

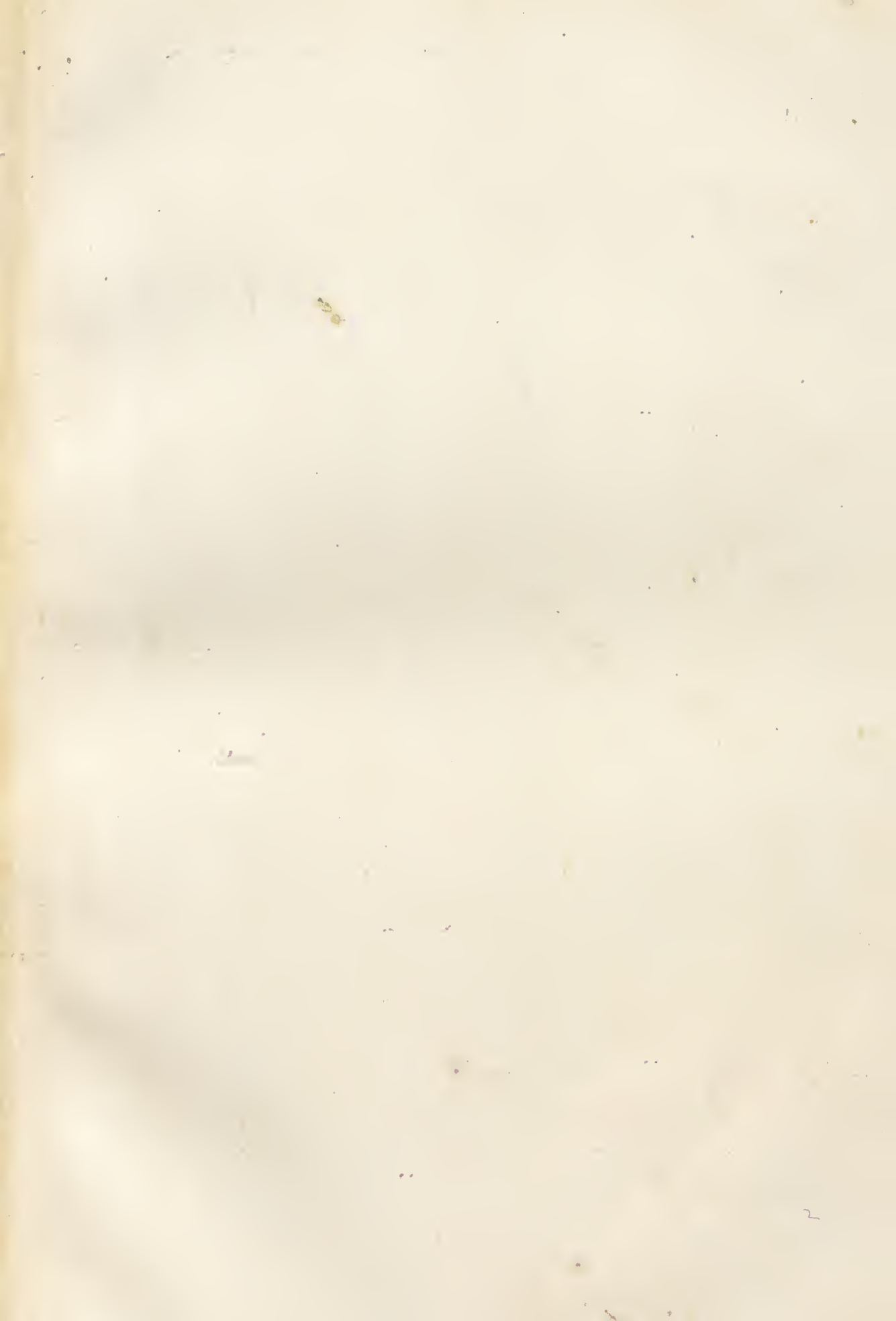
WOMEN OF ALL NATIONS

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EGYPTIAN WOMAN.
DRAWN BY NORMAN H. HARDY.

WOMEN OF ALL NATIONS

A Record of Their Characteristics,
Habits, Manners, Customs and Influence

Edited by
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AND
N. W. THOMAS, M.A.

FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



VOLUME II

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By A. VAN GENNEP

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YOUNG BETSILEO GIRL.

Of the so-called Malayan type, with slight admixture of negro blood.

between the central plateau and the Eastern coast, the Betsimisaraka, the Antaimoro, etc., of the Eastern coast, the Mahafaly and Bara of the extreme South, and the Antankarana of the extreme North. The tribes of the plateau are the most civilised and the gentlest, and of these the details of everyday and social life are the most fully known. Thus the term Malagasy women is principally intended to refer to the Antimerina and Betsileo.

There is as much variety in the female type as there is in that of the male. The women of the central plateau—Antimerina and Hova—resemble the Polynesians, possess regular features, small hands and feet, a light yellow skin, and are of medium

THE general scale of civilisation in Madagascar varies considerably according to the different tribes, such as the Hova or Antimerina, the Betsileo of the central plateau, the Sakalava of the Western coast, the Bezan-ozano of the virgin forests be-

height. The women of the other tribes are of a deeper colour, and present all the gradations as far as the negro type (certain tribes, the Sakalava, Bara), or the negroids (Bezanozano). They are also taller and more thick-set. Although all the dialects of the island belong to the same Austro-nesian stock, from a physical point of view the tribes of Madagascar are far from being homogeneous.

Throughout the island there is a clear division of labour between the sexes. The

Physical Types.



A SAKALAVA WOMAN.

Negro type with curled hair, wearing *lamba*.

men occupy themselves mainly with war-like matters, hunting, fishing with heavy tackle, with the construction of the framework of their dwellings, with the breaking up of their rice grounds, and with the raising and care of their cattle (zebus). The women for their part busy themselves with the preparation of food, the covering in of newly erected dwellings with matting and other materials, with the lighter kind of fishing, with the cultivation of rice, and, of course, with the care of young children. It would not be correct to say that the husbands

Woman's Work.

this division of labour is made on a basis in which trouble and fatigue are not taken into consideration.

Throughout the island also, excepting perhaps amongst the Bezanozano, woman

Position of Women.

is considered as a being equal to man. We do not find in Madagascar, as a general rule, that subjection of woman to the man which is so characteristic of the negro country, and even prevails among more civilised peoples, to wit, Mohammedan and Christian. Thus, marriage is not a mere formality of purchase by one of the parties of the other. The bride keeps the control of her belongings, and possesses the right, which is not merely theoretical, to the protection of her husband. Formerly, when polygamy was the universal custom, each wife lived in a separate dwelling surrounded by an enclosure which was allotted to her as her own property; moreover, before marriage a young girl was perfectly free to do as she liked, and if unhappily wedded could easily obtain a divorce.

According to explorers and settlers who have been close observers of native habits, the Malagasy woman was regarded as quite the equal of the man. In this sense certain ideas and administrative measures introduced by the Europeans may be regarded as having put back her social and moral condition.

The important political part played by the women before the French Conquest is only one of the aspects of the situation. Among the Sakalava, as among the Antimerina and other tribes, are found unmistakable traces of a former matriarchate, a political economical system in which the man is subordinate to the woman. As the social life of the Malagasy has, as yet, been little studied it is difficult to ascertain how far the matriarchate prevailed amongst the various tribes. One fact, however, is certain, that the royal power could be transmitted to women, and that by preference. The history of the Sakalava, which has been pieced together by Commandant Guillaïn, and that of the dynasty of Tananarivo,



A BETSIMISARAKA WOMAN.

Mixture of so-called Malayan and negro types;
in semi-European costume.

leave the lightest tasks to their wives; on the contrary, the women's work is the hardest, so that, from our point of view,

remind us of numerous queens whose husbands were, in fact, only prime ministers. women, and, after the matter has been talked over, calls upon the king of the

Nevertheless, in many districts—for instance, at Majunga and at Ste. Marie—the position of woman is on a much lower scale, and this may be attributed to the influence of Mohammedanism. This may also be noticed in towns where Europeans have settled. The original independence of the Malagasy woman is disappearing owing to the manner in which it has been abused by white men, and to the new ideas which have been imposed by French laws, notwithstanding that, as a general rule, the French carry out the principle of leaving to subjugated aborigines their own customary legislation.

It is natural that, being accorded a recognised social status, the Malagasy woman should be animated by sentiments which assimilate her to our European women,

Feminine Character-istics.

such as a keen sense of her dignity and domestic responsibility. She is, moreover, sensitive to any friendship or love which may be shown her, as she attaches a great importance to these sentiments, and differs in this respect from so many other women of semi-civilised races. The Betsileo and Antimerina women are tender-hearted—a term which would scarcely apply to the negro population of the neighbouring African coast.

In many tribes the women constitute a social group with its own peculiar customs. The most characteristic instance of this is that of the Zafisoro, a tribe of the south-east. If a man has been guilty of any grave offence towards a woman, complaint is made to the "head woman," who has been elected in order to defend feminine interests. This chieftainess summons a council of



A HOVA (ANTIMERINA) WOMAN.

A good example of the fair Malayan type. She is wearing an unembroidered *lamba*.

tribe to punish the culprit—a request invariably granted.

Among ceremonies peculiar to women I would cite the dances and songs performed by the Antaimorowomen during the absence of their husbands (when either hunting or fighting, etc.). These ceremonies are intended to endow their husbands with strength, courage, and good fortune. The women also carry amulets and talismans, intended to facilitate the troubles of child labour, of suckling, of field work, etc.

In the provinces the women wear the "simbo," a kind of sack open at both

extremities, and the "akanjo," similar to the "lamba" worn by the men, but smaller and closer round the chest.

Women's Dress. The ornamentation and the material of these garments differ according to the tribes; thus, among the Antanory in the southern part of the island the "akanjo" is made of widths of red and white spotted calico sewn together alternately. The "simbo" made of reed matting is held up round the waist by a broad ox-hide belt. In addition a broad band of plaited grass is worn round the chest and breasts, and held in position by strings of raphia behind the back.

The women of the tribes of the interior, moreover, possess a well-developed æsthetic taste, displayed chiefly in the manner in which they drape their garments, and also in the ornamental trimming with which they adorn them, more especially the silk "lambas," the embroidered patterns of which are usually geometrical, and finely and delicately executed; but what is more to be admired is the harmony with which the shades of colour are blended. Some embroideries are *en camaïeu* (white on white, etc.)—in fact, it was at Tananarivo during the period of native rule that this *industrie de luxe* was developed, especially as the "lamba" (a simple square of material which is wrapped round the body, one corner being thrown over the shoulder) is the traditional costume alike for men and women of the central plateau. Of late years European costume has begun to predominate, at least in Tananarivo and other large towns.

The æsthetic taste of the Malagasy women is further marked in their head-dresses, the construction of which requires many hours and the assistance of many hands. They begin by parting the hair down the centre; then they plait ten or twenty little tails on each side, commencing very tightly, and tying the ends in such a manner as to form a sort of crimp; finally, with the

ends of these tresses they make round knots varying in size according to their tribe (*see* p. 209). Generally they plaster the whole edifice with clay or beef-fat, so that the hair need not be re-dressed more than once a month. In many tribes among the Bara both the male and female head-dresses are formed of knots coated with clay and grease. As under these conditions the scalp is always dirty, both men and women possess among their most necessary articles of toilette a comb, and a long copper or bone needle, with which they vigorously scratch their heads.

The Malagasy women are greatly devoted to music and dancing. The musical instruments played by the women are of an exceedingly simple type, being mere pieces of bamboo which are rhythmically struck, or bamboos from which strips of bark have been partly separated and stretched over a bridge. These strings are of different lengths, and give forth shrill notes. With regard to the dances, these consist of swaying movements and steps backwards and forwards. The dances are executed either individually or by a number together.

A birth forms a subject of rejoicing for the whole of the family. Shortly before the expected arrival a small private room is constructed in the house by means of a partition of matting, and here a wood fire is lighted and carefully tended, even in summer, for the Malagasies consider that a high temperature facilitates the birth and hastens the convalescence of the mother. All the relations and friends, having been notified, come to pay a visit to the mother and bring her presents—as a rule, money, "intended for firewood." Old women fulfil the duties of midwives and nurses. The birth of a girl causes as much pleasure and delight as that of a boy.

The babies are suckled for a considerable time; as a rule, for two years, but sometimes for three or even four. The mothers carry their children, wrapped in the "lamba" or the "simbo," on the back and occasionally on the hip. Among

the Imarina a special custom prevails with regard to this. When the children come to a mature age they offer their mother a piece of money, known as "perfume of the back," in grateful recognition of

are named after an animal, such as a mouse.

Significance of Names.

When a woman has children, she is merely styled the "mother of So-and-So." Women of a certain



BETSILEO WOMEN.

Showing the method of draping the *lamba*. They are good examples of the so-called Malayan type.

the trouble taken by their parent in thus carrying them during their infancy.

The names given to girls indicate their order of birth; for instance, "Rafaravavy," signifies the last child. Sometimes they

age are called indiscriminately "Ramatoa," a title of respect; and the old women, "Inény," a homely term which means "mother."

In the case of polygamy the first wife exercises a species of pre-eminence over

the others, but this does not include any greater authority or any special privilege.

Polygamy. Each wife maintains complete control over the whole of her possessions, both those which she has brought as a dowry and such as her husband may have given her. The position of the different wives of the same man is very similar among the Sakalava. It may be also mentioned that in Madagascar, as in many other countries, polygamy is only really practised by the rich, for, as each wife has her own private household, plurality of wives entails a very considerable expense.

When ethnographical researches were first instituted in Madagascar it was thought

Marriage Ceremonies. that the habits and customs among the various tribes were as uniform as the language.

We know now that they differ widely. In connection with marriage ceremonies, however, there is one common feature—the part played by the intermediaries, who are either relations or friends. With most tribes the preliminary steps are taken by the relatives of the young man. On the other hand, with the Antaimoro the girls choose their husbands, an interesting parallel to the Hindoo custom of *Svayamvara*.

As a rule marriage is permanent, and can only be dissolved by legal measures, divorce being usually to the man's advantage. But in addition there is a form of union known as temporary marriage, which is equally celebrated by ceremonies (particularly on the Eastern coast). Among some tribes trial marriage exists, and with the Bezanozano may be said to prevail.

The marriage ceremonies follow a usual course—that is to say, the two families come to an agreement after discussing the matter. "When the bargain is concluded the youth comes to claim his bride; but before she is allowed to depart she has to exhibit her charms in competition with the other girls in the place, all of whom are dressed up for the occasion: this ceremony is called "being compared."

After the negotiations are completed the two families take part in a cere-

monial feast. Among the Antimerina the bridal couple are enveloped in the same "lamba," and eat off the same dish. Among the Sakalava one of the young man's relatives or friends kills and cooks a fowl, and offers him the two feet; the bridegroom gives one to his bride, and eats the other, while the two families devour the rest of the bird. Among the Bara and a few other tribes an ox is killed ceremoniously, and eaten in common. (These ceremonies symbolise not only the union of the two individuals, but in a greater measure that of the two families.)

As girls mature very early they are married while quite young—at the age of twelve or fourteen years. In

Matrimonial Legends. the interior and among certain coast tribes marriage is

arranged by the parents while the children are still quite little. Nevertheless love plays a very considerable part in connubial arrangements, as is manifested by numerous songs and legends such as the following, relating to the volcanic lake of Tritriva, which tells of a Malagasy Romeo and Juliet. In the West, at the foot of a mountain are two neighbouring villages. In one resided a young man famed for his strength and skill, and in the other dwelt a young girl celebrated for her beauty. These young people were betrothed, and had sworn eternal love to each other. Nevertheless, they could not marry; their families, divided by a violent feud, refused to consent to their union. In despair the young lovers climbed the mountain of Tritriva, and, binding themselves together in their silk "lambas," threw themselves into the bottomless lake. From that day, every time a young girl died in the village of the unhappy *fiancée*, half the waters of the lake turned red; and if in the village of the lover a young man died, the whole of the lake became the colour of blood. Andrianamjoinimerina, who reigned then at Tananarivo, recognised the hand of fate, and ordered his subjects not to run counter to the loves of their children, but to let them follow their own inclinations.



AN EGYPTIAN BRIDAL CAR.
In which the bride journeys to her new home.

Photograph by Mr. C. Duncan Cross.

NORTH AFRICA

By CLIVE HOLLAND

Egypt—A Mixed Race—The Fellahin—Dress—Fellahin Aids to Beauty—Home Life of the Fellahin—How a Marriage is Arranged in Egypt—Egyptian Marriage Customs—Concerning Egyptian Children—The Copts—Coptic Dress—The Famous Dancing Girls—The Women of Algeria and Morocco—The Berber Race—Berber Dress—Position of Kabyle Women—The Arabs of Algeria and Morocco—Arab Love of Jewellery—Arab Marriage Customs—Arabs and Divorce—Moorish Women—Moorish Jewellery and Ornaments—Home Life of the Moors—Moorish Ideal of Beauty—Moorish Marriage Customs—The Bride Box—Position of Moorish Women

EGYPT

EGYPT is inhabited by what is commonly known as a "mixed" rather than by a "pure" race. Its geographical position is, indeed, such as to render this an unavoidable circumstance.

A Mixed Race.

Its history explains how the mixing of various races occurred.

Of the pure Egyptians, or the original inhabitants, there are two surviving types which at the present day form

the more important basis of the population—the Fellahin and the Copts. They are the lineal descendants of the ancient Egyptians, in whose facial and other characteristics can still be traced resemblance to the types found depicted upon the mural decorations of ancient temples and tombs.

Of the two peoples we have mentioned the process of intermixture has been most strongly marked in the case of the

Fellahin, who form the greater portion of the population in Lower Egypt and the rural districts of the Nile Delta.

**The
Fellahin.**

They are possessed of the distinguishing characteristics of a broad, flat forehead, large black eyes, a straight, well-formed nose and thick lips, and a rather high average height of about 5 feet 6 inches. But notwithstanding Arab inter-marriage, and influences in the Fellahin type, one can trace their ancient Egyptian ancestry.

The dress of the men of the lower class is very elementary; those of the upper classes have adopted Turkish, Arab, or European garments.

The dress of the women of the lower class is very simple, and frequently consists of little more than a long garment of blue cotton stuff, like a dressing-gown, confined at the waist by a girdle. The costume of the better class women is not only more elaborate, but in some cases is rendered very handsome by a profusion of gold ornaments. The principal garment is usually a loose-fitting white robe, hanging from the shoulders to the feet and girdled at the waist. It is sleeveless, but has side openings reaching from the arm-holes to the knees. Underneath this outer robe, in summer time, is worn a chemise of gauze, and loose drawers of cotton or other material, reaching to just below the knees where they are confined. Sometimes these latter are replaced by loose trousers of similar material and of the well-known "Turkish" shape. In cool weather an additional chemise, or an under robe of the same type as the outer one is worn.

Most of the women and girls of the upper class darken their eye-lids with antimony for the purpose of adding lustre to their eyes, and not a few ornament their bodies with tattooed designs and paint.

Their hair, which is often very luxuriant, is plaited into thin "tails," some of which are dressed at the side of the head, and others are allowed to hang loosely down over the

shoulders at the back. The many ornaments worn in the shape of pins, chains, bangles, etc., are generally of gold and, from their number and weight, are of considerable value. The hair itself is often adorned and retained in place by pins and combs of gold, and fringed with rows of coins of the same metal, tiny bells, and discs or shell-shaped pieces of the precious metal. The plaits of hair are secured at the ends with silken cords to which are attached gold coins and fringe.

The women mix little, even nowadays, in the life of the villages or towns, but are

**Home Life
of the
Fellahin.**

supposed to find their chief interests in the care and rule of their households when married, or of their father's home when single, cooking, washing, and sewing making up their principal home duties. The first meal of the day is a light one, consisting generally of a cup of coffee, with, perhaps, some of the flat cakes of unleavened bread (something of the nature of griddle cakes) baked directly over the fire. Though on the whole less confined to the *harem* than are Turkish women, the wives and daughters of Fellahin of the better class do not have unrestricted freedom of movement in the outer world. They are permitted to pay calls upon other women in the morning, and whilst doing so pass their time mostly in idle gossip, smoking, telling stories, drinking coffee, and watching the professional dancing girls. Women of the lower class usually have more liberty than those of higher rank in life.

Of systematic education for women there is none, and comparatively few women possess any knowledge of things outside their own family circle or those of friends of their own sex.

The women of the better class are never or seldom seen, even though closely veiled, in the public market places, and only in the streets when so muffled up as to be quite unrecognisable. Only those of the courtesan class are met in the more frequented streets, but even they are at least partially veiled, and are only seen there at all because they have long ceased to value their reputations. Occasionally some poor

**Fellahin
Aids to
Beauty.**

old peasant women pass through the streets of a town unveiled, but these seem to have gained immunity from the universal cus-

earning a living and able to support a wife, without marrying is regarded as indicating that he is a ne'er-do-well and a libertine.



WIFE AND MOTHER OF A DRAGOMAN.

Photograph by Miss M. A. MacGregor.

A scene in Cairo.

tom by reason of their age and lack of physical charms.

As a general rule marriage in Egypt is undertaken earlier than in European countries; girls marry at any age from fourteen, and boys at sixteen or seventeen. Indeed for a man to attain any considerable age, provided he is capable of

Owing to the fact that there is practically no intercourse possible between young people of opposite sexes, when a young man wishes to marry he is compelled to employ a marriage broker, who is known by the name of a *khatbeh*, or betrother. This woman, who is in the way of her business acquainted with many

How a Marriage is Arranged in Egypt.

families, visits those who at the particular time happen to possess daughters of suitable age and rank still unmarried. Frequently she combines with her profession of matrimonial agent that of a seller of cosmetics, ornaments, or dress stuffs. But whether she is one or the other matters

If they are satisfied, then the *khatbeh* pays another visit to the young lady's family and formally proposes on behalf of the young man for her hand in marriage. The young lady's parents are not long in coming to a decision, for, of course, from the first they have clearly understood what the



A GROUP OF FELLAHIN.

Photograph by Miss M. A. MacGregor.

It will be noted that the women are partially veiled, merely their eyes and noses being visible.

little, she has seldom much difficulty in gaining an entrance into the family circle of a suitable household, who are not long left in ignorance of the main object of her visit. Marriage being esteemed the proper and ultimate goal of most girls, the mothers of eligible maidens do their best to make them in every way attractive so that the *khatbeh* may be favourably impressed with their qualifications and charms.

When the matrimonial agent has selected a candidate suitable to her employer she loses no time in communicating the fact to him. As he, of course, cannot himself see the lady whom it is proposed he should marry, his mother, sister, or other near female relative hastens to inspect her with a view to assuring themselves, on his behalf, that the *khatbeh's* report of her charms of person and suitability is not exaggerated.

khatbeh has been seeking, and would have early broken off negotiations had they been unfavourable to the marriage.

As for the bride-to-be, although she has a traditional right of refusal it is seldom exercised. She has no reason for thinking the marriage unsuitable, for—unless the intended bridegroom is her cousin, and she may have known him when a small boy—she will probably never have seen him. The *khatbeh* is eloquent in her praises of him, and so the bride-to-be generally accepts the position without demur.

Of course amongst the lower and labouring classes whose daughters work in the fields, and cannot in consequence be always veiled and shut up in *harims*, men who wish to marry select their own wives according to their own ideas and without any intermediary.

After the two families have arrived at a general agreement that the marriage arranged by the *khatbeh* is desirable the bargaining regarding the bride's dowry commences. The rule is for the bridegroom to promise a fixed

another on a carpet in the midst of the spectators, clasp each other by the right hand, and raising the thumbs press them closely together. The bridegroom has already mentioned the amount



WANDERING BEDOUIN WOMAN DANCING.

Photograph by Miss M. A. MacGregor.

sum to his wife-to-be, of which two-thirds are paid when the marriage is agreed upon, but the remainder is not paid except in the event of divorce. By a strange custom the bride's family usually pay her dowry out of the money thus received from her future husband! So that things in the end are frequently very much as they were in the beginning. On the settlement of this matter the contract is considered ratified, and a declaration is made before a magistrate or other legal authority to this effect.

Soon after this the bridegroom and a couple of his friends go to the house of the bride's mother or father, where they are formally received. Witnesses and a *Fikêe* or reader also attend, and friends of both parties are also usually present. After a recital of the first chapter of the Koran the bridegroom and bride's father kneel opposite one

agreed as the bride's settlement. The *Fikêe* then delivers a short address, having first covered the clasped hands with a cloth, and afterwards pronounces the words of betrothal. Presents are made, the *Fikêe* receives his fee or tip, and the witnesses and others eat together.

There only now remains the actual marriage, preceded by the introduction of the bridegroom to the bride. Then follows a grand night festival to which all the friends of both and many neighbours are invited, and the newly wedded pair take up house-keeping.

One quaint wedding custom in connection with a bride of Lower Egypt is the visit paid by herself and friends to the bath. The progress to it partakes of the nature of a procession. Headed by Arab musicians

(in the case of a bride of position) with tambourines, flutes, and other instruments it wends its way slowly through the streets to the bath house, over the door of which is hung a handkerchief to intimate that only women may enter. After the bride and her friends have bathed they abandon themselves to the enjoyment of an entertainment provided by the musicians, storytellers, and singers who have come with them for the purpose.

When the time arrives to depart from the bath the bride takes a large piece of *henna* paste into which the various guests stick a gold coin of a value varying according to their means. Then the bride's fingernails and toe-nails are reddened with the *henna*, and she says adieu to her friends, who afterwards divide the rest of the cosmetic amongst them.

The earlier part of next day is spent in those beautifying arts of the toilet which are known amongst Western nations as "make-up." Towards the middle of the afternoon the bride starts for her husband's home, accompanied by her nearest female relatives. The procession also includes camels or horses on which the bride's belongings, dowry, etc., are packed; Arab wrestlers, musicians, water carriers, and others who give entertainments in the streets at various points of the progress of the procession. On arrival at the bridegroom's residence there are feasting and amusements for the guests, and it is not until late that the latter depart. At last even the *bellaneh* (nurse) leaves, and the bride and bridegroom are left alone and at peace. Then, and not till then, is the latter permitted to lift his wife's veil, and catch a glimpse of her features, and decide whether or not she is as desirable as the eloquence of the *khatbeh* had represented.

The Fellahin children are kept in such rigid seclusion for seven days after birth that not even their own fathers are allowed to see them for fear of injury. On the seventh day, however, the infant is borne on a sieve or tray, and accompanied with

lighted tapers through every part of the house, whilst the nurse seeks to propitiate the evil spirits by scattering salt and grain. The baby is afterwards shaken about in the sieve to give it confidence, and then held up to the sun so that it may have its eyes strengthened. If the baby is a girl the guests will be chiefly women invited by the mother; but in the case of a boy the father will also have invited his friends. The boy baby is ultimately carried to the men's apartments, where the father will see it for the first time.

The usual method of christening will probably not appeal to Western peoples. It consists of the *kadi* sucking a piece of sugar-candy, and allowing the melted sugar to flow from his own mouth into that of the infant, after which sadly un-hygienic proceeding he gives the child its name.

Owing to the fact that the upper class women in Lower Egypt, more especially of the towns, lead such secluded lives there are few occupations of at all a public character open to or followed by women. The peasants do a considerable amount of agricultural work, but amongst the shopkeeping classes the women are conspicuous by their absence.

The Copts, the second great native division of the people, are nowadays chiefly the inhabitants of Upper Egypt. They are found more especially in the district near Assiût, and on the shores of, and in the vicinity of, Lake Birket-el-Kerun. Those found in Lower Egypt are mostly artisans, shopkeepers, and scribes. Owing to the fact that the Copts are not followers of Mohammed but are Christians, they have come into contact with the Arab divisions of the population to a lesser degree than the Fellahin, and they remain much purer in race than the latter. But it should be noted that, whilst thus retaining many of their original racial characteristics and religious beliefs, their customs and ideas have altered considerably since ancient times. In many of their customs, indeed, and in attire, they have become little distinguishable from

Egyptian Marriage Customs.

Concerning Egyptian Children.

Moslems, although in dress they prefer the darker colours.

The costume of the women does not differ very materially from that of Fellahin of the better class. There is the same love

Coptic Dress. of ornament, and much the same form of hairdressing.

There is one merit, however, about their ornaments—they are never tawdry or sham. They are often purchased, or otherwise acquired, in times of prosperity either before or after marriage, and are handed down from generation to generation. It is only in cases of direst necessity that they are sold outright, although when hard times come women will frequently pawn them.

from the hips to the ankles. During the hot summer months the tight-fitting undergarments are abandoned, sometimes even the trousers or drawers, and only the outer robe, generally of light blue cotton fabric, or a bright blue striped one, is considered



Photograph by Miss B. C. Reynolds
MOORISH WOMEN OUT
FOR A WALK.



Photograph by Miss M. A. MacGregor.
WANDERING BEDOUIN WOMEN.

In addition to the garments we have already mentioned as being worn by Fellahin women, over the chemise Copt women often wear a narrow-sleeved, bodice-like garment which fits closely to the body, and is secured in front by a series of knots, commencing just below the breast line. Forming a part of this is a skirt which falls in straight folds

necessary. Either there is nothing on the feet, or merely loose-fitting slippers are worn which in no wise destroy their natural beauty.

Out of doors, however, most women are careful to conceal both their faces and persons from the vulgar gaze.

The dress of young girls is very similar to that of their elders, but girls from four or five up to ten or twelve, however, are

generally spared the outer robe, and wear only the chemise and loose drawers, although they very early commence to imitate their elder sisters and other women by drawing their head covering across their faces when a stranger approaches.

The women of the towns follow few public occupations, for they are chiefly concerned

with the management of their homes. But in the rural districts they assist with agricultural work, and much of the milling of the flour is done by women of the lower orders.



Photograph by J. Geiser, Algiers.

WOMAN OF SOUTHERN ALGERIA.

There is, however, one class of women in Egypt whose mission of public entertainers brings them in contact with the outer world, and whose profession dates from the times of the Pharaohs. They are found in almost every town of any size in Upper Egypt, and they claim to be lineally descended from Barmek the favourite of the famous Haroun el Raschid. Some authorities contend that they are genuine gipsies, but this is unlikely owing to the intermarriage which has undoubtedly taken place with all grades of the population. In most towns, although sometimes employed to entertain

The Famous Dancing Girls.

at feasts in private houses, these dancing girls are confined to one particular quarter, where morality and respectability count least. As a rule the women and girls of the better

class are magnificently dressed in a more or less modified form of Turkish costume, with a wealth of bright coloured stuffs and many valuable ornaments. Indeed, numbers of these girls possess not only jewellery of immense value, but also cash in hand to large amounts.

In modern times their ranks have been largely recruited by handsome slave girls purchased by the heads of troupes, or by the proprietors of the houses where dancing entertainments are given.

ALGERIA AND MOROCCO

Although a glance at the map of North Africa shows that Algeria and Morocco are two distinct countries as regards political division, the inhabitants of each are practically identical, and may therefore in most matters be regarded together. The main part of the population of both countries is formed of Berbers, the less important divisions of the inhabitants being comprised of

Arabs, Jews, and negroes.

The Berber race is essentially "white," though in past ages it has been modified locally by Arab influences. Consequently, and from the fact that they are Mohammedans and

The Berber Race.

frequently speak Arabic, the Berbers have often erroneously been regarded as Arabs. There is one thing, however, both Berbers and Arabs have in common which has doubtless led to some additional confusion at times. This is the common "Caucasian" origin, and the fact that in physical characteristics they present some features of resemblance. There are, notwithstanding,



A WOMAN OF BOU SAÂDA, SOUTH ALGERIA.
Showing the method of carrying children.

Photograph by J. Geiser, Algiers.

some very important points of divergence. The Arabs have a longer, more oval face, and less fair skin than the Berbers, with a less broad and more aquiline nose, smaller mouth, less heavily modelled jaws, and darker hair and eyes. They are also less energetic and industrious, less inquisitive and more contemplative than practical. The Arab is very frequently a dreamer rather than a worker. The Arab mind is of a finer grade, and the Arab himself of a more self-controlled and stoical disposition.

The divisions or clans of the Berber race alone in Algeria are very numerous; some authorities state that there are at least twelve hundred. Doubtless this fact has earned for them the sobriquet of the "Scotch of North Africa." The tribes are divided into three principal groups. The coast tribes, or inhabitants of the North, are known as Kabyles, together with the Riff pirates whose depredations in the past caused them to be one of the scourges of the Mediterranean; the second comprises the Shullahs of the Atlas, and the Sus of the Mogador district; the third includes the Black Berbers or Haratins, who dwell chiefly on the Southern slopes of the Atlas Chain.

The costume of Berber women is simpler than that of the Arabs, and consists chiefly of a long tunic-like garment fastened with a girdle round the waist, and a coloured shawl or cloth worn over the shoulders. The women are permitted much greater freedom than among the Arabs, and the all-enveloping veil or *haik* is not worn. Their ornaments consist chiefly of necklaces, bracelets, chains of gold or beads, ear-rings, and sometimes nose-rings.

The Berber dwellings in towns and villages are sometimes of two storeys, built substantially of stone, but in the country districts, especially among the Tuareg in the South, many of the people live in tents or movable huts of straw, and follow the pursuits of agriculture or the more simple industries.

The Kabyle woman occupies a much superior position in the esteem of men than a Moorish or Arab woman. She

**Position
of Kabyle
Women.**

is not compelled to veil herself nor is she prevented from mixing freely in the outer life of her people. She is treated more in the light of an equal and companion of her husband, and in most cases is the sole wife, although some few Kabyles are polygamous. Her dress is of a simple character, consisting chiefly of a loose-fitting robe of light colours, and a head-cloth, arranged somewhat in the fashion of a close-fitting turban, with a fold of the material hanging down over the head and neck behind.

The Arabs who conquered Algeria and Morocco in the seventh and eleventh centuries are found to-day

**The Arabs of
Algeria and
Morocco.**

throughout those two countries, and, indeed, politically speaking, are still the dominant race in the latter country as they were in the former until its occupation by the French. The Arab element of Algeria is found chiefly in the Western portion, although it is in a measure scattered throughout the province. The dress of Arab women usually consists of a white striped shawl, called a *haik*, made of coarse or fine stuff according to the social position and wealth of the wearer, which is thrown over the head, and completely veils the user from head to feet. Underneath this *haik*, arranged across the lower part of the face so that it covers all but the eyes, the bridge of the nose, and a small portion of the forehead left uncovered by the *haik*, is worn a handkerchief of white linen known as an *adjar*, which is fastened securely across the face. Sometimes, more especially in the towns, the *adjar* is of so gossamer-like a material that it forms but the thinnest disguise to the wearer's features. The effect of this semi-transparent veil, and the uncovered eyes, which are generally beautiful, dark, and expressive, is rather coquettish than repellent as one would suppose was the intention. In some parts of the country, where the spirit of jealousy appears more

rampant than in others, the women are only permitted to leave one eye uncovered!

The mysterious and pleasing effect of the plaintive, dark and almost invariably beautiful eyes which look out at one from above the *adjar* is often marred by the practice of tattooing the forehead and extending the eyebrows, so that they meet in one continuous line.

In addition to the *haik* and *adjar*, Arab women out of doors wear wide, loose trousers, of the "Turkish" shape, slippers, and a chemise-like undergarment of gauze or linen according to their social position. The general effect of this costume is neither picturesque nor graceful. The women present rather the appearance of animated clothes bags; and their walk becomes a curious shuffle. Their indoor dress is considerably more elaborate than their outdoor, but it varies greatly according to the social position and wealth of the individual. Working women wear a simple *habaya* or chemise, loose cotton trousers, and a vest; whilst those of the better and richer classes wear gauze chemises, loose silken trousers, rich sashes, and handsomely embroidered vests in type somewhat similar to a "Zouave" coat.

Most Arab women paint their nails with *henna*, and also the palms of their hands; and many also dye the roots of their hair a similar red tint.

But whatever may be the simplicity or luxury of their clothing one and all wear a profusion of jewellery. Earrings, bracelets, anklets of gold, necklaces of the same metal roughly set with various precious stones are worn by the more wealthy, while

the poorer women wear coral, silver ornaments, and glass beads. Even the half-naked little Arab beggar maids of the towns and villages have their arms ornamented



A KABYLE GIRL. Photograph by J. Geiser, Algiers.

by heavy copper bangles above the wrists and elbows.

As the more heavily bejewelled women walk along one hears the faint jingling music of the rings and bangles with which their wrists and ankles are loaded. The Arab and Moorish women of to-day would doubtless incur the invectives of Isaiah, who so sternly refers to the "tinkling of the feet" of ancient Jewish women. By the Koran the women are expressly forbidden to display their jewels except to other women or near relatives. They are also enjoined "not to make a noise with their feet, that their hidden jewellery may be discovered."



SOUTH ALGERIAN GIRL.
Showing a considerable admixture of negro blood.

Photograph by J. Geiser, Algiers.

The life of Arab women proper is of a freer character than that of many other Oriental races. In marriage this is decidedly the case, as women very frequently

Arab Marriage Customs.

have a distinct voice in the matter of whom they shall marry, and after the event they enjoy much more personal liberty than most Eastern women. Honey-moons and wedding tours, however, are quite unknown, although as it is rather the custom — and considered luckier — for the bride-to-be to journey to her future husband than for him to come to her—a girl very frequently makes a considerable journey before her marriage. It is the practice with many wealthy Arabs living in the larger towns to send their sons to reside with tent-dwelling Bedouins, so that they may grow up hardy and full of those qualities of daring and skill with the matchlock and sword in which the Arab takes so great a pride. Thus it is that many young Arabs in after years, when they have returned to their fathers' houses, and seek a wife, find her amongst the girl playmates of their early desert days. When this is the case the girl is sent for, and in due course arrives riding with a woman companion on a richly caparisoned camel and accompanied by attendants and a protecting guard.

On another camel or camels, according to the wealth of the bride, is carried the trousseau and dowry; and after the latter, even when the journey is a long one, often ride musicians beating drums and playing upon other instruments.

The marriage feasts of the Arabs are important ceremonies to which rich and poor are invited, but the marriage ceremony itself is extremely simple. In the towns it generally consists of a declaration made before the *Kadi*; whilst in the desert the only act necessary is the killing of a sheep in front of the tent of the bride's father, or other person standing in that relation to her.

Whilst polygamy is permitted, it is not usually practised, although, as divorce is

very easy, an Arab may, in the course of a long life, marry a number of women in succession. It is by no means an uncommon thing for Arabs to exchange wives, and this is stated by some authorities frequently to be done with the utmost satisfaction to all concerned! It will, however, be easily understood that such practices cannot conduce to the stability of the family relationships, nor would one imagine to the best interests and happiness of the women.

Arab Divorce.

Should an Arab be dissatisfied with his wife he is at liberty to send her back to her father, but such act must be accompanied by the return in full of any dowry that he may have received with her. It is a very common thing for a brother to offer marriage to his brother's widow, a practice which is more followed amongst Eastern peoples, especially of the nomadic tribes, than is generally supposed. The Arab has also an absolute right to marry his girl cousin, who if she possesses several cousins is held to be at the disposal of the eldest, or oldest unmarried, of them. If divorce can be easily obtained by the man it can be procured with similar ease by the woman. A man is considered bound to provide for the necessities of himself and his women folk, and if she be so disposed a wife can obtain a divorce if her husband fails to do this on even a single occasion. In the event of an Arab woman earning money by any means she is at full liberty to dispose of it as she pleases. Usually it goes in the purchase of jewellery and toilet articles such as *henna* and *kohl*. With some tribes it is the custom for the men to pay the women for any special work they may perform.

The Arab women are almost without exception treated with a chivalry which is somewhat strange when one considers the freedom of marriage relationship as regards divorce. But be this as it may, an Arab woman guilty of an offence against morals is almost invariably sheltered and the scandal hushed up. The Arab's attitude is well

Position of Arab Women.

expressed by the saying, "We must give women greater indulgence, for they are weaker whilst equally tempted, and less able to stand temptation. So we must cover them with our cloaks."

Europeans understand the term, there is as yet practically none. Few women can read, and still fewer can write, save those belonging to the highest classes amongst the inhabitants of the towns.



Photograph by F. Getser, Algiers.

GIRL OF BOU SAÂDA, SOUTHERN ALGERIA.

Marriage by capture is still practised by several of the Bedouin tribes. But notwithstanding this somewhat summary method of marriage, Arab wives are usually treated with consideration, and even tenderness, and on the whole marriage amongst the Arabs is happy.

Of education amongst the women, as

Although closely allied to the Arabs, the Moors, who are chiefly the inhabitants of the towns in Morocco, are fairer in complexion than the sons of the desert. This circumstance may be accounted for by the fact that many of them are undoubtedly the direct descendants of the Moriscos, who

**Moorish
Women.**



WOMAN OF BOU SAÂDA,
SOUTHERN ALGERIA.

were driven out of Spain at the commencement of the sixteenth century, but who by intermarriage had acquired a considerable strain of Spanish blood. Probably, also, to this is attributable the fact that they are of a more mercurial temperament than the Arabs proper, more gifted with humour and vivacity, and more cultured. Some of the Moorish women are of distinctly Spanish cast, possessing fine dark eyes, well-marked brows, and dark olive complexions.

The national colour in dress for both men and women is white. The men's costume is simple in character, but that of the women often very elaborate. As a general rule the latter consists of a white muslin chemise,

over which is worn a jacket of coloured material elaborately embroidered in gold or silver. A pair of wide and beautifully worked trousers of green, blue, or red cashmere, girded in with a handsome silken sash at the waist, where they meet the short jacket, usually completes the costume. Some women, however, add other drapery, fastened in front, and allowed to fall down behind as a train. One leg is always left uncovered, on which is worn a heavy silver anklet, and the tips of the feet are thrust into tiny slippers of morocco leather.



ALGERIAN GIRL OF MIXED RACE.

Photographs by J. Geiser, Algiers.

The Moorish women are inordinately fond of jewellery and ornaments. Half-a-dozen massive bracelets on each arm is the fewest

number a well-to-do woman will wear, whilst the wealthy deck themselves to the fullest extent of their means with jewels, precious stones, and gold coins. Women who cannot afford gems deck themselves with numberless gold and silver coins of any country or period, made up into long necklaces, or sewn upon the dress material itself. The jingling noise made by these coins is much appreciated by the wearers.

Moorish women are also devoted to the use of perfumes, dyes, and unguents, which are, indeed, so generally in favour with Eastern women. The darkest of dark eyebrows are the height of fashion, and the more nearly they meet in one continuous line the better is their owner pleased.

Moorish homes are of much greater architectural merit than those of the Arabs.

Home Life of the Moors.

The most striking feature is the courtyard which is partially roofed over, and usually of large size, though frequently approached from the street by merely a narrow passage. The second storey rooms overhang this very considerably, and are supported by pillars. There is invariably a stream of running water in the courtyard, and in many are to be found pleasant fountains and foliage. The courtyard is surrounded by long, narrow rooms, which open into it, and are entered through high archways; closed by huge carved doors or gates in which are smaller doors like posterns. Tiles cover the floors of the rooms, on which are often spread handsome skins and rugs, and very frequently there is a dado of ornamental tiles running round the walls, which are otherwise white-washed. The ceilings of the better class houses are ornamented with beautiful arabesques in gold and brilliant colours. The upper rooms are reached by narrow staircases varying in number according to the size of the house, and sometimes, so irregularly are the rooms arranged, these staircases and the passages leading to the different chambers are bewilderingly tortuous.

Another great and most important feature of most Moorish dwellings is the *stahr* or flat roof, on which the women are wont to sit, gossip, and enjoy the fresh air quite safe from intrusion, as this part of the building is held sacred to their use, and seldom or never visited by the men of the household.

Moorish women are not only generally stout, but as girls they are fattened for the marriage market, much as a

The Moorish Ideal of Beauty.

poultry farmer treats his live-stock. The principal articles of food, too, all conduce to fat-forming, consisting as they do of barley cakes made with buttermilk, porridge formed of flour rolled into small grain-like particles, sausages composed of minced meat, which is rolled round a short stick and roasted over the fire. The staple food of women, however, is bread, and it is chiefly with this that they are fattened. Long-shaped pellets of it are constantly forced down their throats for a period of about three weeks prior to their marriage. Although both wines and spirits are drunk by Moors, tea is the national beverage.

By an inversion of the Western order of things, marriage almost invariably precedes wooing, as neither the wife nor husband see one another, as a general rule, until after the wedding; though occasionally the latter may see his future bride once after the marriage details have been finally settled. Sometimes this is done by stealth, when she comes to pay her future mother-in-law a visit of introduction; but of free intercourse socially between young people about to take each other "for better, for worse" there is none whatever in Morocco.

A bride is always borne to her husband's house at night, and when possible by moonlight. The wedding festivities of the Moors are elaborate, and it is because of their love of taking their amusements after sundown, in the cool of the day, that weddings are almost always evening festivals. In the case of a marriage between rich families a great interest is taken in the proceedings by



MOORISH WOMEN DANCING.

Photograph by J. Geiser, Algiers.

all the street (and even further afield) in which the bride dwells. It is crowded for hours before the bridal procession is timed to leave the bride's old home, and slaves and servants push their way amongst the throng bearing refreshments, bags of money, and other presents. The refreshments are offered to all, and a piece of money or cloth is given to those who request it. But, although the beggars may usually be numbered by scores, no one—such is the unwritten law—asks for a gift twice, or as a general rule accepts both money and cloth.

A strange and, one would imagine, horrible ordeal awaits the bride. She has to be put into a badly made
The Bride Box. and ill-ventilated wooden cage, usually whitewashed, and in it taken in procession through the streets to the bridegroom's dwelling. The *cortège* is accompanied by musicians; a number of closely veiled maidens, friends of the bride; and the hangers-on of such ceremonies who are to be found in every clime. Often many shrines are visited ere the unfortunate prisoner's new home is reached, and at each of these a priest will pray and bless the bride. If the wedding is that of well-to-do people, neighbours, acquaintances, and the curious come to their doors (at least the men do) and shout congratulations and expressions of good will. The women lean over the parapets of the flat roofs and peer down into the street, and add theirs.

On arrival at the bridegroom's home the bride is released from the terrible confinement of the box, but not until it has been carefully carried into the house and placed in the wedding chamber. The bride is then placed upon a couch, and the bride box is decorated by the bride's attendant with flowers and jewellery, and the various articles of her trousseau. Then the bride herself is, so to speak, redecorated. Her cheeks are rouged afresh, her eyes darkened by *kohl*, and her nails re-stained with *henna*; whilst her garments, which have been crumpled by her confinement in the narrow box, are straightened out, and re-arranged where necessary. Then the attendant, lock-

ing the door of the room and taking the key with her, hies herself to the mother of the husband-to-be. The bridegroom eventually receives the key from his mother, after she has had a short interview with the bride, and then goes to seek his wife.

After a two days' honeymoon, the now discarded box is placed upon the roof of the house in a prominent position so that all may see it. This is an official intimation that the newly wedded pair are now ready to receive their friends.

The bride, of course, receives only women visitors and in her own apartments. Her reception lasts three or four days, and she is supposed to doze all the time, and not trouble herself at all about her guests!

The bridegroom's reception of his friends and acquaintances, which often lasts a week, is a very joyful and hilarious occasion, and usually takes place in the courtyard or garden of the house. He joins heartily in the amusements of his guests, and in the case of wealthy people the entertainment offered is of a lavish and even magnificent character.

The position socially and morally of Moorish women has often been described and discussed. It presents
Position of Moorish Women. many problems because of the vivid contrasts of which it is full. Passing her life

from birth to death first within the walls of her father's house and then those of her husband's (if she be married), and strictly guarded as she is, yet her life presents more possibilities of variety than can be readily conceived. Although coming into contact with but one man (after marriage), with the exception of her sons, she still plays many parts. While nominally her husband's slave she still manages frequently to rule him. She possesses innate wisdom which makes it possible for her to be his adviser, comforter, and unrealised tyrant all in one. He invariably tells her his business, and his troubles; and, indeed, it is doubtful if the women of any other race share their husbands' lives so intimately. She works for him, and she entertains him; cooks for him;

and when he is sick acts as his untiring and devoted nurse. For this reason most Moorish women are happy wives, not so much because they pass their lives in ministering to their husband and children (although that in itself is no mean mission), but because owing to these ministrations they form so important a factor in the life of the household, and are objects of such keen interest and tender solicitude on the part of the men with whom destiny, or the fortune of marriage, has elected they shall live and pass their days.

Their lives are narrow to Western ideas.

Granted. But living in almost windowless houses, and, if of good social position, immured, they must perforce gain their happiness from within and not seek it from without. It is certain that they do not regret the system in which they are brought up, and it is possible that they live all the happier for it.

Of education they possess very little. Most, indeed, are entirely ignorant of "book learning," and of "the other side of the wall," and the wider interests of life as understood by Western women. But in social arts they could teach many a Girtonian not a little!



Photograph by Miss B. C. Reynolds.

The street in which the Ouled Naïl dancing girls live at Biskra.



WIVES OF THE SULTAN OF LAMU DANCING. *Photograph by permission of A. C. Hollis, Secretary East African Protectorate.*

EAST AFRICA

By Dr. R. W. FELKIN

I

Area described—Climate—Character of the People—A Beautiful Country—The Contamination of Civilisation—The Women of Uganda and Unyoro—The Aristocrats of the Race—Vitality of the Race—Feminine Characteristics—Dress in Uganda—How Bark Cloth is made—Tanning in Uganda—Waganda Ornaments—African Garden Cities—Waganda Houses and How they are Built—Domestic Arrangements—Position of Women in Uganda—A Woman's Day in Uganda—Birth Customs—Funeral Customs—Wedding Ceremonies—Education of Children—Waganda Fairy-Tales—Waganda Superstitions—Religion in Uganda—Wanyoro Women—Obesity *v.* Beauty—Character and Position of Wanyoro Women—Wanyoro Ornaments—Cannibalism—Wanyoro Medicine Women—Curious Traditions

IT may be well at the outset to describe shortly the area occupied by the tribes treated in this chapter. It is an account of the anthropology of the women living in the area in Central and East Africa comprised in the British Protectorates, as well as those living south of latitude 10° N., which are under the Anglo-Egyptian rule. This area, then,

Area described.

is bounded upon the north by the watershed between the Bahr-el-Ghazal, Darfûr, latitude 10° N., and Abyssinia; on the east by the Indian Ocean as far south as the frontier of the German Protectorate just south of Mombasa; on the south by the frontier between the German and British Protectorates; and on the west by the Congo Free State territories. It includes

an area of some half million square miles, the habitat of many tribes and sub-tribes.

The Island of Zanzibar is really, politically, within the East Africa Protectorate, but it is not dealt with in this division.

Climate. One may say that the whole of the land inhabited by the people to be described are within the tropics—therefore the climate, which has always so great an influence on the physical and moral character of the people, needs a brief description.

Apart from the great Nandi plateau, where we find a climate almost like that of England, it is hot, moist, and not suitable for Europeans. The mean annual temperature may be said to be about 70° F., the extremes being 50° F., as the minimum, which is very rare, and 90° F., as the maximum, save in some isolated spots, where the temperature may rise as high as 100° F., or more.

The annual rainfall is some sixty inches, and there are two periods of maximum rainfall—March, April, and May, and September, October, and November—varying slightly in different districts as they are nearer to or further from the equator. During the rainy season rain falls nearly every day, and thunderstorms are very frequent. In Uganda, for instance, there may be, for days together, a thunderstorm every afternoon, short but sharp. Some of the storms are very severe indeed, tropical rain accompanied by vivid

lightning and deafening thunder. These storms occur with south or south-east winds. Sometimes hail may be seen. Emin Pasha noticed hailstones as large as horse-beans; so has the writer of these pages on many occasions. Local rains occur often, coming down in torrents in one place, while at hardly ten minutes' distance there is no rain at all.

It is not necessary to give details of the geological formation of the country, save to say that it has a volcanic or metamorphic rock formation. The upper strata of land to a depth of two or three feet is a rich,



Photograph by permission of A. C. Hollis.

WIVES OF THE SULTAN OF LAMU.

black, alluvial soil, under which is a bed of red, sandy clay, perhaps thirty feet deep, and lower still in some parts a layer of tolerably pure porcelain earth. Much iron is found, but we need not refer to other metals or precious stones.

It follows quite naturally from what has been said that the people living in such

a country will not have a great fight for existence; that is to say, Nature is very lavish. There are often two crops in a year, which grow in great profusion and with little trouble. Naturally, therefore, the people are often happy-go-lucky and indolent.

Character of the People.

The only scourge of the country is epidemic disease of man or cattle, and there is the usual war against wild animals, of which there are great numbers — lions, elephants, buffaloes, leopards (it is a delusion to imagine that there are tigers in Africa). In the rivers and swamps live hippopotami, crocodiles, and many poisonous reptiles, pythons and scorpions; there are also the white and driver ants.

A Beautiful Country.

With regard to the scenery and vegetation, it may be said roughly that one meets with virgin forests, rolling plains, and park-like country. The forests are often very impressive. "We were completely surrounded by trees, whose mighty branches were so thickly interlaced that we could not see the crowns, which in many instances must have risen to a height of a hundred and twenty feet. The dense foliage completely shut out the rays of the sun, and even at mid-day we marched along in a dim, mysterious twilight. Bright-coloured creepers drooped in graceful festoons from the trees, forming bowers of ever-varying beauty; here and there we caught glimpses of shady avenues, through which darted the startled denizens of the forest. Now and then birds of lovely plumage flew overhead, uttering shrill, piercing cries; rainbow-hued butterflies fluttered hither and thither; while the hum of myriads of insects made the silence more intense. Sometimes we passed under lofty arches formed by the intermingling branches, the soft greensward underneath being a pleasant contrast to the tangled underwood through which we had often to force a passage. At times the path was obstructed by a gigantic tree, which, unable to resist the force of some fierce blast, had fallen, but, though fallen, was still beautiful, its soft covering of moss looking

like velvet. Far above us the wind sighed in the branches, the rustling of innumerable leaves sounding like the murmur of the ocean on a sandy shore. The atmosphere, heavy with the overpowering scent of tropical vegetation, produced a feeling of oppression; and, though wondering and rejoicing at the marvellous beauty so lavishly displayed around us, we were glad when a welcome break in the forest allowed us to breathe a purer, cooler air." *

Sometimes we may see wide stretches of country which resemble a good old English park; or, again, the ground may be covered with tall grass growing to a height of ten or fifteen feet. At a distance it looks like a huge wheatfield. These grassy steppes are very difficult to march through; they are the haunts of many an animal. Once or twice a year the people set fire to them, either to drive out the game or to clear the ground in order to plant their grain.

When the traveller comes upon a home-stand, it is usually in such a clearing in the forest, and is surrounded by banana groves and well-tilled fields.

With the exception of Uganda itself, where good roads are made and kept, they may be said not to exist; paths winding in and out, round boulders or fallen trees, are met, but as a rule they are mere tracks, sixteen to twenty inches broad. Often in marching it is needful, unless one has the sense of direction and locality which is so markedly possessed by the natives, to walk compass in hand, since any view is frequently impossible to obtain owing to the long grass or the overhanging trees.

The above is sufficient to give, in broad outline, a general idea of the country in which dwell the people who are the subject of this chapter. We may add, further, that there are some good streams, apart, of course, from the Great Nile and many swamps; there are several great lakes, the Victoria Nyanza being the largest freshwater lake in the world.

Woman is always an interesting study, but a difficult one, owing to her many-sided-

* "Uganda and the Egyptian Sudan," by C. T. Wilson and R. W. Felkin.

ness. And what obtains in Europe obtains in Central Africa. In the space at my disposal it would be obviously impossible to give a detailed description of all the tribes inhabiting the vast area with which I am dealing, so the subject will be dealt with in four groups :

The Contamination of Civilisation.

First, the women living in Uganda and Unyoro ; next the Masai ; then the Eastern tribes ; and lastly, those dwelling in the White Nile regions, such as the Madi, Bari, Dinka, and Shilluk.

One more introductory remark is needful. It is well known that native tribes are soon influenced by contact with European races. Missionaries, traders, soldiers, all speedily impress the native with ideas and customs far different from their original ones. The writer, who had the pleasure of visiting many of these tribes some years ago, is, he hopes, able to give an account of them before they were contaminated—at least by European civilisation ! Arabs certainly had, in parts, exerted some influence, but not to any great extent. A fair idea, therefore, of the conditions, customs, folklore, and so forth could be obtained by a careful observer—one who had sympathy with the people, and who could look a little beyond the obvious, to the deeper thoughts and feelings which lay under possibly crude, or even repulsive, externals. This must be borne in mind in reading what follows. In certain cases due reference will be made to the work of more recent observers, and the influences which have been at work amongst the people will be pointed out. In the main, however, it will be sought to show how the women were born, lived, married, hated, loved, and died, as seen in the years before contact with Europeans had affected native institutions to any great degree.

As far as physical nature is in question, the description of the women of Uganda and Unyoro is identical ; it is only when we come to deal with their habits and customs that we shall have to differentiate them.

The Women of Uganda and Unyoro.

On the whole, the women are divided into two classes : the bulk of the population on the one hand, and a small class belonging to the reigning race, the Wahuma. These latter came from the southern part of Abyssinia originally, and from this stock, no doubt, sprang the reigning families—in fact, the aristocracy of Uganda.

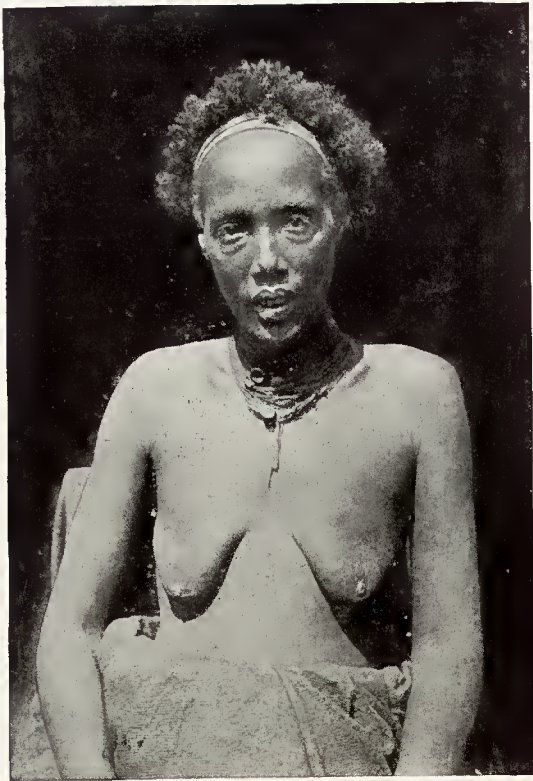
This migration from the south of Abyssinia took place some two or three hundred years ago ; the people arrived near Mombasa, but they were driven back by the coast tribes, and finally crossed the Nile just north of Ripon Falls, and, dividing there into three parties, one conquered Uganda, one Karagwe, and one Unyoro.

This migration probably gave rise to the Kintu myth (to which I refer later) which relates to the origin of the Uganda kings. These Wahuma women can at once be distinguished from the bulk of the population : they are taller, more aristocratic-looking, and possess a peculiar grace of their own. The Uganda women are of a dark chocolate colour ; their eyes are brown, they are well proportioned and have very good features, and in their youth are very good-looking, with small, delicately formed hands and feet.

The Aristocrats of the Race.

They differ widely from the surrounding tribes in so far as that they are never scarred ; their teeth are very good, and are neither filed nor, as is so often seen elsewhere, are the front teeth extracted—in fact, all mutilations are absolutely forbidden by law.

Their facial expression is very animated, and they gesticulate freely in conversation and when telling stories ; for, although they are not professional story-tellers, as one might dub many of the men, yet they are not far behind them, and it is a pleasant sight to watch them educating and amusing the children with long, elaborate stories. They dress their hair very neatly, but there are no elaborate coiffures such as may be seen in other parts of Africa ; the hair is short and woolly, and grows uniformly over



Photograph by Sir Harry H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A WOMAN OF THE BA HIMA: ANKOLE.

the skull. Most of the women, however, have their heads shorn; they act as their own barbers and use small sickle-shaped razors which are sharp on the convex side; they often use their own milk for lubrication.

The ears are small, unspoiled by earrings; the skin is velvety to the touch, and this feeling is due to the natural secretions, not to the application of grease; the voice is melodious and rather deep in tone.

The people do not mind the hot sun and, as a rule, do not wear any covering on the head, but they do not like cold, and have good fires in the huts on cold nights. They may be seen sitting round fires built in the open in the early morning hours. They are a hardy race, and can bear fatigue well. The inhabitants of Uganda, women as well as men, possess considerable vitality; they bear pain exceedingly well, and although when disease does occur it is frequently acute and severe, they recover wonderfully, while wounds, whether accidental or other-

Vitality of the Race.

wise, heal readily. They do not seem to suffer pain so acutely as Europeans, but they are not such stoics as the Arabs.

It is impossible to say exactly what the usual span of life may be; puberty is attained early, and the women cease child-bearing at a comparatively early age. Grey hair is very rarely seen among either men or women.

They all possess a national and distinctive odour; this is noticeable, but not so objectionable to Europeans as that exhaled by other tribes.

Feminine Characteristics.

It is certainly not due to dirty habits or to cosmetics; with one exception, which will be noted later, the people do not use any cosmetic application.

The women walk with a long, easy, swinging stride. The body is well balanced, the head slightly thrown back, the arms permitted to swing freely; the foot is well planted, the toes slightly turned out. When standing at ease, one foot is placed in advance of the other and the knees are slightly bent. All their attitudes are most graceful and unrestrained; in running and jumping their actions are easy and light. The joints of the hands and feet—which, as I have already mentioned, are small and well formed—are very supple, and care is taken to train the children from an early age to use fingers and toes, though the toes are not so useful as among some peoples.

The face of a woman in Uganda is most expressive—joy, sorrow, anger, disgust, betraying themselves on the features immediately. These women also possess the power of mimicry, though not to such a marked extent as the men. They are very strong, good walkers, and capable of lifting and carrying heavy weights; all their senses are very acute.

Deformity is very rarely observed. Sometimes an albino makes an appearance, but this is rare. Such are not liked, as they are irascible and treacherous; what causes them the people do not know. A dwarf may be seen now and then; but, when and wherever met, they are privileged nuisances.

The Waganda women (Waganda is plural for Muganda) are always clothed in a respectable manner when in the streets. The national dress is called *mbugu*, which consists of bark made from a species of fig. The women wear a loin-cloth and then the bark cloth, which is fastened round the chest just below the armpits. In King Mtesa's time the death penalty was attached to any neglect of proper clothing in the streets. In the harems, however, the younger women usually dispense with clothing altogether, or at most wear a simple string of beads round the waist.

Dress in Uganda.

It may be of interest here to explain how the bark cloth is made. The fig, which is used for this purpose, is abundant all through Uganda. The bark is taken from young trees: two incisions are made round the trunk, joined by a third which is vertical. The bark is then stripped off, and the outer surface removed with great care, and rapidly beaten with heavy wooden mallets in time to a low chant.

How Bark Cloth is made.

These mallets have circular grooved heads, which give a ribbed appearance to the *mbugu* somewhat resembling corduroy, and under the blows it very soon spreads out and becomes thin and flexible. When the proper texture has been obtained it is hung out to dry, and afterwards any holes that may have appeared during the beating are neatly patched with the trimmings from the edges and thread made from the bark or from the fibre of the plantain: a long thorn is used as a needle, and the sewing is wonderfully neat. When new, *mbugu* is a yellowish-brown, not unlike freshly tanned leather, though some of the finer qualities are a dull brick-red. The cloth varies very much in quality, the finer kinds being beautifully soft; the best is procured principally from the Sesse Islands. Its chief drawback is that it decays if it gets wet; sometimes it is dyed, generally black, or patterns in red, blue, and black are printed on it. The tree from which the bark is obtained does not die from its re-

moval; the wound is bound up with plantain leaves, and new bark grows after a time.

Quite a number of people are employed in its manufacture; the women strip the bark from the trees and do the necessary repairing, while the men do the beating out. In 1878 Europeans had just introduced steel needles to the country, and a girl could be bought for six!

Skins are used to construct robes or mantles; and are often sewn together. The people also make very good sandals, usually out of buffalo hide; these are boat-shaped, with a thong over the instep and between the great and the second toes. They are very good tanners, and contrive to get their skins as soft as our fine kid; they are proud of their skill in this art, and laugh at those who attempt to compete with them. The

Tanning in Uganda.



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

MUKONJO WOMAN OF MT. RUWENZORI.

Wearing a number of small bangles on each arm.

skins of lions, oxen, leopards, and different kinds of antelope are used for leather; in some cases the hair is removed, but for the most part it is left on. The skins are first dried in the sun, then stretched out on a

The Waganda use five colours: black, green, orange-yellow, red, and blue. The black dye is obtained from the soot of a sweet-scented wood mixed with oil, the yellow from a gum exuded by a tree called



A PEASANT'S HUT, UGANDA. Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

frame, and the inner surface is carefully scraped with a knife. Next they are rubbed for a long time with flat stones till they are quite smooth and a fine grain is produced. After this, butter or oil is applied freely, and the skin is again exposed to the sun; this latter process is repeated several times. Some skins from which the hair has been removed are dyed; others have patterns printed on them; and the thick buffalo skins from which sandals are made have designs drawn on them with a red-hot nail or a knife. Both men and women are engaged in this industry.

mulila, not unlike the *laurustinus*. The article to be dyed is either immersed in the fluid, or else wooden stamps are smeared over and a pattern printed on with these; the common design is a lozenge-shape.

The Waganda women differ greatly from the men in the number of ornaments they wear; the men, as a rule, wear hardly any decorations, save perchance one or two small wire bracelets or a few little charms hung round the neck by a cord of plaited hairs from a giraffe's tail. The women, on the

**Waganda
Ornaments.**

other hand, are very gaily decorated. They wear numerous necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and waistbands made of very fine beadwork. All these articles are extremely well made; the colours are arranged with great skill and artistic taste, and the forms are varied and unique. Some of the necklaces and bracelets are made of neatly carved wooden beads of home manufacture, and many of the women wear suspended over one shoulder or round the waist a cylindrical pocket, highly ornamented with beads; in these they carry their tobacco—for they are great smokers—coffee berries (which they chew), and various odds and ends. Some of the big chiefs' wives, as well as their lords and masters, have good, solid silver finger-rings, made from Maria Theresa dollars brought into the country by Arab traders.

A word or two must now be said respecting the villages with their huts and compounds. The first glance at a Waganda village informs the traveller that he is in a district inhabited by a tribe very different from any he has hitherto seen. If the place is of any considerable size he will at once notice broad, clean streets between the compounds. The groups of huts are surrounded by gardens—in fact, they are real Garden Cities! Enclosed in well-built, wickerwork walls, made from the tiger-grass or sugar-cane, supported at intervals by a species of fig-tree which throws out a large crown of branches affording a pleasant shade, may be seen the conical roofs of, probably, the largest huts in all Africa.

Even in smaller villages the streets, though narrow, are well kept, and it is rare indeed to find a hut without a courtyard in front of it. It is remarkable that the streets are straight, and that the fences, too, are straight instead of the usual circular structures seen almost everywhere else. It may be noted that the compounds occupied by the principal chiefs are very large indeed; there is only one gate, just inside of which is a small hut erected for the porter.

The whole of the enclosure is divided by fences into gardens and courtyards, each yard containing one or more huts. About the centre of the compound stands the largest hut, which is occupied by the chief. The women belonging to his harem inhabit others beyond it, and separated from it by a strong hedge containing a door. The huts between



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A MUGANDA WOMAN.

the chief's dwelling and the main entrance are allotted to the slaves, or are used as storehouses.

The huts are dome-shaped, and, being thatched down to the ground, look like huge beehives. The materials used in erecting them are the stout stems of the tall tiger-grass, poles made from the fig-trees, and grass. They are constructed as follows: A fine ring of grass, closely enveloped with the

Waganda Houses, and how they are built.

fibrous outer part of the banana stem is laid upon the ground, and a number of tiger-grass stems are implanted in it and securely tied to it with strips of papyrus. Then a second and third ring are added at intervals of about fifteen inches. At length, when the curvature of the rings becomes sufficiently slight to allow of the tiger-grass stems being bent without breaking, the rings are formed of them instead of the fine grass employed at first, the whole umbrella-shaped frame being gradually raised as the work proceeds. This forms the framework for the top of the roof, and when it is finished it is turned over, and raised by means of poles to its requisite position. The ground to be occupied by the hut is then covered with poles in parallel lines, but decreasing in length from the centre outwards. These support the roof, and also form a scaffolding to enable the builders to complete the rafters of the roof and subsequently to thatch it. Long bundles of grass are now tied to the ribs to form the thatch, beginning from the bottom; and finally a peak, formed of a large sheaf of grass very tightly bound together, is added. The free edge of each layer of thatch is carefully trimmed to give it a regular appearance; inside the hut wickerwork walls are constructed, the pattern in many cases being extremely neat.

A large door eight or ten feet high is cut out of the side of the hut, over which a neatly curved porch is erected. When this is done, many of the poles supporting the roof are removed, and the interior of the hut is divided by numerous partitions of tiger-grass into compartments, in the innermost of which the owner's bed is constructed. The floor of the hut is level and beaten firm with clubs; the door is wicker-work, made to slide backwards and forwards, and fastened behind by a bar and pins; handles are placed in the middle of it, both inside and out, to move it with. No aperture is left for the smoke to escape.

Outside the hut a bank of earth is placed all round, consolidated by wetting and stamping, in order to prevent the water soaking into the house during the heavy rains. The floors of the huts are carefully

covered with fine soft grass; first, a small bundle of even lengths is placed on the ground, another at right angles to it and partially overlapping it, and then a third at right angles to this, and so on. The wicker-work is often composed of varied-coloured grasses, and the patterns woven are various and clever. The chiefs pride themselves very much on their houses, and should they find the slightest mistake after they are finished they have them pulled down and rebuilt. The builders in such case get no compensation.

Here and there huts may be seen with gable roofs and vertical walls, but they have probably been copied from foreigners and do not need description, save that the walls are composed of three layers, the inner and outer being of wickerwork, and the middle one of grass some two feet thick.

In the larger establishments huts are provided for different purposes. There is first a reception-hall, where the owner receives his guests; next his private hut, where he sleeps, has his meals, and keeps his greatest treasures. Then there are store-houses; one for dried plantains, another for *semsem* seed, which is kept in large wickerwork baskets, or pots; another serves the purpose of a cellar, and in it may be seen innumerable large bottle-gourds filled with the native drink, plantain wine, neatly corked with banana leaves. Another hut serves as a kitchen, and in it are several fireplaces constructed of three stones. People who only possess one hut use its various compartments for the purposes described. From the poles which support the roof, baskets of various descriptions are hung, suspended by ropes tied to the poles by a complicated clove-hitch. The beds are made of wickerwork, and raised a foot or two from the ground; they are covered with hides and *mbugu* cloth. In many of the huts the walls are hung with *mbugu* cloth, which is often dyed in various patterns. The huts are remarkably clean, and, on account of their large size, one is not so much oppressed by the smoke from the fire as is.

Domestic Arrange- ments.

often the case in African dwellings. The only drawback to comfort is the grass carpet, which harbours an army of fleas. All stores of tobacco, coffee, etc., are neatly packed in banana leaves and tied with string. Remarkable order obtains in the huts, a place for everything and everything in its place being the universal practice.

As is only to be expected where polygamy prevails, women are more or less obliged to play second fiddle, especially in a place where the female population would appear to be somewhat largely in excess of the male. The numerical superiority of the women was, at the time we are considering, due to definite causes—firstly, the number of men killed in the constant tribal wars; and secondly, the numerous women taken captive in their raids.

Position of Women in Uganda.

The chiefs had many wives, and even the common men had two or three. Now, of course, since Christianity has made such headway amongst the people, matters are very considerably altered.

In 1878, however, the women were certainly considered to be inferior to men, although the principal wife or wives had a good deal of influence with their lords and masters, and all women had a rather higher status than in many African tribes.

This position is illustrated by the customs at meals and in salutation. When a woman meets a man she bends very low before him, or, if he be of high rank, will even kneel before him. Three meals are partaken of in the day; breakfast at about 7 A.M., dinner at noon, and supper soon after sunset. Each household provides its own food and eats separately. The arrangement of meals differs somewhat according to the rank of the family. In the upper classes, as a rule, the master and a few of his wives eat together, the head slaves form a different group, while the remaining wives and the children and slaves eat in their own huts. In smaller establishments the men and the women and children eat in two separate groups, whilst among the peasants men, women, and children all mess together.

All wash before meals, either with water, or with the circular napkins cut out of the succulent stem of the banana, which, containing as it does so much sap, renders water unnecessary.



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

A BANTU KAVIRONDO CHIEF AND HIS WIFE (STANDING).

About 5.30 A.M. the first signs of dawn appear; dogs bark, cocks crow, and in the

huts the people begin to yawn and stretch themselves preliminary to rising. First one and then another dim form is to

A Woman's Day in Uganda.

be seen moving about; this one unbars the door and opens it, another stirs the fire which occupies the centre of the hut into a blaze, and adds more wood. In a few minutes all is action—the men go out wrapped in their *mbugu* cloaks, and light their morning pipes; the children run hither and thither, fetching water or wood; the women place pots on the fire and set about preparing

the food. Green bananas are brought, quickly peeled, one or two big leaves held over the fire to render them supple, and the bananas are then wrapped neatly up in them, and placed on sticks laid in the pots to keep them out of the water so that the fruit is steamed. When cooked they are placed on well-woven grass mats and taken to the various groups outside. This is usually all the morning meal.

After breakfast the hut is tidied up, the children are washed or made to wash themselves, then the mother may either shave the children's heads or plait their hair. Soon after breakfast the various daily occupations are commenced. The women are the real workers in the community; they clean the banana plantations, sow the sweet potatoes and other vegetables, weed the tobacco, plait, make baskets and pots. Beadwork, too, they do neatly and even artistically.

The women do not smoke at their work, but they do so a good deal at intervals of relaxation. After working for a few hours they prepare dinner, at the end of which they eat coffee berries, smoke, and then, perhaps, go off to "a naming of a child."

A birth is celebrated with great rejoicings, especially so should twins be born. The whole village assembles on the fifth or sixth day at the fortunate mother's hut.

It is considered a very lucky event for the whole village, and the general congratulations are hearty and prolonged.

Birth Customs.

The women and girls deck themselves with flowers, tie banana-leaves round their waists, and dance

round drums, singing meanwhile a song adapted to the occasion. The rest of the company sit in groups, watching the dancers, drinking beer, and smoking. The father makes the round of the groups to receive the congratulations of his friends, the mother sitting in the meantime with her child at the door of the hut, where, one by one, the guests congratulate her. During a pause in the dancing the people assemble in a semi-circle round the happy mother, and the eldest grandfather takes the child, and holding it up cries, "Its name is So-and-So," e.g., Mwenda or Kataruba. This is greeted with shouts of "Mwenda, may

he be happy, may he be brave, may he have many wives, may he become great!" and such-like good wishes for the child's future. A Waganda child receives only one name, but the variety of names among them is very great. The names of gods, animals, or insects are often given.

Or it may be that they go to a funeral, though women are buried without any ceremony whatever. When a man dies



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.
GIRL OF THE AWA WANGA TRIBE.
 With head ornamentally shaven.



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A MARRIED COUPLE: BANTU KAVIRONDO.

a messenger is sent round to his friends to summon them to the funeral, which always takes place within twelve hours of his decease. The body is not embalmed, but simply wrapped in *mbugu* cloth, during which process his friends sing funeral dirges, and a minstrel is often engaged to sing an extempore eulogy on the man's life. The body is then carried into a jungle, where it is buried in a deep grave. Nothing is buried with the body. The friends then generally return to the dead man's hut, where a cow is killed, and a funeral feast takes place.

Again, a wedding may be attended. These ceremonies are of a very primitive character. After a bargain has been settled for the price of a bride—in the lower classes three or four oxen—the young husband simply erects a hut and, having paid the dowry, takes his wife home with him. A little higher in the social scale a dinner is provided by the bride's father, and the afternoon and evening are spent in dancing, singing, and drinking, after which the bride and bridegroom are conducted by their friends to the new house, the door is shut, and the friends carouse outside most of the night. The next day the newly-married couple are congratulated by their friends, and a feast may take place. The songs on these occasions celebrate the joys of marriage, and detail the duties of husbands and wives.

If no such feasts occupy the afternoons the women pay attention to their children, who, from the earliest age, are well brought up. They are taught to follow their parents' occupation, strict obedience to and respect for their elders are also inculcated; but the children are happy, merry little creatures. They do not have purposeless games. Instead of the British "mud pies" they make miniature villages, copies of mountains, and rough models of men and animals in clay. They are most courteous to strangers, sitting silent in their presence, but ever ready to run on errands or anticipate the visitor's

wants. They are taught physical exercises, the girls to dance and sing, the boys to fight, wrestle, and kick—but in the latter no sandals are permitted.

Stories are told to the youngsters, sometimes simple jingles like "Five little pigs went to market," thus:—" *Mkasi, nyumba, mulongo, toki, mwengi,*" illustrating the five chief wants of a Waganda, that is, "A woman, a hut, twins, bananas, and beer." Others again are more elaborate, sometimes a fairy-tale, sometimes a bit of folklore. Of these I will give some examples:—

A chief once had a favourite wife, to whom he committed the care of all he had. Even his other wives, and they were very numerous, were under her control. He returned home from hunting one day and called his wife, but she had disappeared mysteriously, and was nowhere to be found. This loss was a great grief to him; his household was disordered, and his other wives quarrelled. He was in despair, when one day, as he was walking in the forest and thinking of his lost wife, he cried aloud, "Oh! my treasure, could I but find you!" A honeybird flew to him, and said, "Your wife is in the sky." For a moment he was overjoyed, but then became more sorrowful than ever, for, although he might seek throughout the forest, he could not climb the clouds. A rat then came to his aid, telling him of a tree that grew very quickly, and offering to show it to him. He followed the rat through the forest until he came to a tree which was visibly growing, and the top of which had passed almost out of sight. At the rat's bidding he climbed the tree, and the honeybird kept him company and encouraged him. As he climbed higher, so the tree grew, till at length, far above the clouds, he landed in the spirit world. The spirits asked him what he wanted, and he begged for his wife, who was given to him as a reward for his perseverance, and they descended the tree together. Then he rewarded the rat and the honeybird. Some time afterwards he went to look for the tree, but it had vanished.

Two men once had a dispute as to which

Waganda Fairy-Tales.

Funeral Customs.

Wedding Ceremonies.

Education of Children.

was the most successful liar. The one proposed they should each tell lies, and that the one who told the best should be acknowledged by the other as the cleverer. His friend agreed, and asked him to begin. So he told a number of outrageous lies, and then said to his friend, "Now, how do you propose to beat me?" "Easily," said he; "everything you have said is true—now that is the biggest lie." Then they both burst out laughing.

Some driver ants once invaded a man's hut. He was so angry that he killed a great number by setting the grass on fire. The ants went away, but held a council of war, and their leader addressed them, saying: "A man, because of his great size, injures us, for he thinks we are small; he is cruel, so we must punish him." Messengers were then sent by the ants far and wide, and at the appointed time, the next new moon, they assembled in great numbers, so great that they could not be counted. Several leaders were then appointed, and they attacked their enemy's hut, which was soon all eaten up. Even the man, with his wives and children, were not spared. The big should not ill-treat the little.

Innumerable such stories might be given, but these will suffice to show the style of those in which they delight.

The women of Uganda are very superstitious, and

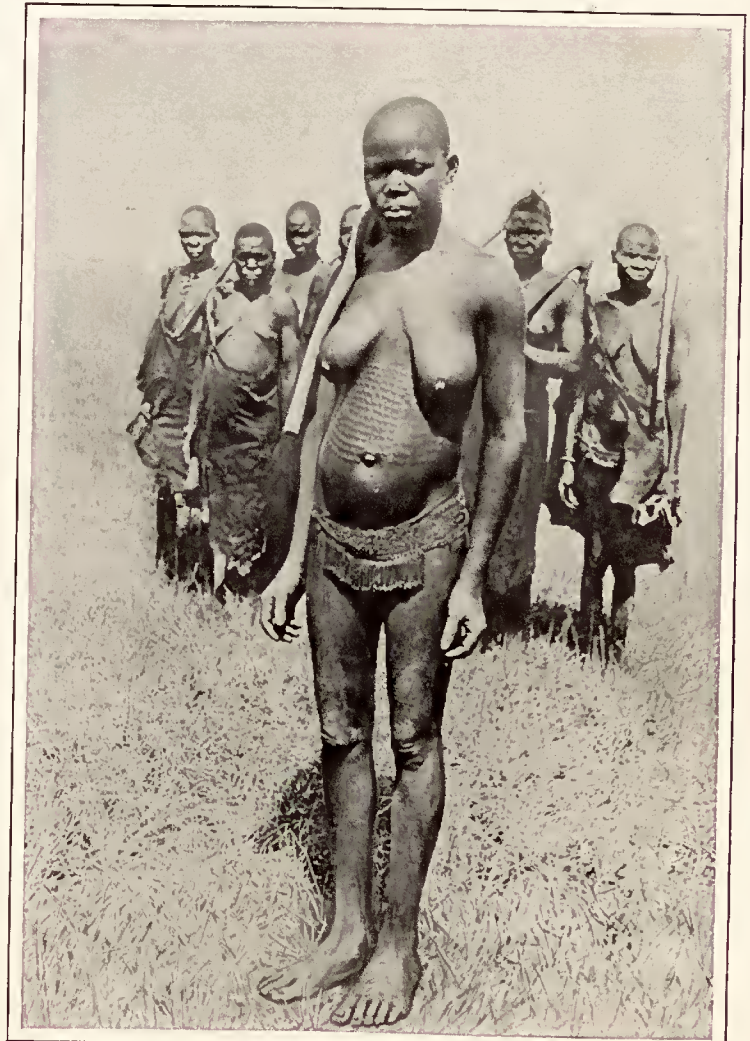
**Waganda
Supersti-
tions.**

lay great stress on the significance of dreams, imagining that they depict and foretell future events, also that impending evil may be avoided by attention to nocturnal

warnings, and that the names and faces of those who would do them harm are revealed with unerring accuracy in the night-watches.

Their daily life is thus influenced by their dreams. Evil may, they opine, accrue to them from the sprites which inhabit the trees or bask on the banks of the streams, or from the incomprehensible denizens of the sun, moon, and stars. They fancy that some demons are able to spirit away children and even grown-up men and women.

Animals, too, are in some cases supposed to have an evil character, while others possess virtues to guard and direct men. Thunder and lightning may be said to be



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

MARRIED WOMAN OF THE KETOSH TRIBE.

Showing scar-tattooing.

worshipped, and most diseases are referred to some deity or demon. If going on a journey, or even for a walk, it is thought unlucky to turn back, and they will always, if possible, return by a different road from

claws, teeth, or horns of animals, often blended into fantastic ornaments with highly decorated beadwork. Others consist of cunningly devised powders containing numerous ingredients such as burned roots, bark, leaves, hair, dead men's nails, and sometimes human teeth. Such powders are usually placed in horns closed by python skin, or else they are packed in neatly made boxes covered with skin.

Charms are hung round the neck or waist, suspended to the rafters of the hut or over the doorway, or they may be hung on the branch of some mighty forest tree supposed to be inhabited by a demon or deity; others again are cast into a stream or lake to propitiate an offended river-deity.

With regard to religion, it may be taken that the people believe in a supreme deity who has created the world, and having done so, and found that his creation was good, has left it in charge of various lesser deities. The people do not in any sense worship idols. They do indeed make offerings to the god of the lake (Victoria Nyanza)

Religion in Uganda.



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

LENDU WOMAN.

Showing scar-tattooing on the forehead.

the one used in going to a place. A stumble in walking is unlucky; the evil eye is believed in; charms for all sorts of purposes are used, some made of roots or stones, others of more complicated construction, such as ointments which women often use to retain their husband's love or to attract a lover. They also use charms to protect their dwellings from fire, their possessions from thieves, to ward off sickness or to cure disease. All charms are manufactured with due mystery and secrecy, in some remote forest glade, at dead of night, or on the appearance of the new moon or when it is at the full. Some charms are made of

and to the gods of war, thunder and lightning, but these are to be thought of as emanations of the deity. True it is that a certain "influence" envelops the trees and some localities, and to these constant votive offerings are made, but idolaters the Waganda are *not*.

If one can at all penetrate into their ideas, one must admit a natural religion higher in conception than that of many of the surrounding tribes, but not on a par with the great religions of the world. Superficial observers will think the religion colourless; those going deeper into the matter will admit that there is a great and solid sub-

stratum of truth in it; and the remarkable progress of Christianity in the past twenty years would seem to prove that the Waganda possess an innate religious consciousness.

The Waganda traditions and legends deal with the origin of the tribe and colonisation of the country, so the Kintu myth—which says that the origin of the Uganda nation was due to a man and his wife who, with a cow, a dog, and a banana-tree, set forth in search of a home and settled in Uganda—may be held as true, a myth real in fact, though doubtful in interpretation.

We must now pass on to consider briefly the Wanyoro women living just to the north of Uganda.

It will not take us long to see how they differ from

Wanyoro Women.

their sisters a little further south. They are rather lower in the scale of progress. Generally speaking, their surroundings are less neat and tidy than those of the Waganda women, nor are their huts and

persons so clean. Also they are more down-trodden and are treated more as slaves than is the case in Uganda. The people altogether are not of so markedly superior a type. The traveller will speedily observe that their faces are much less expressive.

One very curious custom obtains here—the fattening of wives. The king and some

of his chiefs consider that obesity is beauty, and their wives are therefore compelled to

Obesity v. Beauty.

subject themselves to a certain process of fattening to increase their charms. They

are obliged to drink an immense quan-

tity of milk, and so fat do they become that they can only crawl about on their hands and knees. Casati says:

“In the centre of a column was a palanquin made of ox-hide fixed on two poles, upon which one of the royal wives sat wrapt in a bright-coloured mantle of peculiar pattern. . .

A cry of astonishment was uttered by everyone as a woman, almost a shapeless mass of flesh, with immense limbs and small eyes, sitting on a sort of sedan chair, and supported by stout poles, was carried across the royal threshold by four men. The accumulation of fat proceeds gradually so as to render the person unable to stand up. They are compelled to walk on their hands and knees, and even move with great difficulty.”

These women are only allowed a handful of salt occasionally, and salt porridge made with broth twice a week.

The Wanyoro are very indolent; intelligent, however, and cleanly save for the use of unguents made of a mixture of fat and red ochre.



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.
WOMAN OF THE BOSIA TRIBE NEAR
MOUNT ELGON.

Another matter which exerted a great influence on the status of women in

Character and Position of Wanyoro Women. Unyoro was the fact that the king maintained a very large harem, the members of which, except about a hundred who were always on duty in rotation, were at liberty to go about the country. If they took a fancy to a man they could go and stay with him for a month at a time, taking precedence of all his wives, and on leaving might demand from him a considerable largess which they professed to take to the king. No one dare refuse either to house or to give them what they required. This custom bore very heavily on the people, and the ordinary women greatly resented it.

The birth, death, and marriage ceremonies are much the same as those in Uganda; and the dances, music, and songs are identical or closely akin.

Wanyoro Ornaments. The Wanyoro women affect ornaments to a greater extent than do the Waganda. These are made of lead, iron, and copper, and women often wear a series of anklets extending over two-thirds of the leg, while the arms may be covered with bracelets from wrist to elbow. Sometimes the rings are passed over a thin leather strap to keep them in position, and collar supports, much like those now used in this country, are used in connection with the necklaces. So does modern woman copy her primitive sister in her personal adornment! The chignon is frequently seen, but it is worn by man to increase his charms, and once fixed on it cannot be removed. These chignons are made by women.

The necklaces, bracelets, and cinctures are very tastefully made, and ornaments constructed out of finely plaited grass, to which are suspended numerous bosses covered with fine beadwork, show considerable manipulative skill in their manufacture, and taste in the arrangement of their colours. Some of the people, however, do not indulge in ornaments at all. The writer once gave a princess some European earrings and necklaces, which she refused to wear,

saying that she did not need to add to her charms.

There are one or two peculiarities to be noticed before closing this brief notice of the Wanyoro. Hereditary cannibalism is known, but girls from a family so tainted will rarely find a man willing to marry them. "Earth-eating" is practised, sometimes as a cure for disease, more often to gratify a craving; it is said to result in discoloration of the skin and hair, emaciation and death.

The Wanyoro have a great belief in dreams foretelling coming events. Many women are like gypsies, they roam about the country, wearing a fairly distinctive dress of beadwork, feathers, skin, and innumerable charms:

Wanyoro Medicine Women. they drive away disease and evil spirits by means of incantations, dances, and the use of herbs and roots, cautery and cupping. The following story heard at a camp fire in Unyoro, will illustrate a few points here:—

Many years ago two men rose up before it was light, as they wished to go on a journey. They had to pass by the hut of a noted medicine woman, and were rather shy of so doing. Just as they reached the glade in which the witch lived they saw a hyena run into the hut; at that moment the sun rose, and the beast changed into the witch; the men rushed forward and caught her, and when they told their neighbours what had happened the woman was condemned to death. Before she died she said that she had eaten many folk, and she threatened the people with much ill: her threats availed nothing, and she was clubbed to death.

Women in Unyoro have the monopoly of a certain power of charming which consists in bewitching vegetable or animal food with their eyes; the person who eats the bewitched substance is immediately seized with violent pains in the stomach, which continue till the culprit is found and made to spit three times on the body of the sufferer.

Many women anoint their head with a mixture of red ochre and fat. Sometimes

the whole body is rubbed with scented oil. The finger-nails are cut to a point in the middle, and the parings are carefully preserved and buried in the jungle secretly.

If children cut the upper teeth before the lower it is a sign of evil import, and a magician is summoned to perform a dance for the child's protection.

Curious Traditions.

According to Unyoro tradition the elephant and chimpanzee were once men, and the dog was gifted with speech, which, however, he used only in addressing his master.

The following Unyoro stories in this connection are interesting:—

An honest man had an only daughter, and she was wooed by a neighbour for his son who had turned out badly. The young couple lived happily for a short time, but when the young wife absented herself occasionally from the house to visit her parents her husband reproached her with availing herself of this excuse to go after other men. Each day he treated her worse, so she fled and returned to her father, to whom she related her misfortune, and he, angry at the stain which had fallen on his own and his daughter's honour, killed himself. At this moment the son-in-law arrived, and was transformed by the "Great Magician" into

a chimpanzee. But the wife, who would not desert him in spite of all that had happened, followed him, and from them sprang the chimpanzees, who still talk among themselves like men, and have a fondness for women.

The leopard entrusted her three little cubs to the custody of the dog, assuring him that he should have as his recompense plenty of meat, on condition that he never gnawed the bones. The arrangement went on very well for a time, but one day the dog, yielding to temptation, gnawed a bone; a splinter flew from it and, striking a cub on the head, killed it. He found it easy to deceive the mother on her return by bringing the two survivors up to her to be fed one after the other, the first one twice. Soon the same fate befell a second cub; then the dog, seeing that his fault must be found out, fled and sought shelter with a man, who promised to protect and defend him on condition that he did not leave the house. The dog promised, but a few days later, seeing a heap of bones at a little distance, he broke his word and went out. The leopard, who had been in search of him to avenge the death of her cubs, sprang upon him, killed and devoured him; and from that day the leopard has not ceased to wage war upon dogs and to eat their flesh.

II

The Madi Women—Dress and Decoration—Eating and Drinking Customs—Women's Work among the Madi—Medical Superstitions—A Test for Insanity—Madi Religion—Curious Ceremonies—Women as Fighters—Women Workers—Position of Madi Women—Madi Marriage Customs—Polygamy—Madi Childhood—Madi Legends—The Dinka—Cattle of More Value than Women—Dinka Women's Duties—Curious Marriage Customs—Religion and Magic—Golo Witchcraft and Superstition—Tribes of the East African Protectorate—The Kikuyu Women—A "Move" among the Kikuyu—Feasting Customs—Kikuyu Religion—The Akamba—Akamba Marriage Customs—The Masai—Racial Characteristics of the Masai—Domestic Life of the Masai—Masai Marriage Customs—Masai Girls—Masai Superstitions—Attitude to Strangers

WE will now pass on to the women of the tribes of the White Nile area.

As an example of these tribes we may take the Madi, who live partly on the east of the Nile, partly on the west. Broadly speaking, they represent the Shil-look, Jûr (Djour), Bongo, Shuli, Mak-

raka, Golo, Bari, Luri, and Umiro. A few words on the Dinka will be said later on; the Niam-Niam or Makraka, a cannibal tribe, must also be noticed.

The Madi Women.

The Madi are apparently pressing from east to west. There is a very gradual



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

MADI WOMEN ENGAGED IN HAIR-DRESSING.

Note the curious spiral growth of the hair.

movement of all African tribes in that direction, and this is why many of the habits and customs now met with on the West coast probably originated on the East or North North-East.

The Madi (sometimes called Moru) live in a large district about 50° N. lat. Their chief town was, at the period

Dress and Decoration.

of which I am writing, called Bengue. Their women are of medium height, well formed and nourished; they do not tattoo themselves, nor do they dye the hair, which is abundant, growing in spiral tufts; when it is eight or ten inches long it is shorn, but a small ring of hair is left on the crown. The women alone act as barbers. The features are good, but the custom of extracting the four upper and lower incisors does not improve the personal appearance, and also renders the speech somewhat indistinct. Until recent times no clothes at all were worn, but a string was tied round the waist from which a small bunch of leaves hung down in front and behind. Notwithstanding that frequent

ablutions are practised, these people have a strong and very distinctive aroma.

There is only one point which is noteworthy in regard to their cooking: they practise a custom of sprinkling some white ashes on their cooking-pots before filling them, at the same time uttering a few words, with the object of rendering the food more appetising and satisfying when cooked.

Eating and Drinking Customs.

Another of their peculiarities is that they set apart a hut in which to drink beer. This is made in large quantities from millet-seed by the women. The brew is kept in large jars and regarded as common property. No one pays for it, but none drink it elsewhere, only in the special huts, and never at meals. The people often eat in companies, the women bringing a basket, tray, or bowl containing their contribution to the common meal. The women do not wait upon the men, but the children may fetch extra supplies if required.

In this district the men do the heavy hoeing; the women's work is confined to weeding, reaping the corn, winnowing and threshing in harvest. They also extract salt from ashes. Every married woman carries a curved knife stuck in the string round her waist, the handle usually being ornamented; a common form is that of a tortoise.

Women are the chief medical practitioners; the men, who are never paid, deal only with wounds, accidents, and snake-bites. The women may receive one cow, two sheep, or a bundle of arrows in return for their services. They do not possess many medicines, and use much magic. When called to a patient the lady-doctor takes with her a basket containing what may be called her magic wand. This wand is a double tube about twelve inches long and four inches in diameter; one tube is partly filled with small

stones, the other is empty so that the doctor's hand may enter it and perform certain manipulations within. The wand is painted red and oiled. On reaching the patient the woman rattles the wand and mutters incantations for some time; she then feels the patient all over, afterwards drawing the wand over him or her; when the wand comes to the painful part it is held upright over and touching it. The woman puts her hand into the empty tube, and after some manœuvring professes to draw out something which she says is the disease, but which she is careful not to display to the bystanders. Cupping is also practised. Medicine made from roots and leaves is used sometimes, especially for fever.

If the patient is a child other ceremonies take place. It is thought by the Madi that elves live underground who are called "Odi," and whose help is invoked to cure sick children. The "lady-



GROUP OF JA-LUO WOMEN.

Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

doctor" goes to a forest glade at some little distance; there she builds a miniature hut of twigs and leaves; the child's mother then

she enters the hut and sees if the child will recover or not. The prognosis is usually very correct. The child's father then escorts the doctor home, taking the fee with him.



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G., and the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

JA-LUO GIRL

With head ornamentally shaven and scar-tattooing.

carries food and a fowl to the hut. The Odi, being then invoked, appear to the

Medical Superstition.

doctor, or they may say that they are busy and will come next day—they are visible only to the doctor! Usually a male and a female appear. Food is offered to them, the magic wand is shaken, and they are asked to cure the child. They reply and vanish, and the doctor falls down over the little hut, destroying it: she apparently goes into a fit or trance, and is unconscious for a short time. Before the fit comes on, however, she directs the child's mother to run home quickly, and to shut the door of the hut where the sick child lies. The doctor always provides an assistant who, after the fit passes off, raises her up, gives her water, and then assists her back to the hut; arrived there, some formula is gone through, after which

It may be mentioned in passing that if the people think a person mad they hang the unfortunate being. If the

A Test for Insanity.

birds eat the flesh, insanity is confirmed; if not, why, a judicial murder has been committed. Small consolation for the relatives or the sufferer!

The Madi have some religion—what it is, is not easy to say. They have a vague belief in a Great Being who made the world and man,

also in "isa"

—the soul or thinking part of man which is supposed to perish with the body. Yet they think that their departed friends can at times speak to them, but when they look for them they only see smoke. When this happens the people feel sad, and they kill a lamb and sprinkle themselves with its blood.

They are rather superstitious and believe in



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

MARRIED WOMAN OF THE JA-LUO TRIBE

Wearing the decorated goat-skin which is a sign of wedlock.

omens. They have two ceremonies which must be very briefly described; the first is that of "killing a lamb."

Curious Ceremonies.

About once a year, as far as can be ascertained, the whole tribe gets depressed; a great gathering takes place, and they all sit down round a circle of stones erected near a road. A lamb is then led round all the people three times by a young boy. As it passes they pluck off bits of fleece, which they place in the hair, or somewhere about their bodies. The lamb is then led to the circle of stones and killed by a man who seems to have some priestly office. He takes the blood and sprinkles the people with it four times; on the children he makes a small circle of blood over the lower part of the breast-bone. The women and girls are anointed over the breast, and the men on the shoulders. The priest then gives an address somewhat as follows:—

"You who are rich, deny not a cow or a sheep to a poor man who asks for one. When you eat, do not seem unaware of a passer-by, but invite the stranger to share your meat. Children, when you see a stranger, run to your mother and ask her for water to offer to him; should you see an old woman fall, laugh not, but assist her," and so forth.

When the address, which is often very long, is over, the audience rises, and each places a leaf on, or by, the circle of stones, after which they depart in joy.

A similar ceremony on a smaller scale is held at other times—if, for instance, a family is in great trouble, to avert further evil, or at the grave of a departed relative or friend; sometimes also on a joyful occa-

sion, such as the return of a relative from a long journey.

The "harvest home" ceremony is also of some interest. This is a feast held in the open space which is usually found in the centre of each village. The



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

DAUGHTERS OF A KISUMU CHIEF.

villagers may attend their own festivals only. After the feast, at which one man presides, speeches are made, and both men and women address the assembly. The old are listened to with great respect as they give good advice to the young people. The village belle makes the final oration, after which the assembly disperses. The clapping of hands expresses approval; the face is covered with the hands if a person is rude enough to show disapproval of any sentiment uttered.

When a group of villages have celebrated the "harvest home" they combine together

for the first dance of the season. A band composed of drums, horns, and rattles is in the centre; around it the performers dance, the old people sitting in a wide circle. A young woman opens the ball by

in avoiding arrows and spears, and they teach even young children to do the same.

Madi women are very skilful at weaving baskets from *dhurra* stalks; the pulp is



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

JA-LUO WOMEN, KAVIRONDO.

a *pas seul*; she then dances up to a young man, and he takes up the dance; he next invites a girl to take the floor, and so on; but in this district men and women do not dance together. The women put on their war-paint, viz., necklaces, bracelets, and anklets, and flowers in their hair.

Women sometimes fight duels, and a fierce fight it is, for before setting to the combatants put on iron bracelets with straight and curved spikes. After a few minutes' encounter the duellists are covered with blood, and one or both may faint from loss of it. The women are very dexterous

removed, the stalk opened out flat and cut into the requisite lengths. The bottom of the basket is first made, and then the sides are worked up from it, closely woven; so close is the mesh, in fact, that these baskets will hold milk. Sometimes coloured stalks are used, and patterns formed with them. Young palm-leaves are often used for making smaller baskets. Pots are also covered with loose wickerwork, either for carrying them about or for hanging them up in the huts.

Pottery is made by women. After preparing the grey clay it is left for a day; no wheel is used, but having formed the bottom

Women Workers.

of the jar on a board, the women work up the sides with their hands. Some shapes are very graceful; the clay is ornamented with the fishbone pattern, and the pots are painted either black, or red, or black and red. They are then placed in a hut for a day or two, next in the sun, and finally fired. A good trade in pottery is done by the women, and they keep a store of it to sell to neighbouring tribes.

The women also make fine twine and small nets, but the making of rope and fishing-nets is men's work.

Madi women have a very good time on the whole; they are respected and well treated by the men; if ill, they are tenderly cared for, and at no time are they the beasts of burden that some of their sisters are.

Any insult to a woman meets with a speedy retribution. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to revile his mother—only by blood can such an offence be atoned for. Women are buried in this district, and the mourning lasts for a month. Very different this from some tribes among whom, though a man's body is buried, a woman's is simply thrown into the bush! A man when dying is surrounded by his family, and he always exhorts his eldest son to take good care of his mother.

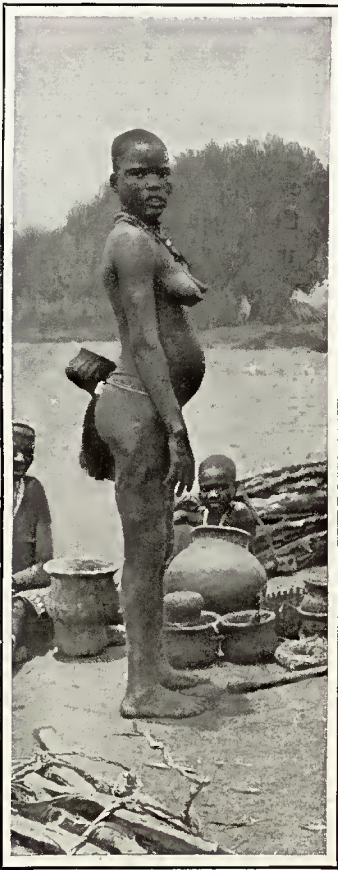
Just a few of the marriage customs may be mentioned. The Madi may not marry amongst their own friends, but usually get a wife from a neighbouring village. When a young man is ready for marriage, his father makes a tour throughout the neighbourhood to find a suitable bride for the lad. Having made his choice, he ties a twig of a certain tree round the girl's wrist, usually the left, and then asks her father's permission for her to marry his son. If the price in cows and sheep can be amicably settled, little further difficulty is likely to arise. Or, if in his travels a young man sees a girl who takes his fancy, he may, if she be willing, tie the twig round

her wrist, and she will then go home and tell her mother, who tells her father; he settles the price, which is then communicated to the young man's father, and if he agrees the match is made. If the parents do not consent the marriage is broken off, as the young people obey their parents and runaway matches are unknown. Before the marriage the engaged couple can meet as often as they like. The young man works hard to get together as much property as he can, and the girl's father builds her a new hut, into which she goes a few days before the marriage takes place. Wedding presents are as great a tax there as here, and all friends are expected to help the couple in providing household stores.

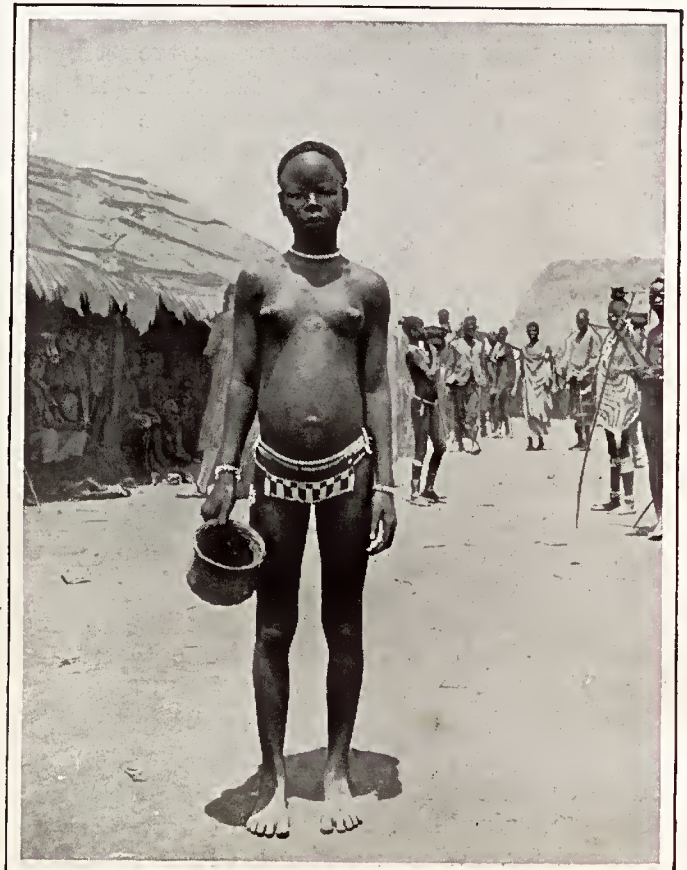
On the morning of the wedding-day a number of boys take the cattle which form the bride price, each boy leading one cow or sheep by a string, the animals being decked with flowers. A group of girls accompanies them, but the bridegroom remains behind. A cow is killed by the brothers of the bridegroom, if he has any; if he has no brother, then his nearest friend takes his place, and a feast is held, lasting for two days. During this time the bride must not leave her hut. She is not, however, quite alone, as her future brothers- and sisters-in-law keep her company, and tell her what a good husband she will have. They bring her food, but it is not the correct thing for her to be seen eating. On the third day another cow is killed, and dancing follows the feast. The bride now appears, accompanied by her brothers-in-law, who walk behind her to the centre of the dancing-ground, around which the company is collected. The bride is left alone, and she then dances the wedding dance accompanied by special music. The longer she can dance, the more she is applauded and the prouder she is; word is sent to the bridegroom as to how she has acquitted herself. Next day she rests, and the day following the bridegroom arrives with his unmarried friends, enters the hut, and claims his bride. The newly-married couple spend a week or ten days in the bride's village, during which time the bridegroom's father builds a new hut. When the bride

**Position
of Madi
Women.**

**Madi
Marriage
Customs.**



IN THE MARKET AT
KISUMU.



Photographs by permission of A. C. Holtis.
NATIVE GIRL IN KISUMU MARKET.

and groom arrive a sheep is killed before the hut, and they enter over the body of the dead animal.

Polygamy is permitted, but this and divorce are both rare. The greatest number of wives allowed is four, and usually an interval of two years must elapse before a new wife is taken. Each wife has a separate hut, and the husband must apportion his time equally between his wives; if he does so the ladies generally keep on very good terms with each other. The Madi women make capital wives, and married life is apparently a very happy state among them.

About a week after a child is born an assembly of friends is called together; a fowl is killed, some of its blood is applied to the child, and it is given a name, often the name of the season, *e.g.*, Krauobi,

famine; Kradaru, hunting season; a child may be named after a deceased relative, rarely after a living one. Family names are not used, but a son takes his father's name as well as his own.

Madi Childhood. The babies are carried slung in a skin which has been well tanned and is very soft; the child's body is under the mother's arm, the head behind—it is often covered with a gourd to protect it from the sun.

Considerable care is taken in the training of the children. They are taught to eat properly, not to put their hands into the dishes until their elders have begun to eat, to rise as soon as finished, wash their hands and mouths, and retire to a little distance. They are taught to be silent when their elders are speaking, to salute their superiors, and to show kindness to the aged and the sick.

The girls are trained in cookery, and

various domestic and matrimonial duties; they are taught to dance, to elude arrows, to carry water and collect firewood, to show hospitality to strangers, and in due course to take care of infants. The education of both boys and girls is considered incomplete until they have travelled. When about ten years old, both boys and girls are sent to visit friends in the surrounding villages.

The Madi women may be said to illustrate the well-known fact that the fewer clothes a woman wears the more modest and moral she is, for the Madi are a great contrast in this respect to the well-clothed and most immoral Waganda and Wanyoro.

The Madi have many legends about animals, of which the following is a short example:—"A monster lion is said to have shaken the earth by his roars. The shock was so great that all the people fell to the

ground, and the lion proceeded to eat them. One man, however, entreated the Being who had created both man and beast to make the lion a little smaller, as he was too great and powerful for man; his request was granted, and the lion was at once reduced in size to his present dimensions."

Madi Legends.

The Dinka are subdivided into about four groups—the Kesh, Atwot, Gok, and

The Dinka. Agar—and occupy the district on the west bank of the White Nile, about 7°30' to 8°30'.

The people are tall, very tall, sometimes lanky—"stalk-like," Schweinfurth called them. The women wear a belt round the waist, from which is suspended a short apron in front and a longer one behind them, for all the world like a swallow-tailed coat! They adorn themselves with numerous bracelets, anklets, and necklaces, and a series



WOMEN OF THE NANDI TRIBE.
Showing wire armlets and other ornaments.

Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

of small earrings in each ear. They always shave their heads, but do not smear themselves with oil and ashes as the men do; oil alone is considered sufficient.

In some parts of this district huts built upon piles are to be seen; the ground around the huts is beaten into a hard plaster, on which the women grind the corn, do their cooking, etc. The huts have very small doors and no windows.

The position held by Dinka women is



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.

WOMEN OF THE SÛK TRIBE NEAR LAKE BARINGO.

Showing wire armlets and other ornaments.



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G., and the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

LUMBWA WOMAN AND YOUNG GIRL.

Showing ear-plugs and distorted lobes.

not so satisfactory as that of the Madi. Polygamy prevails, and a man will have as many wives as he can contrive to purchase. They pay for them with cattle, and the Dinka are the greatest cattle-breeders on the White Nile.

It has been well said that cattle occupy all their thoughts, and doubtless it is the greed for cattle which causes the frequent feuds, not only among the various divisions of the tribe, but also with neighbouring tribes—feuds arising from “cattle-lifting,” and resembling those which used to be carried on between the lowlands of Scotland and the northern counties of England.

The sheep are of a peculiar breed, with a mane-like covering on the head and shoulders, the rest of the body to the meagre tail being clothed with short hair. As Schweinfurth remarked, this tribe seem to hold their cattle in reverence, for they never slaughter them, but tend them carefully when sick, and use them for food only if they die. If the cattle are captured in war, the Dinka will willingly redeem them with their wives and daughters,

Cattle of more Value than Women.

so great is their attachment to the beasts. Schweinfurth estimated that there were three head of cattle to one of the human population, but the population has greatly altered since then.

The women are not employed in tending the cattle in any way, but

they are very good housekeepers, and used to be in great request as domestic slaves, notwithstanding that they were very troublesome and much less docile than the women of other tribes. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that they keep the houses exceedingly clean. They are first-rate cooks and clean eaters; the food is passed round in pots or platters, and the people eat one after the other, all having washed before commencing the meal.

In this tribe only the four lower incisors are removed at puberty.

Marriage is conducted on the same lines as in the Madi district, but there may

be said to be two distinct classes of wives—those paid for in cattle and hoe-blades, and those obtained by capture. The former hold the superior place in the household, though the children of both are equal in status.

When a man dies, his wives are inherited by his son; if children are born to the son they are reckoned to be his brothers or sisters.

It is a recognised custom that old men should marry young wives, who are, in fact, married to their sons, but whose children are looked upon as the old man's offspring, and counted as the brothers and sisters of their real fathers. The women nurse their children till they are

old enough to fetch water for their fathers to drink.

A Great Spirit is believed to have made heaven and earth, and once upon a time there was a roadway or ladder between the two and communication was easy. A small hut was built in each village, and sacrifices and offerings were made before war or in times of distress. Should it rain during a sacrifice before a journey it is postponed. A devil, or evil spirit, is recognised, who was once a friend of the Great Spirit, but they quarrelled.

The Dinka believe that the spirits of the departed have the power to revisit the earth; their appearance is of evil import. They believe in white and black magic, and black magicians are often killed.

They have a very strong feeling that neighbouring tribes possess collective magic, especially the Jûr. Cattle disease may therefore, they think, be caused by some tribe living upon their borders, and not infrequently fights take place on this supposition.

The women as a rule do not take part in the fighting, but hide in the bush with the children. Nevertheless they can give a very good account of themselves if they should be compelled to fight.

The writer did not come into close contact with the Golo, and he therefore gives an extract from Captain S. L. Cummins' article on them. (See "*Anthropological Journal*," vol. xxxiv. p. 164 *et seq.*):—

Golo Witchcraft and Superstition.

"Witchcraft is widely believed in, and all misfortunes are attributed to it. The evil eye is greatly feared. The charming of



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A KARAMOJO WOMAN.

roots and stones into the body of an enemy is as widely attempted, and as firmly believed in, as among the Dinka; and the method of cure (the root being sucked out by a wise man) is identical.

"Ghosts are believed in, but are supposed to be very rare. When seen they are always the harbingers of death or disaster to the beholder.

"The shadows (Vu-vu) of things and people are regarded as important. At death the shadow departs to the place of God. The word 'Vu-vu' is used in the sense of soul when speaking of the departed.

"The Golo theory of dreams is that the shadows of things and people enter into the dreamer's mind during sleep. From this it would appear that the connection between the shadow and the substance is believed to be severed during sleep.

"When on the march the Golo will take a stone, or a small ant-heap (about the size of a man's head), and place it in the fork of a tree, to retard the setting of the sun. The fact that this is believed to be efficacious shows that the Golo does not allow experience to shatter illusions.

"Various charms are worn to avert evil. For instance, a man, who travelled to the country of the Niam-Niam and back with a letter, showed me, on his return, a grass-seed that he had worn, of a kind locally called *Magar*. He said that lions, meeting him on the road, turned their faces from the charm, and crept away into the bushes.

"The Golo's God is named Umvile (pronounced Umveeley). He is the father of mankind by his wife Barachi.

"Umvile lives above the earth, in a place called Van-do-Bah. The word in this connection means heaven, but ordinarily means a house and its surroundings. Bah means a house.

"The souls (Vu-vu) of the virtuous after death go to heaven, but a Satan named 'Hah' employs himself, at God's command, in burning the souls of the wicked.

"It is interesting that the Golo believe Satan to be the servant of God.

"Prayers are not offered to God, but in

times of sickness and trouble He is propitiated with sacrifices.

"The sacrifice is carried out as follows: A feast is made; about twenty chickens are killed, and the first of these is kept for Umvile. The remainder are cooked, and eaten with *Marisa* (native beer) and *Kissra* (a kind of bread).

"The one chicken kept for Umvile is placed in a special hut, without being cooked or plucked, and next it is placed a *Bourma* (jar) of *Marisa*. Possibly the *Marisa* is poured on the ground. If the offerings are still to be seen next day, they are removed, but *not eaten*. A little house is said to be built next their own houses by the Golo for sacrificial purposes. I have not seen such houses. There are no priests."

We turn now to the tribes inhabiting the East African Protectorate between Uganda and the Indian Ocean. Until recently very little has been known of them: those living near the coast have been under Arab influence for hundreds of years: still the Masai, Kikuyu, Kamba and other tribes have not much altered their habits and customs until within the last ten years.

The Kikuyu, to take an example, live in the district of which Mount Kenia forms a centre. Their villages are built upon hill-tops, so that their watchmen may give early notice of any threatened raid upon their homesteads. We are indebted to Mr. H. R. Tate for the greater part of what follows.

The Kikuyu people are a hardy, prolific, well-built race, dark reddish-brown in complexion; living as they do amongst the hills, their legs are much better than those of other tribes—the legs being the weak part of most African races. They are hard-working, thrifty, and moral. Agriculture in this district is very well conducted, the field work being done by the women. The people, owing to Masai raids, are distrustful and treacherous until real friendship has been established.

**Tribes of
the East
Africa Pro-
tectorate.**

**The Kikuyu
Women.**

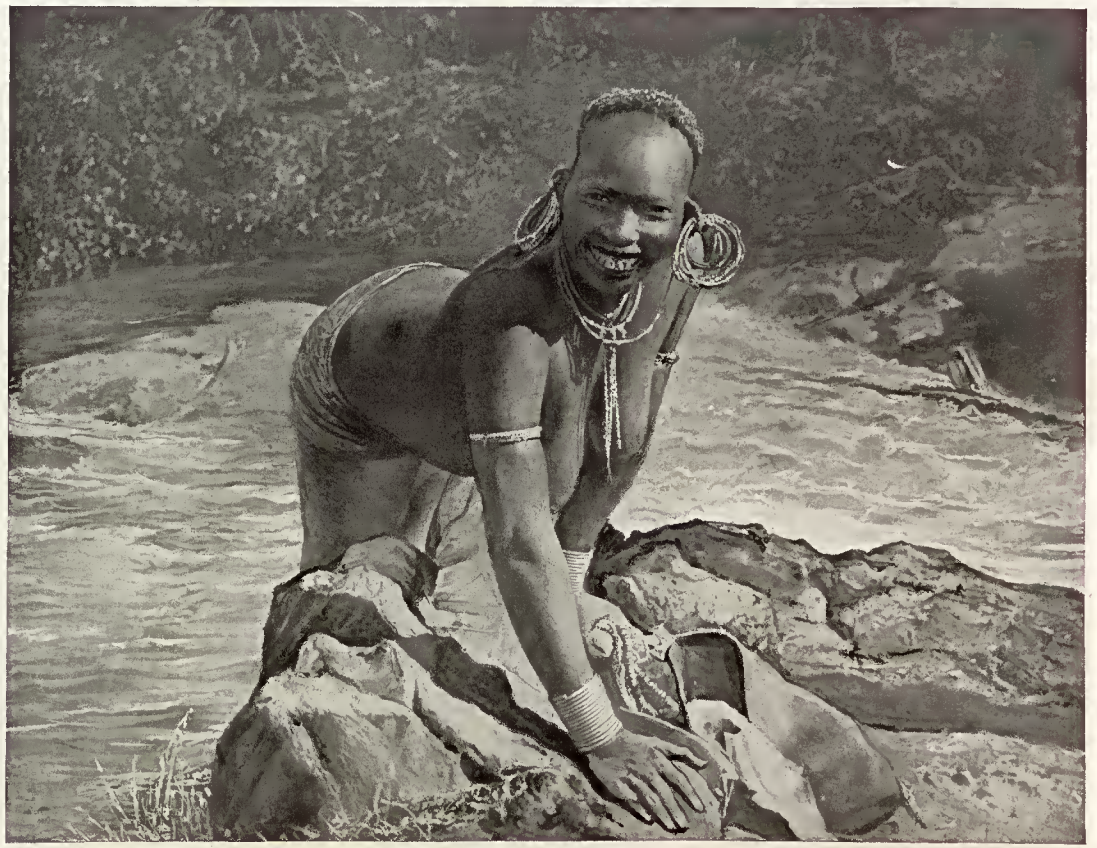


KIKUYU GIRLS POUNDING GRAIN.
Showing the curious methods of ear distortion.

Photograph by H. Binks, B.E.A.

As the women do most of the manual labour they age early. Comparatively few cattle are kept, and even those few are never used for food, so that the women must work hard to keep the household well fed. They have a larger variety of food than

a poncho which reaches below the knees, with no sleeves, and open in front; a small apron is worn, and a half-petticoat is suspended round the waist. Before marriage they adorn themselves with innumerable bracelets, anklets, earrings; the ears are



KIKUYU GIRL WASHING CLOTHES.

Photograph by permission of A. C. Hollis.

The eyebrows are shaved off and the ears laden with ornaments.

some of the tribes, as they cultivate sweet potatoes, yams, *sem-sem*, bananas, and sugar-cane. The only use made of the cattle is to buy wives or to settle fines with them, or to pay blood-money in case a man has committed murder or some great crime. The women marry very young; they are very clean and tidy, and shave their heads with the exception of a circular crown of hair at the back.

A triangular notch is filed in the two upper incisors, while the two lower ones are frequently extracted.

For clothes, the women wear three garments made of skin; the married ones wear

stretched and pierced to admit large discs of wood, which greatly disfigure them. After the birth of the first child most of these ornaments are discarded.

Curiously enough, the women in this tribe do not make their own clothes, this duty falling to the lot of mere man. The latter, however, are adepts at the work, and turn out very passable garments, in spite of the fact that they have to sew with eyeless needles! Both men and women are tattooed, the latter being the operators.

Married women have each a hut to themselves; the unmarried girls occupy a hut apart.

When the people move to a new site, to build either a single hut or a village, the owner pours some porridge upon the ground,



Photograph by permission of A. C. Hollis.
KIKUYU WOMAN.
Carrying gourd vessel.

as does his chief wife. Then a prayer is offered to *Ngai*, asking that a prosperous home may rise upon the site, and that property, wives, and fruitful fields may be his while he lives. Building is then begun, and at its conclusion a sheep is killed. Wine is made, and drunk by the men and married women, and a little is spilt on each new hut. Before moving from the old site the man sends a goat to a neighbour to take care of until the building is completed, when the animal is taken to the new house, and to ensure good luck the head wife of the chief sucks a little blood from a wound in the neck of the animal; her husband must sleep in her hut the first night of occupation, or she will be grievously offended.

When the women return from work in the fields at night they bring in firewood and cook the supper, and also food for the next morning, as all the people eat before going to work. The women and children eat together, the men apart.

Feasting Customs.

The oldest woman in a village plays the chief part in the sacrifice of sheep and goats to *Ngai* every three months.

The animals being killed and cooked, the men eat a goat, the women a sheep; after all are satisfied, the oldest woman takes a piece of fat from the entrails, stands in the centre of a group of the people, holds it



Photograph by permission of C. W. Hobley, C.M.G.
N'DITO, OR YOUNG UNMARRIED GIRL
OF THE LUAS'NGISHU MASAI.

Showing the enormous ear-plug used as an ornament.

aloft, and then prays to *Ngai* for prosperity to the village, to the men, women, and children, husbands for the women, and health

for the flocks and herds. She promises good conduct on the part of members of the village, and finally places the fat on the embers.

The next day is a feast day, and the older people get drunk, but the younger are only allowed to drink sufficient to produce a certain amount of exhilaration. For eight days after this, men and women remain apart, to insure fertility in their flocks.

All disease is thought to be produced by the "bad deity"; they do not think a demon enters into a sick person.

Kikuyu Religion.

They believe in a God of Fire, seen at times in a camp fire, not in the huts; a man may be carried into the air by this power, and told how to propitiate *Ngai*. Should this happen, a feast is held next day; a sheep and a she-goat are sacrificed beneath a spreading sacred tree, and the elders eat the flesh; the skin is cut into strips and given to the women for luck, and they wear it as a necklace. Men, women, and children drink blood, or blood mixed with milk.

Tate says:—"The Akikuyu make small images of clay which represent men and women. They are not idols, but seem more in the nature of dolls; the children play with them, and in a dance between unmarried men and girls the former carry the dolls, both male and female, in the palms of their hands. These images seem to be part of a game concerning which the Akikuyu are unwilling to say much. It is also stated that they are used in certain ceremonies, such as the praying for rain, and the celebration of the gathering in of crops."

When people sacrifice to *Ngai*, the meal is placed in the sacred tree, the worshippers crossing their lips with a piece of meat before sacrificing. As this tribe regards spiritual powers much as do the Masai, nothing more need here be said concerning them.

The marriage customs do not vary from those mentioned elsewhere.

Of the Akamba tribe in the East Africa Protectorate, Mr. Tate says:—"The people are moderately well built, of a medium

height, their brown skin being a shade darker than the Akikuyu's. The young

The Akamba.

girls shave their heads two or three times a year, but do not keep the head as closely shorn as do the married women. The front teeth are filed to a point for ornamental purposes. The young women are fairly good-looking, but hard work and family cares soon render them dull and ugly.

The young unmarried girls wear two garments—an apron, a cloth, some six inches deep and fourteen long, and a flap slightly larger behind—both being secured round the waist by a beadwork belt. The married women dress similarly, but with more ample material.

Until the children can walk they are carried slung in a leather sling on their mothers' backs, their legs being around the mothers' loins. Girls wear an apron from the time they can walk.

After the birth of the first child the women discard the ornaments they had previously worn to attract lovers; these consist of strings of blue and white bead necklaces, the waist and ankles being bound round with strings of small white beads. The aprons are embroidered with cowries or beads as well as the belts. Sometimes a leather cape decorated with beadwork is worn at dances; this cape falls as low as the mid-arm.

After a marriage has been arranged by the payment of three or four cows, the bride

runs away and pretends to hide. The bridegroom and a small party of friends start out to hunt for her, and when

Akamba Marriage Customs.

caught she is carried to the bridegroom's hut, accompanied by a merry crowd of women and girls. She is taken into the hut, and, after some horseplay, is left for three days with her husband. At the end of that time she is escorted back in procession to her father's hut for a feast, and then begins the usual round of domestic duties at her new home. Polygamy prevails; a man may have five or six wives, and he is not at all averse to lending one or more to a friend who may happen to be childless.

The Akamba cannot be said to be a very moral race, and open flirtation is far from unknown. Even married women may be seen carrying on flirtations under their husbands' very eyes. The lover is expected to pay the husband for the wife's fancies, however!

The first and best description of the Masai, the great warlike tribe of East Central Africa, was published

The Masai.

in 1885 by Joseph Thomson.

It is to his account and to the works of Sir H. H. Johnston and Mr. A. C. Hollis that one chiefly turns for information as to this interesting people, now woefully diminished by war, disease, and famine.

There are many divisions of the tribe, some of less pure breed than others, and war frequently broke out between them—war by declaration, not the sudden, treacherous raiding which so often obtains among savage tribes, and which the Masai themselves were wont to practise before the "*Pax Britannica*" put a limit to such excesses.

The Masai are not Bantu, and they hold a position distinctly superior to that of other Central African tribes.

In facial configuration they are not unlike Europeans, for the nose is less depressed, and the lips are thinner than those

Racial Characteristics of the Masai.

of other tribes. The head is broader than in Bantu races, and the face has almost a Mongolian look, with slanting eyes, pointed chin, and rather prominent cheek-bones. The nose is "often beautifully shaped, with high bridge, and delicately curved nostrils, which obey sensitively the passing feelings of the owner, quivering and dilating with pride and rage, or widening and relaxing with good humour." The hair is longer and wavier than with the true Negro.

Naturally large, the ears of the Masai are distorted and rendered more noteworthy by the ornaments they affect. Even small children pierce holes through the lobes of the ears and place twigs in them, till at last the lobe can contain a disc of wood some five

or six inches in diameter, the lobe of the ear being replaced, as it were, by a loop of tough, cartilaginous skin. At times a wooden stretcher with a groove on each side is used to extend the ear. Iron chains, changed after marriage to copper-wire discs, are also suspended from the ear. The hairs of the eyebrows are pulled out, and beards are scanty or absent. The teeth are bad (this is unusual in Africa), and the mouth when open displays hideous, discoloured fangs. The notch filed between the two upper incisors is used for spitting through—for to spit at a person is a mark of great respect and friendship, and it is reckoned an insult to wipe off the saliva!

The Masai arms are long in proportion to the body, and the fingers as a rule reach to the knee when the arms are pendent.

Boys and girls are called *en-gesa* (a kind of sheep) till they are about three; then the boys are called *en-aiok* until puberty, after which they are termed *el-barnode*; and, finally, when they go to war they receive the name *el-moran*. The various tribes of Masai are easily distinguished by the distinct heraldic devices clearly depicted on the warriors' shields in black, white, red, or yellow.

The girls continue to be called *en-gesa* until puberty, and afterwards *en-doya*. Clothing usually is conspicuous by its absence.

The Masai huts are not beautiful erections; they are merely oblong boxes, three and a half feet high, nine feet long, and five broad, made of bent and woven boughs, giving a flat roof with rounded ends, and coated with cows' dung and hides to keep out the wind and rain. These huts are placed in a rough circle forming the enclosure for the cattle, and all are surrounded by a thick thorn hedge to protect the dwellers from the attacks of man or beast. Here dirt reigns supreme!

Girls are at a disadvantage in this tribe; boys are welcomed, girls are not. Nevertheless there is an excess of women owing to the fights which used to be of such constant occurrence.



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

WOMEN OF THE PASTORAL MASAI IN FRONT OF THEIR PECULIAR FORM OF HOUSE.

The men marry somewhat late in life, after their fighting days are done. Then, having bought a bride, a betrothal takes place, but the marriage is deferred till the following calving season, as a great deal of milk is considered essential to the honeymoon. During the period of "engagement" the girl lets her hair grow, and wears round her head a band covered with cowries, from which hang a number of strings forming a bridal veil. The marriage ceremony itself consists in discarding the chain earrings and substituting the copper-wire discs, shaving the head, and for the first time donning real clothes. These garments are an apron in front, and a skin suspended from the shoulders behind. The husband wears his bride's discarded apron for a month!

The Masai usually have two or more

wives, for they are very anxious to have a goodly number of children.

The women design and frequently build the huts; they likewise do the cooking, so their occupations do not lack variety. The pots and household utensils are made by a sub-tribe, the Andorobbo, who also make the warriors' shields; the spears, swords, and knives are made by the Elkonono; a tribe of slaves.

Thomson describes the Masai girls who live with the *el-moran* as follows:—

"Happily facts support the verdict of gallantry when I say that they are really the best-looking girls I have ever met in Africa. They are distinctly ladylike in both manner and physique. Their figures are slender and well formed without the abnormal development about the hips characteristic of the Negro. They share, like the men, the dark

**Masai
Marriage
Customs.**

gums and the bad sets of teeth. The hair is shaved off totally, leaving a shiny scalp. As to dress, they are very decent, and almost classical, if a stinking, greasy hide can have anything to do with things classical. They wear a dressed bullock-hide from which the hair has been scraped. This is tied over the left shoulder, passing under the right arm. A beaded belt confines it round the waist, leaving only one limb exposed. Frequently it is slipped off the shoulder, and depends entirely from the waist, leaving the bosom exposed. Their ornaments are of a very remarkable nature. Round the legs from the ankles to the knees telegraph wire is coiled closely in spiral fashion. So awkward is this ornament that the wearer cannot walk properly, she cannot sit down or rise up like any other human being, and she cannot run. Round the arms she has wire similarly coiled both above and

below the elbow. Round the neck more wire is coiled—in this case, however, horizontally—till the head seems to sit on an inverted iron salver. When these ornaments are once on they must remain till finally taken off, as it requires many days of painful work to fit them into their places. They chafe the ankles excessively, and evidently give much pain. As they are put on when very young, the calf is not allowed to develop, and the consequence is that when grown up the legs remain at a uniform thickness from ankle to knee—mere animated stilts, in fact. The weight of this armour varies according to the wealth of the parties, up to thirty pounds. Besides the iron wire, great quantities of beads and iron chains are disposed in various ways round the neck."

It is strange that, after leading a free and easy life in the camps with the warriors,

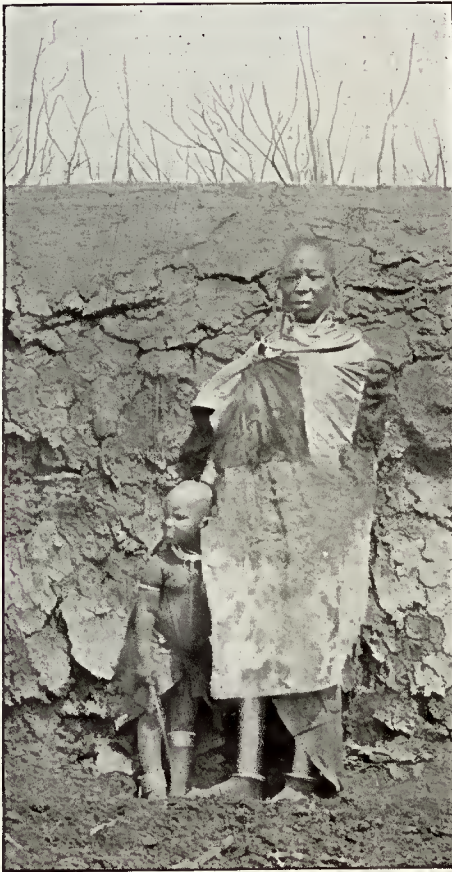


WOMEN OF THE PASTORAL MASAI IN FRONT OF A HOUSE.
Showing the coils of telegraph wire used as ornaments.

Photograph by permission of A. C. Hollis.

the women should ever settle down to sober married life, yet they do so, although their morals are not of the highest.

The Masai have peculiar views with regard to milk, which is held to be a sacred



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

WOMAN OF THE PASTORAL MASAI.

fluid. It is never given or sold to strangers, by the men at least; the women are not quite so strict, and may be bribed to provide the traveller with it on the sly. But woe betide the luckless wight who boils the milk!—he will find himself in a very awkward position, since this is regarded as a deadly insult to the cows, who retaliate by refusing to give any more.

The Masai, unlike the Bantu, do not believe in ghosts, nor do they pay any attention to dreams as do the other tribes we have mentioned. They do understand that there is a God, but their ideas about him are vague,

although they pray to him constantly—in fact, nothing can be undertaken without hours of prayer. They also believe in a sort of earth spirit called Neiterkob. They have faith in witchcraft, though the powers of the medicine-man lie not in any innate attributes of his own, but in his power of intercession with their god *Ngai*, who works through him and imparts magical virtues to various objects. *Ngai* is thought to dwell amongst the snows of Kilimanjaro.

Grass is their most sacred object; held in the hand it is a sign of peace and welcome, thrown on any person or place it is an invocation for a blessing on that person or place.

One word in conclusion must be said on the attitude of East African women to strangers. In whatever district it may be one's lot to wander, these African women show themselves kindly, courteous, and willing to please. As an illustration of their ready gratitude for kindness the following little story is given of an incident which befell the writer:—

I was marching with a small party of Waganda towards the Egyptian frontier. The soldiers, as was the custom when on the king's business, robbed the poor people in the villages we passed through, while I could do little to prevent such behaviour, as I had only one faithful boy with me. One morning the inhabitants of a village were incensed by the men drinking up all their banana wine, stealing their poultry, and generally misbehaving themselves. The leader of the escort was rather frightened at the angry voices and gestures of the people his men had raided, and gave orders for a speedy retreat. He had with him his wife and two servant-girls, one of them a pretty Wahuma maid. The path we followed was very rough and thorny, and a few hours after starting I noticed this girl sitting at the side of the path, vainly endeavouring to extract a thorn which had pierced her foot. Her master was angry at the delay and struck her, telling her roughly to get up and move on, but, seeing the girl's pain, I

Masai Superstitions.

stopped, and to her great relief soon extracted the thorn.

On and on we marched while the sun beat down on us, hotter and hotter as the day advanced, so that we were all glad when

tree on which I had been resting. I emptied my revolver over the attacking natives' heads, and they at once halted, not understanding how I could fire six shots without reloading. Afterwards they told me they



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

WOMAN OF THE NAIVASHA MASAI.

Showing the distorted ear-lobe in which ornaments are strung.

about noon a halt was called, and we were told we could rest for an hour or two in a forest glade. After eating a few bananas and drinking a cup of coffee I leant against a fallen tree and fell sound asleep. I must have slept for some time when I was awakened by a cool hand placed on my forehead, and on opening my eyes I saw the Wahuma girl holding my revolver with the butt-end towards me as she cried, "Wake! we are attacked." I hardly needed her words to inform me of this fact, for spears were flying over us, and as I sprang up, one passed through my sleeve and buried itself in the

thought I must be the devil to be able to fire more than two shots!

What had happened was this. Whilst I slept, some of the men had again been stealing at a village near our halting-place, and the natives in revenge had attacked and driven off their tormentors. The girl, hearing the noise of the fight, had wished to save me out of gratitude for the help I had rendered her that morning. The common-sense she displayed greatly pleased me, and this incident shows, I think, both the quick wit and the good feeling of the African native.



Photograph by E. W. Caney, Durban.

ZULU GIRLS AFTER BATHING.

SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

By ALICE WERNER

The Great Bantu Race—General Position of Women in South Africa—A Missionary's Evidence—Polygamy no Hindrance to Happiness—Misconceptions of African Life—The Brighter Side of African Life—Tribal Wars and Witchcraft—The Zulu—Zulu Girl Life—The Old Zulu Marriage Law—How Zulu Marriages are now Arranged—Zulu Marriage Ceremonies—The Hair and its Ornamentation—Celibacy a Réproach—Restrictions upon Zulu Women—A Zulu Lady Godiva—Women as Food-finders—Women as Brewers—Zulu Tailor-made Costumes—Skin Cradles—Women as House Builders—Zulu Cookery—Zulu Basket-work—Doctors and Witches—Treatment of Widows

SOUTH AFRICA—indeed, all Africa as far north as the Equator, and a considerable area beyond it—is mainly peopled by the Bantu race; so that we shall have to deal chiefly with Bantu tribes in the following pages. The

The Great Bantu Race.

few exceptions will be noted as they occur. As might be expected in the case of a people extending over so many degrees of latitude and living

under such diverse conditions, the various tribes differ greatly in physique, customs, and institutions; but all of them have a great deal in common, as is shown (to take one point only) by the close affinity between their languages; and it is evident that the groundwork of their social organisation, where this has not been broken up by outside influences, is everywhere much the same. We may, therefore, before proceeding

to deal with the women of each tribe separately, consider very briefly the position of women among the Bantu in general.

There are several misconceptions current on this subject. It is popularly supposed that the African woman is a poor, degraded, down-trodden being, with no rights and no morals, subjected to constant ill-treatment, and (it is added, in some cases) deserving little better. Mistaken views like this—arising, in the first instance, from imperfect or careless observation—are repeated by one writer after another till they come to be accepted articles of

**General
Position of
Women in
South Africa.**

fully misleading. It is true enough that the Bantu are polygamists, and that their wives do a large share, if not all, of the field-work; yet the women are not slaves. It is also true that marriages are usually arranged by parents and guardians, and that the bridegroom has to make a certain payment; yet it is untrue to say that he buys his wife.

When native customs are taken as a whole, and looked at in their true light, it will be seen that the position of women is by no means unfavourable. The law makes no distinction between the sexes—except that, in some cases, a wrong done to a woman is more severely punished than one done to a



Photograph by B. W. Caney, Durban.

NATAL NATIVE WOMEN GATHERING PUMPKINS

Which grow half wild in the fringe of the bush bordering the cultivated ground.

belief, which it seems almost impertinent to call in question. Usually they are based on accounts of some custom taken by itself, and not in connection with the national life of which it forms a part, or of some incident quite misunderstood by the European who witnessed it; and such accounts, even if quite accurate as far as they go, may be woe-

man. Many religious ceremonies can only be performed by women, as we shall notice more in detail when speaking of the Hereros and the Anyanja. Among the Balolo (on the Congo) women take part in the public councils of the tribe; and though this is not common elsewhere, their influence unofficially counts for much. The mother of a

chief is nearly always, and his sister very frequently, a person of great importance.

That agriculture should chiefly fall to the lot of women is the natural consequence of a primitive state of things, in which men are usually occupied with war or hunting. In fact, it has recently been suggested as probable that women were really the inventors of agriculture. Women also do the field-work where the men are in the habit of going away on long trading journeys, or engaging themselves to work for Europeans at a distance; but the system is only completely carried out in the case of war-like and pastoral peoples like the Zulus. Among agricultural tribes, such as the Bechuana and Anyanja, the men and women cultivate the fields together.

Perhaps I can hardly do better than quote the words of a German missionary, Dr. Merensky, well qualified to speak by many years' experience in Africa:—

"It is said that girls in Africa are sold in marriage. But this is only a European way of putting it. The black man is indignant at such a suggestion. The gift in cattle, or other things, which the would-be bridegroom has to hand over, is an essential part of the legal marriage ceremony. No African speaks of 'buying' in this connection—he 'marries the girl by means of cattle.' Hard cases arise, indeed, when parents pledge their daughter before she is old enough to have a will of her own; and, when the time comes for the husband to take her home, she is frequently compelled, perhaps by cruel treatment, to follow him, whether she likes it or not, since she is legally bound to him. But all this is not the rule."

The writer might have added that similar hard cases are not unknown among ourselves. We need not go very far back in our history to find parents denying in theory (whatever they may have done in practice) that a daughter had any right to a voice in the disposal of her hand. The idea survives in a convention on which half our popular fiction is built up.

"In some tribes the girl's right to a voice in the selection of her husband is expressly recognised; and it is a very general and laudable practice which forbids the bride being taken home before she is of full age. . . . Only those quite unacquainted with native life can assert that love—even of the higher kind—between husband and wife is unknown. They have been misled by the natural disinclination of the blacks to reveal their deepest feelings to strangers, and by what seems to a casual eye the dull apathy with which they endure the greatest suffering."

He goes on to point out that, though women's work is heavy according to our ideas, it is not so through the oppression of individual men, but because the woman's sphere—within which, it must be remembered, she is supreme—has been strictly defined by custom and tradition; and the most selfish husband cannot at his pleasure add to his wife's burden. If she has the labour of hoeing, weeding, and reaping, she also has the control of the resulting food-supplies; he cannot help himself from her stores, or sell the grain without her permission, though it is her part to provide him and his guests with food, and to brew the tribute-beer for the chief. In other ways, too, married women can hold property independently to an extent which, within the memory of persons now living, was not recognised by English law.

Even polygamy—that is, where the Arabs have not introduced their degrading harem-slavery—cannot be said to make the lot of African women intolerable. Each wife has her recognised position, and, as a rule, their relations to each other, and of each to the children of the rest, are friendly, and even affectionate. Quarrels and jealousies, of course, do occur, sometimes with tragic results. In the case of a great chief's family they become as famous as other "scandals in high life," and lead, perhaps, to inferences as unjust. Though to our notions such an institution may seem incompatible with any true home life, this is

**A Missionary's
Evidence.**

**Polygamy no
Hindrance to
Happiness.**

by no means the case. Everyone who has been behind the scenes knows that, while perfection cannot be expected of poor human nature, its groundwork, in white and black, is everywhere much the same, and that love between husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters may be, and often is, very real and very devoted. Children are never unwelcome—the more the merrier. Even granting the advantage to parents of having sons to work for them and add to the importance of the village and the tribe, and daughters to bring in property when they marry, we need not reduce all care and kindness to calculation. In any case, surely, this is a better state of things than for the little ones to come unwanted into wretched homes, where the struggle for life is so sharp, and the pressure of discomfort and misery so keen, that there is no love to spare.

The most shocking stories have sometimes been told about the Bushmen — of their cruelty to their children, and utter lack of natural affection. But, hunted and persecuted as these unfortunate people were, it is no wonder if they became somewhat callous: the surprising thing is that there should be any human feeling left among them or other tribes who have constantly suffered from wars and slave-raids. Yet Moffat, after retailing assertions of this sort seemingly from hearsay, when he comes to his own observation, tells of hungry mothers sharing the food given to them among their children, without keeping a mouthful for themselves. Or we might refer to the touching account, in Dr. Stow's "Native Races of South Africa," of 'Korinna and 'Kouke, the old couple who had lost everything—children, kinsfolk, and home—but still clung to each other with undying affection.

Again, it is difficult for those who have grown up in the conventions of a European civilisation to believe that people who go about with little or no clothing, as we understand it, can have any sense of modesty or decorum. Yet, undoubtedly, they have;

and, what is very sad, only too often, as the clothing increases, the modesty diminishes. There may be various reasons for this. One, we cannot doubt, is the loss of self-respect engendered when superior beings tell you how very shocking it is to do what your mother and grandmother and you and all your friends have always thought quite right and proper. Be that as it may, it will be found that, while ideas may differ as to what constitutes the indispensable minimum of clothing, a respectable African woman is quite as particular about that minimum as an English lady would be about hers. The feeling may show itself in what we think grotesque ways: a Herero matron will think it improper to be seen without her leather hat, or a Zulu bride to cross the path to the cattle-kraals; and, so believing, no consideration on earth would induce them to commit the acts in question. The light in which such things are regarded is illustrated by the story, told later on, of Zwide's mother, who is honoured to this day for having saved her son from a wicked and ruinous war by doing such outrageous violence to her own feelings that it was supposed she could only be acting by supernatural inspiration.

It may be thought that the necessarily slight and imperfect account of African life given in the following pages does not sufficiently dwell on the darker side. But it seems to me that the darker side is quite sufficiently emphasised already, and we need to be reminded that there is another. Besides, many, if not most, books on Africa make one see things in a false perspective. One would almost think that there was a witchcraft trial every day and a cannibal feast once a week, and that all the various horrors which have happened at different times and in different places are going on everywhere all the time. But it is a trite reflection that these things get chronicled, but not the uneventful years when people go on quietly marrying, and building huts, and bringing up children, and hoeing their gardens.

Misconceptions of African Life.

The Brighter Side of African Life.

There is a common notion that the negro—I use the word loosely for the dark African in general—is ferociously cruel and blood-thirsty, besides being possessed by an irrational hatred for all white men. There could not be a greater mistake. I do not know how the idea grew up unless it be that

disquisition which is likewise out of place. I will only add that the most disastrous tribal wars are those in which civilised nations have interfered, for their own advantage, on one side or the other.

As for witchcraft, I have not said much about it—not because I wish to minimise



Photograph by G. T. Fernyeough.

NATAL NATIVE GRANDMOTHER GRINDING MEALIES

On a stone beside the hut door. Note the basket (*iqoma*) containing mealies.

Europeans have so often seen him in a state of violent exasperation, without knowing what provoked it. But if we ever hear of "unprovoked aggression" on white people, we may be sure there is some dark story behind it—perhaps so old that those responsible have forgotten all about it. There are plenty of stories to prove it—only this is not the place to narrate them.

But the tribal wars? you will say. And the witchcraft trials?

Well, the first seem to be an experience nations have to go through in their early stages. We ourselves fought each other pretty constantly in these islands when we first settled here. To consider this fully would lead us into a historical

the tragedies that spring from the belief, but because they are more than sufficiently described elsewhere, and because the killing of persons under such circumstances does not necessarily prove men and women to be fiends. The history of our own witch trials shows what even good people may do under the influence of such ideas.

Callous the Africans may be—sometimes, as children are, from want of thought; and if so, the remedy is the same. Deliberately cruel I have never found them, and I do not believe they ever are, unless deliberately brutalised.

Coming now to a detailed survey of South Africa, we will begin with the eastern part, where the natives chiefly belong to the great Zulu race. These

**Tribal Wars
and Witch-
craft.**



Photograph by B. W. Cane, Durban.

NATAL NATIVE WOMEN WORKING IN THE FIELDS.

They are breaking up ground for a new garden. Note the baby on the back of the central one, who is wearing a handkerchief on her head instead of having her hair dressed in a cone as described in the text.

are to be found, not only in the country called Zululand, which lies north of Natal and south of St. Lucia Bay, but in the south and east of what is now the Transvaal, and through the greater part of Natal itself. The people usually known as "Cape Kafirs" (properly Amaxosa) are very closely related to the Zulus; so probably are the Amampondo (Pondos), Abatembu (Tambookies), Pandomisi, Amabaca, and others, though some of these have a considerable proportion of Bushman blood, having intermarried with the earlier inhabitants when they first settled in the country, between two and three hundred years ago. Many individuals in these mixed tribes are distinguished by smaller stature and a different facial type, with high cheek-bones and somewhat oblique eyes. The genuine Bantu, especially the Zulu, are tall and well-made, both men and women. The colour of their skins is brown, varying a good deal in shade—some families, or even individuals in the same family, being darker than others; but none are quite black. Sometimes a person is seen of quite a light yellowish-brown complexion; this (if there is no probability of European descent) is no doubt the result of Hottentot or Bushman blood. The sooty shade often noticed in Africans who come to this country is not natural to them—it is the result of new conditions and, in particular, a disturbed circulation. When ill, or badly frightened, a native turns a dull, slatey-grey, and the appearance of the skin when neglected and unwashed is often lighter than the real colour, because dust shows white instead of black against it.

No one looks well or feels comfortable who does not regularly anoint his or her skin—probably because so much of it is exposed to the air—with oil, or some sort of grease. No doubt there are some who do this instead of washing, but (in my experience) the better sort—like the ancient Greeks—do both.

The illustrations will give a better idea of Zulu women's faces and figures than pages of description.

The old custom was for girls, in their own homes, to wear little except beads till their marriage. This, however, is less usual now, and I doubt whether it is to be seen in Natal, unless in remote kraals. They are most carefully looked after by their mothers and grandmothers, and never go any distance alone. If they go to town—perhaps with mealies or *imfe* for sale on market-day—a dozen or more will start together, accompanied by two or three matrons, and perhaps escorted by a brother or two. On such journeys they usually wear a blanket or a piece of dark-coloured calico, passing under one arm and knotted over the opposite shoulder, and reaching to the knees. Various kinds of skin petticoats, fringed and ornamented with beads, etc., are shown in the illustrations. One kind (called *umbodiya*) is trimmed with brass ornaments round the lower edge.

Little girls are expected to make themselves useful to some extent—they have to mind the baby, or help their mothers at the weeding, or sometimes to stay out by themselves, or with one or two companions, in the mealie garden to scare the birds when the crops are ripening. It cannot be said that they are over-burdened or unkindly treated; but they have their duties and responsibilities till they are about sixteen or seventeen. Then, and for the next two or three years, till they are married, everyone seems to combine to make much of them and give them a good time.

The careful supervision already referred to does not prevent them receiving the attentions of young men, or forming attachments which, as often as not, end in marriage; for the arrangement between the fathers is frequently only the formal sanction of an understanding already reached by the young people themselves. As we have said, hard cases sometimes occur, when selfish and grasping parents force a girl against her will to become the wife of some wealthy or influential old man, just as fashionable mothers have been known to do nearer home, with or without a *bonâ fide* anxiety for their daughter's good.

Zulu Girl Life.

The old Zulu marriage-laws (which Cetshwayo wished to abrogate, as he probably would have done but for the disasters which overtook him and his people) pressed hardly on the girls; but they are no longer in force. They arose from an institution found among many Bantu

The Old Zulu Marriage Laws.

then a capital crime for any of these girls to marry outside the regiment in question. The object of the law seems to have been to secure a healthy population by allowing neither sex to marry too early, and, no doubt, also, to stimulate the energies of the men by making them win their spurs, so to speak, before they could found a family.



Photograph by G. T. Ferneyhough.

NATAL NATIVE WOMAN GRINDING MEALIES.

A mat is spread in front of the stone to catch the meal.

tribes, which was modified by the Zulu kings in the interests of their military organisation. All boys born in the same year or period of two or three years form a class, called in Zulu an *ibuto* or "regiment," and known by some collective name. (Where initiation ceremonies are practised, the "class" includes all those initiated the same year.) Girls are classified in the same way. The regiments of young men, when they reached a sufficient age, were called out by the king, either for war, or (as is still done by chiefs in Natal) to do his work in hoeing, weeding, hut-building, etc. Tshaka introduced a law forbidding them to marry till they had received permission. This was granted by the king to each regiment, as he thought fit, assigning at the same time a junior regiment of girls from which they were to be allowed to choose their wives. It was

This custom, of course, is a thing of the past, and native law, as at present administered in Natal, requires that the chief, before whom marriages are celebrated, should ask the woman formally whether she is entering into the contract by her own choice.

How Zulu Marriages are now Arranged.

When negotiations for a marriage (under native custom) have been settled, the next thing is to decide the amount of *lobola* to be paid to the girl's father. This is not so much a price paid for the bride as a guarantee that the husband is able to maintain her, and a settlement for the benefit of her children. It is usually paid in cattle, which are held in trust by her father or other guardian. Should she misbehave and be divorced, or should she die without children, the cattle are returned to the

husband; but if he illtreats her and she returns home, he forfeits them. They are not always paid over at the wedding, and may be claimed (with all their increase) years afterwards, or even in the next generation; there are endless complications and lawsuits arising from debts that have thus stood over.

a good deal locally, so that it would be impossible to give a full account within the limits of our space. We may just glance at a few of the more interesting points.

Zulu Marriage Ceremonies.

It is quite a recognised thing, though in these days rather the exception than the



Photograph by B. W. Caney, Durban

A ZULU BRIDE HAVING HER HAIR DRESSED BY TWO COMPANIONS.

Skewers are used for pushing the string in and out between the strands. The woman on the right is married and wears a short skin petticoat ornamented with beads, while the unmarried girl on the left (who wears her hair short) has only a bead girdle. The skirt (*umbodiyi*) is often longer than this.

Native women do not feel that they are bought and sold; on the contrary, they would feel slighted if no payment were made at their marriage, as if they had no value in the eyes of parents or husband. The payment of the *lobola* is usually considered the decisive point of the transaction, which may extend over many days, or even weeks. Some, however, say that the knot is really tied by the killing of an ox after the amount of the *lobola* is settled, the meat of which is sent to the bride's escort.

The usages at weddings have been described by several writers, and they vary

rule, for the first overtures to come not merely from the bride's family, but from the girl herself. She goes with one or two companions, but without the knowledge of her relatives, to the man's kraal, where, if his family approve of the alliance, the women raise the shrill cry called *umkosi*. She sits down outside the fence till an ox is driven out and presented to her, the idea being that she is too weak to enter till refreshed with meat; this ceremony is gone through a second and a third time before she enters the hut and consents to eat. After a visit of a week or so, she is escorted home by her lover and his friends, with an instalment



Photograph by B. W. Cancey, Durban.

ZULU GIRLS.

The style of hair-dressing differs from the ordinary married women's coiffures, and may be merely a fancy style. The one on the right wears a necklace composed of bits of a sweet-scented wood, strung alternately with large beads. The brass studs on the thongs round the waist of the left-hand girl are a favourite adornment; the *umbodiya* is often edged with them.

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of the *lobola* cattle. When she gets home she sets to work brewing beer, and gets together some girls to help her carry it to the bridegroom's kraal. I knew a young woman in Natal who had revived this almost obsolete custom for her own benefit and that of the man on whom she had set her affections. Her father, who had opposed their marriage, no longer withheld his consent when she had taken this decisive step.

Mr. Dudley Kidd, who gives a somewhat different account of the above custom, tells us what happens under the embarrassing circumstances of the girl not being wanted. They convey the truth to her delicately by giving her a burning brand, "to show her, symbolically, that there is no fire at the kraal for her to warm herself at."

One account of a custom observed at the actual marriage ceremony is as follows: "The bride is taken by force by the young man from her father's house, where all the girls of the kraal support her, and other young men seize and hold them or keep them back, while she is carried off to her husband's hut. Then, if strong, she will hold out still, perhaps, for two or three days, not yielding without a struggle. If so, the contest is at last brought to a close by some girl of her husband's family managing to strike her slily on the ankle with a rod, when she submits to her fate."

Before marriage girls usually wear their woolly hair short, or plait it into small tails. It is seldom seen plaited as Zatschuke's daughter has it in the illustration on p. 292, unless by those who have been partly Europeanised. The commonest ornament is a little chaplet of beads, like the one in the illustration on p. 280, but sometimes beads, brass rings, etc., are strung on the hair, or plaited into it. The head is frequently shaved for coolness and cleanliness, which is the reason why the hair does not grow long. Pondo girls, however, let it grow, and plait or twist it (with a liberal stiffening of some greasy mixture) into long strands, which recall the *coiffure* of the women in ancient Egyptian paintings.

When a girl is going to be married she lets her hair grow, in preparation for the elaborate structure shown in the photograph (p. 280), which marks her new status. String is woven in and out of the hair, to make a kind of basket-work crown, and, when finished, the whole is plastered over with red ochre. As the hair grows, the whole thing has to be undone and reconstructed from time to time, and gradually assumes the shape of the long spike which enables one to recognise a married woman a mile off. The women of the Amabaca (a tribe living both in Natal and the eastern part of Cape Colony), instead of this, have the front part of the hair twisted into stiffened ringlets, so as to form a thick "fringe."

Each wife has her own hut, in which her children sleep with her as long as they are small. There are separate huts assigned to the boys and girls respectively, as they grow older, which they occupy till they marry and depart to homes of their own. An unmarried woman of mature years is almost unknown and old bachelors are not common. Want of means may delay a man's marriage, but seldom proves a permanent obstacle; if his father or uncle cannot furnish the necessary cattle, and no friend will oblige with a loan, he can always go to service or work in the mines till he has earned them. If a man, not blind, lame, or conspicuously deformed, reaches the age of sixty, or so, without finding a wife, the presumption is that he was in his youth too unpleasant and unamiable for any girl to accept him. To escape such a fate young, and even elderly, men in doubt about their own attractions will take great pains to secure adventitious ones; they have a great belief in "medicines for making the girls like them," and will often ask for them in chemists' shops. Among the plants reputed most efficacious for this purpose is a species of *smilax* called *ibuta*, whose delicate, light green leaves have a silvery sheen; if you meet a man with sprays of it wreathed in his hair, you may be sure he is on his way to the kraal where he is paying his attentions. He is probably

Celibacy a Reproach.



PONDO GIRL : SOUTH AFRICA.
DRAWN BY NORMAN H. HARDY.

wearing, in addition, all he can afford in the way of bead ornaments, and bangles of brass, copper and iron wire on his arms and legs—perhaps also a set of brass rings fastened to his front hair and jingling across his forehead. But, though some giddy girls may be impressed by these adornments, they are not generally regarded with much favour; there is an idea that a man who beautifies himself to excess is likely to take to drink later on and prove a bad husband.

The round huts—"beehive huts" the books call them, but they never struck me as like beehives, being flatter in shape—are ranged round a circle, in the middle of which is the cattle-kraal—that sacred place forbidden to all women. They may not even, as a rule, cross the path by which the cattle leave the enclosure. No woman is supposed to have anything to do with the cattle; the milking is always done by men and boys, and even the milk-sack, which forms part of the household utensils, must not be touched by any woman unless related by blood to the owner of the kraal.

The various prohibitions which have to be observed by women (and sometimes also by men), and designated by the term *hlonipa*, are a very interesting subject of study. Here I have only space to mention one or two besides the above. A man must never meet his mother-in-law face to face; consequently, if he comes upon her by accident, he holds up his shield before his face, or otherwise ostentatiously ignores her presence (see p. 284). No woman is supposed to mention the name of her father, her husband, or the head of her husband's family; and, in the case of a great chief, men too have to observe this restriction. If the name means anything, or resembles a word in common use, that word must be avoided as well. Thus the women of a family whose ancestor was named Mtimkulu, "The Great Tree," could not use the ordinary words meaning "tree" and "great," but had to find or invent others.

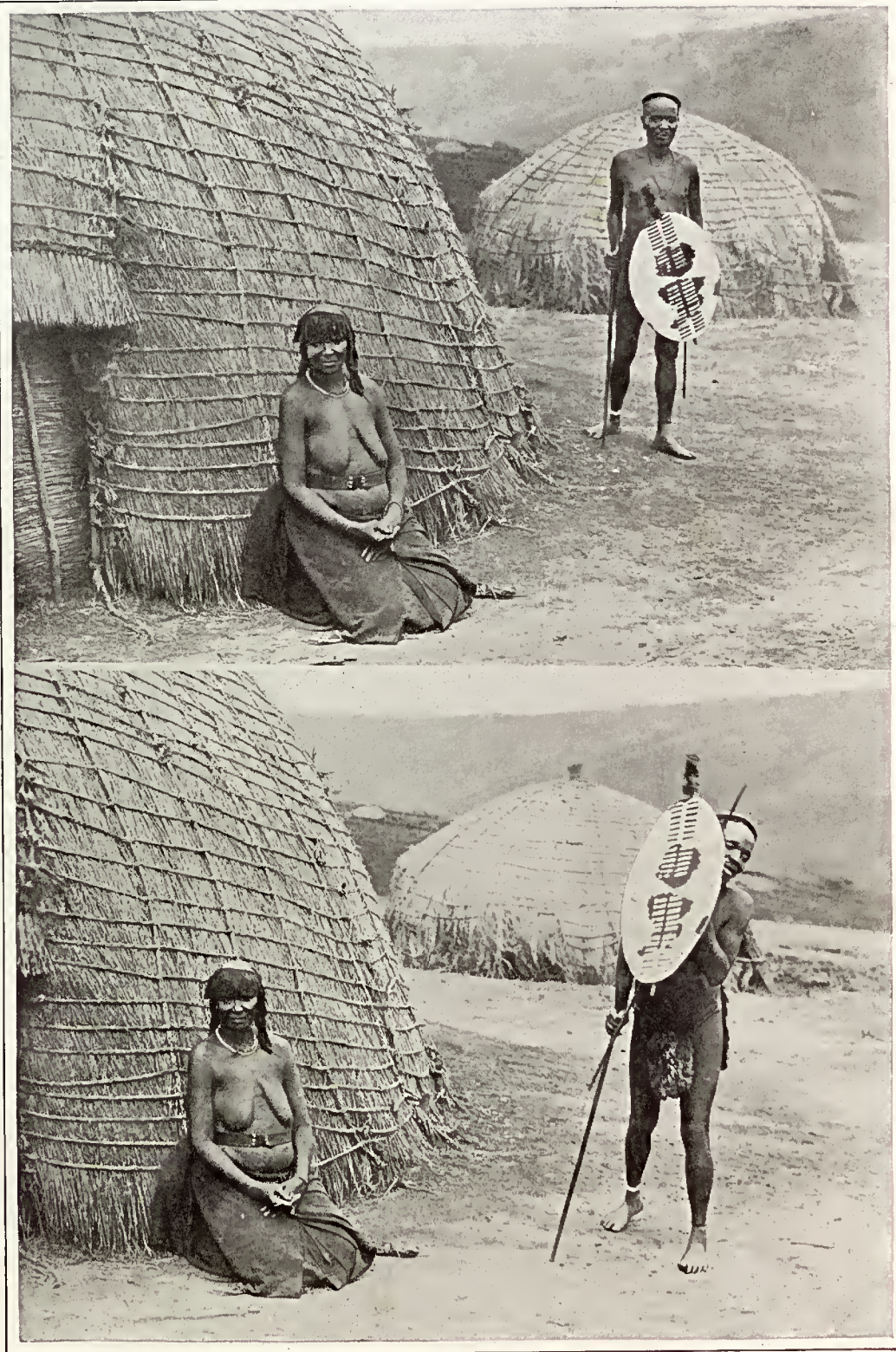
It is this prohibition about the cattle-kraal which gives its point to a remarkable tradition related by the Angoni—a Zulu tribe now settled in Central Africa—a story reminding one of the legend of Lady Godiva. It must have happened about the time of the battle of Waterloo. A chief named Zwide, then living in Zululand, had a quarrel with Zwangendaba (father of the Angoni chief, Mombera, who only died a few years back), attacked him, and was taken prisoner; but Zwangendaba treated him generously, released him, and sent him home with a gift of cattle. But his proud spirit could not endure the humiliation, and he determined on revenge. His mother was grieved at this; in the words of a native narrator, "she reasoned with him, saying, 'My child, shall the Ngoni perish? Did they not send you back, giving you many fat cattle with you? Is it right to go out to war against them?'" But he would not listen, and began mustering his army. Unable to bear the thought that her son could be guilty of such baseness, and dreading the disaster that it was likely to bring on the tribe, she took a desperate step, seemingly with the idea that an outrageous violation of decency would arrest him in his ruinous career, though he would not listen to reason. She went into the cattle-kraal, and, slipping off her skirt, stood there unclothed before all the people. "The soldiers, seeing her thus, wondered greatly, and Zwide also wondered. The soldiers declared it was an omen, that perhaps an ancestral spirit had prompted her to do thus, and they, being afraid to go out, were disbanded forthwith. So Lowawa, Zwide's mother, prevailed." The story is told by Dr. Elmslie in "Among the Wild Ngoni," published some years ago.

Zulu women, one might say, come near to carrying out Ruskin's ideal, in that it is their principal business to provide food for their families. Towards the end of the dry season (about September) they begin breaking up the ground (as shown in the illustration on p. 277) in order to plant "mealies" (maize)

A Zulu Lady
Godiva.

Restrictions
upon Zulu
Women.

Women as
Food-Finders.



Photograph by G. T. Fernyhough.

THE CUSTOM OF "HLONIPA."

The Natal Zulu in the picture, coming unexpectedly upon his mother-in-law (a Baca or Pondo woman by the arrangement of her hair), seated by her hut door, hides his face with his shield till he has passed her.

and "Kafir-corn" or *amabele* (sorghum). Now that ploughs have come into use in many parts of Natal, this heaviest part of the work is often taken off their hands by their husbands, but the hoe is not altogether out of fashion as yet. In December the corn is already fairly high, and everyone's energies are tasked to keep the weeds under—hoeing between the rows every fine day. In this season of the summer rains there is often a forenoon of perfect beauty, with clear sunshine and a wonderful freshness—you can almost see and hear things growing. In the afternoon comes a thunderstorm, and rain for the rest of the day and on into the night. Sometimes it goes on raining for three or four days together, and then, perhaps, by way of compensation, will come a day that is entirely fine. By February, if not earlier, the maize is ripe; the cobs are broken off by hand, piled up in great round baskets, and carried off on the women's heads, to be stored, either in pits underground, or in huge baskets which are kept inside the hut; or, sometimes, in bins like small huts raised on platforms.

The cobs are sometimes boiled or roasted green; but most are allowed to get ripe, and then ground into the meal (*impupu*) which is made into porridge. This and curdled milk (*amasi*) form the chief food of the people. Meat is reserved for somewhat special occasions, though at a chief's kraal it would be cooked every day, and, on the whole, the Zulu eat much more meat than the agricultural tribes farther north. Fresh milk is given only to small children, and not always to them, for babies appear to be weaned on *amasi*, even if not introduced to it at a still earlier period.

Baking is an unknown art in most parts of Bantu Africa; porridge takes the place of bread where cereals are grown; where manioc is the staple food, it is often made into a kind of cake, and roasted in the ashes; and the same thing is done on the Zambesi with bananas. The Natal natives also make a kind of bread (*isinkwa*) out of green mealies. Meat is either roasted (usually in the ashes) or boiled—formerly in a home-made earthen pot, nowadays very often

in the three-legged iron ones bought at the "Kafir stores," or even in an ordinary saucepan like the one in which the woman in the illustration is bringing the pig his supper of chopped pumpkin (p. 286). Pigs are, comparatively speaking, an innovation, and a man advanced enough to keep them would see nothing out of the way in his wife's feeding them, though he would not dream of letting her attend to the cows. The fowls, of which there are any number scratching about between the huts, and, as likely as not, roosting in them at night, belong more particularly to the women. They are kept in order to kill one occasionally for the pot, or for sale—not for the eggs, which natives seldom eat: they are considered especially bad for young people.

Though the women do not bake, they brew, and that pretty extensively. There are several kinds, or rather degrees, of beer, for it is all made from *amabele*, and only varies in strength.

It is usually more like gruel than what we understand by beer; in fact, it is very nutritious, and the people say of it that "it is both food and drink." The best kind is of a pinky terra-cotta colour and slightly effervescent; it has (when one is used to it) a not unpleasant acid taste, and is very refreshing, but (like the Mexican *pulque*) one needs educating up to it. The inferior quality is grey, and looks much like soapy water. The difference, no doubt, arises from the greater or less degree of care and cleanliness with which it is made and strained through a long funnel of neatly-woven grass; certain herbs are also sometimes added, to improve the flavour or assist the fermentation. It is kept in earthen jars, or calabashes, or in baskets so closely woven as to hold liquid quite as well as jars, which they resemble in shape. Great quantities of beer are consumed at weddings, when it too often happens that the latter end of a feast is the beginning of a fray. It is only right to say, however, that comparatively little harm would be done by *utshwala*, were it not that it is nowadays frequently adulterated with spirits, etc.

When a girl has visited her future husband's kraal, in accordance with the custom previously referred to, she sends on some of her companions, a few days after returning home, with pots of *utshwala*. Such a party (only

skin petticoat of the married women, reaching from the armpits to the knees. A man makes this garment for his wife; it is a work of time and patience to prepare the skin. This is about the utmost that is done in the way of tailoring or dress-making, except by women who have learnt to sew at the Mission School and taken to the wearing of print dresses.

**Zulu
Tailor-made
Costumes.**

Sometimes the master of the house is seen devoting his energies to a goat-skin pegged out on the ground before him, which he will spend some weeks in scraping and rubbing and anointing with fat. This is to make the *imbeleko*, or cradle, if we may call it so, in which a baby is carried about on its mother's back, so as to leave her hands free for work. The skin is that of the goat killed for the doctor, whom the father consults on the important occasion of an increase in his family. The baby soon learns to hold on when necessary; but its attitudes seem very casual sometimes—especially when it is supported, not by the skin, but in the looser folds of its mother's blanket.

It is part of women's work to fetch water and firewood; they will walk miles with their little axes to bring home a bundle of the latter, and sometimes they will cut down and trim a suitable sapling to make a post for the hut. But the building of the hut is chiefly men's work. They dig the holes and set up the posts, fix the arched wattles in the ground, plant a second set crossing the first so as to make a lattice-work, and then tie all the intersections with bark-string. Then the women come and do the thatching, and nothing could be neater or prettier than a newly-finished hut, with the thatch accurately and smoothly fixed, and netted over with plaited grass ropes. The door is so low that you have to go down on hands and knees to enter; there are no windows and no chimney; the smoke has to find its way out through the thatch. This, however, is less dreadful

**Women as
House-
builders:**



Photograph by F. E. Colenso.

A NATAL WOMAN WITH BABY.

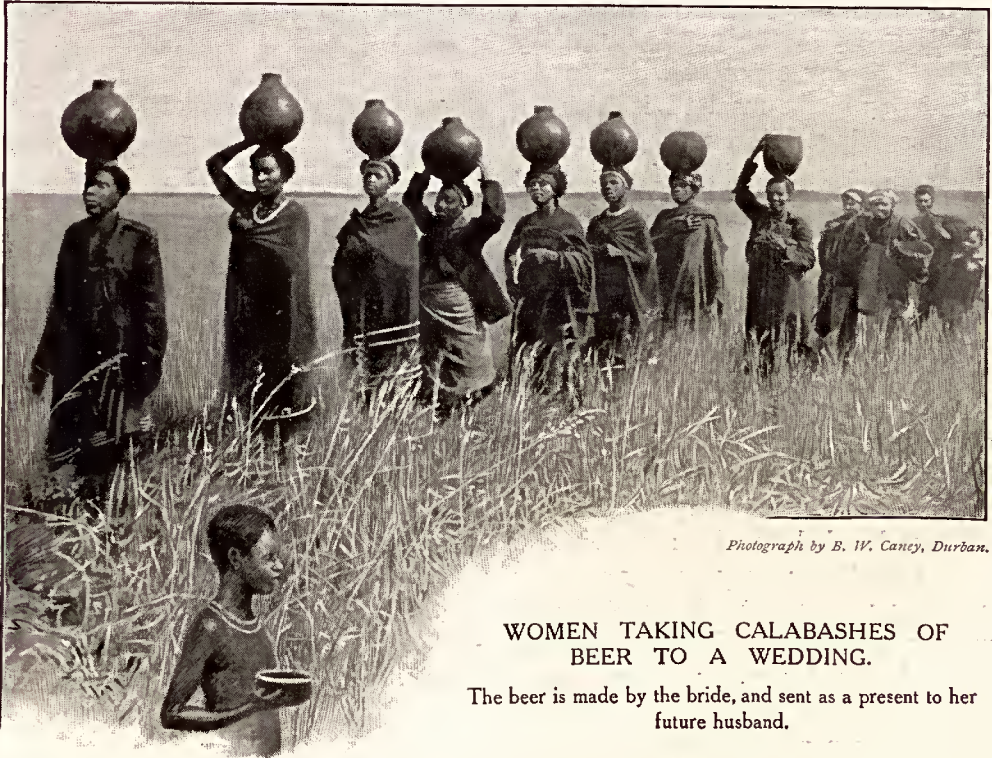
The saucepan contains chopped pumpkin—food for the pig. Notice the baby's hair, with beads strung on some of the tufts; also an unfinished hut in the background. The photograph was taken near Bishopstowe.

in this case consisting of matrons) is shown in the photograph on the opposite page.

Two of these women present a somewhat grotesque appearance in white men's coats, a popular article of dress in the cold weather, irrespective of sex—policemen's cast-off tunics or old military great-coats being valued, when procurable, for their warmth and durability. The second and third in the procession, on the other hand, are wearing the native cloak made from a cow-hide, scraped and rubbed till it is as soft as a glove. Under this is worn the characteristic

than it sounds, for (at least in my experience) the smoke does not trouble you if you do in Rome as the Romans do—*viz.*, sit on the floor. The latter is of beaten earth, very hard and smooth, and kept cool and clean (extraordinary as this may sound to anyone who has never seen it) by being fre-

yard in front, formed by a high reed fence which screens the door from the prevailing wind and shelters the cooking-fire. The entrance is close to the hut on the less windy side. The hut can be closed with a wooden door at night, or when the inmates are away. It is the custom for anyone who calls in the



Photograph by E. W. Caney, Durban.

WOMEN TAKING CALABASHES OF BEER TO A WEDDING.

The beer is made by the bride, and sent as a present to her future husband.

quently smeared with a mixture of cow dung and water, which leaves a light greenish deposit. The smearing (called *ukusinda*) is done in a sort of pattern—as Scottish housewives ornament their stone floors, after scrubbing, with “cam” or whiting, in scrolls and volutes.

The fireplace is a round depression in the middle of the floor, with the earth banked up in a ledge round it. The furniture consists chiefly of mats for sleeping or sitting on, pots and pans, baskets of all sorts, wooden bowls and dishes, milk and beer vessels, and such like. Sometimes you may see a pot on the fire; but, as a rule, the cooking, except in wet weather, is done out of doors. The hut is really only a place to sleep in, and take shelter from the rain.

Most huts have a little semi-circular court-

owner's absence to make some sort of mark (like the Gypsy *patteran*) to show that he has been there, and the word for this kind of mark (*incwadi*) is that now used for a message, letter or book.

Of course, many natives now live in square houses after the European pattern, and sometimes very good ones; but they are usually wattle and daub erections, of a very transitional character, and on a par with the frightful second-hand clothes which render many otherwise decent and worthy persons such distressing spectacles. Women, however, look well in simple, tolerably well-made print dresses, and the soft silk handkerchiefs which they are fond of wearing on their heads: their choice of colours, as a rule, shows a strikingly good taste.

The cooking done at a native kraal is not of a very elaborate character. We have already spoken of the meat and beer; sour milk (*amasi*) is produced by pouring the day's milk

**Zulu
Cookery.**

into a vessel (among the Pondos and Xosas, a skin bag) kept for the purpose, which has a little of the old milk left in it—or milking into a pail with a little whey at the bottom. Porridge is made in the most elementary fashion by bringing a pot of water to the boil and stirring in the meal till it thickens, carefully crushing all lumps with the “spurtle” against the side of the pot; it is then considered ready. It is turned out into a wooden dish, and eaten with the fingers; or sometimes a number of people sit round the pot and eat out of it with spoons—iron ones, which are fairly common now, and can be bought at all the traders' stores. Native spoons are made of wood, and often very neatly carved; they are used for eating *amasi*.

Meat is brought in on a wooden dish and portions handed round on grass mats, which serve as plates; they are very neatly and strongly woven out of the stalks of the *cyperus* rush. Gourds are used as dippers or ladles for water or beer, and small ones as drinking-cups.

Men and women never eat together; the latter, after setting a meal before the men, either wait and eat what is left, or cook for themselves and the smaller children at some other time. It should have been mentioned, by the bye, when speaking of *hlonipa*, that the *right* side of the hut, as you enter, is the men's side, the left the women's. A man's sister is allowed to cross to the right side, but not his wife—at any rate, not during the first years of her marriage. When she is the mother of a grown-up family the restriction no longer holds. This is only one out of many rules which have to be observed by young married women; but the subject is too wide a one to discuss here.

Among the incidental occupations of women is the making of mats and baskets, in which some of them show great skill.

Some tribes north of the Zambesi, as we shall see, consider this exclusively men's work, while pottery is entirely the women's affair, as is the case almost everywhere among the Bantu, except in some places where the men smoke pipes with clay bowls, which they model and bake themselves.

**Zulu
Basket-work.**

There are many different kinds of baskets—some shown in the illustrations—of the most various shapes and uses. Large round ones, worked in coils of grass (something after the manner of our old-fashioned straw beehives), are used for bringing home the maize at harvest time. Some are almost globular, with a cover, and woven so closely that they will hold liquids. These are sometimes used for carrying beer. Others, fitted with lids, are used for storing food—or valuables. Each kind has its own name, but there is not, as far as I can make out, any word which means a basket in general. The English word “basket” is used (in the form *ubaskidi*), but it means “any basket not of native make,” and in particular a basket with a handle, which native ones never have—they are always carried on the head, or else on the flat of the hand.

The late Queen Victoria, in a conversation with Cetshwayo (during his visit to England in 1882) expressed her interest in this industry of the Zulu women. On his return to his own country, he told his family that “the Queen desired to see a specimen of every kind of basket made by the Zulus”—for so he had understood her remark as interpreted to him. His mother and his wives at once set to work, using their best skill; but the King was prevented by the Colonial authorities from sending envoys to England, as he wished to do, and the greater part of the baskets themselves perished in the burnings of kraals which were all too frequent in the next few sorely troubled years. Some, however, were saved, and preserved with religious care, even after Cetshwayo's death, by the royal women, in the hope that they might yet find opportunity to make their offering to “the Great Inkosikazi, our Mother.” Finally, in 1890, when Miss Colenso came to England, to

plead the cause of the exiled Zulu chiefs, the pathetic little gift was entrusted to her, and, an opportunity having been found of explaining the matter to the Queen, it was presented and accepted.

Widows may either marry the late husband's brother—in
Treatment of Widows, which case any children

born are counted as belonging to the deceased—or they return to their father's house, or live with one of their sons. The latter must often happen, judging by the number of kraals where there is a grandmother—generally a useful and cheerful person, who helps to grind the corn and nurse the babies, and, according to the immemorial wont of grandmothers, neutralises the efforts of the parents to bring up their children with wholesome severity. It must be from a very partial view of the case that one writer asserts the lot of old women in South Africa to be so miserable as to leave them no refuge but suicide. It certainly is

not the rule in Natal, and on the Zambesi and Shiré, where I was assured that "the Kafirs" were in the habit of poisoning off the aged, I never found this statement borne out by any lack of grey heads in the villages. I do not know what foundation there may ever have been for this persistent tradition; but I can safely say it has none among the people I know.

Professional women are not unknown among the Zulu. The prophetess (*isanusi*)

is a person of great consideration, and the herb-doctor (*inyanga yemiti*) may be either a man or a woman. These practitioners often have a really useful knowledge of medicinal



Photograph by Ravenscroft.

KAFIR WOMAN BAKING BREAD.

Her dress and the mud buildings roofed with corrugated iron are typical of a town location.

herbs, handed down in their families. But they are not now allowed to practise without a licence.

Doctors and Witches.

The ordinary diviner, or witch-doctor, is not the same as the prophet or prophetess, though sometimes, I believe, the two callings may be united in the same person. The diviner discovers lost property, and finds out the cause of illness by "throwing the bones" (casting lots), or by various methods of "smelling out," which chiefly reduce them-



Photograph by T. Lindsay Fairclough.

A ZULU LADY DOCTOR OF SOME RENOWN, PRACTISING IN BASUTO-LAND.

selves to a habit of observation and a faculty of putting two and two together. While, no doubt, there is a great deal of trickery in the practice of these diviners, they are frequently (as the Rev. Duff Macdonald noticed in the case of the Yaos) shrewd and well-informed men, who give sound advice according to their lights, and are listened to with respect; whereas their opinion, if given on its own merits, and unassisted by hocus-pocus, would count for little or nothing. At the same time, it is probable that many of them possess a certain hypnotic power, and are subject to trances. The circumstance that a man or woman often develops

the gift of prophecy after a serious illness points in the same direction.

The "doctor" in the illustration is a Zulu woman, said to be of considerable standing among the Basuto,* in whose country she practices. She is wearing a large collection of charms, and also, probably, though these are not conspicuous, a number of small bags containing real medicines. The string of bead-like objects hanging below the rest on her right side, which looks something like a rosary, are the "bones" used for divining. They consist of the knuckle-bones of goats and sheep, and some other animals, with other objects, each of which has a certain meaning assigned to it; and when they are shaken up and thrown down, their rela-

* People usually say "a Basuto," but this is much as if we should say "an English." The singular is *Mosuto*, but it is best, when using tribal names in English, to drop the prefix, and say "a Zulu," "a Yao," etc.



Photograph by B. W. Coney, Durban.

ZULU WOMAN, WITH GOURD.

Notice the longer skin petticoat, with many rows of beads.

tive position one to another is interpreted according to the rules which have to be learnt by every one initiated into the profession. If the doctor can make nothing of the dice as they have fallen, there is nothing for it but to throw them again. The wire bangles visible among the doctor's outfit have probably been received as fees from patients—that is, if the Suto practice coincides with that in vogue about Delagoa Bay—though not directly by the present wearer. There (among the Baronga) the young man still in the medical-student stage; who has begun to practise, but not yet, so to say, taken his degree, is not allowed to receive fees in money, but only these bangles, which he fastens to the basket containing his dice, and hands over to his instructor on passing the final examination. This lady received most of her fees in cattle.

The objects on the "doctor's" head are the gall-bladders of goats which have been killed for her in the course of consultation. This ceremony is a necessary part of medical treatment for all who can afford it, and the meat is the physician's perquisite. The more bladders the latter has in his hair the greater his reputation, for it is not likely that a family will call in a man for whom one or more animals will have to be slaughtered unless they feel some confidence in his ability.

"In olden times," says Mr. H. E. Mabile,* "the doctor received no payment unless his patient got better. But now things have greatly altered, and the doctor is paid even for 'opening his bag' of drugs—that is, before he has done anything."

* "Journal of the African Society," No. xx., p. 353.

II

The Basuto—Women Agriculturists—Basuto Huts—Basuto "Schools" for Girls—Basuto Marriage Customs—A Basuto National Heroine—The Hottentots—The Bushmen—Nama Women and their Duties—Nama Marriage Customs—The Hill Damaras—The Herero—Herero Costume and Ornaments—The Sacred Fire of the Herero—Herero Marriage Customs—Herero Birth Customs—Childhood among the Herero—Agricultural Tribes—The Barotse—A Barotse Legend—Women Chiefs—The Matabele—Anyanja—"Calicoes"—Maize and its Uses—Anyanja Ornaments—Yao Women

THE Basuto are a branch of the Bechuana, which name includes a vast number of tribes, extending from the Drakensberg and the Orange River more or less to the Zambesi.

The Basuto. Most of these tribes are rather agricultural than pastoral. "The intense love of agricultural pursuits," says the late Dr. Stow, "formed such a striking trait in the occupations of the Bachoana and Basuto tribes that the early travellers were filled with admiration and astonishment at the wonderful proofs of industry which the extent of the cultivated land surrounding their great towns exhibited. Some of the latter contained . . . eight to ten thousand inhabitants. . . . At the time of

Mr. Campbell's visit to Lithako, the great place of the Batlapin, he remarks that on approaching the town they passed through extensive cornfields spreading out on both sides of the road. Even the Hottentots who accompanied him were amazed at the extent of land under cultivation, never having seen so much before in one place."*

In tribes like these, as has already been mentioned, the cultivation of the ground is not entirely left to the women. This does not appear from Moffat's account of the Batlapin tribe of Bechuana, among whom he lived at Kuruman; but at the time of which he speaks—about 1821—it would seem as if the tribes had been unsettled by recent wars and migrations, and it comes out

* "Native Races of South Africa," p. 417.

incidentally that the men were often engaged in war and hunting. Game was then so abundant—though now almost extinct in that part of the country—that hunting was really a serious contribution to the support of a man's family.

Basutoland proper, it may not be out of

and women work hard in the fields during the ploughing and harvest seasons." He

Women Agri- adds that ploughs are coming
culturists. more and more into use, and

that it is a common thing for a girl to refuse a man because he has no plough. The wheat harvest is at midsummer



Photograph by F. E. Colenso.

A NATAL FAMILY GROUP TAKEN AT A KRAAL NEAR BISHOPSTOWE.

The father, seen on the right, is Zatshuke, a son of the late Hlubi chief Langalibalele.

place to remind the reader, lies west of Natal and north of the eastern districts of Cape Colony, and is enclosed between the Drakensberg Mountains, the Orange River, and the Caledon. The Basuto in some respects occupy a middle position between the Zulu and the northern tribes; they keep more cattle than the latter, and grow more corn than the former. They raise for their own food *amiabele* and maize, chiefly the first, and wheat, which the missionaries have taught them to grow, for sale to traders.

Canon Widdicombe says: "The field-work was formerly almost entirely performed by the women, but since the introduction of Christianity into the country the men have gradually learnt to take their share in it; and at the present time both men

(January); the maize and millet are reaped in June and July. The same writer describes the women's work at harvest time.

"A woman will leave her home a few minutes after dawn, carrying her infant on her back, and a large *seruto*, a basin-shaped basket,* on her head. She will trudge along bravely and patiently until she reaches her corn patch, at perhaps four or five, or even seven or eight, miles distance. . . . She will work with scarcely an interval of rest until the long, slanting rays of the declining sun warn her to return home. Then she piles her basket to the brim with maize cobs or bunches of millet, and with her little one still at her back, cooing out in the prettiest and most engaging way its baby accents, she will plod diligently homeward. Ar-

* Similar to the one in the illustration on p. 276.



Photograph by Ravenscroft.

RED KAFIRS, KING WILLIAM'S TOWN.

"Red" is a common Colonial designation for the "raw" or "kraal" natives, from the red ochre with which (mixed with grease) they anoint their skins and hair.

rived at her cabin, she will at once commence the preparation of the family meal, having herself partaken of nothing but a cup of *leting* (light beer) before starting for the harvest field, and a mouthful or two of *bogobe* (porridge) during the whole day."

Probably the woman so described would be surprised to find herself an object of compassion. For her it is all in the day's work, and it must be remembered that her indoor duties, apart from the cooking, are by no means heavy. There might be two opinions as to the desirability of providing her with a house which will take all her time and strength to keep clean, and rigidly confining her within it.

The Suto huts are constructed on a different plan from the Zulu ones—at least, some of them; for here, too, **Basuto Huts.** we have a transition state of things. The northern Bechuana tribes, like most of those beyond the Zambesi, build a circular enclosure of upright posts, filling in the spaces between them with grass, and cover it with a conical thatched roof. Some huts of this description—only that the walls are here constructed of sods—are found in Basutoland; others are of the Zulu pattern already described.

The Basuto, as well as most Bantu tribes of Cape Colony, have the institution of the *bale* (or *boyale*) called by the Colonists "school," for **Basuto "Schools" for Girls.** girls entering on womanhood.

All those of the same age in the neighbourhood are "isolated for one month in a hut set apart for the purpose and only the instructresses and the old women in the village are allowed access to them. At the end of the month they are daubed with white clay from head to foot, and dressed in aprons of goatskin, with a coil of grass rope round the waist." The old women are supposed to drill them in all the duties of married life. After the first month they are allowed to go about accompanied by one of the old women, and wearing a kind of veil made of bits of reed. Any-one whom they meet is bound to give them

anything they may ask for. The period of seclusion lasts five or six months. The Zulus do not observe this custom, but celebrate the "coming out" of a girl as a family affair.

The marriage customs, including the *lobola* (here called *bohali*), are much the same as among the Zulu, though **Basuto Marriage Customs.** the details differ, and some of them are very curious. Thus, when a young man wishes to marry, he signifies the same, not by wearing smilax in his hair, but by getting up early and driving the cows out of the kraal, letting the calves suck them, instead of keeping them separate as usual. His parents (if, as is probably the case, they have, like Irish peasants, arranged the match long ago), seeing this, send off a messenger with a cow to the girl's father. He signifies his errand—not, indeed, in dumb show, but in symbolic language, saying he is come to ask for a calabash of water. If both father and mother consent—for it is always recognised that either party may have had reason to change their minds—the messenger is anointed with mutton-fat. If he does not meet with this attention, no further explanations are needed; he goes home and reports that "the incident is closed."

The usual amount paid by the bridegroom is twenty head of cattle, perhaps ten sheep or goats, and a horse. At the time of the marriage, he and his friends drive the animals over to the bride's village, and, before they come in sight of it, two bullocks are sent on in advance, one for each of her parents. These furnish the occasion for the romping which, all the world over, and even to this day in the less sophisticated parts of Europe, seems to be considered an essential part of wedding festivities. Here it takes the form of a contest between the women of the village and the men who have brought the cattle, the former, armed with long sticks, trying to prevent the animals from entering the cattle-kraal, while the men do their best to drive them in. The bride's relations, by the bye, so far from trying to outshine their guests in the splendour of

their apparel, "are dressed in rags, which means that the other party must enrich them"; and the other party, as they arrive, walk in front of the cattle to frustrate premature attempts at counting them. The haggling that goes on before everything is satisfactorily concluded is a sort of "signing the settlements" carried out in a more primitive way. A full description of the proceedings is given by Mr. Mabile in the paper already quoted.

Suto traditions mention at least one remarkable woman—the chieftainess Mo-

**A Basuto
National
Heroine.**

kwatsi, commonly called Mantatisi. She was the wife of the Batlokwa chief Mokotyo, who died in 1819 or 1820, when his eldest son was still a child. It was the time of what the Basuto call the *Difakane*—not so much an ordinary war as a series of migrations, in which each tribe, displaced by another pressing on it from behind, is forced to overrun its neighbours in front. Moffat, in his "Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa" gives an appalling account of the miseries of this time, and the terror spread by the invading hosts—as they were supposed to be, though they suffered as much as the invaded. But Mantatisi somehow piloted her people through the worst of their troubles, and left her son, Sikonyela, safely established in the chieftainship. She seems to have died about 1830. "When she was first brought to Mokotyo she was a tall, slim girl with an exceptionally fair skin, and very handsome. . . . It is estimated that she was about forty years old when Mokotyo died, and the weight of chieftainship fell upon her. She was then a large, strong woman, inclined to stoutness, as is usual with healthy native women of middle age. She used to sit in court with the men, on the biggest stone in the circle, hear cases, and discuss politics; and the policy of the tribe during her regency was conducted by her alone. She did not lead the fighting men to battle, but while the tactics were those of the commander, the strategy was hers. She was affable and sociable, and very popular with all her people."

On one occasion, during a war with Pakadita's tribe of Zulu, she had sent the fighting men to a distance for supplies of grain. While they were gone she saw the enemy approaching, and quickly collected the cattle on the top of a steep rise, making the women and taller children stand in front of them. The Zulu, thinking, as they espied them in the distance, that it was the warriors, on whose absence they were reckoning, drawn up in battle array to receive them, retreated, and the Batlokwa were safe.*

Another Suto woman of whom one would like to know more was Maliepollo, widow of Mohlomi, a son of the Kwená chief Monyane. This Mohlomi must have been a truly remarkable man. He was a great doctor, cared nothing for the chieftainship, and hated war. He spent much of his life in travelling about to seek knowledge, and, wherever he went, he tried to induce people to live in peace. Moshesh, the great chief of the Basuto, who was related to him, owed much to his teaching and advice. He died in or about 1816. Maliepollo, his youngest and favourite wife, came, in the course of years, to Grahamstown, where she listened to the missionaries and became a Christian in her old age. The Basuto say that she sent a message to Moshesh to advise him to ask the "teachers" to settle in his country.

The Bantu are not the aboriginal inhabitants of South Africa; they seem only to have reached the eastern part of what is now Cape Colony towards the end of the seventeenth century. When Van Riebeeck and the first Dutch settlers landed at the Cape in 1652, they found the country occupied by yellow-skinned people, with high cheekbones, oblique eyes, and woolly hair growing in separate tufts on the scalp; who wandered about with immense herds of cattle, and lived in huts made of rush mats, which could easily be taken down and put up again. The name of "Hottentots," which the

* "Basuto Traditions, Compiled from Native Sources," by J. C. Macgregor, Assistant Commissioner, Leribe.

Dutch gave to these natives was derived from the uncouth sounds of their language, which it was declared impossible for a white man to learn—"it was nothing but *Hot* and *Tot*." Those still living at the Cape have quite forgotten the tongue of their forefathers, and speak Dutch, or rather that form of it known as "Taal" or "Afrikaans." The Griquas, who at one time occupied what is now the Kimberley district, are Dutch and Hottentot half-castes, or at least descended from such. The Mohammedan Malays of Cape Town are the descendants of slaves brought from Batavia by the Netherlands East India Company. They know no language but Cape Dutch, and sometimes English; but they keep up the observances of their religion, and even make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Other slaves were imported from Ceylon, Mozambique, and the Guinea Coast. From all these different elements is compounded that large population known to-day as "the coloured people."

Further up country we find two genuine and tolerably unimixed "Hottentot" tribes—the Kora (Korannas), and the Nama or Namaqua. The Nama have given their name to the tracts of more or less desert country known as Great and Little Namaqualand—the former lying beyond the Orange River in the German Colony. Their languages, which are of a totally different character from the Bantu, are very much alike, so that Nama and Kora can readily understand one another.

The Nama in old times extended much further south than they are now to be found, as they were neighbours to the Grigriqua and Cochoqua tribes, with whom Van Riebeeck first came in contact. All

these tribes seem to have had much the same character, manners and customs, though the Dutch thought the Nama were far bigger than those nearer the Cape.

The Hottentots, however, were at that time comparatively recent arrivals in the country. The real aborigines were the Bushmen, who have now almost disappeared from the Colony, though there are still some to be found in Bechuanaland and the Kalahari. The common idea of the Bushmen, as a miserable and degraded people, without government, social organisation, or even family ties, is an erroneous one, derived from the fact that they only became

known to Europeans as the scattered and persecuted remnants of a once flourishing people. There were several large tribes under powerful chiefs, each of whom lived in or near the "Great Cave," with the tribal token painted on its walls, where the people assembled on important occasions. They lived by hunting, and had no need to do anything else, as the country swarmed with game; the nearest they ever got to agriculture was collecting the seeds of wild grasses, which the women pounded in mortars hollowed out of the rock. These are still to be found in some parts of the Orange Colony. They must have cost years of labour to make, as they were gradually chipped out



A NAMA GIRL.
A convert of the Rhenish (German
Lutheran) Mission.

with a hard piece of stone. The late Dr. Stow also saw the pegs which the Bushmen had driven into the face of a steep cliff, to enable them to climb up and take the wild bees' nests. Other traces which have been

in existence since the European occupation, if not now remaining, are the cairns they piled up on graves, and the ruins of stone fences (sometimes miles in length) intended for driving the game into pitfalls.

Though the Bushmen, as such, have disappeared from the country, some of them became incorporated with the Bechuana and "Kafir" tribes, so that many of their descendants still remain. It even seems probable that there is, in some parts, a considerable Bushman substratum in the Bantu population, as in the western districts of British Central Africa.

The Hottentots, as a whole, are a pastoral people, but those within the Colony were deprived of their cattle, and passed through a period of serfage, and at the present day most of them work for other people—the men usually as herdsmen or waggon-drivers. They are famous for their power of managing animals, and the "boy" who knows his work drives his team of oxen chiefly by conversing with them.

The Nama, in their original state (for many have embraced Christianity and settled at the stations of the German missionaries) live probably in much the same way as the Cape Hottentots did in the seventeenth century. They are nomads, moving from place to place with their cattle, sheep, and goats, encamping wherever they can find grass and water, and moving on when these are exhausted. It must be confessed, however, that for

many years, at any rate, the greater number of the Nama cattle were those they "lifted" from the Herero, with whom they were continually at war. This is now at an end, and they have also lost most of their pos-

sessions; legitimate or otherwise. They are not a strong people, nor fitted for continuous hard work, and it does not seem clear, at the moment, what will become of them.

Another of their occupations is making the rush mats of which their portable huts are constructed. This is always going on, more or less, for a thrifty housewife likes to have spare mats in stock—either to replace any which may be worn out, or for sale to white traders. If a

daughter is going to be married, extra production is necessitated, and the whole household sets to work. First, the rushes have to be collected, which may take some weeks; then they are soaked, cut into lengths, and strung together by means of an iron needle about half a yard long. When finished, each mat is about three or four yards long by one yard wide. The string with which they are sewn is made from the inner bark of the acacia, which yields our gum-arabic. The collection of this material is a combination of duty and pleasure, for the bark, which contains a sweet juice, is prepared for use by chewing. When it has sufficiently yielded up its sweetness, the fibre is teased out and twisted into string.

An ordinary house requires from fifteen to twenty mats. The men collect about a dozen long, slender wands of a particular kind of tough wood, sharpen them at one



HILL DAMARA GIRLS, AT A RHENISH MISSION STATION.

end, and bend them by drying one side over the fire. After tracing a circle on the ground, they make as many holes as they need, insert the pointed ends of the sticks, and tie the others together at the top. The framework is now ready, and the women can come and tie on the mats.

Such a hut may be four yards across and six or seven feet high. If more air is needed, it is easy to roll up the mats at the bottom. If it rains (not a common occurrence in Namaqualand) the rushes swell and become water-tight, and a trench is dug round the hut to let the wet run away. The front door faces the east, and is provided with a curtain of tanned cowhide, and the floor is covered with skins. There is a smaller entrance at the back of the hut, used chiefly by the servants, if any. The fire is in the front, between the centre and the entrance. At the back of the hut is a stage of poles, with several shelves, on which various household goods are kept—mats, skins, bundles of rushes, saddles, calabashes, milk-pails, pots, and—nowadays—the kettle for making coffee. There is also, probably, a green-painted wooden box, containing the more precious possessions of the family.

Most Nama now wear more or less of European clothing, some of it bought ready-made from traders, and some made by the women at home. They are also very clever in sewing *karosses* (skin rugs), either for their own use or for sale.

When a Nama marries he makes no payment to the bride's family as the Bantu do,

Nama Marriage Customs. but it is considered very mean if his relations do not supply several cows to be killed for the wedding feast. The bride brings with

her a dowry consisting of cattle, and the mat-hut aforesaid, which her mother has had erected in time for the couple to occupy on the wedding-day. At the same time, she gives her daughter a handmaid—a Hill Damara girl, or perhaps a Nama orphan, who is thus provided with a home. The marriage ceremony is performed by the chief, who is said to address the bridegroom

to the following effect : “ You may consider ——— as your wife, but take good care of her. If she will not obey you, you must not strike her so as to disfigure her ; if you can do nothing with her, just bring her back, but don't beat her.” Our informant adds, however, that this admonition is in most cases a dead letter. In that case it is difficult to understand the assertion of another writer that the Nama woman is much better off than the Zulu, whose family have in the *lobola* cattle a guarantee against ill-usage of her. He points out, however, that she is the owner of the house, which ought to give her some advantage ; though we do not learn that she is in the habit of pulling it down and moving on with it when the husband proves refractory.

The Hill Damara just mentioned are a curious people, of whom not very much is known. They are supposed to

The Hill Damara. number about 30,000, and live scattered in the mountainous parts of Hereroland. A small proportion of them have been collected together and induced to settle near the Okombahe mission station ; but till recently they have led a miserable life, enslaved and oppressed by Nama and Herero, and sometimes also by white settlers. They speak the same language as the Nama, but are certainly of a different race, and are also distinct from both the Herero and the Bushmen. They are black, or nearly so, though, according to a German missionary, Herr Irle, they appear, as a rule, of an ashy grey, for want of either washing in water or anointing themselves with fat. They live chiefly on what the Boers call *veldkost*—i.e., anything that may be picked up on the veldt or in the bush—wild bulbs, roots of grass, honey, locusts, mice, lizards, caterpillars, the gum of trees, etc. In good years they dig up huge quantities of the edible bulbs (*uintjes*, or “ little onions,” in Dutch) and sell them to the Herero for sheep and goatskins. They make pots in a very primitive way, which is found among some other African tribes as well, though the art is more advanced among most of the Bantu. They pinch the clay

into a long, thin roll, like a rope, and coil it round till the pot is finished. They also make some attempt at cultivating the ground, which neither Nama nor Herero do. "Wherever a secure spot offers suitable soil and water for a small garden, they take advantage of the situation and plant tobacco, *dacha* (hemp), pumpkins, and melons." *

The Herero are a finer race than either of the two

last mentioned,

The Herero. and have many points in common with the Zulu, though, again, many of their ideas and customs differ widely. They are called by the Colonists "Damara," but their name for themselves is Ova-herero; the prefix *ova* corresponding to *aba*, *ba*, *wa*, or *a* in the names of other tribes—e.g., Abatembu, Basutu, Wayao, Anyanja. Not much has been heard of them in England, except for the war carried on with them for some years by the Germans. Into the rights and wrongs of that war I cannot enter here. Suffice it to say that the

Germans have not, as a rule, been fortunate in their Colonial undertakings, and that the Herero have suffered terribly—quite out of proportion to their original offence—whatever that may have been.

Physically, they are a tall, finely-built race, who often have oval faces and almost

European features. They chip out a Λ -shaped gap between the two upper front teeth.

Women and girls shave their heads except for a tuft in the middle of the scalp, to which they fasten little strings adorned with iron beads (a favourite form of jewellery with this tribe) and similar

ornaments. The rest of their costume is somewhat elaborate. Young unmarried girls only wear a belt, from which thirty or forty leather thongs, ornamented with beads, hang to the ground. Married women wear a skin apron reaching from the waist to below the knee; a skin cloak, more or less ornamented, which reaches the ground behind; and a kind of belt or corselet (*omutombe*) covering the upper part of the breast, and made of ostrich-eggshell beads.† In addition to this, they have the characteristic head-dress assumed at their wedding: a sort of mitre or tiara of skin, of which the illustrations give a better idea than any amount of description. The construction of such a hat is a work of time and patience: the three flaps are cut out of carefully-prepared calf-skin, stitched in patterns, and ornamented with iron beads. No married woman is ever seen without this hat—to leave it off would be as great a breach of modesty as for a Moslem woman to go out unveiled. A sort of veil

—a goatskin, tanned so as to be very soft and pliable—is fastened to the hat in front, but is usually worn rolled up out of the way; while a number of thongs, strung with iron beads, are attached behind. If we add the bracelets and anklets



Photograph supplied by the Barmen Mission.

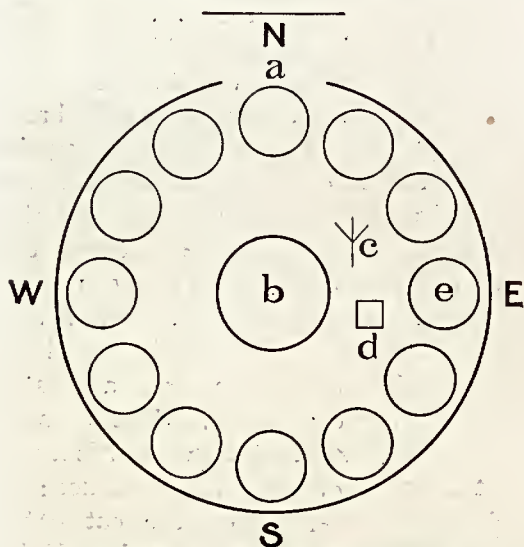
A HERERO MATRON

Wearing the three-pointed hat described in the text.

† These beads seem originally to have been made by the Bushmen, and were sometimes bought from them by other tribes, before the introduction of European beads. They are still made and bartered for grain, knives, iron arrow-heads, etc., by the Bushmen of the Central Kalahari. "The shell, which is naturally very hard, had first to be boiled and softened in cold water, then cut into small pieces through which a hole was pierced with a little flint or agate drill, then rubbed into small rings like beads, and polished" (Dr. Stow). The same authority says, "No other race except that of the Bushmen had either the skill or the patience to manufacture these beads," but it would seem that the Herero women have learned the art. The task of stringing them together to make the *omutombe* is also a very long and tedious one.

* Stow, "Native Races of South Africa," p. 259.

(either single rings or coils of iron wire), the former sometimes reaching to the elbow and the latter nearly to the knee, it will be seen that a well-to-do Herero woman carries a considerable weight of iron about with her. In sewing skins the women use a needle, or rather awl, made of a sharp thorn; their thread is made from sinews of animals.



PLAN OF A HERERO KRAAL.

The site of the sacred fire (*okuruo*) is marked *d*. The huts are arranged in a circle round the cattle-kraal (*b*).

Many points in the customs of these people are exceedingly interesting, but we cannot here do more than indicate a few of the most remarkable. The women milk the cows, which, so far as I know, is the case with no other Bantu tribe. It is also a woman—the chief's eldest unmarried daughter—who is the guardian of the sacred fire. This she always keeps burning in the "great wife's" hut, and from it every morning she kindles the fire on the *okuruo*, or "altar," the position of which in the kraal is shown by the accompanying diagram. The cattle kraal (*b*) is in the middle, all the huts being ranged round it in a circle with their doors facing inward. The whole is surrounded by a thorn fence, with its gateway (*a*) facing north. The "great wife's" hut (*e*) is on the east of the cattle kraal, and between them is the "altar" (*d*). A little to the north of the latter is the sacred tree (*c*). This is either an *omumborombonga* (botanic-

ally, *Combretum primigenium*), the tree from which, as the Herero believe, the human race originated,* or a dry branch of the *omuvapu* shrub (called by Colonists the "raisin-bush"), which is supposed to represent it, and is also held sacred. All round the *okuruo* are the skulls and horns of the oxen sacrificed on solemn occasions, and these serve as seats for the old men when they come to discuss affairs of public importance with the chief.

No strange fire may be kindled on the *okuruo*, and no stranger is allowed to take from it a coal to light his pipe. In the evening the chief's daughter carries the embers back into her mother's hut, and keeps them smouldering all night. If by any chance the fire should go out, it may only be re-lit by rubbing certain sacred sticks. If the kraal is removed, the family carry the fire with them. The huts are built much on the same plan as those of the Zulu already described, but somewhat narrower and higher in proportion, because the wattles are bound together at the top, instead of being planted in a series of arches, and they are also plastered with clay outside, instead of being thatched.

Herero children, both boys and girls, have the two lower front teeth knocked out at about eight or ten years of age, and the upper ones chipped or filed into the triangular gap already described.

The ceremony observed when girls grow up is called *efundula*; they are not secluded, but a great dance is held at the chief's place, to which all the girls within reach come, attended by their mothers. The young men assemble to see them, and, no doubt, make their choice; but no special steps are taken at this time for entering on engagements. After the dance, the girls are rubbed all over with ashes, put on a peculiar kind of cap, and march about the country in procession, carrying long sticks in their hands and chanting as they go.

* The original tree is supposed to be somewhere in the Kaoko country, in the north-west of Hereroland towards the Portuguese border.

At every kraal they come to they are entertained with the best the place affords, and all men and youths are expected to keep out of their way. Anyone failing to do so is soundly beaten by the girls. After a month of this travelling about, they return home, and are now supposed to be marriageable.

Marriages are usually arranged by the parents, though

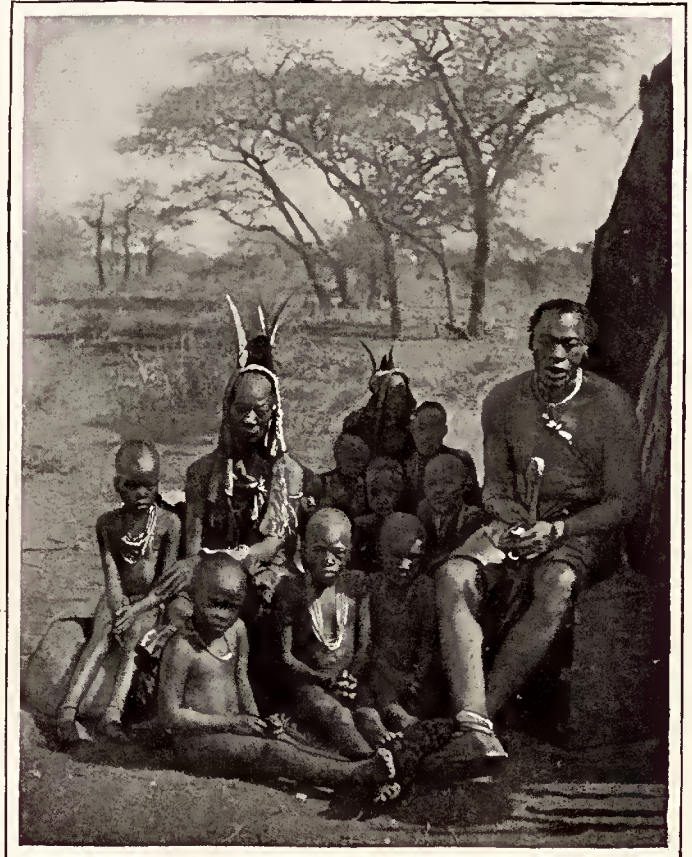
this statement must be understood with the reservations previously indicated. The young

people are betrothed between the ages of fifteen and seventeen or so, when the youth gives the girl an iron bead, and she knots it on one of the strings of her apron. After this they are not supposed to meet till their marriage, and it is considered very improper of him to show his face at her home. It sometimes happens, though not often, that the girl refuses to accept the token, and, if the parents are not exceptionally hard-hearted, this puts an end to the negotiations. The actual marriage ceremony presents more curious details.

When the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house, she takes hold of a strap which he wears hanging down his back, and marches after him all round the kraal, followed by a long procession of friends in single file, all shouting the young man's clan name (*eanda*)*—e.g., "Child of the sun," "of the rain," etc. A sheep is killed for the feast; the bride and bridegroom do not eat of it, but they breathe on the meat before it is passed round to the guests. The bride's girl friends take out part of the inside (the caul, to be precise) of this same sheep, and put it over her head, and she wears this ex-

traordinary decoration till the end of the festivities (lasting, perhaps, for several days), when her mother takes it off and puts on the cap or mitre already described.

Some of these ceremonies are gone through



From a photograph supplied by the Barmen Mission.

A HERERO FAMILY.

again at the bridegroom's kraal when he has taken the bride home; but, this time, during the processional march, she carries in one hand a wooden bowl, into which the inmates of each hut in turn, as the couple come to a halt there, put sweet-scented herbs. During this march, which concludes the ceremonies, the bride wears her veil down.

When a child is born the nurse announces the event by calling out "*Okauta*—a little bow!" if it is a boy; if a girl, she says "*Okazeu*—a little onion!"—or rather one of the edible bulbs which it is part of a girl's business to dig up. In the former

Herero Birth Customs.

* The *omaanda* (sing. *eanda*) are clans or castes, to one or other of which every Herero belongs, and each of which is distinguished by some badge or token—the sun, the rain, etc. The subject is too technical and complicated for further discussion in a work like this.

case, the father goes about shouting "*Okauta*," which is echoed by all the men in the place—in the latter, he covers his face and hides himself—not because the event is a mournful one, for, after all, a girl represents an increase in the family property—but probably as a sort of conventional demonstration of modesty. The head of the kraal keeps a leather thong in which a knot is made at the birth of every child—a kind of family register.

The birth of twins, which is by many savage tribes considered a terrible misfortune, is, for the Herero, an occasion of great rejoicing. The customs observed are too numerous to describe; it is enough to say that a special sacredness attaches to the twins and their father for life.

Children are always welcomed and treated with affection; the Herero, like most Africans, in normal circumstances, are of opinion that "happy is the man that hath

his quiver full of them." A mother carries her baby on her back in a goatskin (as the Zulu women do), and, when she wants to feed it, simply shifts it round till it rests on her hip. An old man is sometimes seen walking about the kraal, or sitting in the sun, with a little grandchild in his arms.

It is very common, when weaning children, to make a nanny-goat act as nurse; the baby very soon learns to catch her by the hind legs, and milk her into its mouth. As elsewhere in Africa, children are seldom weaned before they are old enough to run about.

Boys begin to herd the cattle at five (of course in company with their elder brothers and other companions), and this forms their chief occupation for the next fifteen years or so. Less is expected of little girls; they dig up bulbs, collect gum or berries, and help to fetch wood and water, but they are not overburdened with work. There are few, if any, English books giving a detailed account of this interesting people. Sir Francis Galton came in contact with them in 1850, but his account is not very flattering. If we consider it fairly, however, we find that he saw very little of them, that the only man of any standing he met (the chief Kahityine) made a very favourable impression on him; and that, for the rest, the case might be paralleled by an Indian traveller landing in London for a week or so, and forming his opinion of our nation from a few of the boatmen, longshore loafers and lodging-house keepers in the neighbourhood of the Custom House. A more just notion may be obtained from some German works, among which we may mention those of Dr. Schinz, the Rev. J. Irle (who lived and worked in the country over thirty years), and the late Dr. Brincker.



From a photograph supplied by the Barmen Mission.

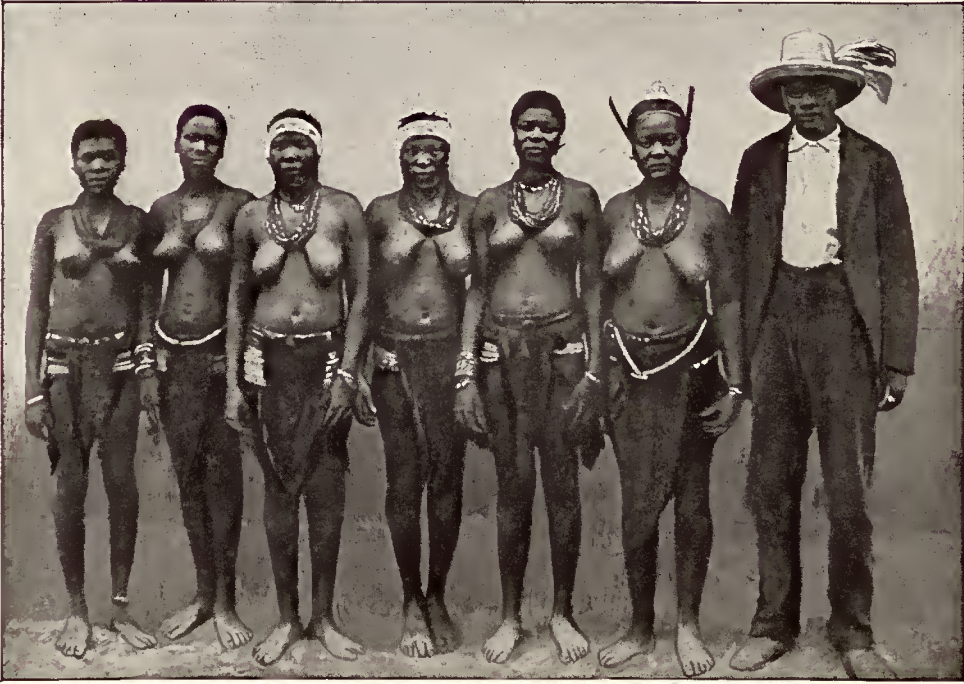
AN AANDONGA (OVAMBO) MARRIED
COUPLE.

The Ovakwanyama and Aandonga (together called by the Herero, Ovambo) live in the fertile flat country to the north-east of the Herero, near the Kunene River. They are an agricultural people,

differing from the Herero in language and in many of their customs; their costume, for one thing, is much scantier, as may be noticed in the illustrations. The villages, instead of having huts arranged in circles, either quite open or surrounded by a simple

Agricultural Tribes.

Christianity by the devoted labours of the French missionaries, and it is probable that many of their traditions will before long be entirely lost. Like other Bantu of Central Africa, they reckon relationship in the female line, and a man's next heir is not his own, but his sister's son, while children



From a photograph supplied by the Barmen Mission.

THE CHIEF COUNCILLOR OF UYULU (CHIEF OF THE OVAKWANYAMA),
WITH HIS WIVES.

round fence, are embedded in a complex labyrinth of passages enclosed between high palisades, through which it is impossible for a stranger to find his way without a guide.

The country of the "Ovambo" reaches up to the Okavango River, beyond which the Barotse country begins.

The Barotse. This country really includes other tribes besides the Barotse, who are the ruling caste. Their king, Lewanika, who asked some years ago for permission to place his people under British protection, has had his sons educated in England, and himself came to London for the Coronation. As might be expected, the customs of the people are rapidly changing, even where they have not actually been converted to

belong to their mother's tribe, not to their father's. The Zulu do not follow this system, though there are indications that they may once have done so, and the Herero do so partially, though for some purposes they count descent on the father's side. It is in accordance with this system that the Rotse king's sister is a person of great importance—much more so than any of his wives. She "has the right of veto on all his actions and decisions," which is shared by only one other person—the king's maternal uncle, officially called the *Nata-moyo*, or "minister of mercy."

The late M. Coillard tells a pleasant story, related to him by the natives, of the first Rotse king, Mboho, who was not much of a warrior, but, being hard pressed by



Photograph by the late M. Collard; by permission of the Secretary of the Barotseland Mission.

THE MOKWAE (QUEEN) OF NALOLO (KING LEWANIKA'S SISTER) IN HER STATE CANOE.

his enemies, prepared a certain powerful "medicine," and directed his people to scatter it over the path by which the foe might approach.

A Barotse Legend.

"Everyone refused, seized with terror, not because of the enemy, but because of the medicine itself. 'For,' they said, 'if it has the power of annihilating our enemies, why should it not kill us, too?' Only one person, a woman, had the courage to come forward. She took the formidable medicine, and went bravely towards the enemy's camp, scattered it all over the paths, and cast the remainder to the wind in the direction of the Mankoya, to such good purpose that the next day they were all dead and the Barotse delivered. The king then said to this woman, 'To-day you are a man; you shall sit in the *lekhothla* (the place of assembly) as a man, and among your descendants there shall always be a woman-chief to take your place.'"

This legend may have been invented by the Makololo—a

Suto tribe who came from the south and conquered the Barotse about 1830—to account for the existence of an institution new to them.

Women Chiefs.

For we find that women chiefs are not at all uncommon among the tribes north and east of the Barotse. Livingstone mentions several whom he saw, or heard of, in his travels. We may remember the Londa chieftainess Manenko, who, with her husband and suite, escorted him, when on his way from Linyanti to Loanda, to the town of her uncle Shinte. There was also Nyango, who seems to have been at one time lady paramount of the tribes on the Upper Shiré; and the chief near Lake Mweru, who goes by the hereditary

name of Kazembe, is also a woman. At Shinte's village, Livingstone says: "This was the first town I had ever seen females present in a public assembly. In the south the women are not permitted to enter the *kotla*, and even when invited to come to a religious service they would not enter until ordered to do so by the chief; but here they expressed approbation by clapping



Photograph by the late M. Collard; by permission of the Secretary of the Barotseland Mission.

BAROTSE BASKET-MAKERS.

their hands, and laughing, to different speakers; and Shinte frequently turned round and spoke to them."

East of the Barotse, the Babemba and Bawisa tribes need not detain us at present. South of these, along the course of the Zambezi, come the Batonga (Batoka)

"Salkats"), quarrelled with King Tshaka, and, flying for his life, founded a kingdom of his own in the north. Another detachment of Zulu left their country about the same time, and for a similar reason, under Zwangendaba, the same whom Zwile wished to attack, as already related; and was dissuaded by his mother. They crossed



Photograph by the late M. Coillard: by permission of the Secretary of the Barotseland Mission.

MAMBOE WOMEN (UPPER BAROTSE VALLEY).

Prisoners taken by Lewanika in a punitive raid on the tribe for having failed to pay the tribute due to him.

and Basenga, and, on the other side of the river, the Mashona. These are part of a people who, under different names, and interrupted by settlements of other tribes who have invaded and broken them up, extend as far as the north end of Lake Nyasa, and down the Shiré and Zambezi to the east coast. They are called—on the Lake, Anyanja; on the Shiré, Mang'anja; and elsewhere Chipetas or Maravi. They, like the Ovakwanyama and Barotse, cultivate the soil, and build round huts with conical roofs.

South of the Mashona, and in some parts scattered among them, live the Matabele (Amandebele), originally a clan of Zulu, whose head (Umziligazi, better known as Moselekatsé, and called by the Boers

the Zambezi in 1825, and their descendants are the "Angoni" of West Nyasaland.

Some of these Angoni still speak Zulu, but only the chiefs and a few other families are really of Zulu descent,

The Anyanja. and those, probably, not unmixed. The name was indiscriminately applied to all the different tribes whom they conquered and incorporated with themselves; and in British Central Africa—at any rate in the southern part—"Angoni" virtually means "Anyanja." A good many of these Anyanja, especially those west of the Shiré, are small, wiry people, cheerful, kindly, and hard working, with several characteristics which suggest that their Bantu ancestors may have intermarried freely with the aborigines of the country—

probably the Bushmen, or some allied race.

Other Anyanja, as those of the Shiré River, usually called Mang'anja, are tall

somewhat into disuse since it has become easy to procure cheap English or American calico. The spinning and weaving is done by the men, who also sew—nowadays with



Photograph supplied by the British South Africa Company.

MASHONA WOMEN.

Wearing leather skirts, bead girdles, and brass bangles. The two middle ones have discs of white shell (brought from the coast and much valued as ornaments and possibly charms) round their necks. Those worn by the girl on the right may, however, be made of ostrich egg-shell. The single disc of the left-hand figure is that called *mpande* in Nyanja; it is cut from the top of the *conus* shell.

and largely made; but on the whole, they, including the Mashona, are of slighter and less muscular build than the Zulu and Matabele. They live chiefly on maize or millet porridge and other vegetable food, instead of meat and milk; they do not keep cattle, only a few goats and sheep; and, as already stated, both men and women hoe the gardens. They are more skilled in arts and industries than the Zulu. Their iron-work and wood-carving attain a higher level, and they spin and weave excellent cotton cloth, though this art has fallen

English steel needles—formerly with implements made out of a splinter of bamboo.

Calico is almost the universal wear—the cheap unbleached kind that costs 1½d. or “Calicoes.” 2½d. a yard in this country.

A man wears his cloth round his waist, reaching to his knees or his ankles, according to circumstances, viz., his means, or the nature of his occupation. Women’s calicoes begin higher up, being usually wrapped round under the arms, sometimes merely secured by tucking in a fold, some-

times supported by a piece of stuff tied round the waist. Better-dressed women have two cloths, the lower coming down to

here called *mapira*, a slightly different species from that grown in Natal, is used for making beer—in Nyanja *moa*. There is a third kind of grain (*Eleusine*), known as *maere*—a small kind of millet, like bird-seed, not specially grown, but springing up of itself in and near the gardens, and gathered in bad years for food. It is so troublesome to husk and prepare that it is not regarded at ordinary times; the porridge made from it is dark in colour, and requires a good deal of hunger-sauce to make it appetising. A quantity of this *maere*, just husked, is seen spread out on a goatskin in the illustration on this page. When the *mapira* is gathered, the heads are laid on a mat and beaten out with a long thin stick. Maize is stored in granaries like huge round baskets mounted on platforms, and covered with a conical roof. One of these is seen behind the old woman in the second photograph on p. 308, but it is not in very good repair.

Maize porridge (*nsima*) is eaten off little flat, round baskets or wooden platters.



Photograph by F. G. Kunje.

A MAKOLOLO WOMAN AND CHILDREN.
Newly-husked *maere* is spread out on the goatskin. The Makololo on the Shiré are people descended from some of Livingstone's followers who came from Sebituano's country on the Zambezi.

their feet like a skirt, and the most complete costume includes a little short-sleeved cotton jacket just big enough to cover all that the upper calico would leave exposed, and a sash of Turkey-red twill, or something similar, tied in front with the ends hanging down. All these garments are sewn, if at all (a "calico" for ordinary wear may be just a raw-edged piece of cloth, but careful people have theirs hemmed at the ends), by the husband, whose duty it is to supply his wife with clothes, as it is hers to provide him with food.

The method of pounding maize in the wooden mortar (cut out of the trunk of

Maize and its Uses.

a tree) is well shown in the photograph on p. 308. The grinding on stones, which in Natal is the whole process, here comes afterwards, when the coarse meal has been taken out of the mortar and separated from the husk by shaking and winnowing in flat baskets. At the end of the grinding it is a fine white flour. The grain of the sorghum,



Photograph by F. G. Kunje.

AN ANGONI GIRL WINNOWING MAIZE.
She is kneeling on a mat of split *bango* reeds—behind her on the left is an earthen pot containing the gourd used for drawing water.

Some relish (boiled in a small pot put on beside the big one for the porridge) is eaten with it—it may be green vegetables, or



Photograph by J. G. Kunje.

AN ANGONI GIRL POUNDING MAIZE.

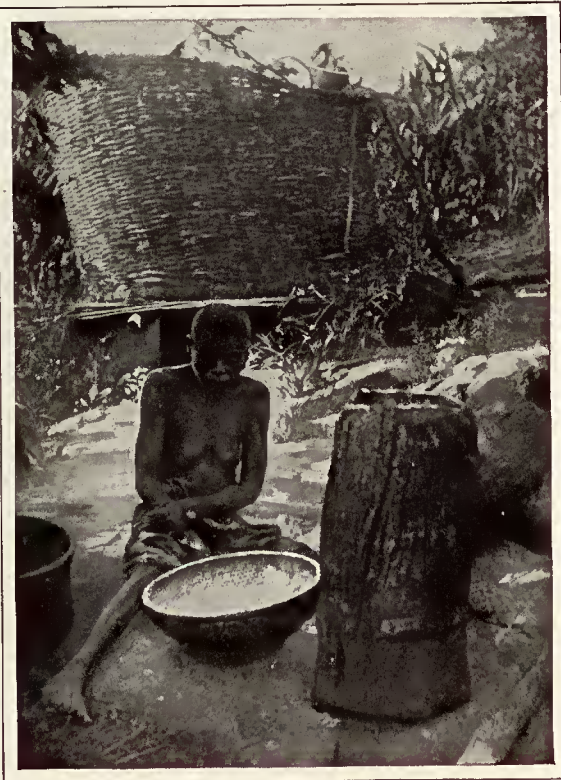
The mortar is formed from a tree-trunk. Note the reed fence surrounding the little yard and the growing maize behind it.

beans, or fish, or perhaps a fowl. It is the height of bad manners to eat alone, and not share the food with others. Cooking is only done once, or at most twice a day, the principal meal being taken about sunset. A native story tells how a husband and wife, each unknown to the other, abstracted a leg of the partridge which was cooking, and retired, separately, into the dark interior of the hut to eat it, where they came violently into collision, and had an explanation, each promising to say nothing about the matter if the other would only keep the story quiet. African natives are as sensitive to ridicule as most other people—perhaps even a little more so.

The Anyanja women have no special way of dressing their hair, though some

Anyanja shave it in patterns, and
Ornaments. occasionally one is seen with red beads threaded on strands of it. They never let it grow more than an inch or two, and are often

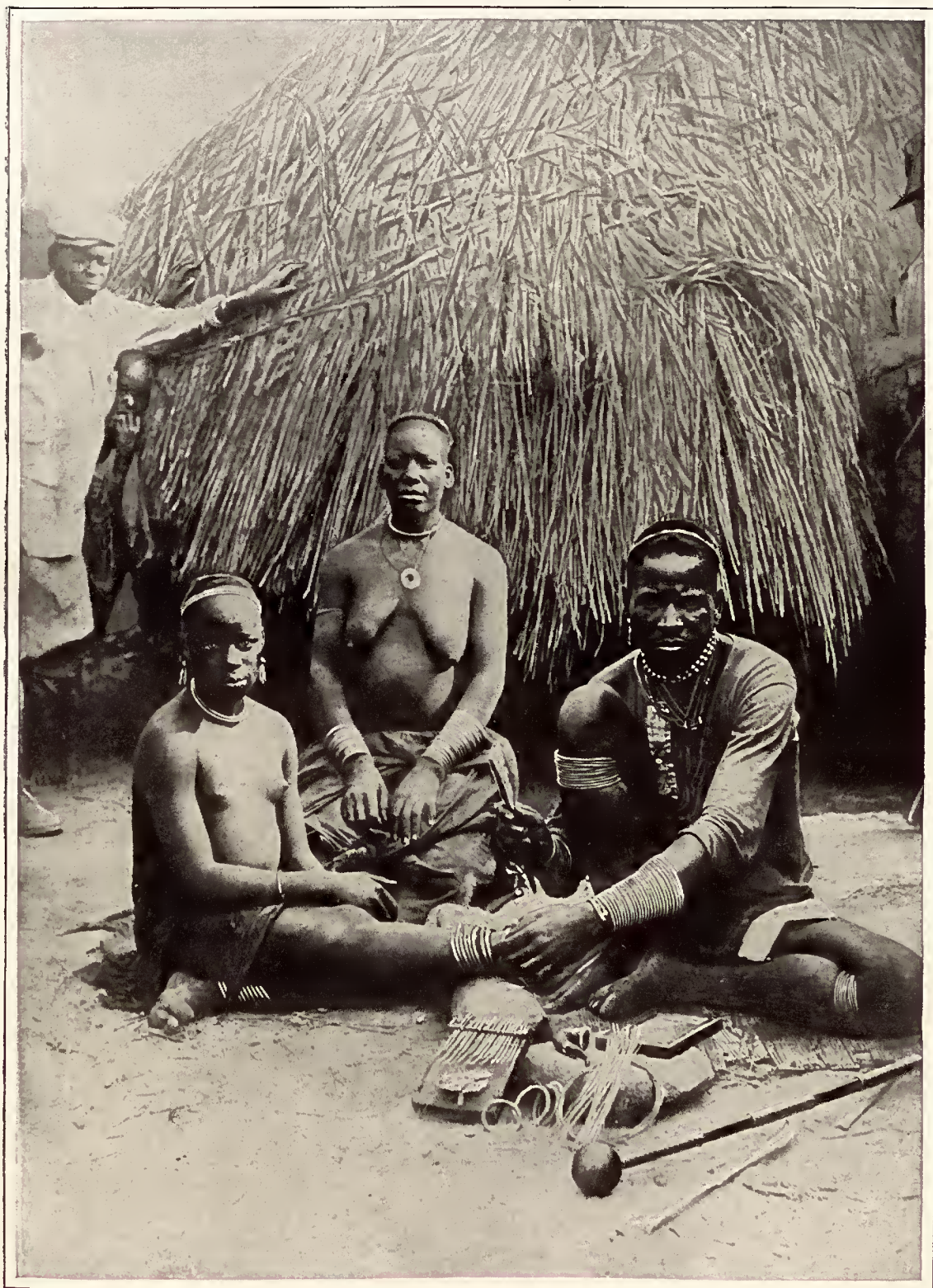
seen with their shaven scalps glistening with castor-oil. Many of them are marked on the face and body with cuts into which something has been rubbed, either to make the flesh heal in a raised scar, or to darken the skin. They often have their ears bored for the insertion of ornaments, and some of the old women wear an ivory ring, the size of a napkin-ring in the upper lip. This fashion passed from the Anyanja to the Yao, and seems to be now going out, even among them, but is in full vigour among the Anguru (West of Lake Chilwa), who sometimes wear—not a ring, but a little metal cup. The Yao women wear a metal stud (like a drawing-pin) in one side of the nose; this fashion has probably been borrowed from the Indian women on the coast. Beads and brass rings are as popular as in most other places. The former are often worn round the neck in ropes made by sewing them on to thin rolls of calico. Wealthy



Photograph by J. G. Kunje.

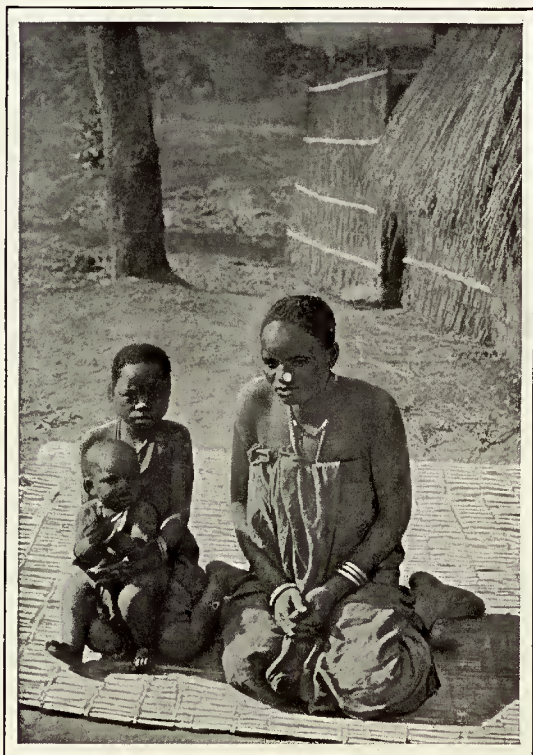
AN OLD CHIPETA WOMAN

Seated on the rocky hill-side with a basket of meal before her; a granary and garden in the background. The mortar is on her left—on her right is one of the large baskets (*mfanga*) used for carrying maize, etc.



Photograph by permission of the British South Africa Company.
MASHONA BRASS-WORKER PUTTING ON A GIRL'S ANKLETS.

men's wives sometimes have so many brass anklets that they can scarcely walk. These are sometimes solid brass rings; sometimes a coil of brass wire is worn which requires a brass-worker to put on. When a craftsman of this sort is known to be passing through a village the women flock from far and wide—



Photograph by J. G. Kunje.

A YAO MOHAMMEDAN WOMAN AND CHILDREN

Seated on a *bango* mat. Note the nose-stud worn by the mother.

they may have been waiting months for the chance of wearing their jewellery. When the coil of wire has at last been coaxed on to the leg it is necessary for some time to pad the lower round with rags, in order to keep the brass from chafing the foot.

The Yao live chiefly on the eastern side of the Shiré—in some districts a good deal mixed up with the Anyanja. **Yao Women.** Their old home is in the north, by the eastern side of Lake Nyasa. Yao women have a tribe-mark consisting of two

rows of small cuts on the temple, but I fancy this is no longer rigidly kept up. They are a race of sturdy mountaineers—somewhat “dour,” and very touchy, but lovable withal, and very faithful when their hearts are won. Many of the men, especially those who have been down to the coast—for they are great travellers and traders—call themselves Mohammedans, and have Arab names. This influence is probably undermining the old matriarchal constitution of society. A Yao not only counts his descent through his mother, but he goes to live in his wife's village when he marries, and hoes a garden for her parents. I have heard that it is generally the Yao woman who proposes marriage, and it is possible that this may be so, for it would be quite in accordance with a system where the man is not the sole bread-winner.

The religious institutions of the Yao are described very minutely and graphically in the Rev. Duff Macdonald's “Africana.” Women have a certain prominence in these, in the persons of the prophetess and the *Mabisalila*, or witch-detective, who dances herself into a frenzy, and then gives the name of the witch or the whereabouts of the property she has been asked to trace. The Rev. Henry Rowley gives a very impressive account of a Nyanja ceremony in which the chief's sister took the principal part, for the purpose of praying for rain. The religion both of the Yao and the Anyanja is chiefly ancestor-worship, with some vague acknowledgment of a supreme spirit called *Mulungu*, *Leza*, *Mpambe* or *Chiuta*, who appears—sometimes, at least—to be a personification of the sky, lightning or thunder. Huts are erected for the accommodation of the ancestral spirits, and offerings of meal or beer laid at the foot of a tree for them. But the subject is too wide a one to be treated in passing—even to show in how many ways it bears on the life of women.

THE CONGO FREE STATE

By E. TORDAY

The Congo State—The People of the Congo—The Pygmies—The Negro Population—The Slave Trade—Women under the Slave-traders—Birth and Infancy—Congo Love and Courtship—Personal Adornment—Congoese Dress—Ornaments—Congoese Coiffures—Marriage Customs—Child Marriage—Congoese Wedding Dance—Conjugal Infidelity—Social Conditions on the Congo—Death and Burial—Widow Sacrifice—Cannibalism—Physical Attractions of Congoese Women—Negroes—Cleanliness—Preparation of Food—Religion—Home Life



By permission of the Ethnographical
Museum, Tervuren.
YOUNG BAKUBA
GIRL.

THE mouth of the River Congo was discovered by the Portuguese navigator Diego Cão in the fifteenth century, but no part of the upper river was known until Livingstone first reached it at Nyangwe, when, however, he believed it to be the Nile. It was first explored by Sir H. M. Stanley, who called it

**The
Congo
State.**

the Livingstone, a name which has passed into oblivion. The actual Congo State was founded by the King of the Belgians, and extends over an area of about 800,000 square miles, with a population which has been estimated variously between eight millions and forty millions, the correct figure being probably about twelve millions.

The population is continually decreasing, in consequence of an epidemic of sleeping-sickness, which ravages Central Africa from the West to the East coast. A great part of the State was under the domination of the Arabs until the year 1892, when they were driven out by an army composed of native troops commanded by Belgian and

Scandinavian officers. It is now actually governed by a central administration in Brussels, represented by a Governor-general at Boma. The government is absolute, but it seems likely that the country will become a Belgian colony under the control of the Belgian parliament.

The inhabitants of the Congo form many tribes, which differ greatly in their customs.

**The People
of the Congo.**

It cannot be of interest to the general reader to enumerate them; so I shall endeavour to arrange them in groups, each group containing those which show the greatest similarity. In this attempt I shall not classify them according to their origin in remote times; for, contrary to general belief, the negro is not very conservative and easily assimilates himself to the people with whom he has been brought in contact in his wanderings. And indeed, as far as their origin is concerned, all is conjecture. A people without writing or historical monuments, which forgets even its traditions in less than a century, can give us no clue, and the ethnographer alone can arrive at a more or less satisfactory conclusion.

It must, nevertheless, be mentioned that the original inhabitants of the country were probably the Pygmies, of whom some specimens were recently seen in London. Few

of these interesting little people are now left, and these are spread in diminutive colonies in all parts of the country. They are very simple in their habits, and have, for the most part, not yet risen above that stage of civilisation when agriculture is still unknown, and when man still lives only on the products of the chase, and the roots and wild fruits provided by the forest. Only a few condescend to barter their superfluous game for the agricultural produce of their more civilised neighbours.

Pygmies cannot be called fine specimens of humanity; their physique is slight, their height varying from four feet to four feet six inches. Their heads are rather big in proportion to their bodies. Their skin varies from a dirty yellow to a brown tint, their hair is short and scanty. In consequence of the active life they are obliged to live they are very thin, to such an extent that their bones may be easily seen through the skin. A most offensive odour attaches to them, but this is probably due to the want of cleanliness so common to people of the forest.

Some "savants" believe them to be related to the bushmen; but a multitude of physical and social differences throws great doubt on this subject.

All other inhabitants of the Congo are invaders. Their physical characteristics divide them into two groups, the Northern,

who show similarity to the real Negroes, and the Southern, much more refined in features, who exhibit traces of "Hamitic" blood.

The Negro Population.

In a general study like this it will perhaps be best to divide the population into two groups, the Negroes as they naturally are, and the Negroes who have been influenced by foreign invaders, such as the Arabs or the Portuguese.

Although they have derived much profit from the Eastern civilisation brought to them by the Arabs, and some little from the Occidental imported by the Portuguese,

their patriarchal habits have been

greatly changed

for the worse where they have been in contact with these foreign dealers in human cattle. The slave trade has destroyed the ties of relationship, and has brought the head of the family to consider its members as mere merchandise.

Slavery has always existed amongst the Congolese, but, where they have been left to themselves, the slaves are considered as the children of their owners, are treated as a rule with great kindness, and are

many times better off than the European "slaves" in mines and factories. Where the natives have been brought into contact with Portuguese or Arabs they have been taught to consider their wives and children as a source of wealth, easily



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A PYGMY WOMAN.

The Pygmy women are purchased as wives for three or four arrows!

exchanged for articles of comfort and luxury.

It has been the good fortune of the author to be in contact with both kinds of inhabitants, and he has found that the cannibal of the interior is by far the wiser and better man of the two.

Only a short sketch of a woman's life in those parts of the country where the slave trade flourished will be given, and then I shall pass to the more cheerful picture of life where patriarchal habits still persist. Happily it is true that the latter prevail over the greater part of the country, in fact the whole of the interior.

The parts of the Congo which for centuries have been the great slave-providing districts are situated in the East, where Arab and Wanyamwesi raiders have carried on their operations, and in the South and South-West, where the Portuguese have been at work. It is painful to have to admit that the Portuguese were by far the worst offenders. It is true that the Arabs in their expeditions did not consider human life, and showed the greatest cruelty, but as soon as they were settled they certainly improved the welfare of the people by teaching them order, agriculture, cattle-raising, and many useful crafts. Their Draconian laws against theft, adultery and murder, although inhuman in our eyes, would not have been considered so in the England of a century ago, when

people were hanged for petty theft, and they have certainly bettered the moral standard of the aborigines. The great drawback to their domination did not lie in the fact that they kept slaves, but in the manner in

which these were seized and in the fact that they were exported. It is evident that family ties were by this means destroyed, and that the position of women, the most coveted form of merchandise, was degraded. And this is still felt, for, in spite of the expulsion of the Arabs, much of the evil still exists, and a man will still barter his women relatives for the necessities of life.

The Arab invaders were warrior merchants, cruel indeed, but we cannot help admiring their courage and the spirit of chivalry which they

displayed. A few bold adventurers, without any assistance from a mother country, they were able by their own pluck to conquer and keep for a long time a territory larger than England, and inhabited by a dense population of cannibal warriors. No such mitigating qualities can be found among the Portuguese traders, the majority of whom were convicts, who had left their country for their country's good, and who had formed the scum of its population. The Arabs conquered with the sword, the Portuguese with gin. The natives could fight the one, but were powerless against the insidious attacks of the other, and what good qualities the "curse of Africa"—alcohol—left to them were destroyed by the



Drawn by Sir Harry Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

GALITZIA—A BATÉKÉ WOMAN.

Women under the Slave Trade.

vicious example of the white man. That part of the country which had been under Arab domination is slowly returning to a better state of things, but no such happy prospect can be expected in the other territory.

arms; this entitles the mother to a little present, which is bestowed gladly in proportion to the donor's means. If the young mother is a slave, her owner will continually bring her dainties, whilst his wives will nurse her. In choosing the child's name,



By permission of the Ethnographical Museum, Teruieren.

CONGO BABIES FROM THE LORI TRIBE.

Their mothers have their lips pierced and distended by an ivory disc.

Let us consider now the Congo woman's life, where the savages are only guided by their natural good instincts.

Birth and Infancy.

When a child is born the greatest interest is taken in the event by all the inhabitants of the village. Old and young women bustle round the mother; men stand outside the hut and discuss gravely with the father. Everybody compliments him, and declares that never has such a strong and fat child been seen before. Just as in Europe, family resemblances are discovered over a glass of "*malafu*" (palm wine), which the proud father offers freely to his guests. And then the people of the neighbouring villages flock in to see the new-born infant; the poor simply look at it, whilst the wealthy, who can afford it, take the baby into their

that of some important man is often selected; and this is a very great compliment which is repaid by considerable presents.

One or two days after the child's birth the mother leaves her hut. This is the time of life when the Congo woman looks most beautiful. I always found that maternity greatly increases her beauty, an atmosphere of happiness seems to surround her, and she simply shines with it.

From this moment the baby does not leave its mother any more; carried in a kind of bag on her back, or later, on her hip, it clings to "mammy" and follows her to the fields, joining in the chase for crickets and locusts. But sometimes the child is taken by the father, who, as fathers always will, spoils it by indulgence. Among some tribes, the Bayaka for example, it is

the father's privilege to carry the child; and to show that all his care is bestowed on the baby, he abstains from washing as long as the infant is unable to walk, though under ordinary circumstances the Bayaka are an extremely cleanly people. If we consider the great importance these people attach to personal ornament, it is a proof of great love to find that women with infants in arms do not ornament or paint themselves for such time as the baby is unable to walk by itself.

When the child is about a year old, her brothers, sisters, and cousins claim the right of looking after her, and, in fact, she takes the place of a doll. A doll is the substitute for a natural object of the affection inborn in mankind, and is especially strong in little girls; but the baby has no cause for complaint, except perhaps by reason of an excess of caresses.

"*Ne frappez pas un enfant, même avec une fleur,*" is a rule amongst these people; children are never punished, and seldom scolded. It would be easier to obtain pardon for murder than for a harsh word spoken to a child.

Thus it may be imagined what anguish a mother must feel in the Baluba tribe, where the child is liable to be claimed by the "*N'Ganga*" (witch-doctor) for religious sacrifice until it has cut its first tooth. But after this event has taken place this claim cannot be made, and the mother rejoices and feasts are often given in honour of the occasion.

Deformed children are hardly ever seen; the Spartan law of suppression at birth is in full force among most of the tribes. The Bayaka form an exception; no deformity could persuade these people to destroy a child.

How far fathers take an interest in children may be shown by a very curious habit (now tending to disappear) which prevails among the Bangala, and consists in the fact that when a child is to be born its father goes to bed, and is nursed in just the same manner as the mother!

Small children of any nationality are very beautiful, and the Congo children do not

form an exception. I do not think that any child has eyes so beautiful as a baby from this country; they are big and shaded by long eyelashes. It is unnecessary to mention their teeth, which justify their great reputation.

Congolese children are very playful, and it may be new to the reader to know that games are found here similar to those in England. Blind-man's-buff is in great vogue, and a form of snap-dragon is much in favour. Any round fruit will serve as a ball, and the "*gombe*" game is not unlike lawn-tennis.

On Lake Tanganika the favourite game is "*baò*," a game of intelligence, highly interesting, which the author has many a time played with little boys and girls, and, he confesses it with a blush, in which he, as a rule, got the worst of it. For negro children are *very* intelligent, probably more so than European children of the same age.

It has been said by many travellers that the Congolese do not know gratitude, and are not really affectionate. How untrue this is! I shall never forget how, when I left a certain region, the little children were sobbing and two little girls, Marisaka and Djimbu, to whom I had shown some kindness, were clinging to me and imploring me not to go away! And this happened in a country where cannibalism is openly practised!

Between games and instruction in her future duties the little girl grows up, to be, at the early age of twelve or thirteen, on the point of changing into a woman, and now the question of love becomes important.

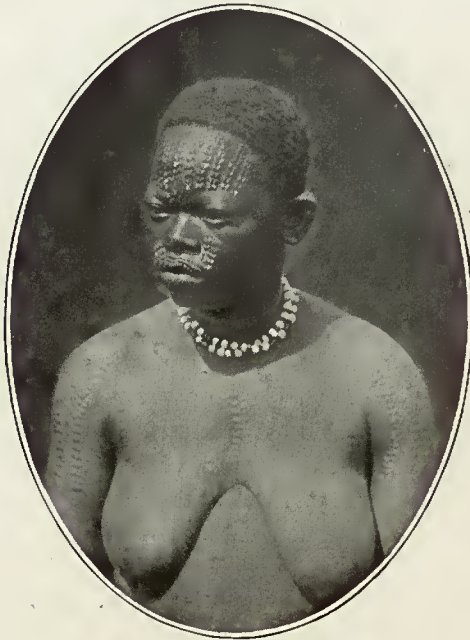
Capello and Ivens say on this subject: *

"Let us consider for a moment whether the negress does or can love in the lofty sense of that word. If she loved, if she had the consciousness of that sublime sentiment which opens to us on earth the gates of heaven, she would manifest it in her actions, and by its aid attain to some belief, some religious faith, inasmuch as her very felicity would help her to comprehend

**Congo
Love and
Courtship.**

* "From Benguella to the Territory of Yacca."

that there must be something better and purer above this material mundane life. But who is capable of inspiring her with such a feeling in the brutalised state of slavery in



A BAZOKO WOMAN.
With typical scar tattooing.

which she lives? Her husband? Most certainly not. He simply encircles her with an iron girdle of obligations and despicable labour, compels her to live in the dirt, like his dog, and toil and travail for his pleasure; she in her part dares not touch or even look at him without permission, she may not eat at the same table, far less from the same dish as he, and must not accept liquor from his hand."

Some years ago, I should have subscribed in all sincerity to this statement, and certainly shared the Portuguese explorers' opinion. But since I have lived amongst natives uncorrupted by the slave trade, I have formed a very different opinion. It is all true concerning the women described in the early part of this article, but not a word of it can be applied to the Congolese women, whose tribe has remained uncorrupted by slave trade and *aguardiente* (gin). I feel competent to speak with perfect knowledge on the subject, having watched with Pickwickian benevolence many a love

intrigue, and often contributed my modest mite to its happy conclusion.

When arriving in a village it often struck me that a few of the girls were more carefully dressed, oiled and painted than the others. On inquiring the reason of this from some old woman, I invariably got the reply: "She is in love, the dear child, and of course wants to be beautiful." And is it not a proof of love, that the heart of the Congo girl often runs away with her head and that important chiefs' daughters wed poor slaves?

Many a time has a father complained to me that his daughter has refused the husband chosen by him for political reasons, because, as she declared, she loved another man, and in countries, where human sacrifice is practised, the wife freely descends into the grave of her deceased husband, to be with him in death. Moreover the Bayeke woman, when her husband has been killed in war, charges like a fury on the enemy,



BANGALA WOMAN.
Showing the ornamental scars on forehead.

be his number ever so superior, in an attempt to revenge the death of her beloved.

Human hearts are the same whatever be the colour of the skin, and the



BAMBALA WOMAN: KWILU RIVER, CONGO FREE STATE.
(Painted with red earth.)
DRAWN BY NORMAN H. HARDY.

Congolese girl loves her "*Bakala*" as much as Miss Smith loves her young man.

Now how does the Congolese woman, who wants to please her lover, try to increase her beauty?

The most important form of ornamenta-

ornament the forehead with a single or double row of crosses, and a similar design is worked on the breasts. Several incisions of varying forms run from the throat to the abdomen, passing on each side of the breasts.

The Bazoko cicatrise the face only,



Photograph by Neville P. Edwards, Littlehampton.

BAPOTO WOMEN.

Showing the process of scar tattooing; the implement used is a short knife.

tion consists in cicatrization, which is performed by making cuts in the skin.

Personal Adornment.

The wounds are prevented from healing for a time, sometimes by inserting some irritant substance, and the resultant scars form a more or less artistic design. Of course this process is most painful; but once finished, it lasts for a lifetime. Cicatrization differs greatly from tribe to tribe, and I shall give a short description of the most characteristic forms.

The Batéké make parallel longitudinal cuts in their cheeks, descending in a column from the temples to the mouth; the Bayansi

which is covered with big incisions; the Bapoto do the same, but the incisions are much smaller and much more numerous.

The Wangata have a straight column formed of parallel incisions running from the top of the forehead to the nose, and a design representing a palm leaf on each temple; the Bangala have the same marking only more pronounced, the central line being carried from the nose to the summit of the head. Their marks stand out in high relief, and form a kind of crest. The Sango and Sakara ladies pinch up knots of skin on their foreheads, tying them round until they become permanent. They have about five

of these skin "beads" arranged in a perpendicular line between the nose and the forehead (*see* p. 324).

Most of the women have their backs elaborately scarred.

Painting is practised nearly everywhere; the favourite pigment, a bright red, is obtained from a tree, and is called *tukula*, but other vegetable and mineral pigments

even elderly women wear a small piece of pleated cloth nearly as big as one's hand, or to the Sango, who find a hair from an elephant's tail all they desire, one feels already again in the civilised world. And one must incline with respect before the rich costume of a Banza lady which consists usually of a few leaves or a bunch of grass; but it must be mentioned that



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BAPOTO WOMEN ORNAMENTED FOR A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.

The figure in the centre is the Fetish Priest.

are equally used. Mourning is, as a rule, indicated by white paint, but an exception is formed by the Ubangi women, who on these occasions blacken their faces, while the Bambala women paint their brown.

The money spent by a Congo lady on her dressmaker would certainly not ruin her parents, and I have never heard of any of them resorting to cheating at bridge in order to satisfy the pressing demands of the milliner. Thus among the Budja, Bapoto, and some other tribes no dress whatever is worn, the tattooed decoration being all that is considered necessary, and when one comes from a sojourn among them into the country of the Bazoko, where a costume of *one bead* fastened round the waist is found, nay where

Congolese Dress.

décolletage is not unknown amongst them, since on festive occasions, these ladies remove their everyday costume and wear a dress consisting of a feather stuck into the hair.

Clothes made of native or imported cloth differ considerably; the size of the garment varies from a scrap of cloth four inches square to a piece extending from the armpits to the ankles; married Bakongo women even have a dress composed of three pieces; one in front, one behind, and one over the breasts.

The Bangala women wear a kind of short ballet dancer's skirt, as shown in the illustration on p. 320, which is made by hanging quantities of dried palm leaves round the hips. O vanity of vanities! The prettier a girl, the shorter the dress! The Bokele women wear similar dresses, but only behind.

The inhabitants of the Kwilu wear a piece of native cloth round their loins; but it is essential that no part above the legs should be covered behind.

But if these daughters of Eve are satisfied with little dress, they are by no means

Ornaments. averse to ornaments.

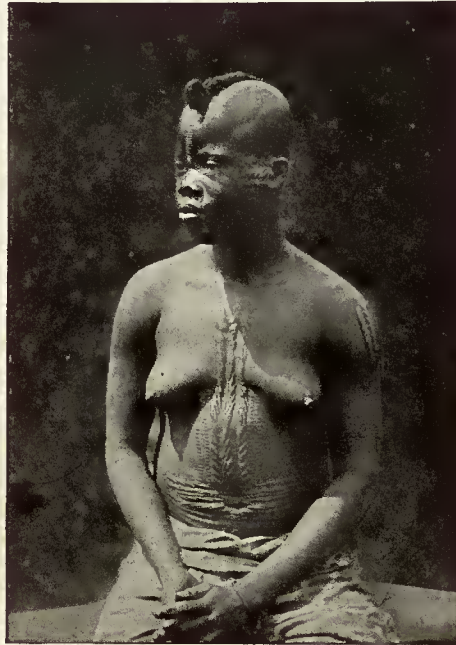
It is wonderful to see the ingenuity they display in adding to their personal adornment. Amongst the most eccentric must be mentioned the Ubangi ladies, who have holes made in their ears in which they hang heavy weights, with the result that their ear-lobes frequently become lengthened to eight or ten inches. Some pass a stick through the septum of the nose; the Bakumu and Banziri pierce their upper lips, and wear in the hole a disc of wood or ivory of the size of a crown or even bigger. The latter make several holes in the lower lip as well, while others pierce the upper part of the ear in several places and hang string tassels from them. The Baluba women have the four front incisors knocked out, and most of the women have their teeth filed.

It may be considered the rule, that the less dress a woman wears the more ornament she requires; of course I only mean Congolese women. Thus the Budja, who wear no clothes, have, around their necks, collars of forged brass often weighing as much as thirty-pounds, and anklets nearly as heavy on their feet.

Bracelets are worn nearly everywhere; those of the Kasai, made of iron, are especially beautiful. The legs are also ornamented with brass circlets, which often reach from the ankles to the knees; in many tribes

brass wire is wrapped round the legs and arms in spirals to the knees and elbows. Rings of iron, brass or ivory, are worn on all fingers, and often on the big toe, and the Banza women wear a ring in the nose. Many women of the "Province Orientale" have one side of the nose pierced and wear a button of iron or silver in the hole; whilst the Bubu in the Ubangi carry in their upper lip a piece of crystal two inches in length; if they cannot afford crystal, they use copal gum.

Necklaces are made of most varied material; all kinds of teeth (human included), beads, feathers, iron trinkets, wood and ivory carvings, seeds and shells, etc. These necklaces are not always very comfortable, such, for instance, as that shown in the illustrations on pp. 322 and 325, which are made of brass, are



A WANGATA WOMAN.
With shaven head and scar tattooing.

forged on to the neck, and sometimes weigh as much as thirty pounds.

Fans are almost unknown; in one tribe only, the Bakumu, women use a very primitive kind made of palm leaves.

As amongst all primitive people, hair-dressing is naturally a great feature among the Congo people. In some parts the first process in the toilet is to extract the eyebrows and eyelashes, no hair being allowed to remain except on the head.

In the lower Congo, the hair is cut short, greased with palm oil, and powdered red.

The upper country head-dress varies from tribe to tribe. The Bangala shave the hair in front and behind the ears, but let it remain on the occiput, and on the side. The Sango women have very long locks, but they make

**Congolese
Coiffures.**

them longer still by adding to them quantities of hair from the dead or from prisoners, or by twining them with palm fibres painted black (see p. 323). The Sakara form their *coiffure* of plaits literally covered with beads; these plaits are parted on the nape of the neck, and are brought to the front to form a kind of cap, which resembles the bonnets of the Dutch women (see p. 324); or they are sometimes built up like mitres. The more complicated *coiffures* take many weeks to complete, but once brushed they last for a long time. Some, the Manyema for instance, wear a circular wooden ring at the back of the head over which they draw the hair; others, like the Southern Baluba, weave their hair with the aid of basket-work into a kind of halo, decked with beads and cowries by way of jewellery. Nearly every lady wears in her hair a long pin of wood or ivory, which she finds very handy to scratch

with at times. It is a fact worth mentioning that in some Azandé tribes women shave their heads while their husbands allow their hair to grow.

After having enumerated the means by which maidens try to please, let us pass to the result of all these preparations, and mention the different customs relating to marriage.

Marriage Customs.

There are so many of these customs in the Congo that it is not possible to generalise; it may only be stated that polygamy is nearly universal, and often practised to the furthest limit; thus certain chiefs provide themselves with several hundred wives. One honourable exception are the Banza, who never take more than a single wife, and pride themselves on their conjugal fidelity.

The Musserongo have a complicated nuptial ceremony. Three months before the date fixed the bride retires to a hut outside the village, where she is painted red with *tukula* wood. Then the bridegroom pays to the father-in-law the price of his betrothed wife, but it must not be thought that, in virtue of this purchase, she becomes his slave; the money only represents the expenses of the parents, and in case of divorce, or premature death, must be returned. The father, after having received the price of his daughter, goes to the "Ganga" or fetish man, who, by



TYPICAL BANGALA BEAUTIES.
Showing palm-leaf petticoats and scar tattooing.

making offerings to the "Bingu" spirit obtains fecundity for the new couple. On the day of the marriage the bride, accompanied by all the young girls of the village, dancing and singing, is led to her husband's house. The next day a great feast is given by the young husband, to which all friends are invited.

Amongst the Bakongo the engagement lasts for a long time, as young girls are often engaged at the tender age of four, and cannot marry before eleven or twelve years of age. This involves great expense to the bridegroom, for whenever he visits his bride he must bring considerable presents to her parents.

The Azandé deserve to be specially mentioned. Here the chief allots wives to his people without consulting their taste; this tribe is an instance in favour of the *Mariage de raison*, as the Azandé are peculiarly fond of their wives, and the couples brought together by the caprice of the chief are generally extremely happy, and some of the ladies show remarkable fidelity to their husbands. The husbands, too, show themselves most affectionate towards their wives, but are exceedingly jealous, and object to strangers even looking at their spouses. In consequence the women are very shy. Not so the Mangbettu, their neighbours, where husbands are only too often hen-pecked, and where women have great influence in the assemblies deciding the destinies of the tribe. Their right to take part in such decisions has greatly influenced their minds, and has given them a spirit of independence and authority rarely found amongst the women of the Congo. There are some women-chiefs found in this tribe who govern with great justice and prudence.

The Momfu are perhaps the only tribe



By permission of the Ethnographical Museum, Tervuren.

WOMEN OF THE WELLE DISTRICT.

Notice the nose ornaments and elaborate girdles.

where it is the men's duty to do the agricultural work; they clear the forest, plant and gather the crops, while their wives only attend to the work of the house, such as cooking, the care of the children, etc. In this tribe wives and husbands eat from the dish together with the children, and this people considers woman as the equal of man: in consequence of this they are despised by their neighbours.

The pygmy ladies are bought by their husbands for three or four arrows!

The Mogwandi are nearly always monogamous because of the scarcity of women: and in order not to be left unprovided with a mate they are wise enough, if they come across a little girl of three or four years, who promises to become pretty, to arrange to marry her on paying the price to her father. As they, too, must bring a present every time they visit their bride, it may be imagined that the possession of a daughter forms a real

source of wealth to the head of the family. But it is always understood that if later the bride bears no children to her husband, a part of the presents must be refunded.

into the water in which she has been washed for the first time, and present the mother with a fowl—he thereby has a right to consider the child his betrothed wife; in case of twins, both girls marry the same man.

Amongst the Bayanzi, nobody but the husband and the brother may call a married woman by her name; all others must mention her as the wife of So-and-so.

In Urua, when the bride is related to the chief, the marriage is celebrated with great festivities. Everybody dances, shouts, and sings in the village, and drink flows in abundance. In the afternoon the bridegroom arrives, and, surrounded by his friends, executes a dance of an hour's duration; then the bride is brought in on the back of some strong matron; the crowd surrounds her, and her human steed executes a wild dance without putting her down; during this dance the bride lets her body and arms hang down and swing about. When the woman who carries her can do no more, the new husband

**Urua
Wedding
Dance.**



WANGATA WOMEN,

One of whom wears the brass neck ornament—weighing upwards of 25 lbs.—which is characteristic among the women of the Upper Congo.

The inhabitants of the Kwilu are familiar with child marriage; any little boy may declare a little girl his future wife, and then, when she is of age, he may marry her. If she does not like him, she may refuse him, and this often happens; but in this case the man to whom she gives her preference must pay to the jilted lover, as it were; damages for breach of promise. In this country a man is not allowed to look at his mother-in-law; if he should see her coming he must run into the bush to avoid her.

A curious kind of child marriage exists amongst the Batetela. When a female infant is born, a man may drop an iron bracelet

approaches, and presents the bride with beads, tobacco, and other trifles. These are thrown by her amongst the crowd, who shout and fight to obtain part of the plunder, as it is considered to bring great luck. Then the bride is put on the ground and executes with her husband a *pas de deux* which cannot be described. Suddenly the husband lifts her in his arms, and runs off with her to his hut.

Conjugal infidelity is severely punished. In the Kwilu the co-respondent becomes a slave of the betrayed husband, whilst the wife receives a good thrashing. Amongst the Bangala the faulty wife has her ears cut

**Child
Marriage.**

and her calves pierced with red hot lances. The Azandé kill the faithless wife, and the rival has his hands and ears cut off. In the Ubangi the unfaithful woman is

Conjugal Infidelity.

killed. The Mogwandi are very severe with a woman who leaves the conjugal home. She is put in the middle of the village, devoid of all dress or ornaments, and the inhabitants defile before her, insulting her and reproaching her with her bad behaviour. Some strike her and spit at her; this done, she is driven by the screaming crowd back to her husband's home.

Marriage for a limited time, as recently advocated in England, exists amongst the Basutanda. Here the young girl is stolen by her sweetheart, who hides with her in the forest till a child is born, when they return triumphantly to the man's village. But there the romance ends; for the wife returns to her parents as soon as the child can be separated from her, and she is only entitled to a part of the game obtained by her husband as long as she is not "stolen" by another man. Amongst the Mogwandi, where, as already mentioned, women are scarce, it often happens that a husband lets his wife to another man for a term of ten months.

If during that time a child is born it belongs to the "lessee"; the lease may be prolonged by a supplementary payment.

The Bakuba, who have been in contact with the Arabs, not only often ill-treat their wives, but if tired of them they exchange them with a friend. Nevertheless, these people expect conjugal fidelity from their wives. If a chief's wife betrays her husband, she is bound to a tree and flogged, and then sent to the co-respondent, who may keep her, but must pay an enormous fine; in the case of an ordinary woman, both she and her lover are killed.

As a rule the social condition of women is not bad; they have to do the agricultural work, and manage their household; but field work is light in this country, where



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SANGO GIRLS.

Showing the method of hair-dressing peculiar to this tribe. The natural locks are lengthened by adding to them hair taken from prisoners or dead women, or by twining them with palm fibres painted black.

the soil is of very great fertility. An intelligent woman can easily attain to honours; and women chiefs are not uncommon. Amongst the Balunda there were always two chiefs; the King "Muata Yamvo," and the King's mother "Lukokesha," who was almost of greater importance than the King himself. The actual Balunda empire was founded by a woman.

As far back as the fifteenth century a great queen was known to travellers in the Congo; this was Zinga, or, as she was later called, Donna Anna Zinga de Souza, who

Social Conditions on the Congo.

governed an important country with great ability. A contemporary traveller says "that a certain chief Kambolo left an important state to his successors, who would still enjoy its possession if a woman, gifted with courage much above her sex, called Zinga, had not

authority at all, women always succeed in the end in making the representatives of the stronger sex do as they wish.

Women are so closely connected with funeral ceremonies that I shall be obliged



SAKARA GIRLS.

By permission of the Ethnographical Museum, Tervuren.

Their hair is braided with beads. Two of these girls have the curious knots of skin down the forehead—a form of personal adornment affected by this tribe.

taken to arms, and having gathered the dissatisfied has dethroned Kambolo, on whom she gained great victories that put her in possession of a whole kingdom."

The Baboma are at the present time governed by a female chief, and the great Mokanda Bantu ben Msiri, King of Garenganza, is absolutely under the guidance of his wife, to whom is due the peaceful condition of the Katanga; and the great friendliness shown by the inhabitants to Europeans.

Mungo Park, in his travels, always found that native women were of great help to him in evading difficulties with the savage tribes which he visited, and any explorer who succeeds in obtaining the favour of this sex may rely upon being unmolested, for, even in tribes where they have nominally no

to describe many of them, irrespectively of whether the person to be buried be a man or a woman. In all

Death and Burial.

cases it is the women's duty to lament the dead, and as a rule the ladies of surrounding villages come to join in the chorus.

In the lower Congo, when a person has died, the body is put on a kind of scaffold under a shed and smoked over a fire of green wood. When the corpse is sufficiently dried, it is wrapped in cloth; the richer the deceased, the more cloth is used; thus a wealthy person when prepared for burial looks like an enormous bale of cloth. The body is then exposed in a hut for a period which may extend to several months. On the day of the funeral all the people of the



A MARRIED BANGALA COUPLE.

Notice the woman's shaven head, and the scar tattooing on the forehead and scalp.

country gather in the village of the deceased, and, to the sound of drums, tom-toms, whistles, and the howling of the women, the corpse is carried to the grave, where all who have guns fire them off. Then eating and drinking begins, finishing up with a general dance which does not terminate until morning. The tomb is decorated with the deceased's belongings, such as pots, empty bottles, household articles, which are "killed" by breaking them, that their spirits may follow their owner to the other world.

In the Kwilu diminutive huts are erected in memory of the dead, in which offerings are placed by relations and friends, consisting of food and palm-wine: it is, perhaps, thought that the soul returns to partake of them. Great importance is attached to the faithful discharge of this duty; for, if neglected, it is believed that the deceased is sure to visit the culprits in their dreams and cause them the most terrible nightmares.

When an Abarambo woman dies her husband disappears into the forest and lives there, sometimes for months, lamenting his deceased wife. A widow does the same; when she returns to the village it is considered that she has forgotten her husband, and is prepared to try another union.

The Banza have a most disgusting ceremonial; the corpse is put on a chair-like scaffold, and a fire is lit under it; the grease, dropping from the corpse, is carefully collected by the mourners, who smear it on their hands and bodies, believing that they thus inherit the virtues of the deceased.

But it is difficult to speak of the Sakara burial ceremonies without shocking the reader.

On a bed, in an immense round grave, his head reposing in his favourite wife's arms, the deceased lies dressed in his richest costume; round him in a circle lie the strangled corpses of his other wives, who have refused to survive their husband. The grave is surrounded by a circle of slain slaves, whose bodies, after the grave has

been closed, will serve as a dish to the invited guests.

The Barua have a somewhat similar custom; a deep hole is dug, and the chief wife, supported on her elbows and knees, crouches there, serving as a seat to the corpse; the second wife serves as a footstool, and the other wives sit round the body; all are buried alive!

The wives of the Bena Kanioka do not submit voluntarily to this treatment, so their legs and arms are broken, to prevent their escape from the grave.

One month after the death of a Baluba chief some of his wives are sent to join him in the next world; they are buried alive round the husband's grave.

Amongst some tribes in the Lado district the widows, together with a number of slaves, are clubbed by a shouting, enthusiastic crowd. When they fall, men and women rush up to them and drive their knives in the still quivering bodies; then the victims are thrown into the grave.

A dying chief of the Bakundi himself names the wives he wishes to be sacrificed after his death.

The inhabitants of the Bomu river are specially cruel in their sacrifices. If a chief happens to be ill he retires into the forest with the fetish man and a few faithful followers. His wives anxiously await the news of his recovery, for on that their lives depend. If he dies his followers spread the news that he has recovered, that his wives may not take the alarm and escape. Great preparations are made for his reception, and the women, full of joy, prepare a great feast, and adorn themselves with their choicest ornaments. Suddenly warriors surround them and inform them of their terrible destiny. Some show despair, but most of them take the awful news with resignation, having always known that it would be their fate; some even seem quite happy to follow their husbands to the other world.

The day after the decease all wives who have not borne children, and one mother of a male child, are shut up in a strong hut, together with numerous slaves who formerly belonged to the deceased. The

people begin to lament the dead, and when the noise has risen to its highest pitch, fire is put to the hut in which are the victims. If they try to escape, they are caught by the warriors and thrown back into the flames.

A large proportion of the inhabitants of the Congo are cannibals; it is true that this statement, as a rule, applies only to men, for the women are usually debarred from taking any part in the banquet; but as they often provide



By permission of the Ethnographical Museum, Tervueren.

A CHIEFTAINESS OF THE WELLE DISTRICT WITH HER ATTENDANTS.

But some wives have been reserved. These are now brought, and, except the two prettiest, are slain above the corpse. The two former, after having their arms and legs broken, enjoy the "privilege" of being buried alive with their husbands. By a refinement of cruelty, holes are left in the grave to allow the air to pass in, and thus prolong for a while the agonies of these two miserable women.

Touching, compared with these customs, is the practice found amongst the Banza; if they have lost some one dear to them, they have his image carved in wood by a skilled artist; this figure is kept in the hut of the mourner, and is an object of great care and veneration.

the most appreciated part of the feast, it is impossible not to enter into some detail with regard to this horrible custom.

Cannibalism may arise from several causes; in some parts, where game is rare, it has resulted from a craving for animal food; in others, it has been caused by the belief that by eating the body of the slain enemy his virtues are transferred to the person who eats him; whilst in others (as some countries in the Aruwimi) a man considers himself a kind of family vault, thinking that no fitter tomb can be found for the dead than the interiors of his relations; moreover in this country the eating of the corpse is regarded as a religious duty to the deceased.

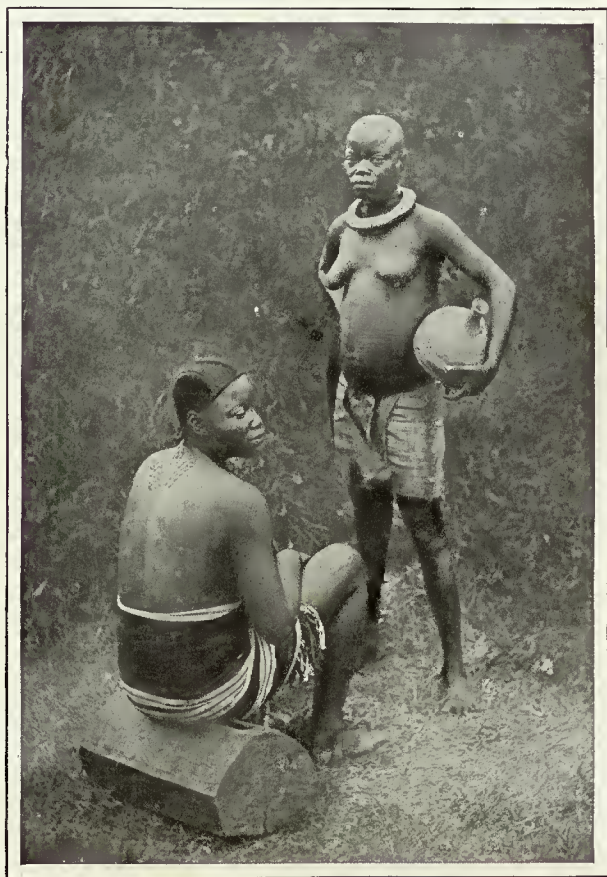
Nowadays, of course, cannibalism is only practised in secret; but when the first explorers came into the country, not only was it practised openly, but the Europeans,

the place of sacrifice, and a grove of palm and banana trees surround the whole with a picturesque screen. In the middle of the circle, alone, sits the unhappy victim on a small chair; he is completely naked and blackened with soot. He seems to be twenty years of age, in good health. Not being bound, he contemplates the audience with interest, and it may be seen by the movement of his chest that his breath is perfectly regular and calm.

"The preparations are long, and whilst these are made by a few men with methodical coolness, the crowd joins in a furious dance, and the musicians beat their instruments madly. A stake, reaching to his shoulders, is placed behind the victim, and his body and his arms are tied to it. The hands, extended behind his body, are fixed to small sticks driven into the ground. A second stake is fixed into the ground before his chest, and his feet are fixed in the same manner as his hands. Then, about four yards in front of him, a long and very flexible pole, about twelve feet high, is driven vertically into the ground. A man jumps and seizes the top and hanging to it by his hands in such a manner as to draw it down, near to the victim's head, which is put in

a roughly made net attached by a string to the end of the pole.

"The innocent victim follows, without emotion, the details of these preparations. Sometimes one of the dancers leaves the crowd and leaps about in front of him. The executioner runs round the assembly, brandishing his enormous Bangala knife, the curved blade of which seems to be shaped to the human neck. Many times he goes near the victim and feigns to try the knife on him. Finally a white line is traced on the spot at the back of the neck destined to receive the final blow. The victim remains unmoved. The executioner says a few words to one of his assistants; the fatal moment approaches. The victim



WANGATA WOMEN.

Showing method of shaving the head and scar tattooing.

being alone amongst an unsubjugated population, were obliged to tolerate it, and sometimes forced to be among the spectators. One of the earliest white men to visit the Bangala, M. Coquilhat, thus describes a "Feast of man eating":

"After a quarter of an hour's walk through the outskirts of the village, we turned a corner and stood before the whole scene. On the left is the band of wooden drums, iron gongs, and ivory trumpets, and the varied sounds of these instruments unite in terrible din; on the right, trembling with excitement, stand the spectators line upon line, in their best dresses, ornamented with feathers, caps, and skins, and paint. The musicians and the crowd form a circle round



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BAKUBA WOMEN.

Showing the wire armlets and anklets.

is blind-folded and his body powdered with white paint.

"The vassals and slaves of the chief file past several times, attired in their war ornaments, brandishing their lances, shields, and knives; then follows a group of dancing women. At last the executioner advances, gloriously attired in blue and scarlet, with a magnificent cap of black feathers on his head, preceded by his wife and surrounded by a great number of people of both sexes. They all proceed round the victim in a kind of dance.

"All people retire from the circle; the executioner takes off his cloth and bends back, so as to touch the ground with one hand on the left side of the condemned; a little white clay is put on his cheeks; he now makes a movement as if to measure his blow, and suddenly strikes. The head describes a circle in the air as the bent pole is re-

leased, and falls to the earth at some distance."

The Bangala and Bapoto are great man-eaters, but as a rule they do not eat women, considering them much too expensive; whilst the Sango show a great preference for women and children.

When the first Europeans came to the Congo, a traveller once met a man walking freely about the market place. His body was marked with red and white lines, and it was said that he was a slave who was to be eaten. As nobody could purchase the whole man, he was sold in pieces, the lines on the body being marks of the purchasers, the red lines being the marks of one tribe, the white those of another. This slave seemed to be perfectly indifferent to his fate; he walked quietly up and down and stopped when some buyer wanted to mark the piece purchased and listened with interest to the discussion of the price!



By permission of the Ethnographical Museum, Teruneren.

BALUBA WOMAN.

The hair is elaborately dressed, but the clothing is singularly scanty.

The Bayanzi do not despise human flesh in a state of complete putrefaction; they even, like hyænas, exhume corpses for consumption.

Much more could be written on this subject, but a return must be made to matters more intimately connected with the central figure of this chapter—woman.

Are the women of the Congo beautiful? This is a very difficult question to answer,

**Physical
Attractions
of Congolese
Women.**

for the beautiful is what pleases, and certainly the negro women are far removed from our standard of beauty. It must be kept clearly in mind that the European, when first he arrives in the dark continent, can scarcely distinguish a man from a woman, and all natives seem to him to have the same features. But the more he lives amongst them the easier he finds it to distinguish sexes and individuals; and later on he is able to deal with the question of good looks.

The Congo women are slenderly built. During a stay of several years in the country I did not come across ten women who could really boast of *embonpoint*. They are not tall, but very well proportioned, and, as far as their figures are concerned, classical beauty is far more frequent among them than among their white sisters. Their back has a graceful "fall," their ankles and wrists are neat; their feet and hands are in proportion; most ladies' gloves made in Europe would be too large for them, and Cinderella's shoe alone might fit their tiny feet. Less pleasing are the racial characteristics exhibited by the head and features. The scalp is covered with woolly hair, which, as a rule, is abundant. The chin is weak, but no more beautiful eyes exist than those of a negro girl—great, bright, almond-shaped eyes shaded by marvellously long eye-lashes. In contradistinction to the pure negro, the Congo inhabitants often have normal lips; their noses are frequently slender and not uncommonly aquiline in shape. Their teeth are like so many pearls, but, unhappily, they are often deformed by filing. Their language is soft, melodious,

and very picturesque. They like to speak in metaphors, and give great emphasis by intonation to what they say. They are very fond of a friendly chat, and are naturally inquisitive. When all other means failed to get on friendly terms with the inhabitants of a village, I used to take out some illustrated magazines and look carelessly over the pictures. The people for a time would keep at a distance, but slowly the women would begin to separate from the group and approach to have a peep. More and more would come, the "Eh," and "Oh," and "Ah," increased in strength, and at last one would take courage and request me to tell them what all these pictures meant, and of course I was quite disposed to do so. They seemed very curious to know all about Europe, especially about women. What long hair they had! How white they were! And a man never had more than one woman! As a rule they greatly approved of European beauty, and, when told about the social condition of their sisters "far, far beyond the seas," much envied them.

It is a popular belief that all women are open to flattery. In the Congo, at any rate, the occasion of paying compliments to ladies must never be let slip; they are highly pleased by it. But they are vindictive too; an affront to a tribe is resented more by the women than by men, and they are always ready to incite the latter to take a bloody revenge.

They are very kind-hearted, and in countries where food is scarce, and where men may refuse to sell provisions, a woman will never refuse the traveller the necessaries for his maintenance. Amongst the Balunda it was formerly the custom, if a foreigner came to a village, for some woman of the locality to undertake to provide his food during his stay; no compensation was required for this; if the traveller could afford it, he gave her a present at parting.

Women of tribes near the rivers are very cleanly, and bathe several times a day; the "negro smell" attributed to them becomes imperceptible after a prolonged stay

amongst them, In the same way, we do not smell the "European smell" although it exists, and is not much appreciated by the negroes. At any rate, it seems a proof that their odour is less penetrating than ours if we consider that it is far less offensive to game. It is a fact that traps laid by negroes in the same manner as by Europeans are more successful than those laid by the latter.

Among tribes of the forest, often living at a great distance from the water, women scarcely ever wash. The toilet consists of spreading over their bodies a mixture of red wood stain, called "*tukula*"; or "*n'gula*" and palm-oil, which is scraped off about once a month with a piece of bone or wood, and then renewed.

All women possess a piece of fibrous wood with which they continually brush their teeth.

When it comes to the preparation of food, a duty which devolves on the women, the greatest cleanliness is found everywhere. The chief food is a kind of paste made of manioc flour boiled in water. This is stirred with a wooden spoon, and the housewife never touches it with her hand in preparing it, and in dishing it up. The preparation of this flour, which is pounded in big mortars, is one of the most important occupations of women; and the preparation of palm-oil is also part of their work. All women work; but in some tribes the favourite wife may be an exception for a short time. The food is the same as for man; but in some tribes certain dishes are not permitted to women. The Bambala women are not allowed to eat goats or game; the Bayaka women are forbidden to eat fowls or eggs, and it is supposed that if a woman breaks this restriction she becomes mad, tears off her clothes and runs away into the bush. When found she is caught and fastened to a log with a fork at one end in which her neck is fixed; thus secured she is brought to the magician. He knocks on the log three times, and the woman

faints; he then pours water on her face, and the spell is broken.

On the other hand Bahuana women are allowed to eat frogs, whilst the men may not do so, and among the Marungu women alone are permitted to eat mulberries.

The principal food is manioc bread; but the dainties appreciated by Congo people are of a nature to make a European epicure shiver. Locusts, crickets, all kinds of caterpillars, and white ants are some of them.

As for religion, very few of the inhabitants of the Congo country have an idea of a benevolent divinity, but the belief in an evil spirit is general. The so-called idols brought from the Congo are not believed by the natives to possess any supernatural power by themselves, it is only the "*Kissi*" or magic force that the fetish man smears on them that is powerful. No prayers are addressed to these 'idols'; their duty is to prevent mischief from happening to their owners, and, if they do not fulfil it, big nails or knives are driven into them to remind them of their obligation.

The habitation of the Congo woman is a hut, quadrangular, rectangular or round, according to the tribe, and, as a rule, made of straw or leaf. Each married woman possesses her own house, and the husband lives with his wives alternately; the wife with whom he stays provides him with food.

There is an unwritten law in accordance with which pottery-making and the selling of provisions is reserved for women.

Woman's greatest pleasure lies in singing and dancing, and the time of new moon is considered the right season for these amusements. The Congo woman's voice resembles that of a child and has no great compass. Many women smoke tobacco and take snuff; in the Bakuba and Basongo-Meno tribes they smoke hemp, the effects of which are very intoxicating, and highly injurious to the health; but the process forms a part of the religious ceremonies of these tribes.

Among many tribes, geophagists or earth-eaters are found, who devour a kind of kaolin earth, pretending that it frees them from pains in the stomach.

And now if one should want to know which is the most accomplished, the best, the most

beautiful and most desirable woman of the Congo, go and ask the first young warrior to be met there. The invariable reply will be: "Why, it's the girl I love," so it is evident that opinions differ widely on this subject.



BAZOKO WOMEN MAKING POTS.

THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA

By NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS

I

Woman and Dress—A Sherbro Island Belle—The Question of Ornament—Beauties of the “Backlands”—The Charm of Native Dress—Variety of West African Types—Clothed and Unclothed Classes—Varieties of Colour and Looks—Styles of Hairdressing—Skin Decoration—Dress—Woman’s Work—The Event of Initiation—A Secret Society for Women—The Bundu Devil—A Strange Funeral Ceremony—How Women become Members of the Men’s Secret Society—Marriage Ceremonies—Official Lovers—Polygamy—Birth Customs—How Twins are Treated—Children’s Food—Mourning Customs—The Position of Widows—How Widowers have to Pay Compensation

Woman and Dress. THE impious male has been known to declare that woman does not always look her best tricked out in the latest fashions; independent bachelor minds, to whom milliners’ bills are not, or should not be, a standing menace, have, greatly daring, put forward the proposition that woman unadorned is the loveliest of Eve’s daughters. Whether the dictum is true of the European wife or maid we need not here venture to inquire; we are concerned with the dusky beauty of Africa, and there are no two views as to the impropriety of her bedizening herself with what were, a few years previously, the latest creations of Paris fashionable milliners. If the negress does not look her best absolutely unadorned, the simple black garb which nature gave her is at any rate preferable to balloon sleeves or whatever the receding tide of fashion in Europe may have cast up as treasure trove at her feet. There are many stages between the unsophisticated native belle of the interior, with barbaric silver chains standing out in brilliant relief from her glossy, well-oiled skin, and the Europeanised woman of the coast, say at Sherbro Island.

Mr. Alldridge, in “Sherbro and the Hinterland,” has described the progress of one of

the latter, culminating in the acquisition of patent leather boots, which transforms her gait from the splendidly free and graceful walk born of the uncabined human foot and the bearing of burdens on her head, into the miserable hobble of the tortured votary of fashion.

A Sherbro Island Belle.

The Question of Ornament.

The ornaments of the lower races may be barbaric, and even hideous, yet they are seldom incongruous; but it is a singular thing that when these races seek to leave the traditional path, and put on European garb, they often commit some glaring solecism, or fail to realise that there is such a thing as harmonising the colours of their attire. The lady described by Mr. Alldridge completed her costume—a Princess robe, with patent leather boots—by putting upon her head a brightly coloured, not to say gaudy, Madras handkerchief, with the two ends tied in orthodox fashion so as to stand up from her forehead like two horns.

As a contrast to the too receptive woman of the coast, let us look upon another picture. In the backlands, where chiefs are powerful, and happy in the possession of many wives, young and old, the proud husband comes to a palaver attended by

a dozen or so of his junior spouses ; each carries some article for his use, one his sword, another his snuff-box, and so on ; and they vie with one another in paying him attention (*O si sic omnes*).

Beauties of the "Backlands."

Ornaments apart, their attire would not fetch in the pawnshop the price of a bottle of ginger beer ; but they make up for it by the satiny sheen of their comely black limbs, polished perhaps with oil, and delightfully cool and velvety to the sight and touch. Unadorned, however, they certainly are not ; barbaric silver chains and heavy plaques of the same metal hang loosely on them and give forth a metallic clang as they walk ; five or six leopards' teeth strung on a cord press tightly on their ebony necks ; and from wrist to elbow their arms are covered in the well-known African style, with massive silver armlets.

But it would be unfair to suggest that the African woman only looks well, or looks her best, when she is, according to European ideas, unclothed. Clad in the products of native looms, especially if she belongs to the better classes, the black woman may be very charming, as Mr. Norman Hardy's picture of "A Kabinda Lady" shows, and for those who are inured or indifferent to the colour of her skin may rival or surpass her fairer sister. Mr. Alldridge was by no means indifferent to the charming picture presented by a small native girl, clothed though she was. One of the pictures that recurred to his imagination most vividly was that of a fruit-seller, a dot of a girl

in a loose blouse and white muslin garment with coral earrings in her ears ; she was the prettiest little creature imaginable.

To depict or describe any considerable proportion of the swarming peoples of the Western coast of Africa would be a gigantic task, and when it

Variety of West African Types.

was accomplished the reader would profit little by the effort, unless his preference in literature is for works of the dimensions and dullness of an encyclopædia. As well might one take the British Isles county by county and attempt to produce a readable account of woman's life in each. There are diversities in the bodily appearance of African women—Sir H. H. Johnston classifies the peoples of the continent into long and short-legged—no less than in their headdress, ornaments and mode of life ; woman's lot is not everywhere the same, and the customs of, and regard-



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

SANGE : A MANDINGO WOMAN.

Note the corkscrew curl above the ear.

ing, women are even more diversified ; but a survey of woman's life at half a dozen different points will be more generally intelligible than the most conscientious Blue-bookery work.

If we start from St. Louis in Senegal, at the mouth of the river of that name, and proceed along the coast we find first the Wolof, who extend to below Cap Verde, then a number of tribes, Bulom, Bissago, Felup, Serer, Timni, to beyond Sherbro Island ; then for a short distance on the coast Mandingo, whose territory in the backland stretches six hundred miles east and west, and three

The Charm of Native Dress.

Clothed and Unclothed Classes.

hundred north and south ; there, too, are the Mendi, the Gora, and the Vai, and other Mohammedanised peoples, who are characterised by ample clothing ; beyond them are the Kru, famous as the boatmen of West Africa, and, like sailors elsewhere, in the past if not in the present, lovers of strong drink ; with the Grebo and other of their neighbours they are characterised by an almost complete absence of clothing, and the costume of a Kru maiden is often no more than a string of beads with a tiny beadwork square of leather or cloth in front. Between the Kru and the Mandingo of the backlands come the Kpwesi, of whom little is known ; and intermingled with the Mandingo are the important Fula people, also Mohammedan, a cross perhaps between the negro and Libyan invaders in the dim prehistoric period, and themselves giving birth, it may be, by further crossing, to the already mentioned Mandingo.

As regards looks, a question which naturally claims the first place when we are dealing with women, the Mandingo, perhaps, take the first place among the tribes just enumerated ; but good looks are found sporadically in most tribes, and the charms of the Vai, both in manner and person, have been sung by many writers.

The colour of the skin varies very widely ; it may be golden yellow in some Mandingo, Kpwesi and Vai, and at the other extreme we find the deep black of some of the Kru ; the Gora and others tend to be deep brown in colour. The hair is usually abundant, and Susu women, belonging to the Mandingo stock in east Sierra Leone, have a shock which is quite Papuan in character.

The Kru women, a short-legged people on the whole, are less good looking ; they may have comely figures, but, whatever native beaux may think of them, more often present a misshapen appearance to European eyes, owing to a too luxuriant development ; even where this is absent, they often appear very broad in the pelvic region, and across the back of the thighs.

The Gora women have rather a Soudanese

type of face with broad cheek bones and rather prominent jaw, which makes them less good looking than the men ; but the Kpwesi are described as well proportioned, even graceful. A singular feature about this tribe is that the women seem to be taller on an average than the men. The Vai woman of high degree is fascinating and altogether a picturesque and pleasing object.

The styles of hairdressing are countless ; often a handkerchief is worn, and then, of course, the hair is short ; it may be adorned, as with the Vai, by silver bangles. The Susu woman combs out her hair to full length ; and the Grandi woman has a cone of hair, bound near the base. In the Sherbro district, where the coiffure, once made up, has to last for some time, the help of a friend is secured ; the patient lies with her head in the operator's lap and a strong wood comb is applied ; when the hair is at full length other pieces of wool elaborately plaited are made fast to it, till the erection is complete. In its finished form the hair runs in ridges from back to front upon a foundation of soft material ; a silver or cane skewer is often passed through the mass, which as time goes on is called into more and more frequent use.

In the way of personal adornment we find both cicatrices and tattoo proper in vogue. The Vai women have raised scars on their backs—made when they pass the bush school—and so do the Gora ; the men abstain. The Kpwesi women, on the other hand, are less given to the practice than the men.

Tattoo is produced by introducing colouring matter under the skin, and the Kru, both men and women, have a broad blue band down the forehead ; Gibi women have slanting blue lines down the neck and arms.

Another favourite form of personal adornment is to daub the body with white or coloured clay mixed with animal fat, or with stripes of indigo. A Kru woman in

Styles of Hairdressing.

Varieties of Colour and Looks.

Skin Decora- tion.

putting on her gala costume will not fail to smear her face with brown clay, and draw a circle of white kaolin round each eye. In the Sherbro district the marks are renewed each morning, and the paint is taken from its shell cup, and applied by means of the index finger.

In the matter of clothing proper we find that the Mandingo women are usually naked to the waist—the amplitude of clothing in Mohammedan tribes is characteristic of the men—but from this point cloths of great length and breadth are wound several times round the body; a string may be added as a girdle, and additional folds thrown over it, to hang down more loosely. The Kru women, as

Dress. of clothing in Mohammedan tribes is characteristic of the men—but from this point cloths of great length and breadth are wound several times round the body; a string may be added as a girdle, and additional folds thrown over it, to hang down more loosely. The Kru women, as

we have seen, are not overburdened in their youth; but the coast women are tending more and more to add to their dress. Calico is wound round from the waist to the knees, and mothers often wind broad pieces of cloth from the waist downwards, forming a nest in which the child finds a comfortable resting place.

Weaving is generally looked upon as women's work; but, African fashion, it falls

Woman's Work.

to the lot of the men among the Mandingo, though the carding and spinning are done by women. The seeds are picked out by hand in Western Liberia, and carded with a tense bowstring. Then swathes of cotton wool are wound round a stick, and this spool is held high in the left hand; the right hand draws the thread with a twisting motion, and it is wound off on another spool, weighted with baked clay. The Mendi woman sits down with the cotton before her, free of seed; in her hand she holds a piece of cane as spool, on one end of which she inserts a cone of steatite; this piece of cane she revolves in a shell, and, continually twirling, draws out the flaky cotton. Here, too, the cotton must be re-wound before use, but this work falls to the lot of the weaver, who may be seen walking round the town, spool in hand, engaged in re-winding the thread for his use.

The manufacture of pottery, too, is almost always the work of women, and some of the palm-wine jars will hold several gallons. The implements are simple, for the wheel is unknown. In the Sherbro district the woman seats herself before a wet slab of wood on which she puts a lump of clay; her tools are her hands, supplemented by a couple of palm



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

GORA WOMEN.

The prominent jaw and broad face are characteristic of this tribe.

canes and a supply of water; but a few minutes suffice for her to turn out the finished bowl. —*Piso*—made of cane; on the top of their

high *coiffure* they wear seeds as large as grapes; a leopard's tooth indicates that they are freeborn, not slaves, and in the way of ornament they have the usual massive silver armlets. For the decoration of the body they use the aforementioned scars, and the face is whitened with kaolin or some similar matter. They wander freely about under the guardianship of their *duennas*, for few men care to incur the wrath of the *Bundu* society. When they meet anyone they greet them by raising their hands at full length above their heads, accompanying the process by a weird, long-drawn-out note; then they bend forward till their hands

The most important event in a woman's life is in

The Rite of Initiation.

most tribes her initiation. Before that time she has little to do, save perhaps to look after the younger children; but as she goes to the "bush school" at the age of eight or nine this is hardly surprising. If she has already been betrothed—a matter of money payment, £3 or so among the Mendi—her *fiancé* bears the cost of her education till she is of marriageable age, otherwise the girl's own family is responsible. Let no one imagine that the school is anything like what we know by the name; true, some rude

cooking may be taught, but of other women's duties hardly a trace—even the care of infants does not enter into the curriculum. The principal course of instruction is one in the *ars amoris*, and according to well-informed observers the girls emerge from their training with minds like cesspools.

As an example of the customs connected with these schools we may take the practices

A Secret Society for Women.

of the Mendi, with whom the training serves as an introduction to the *Bundu*, or women's secret society. The girls are under the control of elderly women; as a rule their costume is far more scanty than is shown in the illustration on p. 340,



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A KRU WOMAN.

Showing heavy finger-rings and other ornaments.

touch the ground and return to the normal position. Often the wailing cry is the first intimation that they are near.

Their dancing costume consists of a net covering the body, short knickers of cotton cloth, and bunches of palm fibre hanging from armlets of the same material. To their dress are attached fragments of iron, and as they move these give out a melodious sound. The music of the dance is provided by the *sehguwa*, a woman's instrument (*see* p. 341). It is a gourd covered with a loosely fitting cotton net strung with hard split seeds; the long loose ends of the cotton are gathered over the bulbous end of the gourd, and held in the left hand; the right hand holds the narrow neck. To produce the sound the gourd is shaken, and the cords

alternately loosened and drawn taut, so that the seeds strike the shell.

When the time comes for girls to leave the school, they are first washed; for this purpose they are marched down to the water, and no man may grace the ceremony by his presence; he is not, however, forbidden to make observations from a coign of vantage in the window of a neighbouring house. After the washing, the girl is then probably smeared with a pomade of animal fat and palm oil mixed, and led to the house of her *fiancé*.

But before we come to marriage and allied

questions,
The Bundu Devil. mention must be

made of the *Bundu* devil—a woman magician, whose function it is amongst other things to see that no man interferes with the *Bundu* girls. Everyone has heard of Mumbo Jumbo, the masked figure of the men's society upon whom no woman may look and live; the *Bundu* devil is his female counterpart, though the sight of her is not fatal to the fortunate male. She is a strange figure; no part of her body is visible; cloth covers her arms and legs, and the ends are sewn up, lest haply a finger tip should be seen. In each hand she holds, of course through the cloth, a bunch of twigs which plays an important part when a malefactor has to be sought out. Her dress is of long shaggy fibre, dyed black, and over her face is a mask, grotesquely carved. She dances occasionally, but in the warm climate her close-fitting attire forbids much indulgence in such exertion. In fact her attendant, known as a *Digba*, carries a roll of cloth which she at times unfolds to act as an undressing room for her superior, when the latter gets

too warm and finds fresh air a necessity. At other times the roll of cloth is carried by the *Digba* between herself and her superior, for the latter is charged with dangerous power which may do her subordinate an injury if she does not take care to insulate herself as much as possible.

If a man has been so rash as to put himself within reach of *Bundu* law, this strange figure sets forth, accompanied by several *Digbas*, and points at the man, when she has found him, with her twigs; he dare not refuse to follow, and when he appears before the chief will have to pay a heavy fine. In former days failure to find the money would have meant slavery. Often, however, a prudent man will come to terms with the head



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A BUNDU WOMAN, BOPASS,
WESTERN LIBERIA.

The top of the *coiffure* is decorated with seeds.

woman of the *Bundu* society, and avoid the unpleasantness of being sought out in this public way for his transgressions.

Before we leave the subject of *Bundu*, allusion may be made to another society of women, the *Yassi*, all members of which must belong to the *Bundu*. Strange ceremonies follow the death of a *Yassi* woman;

A Strange Funeral Ceremony.

her body is laid upon a cloth and borne round the house in which she lived by women of the order, dancing and singing without a stitch of clothing on them. A decoction is sprinkled to keep off her spirit, and *Porro* men (members of the men's secret society) proceed to hold a *post-mortem*, in order to discover if the deceased was a witch or not. During this trial all have to leave the village, the jury alone excepted; they take out the dead woman's liver and try whether it will float or not, and according as the

test falls out, she is pronounced innocent or guilty.

More curious still is the custom which makes certain women members of the men's secret society. It is the law that no woman may look on a dead man of the *Tasso* grade; should one hide and peep—and woman was ever curious—illness comes upon her, and when she confesses fines are imposed, and she is called upon to undergo initiation. Thenceforth she is called *Mabori*, and is reckoned as both man and woman; not the least of her privileges is that she is not liable to be called to account for conjugal misdemeanours.

When the bride, well oiled, makes her way to her future husband's village at her departure from the *Bundu* school, she probably finds great preparations for a feast; palm wine at least is there in plenty, and a bridegroom of any position will have a store of rum or brandy. Music, more or less melodious, will grace the feast—near a Mandingo settlement the little harps of the professional musicians discourse music which even a white man may appreciate—and at the height of the festivity the bride's mother leads her to the husband's hut. Other women, friends of the bride, surround the hut and keep up a loud singing to celebrate the happy event and permit the newly-married couple to exchange confidences, sure of not being overheard.

Among some tribes of the Kru stock feminine freedom takes a remarkable form.

A girl who has been pledged from early childhood, says Sir H. H. Johnston, is nevertheless allowed to have an official lover, when she wishes, between twelve and fourteen. Some time later she is taken over by her husband; but, before he can enter upon his rights, his wife must not only have given birth to a child, but also have weaned it; so that by

the time all these formalities have been observed the bride is sixteen or seventeen, for the negro mother suckles her child for at least eighteen months, and among the Mandingo custom demands that husband and wife shall remain continent for three years after the birth of a girl, or four after the birth of a boy.

One result of this regulation is that polygamy is the natural state of things, though, of course, not all men among the common people can afford two legitimate wives; for, as we have already seen, a wife is purchased, and an ordinary bride price is a cow, a couple of slaves, or their equivalent in goods, and twenty pieces of kola nut. But a big chief may have a hundred wives or even two hundred, especially if he is the head of the tribe. However, the ordinary man who has only one wife does not really suffer much hardship at the present day, for infidelity after marriage is not regarded in a serious light; in fact, society is on the side of the young wife who relegates her old husband to the second place, if not the third, and the old men are beginning to look on the misdemeanours of their wives as a part of the natural order of things.

Secret misdemeanours are forbidden by the Kru laws, and the husband who catches his wife *in flagrante delicto*, either in his own or the woman's hut, may fall upon the male culprit and inflict a severe beating, while the wife does not get off scot free. But before doing so the husband must politely bow the male offender over the threshold, for hospitality is a law that knows no exceptions; and the adulterer, so long as he is on the premises, is the guest of the husband, who may do him no hurt; once outside there is no protection. Nowadays, however, the matter is generally put right by a present of a few dollars, and it is only the habitual adulterer who has to face a severer penalty; he may be haled before the chief and compelled to pay heavy damages, or in default be sold into slavery.



GROUP OF BUNDU GIRLS, YANDAHU (see p. 337)

During the initiation ceremonies.

By the courtesy of T. F. Aldridge, I.S.O.

The birth customs are usually simple, and up to the day of the little stranger's appearance the woman goes about her accustomed tasks. In some tribes a woman goes into the bush to be delivered, and in this case is frequently unattended; in others she goes into another house in the same or an adjoining village. Among the Kru she is confined in her own home, and the same is true of the Mandingo. Of course no man may be present, and in most cases the woman is invisible to the male sex for some days after the event. The Mandingo women remain at home seven days, and on the eighth go abroad, and the father provides a feast. As soon as a birth takes place the woman attendant goes out and announces to the village the happy event, and the sex of the newcomer. At the feast the baby's head is shaved, and it is clothed and washed in full view of the people, but it may not leave the village for forty days, and the mother is subject

Birth Customs.

There is a curious difference of opinion in Africa on the subject of twins; some tribes hold them to be extraordinarily auspicious, and render the mother all sorts of honours; others kill the children and ostracise the mother. In the tribes with which we are dealing the rule is less drastic, but they are regarded with suspicion. Girls are on the whole more valuable than boys, and so when the twins are of different sexes, and this, according to Sir H. H. Johnston, is the rule in Liberia, where the girl is kept alive. Twins seem to be by no means uncommon, and in 1905 a woman of the Gold Coast distinguished herself by giving birth to six children, all living; but in such cases the whole brood is probably put away, for the natives regard the event as a horrible reversion to beast customs, much as twins are regarded in other parts.

Three months after birth the children receive as part of their food pellets of pounded

to the same rule. Among other tribes the mother does not do more than rub her child with palm oil, but everywhere great care is taken to keep the children clean and healthy, though, of course, infant mortality is very high. There is a certain amount of infanticide, chiefly to dispose of the maimed or defective, and weaklings usually succumb owing to natural causes; but the net result of the death rate is to produce human beings of splendid physique.

banana or mashed manioc, and at the end of twelve months they are feeding themselves on rice and other food prepared for their parents; but probably they do not cease to enjoy their natural nourishment for some months more. Children are rarely ill-treated, says Sir Harry Johnston, and both fathers and mothers have a great affection for them.

When a woman dies her body is often painted with indigo or a dark green dye; or variety may be added by grey wood-ashes or white kaolin. Sometimes the hair is allowed to grow as a sign of mourning, sometimes it is shaved off; and rings of dried grass or palm bark are a frequent sign of mourning. In the Mendi country women and girls who

be replaced by narrow strips of cotton fibre. As a further mark of mourning they shave a furrow one inch wide round the head.

The widows of the chief live for six months in a barri or court-house, and are then free to marry again, but as a rule they pass to the eldest brother of the deceased; on his death they go on to the next brother, and so on till the family is finished. Then they become "free women," which means that they are at liberty to dispose of their favours, for a consideration, where they will. So far from being despised they are the leaders of society, and when a married man is successful in securing the goodwill of one of them, and inducing her to quit her former flame, his wives celebrate the occasion, and he gives vent to his joy



MENDI WOMEN PLAYING *SEHGURA*, OR GOURD-RATTLES (see p. 337).

are mourning for a chief put on their heads small circlets made of finely twisted grass cord, black, yellow, brown, or some combination of these colours; they may also

by firing guns; for such a mark of preference means that the recipient becomes a more important man in the estimation of his neighbours.

It appears that among the Vai any male relative may propose, and his love letter takes the form of a strip of the bark of the *raphia* palm. The woman is free to accept or reject the proposal by retaining or returning the bark strip.

Divorce in these lands is a very simple matter; in fact, it consists in sending the wife home to her own people and then wrangling with them as to the return of the bride price. It is far more troublesome to become a widower. In the interior of the Kru country, if a man's wife, a stranger to his village, dies suddenly, her parents may make

**How
Widowers
have to pay
Compensa-
tion.**

a claim for compensation, which has to be met by the chief or by the husband. If the demand is not complied with, the woman's parents are apparently allowed by custom to raid the hen-roosts of the place where the woman died, and may even go so far as to burn down the town.

Among the Vai the custom takes another form: the widower sends a sum of money to the grandparents as a ransom for the children whom he has had by the deceased woman; if it is not paid, they will go to their mother's relatives. Compliance with the custom has the additional attraction of providing a fresh wife, for, if there is another daughter, she comes into her deceased sister's place.

II

Tribes of the Ivory and Gold Coasts—A Woman's Day in Ashanti—Woman is Man's Equal—Women as Traders—Wongave Dress—"Fetish" Dresses worth £200 each—Curious Wedding Custom—Women Officials of Dahomey—The Famous Amazons—"Water Women"—A Race of Trading Women—Bini Women—Houses in West Africa—Hausa Women—Cross River Women—Cross River Betrothal and Marriage

WHEN we leave the Mandingo tribes, among whom in the broadest sense the Kru may be included, we come to the populations of the Ivory and Gold Coasts, Ashanti, Togo, and Dahomey, to the Yoruba, Bini, and other Nigerians, and to the peoples of the Cross River. Then we pass into German territory in Kamerun, where a Bantu population prevails, speaking languages allied to those of the whole of South Africa, Bushmen and Hottentots excepted; and in French Congo and further south we find allied tribes. The mere enumeration of all the teeming tribes of this area and its backlands, not to speak of the central group round Lake Chad, would occupy pages; even a cursory survey of representative tribes of the main groups is a large task, and only salient points can here be selected for notice.

The Tshi-speaking peoples of Ashanti and the Gold Coast are forest-dwellers and

cultivators. Before six in the morning the woman is on her way, water-pot poised on her head, to fetch water from the river, in which, if time permits, she takes a morning bath; and about nine she has the morning meal of bananas and yams ready for her husband and family. But before this she has brushed out the house and the courtyard, a duty which no self-respecting negress will neglect, though she may let a girl act in her stead.

**A Woman's
Day in
Ashanti.**

Perhaps, however, her husband has announced his intention of spending the day on the plantation, of which each family has, as a rule, two, one near the village, the other more remote. Then she sets out, one child on her back, another clinging to her hand, and on her head is a large basket. Her husband, of course, stalks along in manly dignity behind her, with his gun or machet in his hand; unless perchance he is a Christian with only one wife, in which case he must perforce aid her, for polygamy is

not allowed. In the ordinary native family it is the presence of more than one woman which makes it possible for the day's work to be done in twenty-four hours.

Between two and three she is on her homeward way, for the chief meal of the day must be got ready; her burden of sixty or eighty pounds is no joke in this climate, and her first thought when she reaches the hut is to take a bath, after which she anoints herself with oil; for without this her skin turns a dirty grey, and cracks in times of drought. Then comes the dressing of her hair, and if she has time she summons a neighbour to construct one of the erections shown in some of the illustrations; or if there is no one handy she may sit down before her mirror and perform the operation herself. More often these details of her toilette are postponed till the evening when she has more time.

Hard-worked, however, as she is, the Ashanti woman is not a mere slave.

**Woman is
Man's Equal.**

Bonnat says that she is regarded as man's equal; a chief's wife acts as his representative in his absence. The queen mother is the regent during her son's minority, and in after-life remains one of his chief counsellors. She is the guardian of the royal treasure left by the preceding sovereign, and only gives up the charge of it when the new king has sufficiently proved his wisdom.

The woman of the Gold Coast is often a trader; in Soku market she sits on a little stool or a mat; her goods are in large baskets or small grass sacks, and they

consist of shea butter; baobab seeds for soup, rice, maize, pancakes, etc.; nor must we forget to mention the salt crystals which represent the sweets of the little black youngsters, and are sucked with avidity.

**Women as
Traders.**



By the courtesy of T. F. Alldridge, I.S.O.

A PRINCESS OF THE DAMA COUNTRY.

Note the leopard's-teeth necklace.

The Wongave women who frequent this market wear large cloths as dresses, made of wild cotton, strong and soft, and dyed with indigo. Their hair is dressed in three globular masses, one on the top of the head, and one on each temple; there are two stiff locks, one in front of each ear, with strings of bright beads at the ends; and their ears are pierced and decorated with beads.

The young women of the Gold Coast have, of course, to undergo various initiation ceremonies. The illustration on

**"Fetish"
Dresses
worth £200
each.**

p. 345 represents their full dress at Krobo, and is known as the dress of the "fetish" Otufu. At

the age of puberty they perambulate the country in this costume, dancing and receiving presents. It is a preparation for marriage, after which they do not appear in this semi-nude condition. Some years ago the Governor attempted to abolish the custom, but failed, except as regards some of the towns. The caps and other ornaments worn by the women in the illustration consist of Gold Coast silver and valuable beads; it is said that the market value of the dress of each girl is at least £200.

On the other side of the Volta River live the Ga-speaking peoples, but their customs

need not detain us. The Mamprusi of the Gambaga country have a unique wedding custom. Unmarried girls wear little or nothing in the street, and perhaps it is just as well, for when they get married an important part of the ceremony is to bathe them in public. On the eve of the wedding,

**Curious
Wedding
Custom.**



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Donnett.

AN ACCRA WOMAN.

The hair is ornamented with shells, etc.

in two pots, six gallons of water are boiled with herbs, and during the process drums are beaten, and continuous watch is kept. At noon on the auspicious day a bath is made ready in a public place, with the water, which has been kept boiling; cold water and native perfumes are added, and the bride is bathed for five hours or more, while Kola nut and cowries are distributed to the guests and musicians. Then the bride is covered all over with perforated native cloth, and conducted home, to be led at midnight to the house of her husband, who has also undergone ablutions—though not in public. Unmarried girls may not cover the head, and it is a sign of the estate of marriage when a woman wears a cloth upon her head falling down over her back.

Beyond the Ga-speaking peoples come the Ewe-speaking peoples, whose district embraces the old kingdom of Dahomey,

where, contrary to the usual practice, the king's eldest son was his heir; for the

ordinary rule of succession is that a man is succeeded by his sister's son. Strangely enough

this exceptional practice was associated with an extensive system of women officials and warriors; for while the officers of the kingdom were male, those of the palace were female, and within their own domain took precedence of the men, perhaps because they were, in name, the king's wives. By a quaint turn of phrase the female officials were the "mothers" of the male officials, and there was an "English mother" for the benefit of English visitors.

These palace women had another function; they were the king's spies, and he had no difficulty in introducing them into the family of a chief or other suspected person, for all he had to do was to make a present of one or more of the women: this was regarded as an honour, and could not be declined, though it was common knowledge that they were sent to serve the king's interests.

But the most characteristic feature of Dahomey in the not very far distant days

of the old *régime* was the corps of Amazons, also known by the titles of the "king's

wives," and "our mothers." Their origin did not go back to a very remote period, for they seem to have been enrolled for the first time in 1729, and for nearly a century consisted mainly of criminals, that is women detected in adultery, together with termagants and scolds. Early in the nineteenth century the force was put on a new footing, every head of a family being ordered to send his daughters for inspection. The negro woman is inured to labour, and in Dahomey especially was, and perhaps is, physically superior to the male sex; for Burton tells us that the women were generally tall, muscular and broad, while the men were smooth, full-breasted, round limbed and effeminate looking.

The Amazons were sworn to celibacy, though the king had the privilege of taking

**The Famous
Amazons.**



THE "OTUFO" DRESS IN CROBO, GOLD COAST. *Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.*
 Girls are thus dressed during the period of their initiation ceremonies. The ornaments are chiefly of silver.

any of them to wife ; but though they were supposed to meet the male sex only on the field of battle, human nature is frail, and when Burton was at Agbomi, no fewer than one hundred and fifty of the women were put to death for misconduct, the results of which were only too evident. In peace time one of their duties was to escort the king's wives when they went to fetch water, and a bell was rung before them as a signal for all men to leave the road.

In war they are said to have displayed the most ferocious courage, disregarding danger, wounds, and death itself, and one of their chief aims was to carry off trophies in the shape of heads and jawbones.

In many parts of West Africa tribes may be classified into people of the land and people of the water. In Nigeria, the home of the Yoruba-speaking peoples, we may take the Jekri and Ijo as representative of the latter, the Yoruba proper and Bini as examples of the former. The Jekri woman is a "water-dog"; she goes up river in her canoe, paddling on alternate sides when she is alone, to bring food down to the settlements, for she does not plant. She is clean and comely, she wears a shoulder cloth of red, blue, or yellow European stuff with bracelets of silver or brass.

Her house is on the water-side, and she helps to build it of wattles; among her other occupations is the making of rough mats. She decorates her cheeks and back with a series of round dots.

The Ijo women are like the Jekri; their husbands make for them the canoes which they need for their trade in smoked fish, captured with hook and line, traps, or spears. As becomes a people who live by the water their huts are built on piles. The tribal mark of this people is a deep scar down the forehead and nose.

The Yoruba women on the other hand are "land-rats." They, too, are great traders; they do no planting, but travel daily from town to market, starting at five a.m. Bargaining goes on till about eleven, and then

they make their own purchases and set out on their homeward way, often with sixty pounds of load and the indispensable baby. The Yoruba woman is of slender build, she has good taste in dress, and wears mainly dark-hued raiment and a dark turban. So ingrained is her love of trading that even the wives of civilised natives cannot resist the temptation of it, just as the Englishwoman falls a victim to the delights of shopping, even when she has neither money nor credit with which to make purchases.

The Bini woman wears fewer clothes as a rule, often only a loin cloth; when she has more, they are in the Jekri fashion. Her chief ornament is coral, but the chiefs' wives wear brass anklets and bracelets. Common women wear the hair just brushed up and cut short, but the king's wives have elaborate *coiffures*—three great knobs of hair surmounted by coral beads.

Bini women do not go to big riverside markets like the Yoruba, they visit places some two or three miles from the water, and here they meet the Jekri. Their towns are chiefly on the hills, and they have to go down a mile or more to fetch water. Here, as elsewhere, the women are the potters; and their material is kaolin got from the river beds. The products are not so elegant in shape as in some parts, but they are large—a cooking pot will hold ten gallons.

Unlike the women of the west, the fair sex in Benin undertake the weaving as well as the carding; the cotton is spun with the aid of a stick, round which it is wound as it is finished. They also dye their goods with indigo and other colouring stuffs. Indigo they make from three kinds of plants—two creepers and a shrub; magenta is imported; for brown they use a weak solution of black.

Infant betrothal is the cause of the lack of fidelity of Bini women to their husbands. Many women arriving at the age of puberty

A Race of Trading Women.

"Water Women."

Bini Women.



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

A QUETTAH WOMAN.

are handed over to comparatively old men as third or fourth wives, and find themselves with the duties of a slave. Many chiefs have over 200 wives, not all living in the same village or town, but scattered over the country. In many cases the husband, on visiting one of the outsiders, finds she has been living with another man, and has children by him. Formerly it was the custom for the husband to sue the adulterer and thus make a handsome income.

On the death of the husband, all those wives who have not borne children to him pass to the eldest son. Often a wife will not declare the parentage of her child till the death of her husband.

Yoruba and Bini live in far more substantial houses. If you enter the women's quarter of the house, at the left hand of the building, you find yourself in a roofless passage with the rooms of the wives on one

side. In the passage are cooking utensils, the beds are raised platforms of dried mud, seven to eight feet long, allowing for the fire at the foot of the sleeper. The whole interior is black with smoke, and attached to the rafters are calabashes, mats, hoes, cooking utensils, and *jujus* (charms). In many cases a kind of oven is made under the bed, and heated; this is only used in very cold weather, but fires are kept going all the year round.

Bini women usually wear native loin-cloths, which sometimes serve as a pad on their heads when they have loads

North of the Yoruba and Bini peoples live the Hausa, extending over three hundred miles from north to south, and the same distance from east to west. The population numbers at least 15,000,000, and of these the majority are



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

POPO WOMEN.

The coast tribes are becoming Europeanised in dress.



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

OLD AND YOUNG "FETISH" WOMEN, BADAGRY.

Many West African tribes have women as "priestesses."

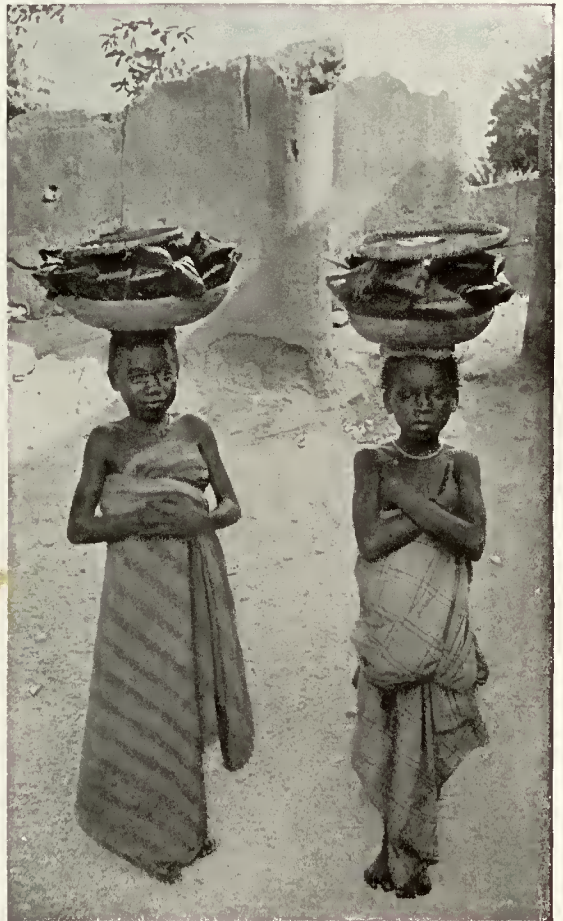
slaves; in Kano, the chief town, the highest price is paid for a girl of fourteen—from £7 to £10. In this connection it may be noted that a free man may not marry a slave, and, if he has a child by his own female slave, he may not afterwards sell her. If two slaves marry with their masters' consent, the children belong to the latter alternately.

As regards the position of women in general, they are better off than in most Mohammedan countries. They are not secluded, unless they are royal, and as a rule they have freedom of choice, in respect of marriage. Not only so, but they have a married woman's property law, which enacts that after marriage the woman retains her own property.

Some of the Cross River women are, according to Mr. Partridge, more than passably good looking. They have well-shaped heads, small ears lying close, good foreheads, short, straight noses, curved lips

not too thick, beautiful teeth, and finely curved eyelashes. Their eyes are pleasant when they smile, but to a European the absence of the soft changing lights makes them monotonous. Some women are shapely, too, and their dark brown skin is smooth and unblemished. It is curious to learn that the native standard of beauty demands a coal-black skin and a long neck.

As so often happens dress among some of these peoples is ornamental, at least in their eyes, rather than useful. The women of the Igbo-Amaban towns wear no clothing in front, but adorn themselves with a tail; the Ikwe women go somewhat further, but in their case superstition steps in to limit the amount of clothing, for they hold that if they have more than a small piece of cloth it will be detrimental to child-bearing.



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

EGBA GIRLS SELLING FOOD,

Trade in which is confined to the women, who are also in the main the producers.



JEBU WOMEN, LAGOS.

They live much upon the water and paddle their canoes to market. Note the styles of hair-dressing.

Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A woman's pride is in her hair, and the people of this district spend many hours in hair-dressing; palm oil and grease are applied, and wonderful structures are built up which remain untouched for months. Horn-like protuberances seem to be the prevailing fashion; there may be a single horn on the top with the tip over the forehead, or two on the side, and one on the back, or four horns along the crown, the intervening spaces bridged with knitting needles of porcupine quills; there may be a single horn planted on a mound, or a coronet of small horns, or horns all over. Furrows from side to side take the fancy of others; and some adorn their hair with tassels, coloured red with cam-wood. A few score safety pins in the hair are held to be a neat decoration.

Betrothal is early in these tribes, and till they get married girls are put under the protection of a fetish named **Cross River Betrothal and Marriage.** Nimm; his duty consists, however, not in looking after their morals, for everything is permitted save only the bringing of a lover into their father's compound, but in seeing that no one poisons them. Nimm's shrine is just outside the entrance, a small stockade, two and a half feet high, with a mushroom-shaped ant-hill in the centre, smeared with paint, and tied with a wisp of grass in which is a wooden knife.

Before marriage the bride is fattened, being painted white all over, and on festive occasion with geometrical patterns in black paint into the bargain. When she is of age to be married her betrothed paints her red all over, and henceforth she must remain faithful to him. After marriage the husband has his own hut among the Ikwe; the stockade of branches, three or four feet high, is set up by the woman, for her own or her husband's hut, but the thatching is the work of the man. Husband and wife work jointly on the farm, too, but for trading purposes they have separate property. Cooking is the woman's task, and, as many hands make light work, the head wife encourages her husband to marry again. Pottery, too, is made by the women; it is built up on a base, dried in the sun, and hardened in the smoke of a fire.

If a wife runs away she cannot be forced to return, but of course all expenses of courtship must be repaid to the husband, and a jury sits to determine how much he has spent. As a rule the children go to the father in such a case. Twins are here abhorred, and in the Efik countries the mother is driven away, and the children put to death; elsewhere a free woman may keep one of them; one twin child of a slave will be killed, and the other given to some other woman.

III

Decoration in Kamerun—Field Work—Women as Councillors—The Mucilongo Women—Women's Work among the Mucilongo—Mucilongo Dyes—Mucilongo Costumes—Birth Customs—How Children are Trained—Child Marriages and Conjugal Fidelity—Women as Doctors—Funeral Customs—Position of Mucilongo Women—The Kabenda and Kakongo Women—Wife Burial—Kakongo Conjugal Fidelity—Women's Work—Kabenda Dress and Ornaments—Angola Women—Loando Market and its Women Traders—How Farina is Made—Angola Marriages

IN Kamerun the distinction is not so much between water and land people as between the dwellers in the forest, and in the grass country. In this area dress is mainly decorative, the women of some tribes wear nothing till the first child is born, or only a thin string of beads; then a four-inch grass apron is

donned before and behind, with a fanlike extension of bamboo like a peacock's tail.

At the present day, however, empty cartridge cases and sardine tins are in great demand as articles of female adornment.

The hair is as usual dressed in many fantastic styles, the Bakundu and Batom

Decoration in Kamerun.

shave it or let it grow long; the Banyang cut it into arabesques, rings, squares, etc.,



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

A HAUSA WOMAN.

The Hausa are Mohammedan, and wear more clothes than "pagan" tribes.

as the individual fancy dictates; some tribes work cowries into the *coiffure*, as many as two hundred being needed. Some of the forest tribes wear long fur caps of monkey skin and rub the body with red wood, and both body scars and filed teeth are among their personal adornments. A curious form of decoration, found also on the Nile, is the wearing of an object in the lower lip; a European thermometer is held to be a highly effective ornament in this situation.

The field work, as usual, falls to the lot of the women, and after an early meal

Field Work. women and slaves set out for the farms, the children astride the mother's hips, hanging to her arm or supported on a band passed round her forehead. Sometimes the husband goes too when the clearing is distant, for in Kamerun they tell how the chimpanzee is enamoured of womenkind, and carries them off to be

his wives. Sometimes the husband on these occasions will carry the child home himself, his spear in the other hand, and an umbrella as a protection if it is raining.

In the grass country woman occupies a high position. The mother of the chief is a member of his council, and he has a great respect for her; his chief wife may also aid in its deliberations. The husband is, however, the head of the house. Polygamy exists in practice if not in name—a man gets his wife by agreement, by betrothal, or by purchase; but with her he has a number of concubines, who enjoy no rights, from the slave caste.

Patience seems to be practised in these regions. A traveller has recorded that he once saw a woman sitting in a courtyard eating. She was hailed by another woman well within earshot, but did not feel called upon to put herself out, and calmly went on with her meal; at last, her appetite satisfied,



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

AN EGBA MOTHER CARRYING HER TWIN BABES.

As a rule one or both of twin children are killed, but in some tribes they are regarded as auspicious.

she did rouse herself so far as to reply "woi" (I am here), but before this happened the summons to her had been repeated one hundred and seven times.



Photograph by A. Holm, Lagos.

WOMAN GOING TO MARKET.

Wherever she goes the African mother carries her child—even when she is at work in the field or laden with market produce.

As already stated, in many parts of Africa it is possible to divide the tribes into water and land people. On both sides of the mouth of the Congo there is a tribe known as the Mucilongo or Musserongo; they are the water people of the district, while the Kabinda, Kakongo and Loango people are the land folk. The Mucilongo live in rectangular huts, constructed by the men, and each wife has her own dwelling, separated in some cases from the others by a kind of enclosure. The hut is perhaps ten feet by six, built of bamboo with a door of the same material; the roof is of mats made of bamboo leaves which are laid on the top of the walls, fastened on with string. The furniture is inexpensive, a bamboo bed stands in one

corner, chairs and tables there are none; on the walls are hung boxes, cooking pots, and other utensils. A wooden box, large or small according to the wealth of the owner, serves as a wardrobe, but a favourite method of keeping cloth is to bury it in the ground well wrapped up in leaves, mats, or the like.

The Mucilongo women are expert laundresses; in their dug-out canoes from ten to forty feet long, they carry their produce to market, singing their boat songs as they paddle along, or steal silently up a creek to set their fish traps.

A woman rises with the sun, say 5.30 a.m., and sets to work to cook for herself and her family, and, if it is her turn, for her husband too, for the wives take a supply of food to him turn and turn about, unless there happens to have been a quarrel.

My friend, Mr. R. E. Dennett, was once visiting the village of the chief of the Mucilongo, when his attention was attracted by groans and howls proceeding from the hut of the chief, which was better furnished than the ordinary dwelling, as became the residence of the king. His majesty was discovered reclining on his couch in a very distressed condition, which he explained by the remark: "Dem wömen, he fit for kill me; my belly be too hungry." Further inquiry showed that owing to some dispute his wives found it impossible to give him any food, for no single one dared face the wrath of her fellows by approaching her lord and master. The principal wife, Donna Maria Segunda, excused herself for her neglect of her husband by saying: "Dem man, he be fool man; he no sab treat him wife proper." Fortunately for his majesty the wives felt some shame at their domestic differences being exposed to a stranger, and soon after Neamlau got his meals regularly.

After cooking food a woman goes to the fields, taking with her water and provisions for the day; her children she may leave with a friend, but if they are small she generally takes them with her. After a walk of two or three miles she comes to the clearing,

The Mucilongo Women.

already prepared by her husband, and sets to work to hoe it or plant it with maize, bananas, manioc, ground nuts, etc., according to the number of years it has been under cultivation.

If she does not work fast the Mucilongo

other men join him, for husband and wife never eat together. About six she takes her evening meal with her children, having taken from her husband's booty what she required; this over, she sets to work to clean earthen cooking vessels and wooden platters.



By the courtesy of Mr. J. W. McCann.

AN *AL FRESCO* TOILETTE ON THE GOLD COAST (see p. 343).

As a rule women dress each other's hair.

woman is a stayer; her baby on her back, she bends over her hoe hour after hour, stopping but once to take a little refreshment, perhaps at 11 o'clock. Towards four or five her field work is ended, and she piles on her back a quantity of wood—as much as a hundred-weight sometimes—and brings it home, baby and all. When she reaches her hut she finds her husband has been hunting and has brought home an antelope, some palm nuts, fish or fowl, according to his luck. This she sets to work to cook in her own hut, and takes it over to the two-roomed hut, which is her husband's private property, for his evening meal, to be taken alone, unless

Then, if a feast or a dance is in progress, she goes forth on pleasure bent.

At a woman's dance she, with two or three others, will stand in the centre of a circle, and wriggle, for no other word will adequately describe this performance. At a men's dance, on the other hand, her show is confined to joining in the chorus; but men's and women's dances are performed on the same occasion. A native ball of this description may finish at daylight, but is equally likely to go on for two or three days.

Between supper and bed time, which is about eight o'clock, the usual pastime is gossip, which is carried on, not in confidential

whispers, but at the top of the voice from hut to hut.

The usual time for ablution is the early morning. The richer class send female slaves to fetch water for them, the poorer fetch their water themselves and bathe in the river at the same time; the children are bathed in the river or at home.

In the dry season the women make mats while their husbands are hunting or cutting the bush; they use the leaves of the *fuba* tree (screw-pine) and plait them. The mats are used as seats, shrouds to wrap cloth in, etc. When a visitor arrives a mat is put down for him under a tree or in the house.

A great industry is that of dyeing. The Mucilongo women dye all their clothes a kind of dull red, which contrasts very well with their silver ornaments. The dye is made of *tucula*, camwood, ground up with water on a stone, and made up into balls, which are used as they are needed; the dye powder is more like mud than anything else. A black dye is used for mats, so too is a yellow dye, the former extracted from gall nuts and iron, the latter from a yellow wood.

The dress of a Mucilongo woman is comparatively simple;

Mucilongo Costumes.

first she has a white loin cloth of Congo cotton, over this comes a red cloth, some fifteen yards long and fifty inches broad, which she wraps round her waist and throws over her shoulder. The ornaments are

usually of silver; leg-rings made of English shillings by the native blacksmith are given by men to their favourite wives and daughters; these are called *kwini bota* (queenly good) from the head of the late queen stamped upon the first that came into their hands. These rings are generally plain, but a crocodile's head may be cast on the side, where it will be cut through in order to allow of its being put over the foot. Armlets and bracelets of silver, gun-metal, pewter, or even galvanised iron, are worn, cast in the same way, usually plain, though bracelets are sometimes decorated with a fret pattern. There are also thin neck-rings, open and joined by a loop at the back, and various magical bracelets. The hair is worn *au naturel*.

Birth is an easy matter on the Congo—sometimes the mother has a friend with her, sometimes she manages alone. A woman will exhibit a baby in the morning of

whose arrival no one has been aware, or bring it back from the field,

Birth Customs.

walking two or three miles with one or two rests on the way. The first thing to do to the new arrival is to wash it, and this is usually done in warm water. Children are as white as white babies for a couple of days, and then they begin to darken, until in a week or ten days they are like their brothers and sisters. In the first twenty-four hours the child gets nothing but cold water to drink; then it receives its natural nourishment. When the mother is at



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

A WOMAN OF OLD CALABAR.

The full clothing is due to contact with Europeans. The next picture shows the unsophisticated native woman.

work the child may be suckled hanging on to the mother's back.

Shaping the child's head is an important process. The

How Children are Trained. mother warms her hands and applies them to the sides and

front. Probably no real shaping of the baby's head is attempted or accomplished; the idea is to close the sutures. Children are also massaged; the mother warms her hands and rubs the child to straighten its legs; sometimes she picks it up by the hands, so as to stretch the arms and straighten the body.

Children begin to crawl and walk much at the same age as European children, but some never go on their hands and knees, but go with straight legs; attempts at walking begin at ten to fourteen months. They are weaned at eighteen months or two years, though they receive solid food earlier.

Until a child is four or five it stays with its mother; it will play at "being mother," and go for water with its own little pot. A girl learns to cook at a very early age; at the age of seven she is serving her apprenticeship, playing with her mother's pots and helping to prepare the family meals.

A girl goes naked till ten or eleven, and then takes a loin-cloth. She assumes ordinary dress when she has been through the "paint house" (*i.e.* initiation).

When the mother is in the fields the girls play with little hoes; they learn to paddle the canoe, to make mats and so on, till at thirteen or fourteen their education may be regarded as finished, and they are received into the society of their elders. Bits of wood dressed in a scrap of cloth do duty as dolls, but they do not figure largely



Photograph by Sir H. H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.
A WOMAN FROM THE INTERIOR
OF OLD CALABAR.
(Cross river, W. Africa.)

in their lives. The existence of the white child is one continual holiday compared with the life of the black child. There is not much play about a native, but we find knucklebones played with palm kernels, and the ubiquitous *warri*, something like backgammon; but make-believe, which passes into real work, is the chief amusement of the Congo child.

Parents agree to betroth their children, even before birth,

Child Marriages and Conjugal Fidelity. and the boy, from the age of seven or

eight onwards, will take presents to his wife; the marriage

proper takes place at the age of thirteen or fourteen.

Conjugal morality is severely enforced among the Mucilongo; an offender pays a heavy fine to the aggrieved husband, but by a singular provision if any one but the husband detects the offender and publishes the fact, he, and not the real culprit, is responsible to the husband.

All women know the use of herbs in medicine, and occasionally a woman is found acting as doctor in more serious cases, such as bites of scorpion, etc. The surgeons on the other hand are always men.

Women as Doctors.

At death a woman is buried simply; she is wrapped up and smoked like a man. When she has been a kind of head of the family, there may be a big funeral, but as a rule there is very little fuss made over the death of a woman.

Funeral Customs.

After the funeral ceremonies of her husband a widow—who was formerly buried

with her husband—paints her face black with oil and ashes. Widows are not allowed to marry until after the real burial, which may be postponed three or four years. A woman goes back to her own district if she can when her husband dies.

There are many curious customs which space forbids us to describe, but mention may be made of an institution which should rejoice the heart of the suffragette. The Mucilongo woman, if she is not strictly the keeper of her husband's purse, is cer-



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

TWO KABINDA WOMEN.

tainly the guardian of his property. In the face of this it is disappointing to have to record that when she returns from the fields or brings anything to her husband, she is required to salute him by kneeling down and thrice clapping her hands.

**Position of
Mucilongo
Women.**

The lot of the husband of a Congo princess is a curious one. She may marry anyone she chooses, and he becomes her slave; but though she may put him to death or divorce him when she wants a change, he is nevertheless a very big man; should he survive her he inherits her property. According to Andrew Battell this practice led in the old days to a curious result, for it appears that the husband only became the heir if there were a child by the marriage. This desirable result attained, the husband was, of course, still at his wife's mercy, for she might divorce him or have him killed; so, the old traveller tells us, the happy father cut the Gordian knot by putting his wife out of the way before she had time to play him a similar trick.

Loango people are to the Mucilongo as the Bini and Yoruba are to the Jekri and Ijo; they are land people. Mr. Dennett's first introduction to the woman question in Africa was seeing an old woman walk into a huge bonfire in Kabin-da Bay; she had been accused of causing the death of her husband by witchcraft. As she loved her husband very much, and her accusers were really anxious to get her out of the way



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

A GABOON WOMAN.

**The Kabinda
and Kakongo
Women.**

owing to the idea that she had hidden a great deal of his wealth, she, knowing her innocence, full of faith in it, walked into the fire, and was burnt to death. Properly speaking the fire is the punishment for witches, not an ordeal, but this woman walked in of her own accord.



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

A LOANGO WOMAN.

Mr. Dennett's next experience was hearing of the fact that a large number of a great man's wives had been buried with him in a vil-



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

LOANGO HALF-CASTE GIRL AND HER MOTHER.

lage close to Kabinda. In this ceremony a huge hole was dug, then the funeral car proceeded to the grave, and the coffin was taken out and placed in it. Food and ornaments were thrown in, then some of the slaves, the number varying according to the rank and wealth of the deceased, and other slaves presented by neighbouring chiefs, with their arms and legs broken, were thrown into the grave. Finally a certain number of wives volunteered to be buried with him; their arms and legs were broken, the grave was filled up, and the car placed over it.

Mothers are often being called upon to take *casca* (poison), owing to constant miscarriages or frequent deaths of their offspring; it is considered that they are possessed by *ndongo*, or witch power.

The Kabinda women have a greater reputation for beauty than their Mucilongo sisters, but it is a matter of taste whether the Kakongo are more beautiful than the Bavili.

**Kakongo
Conjugal
Fidelity.**

The Kakongo are far truer to their husbands, and have a greater sense of the sanctity of marriage than either of the other tribes. Mr. Dennett knew one old couple, about eighty years of age,

who had lived together for over fifty years in monogamous union.

As far as occupations go, the people of Loango are chiefly noted for mat- and basket-making; the Kakongo for their pottery. In mat-making they dye the leaves red, yellow, and black, and work the different colours into patterns. Sitting on the ground they have two pegs before them, fixed the width of the mat apart; a string runs from one to the other, they fold the leaves over it, and then begin plaiting. They make baskets, some of *fubu* leaves, and some of *piassava* (bamboo ribs); the latter have a wooden bottom; the first row is plaited of *piassava* alone, and they go on plaiting *piassava* and *zimbamba* (outer skin of the cane) together. Bottles are also covered in a similar manner.

Pottery is made without a wheel; if a water-pot is to be fashioned the potter



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

A GABOON WOMAN AND A LOANGO MAID.

Note the difference in type between the lady and the lower class woman.

generally has the broken bottom of an old pot to start with, and with the prepared clay moulds on it the bottom of the new one; then as the sides grow she keeps one hand on each side, adding clay, and turning the pot continually. Next it is allowed to dry in the shade, and afterwards in the sun, and finally baked in a sort of bonfire. Open vessels for cooking are also made.

piece of fifty-inch cloth, nine or ten yards long.

If she is married she has a *lembe* bracelet, and ornaments of the Mucilongo type, or of copper and brass, are also worn, but not zinc or pewter.

Kabinda women are very fond of a little gold wire earring, coral beads round the neck, or the tail of an elephant. Anklets



By the courtesy of Mr. R. E. Dennett.

A LOANGO LADY RECEIVING A VISIT FROM INFERIORS, WHO KNEEL BEFORE HER AND CLAP THEIR HANDS.

The women play with a doll shaped like a bullet when they have lost a child or are childless. They buy fish from fishermen, carry it thence four hours inland to a market and exchange it for rubber, palm oil, or kernels. On one day the women are not allowed to work in the fields.

The Kabinda woman wears an underskirt of ordinary cloth; a piece fifty inches broad, fifteen yards long, is pleated on a waist string, and which forms a voluminous skirt; over her shoulders, and covering a quarter of her skirt, is a white short-sleeved chemise. Then comes a shawl—a

**Kabinda
Dress and
Ornaments.**

are generally of brass, but are not always worn.

A bushwoman will only wear a little piece of grass cloth. The waistband consists of a number of longitudinal strings made of very fine grass, plaited and ending in a single string, worn in front. When one woman has told another a lie, the latter can put it to the test by saying "*Siba lixele*. Hitch up your waist-band," and if it is not true, she will not touch it.

The first thing that is noticeable with regard to the women of Angola is that they are nearly all *lavadeiras* (washerwomen). The laundry is the river bank, and those

who have not got a washing board beat the linen on a stone, the instrument of percussion being in either case the hand.

Angola Women. Besides being washerwomen they do most of the business of the markets; they receive cloth in payment for their service, and go to market to trade this, unless perchance they think a new dress for themselves is a pressing necessity. Singularly enough the favourite colour for the dress of the "Upper Ten" is black.

The washerwoman is proverbially talkative, the negress no less so, and the voice of the Loanda woman is singularly high. Loanda market is not a mere open space like the ordinary native market, and when there is a crowd of a thousand women in it the general effect, heard all over the town, is much the same as that of a flock of starlings, all shrieking at once.

The Angola women are great wanderers, and when they leave their native land they retain their commercial instincts; in fact they form the petty traders of all the districts where they are found. Loanda being the capital, they look down on the people among whom they go, and the fact that they are baptised, and have some white blood in them, adds to their prestige.

The Loanda women are famous for their skill in making farina. They take the root of the manioc, and shred it into a large tub, in which it is soaked; the mush is put into a cloth, squeezed, dried, and then roasted in brass pans. The next operation is to sift it, after which it is ready for use, and eaten raw or boiled.

The water that is squeezed out into the

tub is allowed to clarify, the very fine powder accumulates at the bottom, the water is poured off and the residue is used as starch.

Livingstone says, in his "Missionary Travels in South Africa," that the chief recreations of the natives of Angola are marriages and funerals. When a young woman is about to be married she is placed in a hut alone, and anointed with various unguents, and many incantations are employed in order to secure good fortune and fruitfulness.

Here, as almost everywhere in the south, the height of good fortune is to bear sons—wives often leave their husbands altogether if they have daughters only. In their dances, when a woman may wish to deride another, in the accompanying song a line is introduced "So-and-So has no children, and never will get any." The insult is felt so keenly that it is not uncommon for the victim to rush away and commit suicide.

After some days the bride-elect is taken to another hut, and adorned with all the richest clothing and ornaments that the relatives can either lend or borrow. She is then placed in a public situation, saluted as a lady, and presents made by all her acquaintances are placed around her. After this she is taken to the residence of her husband, where she has a hut for herself, and becomes one of several wives, for polygamy is general. Dancing, feasting, and drinking on such occasions are prolonged for several days.

In case of separation the woman returns to her father's family, and the husband receives back what he gave for her. In nearly all cases a man gives a price for the wife, and in the case of a mulatto as much as £60 is often given to the parents of the bride.

SOUTH AMERICA

By THEODOR KOCH GRÜNBERG

Misconceptions of Indian Character—Position of Indian Women—Probationary Rites for Girls Betrothal and Marriage—Tests for Bridegrooms—Temporary Marriages—How Brides are Obtained—Marriage by Capture—Plurality of Wives—Conjugal Fidelity—Penalties for Infidelity—Divorce—The General Position of Woman in South America—Influence of Indian Women—Birth Customs—A Birth “Fast”—Diet of Parents—The “Couvade”—Indian Childhood—Where Charms Fade Early—Curious Pets—Indians as Parents—Ornamentation of Children—Girl’s Duties—Death and Burial Customs—The Economic Importance of the Indian Woman—An Indian Woman’s Work—Preparation of Manioc—The Indian Woman’s Burden—Woman as Potter—Women as Weavers—Women Artists—Indian Dress—The Question of Adornment—Fashions in Distortion—Division of Labour—Women Eat when the Men have Finished—Curious Ceremonies—The Intelligence of the Indian Woman—Her Kindliness

By many travellers—especially those of the early days, the Indian woman was represented as an inferior being, the slave of her husband, degraded to the position of a soulless beast of burden. Such

Misconceptions of Indian Character.

descriptions are based on superficial observations made, perhaps, on Indians living in contact with the white man. In his native wilds the Indian meets the European with distrust, for only too many of our fellow whites are adventurers, not to say out-and-out rascals. But treat the Indian well, and he soon realises that his visitor means well with him, and lays aside his mistrust. He is a harmless child of nature, who repays the traveller’s good deeds with the most complete confidence.

the native, and learns how great is the part played in it by woman; she enjoys respect both as wife and mother; she is the equal of her husband, and in diligence and artistic skill perhaps even his superior.

Position of Indian Women.

During my travels in South America in 1903-5 I lived nearly two years with the wild Indians, and took a delight in watching their pure family life. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that the following pages will help the Indian woman of South America to her rights.

When the time comes for the girl to put off childish things and take her position as a member of the community with full rights, she has sometimes to undergo a severe probation. On the

Probationary Rites for Girls.



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

LITTLE MAPUCHE GIRL.

Thus the traveller who looks on the Indian as a fellow-man rather than as a subject for experiment soon gets glimpses into the family life of Içana and Caiary-Uaupes, tributaries of the Rio Negro, I observed that the puberty rites opened with hair-cutting and painting the

girl's back with dark-blue genipa; this is done by the mother, or an old woman, in the house, her friends sitting round, and at the conclusion each takes a lock of hair for use as head decoration, etc. For four weeks the girl may eat only manioc, pepper, *maniuara* ants, and, in some tribes, small fish; her drink is manioc water; on no account may she eat large fish or warm-blooded animals.

When the month of fasting is over, her father sings before sunrise a long monotonous chant, reciting the fruits and animals which are now again permitted to her; the opening words of each verse and the refrain are invariable. Then the maiden bathes, and a great pot, full of all manner of fish, flesh, and fowl, is set before her, and her fast is at an end. In celebration of the occasion she is painted with *carayuru* (*Bignonia Chica*), and of course there is the inevitable drinking party afterwards. Among the Warrau of British Guiana the girl's hair is cut, and a dance follows, in which she appears decorated with beads and bird-down gummed on her clean-shaven head, legs and arms.

Some of the Uaupes tribes, as A. R. Wallace tells us, made the initiation more painful. After fasting on bread and water for a month, the girl was brought out perfectly naked into the midst of a group of friends armed with *sipo* strips (a creeper), with which they inflicted five or six severe

blows apiece, repeated four times in the twenty-four hours, as a result of which the girl fell senseless or even dead. In this case, too, numerous pots of all kinds of meat have been prepared; but the initiate is only allowed to lick the *sipo* rod, which is dipped into the pot.

Among the Macusi Indians the girl is cut off from all intercourse even with relatives, for she is considered impure; her hammock is hung right in the top of the hut, the smokiest part, and for the first few days she may not leave it, except at night; then she lights a fire and sits at it till it is time for her to climb into her hammock again. After some days she is allowed to occupy a screened-off corner of the hut, where she still lives on her cassava bread. Ten days later the magician appears, murmurs spells over the girl and all she has touched, and thus frees them from



UAIANA WOMAN, RIO CAIARY—UAUPES,
NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.

the magical power she has imparted to them; pots and other breakables are shattered, and the fragments buried. But this is not the end of her troubles. After bathing, she is beaten by her mother at night, and must sustain her ordeal without uttering a sound, for if she woke the other occupants of the hut she would suffer for it in the future.

The beating is repeated on another occasion, and then the maiden is free; if she has been betrothed, her future husband appears and carries her off without more ado.



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

KAUA' WOMAN, RIO AIARY,
NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.

Among the Caribs of British Guiana, the ordeal was even more severe. The girl's hair was burnt off, and the magician made two deep cuts with *dasyprocta* teeth down and across her back, and rubbed pepper into them; and here, too, the operation had to be endured without a sound. Then the girl was laid in her hammock, her arms tied to her body, and an amulet of teeth round her. In this condition she had to lie for three days without food and drink, absolutely silent. She was then taken back to the stone which served as a seat during the first operation—and on the way her feet might not touch the ground—and her fetters were taken off; but she had to lie up in the hammock for a full month, and eat only uncooked roots and cassava bread. At the end of the month the whole performance was repeated, and not till the third month was the girl at the end of her trials.

Spix and Martius tell us that most of the Amazon tribes compelled their girls to undergo this operation. Elsewhere the rites were

less trying. The Caraya of the Araguaya River tattoo the girls as a sign that they are full-fledged members of the tribe.

But the girl who has "come out" does not enjoy her liberty long; children are betrothed quite in infancy, and, as we have seen, the maiden becomes a wife in some cases as soon as her ordeal is at an end. But sometimes the future husband has to give to the girl's parents proofs of his capacity to support a family.

In most of the tribes of British Guiana marriage takes place at a very early age. Girls of eleven or twelve are mothers of experience. The choice of a bridegroom is made years before the bride is handed over, and the favoured male has to serve his parents-in-law till he enters the married state, and, as a matter of course, to show little attentions to his future wife, such as adorning her with beads. Where a youth has not been betrothed, the matter is simpler; he pays one or two calls on the lady of his heart, makes her a few gifts, and agrees with the parents whether she is to be his in return for a few gifts, or whether he must serve the customary year or more for her. This over, he clears a patch of ground, which the girl henceforth cultivates.

Breach of promise cases are unknown in British Guiana, for Im Thurn tells us that the *fiancé* may marry anyone he pleases, and if he casts off the old love he demands the return of all the beads and other ornaments he has given her.

The test of the bridegroom takes various forms: the Uacarras of the Uaupes require

the man to submit to a trial of skill with the bow, and if he does not show himself to be a

good marksman, the girl refuses him on the ground that he will not be able to shoot fish and game enough for the family. Among the more primitive Mura, all the girl's lovers assemble, and the one who comes out "top dog" in a game of fisticuffs carries off the girl. Among the

Tests for Bridegrooms.

Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego the man lives with his wife's parents, and serves them till he has made a boat and earned the right to run a separate establishment.

Among the Arawaks of British Guiana infant betrothal is practised, but unbetrothed young men set out to find wives for themselves. A **Temporary Marriages.** man gains the support of the relatives of his lady love, and assures the father of the girl that without a wife he is miserably poor, to which the father assents. If the damsel then sets food before the man, it means that he is a successful wooer; he eats the food and the wedding is over. If the girl is too young for marriage, the prospective father-in-law hands over to the wooer as a temporary wife a widow, or an old maid from among his relatives, who acts as a substitute till the girl can take her place, when she retires from the married state and becomes the servant of the bride.

As a rule, a girl is not asked which suitor she prefers; the Yahgan father chooses the strongest candidate, and **How Brides are obtained.** on the Rio Içana I found the same practice among the Siusi.

The chief's daughter fell in love with one of my men, a young Kaua, but an unbending father married her to a chief of the Huhuteni. Among the Tehuelche of Patagonia, however, the girl of sixteen is of age to be courted, and it is for her to say whether she will have a wooer or not; though she often marries early, she may remain unwedded for some years. Caraya parents, too, ask their daughter's views as to the merits of her suitors before they accept a young man's proposals.

In many cases the bride is simply bought. The Goajiro father fixes a price, usually in cattle, and, this paid, the girl is a wife and must supply her husband with food and clothing. Among the tribes of British Guiana the payment consists of axes, knives, cloth, etc., or the father may hand over the girl in return for services rendered, and the husband removes to his father-in-law's hut with all his possessions.

Among the Toba of the Gran Chaco a price is paid for the bride, but the suitor has also to undergo a test. He must dance before the hut of his love to the sound of the drum, beating out his tune on a skin-covered mortar half-filled with water. If he is invited to come in and sit down, it is a sign that his proposal has been accepted. Among the Tehuelche, on the other hand, the bride-price is practically non-existent, for bridegroom and father-in-law exchange presents of equal value.

Some of the Uaupes Indians practise a kind of marriage by capture. The bridegroom's father sends a messenger that he is going to call at the bride's father's house with a party of friends; if the marriage is looked upon with favour, there are then preparations for a feast, which may last for two or three days, when the visitors will carry off the bride in their canoes. My own observations on the Uaupes and



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

SIUSI GIRL:

Daughter of the Chief Mandu, Rio Aiary, North-West Brazil.

Içana agree in the main with this. If a Kobeua youth wishes to marry he first obtains the consent of the girl's father, and then remains for five days, during which there is a great dance, accompanied by much drinking. For the entertainment of the guests the young man supplies smoked fish and game. The wedding proper consists in the handing over of the girl by her father, who makes a long ceremonial speech, and recommends her to her husband's care. Then the youth takes her by the hand and hurries down to the river; behind them comes the girl's father, lamenting and lightly striking his weeping daughter on the back with his hand. He is followed by the tearful mother, bearing her daughter's trousseau—hammocks, baskets, pots, etc.—which she lays in the canoe, and the newly-married couple go off at top speed. In this tribe the wife always goes to live with her husband, who, as a rule, lives with his parents. The bride-price consists of hammocks, baskets, sieves, and valuable dance decorations.

The Kobeua have a story of the "Rape of the Sabines," according to which many, many years ago the Uanana, who still live near, carried off the two daughters of Hemanehike, the founder of the Kobeua tribe. With his two brothers, Hemanehike made war on the offending tribe, and burnt many of them in a house which he fired. The survivors fled to the Caruru rapids, where the chief of the Uanana still lives.

To this day it is the custom of the tribes of the Upper Rio Negro to take their wives from another tribe, and this seems to point to a custom of marriage by capture.

Among the Ipurina, on the other hand, it is the girl who runs away, and, if the wooer can catch her, no further ceremony is required to make her his wife.

Polygamy—the plurality of wives—is comparatively infrequent in South America, and often the privilege of the chief alone. Wallace says of the Uaupes that the men generally have but one wife, though there is no special limit; some have two or

three, while the chief may have more. The oldest wife is—and remains—the mistress of the house.

Personally, I only saw two chiefs on the Uaupes who had more than one wife. In both cases the wives lived at peace with one another, and shared the household duties—I never saw any favouritism. The custom of the Kobeua requires that a second wife may be taken only if the first gives her assent.

The Macusi permit polygamy, but it is rarely found. Schomburgk found one case in which a man married three sisters. Among the Chaco tribes it is the chief alone who takes more than one wife, and he may have as many as he can support. The Caraya have, as a rule, only one wife, but sometimes a man is compelled to take a second when the first gets old. This is due to the peculiar custom according to which young men marry old women, and *vice versa*; this is, perhaps, the cause of their small fecundity. Von den Steinen observed this unnatural custom among the Bakairi, and Hyades among the Yahgan, but in the latter case it is the exception. Polygamy is also rare, but powerful men possess two, three, or even four wives. A Tehuelche may have as many wives as he can keep, but does not often have more than two, one being the rule. Among the Araucanians Musters saw a chief with three wives, who lived in the greatest harmony, and impartially looked after each other's children. The Ipurina may take one or two wives over and above the first.

The Warrau and other British Guiana tribes permit polygamy, and every man takes as many wives as he can get—or, rather, as many as he thinks necessary to take care of him. Chiefs have regular harems, and when one wife gets old he hands over to her for education a child of seven or eight, and she enters upon her wifely duties as soon as her training is over. However many wives there are, the first one is undisputed mistress, but there are one or two favourites who accompany the husband on all his journeys.

The magicians especially indulge in a

**Plurality
of Wives.**



A DUTCH GUIANA GIRL.

Photograph by P. Neville Edwards, Littlehampton.

very large number of wives, for the immense influence which they exercise over the other Indians enables them to acquire any number they please. An Indian, when asked for his daughter, or even sometimes for his wife, by his *peaiman*, dare not refuse. In this way it happens that the house of the *peaiman* is generally full of women.

Polygamy is said to be universal among the primitive Botocudo of Brazil. A man has as many wives as he can support, sometimes even ten or twelve; but Prince Maximilian of Wied never saw instances of more than three or four wives to one man.

In most tribes a girl enjoys the greatest freedom before marriage, but though her innocence is far from being unquestionable, the standard of married life is high, and it is but seldom that either spouse proves unfaithful. When I asked the chief of the Siusi what the punishment for adultery was, he replied proudly: "It never happens." During the many months that I lived in familiar intercourse with the Indians in their "long houses," inhabited by large numbers, I never saw any signs of marital infidelity, nor even, under normal circumstances, of quarrels between husband and wife, though in our civilised Europe scenes of this kind are unfortunately by no means uncommon in many circles. It is true that at a drinking festival, when the *kashiri*, their light alcoholic beverage, gets into their heads, they literally fly at one another's throats, but even these cases are infrequent.

At a great Siusi wedding celebration a young married couple came to blows in my presence; the wife was the ultimate victor, and broke on her spouse's head her whole store of pottery. But this is the only case of marital unhappiness that came under my notice on my travels, and even this does not really count, for the man had been in the service of more than one European, and had acquired white vices. Moreover, he was famous in the whole neighbourhood for his quarrelsomeness, and

very unpopular even among his fellow-tribesmen.

Im Thurn bears testimony to the morals of the natives of British Guiana: "Indian husbands and wives," says he, "are, as a rule, very faithful to each other; even on the comparatively rare occasions on which there has been some looseness before marriage, there is none after. Husband and wife, without being demonstrative, are decidedly affectionate towards each other."

The Fuegians are very jealous, and stand up for conjugal fidelity. A man will never at any price yield his wife, and travellers who assert the contrary have apparently mistaken the unmarried girls for married women. The latter must remain chaste, while the former have full liberty. Adultery is severely punished by the husband, but there is no recognised penalty. In revenge, jealous wives make their husband's lives a burden; but, strange to say, jealousy among the unmarried is unknown in either sex.

Among the Toba a man's wives are often desperately jealous of each other, and sanguinary conflicts are the order of the day, ending often in the death of one of the rivals. If a wife has committed adultery she may be put away either by divorce, or by the hand of her husband.

If a Goajiro woman, by exception, proves untrue, her father must repay the bride-price; if he is not solvent, the seducer is responsible. The

Penalties for Infidelity.

Caraya punishes his erring wife with blows, or burns her flesh with glowing pieces of wood; sometimes he even goes so far as to burn her to death. The husband's misdeeds are punished by his relatives-in-law. Everywhere, says Ehrenreich, is seen the endeavour to repress all that tends to a breach of the family peace; hence young married people are kept strictly in hand.

Among the Paravilhana the seducer enjoys a bath of Spanish pepper; the woman is exposed to the bites of large ants.

Rude in all his customs, the Botocudo is not least so when he is jealous. If a husband surprises his wife in the society

of another man, he takes his revenge with blows, snatching up the first thing he can lay hands on as a weapon; this may be a burning brand, and women often bear marks of such wounds on their bodies. Many men use the knife in such cases, says the Prince of Wied, and cut open arm

In Tierra del Fuego, on the other hand, where marriage is early—a girl may be a wife at thirteen—it is not regarded as irrevocable till three children are born. Not infrequently a woman changes husbands either because she is fickle, or because she has been ill-used.



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

ARAUCANIAN (CHILI) WOMEN HAIR-DRESSING.

or leg, so that the unhappy wife has, years after, great scars, often one beside the other. He even saw one case in which an Indian from Belmonte shot his wife, who was famous for her qualities of mind and body.

Though marriage is thus inviolate, divorce is relatively easy, but only if there are no children. A Macusi may leave

Divorce. his wife or even sell her; but one can hardly say that her lot is thereby rendered hard, for she has often found another husband before the sun goes down. But should children have been born a separation of husband and wife is a rarity, and justifiable only by a charge of adultery.

If a Caraya married couple do not hit it off, the husband may agree to exchange with another man. A divorce entails celibacy on the man in name only, for he may take a housekeeper. Among the Tehuelche, if a married couple part company, the wife receives the presents given at marriage by her parents to the husband; but divorce is rare with them.

The Prince of Wied relates that there were no marriage ceremonies among the Botocudo, consent of the parties and of their parents sufficing, and that divorce was equally easy. It is related that a woman left her husband, in his absence, for another whose bag of game was larger, without inconvenient results to herself. If

a man repudiates his wife young children remain with the mother, but go back to the father as soon as they are old enough.



Photograph by Eric Graf Rosen.

CHOROTE GIRLS, BOLIVIAN CHACO.

Once I was among the Bara, at the sources of the Tiquie, the largest tributary on the right bank of the Uaupes; a young wife left her dying husband and sick daughter, taking with her a healthy boy, and went back to her first home. Though there was a noisy scene with the sick man's father, my impression was that it was simply a matter of form, and this was made probable by the indifference of the bystanders.

However barbarous it may appear to us to leave a dying man, all travellers agree that it is practised, and for primitive man there is nothing unnatural in the idea, for a patient means more household work for one whose value to the community is nil.

In all the tribes that I visited the position of woman and her relation to man is a worthy one. It can readily be seen that she even exercises no inconsiderable influence upon him—a fact to which all travellers who have had much intercourse with Indians testify.

Macusi women have indeed hard work to do, but their husbands treat them with

kindness. Robert Schomburgk never saw a quarrel between man and wife in all the years he lived in the interior; but the coast Indian, a victim to European vices, may treat his wife tyrannically.

The same traveller expresses his surprise at the high position of women among the Caribs. Hard her work may be; the man clears the ground, and the wife tills it and harvests the produce; but she is by no means the degraded slave that some have made her out to be.

If a Carib should be so well to do as to possess a shirt, he removes it as soon as rain begins to fall, and brings it under shelter; but if his wife is shivering beside him, he protects her by putting it over her head and shoulders. So, too, among the Caraya the wife has heavy duties, but she is no beast of burden. The husband takes counsel of his wife in all important matters; the chief shares his position with his wife, and ill-treatment of a woman is unknown.



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

KAUA WOMAN, RIO AIARY, NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.

Returning from work in the fields. She is carrying a large basket full of manioc roots, suspended by a band from her forehead. The child sits astride her hip.

Im Thurn tells much the same story of the Guiana Indians. Woman's work may seem to us heavy, but it is, for the Indian, part of the natural order of things. The man's work of hunting and clearing is no less heavy, though more irregular. Moreover, the physical strength of the two sexes is about equal, and it is by no means certain that the average man would be the master of an average woman in a fight. Musters, who lived long in the midst of the Tehuelche, and tells us much of their continual feuds, praises, as one of the finest traits in their character, their love of wife and children; husband and wife never quarrelled, wives were never struck, and the real sorrow with which the loss of one was mourned had nothing civilised about it, for the widower destroyed all his property and burnt everything he possessed. We learn from Karl von den Steinen how charming is the relation of husband and wife on the Lower Xingu

among the Yuruna, or at any rate of the husband and his favourite wife. The chief had three wives, and the youngest was really pretty, of uncommonly graceful figure, and her face told how much she loved him. She was inseparable from him, followed him like a dog—they were a real pair of love-birds. Of the Macusi, Schomburgk says: "The husband loves his wife as deeply as a civilised man can, but he regards it as improper to show his feelings in the presence of others, and so

regards with contempt the white man who cannot repress his feelings." To the truth of this I can testify as regards all the tribes with whom I came in contact. If soon after my arrival the men were favoured with the sight of some of my curiosities—my watch, my camera, a picture-book, etc.—they went to fetch their wives, and I had to go through the performance a

second time. A husband never sold me the most insignificant object belonging to his wife without her express permission.

Their self-control was really wonderful, even when the men returned from a long journey. A young married couple were sometimes an exception. I often saw a young Kaua as he sported harmlessly with his charming wife in their rather gloomy apartment. A young couple among the Kobeua were inseparable; if the husband went fishing, the wife steered the canoe; if the wife had work in the plantation, the husband went along

with his bow and arrow, so as to hunt near her. After the heat and burden of the day, they sat, as a rule, on the "village green," and combed each other's hair (in the literal sense), or caught gnats on each other's backs. Never, during my two years' stay among the Indians, did I see a shadow of indecency in the relations of married couples.

Much weight is given to the views of women, and this is true also when the



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

KOBEUA WOMAN AND CHILD, RIO CUDUIARY, NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.

Infants ride in a broad bark band at the mother's breast.

question is of tribal relations with strangers. An old woman was the speaker in several villages, though men were also present, when a speech of greeting had to be made.



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.
CHACO SCHOOL GIRLS.

A Siusi was quite disposed to sell me his elegant canoe, but his wife said "No," and there was an end of the matter. On the other hand, a Kaua was persuaded by his wife to sell me his treasured blow-gun with quiver and poison pot, because her vanity called for several yards of coloured calico with which to decorate her person.

Other travellers agree as to this influential position of the wife. Martius won the hearts of the women with beads and handkerchiefs, and got from the men all he wanted. Von den Steinen was likewise struck by the prominence of women among the Kustenau; they joined in the discussions without being asked, and were always against giving anything. Among the Arhuaco a bargain is invalid if the woman's consent is not given. Wives accompany their husbands on their journeys, and always lead the way.

Though he draws a dark picture of the character of the Miranha on the Yapura, Martius cannot but confess that among this rude people a woman, notwithstanding her servile position, has great power over her husband as mistress of his house. Among the Tehuelche, women and girls play an important part in the horse races. Among the Toba, woman plays an active part in the life of the tribe. If a fight takes place,

women exhort the men to stand fast, though in other tribes they are prominent as peacemakers. It is rare for a woman to get drunk at one of their festivals; on the contrary, in common with a few warriors, temporarily teetotal, it is their duty to prevent quarrels and excesses, though they are not always successful.

Goajiro women, too, put an end to strife, and in general it may be said that a traveller accompanied by women is safe, for they are never attacked.

In some tribes woman's equality has made way for woman's superiority. Among the Siusi I saw a woman doctor, though it is true she did not make use of all the trickery and mystery inseparable from the leech-craft of the magician. Among the Caraya the chief arbitrates in quarrels between men, his wife between women. Among the Macusi an old widow once ruled a whole village, and the singular thing was that even the Caribs, a tribe



Photograph by Eric Graf Rosen.
CHOROTE WOMAN AND CHILD,
BOLIVIAN CHACO.

often hostile to the Macusi, submitted to her commands.

To this predominance of woman is due, perhaps, the fact that in marriages between

different tribes in Guiana the children follow the tribe of the mother; if a Warrau woman marries an Arawak, the children are Warrau.

Thus there are many competent witnesses to the worthy position of the South American Indian woman in family life and in the life of the community. The few writers who bear contrary testimony are of small importance, for their evidence is drawn in some cases from tribes on a very low level of civilisation, or rather of savagery; in others the peoples whom they describe have been in contact with Europeans and have thus suffered corruption of their original manners and customs; or, finally, they are tribes whose kindness has vanished as a result of interminable forays and other sanguinary

expeditions. Some of the evidence, however, may perhaps be cited.

The Mura, a nomadic people of the valley of the Amazon, keep their women, according to the distinguished traveller, von Martius, in a state of humiliating servitude.

Maximilian, Prince of Neuwied, says that laziness is the principal trait in the character of the Botocudo. He left to his wife and children the task of accomplishing the greater proportion of the work. A wife had to show servile obedience to her lord and master; and, only too often, numerous scars on the body of the woman bore witness

to the hasty and ungovernable temper of her husband.

Richard Schomburgk, in contrast to his brother Robert, gives to the Caribs of



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

YAHGAN GIRL.



WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF AN ARAUCANIAN (CHILI) CACIGULO FAMILY.

British Guiana an exceedingly bad character. He writes of them as follows : " The Carib is arrogant and tyrannical in his dealings

for some time closely associated with white men ; they had adopted several civilised vices ; and, last but not least, the continual



Photograph by Eric Graf Rosen.

CHOROTE WOMAN AND CHILD, BOLIVIAN CHACO.
Showing the method of carrying the baby.

with other Indians, and his behaviour to his wives is on all fours with this ; it would probably be difficult to find a single woman whose body did not bear a multitude of scars and even of wounds as the result of her husband's cruelty and tyrannical behaviour. At nearly every drinking festival the male population lowers itself below the level of the beasts ; when he is in a state of drunkenness the Carib selects his wife, as a rule, as the most suitable victim of his ill temper, and the reason for this is not far to seek."

With regard to this, however, it should be observed that the traveller in question visited this tribe precisely at the period of their great drinking festival, and that hardly a single individual of them would then be found in a moderately sober condition. Moreover these Caribs had been

slave raids which they undertook against their more peaceful neighbours had degraded them into a state of real savagery ; they were not only savages but savage.

Their near relatives, the aboriginal inhabitants of the Caribbee islands, who have now vanished from the face of the earth before the progress of civilisation, are also reported to have had an equal want of appreciation of the value of the female sex ; but they were living at the period in question under very abnormal conditions, and it would hardly be fair to quote them as evidence. Their incessant warlike expeditions, their restless desire for a wandering mode of life, their cruelty towards their enemies, and their extensive cannibalistic practices must all have helped to stifle every tender feeling in their breasts ; they captured their wives, their weapons in their hands ;

and under the circumstances it is, perhaps, hardly surprising that they looked upon them as slaves.

Important as is the rôle of woman as spouse and counsellor of her husband, she is even more important as mother of his children, for that is her natural province, and she alone has the care and education of the children. Even before the little stranger puts in an appearance, its parents are concerned for its health. Spix and Martius found the diet of parents before the birth of a child strictly regulated in some Brazilian tribes. Both abstain from the meat of certain

Birth Customs.

both husband and wife, who live only on fungi, ants, and *guarana*. The purpose of this abstinence is to prevent the bad qualities of the various animals from being imparted to the child through their persons. A month before birth a Kobeua woman eats all kinds of birds and fish save the *silurus pirarara*, enjoyment of which would entail many ill consequences. All four-footed animals are forbidden to her.

Birth takes place either in the hut itself or in a hut a little removed from the ordinary one, or else in the forest; it is accompanied by usages which seem peculiar to the European.

Wallace says of the Uaupes: "The



A FAMILY OF ARAUCANIANS (CHILI).

Showing a baby strapped in a native cradle.

animals for a time, and live chiefly on fruits and fish. Among the Mauhe pregnancy involves a considerable amount of fasting for

women are generally delivered in the house, though sometimes in the forest. When a birth takes place in the house, everything

is taken out of it, even the pots and pans and bows and arrows, till the next day; the mother takes the child to the river



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

**KOBEUA WOMAN AND CHILD, RIO CUDUI-
ARY, NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.**

and washes herself and it, and she generally remains in the house, not doing any work, for four or five days."

I witnessed the same customs on the Uaupes and Isana of to-day, with but small variations. Birth usually takes place in the "long house," and all the married women stand by to give advice or help. The apartments of the family in question are shut off by mats, and the young mother keeps her room five days, cheered by the company of her spouse. They may do no work, and only eat light food like manioc and roasted ants. Any infraction of this rule would be considered injurious to the child. The five days over, all three take a bath, but not till the next day does a near relative—usually the husband's brother—bring them fish to eat, as a sign that the fast is over.

Before the young couple go for their

bath, all their furniture, weapons, etc., are carried out of doors, and the other dwellers in it leave the house by the back entrance, so that the place is empty till the parents return from their bath; then their possessions are gradually brought back, and three days later a drinking festival is given in honour of the child, and all the relatives are invited. The paternal grandfather names the child, choosing the name of some animal in most cases. A boy has two names, a girl only one.

The Siusi mark the close of the fast by a monotonous chant, in which the husband's father grants permission to the parents to eat food as usual, exactly as the father does to the girl at puberty.



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

LITTLE KOBEUA GIRL.

Children are placed in these swinging chairs so that they may learn to walk—and be out of their mothers' way.

When I was among the Tuyuka on the Rio Tiquie in 1904, I saw the close of one of these five-day fasts. About five in the morning, not long before daybreak, the



Photograph supplied by Miss F. Ackermann

ARAUCANIAN INDIANS.

The woman in the foreground is wearing the characteristic large silver ear-ornaments.

Indians carried most of their goods—and especially the weapons—into the open air, and asked me to do the same—or at any rate to take the guns out. This I did readily; then all the others left the house,

seems to show that the parents and child are regarded as unclean—hence the bath. The abstinence from food, the censing of the path and the water, and the removal of the goods, and especially of the weapons,



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

MAPUCHE (SOUTH CHILE) MEDICINE WOMEN

With the symbols of their profession.

and a singular procession wended its way to the river. In front marched the mother

A Birth "Fast."

of the husband, smoking red-hot coals on a potsherd before her, which she fanned to spread the smoke about her. Behind her came the young mother with the child, and she was followed by the happy father. The grandmother censed the whole strand, then embarked in a canoe, and treated the water likewise. Then parents and child bathed, and returned home, and the grandmother brought them a potful of fish, their first solid food for five days. I saw a similar performance among the Kobeua later. This

are meant to save the new arrival from harmful influences.

Among the Maxuruna the young mother may not eat monkeys; her chief article of

Diet of Parents.

diet is the Hocco fowl. The Culino, too, restrict the mother's diet, but compel the father to practise complete abstinence for the first five days. Paca and tapir meat is forbidden to the mother, who may, however, take pork. When the child is a week old, the magician fumigates it for a whole day with cigar smoke, and it then receives a name.

Among the Marauha the child is bathed

in warm water, and then the mother lies up in her hammock for three weeks, and with her husband partakes only of manioc flour, together with certain birds and fish. When the mother leaves her hammock the oldest relative names the child in a dark room, choosing a title hereditary in the family. The Omagua woman may eat only the tracaja turtle and fish, but no mammals, and the father must practise the same restrictions till the child can sit up. The Passe compel the mother to remain in the dark for a month, and eat only manioc; her husband does the same, and in addition blacks himself and remains in his hammock. Bororo parents

couvade. This custom demands that the mother shall resume her household duties as soon as the child is born, **The "Couvade,"** whereas the husband must lie up and allow himself to be coddled.

Im Thurn found this remarkable custom among the Indians of Guiana. The woman works till the hour of birth is near at hand; then she retires to the forest with one or more women, hangs up her hammock, and awaits the progress of events. A few hours after, she gets up, washes the child and herself in a neighbouring stream, and returns to the village to take up her ordinary work, while her husband lies for days,



MAPUCHE MEDICINE WOMEN TREATING A PATIENT.

By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

eat nothing for two days, and then take a little warm water.

One of the most singular usages, reported by the earliest authors, is the so-called

and perhaps weeks, in his hammock. He may eat only a decoction of manioc meal; he may not smoke, and may not wash; he may touch no weapons, and enjoys the services of all the women in the

village as nurses. Schomburgk says that he may not even touch his body or his head with his nails; but must scratch himself with a palm leaf nerve hung near his hammock. Any infringement of these rules is held to cause the death, or lifelong illness, of the child. If, for example, the father eats *capivara* meat, the child's teeth will grow like those of the animal, and be prominent. If he eats the meat of a spotted animal, the child's skin will be spotted.

More or less similar customs are recorded of the Mundurucu, among whom the husband is visited by his neighbours as he lies in his hammock; by the Bakairi, and by the Pareisi. The Ipurina mother does not return from the forest till four or five days after the birth of the child, and for a whole year her husband may not eat pork or tapir. The custom of the *couvade* is to be explained by the Indian belief that the child—boy or girl—is, as it were, a part of its father, just as if it formed a portion of his body. All injurious substances which the father ingests into his body are thus considered to be transferred to the child.

From its birth onwards, until the child can go on its own legs, the mother is seldom parted from it. A few days

Indian Childhood.

after birth she begins to take it with her to the plantation, protecting the little head against the heat of the sun with a banana leaf or a sieve. I have often met canoes in which whole families were off to a dance at a relative's some days' voyage distant. They take with them all their worldly goods, and with the powerful strokes of his broad paddle, the father drives the boat along, aided by his youthful progeny, who ply their tiny paddles no less manfully; while at the helm sits the mother, her newborn child at her breast.

While the babe is very small, it is carried in a broad bark band, hung over the mother's right shoulder. Later, when it can sit alone, it rides on the mother's hip, supported by an encircling arm; and the pair often take part in the men's dances.

Quite tiny girls take charge of still smaller children, and it is amusing to see the intense seriousness with which the little mothers, imitating their elders, fulfil their office. If the child interferes with the performance of household duties, it is hung up in a swinging chair, a clever contrivance of supple pieces of wood and strips of bark, in which the child can sit or stand (*see* p. 374). This arrangement satisfies both parties, for the mother is relieved of the care of it—it can neither fall nor crawl on the ground and eat earth and get into all sorts of mischief; but, on the other hand, if the chair is hung low enough, its feet touch the ground, and it can learn to walk.

To coddle children is the last thing it would enter an Indian's head to do; on the contrary, they are hardened from youth up, and bathed by the careful mother every day in cold water in some shady forest stream. Children are suckled long, and I have often seen youngsters of three and four years old run away from their games for a draught of their mothers' milk. In a Tukano village on the Lower Uaupes I was received by a very energetic lady, no longer in her first youth, who, in the absence of her husband, received us with full honours. While she was chatting with us a three-year-old boy ran up, took the cigarette out of her hand, puffed at it a few times, gave it back to her, and then settled down in her lap to enjoy his natural nourishment. During the whole performance the mother's flow of conversation was unbroken.

According to Schomburgk, Warrau children are weaned at the age of three or four, and two children of different ages may be seen, one on the mother's arm, the other standing at her side, taking their quantum of refreshment. The most absurd thing of all is to see a lusty boy descend from the top of a high tree, laden with fruit, and run to his mother for a little liquid nourishment. More curious still, in some of the Guiana tribes the grandmother supplies the needs of the elder children, while the mother devotes herself to the wants of the last born. It is said that the women, however

old they may be, have a method of prolonging the activity of the milk glands.

There are, it is true, very youthful grandmothers among the Indians; many marry at ten or twelve, and are grandmothers at an age when the European girl is thinking of marrying! I once saw a

**Where
Charms
Fade Early.**

Tukano girl of thirteen who was already the mother of two children. To the early puberty and marriage of Indian girls is perhaps due their early loss of charms.

Though girls are strong and healthy enough in North-West Brazil, where I have travelled, good looks can hardly be reckoned among their advantages. But in other parts of South America the graces of the maidens are sung by many travellers. The women of British Guiana are noted for their beauty, the symmetry of their figures, the sturdy swell of their limbs and their charms of face; but those who sing their praises lament that they grow old too soon. At the age of twenty their bloom has disappeared, symmetry of body and limb is gone, elasticity of step has been replaced by a suggestion of effort; finally, the rounded beauty of the body is replaced by horrible and unsightly accumulations of fat, which are not hidden from the gaze by a shred of clothing.

Other women get thin as their families grow large, their bones stand out, and some of the old women are regular witches with bleary eyes.

The Indian woman does not confine her love and care to her own children; she has a whole menagerie of pets, which it is her pride to tame and bring up. Any young animal she can

catch takes turn and turn about with her own child at her breast, and the creatures—especially the apes—become so attached to her that they follow her everywhere.

In 1904 I lived among the Kobeua for several weeks, and hardly a day passed without my receiving visitors from the neighbouring villages. People came for miles to see the white stranger and his wonderful possessions, perhaps also to do a little profitable business with him. Among the pets which I saw were several young sloths, and these dull-witted dwellers in Brazilian forests hung round the necks of their foster-mothers like so many children, and shared the nourishment which nature meant for the two-legged nurslings.

One day a hunter shot a monkey and saved her young one alive. His wife tried to get it to take the breast, but the little brute scratched and bit; finally the woman took it by the throat

and trickled her milk into its mouth.

The Guiana Indians allow four-legged and two-legged nurslings to share their mother's love and tenderness, and their pets are mainly monkeys, rats, and the like.

Parents are usually loving towards their children, though they hide their feelings before strangers. In some villages where I resided for some time, and came to be regarded as one of the family, I observed that the parents displayed just the same tenderness towards their children—especially the small ones—as Europeans do. I saw mothers play with their children by the hour, and if a tiny baby demands all the mother's care, or she has to attend to her household duties, she readily entrusts to the grandmother the care of an older child;

**Indians as
Parents.**



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

**CHACO WOMEN DRESSED
FOR A FEAST.**

and she, to amuse her small descendant, plays just the same games and makes just the same inarticulate sounds as a European would do.

mortality is heavy, and to this is due the fact that the fecundity of the women does not, in the area of which I have a knowledge, lead to an increase of popu-



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

AN ONA FAMILY (TIERRA DEL FUEGO).

A mother's tenderness is also displayed by the lavish adornment of the child with necklaces of teeth, seeds, and laboriously pierced stone beads, which no small child ever lacks. Nothing wins a mother's friendship sooner than gifts of beads to a child; they are strung at once and hung round its neck, and the whole family breaks out into ejaculations of admiration. I seldom omitted a present to the smallest child at the breast of a mother who helped to carry my goods.

The mother loses no opportunity of painting her child red, sometimes with *urucu* as a decoration, sometimes with *carayuru* as a prophylactic against catarrh and other diseases. Mothers often brought sick children to me, and begged me to heal them; their care for them is touching, and their grief at the death of their darlings quite moving. In the early days of a friendship a woman would in piteous tones tell over the names of children torn by death from her arms, and point sadly to the ground to show their fate. Child

lation; in some tribes there is even a steady decrease.

Children give signs of great intelligence at an early age. Of course, there are naughty children among the Indians, as there are elsewhere, especially among the smaller ones, who have not acquired the calm and self-control of their parents. Then they are reproved, but I never saw a parent led by anger to act unjustly or to ill-use a child.

On the Tiquie I saw how an Indian woman can give a lesson to a European; the two-year-old son of a Tukano chief was a special favourite of mine. One day my servant brought me a splendid *morpho* butterfly, quite perfect. I laid it aside, intending to put it away later, but my small friend who was playing at my feet made a grab and broke the wings. I am sorry to say that I lost my temper and scolded him; the youngster looked at me first with surprise in his big round eyes, and then ran to his mother crying. She was elderly and energetic, and treated me

like a son, so she read me a long lecture, saying how wrong it was to scold a small child which had done wrong in ignorance. I felt ashamed of my hasty temper, and became a reformed character.

Other travellers give similar accounts: the Warrau mother loves her child fondly—almost foolishly, though the father takes but little notice of it; but it is never punished by either. Caraya children are incessantly cared for in their tender years by their mothers, and often painted and hung with ornaments.

Among the Macusi and other tribes a mother's first care is to paint her child. Yuri women spend hours in this occupation; then the elder children perform the toilette of mother and grandmother, and

who had a still more impatient customer to deal with—an ape which was even more unwilling to allow the elaborate pattern to be painted on his face. Every reproof which the mother addressed to her son was repeated ten times by the daughter before the task was complete, and a few rows of beads could be hung round the creature's neck.

Girls soon begin to help their mothers; the smallest can peel cassava roots, watch a pot on the fire, or collect fire-wood. Among the Yuri the men go off fishing or hunting, and this is the mother's opportunity for educating the children. Then the girls learn how to net hammocks, spin cotton, make pottery, and so on. Cultivation of the fields and cooking the children can learn of themselves.

Girls' Duties.



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

ALACALUF WOMEN IN EUROPEAN COSTUME.

This tribe dwells on the Coast of the Straits of Magellan.

not till then do they think of breakfast. The Passe mother pierces her daughter's ear, and begins the painful operation of tattooing for her, as the father does for a boy.

Ornamentation of Children.

Schomburgk once saw a charming scene before a Warrau festival. A mother was painting an impatient youngster, who could not stand still for a moment. Beside her sat a pretty child

In death, as in life, the wife has equal rights; baskets and sieves are burnt on her grave, pots are broken and cast into the forest; and thus nothing remains to provoke the dead to return and punish the living for neglect or meanness. Neither widower nor widow may marry till a year is past; but lamentation for the dead is mainly the business of the women.

Death and Burial Customs.

The Macusi widower must mourn some ten or eleven months—that is, till the manioc field of his first wife provides the raw material for the drinking festival which welcomes the new spouse. The hair of the Arawak wife is cut short, and she must put off her clothes till it is grown again.

Among the Goajiro a wife is simply bought, and if she dies in childbed the bride-price must be paid a second time, as compensation to her family.

We have shown how high woman stands in most tribes as wife and mother; we have now to show her economic importance, for she has upon her shoulders the whole care of the household, and—especially in the tropics—tends the manioc, which forms the chief article of food.

The Economic Importance of the Indian Woman.

Before marriage the husband has cleared a considerable piece of ground, cut down the trees and let them lie to dry in the sun. When they are burnt, the fruitful soil is still more enriched by the ashes. This done, the man's share of the work is at an end; all else is the task of his wife. The planting season is determined by certain constellations. Manioc cuttings, usually short stems with two or three nodes, are stuck slanting into the earth and left to themselves, for in these fortunate climes nature's operations are subject to no irregularities. Harvest and preparation of the roots make greater claims on the endurance of the woman.

The diligent housewife rises before day-break, bathes in the nearest stream, and fanning into a flame the fire, which the low temperature of the nights renders necessary, she prepares breakfast. Soon her husband emerges from his hammock and takes his morning tub. The meal over, they go about their respective businesses; in the fields the wife has new plants to put in, weeding to do in the young plantations, and ripe roots to dig for daily use.

An Indian Woman's Work.

Towards mid-day, when the heat makes work impossible, she returns home, bending beneath her well-filled basket, which hangs from a forehead band. Small children take her hand or ride on her hip; the older ones with their little baskets help with all the seriousness in the world.

No time is lost in preparing the supplies, for they do not keep; manioc roots are peeled and ground on concave boards set with pointed splinters of stone in elegant patterns. Holding the board in her lap, the woman sits, and exhales her breath with a hissing sound through her teeth in time to her work. The white mass of manioc, resembling mashed potatoes, is then freed of its poisonous sap by kneading on a sieve that stands on a triangular frame, or in a basketwork funnel of cane strips, which hangs from a projecting beam; sometimes it is weighted at the bottom, sometimes a beam, on which half the family sits, effects the work of removing the sap, which runs into a clay dish below.

This done, the meal is freed of lumps and spread on the baking hearth, used in common by all the inhabitants of the "long house," and situated in it or in a shed where the women spend most of their day; here the meal is completely dried and baked into flat cakes, which are turned from time to time.

The meal keeps better when the root is slightly fermented by being kept in water for some days, so that the rough outer skin can be peeled off with the fingers; in this case the meal is roasted as before, without being made into cakes, but the process is carried further. It will keep for months, and is put up in baskets of 50 lb. for trade purposes. When the sap has stood for a time, a fine meal settles, which is also roasted; this is tapioca, and is used in many dishes.

Many kinds of drinks are prepared from manioc meal; prepared with cold water, it furnishes a refreshing drink in the heat of the day; for breakfast it is made into warm soup, or the manioc cakes, warm



Rubbing the peeled manioc roots on a board set with splinters of stone on its slightly concave upper surface.

from the fire, are crumbled into the water. The drink tastes best when it is made from tapioca, which is also cooked in a gelatinous mass with small fish and pepper, and the manioc cakes dipped into it; or an attractive drink may be prepared from it by mixing it with pine-apple juice. Even the sap serves a purpose; freed from prussic acid, it gives a sauce as good as the best Worcester.

But the favourite drink, always to the fore at festivals or even friendly visits, is a kind of light beer, known in the west as *chicha*, in the east as *kashiri*. On the Uaupes and Isana it is thus prepared: the women crumble burnt manioc cakes into a trough and add water; to hasten the fermentation they chew cakes and add the paste; the leaves of a certain tree, and sometimes sugar cane sap, also

furnish intoxicating ingredients. After careful kneading the trough is covered with fresh banana leaves or mats and set by the fire; on the next day it is the harmless *payauru*. *Kashiri* is formed after two days' fermentation, and is intoxicating. It is made by pressing the brown pap through a sieve; the juice runs into a pot, from which hostess or host fills the calabash. The moist meal in the early stages may be stowed away in pots, covered with a net to prevent bursting, or in banana leaves, till wanted for use.

Woman's culinary powers are by no means exhausted by the preparation of manioc; bananas, wild fruits, etc., are made into tasty dishes, and the Indian's bill of fare is by no means so monotonous as people think.



Manioc meal being pressed through a sieve hung on a triangle. The juice, which contains a quantity of prussic acid, runs into the pot below.



Photographs by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

Pressing manioc in the strainer. A tube, plaited out of elastic reeds, is filled with manioc meal, and the lower end weighted to press out the poisonous juices.

KOBEUA WOMEN PREPARING MANIOC.

Manioc is the staple food of this race.

The household work in North-West Brazil, which I have described from personal experience, is typical of the work of woman elsewhere, though ways and means may differ. Everywhere the burden is on the woman's shoulders; she must fetch wood for the fire, and water; at night she must keep in the small fires lighted beneath the hammocks to keep off mosquitos; she has to clean the house, a frequent performance resulting in clouds of dust; and on journeys she carries the children and all the household goods, while her lord and master stalks along with bow and arrows only. Hunting, fishing, canoe-building, and care of his weapons occupy him; all else is beneath his dignity, and when he comes back to his house he throws himself into his hammock, and as he swings watches with an indifferent air the toil of his wife, or calls upon her to give him refreshment. He is the head of the family, yet we cannot say with truth that woman is his slave.

As the wife presides over the house, it is natural that she should be skilled in making household goods. All over South America pottery is made by women, and, save among the nomadic Maku, the artistic standard is high, though the means are simple. The material is a fine blue clay

The Indian Woman's Burden.



YOUNG KOBEUA WOMAN, RIO CUDUIARY,
NORTH-WEST BRAZIL.

The marks on the body are from manioc meal.

found in small deposits on river banks, to obtain which some tribes make long journeys. It is not washed, but carefully kneaded and freed from hard lumps, and ash from the *caraipe* tree is added to give it firmness. The worker squats, and with open hands upon a mat makes long rolls of clay, and with them builds up the vessel in spirals. With the left hand she then presses the rolls together, and with her nails, or a small piece of wood, she effaces the hollows, and finally smooths the vessel with a shiny pebble.

Sometimes she adds two handles, moistening them with saliva to make them adhere. The pot is dried on a platform in the house for three or four days, then for three days more in the sun, the mouth being supported by small pieces of wood. The pot is burnt in a small hollow, mouth downwards, on three clay supports or a few stones. Wood is piled over

it, and then bark, and when all is reduced to ashes the pot is red-hot; it gradually cools, but sometimes an unexpected shower will reduce it to fragments.

On the Isana the technique is specially good, and meander patterns are drawn on the sun-dried vessels and covered with powdered resin, or the sap of the *cuma* tree, which forms a varnish in the burning.

Such painted pottery is commonly used only for fetching water, for *kashiri* in the long run spoils the varnish and the design;

but at ceremonial visits and dance festivals they serve as bowls for manioc drinks.

The greatest variety of form, size, and

have few leisure moments. But among the Uaupes tribes hammocks are made from palm fibre by both sexes; and the male sex



Photographs by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

KOBEUA WOMAN POTTER.

In the first illustration the woman is seen rolling the clay, and in the second placing the rolls spirally to form a bowl, squeezing them into position with the left hand.

style is found in Indian pots; manioc vessels vary from giants of thirty inches diameter to tiny children's plates; there are dwarf pots for *curare*, and *kashiri* pots three feet high and nine feet round; there are pots quite classical in style, and others in the shape of animals. Woman is everywhere the potter, and, when she has married into an alien tribe, has sometimes brought her art with her.

As a rule, woman does the weaving, spinning, and the like, but to this there are some exceptions. In British Guiana women prepare hammocks for sale, do the bead-work which forms their only dress, spin cotton, or make little hammocks for their children. It is not surprising that they

undertakes the preparation of all baskets, with their regular red and black patterns, and even the sieves and tubes for the preparation of manioc are their work. Both sexes wear knee bands of *curaua* fibre, and these are woven by the women, who produce the same patterns in them as in the bead aprons and on their pots. It may be said, on the whole, that woman is in no way inferior to man in artistic gifts.



KOBEUA WOMAN POTTER.

Finishing off a pot before it is dried and baked.

One opportunity of displaying this is seen when they are called upon to paint the men for a dance festival with dark blue *genipa*, which they do with great skill and speed. My servant and I could give the women no greater pleasure than to beg them to do us the same

service. Among the Yuri the women paint the whole family every morning, and Martius once for a joke added a few grotesque scrolls to the work of an old woman on her granddaughter's face. She was so charmed that she begged him to set to work on her, and the next morning he found a whole row of girls and women in front of his hut waiting to be operated on.

Among the Macusi and other Guiana tribes the women seem to take to painting of other objects too; if a man has finished a weapon he hands it over to his wife for her to add an intricate pattern, which she does without any design before her. The Taruma told Schomburgk that some sculptures on the rocks near had been done long, long ago by women, a testimony to mere man's mistrust of his own powers.

This brings us to the question of woman's dress and ornaments. Dress is usually reduced to a minimum; in most of the primitive tribes, woman is quite unclothed, and the further you go up the Uaupes the less she has on. Among the Apiaka on the Upper Tapajoz, where the men have European dress, like the whites whom they serve, woman is in the state of Eve when she lived in Paradise. When a small covering is worn, as among the Bakairi and other Xingu tribes, it is intended as a protection against insects, not as a covering demanded by modesty. Yet, in spite of the lack of clothing, I never saw a woman behave in any way improperly, and even completely unclothed women are so decent in their behaviour that one forgets their nakedness.

Woman in South America is anything but indifferent to adornment, and seeks to enhance her charms to the utmost by artificial means.

The Question of Adornment. Long, glossy, black hair, combed and oiled every day, is in many tribes an envied possession. Tehuelche girls wear their hair in two plaits; it is coarse, and hardly so long as that of the men; but on festive occasions they supplement it artificially, probably with horsehair decor-

ated with blue beads; the ends are adorned with silver ornaments.

As we have seen, face-painting is a favourite occupation; on ordinary days the colour is red, and no patterns are used, but for a festival the whole body is covered with patterns in *genipa* juice. A European comb for putting up the hair is an acquisition, and a woman loves to wear silver coins and beads strung as a necklace, or bead bracelets. For a dance her adornment is far simpler than a man's, and is limited in the tribes I know to a tasteful bead apron.

Vanity takes singular forms here, as it does in the rest of the world. The lobe of the ear is usually bored, and oval pieces of wood, cane, or even European earrings are worn. In the underlip is a disc, or, as among the Caribs of British Guiana, a needle, point outwards, is passed through it. Sometimes this adornment grew to a huge size, and the Botocudo woman wore in her lip and ear a disc which was but little smaller than that of her husband, and attained a size of nearly three inches in diameter and a thickness of nearly an inch. Some tribes pierce the septum of the nose and pass through it a piece of cane, bird's bone, or, on festive occasions, a coloured feather.

More disfiguring is the Miranha custom of piercing the side of the nose and wearing in it a cylinder of wood or a shell. The women outbid each other to such an extent that some have to hang the ring of flesh thus produced over the ear to prevent it from hanging down too far.

The tattooing of the face is often an important process; in North-West Brazil I only saw it in one tribe, the Desana on the Uaupes, in which both sexes wear on the lower lip two lines parallel to the chin, produced, as is everywhere the case in tropical America, with a palm prickle and *genipa* juice.

In British Guiana the Warrau and Aca-woio pull out their eyebrows and tattoo the places as well as the corner of the mouth with curved lines, which gives them a

characteristic and not uninteresting appearance. Among the Caraya both sexes receive the tribal mark at puberty—a circle on each cheek. Some of the Guaikuru stock

the chief beauties of woman, girls have from youth upwards cotton bands, three fingers broad, beneath the knee and above the ankle; these she wears till she is full



ARAUCANIAN WOMEN (CHILI) SPINNING.

of the Gran Chaco—the Toba, Takshik, and others—have a very complicated pattern, which covers the whole face, and is usually confined to females.

Some tribes—like those of the Calchaqui Valley, in the west of Argentina, and some in ancient Peru—deformed the heads of the children; and this was also done till recently by the Omaguas on the Upper Amazon. Bands round the children's heads produced a horn which tapered towards the back. Another singular eccentricity, noted in the Caribbee Islands by some of the earliest voyagers, reappears, according to Schomburgk, among the Caribs of the mainland. To give the calf an unnatural thickness, which is looked upon as one of

grown, and the result is to atrophy the muscle beneath the bands, while in between it forms an unshapely mass.

I have often mentioned the strict division of labour between the sexes, important especially in the preparation of household goods and in the ordinary work of the household.

Division of Labour.

Woman has to cultivate and prepare the manioc from start to finish; men do a little roasting on their own account, but never any cooking. This is true of the Xingu sources, of Guiana, in North-West Brazil, and probably all over South America. Im Thurn tells a story of how he was once forced by famine to take cassava roots from

an Indian field; but as all his companions were men, no one would undertake the preparation; at last one was persuaded, but he was ever afterwards scornfully pointed at as "old woman." There is in South America a widespread custom which enacts that men and women shall not eat together; this is perhaps due to the division of labour in other matters.

As regards meals, the first is at daybreak in the long houses on the Isana and Uaupes, immediately after the morning bath. All the married women bring flat baskets, with flat manioc cakes and a pot with a very peppery dish of fish, and put them in the middle of the house. The men squat round it in a circle and fall to on the warmed-up fragments of yesterday. The meal over, the women hand round big bowls of manioc drink, and last of all calabashes for washing of hands and mouth. Not till the men have gone do the women sit down. A second important meal is taken shortly before sunset; and between times a man, when he comes in from hunting, may eat a mouthful or two with his family in his own apartments. Lafitau remarked the singular custom of eating apart among the Caribs of the islands, and put it down to their servile position, which it probably is not.

Among the Guiana tribes, too, men and women eat apart, and the latter get only the crumbs of the feast; but they know how to look after "number one," and keep a heap of little pots filled with dainties stowed away in every corner of the hut; and these provide them with a hearty meal when the males have withdrawn.

There are a certain number of religious ceremonies from which women are excluded among some of the tribes. These are the secret societies of the men whose festivals are often closely connected with the puberty rites of the young men and their initiation into full tribal rights. It will be well to give some account of these, for, as will be

seen, women were more concerned in these matters than might appear at first sight.

The Orinoco tribes hold a festival, which is described by Humboldt, in honour of the good spirit, Cachimana, who presides over the seasons and brings to maturity the fruits of the earth. In the rites the initiated breathed out their souls and spent their breath in playing upon long trumpets of burnt clay; and as a variation submitted to flagellation, fasting, and other interesting and exhausting religious exercises. Not only were women strictly excluded from celebrations of this kind, but they might not even so much as cast eyes upon one of the trumpets. If one had the mischance to do so she paid the penalty, and her silence as to what she had seen was ensured by sending her to the bourne whence no traveller returns.

Dr. Ehrenreich found a similar festival among the Ipurina, which was named Kamutshi, after the evil spirits which then make their appearance. These spirits choose as their place of abode the musical instruments used in the festival—large flutes and horns made of bark twisted in a spiral to the proper shape. When the dancers and other performers approach, the women hastily disappear into their huts, and there put out all fires. If any of them were so unfortunate as to catch a glimpse of the bark trumpets, the Kamutshi issued from their lair, penetrated into the body of the woman, according to the native account, and never failed to bring about her death.

When some kinds of palm fruits are ripe, tribes on the Isana, Uaupes, and southwards as far as the Yapura, celebrate a festival to the honour of a hero, in which are used instruments in every way similar to those described. Participation in the festival is the privilege of the adult males, and they submit to severe mortifications and castigations. Even the initiation into this secret society is preceded, as I noticed on the Uaupes, by painful flagellations and privations. No female of any age may be present at the festival, nor even small boys; if they so much as see the instrument, the spirit kills them, or, in other words, they are put to death.



ARAUCANIAN WOMEN (CHILI) SPINNING AND WEAVING AT THEIR PRIMITIVE FORM OF LOOM.

The Tariana tribe on the Uaupes has the same festival, and the men wear a kind of mask woven of human and monkey hair,

In the basin of the Xingu, women are likewise strictly prohibited from seeing the masked dances; the house in which the



By courtesy of the South American Missionary Society.

YAHGAN (TIERRA DEL FUEGO) FAMILY IN CANOE.

which is likewise strictly kept from the gaze of women. A quarter of a century ago a Franciscan monk in Ipanore, a large village of the Tariana, was nearly killed by the enraged men because he had profaned these ceremonies by speaking of them before the women in the course of a sermon.

Among the Caraya, women and children may look on while the masked dances are in progress, but they may not see the masks without their wearers, for the men persuade them that what is behind the mask is the veritable spirit of the animal whose mask it is; at most, the oldest women are now and then initiated into the secret. If a woman, out of curiosity, penetrates into the secret hut in which the dance costumes are kept, or if she utilises any other opportunity to catch sight of them, she is condemned to death or, at the least, to a very heavy penalty.

masks and musical instruments are kept serves also as a house for the entertainment of guests, but women may nevertheless not pass over the threshold on pain of death.

In South America, as everywhere else where such secret societies and festivals are known, the air of mystery which is thrown round the whole business arises from the desire of the men to maintain their authority over the women, and to add to it. Of course, it is also possible that the precautions are actually intended to protect the weaker sex against the spirits in whose existence the men no less than the women believe, and whose might they dread at the bottom of their hearts just as much. Once I was asking my friend, the Siusi chief, about the name and importance of certain spirits, and before he answered me he sent away his two grown-up daughters, who were

standing close by. "Women," said he, "may not hear about the spirits."

If we take a final survey of the Indian woman's life, we must admit that it is full of toil; but this very fact permits her to unfold to their full extent her qualities of head and heart. She is anything but a dull-witted beast of burden; but whereas the man's powers are devoted in the main to the service of the community, the woman plays her rôle in the smaller circle of the family. If, however, the heaviest duties are hers in

**The
Intelligence
of the Indian
Woman.**

good nature, which finds utterance not only towards members of her family and tribe, but also towards strangers, as I can prove from my own experience.

In every village where I resided for any length of time, I was treated by the women as one of their own community.

**Her
Kindliness.**

Food and drink were never lacking for me, and my welfare was a matter which concerned them all. As a rule, it was an elderly woman who played the part of mother to me. In the Koboua village of Namokoliba on the Cuduiary, where I passed several peaceful



TEHUELCHÉ WOMAN AND CHILDREN (TIERRA DEL FUEGO).

Photograph by P. Neville Edwards, Littlehampton.

this sphere of labour, hers also are the chief privileges in the household.

In her care for her child, both before and after it is born, we may see one of the chief expressions of her mental life. Her great intelligence is united to a spirit of pure

and interesting weeks, it was the wife of the chief whose protection I enjoyed. It really was no difficult matter for me to address the good old woman, who had three grown-up sons, as "mother," especially when I saw how much pleasure it gave her

and her family; and I am free to confess that it gave me no less pleasure when she called me her son. Every morning when I woke she sent her little girl to my hammock with fresh water for minor ablutions, and many a titbit and refreshing drink I owed to her kindness. When the time came for me to take my leave, all the good folks came to the bank to see me off—only my "mother" and my "little sister" were not there; they had gone to the plantation before daybreak, so as to miss the final parting.

Wherever I went sympathetic and tactful inquiries were made by the women about my family relationships. Pictures of my *fiancée*—or, as they called her, my "wife"—aroused the greatest interest. They gave her the honourable name of "elder sister," and I enjoyed the title of "husband of our elder sister."

As I travelled along the Tiquie in February and March, 1905, making for the Amazon

along untrodden paths, I was greeted as an old friend in all the villages. In one place the Tukano women celebrated the eve of my departure by a party, and, with faces painted in red patterns in my honour, they squatted round my hammock. Of course, I had to sing, and I gave them a performance of every song I could think of, cheerful and sad, soldiers' songs and sentimental ditties, anything that came into my head. And still they said: "Sing us one more song, doctor." Who could refuse them? I sang till I was hoarse, and then they sang to me; and though the range of tone is small, their efforts were not lacking in melody. Finally, they turned to improvisation of songs on my relatives; songs on my travels, my return and my meeting with my "wife." Next morning they all stood on the high bank of the river, and as long as they could follow the boat with their eyes they called after me, "Give our love to your wife, Elsa."



Photograph by Dr. Koch Grünberg.

A SIUSI VILLAGE.