so as to escape the piercing north-east wind.



PAPYRUS FILLETS.

The cattle are humpless and somewhat like Ayrshires. A great deal of attention is devoted to their appearance—their ears are frilled, and for full dress they wear large papyrus necklaces with pendants attached. Certain of the East African tribes deck their cattle in the same way, and so did the poorer Egyptians centuries ago. The cows we see represented on ancient papyri are wearing elaborate jewelled fillets. When

milk is wanted a messenger is sent to the cow-town to obtain it. Goats and a few wizened little fowls remain on the principal islands, where they pick up a precarious living as best they may.

The cow-towns made a great appeal to our imaginations, and we therefore determined to stop at one named Kika, some four hours distant from Bulariga; and there—in the language of the “boys”—once more



Madjagodia Buduma, with an Ambach Float.



Buduma Swimming on an Ambach Float.





“sleep for ground” before continuing our landless passage to the Northern Nigerian shore. We could not afford time to linger on the lake, and accordingly the next day found us at Kika.

When we landed Mrs Talbot and I went out on a shell-collecting walk, and found fourteen different varieties, including one very odd little fellow that was as curly as a French horn. We had hardly started before a hare got up beneath our feet, and in another moment we came upon leopard and gazelle tracks. Our amazement was great, for Kika is in the centre of big open water, and miles away from the mainland. The Buduma told us there was only one other island with gazelle on it. We sent to tell Mr Talbot, who got his rifle, and in the course of a few moments saw a dama gazelle, some tiny gazelle, and one that in shape, colour, and size looked like a red deer, though its horns were ringed and curved outwards and up. Mr Talbot stalked it, but, alas! in vain; while I, being weaponless, crouched down behind clumps of grass to watch. Presently it came back and lay down within fifty yards of me. I crawled to within twenty yards before it saw me; then it rose, looked full at me, stamped, and walked slowly off. The species was not recorded in our big-game book, which made its escape exceedingly hard to bear; so a drive was organised next morning, and we walked the island in line. Our task was difficult, for the beaters were untrained to the work and did not realise their importance, so that the mass of game we saw escaped into a big swamp that flanked the north and east of the dry land. The island is about three-quarters of a mile broad and two miles long. Mr Talbot very

soon got a kob, however, and then Mastaba, in eager excitement, ran up to me and murmured "nama-nama," the Hausa word for animal. I looked, but could see nothing but hummocks of thick grass and scrub stretching away to where a tangle of bush denoted swampy ground. Mastaba pointed eagerly to a tiny tree, and suddenly my eye was arrested by a patch of bright red beneath it, and I recognised no less an animal than the mysterious red deer. I hesitated, to see if it could be driven up the line to Mr Talbot, but that second lost me my chance. Had it remained motionless I might have hit it, but it started running just as I fired. I missed, and a steady gloom fell upon me, undissipated by any further chance. We came upon the skull and one horn of a Senegal hartebeeste, and saw bariwa, which brought up the number of different species of animals that we had either seen or of which we had seen the tracks to nine. We longed to follow into the marsh, but even had it proved penetrable, we could not afford to give the time to it. There were large numbers of birds, particularly egrets and crown-cranes, and many others which were new to us. This island was an exception, for otherwise we saw surprisingly little bird-life,—no doubt they remain in the islands of the north and east.

Again we "lived for water" for three days and two nights—eating and sleeping ravenously in the healthy, bracing air, and enjoying the pure, cold, delicious water, which has little tiny lumps of yellow natron-looking stuff floating on its surface.

On the afternoon of the third day we neared the Northern Nigerian shore at Saiorum—a name that



A Buduma Canoe with Cattle.



A Buduma Canoe far from Land.



is associated with a legend about the origin of the Buduma.

There was a man of the Kanembu tribe named Bulu, whose brother was a holy man and went on pilgrimage to Mecca, but ere he started he recommended his wife to Bulu's care, for his absence would be a long one—even now the pilgrimage takes three years. It is the custom amongst the Kanembu for a man to succeed to his deceased brother's wives, and as time passed and no news came, Bulu assumed that his brother was dead, and he took the supposed widow to himself, though he was conscious of wrong-doing. One day his brother did return, and Bulu did not dare remain to give account of his false stewardship, but fled affrighted to the islands of Lake Chad. No man had ever ventured thus far, and there he led a solitary existence till one day a great wind blew from the west, and presently he saw an object that had been washed against the rushes. He waded out and found that it was a basketful of millet. It reminded him of grain-lands and cultivation, and a life of peace and plenty; so he set out, and landed on that shore that is now called Saiorum. It was in the territory of the Sos, from whom the Kotoko are descended. The chief welcomed him in friendship, and Bulu dwelt with him a certain space. Now the Chief of Sos had a beautiful daughter named Saiorum, after whom the land is called, and she and Bulu loved each other. They had no hope of gaining her father's consent to their marriage, but Bulu had not strength to force himself to leave her, and he remained to bring dishonour on the house that had

harboured him. When the chief knew what had befallen his daughter, he would not allow her to remain with the people she had disgraced, and she and Bulu were together banished to the islands of Lake Chad. From them is sprung the Buduma race.

Within one and a half hours of Saiorum we came to thick rushes, but our Buduma boatmen found a track through them, the existence of which no stranger could have guessed. At times we passed into an open space set in a framework of rushes; and once Mr Talbot, who was sitting in the stern route-sketching, called out that he had seen a flying-fish, and a few moments later I saw another.

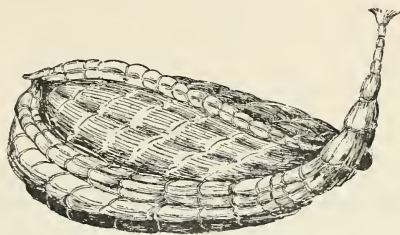
The scene was a patchwork of colour: little yellow flowers—supported on their own bladders, together with the water-violet, made a delicate background for the huge crenelated leaf and fine blossom of some giant water-lily. These carpeted the way, standing high out of the water, and scenting the air with their delicious perfume. There were five or six different varieties, some white, with shell-like pink tips, and others from pale-blue to a deep, almost violet, shade. Our polers dragged them out of the water, not to indulge their æsthetic senses, but to gratify their baser appetites, for they munched up both the seed-capsules and the long, snake-like stalks—a practice they repeated with the rushes, which again closed thick upon us.

Land was near, and through the gloaming we saw the forms of men, and huge horned cattle. We drew closer to them, passing a fleet of papyrus canoes—some little more than 8 feet long, designed for speed and



ease of handling; others big, to carry much merchandise, or perhaps cattle. In a few moments more we had arrived at Kaua Baga, where thousands of people were assembled for a great market.

As we landed we looked back upon our second canoe, which was behind us. It seemed as if it were held in the bondage of



COW CANOE.

reeds,—though, without appearance of labour, it too passed along through the rushes which swayed and bowed and closed up behind it, giving once more the semblance of an impenetrable phalanx.



PASSENGER CANOE.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A TREK THROUGH BORNU.

(FEBRUARY 7-MARCH 1.)



BORNUESE WOMAN.

BAGA means market, and the Baga of Kaua is important, for it is only there that the mainlanders meet on terms of friendship with their Buduma neighbours. It is held every week, and lasts into the second day, for on the first much time is taken by the Government agent, who registers and levies a tax on each slab of potash. Little trade is done in anything but this horse-salt, with perhaps the exception of cattle. Huge thick-horned oxen from Kanem, the long-horned, humped cattle of Bornu, and a smaller Buduma breed, are all here.

It is a picturesque sight to see them, as we did, at night, picketed down two long rows of campfires; a number of men and women grouped round them, all sharing alike in the warmth of the blazing logs. Some oxen are for sale, but most are here, together with quantities of small donkeys, for transport purposes. The donkeys carry four slabs, the equal of two men's loads; the oxen six slabs. The goods are put into two stout cord bags, which are hung one on each side of the animal, thereby saving



A Potash Market at Kaua Baga.



A Buduma Canoe in the Process of Construction.



the long, tedious process of tying up each case with plaited grass rope, which is the practice round Fort Lamy.

In the Chad territories each boy rides the same beast, which is more satisfactory for himself, the owner, and the animal, for disasters rarely occur; and the average distance covered is at least a fourth, and in our experience a third, as much again as that done by the Bornuese cattle.

In Nigeria the cowboy, or woman as the case may be, usually walks behind and drives his animal in front of him, with the result that one a little stupider or wiser than its fellows wanders off the road and scratches its back against some shrub and off come both loads—a feat that is often accomplished even without the help of the shrub.

Five days' experience of these conditions did more to break up our boxes than the previous six months.

No doubt a short-sighted cheapness is gained by the driving method, for it only takes one boy to conduct a number of oxen, though his incapacity is so marked that the economy is more apparent than real.

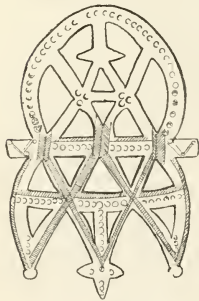
Few white men use bullock transport in Nigeria, for they find oxen undependable, and carriers, or labourers as they are here termed, are reliable for continuous work.

We bought some cattle, and they paid us, though it was disappointing that the beautiful, long-horned beasts were not as good carriers as their smaller, uglier brethren.

Probably it is not an invariable law that the white official has to examine each bullock as it passes through

his station, to see if it is fit for work, but in Bornu this was the task of the Resident at Gujiba. It must be a severe tax upon him and a very unpleasant addition to his duties, and one too that requires a good deal of knowledge, for most of the cattle have scars that tell of once sore backs even though they be healed and painless now.

Our tents were pitched in the very middle of Kaua Baga: over 1000 people had assembled to attend the market, and in the morning we wandered amongst them, taking photographs and offering a price for any personal possession we coveted. Mr Talbot was soon surrounded by a mob thrusting a medley of objects upon him—spears, toe-rings, pincers, shields, and ambach floats. Also Buduma canoes, that were there in process of construction, but their weight, even in the dry state, was too great to admit of carriage, so we contented ourselves with purchasing models.



HAIR ORNAMENT.

The women were hideous: some had partially shaven heads with a centre-piece of wool. Another style of coiffure, the Kanembu, is sometimes finished with a series of metal rings hung one below the other. All round the lobes of the ears rings are worn, also made of metal, or, where this fails, of string, and sometimes a cylindrical bead of imitation coral is added.

In contrast with the interesting races amongst whom we had lived since entering French Ubangi,



Women at Kaua Baga.



A Kanembu Coiffure.





the Kanuri struck us as a dull people with little initiative.

The town of Kaua, as apart from the market, was our destination for that evening, and we were told that it was not much beyond a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours' march; but it proved to be 17 miles distant, and the road was so thick with sand that the carriers did not straggle in till 11 P.M., though they had started about 3.

The track is broad, and leads on and on in dreary straightness through a desert country, the level of which is only broken by asclepias. Their juicy grey-green leaves conform to the general monotony of tint, which is accentuated here and there by the brighter brown of burnt grass. By Government regulation no men may hunt here, for a vast sanctuary has been made for the protection of big game, and especially of elephant. Herds of Senegal hartebeeste, antelope, and gazelle gazed at us from the side of the road, as if conscious of their security.

Presently we passed a big trading caravan, carrying potash from the Baga to sell at other markets, which succeed each other at the distance of a day's march right along the road. The sun was setting and each moment we expected to reach our destination, so when I heard loud cries and laughter, I hopefully remarked to my companions that women's voices must mean the neighbourhood of some town. They corrected me at once,—it was the laugh of a hyena I had heard.

Mimosa and other low-tangled growth precluded our approach to a bahr and bigger trees, but we had still some miles to go, and when at last we rode into Kaua we were famished and exhausted. The chop

box was far behind, but the chief had sent us a dash of eggs and milk. Luckily washerman's wife had a bowl in which to boil them. They were not appetising, for large skins formed on the milk, and the eggs were without salt, but we were hungry and devoured them eagerly. At least they had the advantage of being easily eaten without plates or spoons.

We wasted no time on the way, but marched quickly on to Maifoni, through Mongonu, Dubala, and Massu, along the same broad, straight, sandy road. Its surface is occasionally bad with a sort of hard, black, caked shale, and at no time is it safe for unconsidered galloping, as it is perforated with jackal holes and dotted with ant-heaps.

One day we had trouble with the little cubs, who, though three months old, still travelled in the same basket. Lamy remained the bigger and stronger, and as ill-luck would have it he chose one hot morning to sit on his brother's head. At the mid-day halt poor little Kusseri emerged sick and sorry, and as he was little better when the march had to be continued we made a stretcher for him out of a Buduma shield, and Mandara—the zakis' special attendant—carried it. It meant an extra carrier to take Lamy, and, to his shame be it said, the labourer selected proved unworthy of the honour, set down the cage, and fled "for bush."

When I rode up poor little Lamy had bitten his way out and was wandering about all by himself. I dismounted at once, and the moment he saw me he rushed to me and flung his arms round my neck.

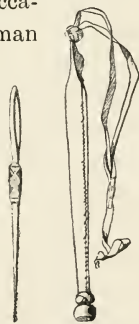
The Government Agent, who was with us, meanwhile searched some houses near by for a man to

take the runaway's place. The youth chosen declined the honour, and when pressed waxed passionate and declared himself "fit to kill a man," for which ebullition of temper his spears were smashed—a temporary disarmament, as the wooden shafts are easily replaced.

I then stepped forward and indicated that a man must be found who would enjoy the privilege, and one was produced wreathed in smiles and gesticulating his anticipated bliss—but he was a base deceiver and fled also. The next was not trusted, so a horseman rode on either side of him, and Lamy concluded the march in dignity, with the exclusive attendance of two cavaliers and one footman.

The little lions were very light burdens, but they sometimes walked about their cages, and this no doubt upset the balance and made it awkward for their bearers; and even Mandara and Small Mastaba, their two guardians, later on pleaded an occasional headache, so that some other man might take a turn at carrying the precious loads.

Except on the march the lions were always free and used to scamper about wherever we were, jumping up and kissing us all, but especially Mr Talbot, whom they adored. Their trouble was from burrs, which are so great a pest in Bornu that pincers are made on purpose to extract them—and an untended dog may become really ill or even die from their effects. The cubs used to get full of them, and would officiate on each other, gently pulling them out with their teeth, and much of our time was spent in the same



PINCERS AND SHEATH.

humble office, though we used our fingers for the purpose. They were just like kittens, and loved playing ball with any round fruit, or doing tight-rope walking on the narrow edge of some wall. Sometimes they would climb a tree and get above our reach on a perfectly straight stem, and they would stalk each other or anything else with wonderful finesse.

A horse's tail they used to find an alluring toy, and strangely enough their familiarities were never resented. They were a nuisance on two points: they would kill fowls and pigeons, and often added insult to injury by bringing them under our beds to devour; and they gently munched pieces out of our clothing whenever we were not looking. Once Lamy occupied me in front and Kusseri jumped on my back from the rear, and before I could shout the magic word of "Kai," which always had the effect of quelling them, he had bitten a great piece out from an unpatchable place. That dress had to be discarded, and only those who have been reduced to four well-worn washing dresses, with weeks and months of wear before them, can realise the anxiety of it.

Our entry into Maifoni was a very quiet one: no crowned head to greet us, as at Tchekna, with his guard of horsemen, and no white man either—a sharp contrast to our welcome in the Kamerun and throughout the Chad district. The natives seemed uncivil: neither they nor the soldiers on guard accorded us a salute, as is the almost invariable custom in other parts.

Mastaba was greatly disturbed, and begged us to assert our dignity by riding in the centre of the road. It was a nuisance, but we did as he wished right through the big model town of Maiduguri, a







modern city that has obtained importance by the action of the British Resident, who found it convenient that the Shehu (King) of Bornu should move his court from the ancient capital, Kukaua, to the neighbourhood of the adjacent fort at Maifoni. The latter lies at one end of a ridge, along which are other bungalows, for five white men are quartered here—the Resident, his assistant, a doctor, and two officers, one of whom is often away on service.

Our native guide took us to the Assistant Resident's house, who had been good enough to vacate it for our accommodation. Naturally we did not like to put him to this inconvenience, and sent next day to ask that zana shelters should be erected for us beneath a big tree a quarter of a mile from the fort, away in the open plain.

As near as may be, the rent (10s. for ten days' occupation) was one-quarter of the purchase price of the house, exclusive of the building fee of 10s., which we paid in either case. I mention this, as it was the one opportunity we had of gauging house rents in Africa.

The Maiduguri market is large and famous for its excellence, and we can testify to its attractions, for I alone bought over 200 objects, and the Talbots many more besides. It is laid out, as is the town, in model style. Streets of stalls are arranged according to trades, and are divided by broad walks—the leather work in one place, saddlery in another, metal in another, where spears and knives are turned out in



SPUR.

rapid succession by smiths behind them. There were pots being painted, straw plates being plaited, dolls of mud and honey being shaped and mounted on sticks. In a separate street old clothes and meat are sold—disgusting objects in fitting juxtaposition.



DOLL.

A medicine-man crouched before one of the stalls, his clothes almost concealed by the mass of amulets that hung over his person, and on his head was a leopard skin with the claws dangling against his ears. He “lived for fear” when we first asked leave to photograph him, but, luckily, he thought better of it.

During our stay General Wilkinson arrived at Maifoni on a tour of military inspection. We had already met him for a few minutes at Mongonu, and he was kind enough to invite us to witness the ceremonial visit the Shehu was to pay him at the fort. The message did not reach us till rather late, so we had not full opportunities of taking photographs, and those printed are from some taken on that occasion, and generously given to me by the Intelligence Officer of Northern Nigeria, Captain Howell.

The Shehu was in the centre of a long line of horsemen, the prevailing tints of their robes being carmine and white. Some of the horses were caparisoned with long quilted cloths that reached to the fetlock, and were so thick as to be proof against arrows, while others were further protected by brass or tin nose-pieces.

Three or four hundred horsemen must have taken part in the ceremony, but there were few footmen.



Maiduguri Market.



Medicine Man.



Those there were formed a guard to the Shehu, and looked imposing in their uniforms of white and red, though in one case green instead of white trousers peeped below the riga.

The Shehu's little heir, Kiari, looked very dignified, in the middle of a wing of horsemen, with his immediate bodyguard of eight or nine men clad in coats of chain-armour. He was dressed in a yellow robe, and held a small gun in his hand, its stock resting on the broad shovel-shaped stirrup.

The Shehu is a tall, pleasant-looking man, and, as at Tchekna and Gulfei, a huge parasol was held above him. His silver tissue dress was magnificent, and he wore a black-and-gold scarf over his head.

It was a fine sight to see these gorgeously apparelled men, each holding his spear, file past the General. Each dignitary of war or state headed his own cavalcade, and in an honourable position amongst them was the medicine-man.

The General's visit was in every way satisfactory. He was delighted with the efficiency of the troops under Captain West's command, and he afforded us the chance of seeing the Shehu, as also of renewing our friendship with Major Rose, who had come north from Lokoja to escort the General round the district.

Major Rose very kindly lent me a pony, as mine had collapsed under its week of holiday, or, to be more accurate, under its groom's holiday, for a sore back could not have come except by miracle to an unriden horse. Mr Talbot's boy was convicted of the offence of which mine also must have been guilty, for while riding his master's animal it kicked and pitched him

off, and he broke his wrist. Luckily for him, he was received in hospital.

Dr Inness and Captain West were both very kind to us. The former has a really nice bungalow, and the flowers in its big garden are a great feature. He gave us each a sprig of mignonette. The scent brought back my thoughts to home, and there flashed upon me the picture of many English gardens, and even conversations of no particular import which yet were associated with that fragrance.

The doctor had a disagreeable task before him, that of shooting pariah dogs, for hydrophobia was suspected, and on a previous occasion cases had been reported. He sought in vain for a companion in this task, but no one would accompany him.

Mr Talbot had to return with all possible haste to his duties in Southern Nigeria, so we doubled marches, and pressed on down the broad sandy road on our first stage to Nafada. The regulation length for a march in Northern Nigeria is seventeen miles, a lesser speed than the French habitually travel, but then we have not got their superior bullock-transport.

It was the height of the dry season, and most of the trees had lost their leaf, though some remained in foliage in defiance of the general law. Ebony grows here, though not to a size to be of commercial value, but it is sometimes used to support the roofs of houses. Huge-trunked squat baobabs were landmarks in the dull level of sand and burr-grass, and their thick mauve-shaded trunks and dull-green fruit were of exquisite colouring.

A great deal of traffic goes along this road, and we often passed big and small caravans of oxen and





Kiari, Heir to the Shehu of Bornu.



The Retinue of the Shehu of Bornu.





donkeys travelling to or from some market. The traders do not have an easy time, for water is scarce. There are usually wells at the villages, but at the township of Marguba there are none, and each carrier is charged 3d. for one bowlful—a statute price that is a heavy draft on the 9d. which he receives for a full day's work.

From Gujiba to Mutue there is a long march, twenty-four miles, and there is no well on the way. Nor are there trees big enough to give shelter in the noonday heat. It would seem an easy matter to erect shelters of zana mats, where travellers could rest for the four hottest hours between eleven and three, but there are none, and the caravan plods on, men and beasts with downcast eyes and nodding heads, in dull acceptance of an unpitying fate.

Knives and spears are both carried, for there is no security on the road, and every man goes armed.

As we passed by a small knot of men were gathered together at the corner of a field—they were burying a trader lately murdered. He had paid the penalty of prosperity. The people told us that the villagers were responsible, but the Resident at Gujiba said it was more probably due to a raid of the Maragi, who are not yet fully subdued, and who often act highway-men along the Bornu road.

Between twenty and thirty miles from Marguba is a beautiful town named Gabai. It is inhabited by a tribe called Ngassar, who say they came from the town of Ngusseri, near Constantinople, some 330 years ago. They are Mahommedans, but they have a peculiar practice of early morning worship. Each "good" man has a pot let into the ground, which is exclusively

his own. Every morning he pours water into it, prays beside it, and then uses the water thus sanctified to wash himself. In the Ajia's compound we saw five pots, of varying size as in the story of the Three Bears. The largest was for himself, the next largest for his "big" wife, a lesser one for his "small" wife, and a tiny and tinier one for his two daughters. Thus this little household perform their devotions regularly side by side, but the "foolish" don't trouble.

Gabai is protected against invasion by two deep fosses and three mud walls, one within the other, through which there are loopholes for men to shoot with bows and arrows,

Without are beds of onions, irrigated from a well at the corner of each small enclosure.

Inside are houses of diverse architecture—some of mud, some thatch, some square, some round, some high, some low; and the granaries are doubly protected, being made of mud surmounted by thatch.

Zana mattings surround the compounds, and give the appearance of enclosed streets, which by their narrowness add to the grandeur of the one broad road which leads from the main gateway to the palace. The whole is shadowed by date-palms, whose graceful growth and golden-brown fruit add to the beauty and prosperous aspect of the scene.

The chief gave us a cordial welcome, and took us to see the house that belonged to his now deceased brother, and his palace. The former contains three wonderful chambers. The first, an outer hall 12 feet in height, has a rafter ceiling supported by one pillar, connected with the walls by arches. The material is mud rubble, and each arch is differently patterned in



Women at Gabai.

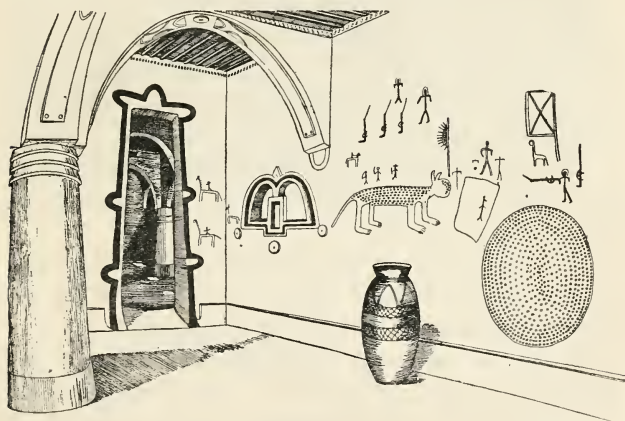
*(The cloth worn by the one to the left gains its glittering appearance from powdered kohl, which is beaten into it when it is wet.)*



Inner Hall of a House at Gabai.



white and black. Light is obtained from above by two narrow slits in the wall, and a line of frieze, moulded by the finger tips in soft mud, runs right round the room. The structure is different to any other we had seen, and the hall is still further ornamented. A niche for lamps is let into the wall, and at the other end of the room is a raised diamond pattern. The rest of the wall is covered with drawings and paintings—



ENTRANCE HALL.

a black-studded shield with brass nails, a wondrous beast, men on horseback, who, as will be seen, stand in order to obviate any difficulty in the disposal of their legs, though one gentleman round the corner has contrived to sit with both his on the same side.

The object that seems, however, to have most fully awakened the artist's instincts is the bayonet, and this is amply represented.

A decorated doorway, 10 feet high, leads into the second hall. Its many pillars and rounded arches

resemble the architecture of some cathedral vault. Beyond this is a court, and then a third room, which is again profusely decorated, and also gaily coloured. Its flooring gives an impression of mosaic, for little bits of broken pots are stamped into the soft mud, though a regular pattern cannot be claimed for it. The artist is said to be a Hausa, who came from the neighbourhood of Kano some twenty years ago.

The Palace is also interesting, and its outer hall is in somewhat the same style. Within are a number of courts that lead one to another, and in the centre of each is a little round hut, which thus has the dignity of standing in its own grounds.

The floor is below the level of the earth, and there is a step down at the entrance. Tiers of pots stand all round the walls.

One court was full of a thick-leaved grass, grown as a medicine for the back, and in another stood the unoccupied house of the chief's late parents.

Round its walls are hung quivers of arrows which belonged to five generations of chiefs, but there is little difference between those used then and now, though the oldest of all show traces of Nilotic origin.

As a general rule, they were designed to overcome the various forms of defence. Long narrow points were used against chain-armour, sharp narrow barbs against thick cloths, and coarser heads against thin raiment—though in the last generation some are found with very heavy shafts.

It must be remembered that a scratch of the skin may be as effective as a deep wound, for all these arrows are poisoned. The chief very generously gave us a selection from each bag, together with his own





RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF ROOM.



LEFT-HAND SIDE OF ROOM.

quiver, which has a small outside pocket, where that form of arrow which he expects to want is kept in immediate readiness.

His armoury was very good, and numbered, besides long spears with four-bladed heads, some old pistols. The stock of one has a human head carved on the wooden handle, and is certainly native. It is now in Mr Talbot's our possession.

A dance was held in our honour. The performers were all of the female sex, and arranged themselves methodically in a long row according to height. Three drummers—men—stood about 20 yards in front, and to their accompaniment each girl or woman glided down a slight slope, made two or three graceful turns opposite the musicians, waving the while great lengths of dress that would otherwise have swept the ground, and which hung straight from the bust. The moment they had performed these evolutions they walked back to the starting-point, and formed once more into a long row.

When everyone had finished their turn, the drummers advanced, beating their instruments with increasing ardour till they came right up to us, and yelled and shouted our praises.

Then a new measure was danced. The graceful glide was replaced by a slide and hop, and on reaching the band each performed the back-to-back motion of Sir Roger de Coverley with the dancer immediately preceding and following her. A crowd of people had collected to watch, the enjoyment of the dancers grew more keen, and we began to wonder whether there was any end to the performance. At last we gave up that hope and returned to camp, trusting



A Cow-Fulani Woman.



A Kanem Ox.



that our kindly entertainers were not offended by our lack of zeal.

Next day we continued our march, and found the road beyond Gabai was far more beautiful than that we had just traversed. The depressions and iron-stone rocks that had varied the scene the previous day now became actual hills, and the road led across a path so steep and stony that it was difficult for the horses.

The Kerri-Kerri hills became visible to the north and the Bagi hills to the south, and the slopes and valleys were well wooded. Acacia and mimosa grew everywhere; also trees with clusters of mauve flowers and shiny leaves like laurels,<sup>1</sup> and others with round red blossoms. Some had sweet-scented yellow flowers, and they, together with clusters of tiny mauve blossoms like small wistaria,<sup>2</sup> had no leaves; while one big shrub showered down white petals that scented the air like syringa.<sup>3</sup>

Brilliant green and blue birds flitted from one tree to another, and occasionally the startling scream of a paroquet was heard.

Every now and again deep channels cross the road. Here the water races down from the hills in the wet season to the discomfiture of the traveller, for there are no canoes to cross these torrents in Bornu, and the trader waits, if he can, till they dry up and passage is once more easy.

Those who have to cross do so, we were told, by the aid of a ferryman, who swims over, pushing before him a long pole on which his body rests, and

<sup>1</sup> *Stereospermum Kunthianum*.

<sup>2</sup> *Lonchocarpus laxiflorus*.

<sup>3</sup> Unidentified.

which has attached to either end an enormous calabash. Loads are placed in these; but the less fortunate passenger is delegated to a seat on the ferryman's legs, so that, if he is lucky, his head escapes immersion—but nothing else.

As we neared the valley of the Gongola we came upon water—though, even had we not seen it, we should have known its presence, for the country was full of game. Guinea-fowl, bush-fowl, and small birds appeared in flocks; and Senegal hartebeeste, big baboon, and small grey monkeys also frequented the road.

The passage of the Gongola presents no difficulty at this time of the year, and it was barely necessary to raise our feet to ride over dry-shod.

Thus we passed out of Bornu, after riding between two and three hundred miles from the boundary at Kauga Baga to a mile or two short of Nafada. The inhabitants of this vast province, as we got farther from the capital, showed increasing courtesy and friendship. We little guessed that we were to renew our acquaintance with them by a prolonged stay at Fika, for our object then was to press forward to the railway by Zaria and Bauchi.

Nafada is a big town, situated on a high bank above the Gongola. It is trenched and walled, and on its farther side is the British fort. Besides the O.C. there is a doctor; and when we were there Mr Carlyle, Resident of the District, had come to census the householders. They all showed us great hospitality, but made us miserable by descriptions of the country down-river which we longed to visit, and from which nothing would have with-

held us but that an almost morbid sense of duty forbade an hour's delay.

We were particularly grieved to miss the cow-Fulani, some of whose customs they related to us. These wandering people had lately been on a visit to Nafada, and had there held a play to test the endurance of their young men. It was witnessed by our hosts, who described it to us in vivid language. A circle was formed round some young braves, who stood with arms raised above their heads, thus signifying their readiness to undergo the ordeal. Their expression might not vary from cheerfulness and calm. Meantime their comrades were armed with long sticks, and from time to time they would step forward and beat the young Stoics with a force abundantly attested by the weals that a cow-Fulani bears round his body to his dying day.

The man who has shown no sign of suffering has proved his manhood, and is now considered worthy of marriage. Girls stand round to watch, and to them belongs the right of ending the test: this they do by stepping forward with raised hands.

When a man has already gained a great reputation for courage his fellows will not strike him—not, it is said, that they dread reprisals, but for fear lest his demeanour should excite worship from too many young ladies.

Another sport they practise is a form of bull-baiting. The fore and hind legs of a bull are bound with a rope, which is held taut at either end by two groups of men, who thus deprive the animal of power of movement. Its head is free, and a man comes and squats in front of it within range



of the horns and teases it, dodging as the brute butts. When it is fairly infuriated he springs on to its head and holds on to the horns—a game that is hazardous enough, for the horns are long and sharp, and danger is added by the somewhat insecure tenure of the ropes.



TENGALE INSTRUMENT OF MUSIC.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## FOUR WEEKS IN FIKA.

(MARCH 1-23.)



CLAY TOYS.

ON hearing that the railway was now so near to Kano as to make it our quickest route to Lagos, we changed our plans, gave up Bauchi, and started off by the least-known road to Kano. Our first stage was to Fika; and we set out in high spirits, for the road was a pretty one, shaded by dum and borassus palms, amongst which dog-faced baboons ran in and out. The first one I saw looked so exactly like a dog that I shouted out to Mr Talbot not to fire at it, which brought mockery upon me.

Our path led up and down steep braes, and at the bottom of one of these lay a dull, turbid piece of water. I should be tempted to describe it as a ditch, were it not glorified by the habitation of an evil djinn. It is only three or four feet in width, and looks innocent enough; but no one who has ever set foot in it has escaped destruction.

The water djinn is a common enough genus in Bornu, and it is well known that they covet fine things—such as necklaces, bracelets, and rings; so

that a well-to-do woman who wears many of these is in especial danger. A year or two ago the wife of Mastaba, our headman, was walking by the Maifoni river, and the djinn reached out his arms and pulled her in: she was never seen again.

There are djinns, too, who live beneath baobab-trees. They lead a more social life than their river brethren; for there are amongst them chiefs and mallamai, rich men and poor, and women. They have fine sheep and cattle and slaves "past what black men get," and their houses are like a white man's, with "plenty plenty pans" round the walls. They have the power of turning black, red, or white at will; or they may take the appearance of human beings and come and live like good men amongst the people. They are everywhere; and the knowledge must be alarming, for if they dislike a man they slap him on the face, and in four or five days he dies.

The chief wisely keeps boys who have the power of seeing them as they come into the towns; and the mallamai, too, often see djinns and spirits when they pray in the night.

We were given a cordial welcome to Fika by the chief, with whom we had already made acquaintance, as he had ridden to the extreme verge of his territory to give us greeting when we were on our road to Nafada.

He comes of a great stock, and traces his descent in the direct male line since 1538, when his ancestor, Duno Maisha, first kept a record of the race. The office of chief is an important one, and is hedged in by many rules. For instance, no one is allowed to see him eat, except one youth who is deputed to wait

upon him. Probably this is a relic of the primitive fear lest evil should enter the open mouth and thus reach the soul. This was the reason that, in old days, caused many African chiefs to wear a cloth in front of their mouths: now, though the habit often remains, the explanation is lost.<sup>1</sup>

Next day Mr and Mrs Talbot rode in to visit the town. When in Nafada two days previously we had bought a new horse, recommended as suitable for women. Its price was only £5, but we attributed its cheapness to the fact that it had no intermediate pace between a crawl and a gallop. After its purchase was completed, Aji, the gun-boy, said that he had had care of it for five months, and that he still bore the marks of its teeth upon his arm—also that it reared if checked with undue vigour. It had not proved untractable the first day, and as Mr Talbot was a very good rider, we had no fear for him, but the question was whether his wife and I could manage it. He took this further opportunity, therefore, of testing the matter by riding it himself.

All went well till he was on his way home; then it started off at full gallop, and, before he could pull up, charged into a cow which suddenly entered the road from a side street, and all three went down together.

The accident happened about 5 P.M., and I was quietly reading in camp when two horse-boys dashed back in great excitement. They went straight to Situ, who understood their language, and asked for the hammock. Situ told me at once, "Massa fall for horse." It did not take long to see that everything was made ready for him, and then I too started out,

<sup>1</sup> This is, I am told, the ordinary Fulāni practice.



A STREET CORNER AT FIKA. (*Observe the village meeting-house on the right.*)

running wherever the soft sand did not engulf my feet. The town wall was only half a mile away, but as I approached I knew he must be very bad. Groups of men were clustered together, but they were grave and silent, and as I hurried past they pointed me on my way with looks of commiseration that made me shudder. I longed to see gesticulation and to hear eager arguments as to how the accident happened and who had seen it best. No, it was beyond that—did it mean death? It was the seventh accident, and so should be the last. Surely, surely, were he still alive they would be coming down the road. At last I saw them: he was on a native bed, being carried on men's heads. My heart gave a great thump, and I ran forward to Mrs Talbot, who was behind him. . . .

A messenger rode that night to Nafada, and early in the morning Dr Lobb came out and stayed with us through the day, for the anxiety was great. He believed the pelvis to be unbroken, but that there was serious danger from internal hæmorrhage. He was very kind, and did his utmost; but examination was almost impossible, and treatment other than by simple compresses was also beyond us. There was nothing for it but to wait, so we three sat and talked with forced cheerfulness, and Mr Talbot, too, joined in, for he knew how his wife was suffering for him. When twenty-four hours had passed and he was still alive, the doctor muttered "miracle," ordained peace, and took his departure.

Next day the carriers were told we might be kept six days, ten days, three weeks, we could not tell—so that they were free to seek other service. They

answered that six days, three weeks, six months were all one to them, and they would wait without pay till we were ready. They did wait, though it was only two days short of a month before we started, and all those weary weeks Mr Talbot was a prisoner to his bed.

Fortunately there is a rest-house at Fika, with two huts for white men. One served as Mrs Talbot's dressing-room and my bedroom, and also as "silence" room when either of us wanted to do any work. The other, with two entrances, was a big round hut which was both sickroom and living-room. It was airy, for there was a gap between the wall and the thatched roof, which jutted down a long way to prevent glare from the sun, as also to carry off rain in the wet season. Tents were of no good to us, as at night Mrs Talbot could not leave her husband unguarded, and by day the heat was far too great for a mere canvas shelter. In the draughtiest place in our mud house the thermometer registered  $87^{\circ}$  by night and  $105^{\circ}$  by day. Our good fortune was not confined to comfortable quarters, for we were detained amidst a friendly people and lovely scenery.

Fika is on a river formed by two streams that come down from the hills and unite some hundred yards above the town. In the dry season it is nothing but a sandy bed, though water is obtained for the whole town from shallow wells in its course. The women scoop it up in small calabashes and pour it into water-pots,—a somewhat laborious and back-breaking proceeding.

It would be hard to say which stream has the more beautiful surroundings. Both pass through valleys



made brilliant by the blossom of trees and shrubs, and both are dominated by one peak which surpasses all the others in beauty of outline. One is sharp and rugged, with a point that looks unscaleable. The other is akin to the fortress hills of the Kerri-Kerri, for above a sheer face of perpendicular white cliff is a broad, level space, and rising from it another peak.

The stream winds past slopes of broken ironstone, with grey-black boulders standing out amongst it—through gorges that are now thickly wooded, now bare. Sometimes there is a high bank of rock, and above it hang the fresh green and long golden clusters of cassia, recalling the laburnums of home. Beneath lie herds of goats, seeking shade from the fierce sun. Down the valley men and women pass, bearing faggots on their heads, which they are bringing to Fika from the woods that surround their ancient capital of Daniski. On the tops and slopes of the hills circles of stones denote where dwellings have been—for people sought safety on the tops of the hills in the bygone days of feuds and wars. There they could command the approach of an enemy, and when they were too weak to resist, could fly to some other mountain fastness. Deep cups that have no outlet lie between the hills, and on their greenswards the rock-dwellers frolic, even as they do in our Scottish corries.

They are well known, these little people; they often meet together to play some simple air on their guitars, and on a still night their music is heard long distances away. Their tiny footprints are found by those who frequent the hills, but for him who walks softly there is more. Perhaps he will find a lizard transfixed by a fairy dart; or maybe he will see the wee mannikins,

each with his axe or bow and arrows on his back, dressed in bright-coloured cloth zouaves, with skins hanging from the waist. Some are taller than the others, and will perhaps attain the height of a man's knee. These are privileged, and may wear a cowrie on the top of their heads.

But they are not the only inhabitants of this mountainous region, nor the ones most commonly to be seen. Kob live there, and gazelle the size of hares, for there is good bush cover, though the country is wild and rocky. The Fikans are great hunters. They use dogs, and ride down game in the plains. They snare and also stalk—for this purpose they attach a toucan's head made of wood, with a real bill, to their foreheads, and, as they creep close to their



TOUCAN'S HEAD.

victim, the animal stops to gaze at the strange bird that advances, nodding its head this way and that as if in search of food.

One day the chief gave Mr Talbot a lion's skin, shot the previous morning by a huntsman who had killed it with one arrow from a distance of sixty yards. It was poisoned, and the hunter left it to do its work. Some hours later he returned to the spot and found the lion dead. He gave us an exhibition of his archery, and, as is shown in the illustration, he stoops to shoot and aims straight at the mark. He can achieve fair accuracy at a distance of eighty yards. It will be noticed that his arrows are unfeathered, as is invariably the case in that part of Africa.

Baba the hunter is one of those who has been privileged to see the rock-dwellers, but he can never do so more, for he was fearful and ran to the Mallam and



Baba, a Fikan Archer.



A Street in Fika.



got a medicine that has taken the power from him. He says they are very strong, with big heads and big limbs.

The chief or his son came every day to inquire after Mr Talbot, and they deputed one of the Mallamai to our especial service. In his company we visited the town, which is strongly fortified. A big mud wall surrounds it, and it is further protected by a double fosse that makes cavalry charge impossible and greatly impedes the advance of footmen. Were the foe to carry this first defence he would be confronted by an almost equally difficult task, for inside there is another ditch, and then a wall in which loopholes are cut at irregular intervals.

The town is extremely picturesque, and has an individuality all its own. Date palms overshadow it, and small boys climb up them with infinite glee to pick great clusters of the sweet golden fruit. The streets, now broad now narrow, wind amidst highly ornamented mud houses, whose entrances open into it quaintly at unexpected angles.

Big clay pipes act as gargoyles to run the rain off the roofs, and wooden runnels jut from beneath them to carry the water still farther out.

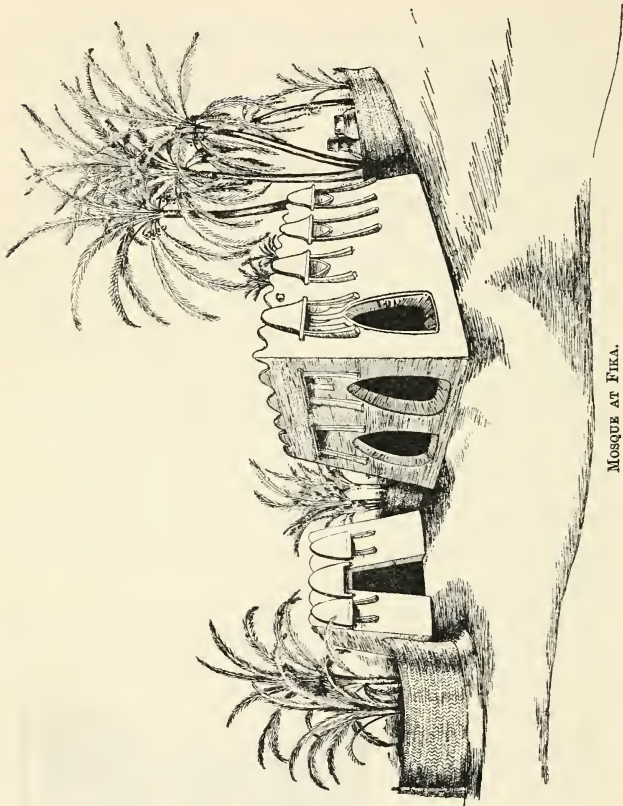
There are large numbers of mosques in the city, and in the principal one a sacred fire is kept



CLAY PIPE.

burning, tended by young acolytes. Its porch opens to the street, and through it mud pillars are dimly seen. Outside old men stand or squat, fingering their

beads in prayer, but they raise their eyes and give a friendly greeting to the passers-by—even when they



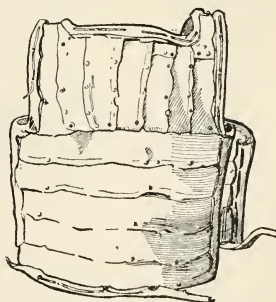
MOSQUE AT FIKA.

happen to be unbelievers and women like Mrs Talbot and myself.

The Mallamai number 120 out of a population of some 1400 householders, but they are scribes and teachers as well as religious men, and perform secular offices of trust.

While Mrs Talbot sketched, the Mallam took me on a regular house-to-house visitation. The owners made me cordially welcome, but an ever-increasing, though friendly, crowd followed us through the streets, and in one big dwelling they were perforce refused entrance. My host attempted to shut and bar his gate against them, but the throng pressed eagerly against it, and a regular hand-to-hand conflict ensued. Obviously it was expected that I should take some action, but, fearful lest it might not be successful, I waited till the householder had practically won his victory before I turned and said, "Let this noise cease." To my astonishment obedience was instant, and when I stepped into the street again the multitude ran away. "They done fear," as Mastaba, our interpreter, explained to the mystified Mrs Talbot, who was quietly sketching when the men fled past her.

The houses are regular rabbit-warrens, leading from room to court, with so many entrances into each that, once I had reached the interior, it was impossible to find my way out again. No doubt this mode of construction was adopted for defensive purposes, and it must have made the place almost impregnable.



NATIVE-MADE IRON CUIRASS.

Rows of pots are ranged one above the other round the rooms, and the demand for these is easily supplied, as there is a great deal of clay in the hills as well as iron and tin, and large heaps of ashes out-



side the town walls show what an important industry pottery is.

There are also large numbers of carved wooden bowls, into which soft native tin that looks just like tinfoil from a chocolate box is beaten, but it is not effective, for it flakes off.

The people sleep on mud-beds, and beneath each are two holes, where fires are lit every night, even when



CLAY TOYS.



DOLL.



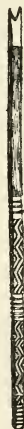
CLAY RIDER.



LAZY-TONGS.



DOLL.



COTTON STICK.

the natural temperature is at 87°. Had I not seen the hot ashes myself I could not have believed it.

Amongst the ashes a clay horse was stabled. Its owner, a little boy, pulled it out to show it to me, and also a small clay rider, whose figure consisted of two legs and a trunk that were so exactly alike as to be interchangeable. The whole was enveloped in a rag, and he had even got a saddle and horse-

cloth to complete the image. The children make them, and they brought a whole army to us in camp.

The little girls also have clay toys, dolls rudely moulded and very conventional in expression, ornamented with white stripes. Some have sticks in one nostril like the children's mothers, but the form is somewhat similar to that of an Egyptian mummy. Cross-questioned as to how they got there, the Mallam answered that his people had brought them from Yemen, in Arabia, which they left at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.

A third toy is used for babies. It is very simple, and consists of a bird's beak bound round in cloth that darts in and out on bamboo sticks like a lazy-tongs.

Generally Mrs Talbot and I dispensed with the Mallam's, or indeed any other, escort in our daily walks. Sometimes we would come and watch the baking of the pots, or the processes of dyeing, for which indigo is in common use.

At other times we roamed the hills, where a misadventure once befell Mrs Talbot. She was bitten in the leg by a snake, the fangs passing through her leather stocking. Unluckily I was not with her, and it was twenty minutes before she got home, where we could apply the correct cures—permanganate, ligatures, champagne, brandy, and black coffee. As her pulse never fluctuated, the snake cannot have been a poisonous one, and she suffered no ill result—except from the cures, which did make her very sick and miserable all the next day.

Meanwhile Mr Talbot, though a prisoner in bed, did not neglect his opportunities, and for hours together

the Mallam would come and talk to him of the wanderings of the tribe and the customs of the people.

This is their history, which he read from the archives kept since 1538, and written in Marghaby : At the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century the Bagirimi, Bornuese, and Fikans left Yemen, south of Mecca, and travelled together across Africa until they came near the mouth of the Shari river. There the Bagirimi split off and settled in the country they still occupy.

It will be remembered that all their own legends agree as to their Eastern origin. The three tribes originally spoke the same language, and it is probable that the Bagirimi have retained it.

The Bornuese and Fikans settled near Fort Lamy, where they lived nomad existences. They could not agree as to hunting and other rights, and at the end of a year matters came to a climax when the Bornuese caught and ate a wounded kob shot by a Fikan. The Fikans, full of anger, quitted their dishonest neighbours and trekked farther west. Later the Bornuese, too, gradually journeyed westwards, spreading their kingdom wherever they passed. South of Lake Chad, in the Dikoa district, they took the language of the people. Some remained there, while others went north and west and settled in that vast province of Bornu, of which Fika occupies a corner.

The Fikans trace their wanderings till 1540, in which year they settled at Daniski, a town in the hills only a few miles from Fika, where they remained till the beginning of the nineteenth century. They left Daniski then, because three chiefs died within a year, and they have been at Fika ever since.

At one period they settled amongst the Bolewa, whose language they adopted, for they intermarried with that race, and the women brought up the children to speak their own tongue.

The Mahommedan religion did not become universal till the beginning of the eighteenth century, though Duno Maisha, the historian chief, who reigned in 1538-39, was the first convert.

They are still a superstitious people, and use promiscuously both pagan and Mahommedan love-philtres. Cross-questioned as to their properties, Baba, Mallam of Fika, recited to us the following, which is here transcribed as nearly as may be in the words in which it was interpreted.

As will be seen by the prayer, these two are Mahommedan potions :—

“Drink this medicine and everybody will love you. Call on the name of the woman, her mother’s name, your own name, and her father’s name. Put this prayer on a board, and then wash it with water—wash yourself in the same water. When the woman sees you, she will love you too much. Even if she does not see you, or live by you, she will come and follow you wherever you may be.

“Wa na Allaha! Thou who art everywhere, Thou who knowest everything. Thou who art greater than everything. Only Allah knows everything in the world. All people will come to Allah, but only few will see Him. Allah will make all come back to Him.

“First of all, nobody lived in the world, for Allah made everybody. Allah can take everybody from the world again. Allah is always near. Father and

mother bear children that do not like one another. Allah can put sense in them, and then they will like one another. If one is stronger and flogs another, only Allah can touch him. If a man does evil, Allah can be sorry for him."

This prayer must be written on a board, then it must be washed, and the water given her to drink :—

"When a woman drinks this, she will no longer hear her father or her mother. If the judge [the white man] speaks to her, she will not hear him, but only her lover. She will never hear any other man, but only the one. Ku n'Allaha! Allah can give man strength and then make him low. Allah sent a man to wake all people. When Allah wakes the world it will be very soon—no one knows when."

It will be noticed that both these medicines subdue a woman to a man. The first he takes himself, the second he gives to her, and presumably it is he who writes the prayer on her board, and he who washes it and gives her the water to drink—perhaps without her knowledge.

It seems hard that a woman should have no opportunity of gaining a man's heart, and in the pagan medicines also she is the subject.

The directions are similar to those of the Mahomedans: "Make a prayer on a board, wash it, and mix the water with blue and crocodile fat, and rub it in your hands."

The interpreter used the word prayer, but probably incantation was meant. This is it: "If a man make

this medicine, everybody will love him. The blood of his heart will change; it will become white. If a man does not like him, he can put some of the medicine in his own hand and take the other's, and he will like him."

This medicine was made for us, and was put in a little bit of hollowed maize-stalk. The "prayer" and water we should have to add, but as it is intended for the overthrow of my own sex I shall not allow its efficacy to be tested.

These love-charms are not the only ones in use, and medicines can be obtained for protection against lion and similar dangers. Others give a certain measure of occult power, and that of second-sight is recognised in a story that dates from the end of the sixteenth century. It is told of Gandauwu, heir to the reigning chief. As a preliminary I must mention that by the Fikan laws of inheritance a child only succeeds his father when he is of man's estate; till then the brother is the inheritor. One day his father and uncle were together when Gandauwu, as a small child, began to cry out. His uncle asked the cause, but the chief made answer, "If I tell you what the child is saying, your heart will not be good,"—for he was a wise man and knew the secrets of all hearts; but when his brother insisted, he answered, "The child says that when I die he will be chief, and you will be chief after him." Langwua was angry, and went away, saying, "It is good; now I will not come to your house any more." The mother of Gandauwu ran after him and pleaded with him, and said, "Why are you vexed? If my piccan will be chief for plenty years, and you will be chief after him, you will live

for many years, and that is good." But Langwua left the house in anger.

It came to pass that the chief died when his little son was seven years old, but the child had spoken destiny, and the people chose him to be chief, and would have none of Langwua, though he forced his claim with a thousand warriors.

Till then the child had worn no clothing, but when he became chief they put trousers on him, and this is the meaning of his name — "Dauwu" = trousers, "Gan" = to cut or sew : Gandauwu.

He reigned for thirty years and had no children, so, as he had foretold, Langwua succeeded him.

The people accepted us very simply into the life of the place, and they would come and tell us such little histories as I have recounted above, in which I have tried, as far as possible, to keep to their expressions; and they would bring us contributions to Mr Talbot's collections—monkeys, squirrels, rats, and a little duiker. The rats<sup>1</sup> have proved new to science, and have been named after me by the kind wish of Mr Talbot and of Mr Oldfield Thomas, who worked them out at the Natural History Museum. Scorpions also were brought in large numbers, for Mastaba collected them from beneath the stones in the town. He brought them in his cap and overturned them on the table, where they scuttled about in a manner that alarmed us very greatly. He, however, picked them up one by one and placed them in the collecting-bottle, assuring us that there was no need to fear, as he had a medicine that preserved him from their sting. Certainly he appeared to be immune, whatever the cause.

<sup>1</sup> *Cricetomys gambianus oliviae*.



Another offering that gave us enormous pleasure was the war-drum, which for the last sixty years had led the Fikans to victory. Did they lay siege to and fail to capture a city, they had only to throw the drum over its wall, and no defence could keep their men from swarming over to regain it. I have it now, for the Fikans no longer require it. The white man has come, and forbids war.

One day we were told that the chief's second son was to be married, and we were invited to witness the festivities. Mr Talbot was by then so much better that he came with his wife and me to see them. They took place in a big open square outside the palace, whither he was carried in a hammock. Before the Royal party appeared a dance was held, which proved monotonous in the extreme. A row of men, youths, and tiny boys advanced slowly, making two movements with each foot before they leant their weight on it, and that was all. They were preceded by a man playing a small, wooden calabash drum, who walked backwards before them.

This entertainment was at length varied by some musicians, who had far more life and go about them. The drums formed a large contingent—there were two big ones, two long, narrow-waisted ones surrounded by strings that were attached from one end to the other, and which are held between the legs as they are played, and several small, round, wooden calabash drums, which completed that section of the band. One energetic musician played two sorts at the same time—a long, narrow one beneath his arm, and a



WAR DRUM.

large, round one that hung from his neck, which he struck on the wooden back, as he was unable to reach its skin face.

The aligata is not a Fikan instrument, and the band included only one specimen. It did not take the leading part, as it usually does, but was superseded by one of four very fine cow-horns. This instrument<sup>1</sup> rests on the top of the left arm, is played through a side embouchure, and is stopped with the right hand—different notes being obtained by the degrees of stopping, as on the same principle with the French horn.



HORN.

The excellence of a player is, however, judged not so much by the sounds that he produces, but by the contortions he is able to adopt the while.

The principal performer was wonderful. He lay on his back and rolled from side to side, kicking his legs in the air without ceasing to play.

From time to time some one of the audience would show his appreciation by a gift of kola-nuts or cowries, and the recipient would kircuddie after him with an expression of rapt admiration in his mobile jester's face.

Presently another weird figure leapt into the circle. Red, yellow, and white stripes were painted on his cheeks and forehead. A quilted cap, decked with tin plates and a cloth streamer, and further covered with animals' teeth and claws, was set on his head. In one hand he carried a large straw hat, in the other a sword,

<sup>1</sup> The Fikans claim that their forefathers brought similar instruments from Yemen.



Musicians at Fika.



The Principal Mosque at Fika.



and over his shoulder an axe. He wore a full short skirt, and every sort of animal's skin hung over his person, and between them innumerable knives and daggers.

In spite of his accoutrements he did not look dreadful, for his face was full and fresh and young, and his eyes sparkled with boyish excitement. After posturing for two or three minutes he danced a *pas seul*, which consisted of a series of jumps, when he alternately thrust his stomach in and out. This somewhat quaint movement proved to be not an end in itself, as we had feared, but an awakening of his powers, for suddenly he stopped in front of us and demanded that we should see his great dance. He flung his hat, sword, and cap from him, and ran quickly to a spot where horse's dung had recently fallen. This he gathered in his hands, rolled it into a little ball, and, to our extreme disgust, ate it. This we learnt was to give him courage. He next seized a dagger, and in a trice had cut a maize stalk clean in two. Having proved the sharpness of the blade he raised his skirt and cut into his leg again and again. Not a drop of blood flowed, though the scar showed white against his black skin. This was due, we were told, to his wearing a certain narrow leather bracelet, the property of which is to prevent any blood flowing from its wearer. He next seized his tomahawk, swung it round and round, and struck his head with what appeared to be considerable violence: no result was visible.

The people rewarded him with kola-nuts and cowries, and were evidently proud of a performance they had often seen. We, on the other hand, were utterly nauseated, though I less so than my companions, for I could

not at the time believe that there was no trickery about the weapons, or illusion about the thrusts—and my incredulity saved me from a sickness I should surely have felt had I realised the truth.

The performance was put an end to by the gathering of horsemen, in preparation for the fantasia. Then a terrible incident occurred. A little boy ran out amongst them and received a kick on the shin. There he lay, poor little fellow, crying lustily. A man went out and picked him up, but the small leg was broken, and he was laid down again. Mr Talbot hurried across as fast as his injuries would permit him, and improvised splints from a walking-stick, which he broke up for the purpose, and we bound them on with our handkerchiefs. The poor baby struggled and screamed without cessation, and Mrs Talbot and I knelt beside him, holding him quiet and trying to soothe him, but the terror of an unaccustomed white face only added to his troubles.

His father was there, but refused to come to his little son; and the mother could not, because no woman is allowed to mix with men at a time of festivity. Mr Talbot sent to tell the chief, and in a moment he walked out at the head of his retinue, spoke kindly to the little chap, and directed some men to bear him away on a native bed, on to which he had to be held, for he was still fighting and crying. Native surgery, however, has the reputation of being very good, and each day until we left we heard favourable reports of the poor piccan's progress towards recovery. It was a sad interlude in the wedding festivities.

When they were renewed the chief seated himself beneath an awning, while the bridegroom and the bride's father led the horse-play. The latter looked



Fikan Medicine Man Cuts his Leg.



Fikan Medicine Man.





almost as young a man as his son-in-law, who was magnificently arrayed in a bright apricot-coloured robe, and was mounted on a well-accoutred horse with silver saddle-cloth.

Presently a body of women approached the chief, and saluted and knelt before him. They then retired, and were followed by others, who bore on their heads presents from the bride's parents to the chief. Pots, pans, and calabashes full of food, and sixteen head of cattle were herded into the palace compound. After standing a while till the richness of the gifts was fully realised, the women turned and marched back with them. They were taken to the bride's house, but whether they contributed to a feast there we never discovered.

Perhaps they were carried back to the palace at dusk, when the bride was brought to her husband.

Long after the horse-play had ended strains of music were heard outside the girl's house—a bride-song on guitars,—which no doubt continued until she left for her new home.

There is, I believe, a ceremony we did not see, when the Mallam offers up a prayer, and makes an exhortation in which he says to the bride, "May you stop long with this man in his house." For this he receives a fee of 3d., and generally a good "dash" (present) besides.

In ordinary cases a man selects his wife when she is still a child, and he sends an intermediary to her mother with a dash of four gabiga and a 6d. A gabiga is a length of cloth, two or three inches in width, and is often used in place of small coin. Each year he brings the mother another gabiga, and when the girl is grown up he presents cloth and ornaments to her, and 5s. to 20s., together with fine cloths to her mother, according

to his wealth. Half of this the mother gives to her relations, and to her daughter she gives household utensils. The father seems to play very little part in his daughter's matrimonial affairs.

On the birth of a child a husband gives his wife a present—if he is poor, a piece of cloth; if he is rich, a goat, sheep, or even more. For the first seven days he gives her two fowls to eat every day, so that she may become strong, and she is also given vinegar, honey, and pepper at frequent intervals. Morning and night time she is washed with warm water, and she has a fire in her house and does not come out. On the eighth day the infant is named. Only the Mallamai go into the mosque, but the relations gather outside. "Plenty chop" is brought to the entrance, including a sheep or a goat, and there the food is distributed—part to the men and part to the women, who eat it in different places—"and all the people of the town rejoice."

Men and women, even in their home circles, never eat together, and the law extends beyond this, for certain foods are also forbidden. No one may eat swine, monkeys, or dogs, and women are especially forbidden lion, leopard, or hyena.

Nearly four weeks had now elapsed, and though Mr Talbot's back was still painful and movement difficult, he would not listen to our exhortations to rest longer; and, in obedience to a summons to his duties in Southern Nigeria, made preparations for an immediate start. So much time had elapsed that the Mallam, who was to have come to Kano with us, had in consequence of our delay to alter his plans and take the Government taxes direct to Gijiba instead.

The Chief of Fika is responsible for a sum that

amounts to £1000, and his capital, assessed on 1370 men, contributes one-fourth of the amount. The town is divided into eight districts, each under a head-man, who levies the money according to the estate of the residents.

Roughly speaking, the tax is assessed according to the number of wives a man keeps. A man with one wife pays from four to five shillings, with two wives six shillings, and so on according to scale.

It is obviously a difficult matter for them to obtain sufficient cash for the levy. The sale of dates, ground nuts, corn, and goats to the soldiers at Nafada is their most profitable market.



CALABASH HORN.



STOPPED AGAINST THE LEG.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HOMEWARD BOUND. FIKA TO LAGOS.

(MARCH 28-APRIL 18.)

Two hundred miles lay between us and Kano, and we looked forward to our journey there with despair. We were all unwilling, however, to prolong our absence: the tornado season was now due, and once it set in there was a risk that the banks of the newly built railway would be washed away. In this case our return would be delayed still further, for we should have to trek from Kano instead of going by rail, as we hoped to do. Had it been a straight-forward march, Mr Talbot might have been carried in his hammock with little risk, but unfortunately the geographical position of the country had been fixed only by route sketches, and he was determined to complete his survey from Maifoni to Kano by theodolite and plane-table. At present, as we learned to our cost, the true position of a town was often miles away from where it was marked on the published maps; and the disgusted traveller was tempted to place credence in the tale that distances had been determined by firing pistols in the air, and so judging how far the sound would carry.

Mr Talbot first tested his powers by two days' laborious surveying at Fika, and then we started. We sent the boys on in the morning to pitch camp and have everything in readiness for us, and, as the march was to be a short one, started ourselves in the afternoon, after a somewhat tiring day. The chief, his son, and a large retinue escorted us. Behind this gay cavalcade we rode, for the last time, down the little sandy track, beneath a baobab, and across the sandy riverbed, where women were drawing water from the wells. Up to and past the town we went, and then we turned to look once more at the mud-decorated houses; the date-palms, now bereft of almost all their fruit; the ash-heaps, where pots are baked; the indigo pit by the mountain gateway. It was our last sight of Fika and its simple friendly inhabitants. In single file we wound up a narrow valley, along the gentle slopes of wooded hills, lit by brilliant sprays of golden-flowered cassias. Presently a heavier mass loomed high above us, it was the last of the mountain-ridge, and now we drew beyond the neighbourhood of habitation. Here the chief turned and left us, and it was with real regret we said good-bye to him and to the Mallam, for both had contributed their utmost to make our stay in Fika a pleasant one. For seven miles we rode, and then in the stillness of a wooded brae Mrs Talbot and I dismounted and sat upon a fallen tree-stem to wait for Mr Talbot, whose progress in that hilly region was slow. The light was waning, and when the hammock came up we found Mr Talbot was tired. We pressed the guide as to how much farther we had to go, but though his answer was indefinite we were undismayed, and, think-

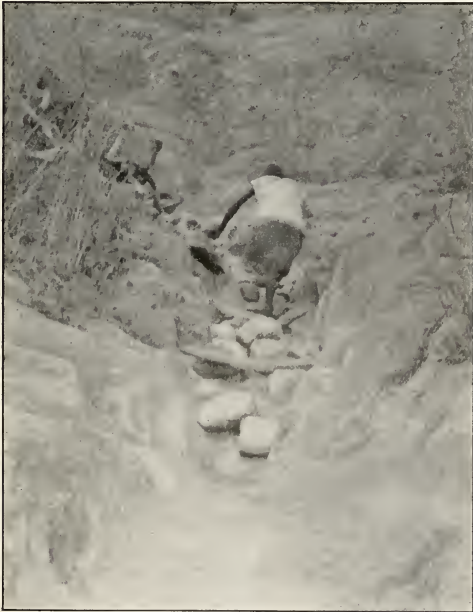
ing that we could not be far off, I decided to walk the rest of the way. So we proceeded, and every minute expected to hear the sound of the carriers laughing and talking as they told each other tales by the bright fires that always surround a camp. But the darkness increased, no voice broke the silence, and our footsteps sank deep in the soft sand. Thick bushes grew on either side and made the darkness darker, while their thorny boughs stretched out to catch us as we passed. Occasionally steep gullies barred our way, cut by turbulent rivulets in the rainy season, their banks a mass of sharp loose stones. Sometimes an exclamation was heard, the cry of a boy who had tripped in the darkness and fallen. It became evident that some mistake had been made, our boys had not pitched camp halfway as they had been told to do, and the whole long march was before us. Our water-bottles were nearly empty, and we had had nothing except tea and biscuits since an early lunch, and now it was nine o'clock.

Eight men who had come from Maifoni with us took it in turn to carry the hammock, in shifts of four at a time. When off duty, one preceded his comrades to test the path and give warning of its difficulties; another stayed immediately behind, ready to seize the pole, and so save an accident should a comrade slip and fall. Their unselfishness and courage were really wonderful, for the thorny bushes tore them as they passed, and sandals were but little protection against the jagged stones. We all walked single file, but they had to walk two abreast, yet they never once sacrificed Mr Talbot to any consideration for themselves, and it





Lewe, one of the Fortress Hills of the Kerri-Kerri.



The easiest Road to Lewe.



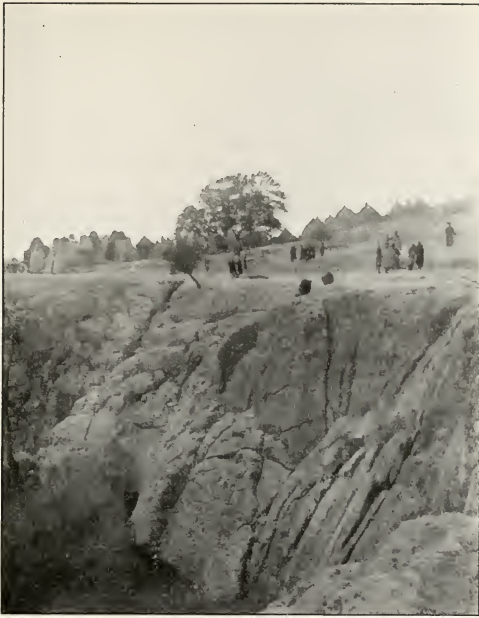
was touching to hear them congratulate each other on a difficulty overcome.

Another hour passed; by that time we were traversing an open plain, where all was deserted, and there was neither sight nor sound of any village. As we marched we raised clouds of sand, and fatigue and dust combined to make us very thirsty, but there was hardly any water left with which to satisfy our need. We plodded on, now so weary that visions of light danced before our eyes, and we called to one another, "There's the fire!" But disappointment always awaited us, and we learnt the bitter lesson that we could not trust our senses. It was past eleven when we reached two blocks of hills, and voices echoed along the valley. We had reached our destination at last, and once in camp we all three sat and drank with no thought beyond the gratification of our thirst. Bed that night was very welcome, and when we woke we found ourselves in picturesque surroundings. Through the branches of low scrub trees we saw white cliffs tower up above us, on their crest buildings were dotted like little beehives, and in their centre a jagged ironstone peak jutted abruptly into the dazzling turquoise sky. They were the fortress hills of the Kerri-Kerri.

That immediately above us was Lewé, visited by the late Captain Claud Alexander and Mr Talbot in 1904. Then they had met with hostility from the wild pagan inhabitants, who disputed their advent with poisoned arrows. We sent our head-man to tell the chief we had come as simple travellers to ask their welcome, and two Kerri-Kerri came half-way

down from their stronghold to meet our emissary, but at first they would not let him come up, nor would they themselves descend. Their opposition relaxed, however, after a while, and it was arranged that we were to visit the town. They are fortress hills indeed, and every precaution is taken for defence. At the base of the cliff, concealed in grass and leaves, is a trench, dug to harass an invading army; but it would be a bold foe who attempted to storm such a position. For 300 feet the cliff rose, in ever-increasing sheerness, till we were clinging to the rock with our hands as we clambered up by artificial steps of wood, laid in interstices of rock, to give foothold, and so render the passage less arduous in time of peace.

The ascent was a very serious labour to Mr Talbot, but he was bent on more work with his theodolite, nor would he have liked us to explore without him. Once up we found ourselves among a small group of natives gathered by some immense boulders beneath a little tree. They were thin and tall, and had unpleasing expressions, and though the chief conducted us from place to place they certainly did not suffer our visit gladly. A broad plateau was dotted with narrow domed huts, built in groups that were each surrounded by walls of matting. Nearer to the peak the level ground narrowed in space, and here granaries were built along the edge. They were raised from the ground and were made of mud. The grain, grown on the plain lands below, is poured in through a hole in the top of the sambu, which is covered over by thick matting. When the grain is required again a man climbs a rudely constructed ladder, leaps into the granary, passes out its contents in big bowls,



Face of Cliff at Lewe.



Granaries—Cakes of Dung in the Foreground.

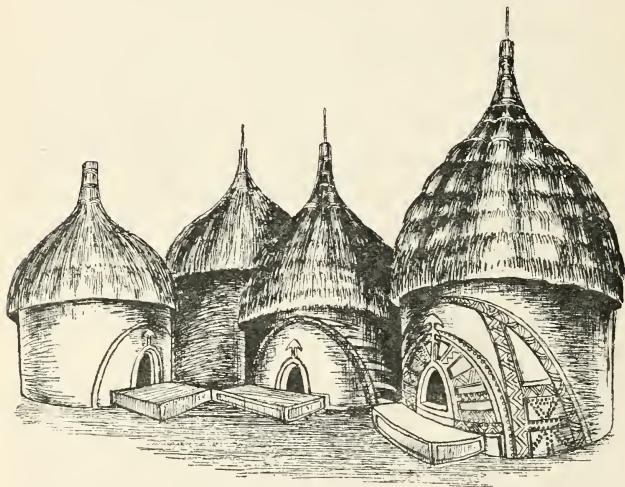


and when the end of the supply is reached a hole is made in the floor to drain off the remainder. Enough is stored to feed the people from harvest to harvest.

As we walked along the ledge we noticed cakes of dung drying for fuel; and we passed dyeing pits that exhaled nauseous manure-like fumes—for black dye is got from dung. Near by were some great boulders that stood by the edge of the cliff, ready, in case of emergency, to be shoved down upon assailants, should they attempt to storm the place. The precaution seemed unnecessary, for the cliff was sheer, but the chief told us that ascent there is possible, and that each inhabitant of Lewe when he reaches manhood must climb down that rock—for, until he has done so, he has none of the privileges of citizenship, and is not allowed to marry. They all drink pito—the native spirit—together, before the dangerous attempt is made. The bachelors have an undesirable time altogether, and must long to have their manhood proved, for they live in piccans' houses, clustered together, apart from the other residents, and the entrance to these huts, on which they are dependent both for light and air, is no bigger than that of a dog's kennel. They are so absurdly small that when two of our boys tried to crawl in only one succeeded. He had got in legs first, but the floor was lower than the doorway, and he could not get out again. The only way to release him was to take the roof off, but this was a serious measure, and we decided to leave him to his fate. Some time later he succeeded in emerging, his struggles having at last been effectual.

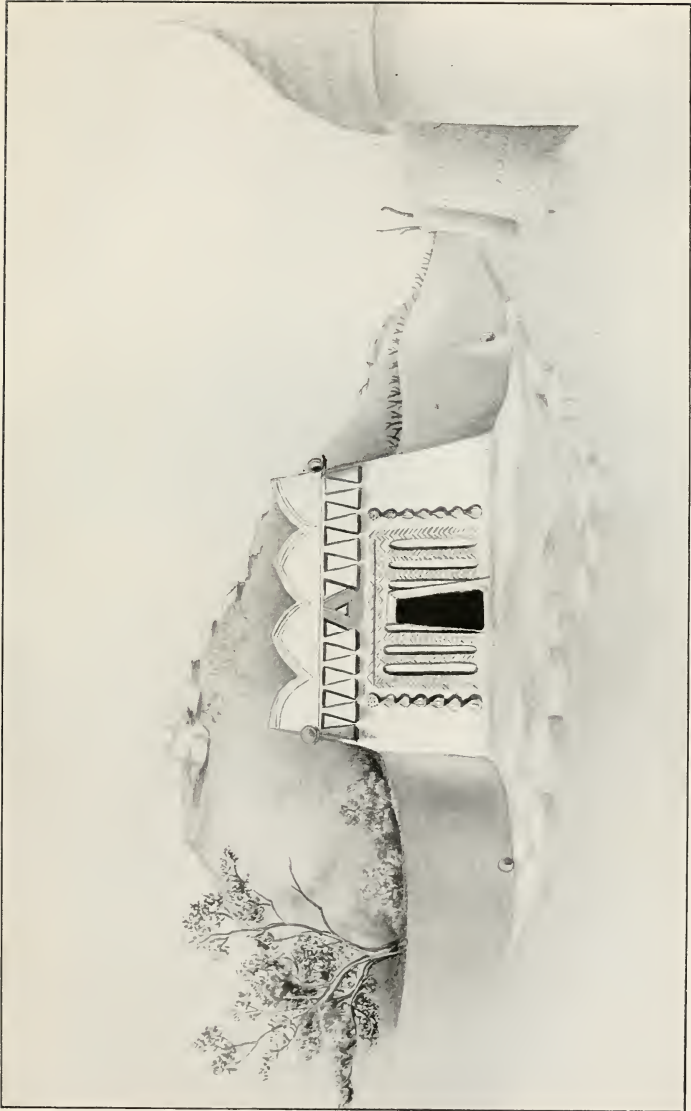


We went to see the chief's compound, which stood right on the edge of the cliff and commanded a magnificent view of the country round. It was empty of everything in the nature of a curio, but then, as the people disliked us, it was probable that they had hidden everything. We tried hard to change their disapproval into liking, but only one man was pleasant,



BACHELORS' HUTS.

and the others all replied to our questions with dour, unconvincing lies. We climbed to the very top of the peak, which meant a real scramble, passing at its base a series of wells in the rock. They contain a supply of water, at small depth, all the year round; but in the dry season the Kerri-Kerri often get their water from the plains, to avoid too great a drain upon their natural reserve. They use it, of course, in time of danger, and our presence was counted as such, for no



Kerri-Kerri House at Lewe.



Types of Men at Lewe.



Types of Men at Lewe.



Types of Women at Lewe.



one ventured down from the hill. On the neighbouring peak at Gamari the wells had run dry, but this is a rare occurrence, though the rainfall averages only some 21 inches in the year. Full advantage is taken, however, of what rain there is, and there are a number of shallow reservoirs on the plateau.

When we came down to the camp again it was to find the little lions scampering about, playing in the trench, and stalking each other, with a marvellous eye for cover. They climbed the trees, too, and by aid of their sharp little claws got above our reach, a sport they immensely enjoyed.

The next day we continued our march, and passed into flat country of singular monotony, in the midst of which we twice came to granite rocks 100 feet high, that rose in round lumps and were surmounted by perched blocks. They were very curious in formation, and were welcome as a break in the landscape; but for personal reasons we hated them, as it always meant a fresh point for survey work, and Mr Talbot was not strong enough to do it. The population was Fulani, with an admixture of Hausa—and it was their habit for every man, whether on foot or on horseback, to cast himself in the dust before us and cry “Zaki, zaki”<sup>1</sup>—“lion, lion,” an appellation of greatness in which I had taken a certain pride until I found it equally applied to Mastaba. This proceeding must have been a great bore for the people unfortunate enough to meet us; but the custom is their own, and this salutation is exacted by their own Emirs and Waziris, who have themselves begged our Administration to

<sup>1</sup> The Hausa term for this salutation is “ledabi,” derived from the Arabic verb “to train” or “educate.”

insist on the same respect being shown to Europeans. We were prepared to be sympathetic over their drudgery, but all such feeling turned to annoyance when we found how deeply they lied to us as to the distances we had to traverse between village and village. The maps being so incorrect we had to make these inquiries, for the carriers always started ahead or they would never have arrived, and it was, of course, necessary to name a place for them to go to. However early they started, we had to wait for hours before the more dilatory brought in their loads, and once a bed failed to appear until the morning.

On one occasion we had to camp in the town itself, for we had come in very late, and it was too dark to set forth again to pitch our tents away from the noise and smell. A native compound was put at our disposal, and in walking about an inner yard Lamy disappeared. The boys ran to tell us that the little cub had fallen down a well, and horrified we rushed to the brink to ascertain his fate. He was quiet, but when Mr Talbot called down to him he answered back, and each time we spoke he replied. It was evident, therefore, that the water was not deep enough to drown him, though he might be badly hurt. Kusseri meanwhile was wandering to and fro in terrible agitation, and we had to tie him up lest he might spring down to his brother. Aji volunteered to descend to the rescue, and he was lowered down in a basket: poor little Lamy scrambled against him and climbed up him and, in the process, tore his clothes to pieces, but Aji got him out absolutely sound and well. He was frightened, and annoyed, and

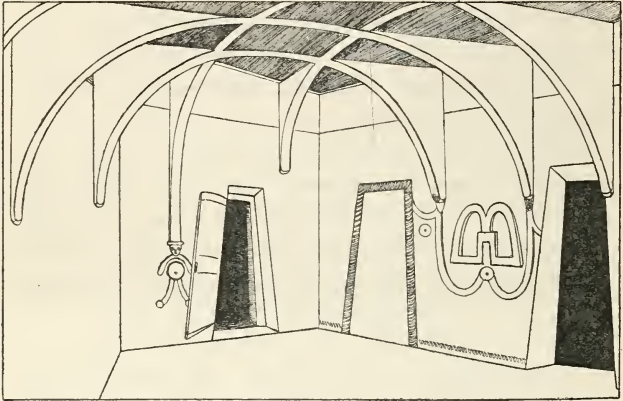


wet, but uninjured, for luckily there had been enough water to break his sixty-foot fall. When he joined Kusseri the two kissed each other all over, in joy at their reunion after so startling a separation. Kusseri felt the marches a good deal, for he had begun to teethe, and was occasionally taken with fits which terrified us for him. He was always good and gentle with us, and would let us handle him however much he might be suffering.

A kob had been given to us at Fika, one of the kind pronounced dangerous by the boys at Fort Lamy, and they now imputed Kusseri's troubles to its agency. It was a dear little beast, tame and gentle, and very confiding; but it died mysteriously, and we suspected the boys of having contributed to this result.

When we entered Kano province an emissary from the Emir met us, to be our guide. He paid us profuse compliments, and indulged his curiosity in us to the full, poking and peering into our rooms or tents, so that to preserve our privacy we had to fill up every crevice with boots or cushions; but, as the zakis loved to romp in and pull them out, his hours of assiduous watching were rewarded by occasional glimpses. This man was an utter liar, and after he had caused us a great deal of inconvenience by his falsehoods, Mr Talbot told him we could not allow him to come with us any longer. The wretched fellow was in a great state of mind; he knew the Emir would not forgive him his disgrace, and his pose of self-sufficient swagger dropped from him in a moment. He left our presence, stripped off all his fine garments, and returned in a rag; cast himself upon the ground before us, bowed his head in the dust, and repeated, "Zaki, zaki," while Mastaba

good-naturedly begged us to have pity on him. Though degraded from any connection with us, we allowed him to accompany our escort to Kano, and he was thus saved from public humiliation.



ROOF IN FULANI HOUSE AT GAIYA, NEAR KANO.

Since leaving the fortress-hills the scenery had been uninteresting, though at Dusi, in the Kano province, we passed over ridges that were beautiful in their rocky bareness, and the neighbouring hamlets, clustered round huge boulders for shelter and defence, were picturesque. Once or twice the still pools of some placid rivulet, the drinking-place of birds and beasts, surrounded by brilliant green grass and foliage, lent a variety that was refreshing after the drabs and browns of the plain; and once a forest of borassus palms, with an undergrowth of sweet-scented flowers like syringas, broke the monotony.

It was with great relief that we arrived at Kano, for the march had thoroughly exhausted Mr Talbot. We



A Roadside Well in Kano Province.



A Corner of the Market, Kano.



lodged in a rest-house, surrounded by other white men's bungalows, a couple of miles away from the native town; and thence we went one afternoon, our only one, to visit the market, which we believed to be the biggest emporium of Northern Nigeria. Semi-civilisation had made it uninteresting. Many of the articles for sale were either imported or made in imitation of white men's goods, and they were all excessively dear. It may have been the contrast from what we had seen that made this famous place seem hackneyed and dull, or perhaps a revulsion of feeling now that our journey was at an end, united to anxiety for the over-fatigue of our patient. Anyway, we were not called upon to prolong our stay. The railway had been opened on March 31. We arrived on April 8, and a construction train was to leave for Zungeru on the 10th. It was with infinite joy that we took passage on it, for the tornado season had already begun, and the first heavy rain was expected to wash away the line. We were given the use of a luggage-van, where we erected a bed for Mr Talbot and chairs for ourselves, while the little lions ran loose about the floor. Poor little fellows, they were frightened at the noise and shakiness, and rushed ceaselessly from end to end of the van, jumping up and trying to get out, every now and again seeking consolation for a second on our knees. There were no windows, of course, and we could not leave the doors open, for the cubs would have got out, so we ourselves were simply stifled. The sun baked through the wooden roof till the van became an oven, and for ten hours on end we sat and suffered. The train was run by white engine-drivers, though it is hoped that black men may soon be able to do the work.

When darkness fell we all slept at a little railway encampment, and proceeded next day to Zungeru, the seat of Government, where we stayed with the acting governor, Mr Temple. The train was late, and we did not arrive till 8.30 P.M., when we walked up to the residency in a perfect deluge of rain that succeeded a blinding sand-storm. We had left Kano none too soon. Zungeru is an odd place to have chosen as residency. The situation is low and the place hot and damp; nor before the very recent advent of the railway was there any natural means of communication with any part of the colony; and the original native settlement, Dungereu by name, was very small. Government House is a nice comfortable building on a superior bungalow scale, but there is a general feeling that a change of residency would be advisable.

We were obliged to continue our journey the following afternoon, but our stay, though brief, was pleasant. We had returned to furnished rooms, and even butter for breakfast, while the joy of conversation with men who knew what had been happening at home was immensely invigorating.

At Zungeru a gap in the railway line occurred which necessitated a land portorage of over twenty miles to Akerri, where the construction line was available once more to Jebba. For this part of the journey we were promoted to an open truck with an awning over it, which was much more fun, and as the zakis were then experienced travellers, their only objection was to the tedium of the journey. They were very popular all down the line, and many photographs were taken of them; but once we reached Southern Nigeria the enthusiasm became intense. We were then in





New Railway Line at Kano.



The Railway in Southern Nigeria.





ordinary saloon cars, and for the first time in their lives they saw a carpet, for which, after licking and scratching it to test whether it had any practical recommendation, they conceived immense contempt. The natives stood on boxes and climbed up telegraph poles outside to see them; a crowd always gathered thickly at the windows, and the officials and other superior persons came in. Lamy and Kusseri were both quite alive to their attractions, and generally bestirred themselves to box together, or pose in some bewitching way for the benefit of their admirers; and time and again as we steamed out of the stations a deafening cheer would be raised for the zakis. Only a few of the travelled natives from that part had ever seen a lion, and we were not unfrequently asked if they were "dawgs."

We reached Lagos on the ninth day from leaving Kano, and were kindly welcomed by the Governor of Southern Nigeria, Sir Walter Egerton, and his wife. Our time with them was, however, short, for the homeward bound steamer, the *Dakar*, called at Lagos on the second day after our arrival there, and I embarked on her.

It was very grievous to me that my companions should have to remain in Africa while I went home, but Mr Talbot had his work to do as District Commissioner in Southern Nigeria, and his wife stayed with him. We had now spent close on nine months in complete intimacy, and it was hard to part, but the time for good-byes had come.

Big wooden cages had been made for the zakis, and with howls and yells of protestation the little pair were subjected to their first real imprisonment. Once

on board the steamer the cages were placed opposite each other, with the doors open in between, so that they could be together; and people were very kind in giving them toys to play with. They were catholic in their tastes, and accepted everything from pyjamas to helmets, though the latter were the greatest prize, for it was more fun ripping the pith in pieces. They made their own beds out of straw envelopes in which bottles are packed, and they loved pulling these, one at each end, just like boys in a tug-of-war. The butcher was in charge, and they soon got fond of him. He was very good to them, and they feasted like the little kings they were, off liver one day, beef the next, then chicken, mutton, turkey; and when we arrived at Southampton the butcher gave me a large packet of bones that they might have their breakfast on the train.

They travelled up to London in the guard's van, and I did not dare release them, for they had grown too big and strong for one person to hold. At Paddington what looked like a tradesman's cart was awaiting them, they were lifted into it, and were rattled off to the Zoological Gardens. They were in as much demand in England as they had been favourites in Africa, but the Talbots and I had resolved to place them where they would be appreciated by the greatest number of people, and where they would be well cared for. The Secretary of the Zoological Society assured us they would be valued at the Zoo, and they became members of the King's African Collection.

An expert who visited them there described them thus: "The lions are about six months old, and are extremely friendly and playful. They show, in a



Mr and Mrs Talbot on an Elephant killed near Oban, South Nigeria.



greater degree than is usual in cubs, that the tawny coloration of lions is a comparatively recent acquisition of the race, and that lions are descended from a spotted or banded ancestor with much black on the body. The usual black bands across the ears and the black tuft on the tip of the tail are very conspicuous, and the dark rings on the tail, not infrequent in young lions, are more than usually well marked, especially towards the tip. The longer hairs on the surface of the back are very dark at their ends, so that there appears to be a faint wash of black over the tawny coat. The legs and under parts of the body are covered with thickly-set dark spots, which show traces of being arranged in stripes on the flanks."

Another point of interest is whether the cubs, who come of a maneless parentage, will develop manes in captivity. It is, I believe, popularly asserted that all lions naturally have them, but that the hair gets pulled out in bush country till they are as bald as coots. In support of this theory it is said that there has never yet been a maneless lion in captivity. Time will show, and at no distant date, for the zakis in question were born in November 1910.

One word of explanation is due to the reader to tell why I have written this book instead of my companions, who, by their experience and wide African knowledge, could have made it a book of special value. Mr Talbot was already committed to produce a book on the Ekoi tribe, amongst whom he has spent years of work in Southern Nigeria; and even his and his wife's energy could not make time for two books, in addition to ordinary station work and many pursuits.

I have written lightly and idly, because I cannot do more, but what interest this book may have is mainly due to my companions: to Mr Talbot's map and photographs, Mrs Talbot's sketches, and her sister Mrs Baker's drawings of the curios that I collected during the journey and brought home.

I also owe grateful thanks to Mr C. A. Temple, who has given me much help by his careful consideration of my proofs. Though I have thankfully adopted many of his valuable suggestions, perhaps it is only fair to him to say that I have shown self-will about others.

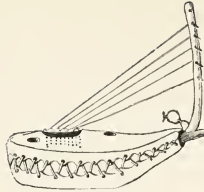




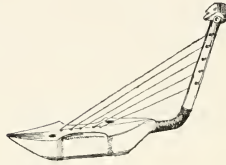
# SOME MUSICAL



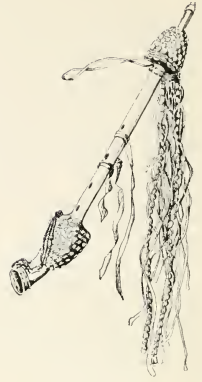
GUITAR (1).



HARP (2).



HORN (3).



CLARINET (4).



XYLOPHONE (5).



HORN (6).



CALABASH HORN (7).

## COLLECTED AT

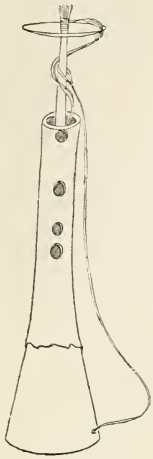
- |                      |           |                   |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| (1) Ibi              | . . . . . | Wide Distribution |
| (2) Fort Lamy        | . . . . . |                   |
| (3) Ham              | . . . . . |                   |
| (4) Tehekna and Mani | . . . . . |                   |
| (5) Nafada           | . . . . . |                   |
| (6) Fika             | . . . . . |                   |
| (7) Fika             | . . . . . |                   |

## NOTES.

- |  |
|--|
| Strings tuned by the tightness with which they are bound. The bridge made of pods.                 |
| Horse-hair strings.  |
| Note carved head. Metal strings, which are most unusual.   |
| In each case belonged to Court musicians.  |
| Played by a metal stick on wooden keys, at the back of which are resonators of cow's horns.        |
| Cow's horn; common in N. Nigeria, but the Fikans claim that their ancestors brought it from Yemen. |
| Made of gourd. Stopping is done against the leg.   |

# INSTRUMENTS.

W. G. B. CALIFORNIA



ALIGATA (8).



BUSA (9).



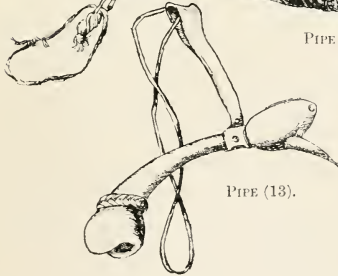
FLUTE (10).



FLUTE (11).



PIPE (12).



PIPE (13).



HORN (14).

COLLECTED AT

NOTES.

(8) Garua . . . . .	Wide Distribution	Reed instrument, tuned by tightening or loosening the reed.
(9) Garua and Léré . . . . .		...
(10) Kerra . . . . .		...
(11) Kerra . . . . .		A Wadama instrument unlike any other, consisting of four gourds, with a hollow stick as mouthpiece.
(12) Lake Léré ) . . . . .		A Mundong instrument, with a double bulb, in one of which there is a tiny perforation used as an open stop.
(13) Lake Léré ( . . . . .		
(14) Léré . . . . .		...



Owing to the kindness of Dr RENDLE, who, together with Mr E. G. BAKER, Mr S. MOORE, and Mr H. F. WERNHAM, has worked out our botanical collection, I am enabled to add this Appendix for the benefit of those interested in West and Central African Plants.

## LIST OF PLANTS COLLECTED BY MR AND MRS P. A. TALBOT AND MISS MACLEOD ON THE EXPEDITION.

THE CYPERACEÆ AND GRASSES WERE COLLECTED BY MISS MACLEOD,  
THE REST OF THE PLANTS BY MR AND MRS P. A. TALBOT.

### DICOTYLEDONS.

#### POLYPETALÆ. (By Mr E. G. BAKER, F.L.S.)

##### NYPHÆACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Nymphæa cœrulea</i> Savigny .	Tuburi marshes . . .	Northern and Central Africa.
<i>N. Lotus</i> L. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Widely distributed.

##### ANONACEÆ.

* <i>Hexalobus monopetalus</i> Engler & Diels, var. nov. parvifolius.	Léré to Ham . . . . .	Type comes from Upper Guinea and Nile-land.
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##### CAPPARIDEÆ.

<i>Capparis tomentosa</i> L. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>C. Rothii</i> Oliver . . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	Nile-land.
<i>C. aphylla</i> Roth ( <i>Sodada decidua</i> Forsk.)	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	North Central Africa and Nile-land.
<i>Mærua rigida</i> R. Br. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . . .	Widely distributed,
<i>Cadaba farinosa</i> Forsk. . . . .	Léré to Ham . . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Cratæva religiosa</i> Forst. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Courbonia virgata</i> A. Brong. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . . .	Upper Guinea and Nile-land.

##### POLYGALACEÆ.

<i>Securidaca longipedunculata</i> Fr.	Lake Chad district . . . . .	Widely distributed.
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\* *Hexalobus monopetalus* Engler & Diels, var. nov. *parvifolius*.

Frutex vel arbor parva, ramulis adultis cinereo-corticatis; foliorum petiolo brevissimo, lamina chartacea vel subcoriacea oblonga supra nitida subtus fere glabra quam typi minore; floribus ad axillas solitariis subsessilibus; petalis anguste lanceolatis corrugatis basi connatis; carpellis 3-4.

French Ubangi, Léré to Ham.

Foliorum petioli 1-2 mm. longi, lamina 4-6 cm. longa, 15-21 mm. lata. Sepala 6 mm. longa. Petala 18-20 mm. longa.

Differs from the type in having smaller leaves, which are shining above and glabrous except on the midrib below. The petals are 18-20 mm. long, and there are fewer carpels (3-4) instead of 4-6.

Mons. Chevalier collected the type on his Chari-Lac Chad Expedition near Kaga M'bra, No. 6486.

## TILIACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Grewia mollis</i> Juss. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Upper Guinea and Nile-land.

## SIMARUBEÆ.

<i>Balanites ægyptiaca</i> Del. var. (?) <i>angolensis</i> Welw.	Garua to Golombe . . .	Lower Guinea.
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## OLACACEÆ.

<i>Ximenia americana</i> L. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
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## RHAMNACEÆ.

<i>Zizyphus Jujuba</i> Lam. . . .	Ham to Fort Lamy . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Z. Baclei</i> DC. . . .	River Benue . . .	Upper Guinea.

## LEGUMINOSÆ.

<i>Indigofera macrocalyx</i> Guill. & Perr.	Léré to Ham . . .	Upper Guinea.
<i>I. procera</i> Schum. & Thonn.	Tuburi marshes . . .	Upper and Lower Guinea.
<i>I. pulchra</i> Vahl. . . .	North Kamerun . . .	Upper and Lower Guinea, Nile-land.
<i>I. diphylla</i> Vent. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>I. strobilifera</i> Hochst. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Nile-land, Mozambique.
<i>I. endecaphylla</i> Jacq. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>I. secundiflora</i> Poir . . . .	Ham to Fort Lamy . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>I. senegalensis</i> Lam. . . .	Léré to Ham . . .	Upper Guinea.
<i>Tephrosia uniflora</i> Pers. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Upper Guinea.
<i>Hernimiera Elaphroxylon</i> Guill. & Perr.	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Rhynchosia flavissima</i> Hochst.	Lake Chad district . . .	Nile-land.
<i>R. minima</i> DC. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Lonchocarpus laxiflorus</i> Guill. & Perr.	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Swartzia madagascariensis</i> Desv.	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> Poir. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Upper and Lower Guinea.
<i>Cassia Absus</i> L. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>C. goratensis</i> Fres. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Bauhinia rufescens</i> Lam. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Upper Guinea, North Central, Nile-land.
<i>Dichrostachys nutans</i> Benth. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Neptunia oleracea</i> Lour. . . .	Léré to Ham . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Mimosa asperata</i> L. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Acacia arabica</i> Willd. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.

## SAXIFRAGEÆ.

<i>Vahlia viscosa</i> Roxb. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Upper Guinea, North Central, Nile-land, also Egypt, Persia, and India.
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## COMBRETACEÆ.

<i>Guiera senegalensis</i> Lam. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . .	Upper and Lower Guinea, North Central.
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## CUCURBITACEÆ.

<i>Momordica Charantia</i> L. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
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## GAMOPETALÆ. (Mr S. MOORE, F.L.S., and Mr H. F. WERNHAM, B.Sc.)

## RUBIACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Oldenlandia senegalensis</i> Hiern	Léré to Ham . . . .	Upper Guinea as far as Senegambia; Nile-land.
<i>Gardenia Thunbergia</i> L. fil.	Lake Chad and Bornu . . . .	Widely distributed in Africa, from Senegambia to the Cape.
<i>Mitracarpum scabrum</i> Zucc.	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Tropical Africa and the Cape de Verde Islands.

## COMPOSITÆ.

<i>Ethulia conyzoides</i> L. fil.	Léré to Ham . . . .	Tropics of Old World.
<i>Vernonia senegalensis</i> Less.	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical Africa.
<i>V. Tenoreana</i> Oliv. . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical Africa.
<i>Blumea lacera</i> DC. . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Tropical Africa, Asia, Australia.
<i>B. aurita</i> L. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Tropical North Africa to India.
* <i>Sphæranthus Talbotii</i> , sp. nov.	Garua to Golombe . . . .	...
<i>Pulicaria undulata</i> DC. . . .	Léré to Ham, Garua to Golombe	Northern Tropical and North Africa; the Orient.
<i>Gnaphalium niliacum</i> Raddi	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Northern Tropical Africa, Egypt.
<i>Ambrosia maritima</i> L. . . .	Léré to Ham . . . .	A Mediterranean plant extending to Northern Tropical Africa.
<i>Echinops spinosus</i> L. . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Abyssinia, North Africa, and Arabia; Levant.

## PLUMBAGINÆÆ.

<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> L. . . .	Léré to Ham . . . .	Widely distributed in the tropics.
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## APOCYNACEÆ.

<i>Adenium</i> sp. . . . .	Léré to Ham . . . .	...
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## ASCLEPIADEÆ.

<i>Oxystelma bornouense</i> R. Br.	Lake Chad district . . . .	Northern Tropical Africa.
<i>Calotropis procera</i> R. Br.	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Northern Tropical Africa to India.
<i>Leptadenia lancifolia</i> Decaisne.	Lake Chad district . . . .	Northern Tropical Africa.

## GENTIANACEÆ.

<i>Schultesia stenophylla</i> var. <i>latifolia</i> Mart.	Tuburi marshes . . . .	Senegambia; Sierra Leone. Probably introduced from Brazil.
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## HYDROPHYLLACEÆ.

<i>Hydrolea graminifolia</i> A. W. Benn.	Tuburi marshes . . . .	Nigeria and country westward.
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\* *Sphæranthus* (§ *Pauciflori*) *Talbotii*, S. Moore (sp. nov.) Herba verisimiliter humilis; ramis subsparsum foliosis anguste alatis cito glabris; foliis parvis oblongis vel lineari-oblongis apice mucronulatis basi longe decurrentibus integris vel obscure denticulatis primo puberulis dein glabris, capitulorum glomerulis pro rata parvis breviter subsphæroideis pedunculatis; bracteis exterioribus 6 ovatis acutis vel brevissime spinuloso-acuminatis extus scabridule pubescentibus; bracteis capitula stipitibus lineari-oblongis apice subito dilatatis truncatis necnon margine ciliolatis ipso mucronulatis; involucri phyllis 4-5 lineari-oblongis apice truncatis ipso saepe acutis; flosculis fem. 4-5, hermaph. 1, horum corollis paullulum supra basin constrictis ceterum cylindricis. Hab. North Kamerun, Garua to Golombe; P. A. Talbot, 1005.

Branches slender, white, with narrow herbaceous wings barely 1 mm. wide. Leaves up to 25×4 mm., those on the branchlets usually reduced to about 10×2 mm. Glomerules about 10 mm. in diameter, composed of a large number of capitula. Peduncles at most 5 mm. long. Outer bracts 3-4 mm. long, 2 mm. at the widest part, firm in texture, greyish-green when dry. Bracts of the capitula 3-5 mm. long, .75 mm. broad, somewhat cymbiform, provided with short stiff hairs near the apex on the outer side. Involucral leaves 3 mm. long, like the bracts scarious. Corollas of the hermaphrodite florets pale purple, 1-5 mm. long, the same length as those of the filiform female florets, which stand on exceedingly slender pedicels 1-1.5 mm. in length. Young achenes 2 mm. long, papillose. Achenes of the female florets 1 mm. long, covered with spreading hairs.

This might be mistaken on a first sight for *Sph. peduncularis* DC., which, *inter alia*, has 6-leaved involucre. Its position in the genus is near *Sph. Steetzii* O. & H.



## BORAGINACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
Varronia abyssinica DC. . . . .	Tuburi marshes . . . . .	Nile-land and Arabia; Mozambique; Angola.
Heliotropium sp. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	...
Arnebia hispidissima DC. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	North Nigeria; Nile-land; Egypt, the Orient, to northern India.

## SOLANACEÆ.

Datura Metel L. . . . .	Léré to Ham . . . . .	Everywhere in the tropics; probably originating from tropical South America.
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## SCROPHULARINEÆ.

Rhamphicarpa fistulosa Bth. . . . .	Léré to Ham . . . . .	Of wide distribution in tropical and south Africa; occurs also in Madagascar.
Buchnera sp. . . . .	Léré to Ham . . . . .	...

## BIGNONIACEÆ.

Stereospermum Kunthianum Cham. . . . .	{ Tuburi marshes { Lake Chad district	{ Tropical Africa, widely distributed.
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## PEDALINEÆ.

Sesamum alatum Schum. & Thoun. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	Upper Guinea, Nile-land, Mozambique.
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## ACANTHACEÆ.

Nelsonia campestris R. Br. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . . .	Tropics of both hemispheres.
Hygrophila spinosa T. And. . . . .	Tuburi marshes, Léré to Ham . . . . .	Tropical Africa and India.
* Barleria bornuensis, sp. nov. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . . .	...
Justicia flava Vahl. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . . .	Tropical Africa.
† Siphonoglossa Macleodii, sp. nov. . . . .	R. Benue, N. Nigeria . . . . .	...
Monechma hispidum Hochst. . . . .	Ham to Fort Lamy . . . . .	Senegambia to Nyassaland.

\* *Barleria* (§ *Acanthoidea*) *bornuensis*, S. Moore, sp. nov. Frutex vel fruticulus ramosus; ramis crebro foliosis aliquantulum flexuosis ad nodos leviter tumidis juventute pubescentibus dein glabris; foliis parvis subsessilibus oblongis vel oblongo-ovatis breviter spinoso-acuminatis integris raro sparsissime spinuloso-denticulatis coriaceis pagina utraque pilis strigillosis appressis onustis; spinis inter-petiolearibus binis patentibus vel ascendenti-patentibus simplicibus vel juxta basin 1-3-denticulatis ventre planis dorso convexis apice pungentibus sordide albis glabris; bracteis spinis interpetiolearibus similibus; floribus in axillis superioribus solitariis subsessilibus; calycis parvuli puberuli segmento antico ovato-oblongo apice bidentato margine integro segmento postico antico subsimili apice obtuso segmentis lateralibus oblongis obtusis quam reliqua paulo longioribus omnibus herbaceis; corollæ violaceæ tubo calycem excedente triente superiori ampliato lobis omnibus inter se subsimilibus late rotundato-obovatis lobo antico altius soluto; staminibus 2 subinclusis; staminodis 2 antheris parvis gaudientibus tertium anthera orbum haud vel paullulum superantibus; ovario ovoideo glabro; ovulis quove in loculo 2; capsula anguste ovoideo-oblonga basi apiceque angustata.

Hab. Lake Chad district; P. A. Talbot, 1009.

Leaves 8-13 x 4-7 mm., the terminal spinelet about 1.5 mm. long, drying a darkish grey-green; petioles at most not much exceeding 1 mm. in length. Interpetiolear spines ± 1 cm. long, not very strong, but sharply pointed. Outer segments of calyx 6 mm. long, 3-3.2 mm. broad; inner segments 7 mm. long; all the lobes ciliate at the margin. Corolla 34 mm. long; tube in front 15 mm., behind 22 mm. long, 3.5 mm. wide below, increasing to double that width at the throat; lobes 12 mm. long (front one 18 mm.) and 8-10 mm. broad. Staminal filaments 15 mm. long; anthers ovate-oblong 4.5 mm. long; staminodes 5-6 mm. long. Ovary 2.5 mm. long; style glabrous, except for the pilose base, 25 mm. long. Capsule 12 mm. long, 6 mm. wide at the widest part, apparently 4-seeded. Seeds not seen.

Much like *B. triacantha* Hochst. in habit, but different from it in several respects, notably in the calyx. For the lateral segments of the calyx to exceed the outer segments, as they do here, is very unusual in the genus.

† *Siphonoglossa Macleodii*, S. Moore, sp. nov. Caulis ascendente geniculato sat distanter folioso piloso vel sparsim piloso-puberulo; foliis brevipetiolatis lineari-rariis oblongo-lanceolatis obtusis membranaceis præsertim juxta basin piloso-puberulis mox fere glabris margine ciliolatis; floribus in axillis superioribus 2-3 sessilibus subsessilibusve; bractea calyci circa æquilonga anguste lineari-lanceolata obtuse acuta margine pilis pilosohispidulis ciliata; bracteis parvulis anguste lineari-oblongis glabris; calycis segmentis 5 inter se inæqualibus lineari-lanceolatis longe acuminatis margine ciliolatis; corollæ tubo calycem manifeste excedente anguste cylindrico faucibus leviter amplificato dimidio superiori puberulo ceterum glabro labio antico elongato

## VERBENACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Lippia adoensis</i> Hochst. . . .	Léré to Ham . . . .	From Senegambia to Angola on the west coast, and Abyssinia to Uganda on the east.
<i>L. nodiflora</i> Rich. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Widely distributed throughout the tropics.

## LABIATÆ.

<i>Moschosma polystachyum</i> Bth.	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Tropical Africa, Mascarene Islands, Tropical Asia, and North Australia.
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## APETALÆ (Mr S. MOORE).

## NYCTAGINEÆ.

<i>Boerhaavia plumbaginea</i> Cav. . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical and North Africa, Arabia.
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## AMARANTACEÆ.

<i>Ærva tomentosa</i> Forsk. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical and North Africa to India.
<i>Æ. brachiata</i> Mart. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Tropical Africa, Madagascar, India.
<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L. . . . .	Léré to Ham, Lake Chad district	A weed of wide distribution in the warmer regions of the world.
<i>A. aquatica</i> R. Br. . . . .	Ham to Fort Lamy . . . .	N.E. Tropical Africa and India.
<i>Alternanthera nodiflora</i> R. Br.	Tuburi marshes, Léré to Ham .	Tropical Africa and India to Australia.

## POLYGONACEÆ.

<i>Polygonum tomentosum</i> Willd.	Lake Chad district . . . .	Africa and Tropical Asia.
<i>P. acuminatum</i> H. B. & K. var.	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical and South Africa and Tropical America.

## THYMELEACEÆ.

<i>Lasiosiphon Krausii</i> Meisn. . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical and South Africa.
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## LORANTHACEÆ.

<i>Loranthus globiferus</i> A. Rich. {	Léré to Ham	} Northern Tropical Africa, also Arabia.
var. <i>verrucosus</i> Sprague {	Tuburi marshes, Léré to Ham	

## EUPHORBIACEÆ.

<i>Phyllanthus reticulatus</i> Poir. . .	Ham to Fort Lamy, Garua to Golombe	Tropical Africa to Malaya.
<i>Ricinus communis</i> L. . . . .	Garua to Golombe . . . .	Through the warmer countries of the world.

adusque medium diviso lobis lateralibus ovato-oblongis intermedio ovato aequalongis omnibus obtusissimis labio postico abbreviato quadrato-ovato apice retuso; *staminibus* breviter exsertis antherarum loculis linearibus loc. inf. solum calcarato; *stylo* apice 2-dentato puberulo; *capsula* anguste obovoidea acuta superne puberula alibi glabra 4-sperma.

Hab. North Nigeria, R. Benue. *P. A. Talbot*, 379A.

Folia 3-5 cm. long., 4-8 mm. lat., in sicco viridia; petioli 2-4 mm. long. Bractee sub flore panso 10 mm., sub capsula 12 mm. long.; bracteolae 2-2.5 mm. long. Flores (limbus) purpurei. Calycis segmenta sub flore 6-8 mm., sub capsula 8-10 mm. long. Corolla tota humectata 28 mm. long.; tubus 17 mm. long.,  $\pm 1.5$  mm. lat., faucibus 2 mm. lat.; labii antici 11 mm. long., lobi 5.5 mm. long.; lobus posticus 7 mm. long. Antherarum loc. alter. 1.6 mm. long., alter (incluso calcare parum curvato) 2 mm. Pollinis granularum verruculorum series utroque latere saepius 4. Stylus 2 cm. long. Capsula 11 mm. long., inferne compressa. Semina tuberculata, brunnea, diam. 1 mm. leviter excedentia.

At first sight this looks rather like *Justicia Galeopsis* T. And., but the narrower leaves, and of course the long corolla-tube, are easy distinguishing features. According to Lindau's views, this is an *Aulojusticia*, but I agree with Bentham & Clarke in placing the allies of the plant just described in the genus *Siphonoglossa*.

## MONOCOTYLEDONS (Dr A. B. RENDLE, F.R.S.)

## CYPERACEÆ.

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Kyllinga pumila</i> Michx. . . .	Onitsha, S. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Pycreus capillifolius</i> C. B. Clarke	Lokoja and Illa, N. Nigeria . . . .	Tropical Africa.
<i>P. albomarginatus</i> Nees . . . .	Garua, N. Kamerun . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Juncellus alopecuroides</i> C. B. Clarke	Lake Chad district . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Cyperus uncinatus</i> Poir. . . .	Garua, N. Kamerun . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>C. Haspan</i> L. . . . .	Kamberi, R. Benue, N. Nigeria, Jigawa	Widely distributed.
<i>C. rotundus</i> L. . . . .	Amar and Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>C. Papyrus</i> L. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . . .	Tropical Africa.
<i>Mariscus Sieberianus</i> Nees . . . .	Abinsi, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>M. umbellatus</i> Vahl . . . . .	Onitsha, S. Nigeria . . . .	Tropical Africa.
<i>Fimbristylis diphylla</i> Vahl . . . .	Amar, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>F. exilis</i> Roem. & Schult. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Bulbostylis barbata</i> Kunth . . . .	Yola, R. Benue, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Fuirena umbellata</i> Rottb. . . . .	Lokoja and Abinsi, R. Benue, N. Nigeria, and Golombe, French Equatorial Africa	Widely distributed.
<i>Scleria foliosa</i> A. Rich. . . . .	Ham, French Equatorial Africa	E. Tropical Africa; Angola.
<i>S. ovuligera</i> Nees . . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . . .	W. Tropical Africa.

## GRAMINEÆ.

<i>Imperata arundinacea</i> Cyr. . . . .	Tuburi marshes, French Equatorial Africa; Lake Chad district	Widely distributed.
<i>Thelepogon elegans</i> Roth. . . . .	Lokoja and Yola, N. Nigeria; Bogolo, N. Kamerun	East and Central Tropical Africa; India.
<i>Vossia cuspidata</i> Griff. . . . .	Lake Chad, Lake Léré, and Tuburi marshes	India; East Tropical Africa.
<i>Manisuris granularis</i> L. fil. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria; Garua, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Anatherum muricatum</i> Beauv. . . . .	Léré, French Equatorial Africa; Bogolo, N. Kamerun; and Illa, N. Nigeria	West and Central Tropical Africa.
<i>Andropogon hirtiflorus</i> Kth. var. . . . .	Lokojo, N. Nigeria; Bogolo, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>A. fastigiatus</i> Sw. . . . .	Bogolo and Golombe, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>A. Gayanus</i> Kth. . . . .	Bogolo and Adamawa, N. Kamerun; Tuburi marshes.	Tropical Africa.
<i>Cymbopogon rufus</i> Rendle . . . . .	Ham, French Equatorial Africa	Widely distributed.
<i>C. Schönanthus</i> Spr. . . . .	Bogolo, N. Kamerun . . . .	...
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i> R. & S. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria; Adamawa, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Sorghum halepense</i> Nees . . . . .	Amar and Lau, N. Nigeria; Logone Birni, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Perotis latifolia</i> Ait. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria; R. Benue, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Paspalum scrobiculatum</i> L. . . . .	Mutum Biu and Amar, N. Nigeria; Bogolo, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i> Scop. var. <i>ciliaris</i> Rendle	Amar and Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . . .	Widely distributed.

## LIST OF PLANTS

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NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Digitaria sanguinalis</i> var. <i>horizontalis</i> Rendle	Tuburi marshes . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Panicum brizoides</i> Lam. . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed in the tropics.
<i>P. falciferum</i> Trin. . . .	Illa, N. Nigeria . . .	Tropical Africa; Tropical America.
<i>P. numidianum</i> Lam. . . .	Amar, N. Nigeria, R. Logone, Lake Chad district	North and Tropical Africa; Brazil.
<i>P. maximum</i> Jacq. . . .	Onitsha, S. Nigeria . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>P. proliferum</i> Lam. . . .	Amar, R. Beue . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>P. graciliflorum</i> Rendle . . .	Pogo to Ham, French Equatorial Africa	Tropical Africa.
<i>P. pansum</i> Rendle . . . .	Bogolo, N. Kamerun . . .	Angola
<i>P. repens</i> L. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>P. colonum</i> L. . . . .	Amar, N. Nigeria . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>P. Crus-galli</i> L. . . . .	Yola, N. Nigeria . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>P. stagninum</i> Retz. . . . .	Amar, N. Nigeria . . .	Tropical and South Africa; India.
<i>P. pyramidale</i> Lam. . . . .	Logonegana, R. Logone, N. Kamerun; Onitsha, S. Nigeria	Tropical and South Africa.
<i>P. spectabile</i> Nees . . . .	Tuburi marshes, French Equatorial Africa; Garua, R. Logone, N. Kamerun	West Tropical Africa.
<i>Tricholæna rosea</i> Nees . . . .	Onitsha, S. Nigeria; Lokoja, N. Nigeria	Tropical and South Africa.
<i>Setaria aurea</i> Hochst. . . .	R. Benue, N. Kamerun; Tuburi marshes	Tropical and South Africa; Tropical Asia.
<i>S. glauca</i> Beauv. . . . .	Bogolo, R. Benue, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>S. verticillata</i> Beauv. . . . .	Bogolo, R. Benue, N. Kamerun	Widely distributed.
<i>Oplismenus africanus</i> Beauv. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . .	Tropical and South Africa.
<i>Pennisetum setosum</i> A. Rich. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria; Adamawa, N. Kamerun	Tropical Africa.
<i>P. lanuginosum</i> Presl. . . . .	Adamawa and Bogolo, N. Kamerun	East Tropical Africa.
<i>P. ovale</i> Rupr. . . . .	Adamawa, N. Kamerun; Tuburi, French Equatorial Africa	East Tropical Africa.
<i>P. purpureum</i> Schumach. . . . .	Onitsha, N. Nigeria	Tropical Africa.
<i>Cenchrus catharticus</i> DC. . . . .	Amar and Lokoja, N. Nigeria .	North and Tropical Africa.
<i>Oryza sativa</i> L. . . . .	Tuburi marshes . . . .	Widely cultivated.
<i>Aristida adscensionis</i> L. . . . .	Adamawa, N. Kamerun . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>A. hordeacea</i> Kth. . . . .	Yola, N. Nigeria; Bogolo, N. Kamerun	Tropical Africa.
<i>Sporobolus pulchellus</i> R. Br. . . . .	Garua, N. Kamerun . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>S. indicus</i> R. Br. . . . .	Garua, N. Kamerun . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Trichopteryx simplex</i> Hack. . . . .	Lokoja, N. Nigeria . . .	Tropical and South Africa.
<i>Phragmites communis</i> Trin. . . . .	Amar, N. Nigeria; R. Logone, N. Kamerun; Tuburi marshes; Lake Chad district	Widely distributed.
<i>Cynodon Dactylon</i> Pers. . . . .	Lake Chad district . . .	Widely distributed.
<i>Schœnefeldia gracilis</i> Kth. . . . .	Adamawa, N. Kamerun; Lake Léré, French Equatorial Africa	Tropical and North Africa.
<i>Ctenium elegans</i> Kth. . . . .	Bogolo, N. Kamerun; Lake Léré and R. Logone, French Equatorial Africa	Tropical and North Africa.
<i>Chloris breviseta</i> Benth. . . . .	Onitsha, S. Nigeria; Abinsi, N. Nigeria; Garua, N. Kamerun	West Tropical Africa.

## LIST OF PLANTS

NAME.	HABITAT.	DISTRIBUTION.
<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptiacum</i> W.	Lokoja and Illa, N. Nigeria	Widely distributed.
<i>Eleusine indica</i> Gaertn.	Amar, N. Nigeria	Widely distributed.
<i>Eragrostis major</i> Host	Yola and Amar, N. Nigeria	Widely distributed.
<i>E. ciliaris</i> Link	Abinsi, Amar, and Lokoja, N. Nigeria	Widely distributed.
<i>E. tremula</i> Hochst.	Lokoja, N. Nigeria; Ham, French Equatorial Africa	Tropical Africa; India.
<i>E. rubiginosa</i> Trin.	Abinsi, Amar, R. Benue, and Illa, N. Nigeria	West Tropical Africa.
<i>E. Brownei</i> Nees	Lake Chad district	Widely distributed.
ALISMACEÆ.		
<i>Limnophyton obtusifolium</i> Miq.	Garua to Golombe	Tropical Africa.
<i>Butomopsis lanceolatus</i> Kunth	Tuburi marshes	Tropical Africa; N. India; Queensland.
COMMELINACEÆ.		
<i>Commelina Forskalei</i> Vahl.	R. Benue	Tropical Africa to Southern India.
<i>C. latifolia</i> A. Rich.	R. Benue	Tropical Africa.
<i>Aneilema sinicum</i> Lindl.	R. Benue	Tropical and South Africa; Mascarene Is.; Tropical Asia.
<i>Cyanotis lanata</i> Benth.	R. Benue	Tropical Africa.
PONTEDERIACEÆ.		
<i>Eichornia natans</i> Solms	Léré to Ham	East and West Tropical Africa.
DIOSCOREACEÆ.		
<i>Dioscorea prehensilis</i> Benth.	R. Benue	Tropical Africa.

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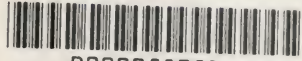
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