



ALBERT SCHWEITZER

African Notebook

TRANSLATED BY MRS. C. E. B. RUSSELL
WITH A FOREWORD BY LACHLAN FORBOW, M.D.

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK



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ALBERT SCHWEITZER

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MRS. C. E. B. RUSSELL

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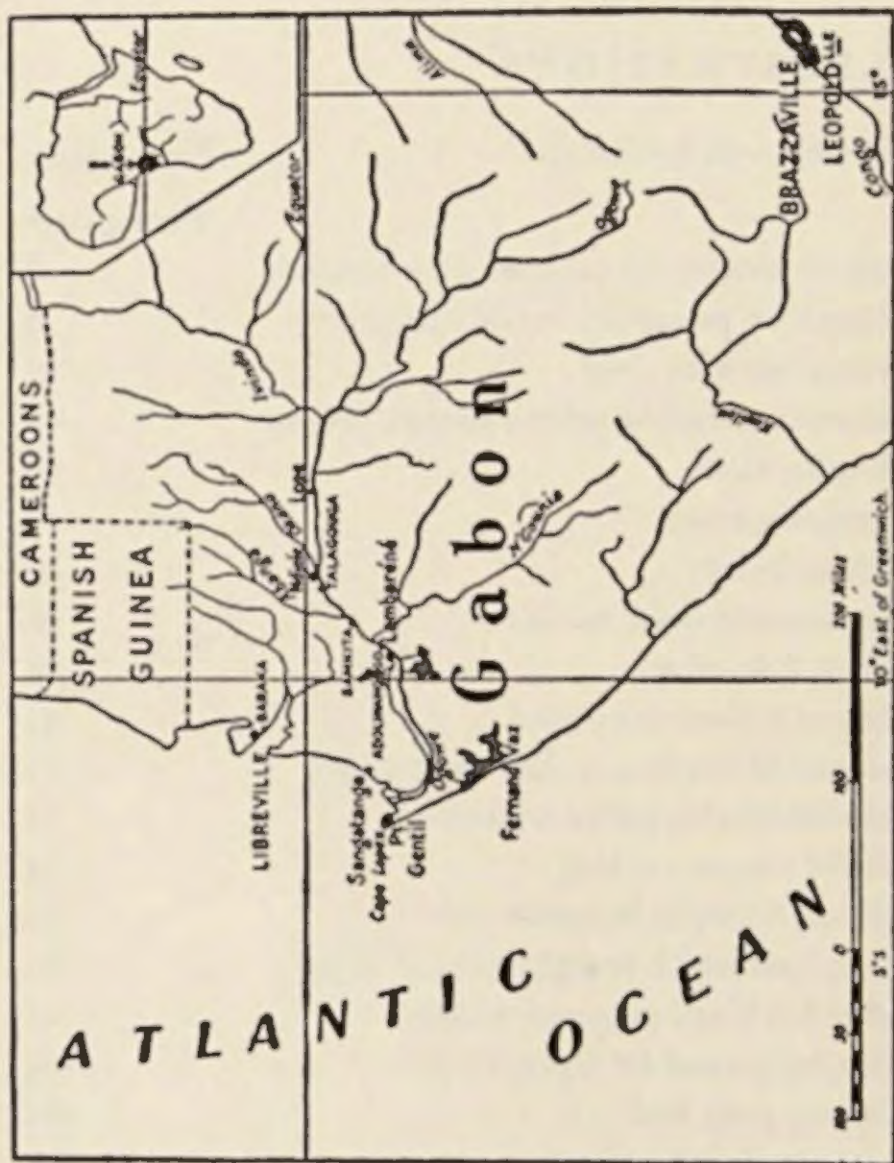
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CHAPTER ONE

ON THE TRACKS OF TRADER HORN

THE HOUSE IN WHICH I AM WRITING THESE REMINISCENCES of Africa is situated on a small hill on the banks of the River Ogowe above Lambaréné. Its name is Adolinanongo, which means "looking out over the peoples." It deserves this name, for from the hill one gets an extensive view over the river, which at this point divides into two branches, as well as over the green islands whose shores it washes and over the villages on its banks, right away to the line of blue hills past which its big tributary, the N'Gounie, flows into it from the south. On this broad-topped hill lay the large village of the King of the Galoas, by name N'Kombe, the Sun King. Below, on the river-bank, lay the trading post of an English firm, Hatton and Cookson, which enjoyed the protection of N'Kombe.

This was Adolinanongo about the middle of the seventies of last century, when the firm of Hatton and Cookson sent as assistant to Mr. Gibson, the

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manager of the trading post, a young man from Liverpool who for some time had been working at their headquarters in Libreville.

As an old man, resident in an institution at Johannesburg, this former agent of the trading post at Adolinanongo, persuaded and helped by Mrs. Ethelreda Lewis, a South African authoress, wrote his reminiscences of that period under the pseudonym Alfred Aloysius Horn. Enthusiastic over the directness of the narrative and the charm of the philosophic reflections which accompanied it, John Galsworthy wrote a foreword for the book, which quickly achieved success.¹

So in those years Trader Horn was at home on the spot now occupied by my Hospital. It was from

¹ Alfred Aloysius Horn, *The Ivory Coast in the Earlies*. (London and New York: Jonathan Cape, 1927.)

On the maps of the present day only the stretch of coast between Cape Palmas and Cape Three Points at the northern entrance to the Gulf of Guinea bears the name Ivory Coast. But Trader Horn means the coast from Cape Lopez towards the mouth of the Congo, which also bore the name in his time. The region in which he traded is called Gabon.

Trader Horn writes Adonimanango, Adimanongo and Adonimango. The explorer Alfred Marche, who often stayed here between 1872 and 1877, renders the name as Adanlinanlango. But Adolinanongo is the correct form.

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Adolinanongo that he set out on his enterprises and to Adolinanongo that he returned. Here it was that he quarreled with his chief, Mr. Gibson, whom he reproached with lack of the spirit of enterprise. In the early sixties it was here he met de Brazza, who persuaded Horn to attempt to found trading posts up stream in the districts he was to traverse on his march to the Congo.

In the course of his career, Trader Horn traveled far afield, not only in Africa, but in other parts of the world as well. Nevertheless, in his old age, memories of the years he had lived among the savages in the primeval forests of Gabon obscured those of later times. The peculiar fascination of Gabon has affected others in the same way.

Trader Horn, to keep to his assumed name, lived here from about 1875 till towards 1884. We know this from the events and persons he mentions.

During this period both Alfred Marche and de Brazza visited the Ogowe district. Marche stayed here in the course of two journeys of exploration (1872-74 and 1875-77). De Brazza visited Lambaréné several times between 1875 and 1887. It was from here he started to explore the upper waters of the Ogowe, and when he set out to seek

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a means of communication between the Ogowe and the Congo.

The Protestant missionaries of an American Society worked on the Ogowe from the year 1874. The Catholic Mission Station at Lambaréné was founded in the year 1881.

Accounts published by Marche, de Brazza and some of the American missionaries, and recollections of the period still to be gathered among aged natives, allow us to check the account given by Trader Horn.

Whereas the memory of his chief, Mr. Gibson, still lives in the land, there are but few old people who can remember his subordinate of that time. What they still remember is that he was very young, that he wanted to trade according to his own ideas and on his own account and was therefore constantly at variance with Mr. Gibson, that he was very irritable and that he had a liking for rum and good brandy.

Trader Horn in many passages lets us perceive that his reminiscences are interwoven with fiction. The story of the priestess Lola, the daughter of a white father, who lived in a native sacred precinct, was carried off by Horn on his homeward journey and immediately married to his former schoolfellow in Liverpool, an immensely rich Peruvian, who came

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to Africa on hearing from Horn of her beauty, is an invention. There has never been anything of the nature of a vestal virgin in this country. One can see what a joke it was for the jolly old man to set so touching a jungle romance before his credulous readers. But it disfigures the book.

And when he talks about his adventures with wild animals, Trader Horn seems at times to give the reins to his imagination.

He is rather free too in some of his accounts of the habits of the wild animals. For instance, he says the crocodile digs passages into the bank from the water. But it is only the true cayman that does this.

Leopards, elephants, hippopotamus, buffaloes, crocodiles, boa-constrictors, chimpanzees, and gorillas are as numerous as in those days. Indeed they live a more tranquil life than they did then, as they are much less hunted by the natives than they used to be. The population has declined. And the natives have not so much leisure time as they used to have, and are not such practiced hunters as were their forebears.

When it is repeatedly stated in the newspapers that the days of elephants and gorillas are numbered, that certainly does not apply to ours. These have no

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idea of dying out. In villages not far distant from the Hospital the inhabitants in recent times have often experienced the devastation of their plantations by elephants.

Apart from trifling discrepancies, Trader Horn's description of the country and its inhabitants is accurate. It is a wonderful feat of memory that after so many years he should have remembered the geography of the district and the names of places and people so well. He gives a very practical account of his activities as a trader. Judged with knowledge of the country and the conditions which obtained, it becomes clear that he was not only extraordinarily enterprising but remarkably capable. When, for example, as the result of a reconnoitring expedition in the region of the upper N'Gounie, he sought to persuade his superiors to send goods from that district to the sea by the direct route instead of by the enticing waterway of the Ogowe, he was expressing a view which down to the present day has again and again been proved right.

His clearness of vision is also demonstrated by the fact that from the moment when, thanks to de Brazza, the rule of the white man over the country began to be effective, he directed his efforts to

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freeing trade from the dependence on the chiefs by which it had hitherto been hampered. He demanded free trade on the river, and wanted to found further in the interior settlements run by white men in order to make it possible to buy goods directly and cheaply instead of being dependent in those regions on black middlemen and getting from them wares increased in price by the imposts paid to the chiefs.

He actually realized this plan on the island of Osange (Trader Horn writes it Isange) situated near the present-day station of N'Djole, 180 kilometers (about 120 miles) up stream from Lambaréné. He was not to be diverted from his purpose by the struggles with one of the chiefs in which it involved him.

He seems to have run this undertaking entirely on his own account. At all events he obtained possession of the island for himself personally, not for the firm. Similarly independent activities on the part of agents were not uncommon in the colonial trade of those days. Nevertheless, Trader Horn remained in the service of the firm. From it he obtained goods for barter, to it he delivered the produce obtained in exchange.

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Free Trade carried with it a danger to which Horn as yet paid no attention. As long as goods were passed on from tribe to tribe and there was no direct intercourse, the natives were fairly well protected against the introduction of diseases. But when porters recruited in other districts came from the sea escorted by white men and penetrated far into the interior, it was only a question of time before the appearance in the Ogowe territory of hitherto unknown forms of sickness. In the year 1876, i.e. in the period of Trader Horn, smallpox appeared, as we know from Marche, on the upper Ogowe. Old people tell me that in 1886, after Horn had left, an epidemic of smallpox on the lower course of the river destroyed nearly half the population. Later on, porters from tribes inhabiting the coast in the direction of the Congo brought sleeping sickness into the country. Unfortunately this could not be fought like smallpox by vaccinating the population.

Perhaps it was the difficulties that had arisen between Mr. Gibson and his enterprising but self-willed agent that prevented Trader Horn from returning later to his interesting post at Lambaréné.

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CANOES WAITING FOR PATIENTS NEAR HOSPITAL



SCHWEITZER PREACHING, NATIVE INTERPRETERS

ON THE TRACKS OF TRADER HORN

The *Pioneer*, one of the firm's vessels in which Trader Horn made many a journey on the Ogowe, and on the sea between Cape Lopez and Libreville, originally belonged, as he tells us himself, to Livingstone. The British Government had given him this fairly large paddle-steamer in 1861 for his journeys on the Zambesi. But she drew too much water to be suitable for that river, and after several changes of owner and a return to Liverpool was acquired by the firm of Hatton and Cookson and brought to the Ogowe. Here she rendered service for many years. She it was that in 1874 brought the first American missionary, Dr. Nassau, up the river. Thus through the steamship *Pioneer* there is a connection between the two so different pioneers, Livingstone and Trader Horn. How hard it must have been for Livingstone to become reconciled to the fact that the vessel he had so passionately longed for was of no use to him!

I can find no answer to the question how it was that Livingstone, who must have known his Zambesi and its sandbanks, did not succeed in insisting that a steamer of sufficiently light draught should be delivered.

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At that period the two firms of Hatton and Cookson of Liverpool and Karl Woermann of Hamburg shared the trade of Gabon. Besides these, other companies hardly deserved consideration. There was good comradeship between the two firms—no difficult matter, for business flourished exceedingly. Before the arrival of Trader Horn, the German trading post was also situated at Adolinanongo in the neighborhood of the English establishment. Later it was transferred to the so-called "Big Island" opposite, lying between the two arms of the river. Trader Horn, who had made friends with the head of the Woermann trading post, Herr Schiff, already an elderly man, made a point of fostering good relations between the two commercial houses.

Lambaréné was then the most advanced post of both firms. The trading post of Hatton and Cookson is still extant. The firm of Woermann withdrew from the Ogowe region in 1904. But its big corrugated iron shed is still standing and bears witness to the superiority of the solid, thick corrugated iron of olden days to the thin stuff of the present.

At that time the chief articles of commerce were ivory, rubber, ebony, and padouk.

The most remunerative was rubber, for that was

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the most coveted product. It was before the period of rubber plantations, so the only source of supply for world trade was the rubber extracted from the lianas or vines of the jungle. But the search for it was hard and disgusting work. The natives engaged in it were obliged to spend many long weeks in the forest and swamps, to endure famine, because being far from their plantations it was very difficult to procure food, and to suffer the torments inflicted by all kinds of insects. They smeared the sap drawn from the vines over their bodies and let it solidify there. To make the unpleasant task as easy as possible, instead of getting the sap from incisions and keeping the plants alive, they cut the vines and let them bleed to death—a piratical method! So they had to penetrate further and further into the forest to find the valuable vines. And as the need for rubber grew, throughout the whole of equatorial Africa pressure was brought to bear on the population to induce them to supply it. So rubber was the great misfortune of the natives until by degrees the immense plantations laid out in the Dutch East Indies and other countries began to bear.

When I came to the country in 1913, rubber had

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already ceased to play its earlier part in commerce, and for many years now jungle rubber is scarcely wanted or exported. It is completely superseded by plantation rubber. The younger generation of natives only knows by hearsay of the misery rubber brought upon the Africans a few decades ago, and the rubber-vines, which have re-established themselves meanwhile, no longer have to fear the knife.

Even at that time, ivory had to be brought from further in the interior, as the stores of it in districts near the coast had already been used up.

The splendid, gleaming red padouk wood, here called Oïngo, is frequently found, as also is ebony, in the Ogowe territory. Great labor is involved in the transport of these heavy varieties of wood through the jungle to the boats on to which they must be loaded. Padouk is not only used as timber; a highly prized red dye is prepared from it.

As far as possible we try to avoid the use of padouk, which costs so dear in Europe, for the reason that it is very difficult to work with it. If there is a quantity of padouk among the timbers of several of the buildings of my Hospital, the reason is not that I take pleasure in valuable wood,

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but that at the time I could get no other. When I ordered hardwood beams from my Canadian friend Mr. Airth, the manager of a saw-mill on Lake Gome, he apologized for sending padouk, because at the moment he had no other hardwood ready for sawing. So he let me have this valuable wood cheaper than ordinary hardwood! But I had to speak smooth words and give a present to my black carpenter, Monenzali, to compensate him for the trouble of boring holes and knocking nails into this detestably hard timber.

At that time, palm-oil and palm kernels did not yet play any part in local trade, though at the mouth of the Niger and in the Bay of Libreville palm-oil was already being shipped. Coffee and cocoa plantations were first made towards the end of the century. Okoume wood, the principal article of export from Gabon at the present time—some 300,000 tons per year are shipped—was first cut about the year 1905. At the time of Trader Horn, no notice was taken of this semi-hard wood, from which the natives dug their canoes. Traders were interested only in the precious hardwoods.

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Officials of the Administration at that period only made passing visits to the district watered by the Ogowe. The country was governed from the naval station at Libreville, but the naval officers could do little more than send small gunboats up the river from time to time to bombard the villages concerned when there recurred plentiful complaints of the plundering by natives of the trading posts and means of transport. And even this was only possible when the water was at its normal height, that is to say only during a few months of the year. In the dry season the natives had nothing of the sort to fear.

An old man who happens to be just now in the Hospital tells me that as a boy he experienced the bombardment of his village by a river gunboat.

In the main, then, the white traders had to rely entirely on themselves, as is apparent from Trader Horn's descriptions. They had to pay regular tribute to the chiefs. In the constant wars between the tribes they had to endeavor to keep neutral or take the side of the probable victor. We know also from the reports of American missionaries how dependent the Europeans were on the chiefs and how insecure were the conditions. If they wanted to start on a

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preaching tour, they were obliged first of all to ask permission from the chiefs through whose territory they were about to travel and send them the fees required for according it. They built the first mission station at Lambaréné on a steep hill to make things a little more difficult for savages bent on plunder. The cement pillars of this house may still be seen in the jungle above the present station.

Trader Horn knew the reason why it was that on his journeys, as he tells us, he considered islands and sandbanks as the only safe places to camp.

During the disturbances which broke out in 1874 in Adolinanongo after the death of the Sun King, the explorer Marche and Mr. Walker, at that time agent for the firm of Woermann, had to erect palisades round the trading post in order to be able to defend themselves against the natives.

Trader Horn was unable to avoid a bloody encounter with a chief who cut off access for his goods up the river and even ventured to attack him on the island. This was necessary in order to be able to maintain the trading post which at the instigation of de Brazza he had founded on Osange Island in the neighborhood of the present N'Djole. The chief had felt the opening of the new trading station to

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be to his own disadvantage. For owing to its presence he lost income which he had previously drawn because the up-river trade had hitherto passed along the bank of his territory and he had received tribute for all that came through his hands.

Mr. Gibson was not in favor of being involved in any disputes with the tribes that dwelt higher up the river. When the chief had pillaged the canoes containing the goods, without knowing that he had also ventured to attack his agent, he immediately entered into negotiations with him and concluded an agreement under the terms of which the chief would restore the canoes, goods, and prisoners, while the firm of Hatton and Cookson undertook to recall its agent. But as he had won the battle, Horn was able to override the settlement made by his superior and carry on trade in defiance of the chief.

As an old man he acrimoniously remarked to Mrs. Ethelreda Lewis. "That feller Gibson belonged to a genus Nature never intended for trading up the river."

The reason why conditions on the Ogowe were so insecure at the time of Trader Horn was first and foremost that the Pahouins, also called Fangs, who were quite savage cannibals from the interior, were

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moving towards the coast and pressing on the tribes they came across on their wanderings. The former population lived in great fear of the powerful intruders. For the sake of better protection against the Pahouins, about the middle of the eighties the Galoas left Adolinanongo and migrated to the Big Island opposite. The firm of Hatton and Cookson had moved their trading post to it somewhat earlier. The reason for the removal was probably that in the period of disturbance which followed the death of the Sun King, the large Galoa village had lost its former importance and trade had been more and more diverted to the Big Island.

When Trader Horn returned from his great expedition, probably in the year 1883, the move was already accomplished. The new house, which he praised in his reminiscences as well built and in every way suited to its purpose, was still standing a few years ago. It rested on hardwood piles about six feet high and the roof was covered with palm-leaf mats.

Only the intervention of the white man saved the inhabitants of the Ogowe region from annihilation at the hands of the Pahouins. The old tribes, which in spite of the common danger which threatened

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them still went on fighting among themselves, could not have maintained themselves against the new enemy by their own strength alone.

When long-resident natives of the district express to me their discontent at being ruled by the whites, I answer that without the white man they would no longer be in existence, because they would either have slaughtered each other or ended in the Pahouin cooking-pots. To this they have no answer. In general—manifold and heavy as is the guilt of the white people all over the world in the matter of colonization, yet they may claim on their own behalf that to the races they have subjected they have in so far brought peace that they have put an end to the senseless wars which constantly raged among them. Here I can measure the full significance of this when I recall what the conditions were at the time of Trader Horn.



Trade was then carried on simply by barter. In return for ivory, rubber, ebony and padouk, the natives received from the traders salt, brandy, muskets, powder, lead, cooking-pots, crockery, cotton

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cloth, and trinkets. The barrels in which rubber was sent to Europe returned full of old uniforms.

Salt was greatly coveted as a medium of exchange, for none was to be found in the interior. The natives seasoned their food with potash, which they prepared by burning some small, fleshy-leaved marsh plants. Before the coming of the white man, the coast people carried on a very remunerative trade with those of the interior by the medium of sea salt. This was gradually displaced by the salt the white men brought in sacks, so that the coast natives lost their previous profits. In order to retain their salt trade and along with it trade in general, they did all they could to frighten and stop Europeans from penetrating into the interior of the country. Hence it was that, whereas the coast at the mouth of the Ogowe was known since the end of the fifteenth century and had long been visited by white traders, it was not until about 1870 that they first came up the river!

Salt is still the currency best appreciated in the interior. In remote districts where the nearest trading post is many days' journey distant, the people have no use for money.

Trader Horn gives us some naïve and character-

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istic information about the part which rum and brandy then played in the country. When Mr. Gibson expressed his surprise that he had succeeded in penetrating without the use of arms into an unexplored region of specially evil repute—he had done this in order to find out how the trade routes ran—he replied that his weapon had been the bottle. The island up the river on which he wanted to establish a trading station he obtained from the chief it belonged to as a possession for all time for a bottle of gin. When he was pleased with his boatmen, he gave them a ration of rum in the evening.

In those days people here, as all along the West Coast, never gave a thought to the question what would become of these Africans who were being habituated to a state of constant intoxication due to rum and brandy. Trade was preoccupied with one aim alone—to get as much produce as possible out of the natives. It was not until some time had gone by that the Europeans began to see that alcohol would ruin the inhabitants and the land and commerce along with them. In the year 1913—I was there—they got together and demanded that the sale of rum and brandy to the natives should be prohibited. They succeeded, though not at once.



SCHWEITZER WITH CHILD



SCHWEITZER FEEDING PELICAN NAMED TRISTAN

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This was in itself a tremendous gain. A great trading company which enjoyed a monopoly on the upper Ogowe had kept rum and brandy out of its district since the end of the nineties with excellent results.

At the time of Trader Horn guns and gunpowder were brought in quantities to the natives without a thought of the consequences. If the wars carried on by the tribes among themselves disturbed trade, they led to its revival later by maintaining the demand for firearms and powder.

But when the work of the Administration had progressed so far that it could undertake to establish settled conditions in the country, it found itself, as was usual in African colonies, in a most difficult position owing to the number of firearms possessed by the natives. Years passed before they had handed in all their guns and resigned themselves to being only permitted to possess a certain number for killing game.

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At the time of Trader Horn the slave trade still flourished here, though not indeed to the same extent as in earlier times, since slaves could hardly

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be exported any longer across the sea. But in the interior there was still a demand for them.

The trade sustained its first blow when Great Britain and France about the mid-thirties of the nineteenth century agreed to keep warships on the West Coast to combat it. But the region to be supervised was so vast that the export trade in slaves, although greatly hindered, was far from suppressed. In the middle of the century England and France together had fifty-two cruisers patrolling the West Coast. In view of the fact that the coastline concerned was four thousand nautical miles in length, and offered magnificent hiding-places for the vessels of the slave-dealers, this was no great number.

Although the naval station founded in 1843 in the Gabon Estuary was only a few hours' sail north of Cape Lopez and the mouths of the Ogowe, up to nearly 1870, if not later, slaves were secretly shipped from this point. In the later years, as old people have told me, they were destined for the plantations on certain small islands on the West Coast itself. Trader Horn says, "Cape Lopes and this river mouth is inhabited by the Ceringus, mostly pirates and slave-traders."

The naval station in the Gabon Estuary got its

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name Libreville from the fact that in the year 1849 a settlement was formed here with the live cargo from a slave-ship captured in the neighborhood.

At an earlier period Cape Lopez was one of the chief ports on the West Coast for the export of slaves. We know what the trade was like between 1845 and 1850 through the American explorer Paul du Chaillu, who was there at that period. He saw quite a number of buildings which housed the slaves destined for America. The men were chained together in sixes. As the chain was fastened to their collars, they could move freely together inside the palisades which surrounded the buildings, and could even work. Such a parking-place for slaves was called by the Portuguese, who were the chief slave-dealers of that region, a barracoon. It is from a barracoon that formerly existed near Libreville that the Protestant Mission station, founded there in 1842, derives its name Baraka.

On his wanderings in the region of Cape Lopez, du Chaillu came across regular hills formed by the bones of slaves whose bodies in the course of years had been thrown there to the number of thousands. People who know the district of Cape Lopez in a wider circuit have been struck by the fact that there

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are great stretches of relatively young forest. This forest has grown on plains which in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries had been cleared to make plantations to supply food for the large number of slaves.

According to du Chaillu's account, for a young slave he saw delivered a Portuguese dealer gave a keg of rum containing a hundred liters, a few yards of cotton cloth, and a number of glass beads. The payment for a young woman was a gun, a large copper kettle, sixty yards of cotton cloth, two pieces of iron, two machettes, two mirrors, two files, two plates, two bolts, a small barrel of powder, a few beads, and some tobacco. These were prices at the coast. In the interior slaves might be purchased for much less. There a young man would cost four pounds of salt, a copper kettle, a few yards of cloth, and a few glass beads.

Du Chaillu also had an opportunity of seeing a cargo of slaves shipped. One day a schooner of about one hundred and seventy tons sailed into the bay. The embarkation of six hundred slaves began at once. They were conveyed in enormous dug-out canoes, in each of which were twenty-six paddlers and about sixty slaves. Two hours after the schooner

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had appeared she was off again. She was in such a hurry in order not to be surprised in the bay by a cruiser.

What brought peculiar despair to the slaves, as du Chaillu among others narrates, was the belief that they would be taken to the distant land beyond the sea in order there to be slaughtered and eaten by the white people.

I have often heard old people here say that the natives used to think that the meat in tins was the flesh of butchered slaves.

Cape Lopez supplied principally Brazil and Cuba. The Portuguese complained to du Chaillu that business was not going well, not so much because it was rendered difficult by the coast patrol, as because Brazil, for fear the large numbers of Negroes might become a menace to the white people, had reduced the number of slaves admitted. Cuba alone was still a good customer.

When the possession of slaves in the United States of America was abolished after the Civil War of 1861-65, the slave-dealers on the West Coast were forced gradually to give up their calling.

But we know from the accounts of Marche and de Brazza and the recollections of Trader Horn that

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in the Ogowe territory at the same period there was still going on an active trade in slaves from the interior to the coastal districts.

The old-established population in this region had always been accustomed from time immemorial to use slaves for labor on the plantations. Indeed, in families which had lived by trade for generations, physical work was regarded as not befitting their station. That a Negro may believe himself to belong to better circles of society is apparent even to-day when he will not paddle a canoe with others. If I am accompanied on a journey by one of my male nurses, I have great difficulty in persuading him not to think it beneath his dignity to take a paddle in his hand with the rest.

The export of rubber even caused a revival of the slave trade. Slaves were now wanted not only for cultivating plantations, but for getting rubber.

When explorers or business men undertook trips to the interior, numbers of natives offered themselves to paddle their canoes. These made use of the opportunity of buying slaves up country at low prices and bringing them down under the white man's protection without having to pay customs dues to the chiefs through whose territory they traveled.



HOSPITAL STREET



OPERATING ROOM

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In the interior slaves were commonly bartered for salt. The prospect of reaching a country in which there was salt made many of them forget their sadness over the loss of their homes and the parting from their families. Trader Horn reports that once on the River N'Gounie he met some large canoes in which the slaves were looking quite merry because they were hoping to get salt and salt fish at the coast. But very many slaves suffered terribly by being forced to go to a strange land.

Among the slaves were many who had been sold by their fellow-tribesmen because they had cheated, or because of the use of magic by which they were supposed to have brought misfortune to others. Members of a family were almost invariably separated from each other. Often the parents were drowned and only the children taken.

Old people have told me that parents from certain regions in the interior sold their children into slavery less for the sake of gain than to get the children away to a country where they would get enough to eat.

Equatorial Africa, as I have noted in *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, possesses no indigenous fruit-trees or fruit-bushes. The banana, the yam, cassava,

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the sweet potato and the oil-palm are not indigenous, but were introduced from the West Indian Islands by the Portuguese. In those districts of the interior to which these useful plants had not yet penetrated, the natives had for food, in addition to what they obtained by hunting and fishing, only certain roots and the nuts of a few forest trees. When their hunting and fishing were unsuccessful—as often happened—famine ensued. The inhabitants of these famine districts, especially near the sources of the N'Gounie, regarded the country near the coast with its plantations—not to speak of salt—as a desirable paradise for their children.

From those same famine districts there used to come to my Hospital people who were earth-eaters. As a result of hunger, as children they had formed the habit of eating earth and continued it even when they had enough to eat.

In general the slaves did not have a bad time with the natives. If they did their work, they were left in peace. If the master was satisfied, he allowed them to marry, but their children, of course, belonged to him. Many female slaves married into their masters' families.

But indeed one must not think of the position of

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these domestic slaves as too idyllic, as is frequently done. Their master could do just as he pleased with them, be as cruel as he felt inclined, or put them to death.

If a chief died, a number of his slaves were slaughtered to do him honor. That even at the end of the fifties this custom was widespread in Gabon, we know through du Chaillu, who narrates as a specially remarkable fact that Will Glass, a member of a ruling family in the neighborhood of Libreville, when he was dying expressly forbade the sacrifice of slaves over his grave. Under the influence of the American missionaries, he had risen above the traditional views of his people.

The struggle against the slave trade and slave-dealing started with de Brazza. During his first tour (1875-78) he cautiously did not go further than buying the freedom of slaves who wished to be free. The proclamation of the principle that no black man can lose his freedom was his next move. He effected the first manumission by purchase in Lope on the upper Ogowe, where a slave market was being held near his camp. He caused the slaves who were about to be shipped in canoes for the voyage down the river to be informed that he would purchase the

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freedom of all who wished it. But only eighteen presented themselves, and even these thought they had now become slaves of the white man. It was only gradually that they grasped the fact that they were free. In time it came about that a considerable portion of de Brazza's crew consisted of slaves freed by purchase. Many of them, however, gave him little satisfaction. He tells us about them in his letters.

From the moment when (after his second journey in 1880-82) in the year 1883 he returned to the Ogowe, not simply for further journeys of exploration, but with a commission to organize the administration, he set to work in all seriousness to put down slavery. All slaves who desired their freedom were to have it granted by their masters, whether they wished to return to their homes or to follow de Brazza and be settled by him in new villages that were to be founded.

This time again there was little success. The chief, Apaque, who lived up stream from Lambaréne, with gusto told his friend Trader Horn that de Brazza had shortly before spent a night with him and had begged him to hand over any slaves who wished to go with him. But notwithstanding

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that he, Apaque, had agreed, and had announced this to the slaves who were summoned together, not one had been willing to leave him.

I know from old inhabitants that in many ways pressure was brought to bear on the slaves in the Lambaréné district to induce them to go away, and that in many cases they were simply taken from their masters—as happened to the one hundred and twenty slaves who belonged to the heirs of the Sun King of Adolinanongo. Many of these slaves withdrew to the jungle and returned later to their masters when the question of their manumission was no longer in the foreground. But even slaves who had been freed and had returned to their homes in the interior turned up again. They felt more at home with their masters than with the relations they had rejoined, and they did not want to miss the civilization with which they had made acquaintance on the lower Ogowe.

According to my authorities, the rule of the Government was then so little established in the regions not immediately on the river bank or on the great trade routes that the manumission of slaves could not be seriously considered.

Later, in measure as the Government became

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organized, it became possible to prevent the purchase and transport of slaves, and the war against slavery was successfully waged.

When I came to the country in 1913, there were still a fair number of natives living as slaves. By law indeed they were free. But they made no use of their freedom, but stayed with their masters, serving them without wages, because they were accustomed to live in that way and did not think they could devise a better means of existence. The idea of paid employees, who had never been known here, was only slowly acquired by the natives. The Government could do nothing against this unacknowledged, voluntary slavery, and had no interest in doing anything. One could recognize the strangers by their facial characteristics and the peculiar shade of their skins.

During my first stay here, there came to the Hospital a woman one could see to be well-to-do, accompanied by four fairly young men. She said they were her servants, but really they were slaves. The next day I met her gathering wood for her fire at the edge of the forest. When I inquired how it came about that she had to fetch her own wood, seeing that she had brought four slaves with her, she

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replied with a smile, "Having slaves does not mean that one is well served."

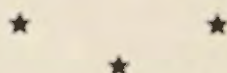
Once when I had a jovial elderly patient in the Hospital, a native came and asked me if I would not like to have him for my own. He was willing to give him to me as a laborer on the understanding that I should give him his food but not pay him any wages. To my astonished questions, he replied that he had inherited the man as a slave from his father and found him fairly handy and not specially lazy. But he was up to all sorts of tricks. According to the law in force among the Africans, the master was responsible for all his slave did, and so he had had to pay a number of fines for this slave. He had often offered him his freedom, but he refused to accept it, because then he would have to pay the penalty for his misdoings himself. That was why he was offering to give him to me. I should be able to manage him. Unfortunately I was obliged to reply that I too was not rich enough to possess so expensive a slave.

In the course of time the former slaves in this district have been absorbed into the population by marriage or adoption. I have known village headmen

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who were descendants of former slaves or had even been slaves themselves.

The conception of the paid workman has now penetrated to the consciousness of the people. Nevertheless, there are still many Africans who do not look for wages, but give themselves for work on his plantation to the master they have chosen, in return for clothing, lodging and an ample diet, in the expectation that some day he will buy them wives. One finds these placid people on remote plantations. The arrangement is advantageous to both parties.



For forty years, while so much was happening and so much was changing in the country. Adolinanongo was deserted. Forest and bush again took possession of the soil.

In the year 1923, a white timber merchant settled on the portion of the hill situated up the river. At the end of 1925 I began to clear the southern side. At the Protestant Mission Station, hitherto the site of the Hospital, the land at my disposal was not extensive enough to allow of its expansion to cope with the constantly increasing number of sick. At

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the time when Trader Horn was writing his reminiscences in Johannesburg, building after building was rising at Adolinanongo. In January, 1927, the new Hospital was ready for occupation.

The places at the edge of the former village where for many decades the women had thrown their kitchen rubbish provided quantities of good black earth such as I needed for the vegetable garden. In the process of digging this earth, we found heavy bracelets and anklets of bronze.

When a river steamer sounds its siren as a signal that it is going to stop on our side, I often think of young Trader Horn and how he returned from his journeys steering the *Pioneer* for this hill, and how he had his home in Adolinanongo before me. If he could return once more, he would find Nature unchanged. Crocodiles still sometimes sleep with wide-open jaws on sandbanks or on deadwood on the banks. Hippos still frequent the waters of Adolinanongo in the dry season. Pelicans still circle in the air. The islands and shores are still covered with bright green, impenetrable bush mirrored in the brown flood.



CHAPTER TWO

TALES OF OLDEN DAYS

ON ONE OF HIS JOURNEYS DE BRAZZA SENT A CANOE crew consisting of men from the interior from the upper Ogowe down to N'Djole to fetch some stores. At the same time he took the opportunity of getting their wages paid to them there in goods. In their presence he wrote a letter to the agent at the trading post, and told the men he would hand over to them so and so many muskets, so and so many barrels of gunpowder, so and so many machettes, so and so many bags of salt, so and so many yards of cotton cloth. "But will he really?" they asked somewhat incredulously. "He will as soon as you have given him the paper," replied de Brazza.

And so it came about. When the European in the trading post at N'Djole had received the paper, he looked at it for some time. Then, without asking any questions, he got his assistants to bring so and so many muskets, so and so many barrels of gunpowder, so and so many machettes, so and so many

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bags of salt, so and so many yards of cotton cloth. The quantity exactly met their claims.

Some time afterwards a chief from the interior sent a message to the missionaries at Lambaréné asking them to send up a catechist. He and his people wished to hear the Word of God and learn to read and write. The catechist arrived and began to instruct them in Bible History, to teach them that B-A is equal to Ba, and how to draw letters on a slate. But soon the zeal of the savages diminished. "That's not the right thing," they said, "you shouldn't make us scribble on a slate, but only teach us how to write a paper so that the man in the trading post at N'Djole has to give us goods." They regarded writing as a form of magic.



On their first long journey of exploration in the region towards the Congo, the Protestant missionaries had with them two boys from the neighborhood of Lambaréné who had learnt to read and write at the Mission Station.

Once, towards evening, when they were putting

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up their tents on a sandbank, they sent one of these boys to the end of it, out of hearing, and told the savages from the interior they had recruited as paddlers that if they called him back, he would be able to tell them what had been said without having heard it. Before he was called, the other boy wrote on the sand. When the first one came back and, after a glance at the lines on the sand, gave a correct report of the subject of conversation in his absence, the amazement of the savages knew no bounds. The experiment had to be repeated again and again. When they came to a village, the paddlers told the inhabitants about it, and then these too wanted to see the magic performance.

On this journey the boys had with them a concertina. In exchange for it the natives offered them four elephant tusks each as tall as a man.



In the N'Gounie district there was working at that early time a somewhat aged black catechist. He was not having an easy time, for hearts were obdurate. He was particularly troubled by the fact that when he narrated stories out of the Bible, young men inter-

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rupted him by saying that nobody knew whether these things were true because nobody had been there to see.

One day a missionary came up the river bringing a magic-lantern. When it was dark, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David, Goliath and Solomon, Jesus and His disciples, passed by in colored pictures on a sheet fastened to the wall of a hut. Suddenly, out of the devotional stillness rose the voice of the evangelist, "You dissolute young men have always said, 'What the old man tells us is not true.' But now you see with your own eyes. Who dares to say now that it isn't all true?" For the good old man the magic-lantern pictures held the past exactly as it had happened.

When I first came to the country, the story of the Passion was shown with a magic-lantern to the faithful who came to the Mission Station at Lambaréne to celebrate Holy Week. When Judas first appeared on the sheet among the disciples, there resounded cries from the background, "Look out! He will betray you!" When he kissed the Lord in Gethsemane, the onlookers could no longer control themselves. They jumped up, clenched their fists and

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shouted imprecations and threats. The missionary had to calm them down before he could go on with the display.

It used to make a deep impression on me that the natives took the absolute identity between picture and reality as a matter of course. We smile at their *naïveté*. But if one thinks it over, is it not an outrageous and dangerous thing that men have come to the point of playing with reality and making something they have invented and made themselves enter into competition with it? Is not our feeling for truth damaged in this way? Cannot much in the mentality of modern man that gives us ground for reflection be explicable by the fact that he no longer discriminates between the real and the artificial?

From the moment when man gets beyond the naïve idea that every picture must be a reproduction of reality, he finds himself on a line of progress with hidden dangers. He can only follow it unharmed when in place of the irretrievable, lost, natural ingenuousness he acquires the higher, spiritual simplicity. All true civilization consists in our attaining that deepest simplicity which is the highest wisdom.

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AFRICAN BEAUTY



WOMAN AND CHILD, MARKET

TALES OF OLDEN DAYS

It was in the N'Gounie district similarly that in those early days a white trader thought of making an impression on the natives by giving them a gramophone performance. But it did not turn out as he expected. As soon as the people heard voices coming out of the box, they became terribly excited, smashed the box and went for the man, who was obliged to flee for his life. They believed they had heard the voices of the spirits of their ancestors which the white man had imprisoned in the box by magic.

But in the course of years they have made friends with the gramophone. There is hardly a village in this neighborhood from which no gramophone screeches into the jungle.

The Africans do not worry about how it can be possible that speech and music come out of a box. This is for them only one of the many incomprehensible things achieved by the white man. "The white man's an artful fellow," my Hospital assistant Joseph used to say in regard to machines and such things.



In that early period the savages were immensely surprised when white men collected stones and took

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them away. A man who had done so on the upper Ogowe had to leave the district because the people refused to supply food to him and his porters. They thought he was possessed by an evil spirit which made him mad and could not rest until they had got rid of the uncanny creature.

His porters played a dirty trick on a geologist who had been working in the hills south of Lambaréné. They really could not see why they should carry the stones he had packed in boxes up hill and down dale in the heat until they reached the sea, as if there were no stones there as well. So they opened the boxes by night, emptied them and marched gaily on with their light burdens. Before arriving at the sea, they refilled the boxes with stones they found by the wayside. . . .

It is said that similar surprises were prepared more than once, and in more than one region, for geologists in Africa by their porters until they took the necessary precautions to avoid them.



In general: paddlers and porters and their tricks! I heard the following story from a white man who

TALES OF OLDEN DAYS

many years ago, as agent of a commercial firm, was manager of a trading post on the upper Ogowe. It was situated just above a series of rapids. Again and again he saw canoes coming up laden with goods capsize in the whirlpools. Then when the natives who had escaped with their bare lives came to him and lamented over their lost sleeping-mats, blankets, mosquito-nets and cooking-pots, he made good the damage, glad that there was no human life to regret.

But it was only for a certain time that he acted thus. The accident occurred so often that his firm admonished him for evidently not knowing how to recruit the crews for his canoes.

But there could be no doubt that the canoes did capsize, and that the misfortune could not be arranged to hide the absence of packing-cases stolen by the way. From his trading post he saw the paddlers fighting with the waves, and with his field-glasses he could count how many cases the canoes contained. The number always agreed with the bill of lading of each consignment received from the trading post lower down the river.

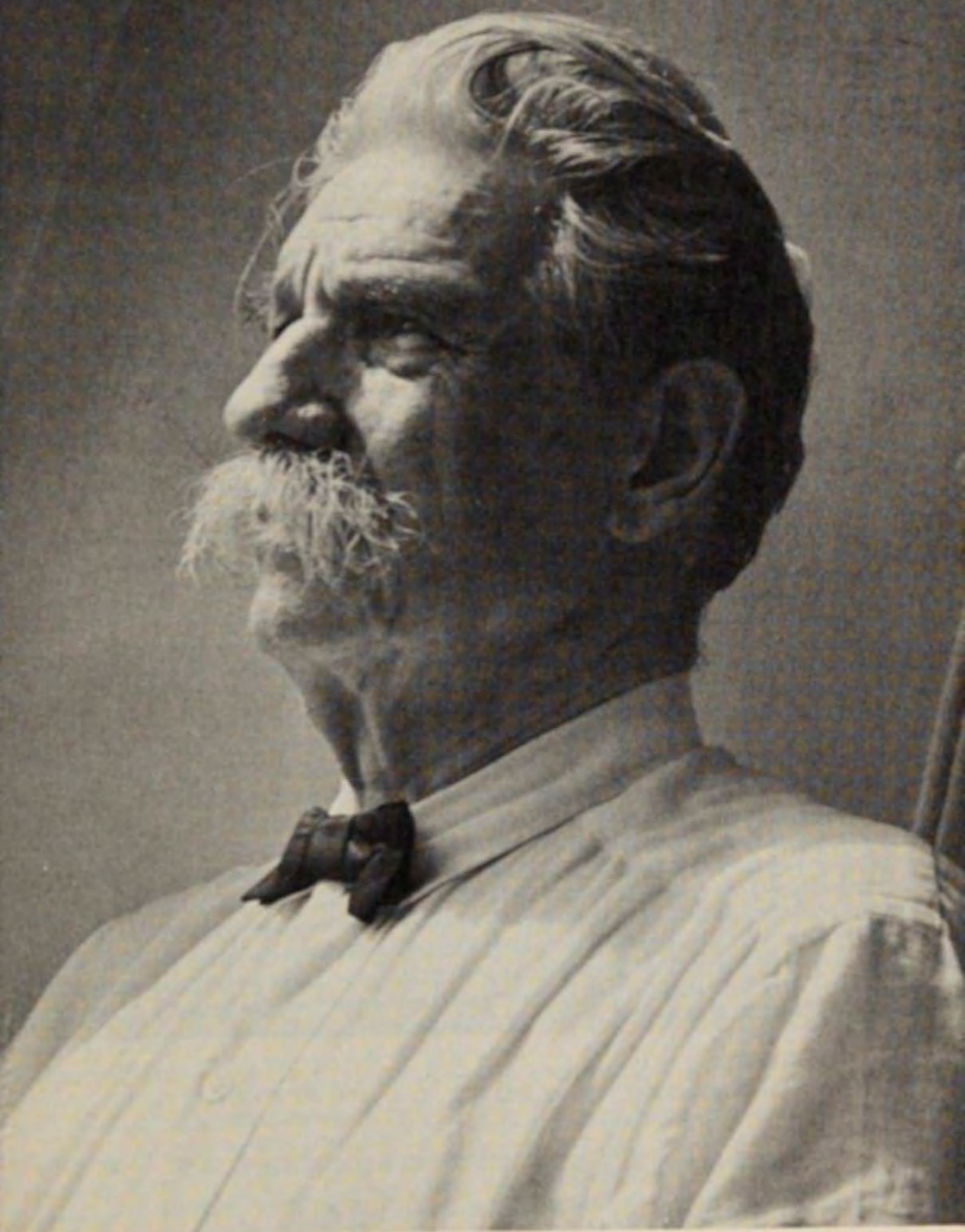
After some time he heard that in some villages down stream many of the women were wearing new cloths, were in possession of new cooking-pots and

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machettes and were making a generous use of pomade on their hair. This gave him something to think about, because these villages, which could only obtain such goods from him, had for some time hardly purchased anything. He also reflected that every time the accident happened all the packing-cases sank, whereas there were some with contents that should have caused them to float. So, with a promise to reward them well, he placed spies to find out whether there was any connection between this inexplicable wealth in the villages and the capsizing of the canoes.

There was! In the neighborhood of the villages concerned, from time to time the crews took the goods out of the cases in the night and put stones in their place. Thus it was that the right number of packing-cases could be seen in a canoe which capsized, a misfortune easily brought about by a few wrong movements in the whirlpools.

When the crews had been severely punished and were told that in future all losses incurred by the trading post through the capsizing of canoes would be deducted from their wages, they must have succeeded in acquiring some powerful fetiches. For all the canoes passed through the rapids unharmed.



ALBERT SCHWEITZER



CANOES IN FRONT OF HOSPITAL

CHAPTER THREE

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHITE PEOPLE AND BLACK PEOPLE

WHEN I AM IN A BOAT WITH NATIVES AND GET TALKING to them, and they ask me to tell them what is different in the white man's country from what it is here, I generally speak about three of the most remarkable things. The Hospital employees have all been with me at one time or another when I have expatiated in this way. But they are never tired of hearing it all over again, that they may wonder afresh and once more add their comments.

The first thing I relate is that in Europe there are forest fires. This is beyond their imagination. For here it is so damp even in the dry season that the forest can never catch fire even if one does everything possible to set it alight. The Africans cannot even succeed in burning the trees which they fell in the course of the dry season to clear land for their plantations—trees which they have left lying for months that the wood may get dry. The flames devour only

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the small and middle-sized branches. The large ones and the huge trunks are only charred and lie in the plantation where they fall.

At the sawmills in this country, the owners and their employees smoke their hardest and shake out their glowing pipes into the sawdust. This is so damp that there can be no question of fire danger. So how can natives imagine that fire may break out in a European forest if anyone drops a burning match?

At last all that is to be said on either side about this curious affair has been discussed, so I go on to tell them that in Europe people row for pleasure, a statement followed by uncontrolled laughter. Then come the questions, "Who orders them to row?" "Nobody." "But somebody must give them a present for doing it?" "No, they do it of their own free will, and for nothing, and often they row until they are quite exhausted."

The comments on this second subject are endless. Even here it may happen that the crews of two canoes that are going up or down the river together race each other for a certain distance. But that people get into a boat without wanting to go on a journey or being obliged to forward goods, merely in order

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to row, and that they spend their leisure time in practicing rowing is quite incomprehensible for our Africans. I don't attempt to make clear to them what sport is. The conditions under which they live in so many ways compel them to use their physical forces and take exercise to a greater extent than they like, that they cannot understand at all how people can do so except under compulsion.

The third thing to tell them is that in Europe a man can marry without having to pay for his wife. Now, they declare, this cannot possibly be true. The Doctor is amusing himself by making game of the poor black man.

Women here are objects of value. From the moment a girl is born, the family calculate her value as capital. From their youth up the natives are accustomed to view things in this light. When a white lady bore twin daughters at the Hospital and the babies were shown to the "boy," he could find nothing better to say to the father than, "Now you're a rich man!"

The whole life of the African is governed by the money affairs connected with marriage. To earn the means to purchase a wife, from his sixteenth year onward he seeks an opportunity to earn money. To

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gain this end, he must often decide to leave his village and take a situation somewhere under a white man. What he has put by after three or four years of this life is not nearly enough to pay for a wife. The price demanded is usually so high that it is more than a native can save by ten years of work. So he marries on the hire-purchase system. His father, or, if he is no longer alive, an elder brother must help him with the first payment and undertake to be guarantee for the further installments.

To secure a wife for their son, parents begin to pay installments for a girl of only a few years. Just as I am writing this, a new nurse comes to me to beg for a big payment in advance of his wages so that he may purchase a wife. In the course of conversation it comes out that the girl is nine years old! He has already, some time earlier, paid a certain sum, but if he cannot keep up his payments, the girl will be promised to another. And then he will have great difficulty in recovering the money already paid, or at least some part of it.

The awkward thing is that when a man marries, he usually cannot get a final definite statement of what the whole price is to be, nor can he learn anything definite about the size of the installments and

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the dates on which they are due. From the side of the wife's family there begins a process of squeezing which goes on for years. The father of the young woman and his relatives have not the chief say in this affair. The girl belongs to her mother and her mother's brothers. It is these that get the greater part of the money.

While the couple are living on the best of terms with each other, there suddenly arrives a message from the family that the husband is in arrears with his payments and must pay down so and so much before a certain day, or his wife will be taken from him. Now he runs round to all his friends and acquaintances to try to borrow the requisite sum. If he is in the service of a white man, he goes to him with great lamentations to beg for an advance, which generally amounts to his wages for many months ahead. If the white man is a greenhorn, he lets his heart be softened and grants the request, very often with the result that the Negro leaves his service so as not to have to earn the money advanced. When one of my nurses goes about day after day with a gloomy face and takes no interest in his work, I know that he will be coming to me for an advance that he needs in order to keep his wife.

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If the husband succeeds in making the payment demanded, he has peace for a time. If he could not produce the money, the wife is taken from him until he has collected it. As a rule the woman is stolen from him without warning. She goes to the river to fetch water and fails to return. People who were lying in wait for her there carry her off in their canoe.

How excited I was in my early days in Africa when on entering the Hospital one morning I was told that a man had had his wife stolen in the night! I instituted a thorough investigation, heard what the husband had to say, sought out witnesses, and tried to learn who might be suspected, why he had carried off the woman and whither he was likely to have taken her. But it seemed to me that the natives were taking the affair less tragically than I did, and were not particularly anxious about the fate of the poor stolen woman.

Since then many women have been stolen from the Hospital. But I make no investigation; I am content to express to the husband a friendly regret that he must now take the trouble to find the money.

Truth demands that I should here observe that if the wife's family did not proceed in this way, in the majority of cases they would not get their due.

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One of the day-laborers at the Hospital, a nice fellow, came one day weeping to me and informed me that wicked men had come and taken away his wife. Though I was about to get angry with him, I inquired how far he had got with the payment for the woman. Then it came out that after the first installment he had secretly moved from a great distance away to Lambaréné and sent no news home for five years. But his indignation that the relatives had now discovered his whereabouts and were trying in the usual way to make him pay the installments due, was perfectly sincere.

If he loses his wife a man knows at once where to look for her. Sooner or later, he quits his work, and with the necessary cash undertakes the journey to her village. After a short time he brings her home and lives happily beside her until the next payment is demanded.

If there are children, they are carried off with the woman. By the law in force among primitive peoples, children do not belong to the father, but to the mother and her brothers and uncles.

I had a nice experience of such an affair with a small chief who was at my Hospital suffering from an injury. When his wife disappeared, he wanted

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to make me liable because it had happened on my land. He demanded compensation to the value of the woman. At first I did not take his demand seriously, but afterwards, nevertheless, I became uneasy when several times a day he got in my way and with increasing insolence demanded compensation. I did not feel quite comfortable at the notion of incurring the hatred of such a savage as he was.

But one morning he approached me with a beaming smile. The matter was settled. He had recovered his wife. The relations who had stolen her had gone up the river and on the third or fourth day had stopped for the night at a village in which lived some of his friends. They immediately realized what had happened, and in their turn stole the woman, paddled down the river and early one morning threw her, tied up like a well-packed parcel, on to the Hospital shore, where the husband thereupon took possession. When he had loosed her bonds, they lived together again as if nothing had happened.

When the family of a wife send her a message to the effect that she has to return to them because an installment of the purchase-money has not been paid up to time, she agrees without further ado, even if she loves her husband and finds it hard to leave him.



SCHWEITZER OVERSEEING CLEARING OF JUNGLE



SCHWEITZER WITH NATIVE WORKMEN

WHITE AND BLACK PEOPLE

She makes no resistance to the abduction. She takes the rights her family exercise over her as a matter of course.

Even when the price has been paid in full, the family retains the right to receive the wife if she has been badly treated by her husband and to keep her until the husband has appeared before her uncles and brothers to render account and has paid the penalty imposed.

Although among primitive tribes the wife is sold to the husband, her rights are better safeguarded than by the laws of civilized peoples. She never ceases to be under the protection of her family.

Divorce is possible, but rendered difficult for the wife by the fact that in such a case her family must restore to the husband the whole of the money he has paid for her over a course of years. As the brothers and uncles have long since spent their share, it is as a general rule so difficult to collect the necessary sum that the divorce does not take place. Nevertheless, I know cases in which the relatives, by great sacrifices, have collected what was needed to make possible the divorce of a woman who was unhappy with her husband.

If a new suitor is at once found for the woman,

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he it is who has to pay off the husband, if he agrees to the divorce. But he must pay down the whole sum at once. Payments by installment are out of the question in such a case.

It is seldom that the husband seeks for divorce, as that involves the loss of the money paid for his wife. Even if he can show that she is the guilty party and after a lengthy palaver a portion of the purchase money is assigned for return to him, he is not sure of getting possession of it. For he holds no pledge by which he can exercise pressure on the debtors. He has but small prospect of ever getting anything back.

The native wives make very ample use of their right to return to their families whenever they wish. For a third of the year at least my male nurses are grass-widowers. The wife takes the youngest children with her and leaves the older ones with her husband.

When their wives are away, my nurses have to cook for themselves, with the result that they are in a bad temper and neglect their duty. If I say I cannot understand how they can allow such a thing, they shrug their shoulders and simply say, "That's

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how things are with us." They know that it is no use raising any objection.

In spite of these never-ending disputes between the husband and his wife's family, in which the wife must take sides with her own people, marriages in this country, so far as I can judge, are usually fairly happy.

So for my Africans it is the most incredible of all incredible things that among white people a man is said to be able to marry without being exploited and tyrannized for years by his wife's family. I never dare to mention that in certain circumstances a man even gets money for taking a wife, because, if I said such a thing, I should get the reputation of being a liar.



CHAPTER FOUR

TABOOS AND MAGIC

THE CONCEPTION OF TABOO PLAYS A GREAT PART IN the life of primitive peoples. Taboo means that something must be avoided because it will bring misfortune and death. How these taboo ideas originated lies buried in obscurity.

There are taboos which affect all people alike and taboos which only affect individuals. Among those of general application, a great part is played by those a man has to observe if his wife is expecting a child. Among the Pahouins he is prohibited from eating flesh that has begun to smell (whereas apart from this taboo, the natives unhesitatingly devour meat that is already almost putrid), from touching a chameleon, from filling a hole with earth, from driving in nails, from being present at the death of man or beast, from having anything to do with a corpse, from stepping over a procession of driver ants and various other things.

In my early days I was annoyed when men abso-

TABOOS AND MAGIC

lutely refused to help carry the bier at Hospital funerals. When it was their turn, I tried to persuade them with presents and by compulsion. Thereupon a man would even fall on his knees and beg me to let him off. But since I came to understand into what a soul-conflict I plunged them, I have only employed volunteers to carry the dead and have given them a fixed reward.

At the birth of a child the special taboos affecting it as an individual are usually disclosed by the father. In the belief of the natives he is not expressing his own views for the child, but on the strength of a revelation from the spirits of his ancestors is telling what it must avoid in order to be safeguarded against misfortune and premature death.

The child learns what are the taboos affecting it when it is old enough to count its five fingers. Such as it cannot understand at so early an age are disclosed when it has acquired the necessary power of discretion.

There is nothing in human life that may not give occasion to a taboo.

In the neighborhood of Samkita there lived a woman whose taboo was that she must never touch a broom but do all her sweeping with her hands.

TABOOS AND MAGIC

The taboo for a certain young boy was that he must not be struck on the right shoulder. When a white man gave him a gentle tap because he had neglected his work, the boy, to his amazement, thanked him. When he asked the reason for this remarkable behavior, the child answered, "I thank you because you smacked me on the left shoulder. Whatever would have happened, if you'd hit me on the right!"

We once had a man at the Hospital whose taboo was that he must not get a blow on the head. If by accident anybody's hand came near his head, he had a fainting-fit. This we saw for ourselves.

During my first stay, a tragic taboo affair happened at Samkita. A boy at the Mission school there had as his taboo that he must not eat plantains, and must even be careful not to eat any food out of a cooking-pot in which plantains had been cooked immediately before. One day his schoolfellows told him that he had eaten fish from a pot in which there had been remains of plantain. He was immediately seized with cramp and died after a few hours. A missionary who was present gave me an account of this perplexing affair.

And I have heard quite reliable accounts of other

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cases which ended with the death of the person who was burdened with the taboo.

There are women whose taboo is that if their first baby is a boy, either they or the child must die.

It happened once that one of these women bore a girl, but in the judgment of the female relatives who heard her first cry, it was like the cry of a boy. How they came to make this distinction about the first cry of a newborn infant I could not learn. On the strength of what they said, the mother assumed that the child had been born as a boy and then changed into a girl. No amount of persuasion could dissuade her from this insane belief. So, as her conviction was that either she or the baby must die, she chose death for herself. From that day she grew thinner and thinner until she was brought to the Hospital a mere skeleton. After a few days she died. So far as we could diagnose it, her illness was entirely psychic in origin.

That natives die when their taboo is outraged can only be explained by the assumption that as a result of their domination by the belief in taboo they are psychically affected in a way beyond our imagination.

White people who enjoy the confidence of Afri-

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cans can achieve something in such cases by their spiritual authority. Monsieur Lavignotte, the Director of the Protestant Mission plantation at Samkita, who is one of the best authorities on the Pahouin world of the imagination—I owe to him much that I recount in this book—has often ventured to interfere, and not unsuccessfully.

It happened that a woman at Samkita whose taboo was that she must not be struck on the back received a blow in that quarter in the course of a quarrel among women in which she was taking part. She was at once seized by terrible spasms, by which her breathing also was sympathetically affected. Monsieur Lavignotte was summoned. He took her hand and ordered her to breathe properly, which she managed, though only with difficulty. He had hardly started to leave when she was again near to suffocation. When he had stayed with her for a long time, prayed with her and exercised all his powers of persuasion, she overcame the delusion to which she had fallen a victim and the convulsions gradually ceased. On the following day she had several relapses which necessitated Monsieur Lavignotte's intervention.

From all I could learn, the fatal cases generally

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run their course with convulsions accompanied by breathing trouble. I have never myself had the opportunity of observing such a case.

The woman who suffered considerably under the taboo that she must not touch a broom was also liberated from it by Monsieur Lavignotte.

In a short work on the world of imagination of the Pahouins, he relates the story of the cure of Nyingone, the woman whose taboo was that she must never see her reflection either in glass or metal or water.

If she was returning home from the plantation with a heavy burden on her back and had to cross a stream by means of a tree-trunk lying across it, she must not keep her eyes on her feet, as was necessary for a safe crossing, because she might chance to see her portrait in the water. If this did happen, she fainted and fell in. She had several times been rescued from drowning.

In despair over what she had already suffered from this taboo, she came to Monsieur Lavignotte. "This taboo," she said, "is a dreadful force. I can't help being afraid of it. But I know too that God, Whom you know and preach, is stronger than Satan, in whom we have hitherto believed. So with your help

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I hope to get rid of my taboo. When you have prayed with me, I shall fearlessly turn round the mirror I hold in my hand and look at myself in it."

After the prayer, she had courage to do as she had said. She looked in the glass for a long time glowing with happiness because nothing happened. When at last she raised her eyes, she said to Monsieur Lavignotte, "And to think I never knew how beautiful I am. . . ."



The natives also suffer heavily under the belief that a curse spoken by one person against another is effective, and that men and women possess the power of preparing magic against others.

A curse uttered by a father is regarded as an active force. A girl had refused at the command of her father to give up the man for whom she had been destined from childhood in order to marry another who had offered much more for her. Thereupon, the father, who needed the money to pay his debts, laid on her the curse that after her marriage either she or the child she expected must die. She gave birth to a healthy infant and in order that it

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might live resolved to die herself. Like the woman who had to face the same alternative under a taboo, and had decided in the same fashion, she died a mysterious death from feebleness. The child was then brought to the Hospital and brought up with a bottle. That is how I heard of the case.

Years ago a missionary here discovered that it is also possible to burden a person with a curse without wishing to. As often before, he was obliged to reprimand a senior pupil of the Mission school on account of his disagreeable behavior to the other boys. In anger he used the words, "You will always have a bad character."

Years later, the former schoolboy came to him and complained that the curse he had laid upon him had made him an unhappy man. He had no longer had the courage nor the energy to become different because he felt that this had been made impossible for him. The missionary, amazed, asked him what he meant by saying he was under a curse uttered by himself. Then the native told him what he had said. When the missionary explained that it was never meant as a curse, but was only a remark flung out in anger, and that on the contrary he had

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always wished that he would change his character, he became quite happy. As he said good-by, he remarked that now he could really become a different man.



In the belief of the natives there is power in a blessing just as in a curse. That is why they give the child the name of a person from whom they expect for it a blessing, and with whom they seek to bring it into relationship. That is the object when children bear not only the Christian name but the whole name of a well-known missionary or popular official. The relationship given by the name develops its full efficacy, if the person concerned was asked for permission to name the child after him and gave it. Then he himself has given the child his name and with it his blessing.

After a birth in the Hospital, a woman begged that her boy might be called Dr. Albert. The nurse Dominique has called his two daughters after two helpers not simply Mathilde and Emma, but *Mademoiselle Mathilde* and *Mademoiselle Emma*.

It happens too that the name given is for the purpose of counteracting a taboo or magic. If we some-

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times see at the Hospital girls with boys' and boys with girls' names, we know that the cause is no mere whim, but that there is a good reason. The mother had a taboo that, if her first child were a boy, he must die. So when it actually turned out to be a boy, she gave him a girl's name to circumvent the taboo. Or a curse lay upon the expected infant if it should be a girl. So she gave her a boy's name.

A woman I know had lost several infant girls and ascribed their deaths to an evil spirit with power over her family. At her next confinement, at the moment of the birth she cried, "What a beautiful boy!" In spite of the fact that the baby was once more a girl, she gave it a boy's name and behaved in every way as if it were a boy. She wanted to delude the evil spirit, which in her opinion had a prejudice against girls. And this child did indeed remain healthy and grow up to be a fine young woman.

In the year 1935 we learnt a girl's name that had nothing to do with taboo or magic. When the doctor was making the entries on the card of a little girl brought as a patient by her mother, and asked her name, he was told it was Crisis. In astonishment he repeated the question. "Her name is Crisis," replied

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the mother, "because she was born at the beginning of the crisis. That's why we gave her the name."



To attain to the possession of magical powers, the native applies to a great fetich doctor, who gives him the required instruction and makes him pass through a progressive series of initiatory rites.

All great works of magic can only be effected by the sacrifice of a human life. What a number of people used to be murdered in this country because hunters wanted a powerful ju-ju for their elephant hunting! In all the big fetiches which I have seen because they had been given up to the missionaries by Christians, there has always been a piece of human skull.

It happened by no means seldom that the fetich-doctor revealed to the person who wanted a charm that in order to get it he must kill a near relation. And he generally added that if the murder were not accomplished the applicant himself must die.

Many years ago a young man went to his home village for the purpose of killing his father in order to secure a ju-ju. The father suspected the reason for

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his coming. In the night he got up and shouted round the village, "There is someone among us who wants to kill me! But here is somebody who is stronger than he!" The next day the son took refuge at a Mission Station, and not long after he died.

Another young man wanted to become the pilot of a big river-steamer. Like a real savage, he never thought that first he would have to serve his time as a sailor and then become a really good assistant pilot. He thought he only needed a powerful fetich. To obtain this, a demand was made that he should kill his mother, but he could not decide to do that. Then it became clear to him that he himself must perish, and he actually did fall ill and die. Before his death, he confessed to his mother what he had thought of doing.

Monsieur Lavignotte heard from an old Pahouin a horrible story about a fetichist who without intending it brought about his own death by his magic.

A man who was very ugly and very wicked could not find a wife. His uncles and elder brothers—his father must have been already dead—would not buy one for him because they did not like him. Completely embittered, he turned to magic in order to do harm to his family. He did not even shrink from

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poisoning some of his relations, but was cunning enough to divert suspicion to others among them. Thus he brought misfortune on the whole family, without their being able to prove anything against him, indeed without anybody imagining that he was at the bottom of anything that happened.

At last he poisoned even one of his brothers.

When the period of mourning was at an end, the family gathered to decide to whom the wife of the dead man should now belong. When it was left to her to choose as she would among the brothers, she declared that she loved the ugly one and wished to be his wife. He was no less pleased than astonished at her decision. Now he had gained a wife without having had to pay for her, seeing that she already belonged to the family. She was very devoted to him and he lived happily with her.

After some time she begged his permission to visit a brother in a distant village as she had news that he was ill and wished to nurse him. When, after a short absence, she returned, she told her husband she loved him so much that she could no longer bear the separation. At the same time she begged him to prepare a big ju-ju against the man guilty of her brother's illness. In many cases primitive people

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accept no natural cause for illness and death, but believe them due to magic employed against the person concerned.

As he had complete confidence in his wife, the man admitted to her—a fact he had hitherto kept secret—that he had indeed acquired great powers of magic. He begged her to procure for him any little portion of the man she believed the originator of her brother's illness. She gave him a few hairs, saying they were his.

For to prepare a powerful ju-ju against a person it is necessary, the primitive people believe, to have a small portion of his body, however tiny it may be. For fear of becoming the prey of a fetich-doctor, when such people cut their hair or their nails, they are very careful to pick up all that falls and destroy it. They believe that if the tiniest little bit of the body is struck by magic, it affects the whole person.

The man prepared the ju-ju with the hairs his wife had given him. His method was to pour a fluid, mixed to the accompaniment of magical rites, along with the hairs into a large snail-shell¹ and then put this on the fire. The efficacy of the magic would

¹ Translator's note: A very large snail-shell, some six inches long, is common in French Equatorial Africa.

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declare itself when the fluid should boil over and put out the fire. The life of the man would be extinguished like the fire.

The ceremony miscarried several times because the snail-shell cracked in the fire before the fluid began to boil. The fetichist was much surprised, and observed to his wife that the man must himself have great magical powers. At last, at the ninth repetition, the snail-shell remained undamaged. The fluid boiled over and extinguished the fire. In triumph the fetichist informed the woman that all was over with the life of the man she wished to kill. Then he ate and drank and lay down to rest. During the night he suddenly felt very ill, became greatly excited and died next day.

When the period of mourning was over, the woman called together the members of the family and addressed them: "I killed your brother. He was guilty of the death of my first husband whom I greatly loved. I knew that he had murdered him by poison to bring misfortune on the family. To avenge myself, I became the wife of the murderer, suspecting that he was a powerful fetich-doctor. I gained his favor and his confidence and made use of them to make him prepare the magic for his own death. The

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hairs I gave him were his own. So I have slain a man of your family. I belong to another clan, and am entirely in your hands. Do with me as seems good to you."

Then the members of the family answered, "You have killed a man of our blood. But at the same time you have freed the family from a wicked magician. So henceforth we regard you as one of ourselves. You are free and can live with us, or, if you like, you can return to your home."

Up to now the woman had only been a member of the family by marriage. She was not free. After the death of the second husband, the family might have again allotted her in marriage. By surrendering this right and allowing her to do as she pleased, they were showing her great favor.

Of course the fetichist did not die of his own curse, but of poison administered by the woman after the ceremony. But she made him prepare the ju-ju against himself in order to be certain that the poison would be effective against a man of his supernatural powers. Otherwise she would not have dared to attack him.

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While we are accustomed to ascribe the death of a person to natural causes, primitive people are inclined to explain it as due to the influence of magic exercised against him. That is why the relatives of a dead man in so many cases regard it as their duty to make investigation immediately after the burial as to who originated the magic to which he fell a victim. To this end they have recourse to a fetichist, who claims to discover the guilty parties by magical rites and then compels them to drink a poisonous beverage he has prepared. If the poison takes effect, they are recognized as guilty, and if its effects are not fatal, they are put to death in some other way. It is because their services are so often requisitioned when people die and everybody is liable to become their prey, that the fetich doctors possess such terrible power among the Africans.

Du Chaillu gives an impressive description of a trial of this kind in early times in the account of his travels in the country south of the Ogowe which appeared in 1861.¹

In a village called Goumbi he found a young native, with whom he was on friendly terms, at the

¹ Du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa*, London, 1861.

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point of death. He was entreated to help him with his medicines, but was obliged to explain that it was impossible to save him. On the very day he was buried his relations began to inquire who could be responsible for his death. They refused to believe that this young man, who had been perfectly well only a few weeks before, could have died from any other cause than magic. They sent for a great fetichist from the interior, and for two days and two nights he was busy with his ceremonies. On the third day, when he saw that the people were now in a state of the greatest excitement and all alike, young and old, men and women, full of the thirst for vengeance against the supposed originator of the fatal charm, he assembled them in the village square and performed the final rites by which at last the names of the guilty were to be discovered. In vain du Chaillu tried to stop the horrible event which was in preparation. His word had no effect on the people, although as a rule they recognized his authority and willingly followed his advice. He was compelled to acquiesce in being an impotent onlooker at the frightful scenes anticipated.

A sign from the fetichist put an end to the shouting and tumult of the excited crowd. In the deathly

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silence which followed, his strident voice was heard, saying that in a certain hut "there lives a very dark-skinned woman. She it was that wrought magic against M'Pomo." Thereupon the mob rushed to the hut with howls of rage and seized a girl named Okandaga, the sister of Adouma, du Chaillu's faithful servant. They dragged her to the bank of the river and bound her. When she caught sight of du Chaillu, she cried in desperation, "Chally, Chally, don't let me die!" Overwhelmed by emotion, he turned his head away. For one moment he had thought of plunging into the midst of the raging crowd to snatch away the victim, but he was at once obliged to renounce the project as completely hopeless. So he retired behind a tree, shedding bitter tears at being condemned to inactivity.

Again, after an appeal from the fetich-doctor, there was complete silence. The harsh voice was heard once more, "In that hut over there lives an old woman. She too has perpetrated magic against M'Pomo." Straightway the mob dashed in the direction indicated and seized on a respectable old woman, a relative of Quengeza, the chief of the whole district. She faced her assailants with pride.



NATIVE WOMAN COOKING



AFRICAN FAMILY IN HOSPITAL WARD

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"I will drink," said she, "but if I fail to die, woe to those who have accused me!" She too was dragged to the river bank and bound.

For the third time there was silence. For the third time the fetichist screamed out, "A woman with six children lives on a plantation to the east. She as well practiced magic against M'Pomo!" Again the crowd rushed off and dragged up a slave of Quengeza who was of very good repute and was an acquaintance of du Chaillu.

Thereupon the fetichist stepped up to the bound prisoners and standing in the midst of the people announced why they had resolved on the death of M'Pomo by magic. Okandaga was angry with him because a few weeks before he had refused her request for some salt, of which there was a scarcity. The relative of Quengeza had conceived a hatred of M'Pomo because he had children and she had no descendants. Quengeza's slave had once asked M'Pomo for a mirror and he had refused it. For these reasons they had desired his destruction. Each of these revelations was accompanied by wild howls from the mob, in which even the relations of the accused joined. Anyone who failed to make known

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his indignation with sufficient vehemence ran the risk of incurring suspicion himself.

The three women were immediately conveyed to a canoe, and the fetich doctor and a number of armed men took their places in it. Other canoes filled with armed men drew alongside it.

To the accompaniment of the tam-tam the fetichist prepared the beverage for the ordeal. Quabi, the elder brother of the dead man, held the cup. The unhappy women were in turn forced to drink. Each time the people cried, "If they are witches, the drink shall kill them! If they are innocent, it shall not harm them!" All three were unable to stand upright after drinking, but sank to the ground. The head of each one was immediately cut off. When the third had been decapitated, all the armed men flung themselves on the bodies and cut them into a thousand pieces which they flung into the river. Then all the people returned to the village and retired into their huts. There was an uncanny stillness about the place. Over and over again in recent times villagers had been sacrificed in this way.

In the evening du Chaillu's servant Adouma came to him. Having been compelled not only to join in witnessing the murder of his sister, but to shout with

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the mob in the chorus of rage, had caused him frightful suffering. His master endeavored to comfort him. He spoke to him of God, Who loathes all cruelty. "Oh, Chally," said the poor African, "when you go back to your country, tell the people there to send people to teach us poor ignorant beings the words that come from the mouth of God."



In these days the witch-doctors can no longer exercise their power with the same publicity as formerly. But as the belief that illnesses and deaths can be brought about by magic is far from having been rooted out, it happens again and again that people are accused of being guilty of one or another case of sickness or death. Only these trials in which the fetichist still continues to play his part are no longer held publicly but in secret. And the poor victim of this cruel superstition is no longer simply murdered, but loses his life in a staged accident or is removed by poison.

In the case of every death at the Hospital I try to explain the causes to the relatives. But I dare not deceive myself into thinking that they always believe

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my information, and I must always reckon with the possibility, especially in cases of sudden death, that they will not let me restrain them from the search for the originator of the evil magic.

I remember an affecting scene at my Hospital during my first tour. There had been brought to me a man with severe blood-poisoning which had started in a small wound on the back of his head. From the very beginning I had told the men who had come with him that death could not be averted. As best I could I tried to explain to them how the miserable condition of the sick man and the terrible swelling of the head and neck had been caused by that little injury. They listened as if they were absent-minded. When death had come, they talked excitedly with a young man among them. I learnt from my nurses, who had overheard the discussion, that they had brought him with them by force, because to him they attributed the guilt of the man's death. Some time previously he had been incautious enough to relate to one of his acquaintances that in a dream he had dragged the dead man, with whom he lived on excellent terms, behind him with a liana which he had twisted round his neck. When he became seriously ill, the relations at once seized this young

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man and told him that if the other died, he would be put to death, because through the dream he had betrayed himself as his wicked enemy who wanted to kill him by magic. From their point of view, the dream was in itself a kind of magic. When I went out, and with the help of the nurse as interpreter endeavored to talk them out of their madness, threatening them as well that I would denounce them to the District Officer, if any harm were done to the young man, they said there was no question of his being made responsible for the death of the other. For a moment I had to leave them to see to a man who was very ill. When I came back, they were already in a canoe on the river with the corpse and the accused man. As I knew neither their names nor the name of their village, I could do nothing.

When the witch-doctor is busy with his rites for finding the guilty person, he is, of course, guided by what he is told of possible enemies the sick or dead man may have had. But also he often makes use of the case to wreak vengeance on people to whom he personally wishes ill. Not seldom he practices blackmail. When he condemns somebody to go through the ordeal by drinking, he expects that the family will secretly bring him presents to persuade him

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only to mix so little poison in the drink that the accused will be none the worse for it.

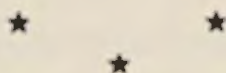
In many cases fetich-doctors in the pursuit of their horrible calling sincerely believe that they can identify the right victims on the strength of the rules of their profession. Although there is much deception about their work, they are not merely impostors. They are convinced that through those who initiated them they came into possession of effective ceremonies and secrets and that they can control supernatural powers.

The stamping out of the activities of the fetichists is made much harder by the fact that as a rule it is impossible to establish their identity. Most of the natives know hardly anything about them. They do not appear in public, but remain hidden. The people who require their services go to them by night. The Africans keep to themselves what they know about a witch-doctor. If they were to betray anything, they would have to make up their minds to lose their lives and would be got out of the way in one fashion or another. As long as the Africans are dominated by superstition, the position of the fetichists remains unshaken.

Recently I learnt afresh how greatly the natives

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are influenced by their belief in magic. A simple little surgical operation, involving no danger whatever, was to be performed on a woman. But when she was to come to the theater she behaved as though she were in despair and tried to run away. Her husband entreated me not to do anything, and no amount of persuasion could calm him. Seeing how readily the natives usually decide in favor of operation, the conduct of both seemed to me so extraordinary that I suspected something in the background. Then in a prolonged talk with the husband I learnt the reason of their fear. Two men who wished ill to him and his wife had made a charm according to which the wife must die if she were in any way cut with a knife. It was only with great difficulty that I succeeded in persuading him nevertheless to allow surgical intervention. A few days later the woman, cured, was able to travel home.



So the natives who come to us for treatment at the Hospital often cherish thoughts of which we have no conception. As the result of a taboo, a curse, or an enchantment, they are in a state of spiritual

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distress that is hidden from us. What brought them to us was not so much the expectation of the care they would find, as the need of being somewhere where the sinister forces of which they felt themselves the victims would be unable to operate. Even the natives who are still completely involved in the old beliefs are for the most part convinced that on the land of the Mission Station and on that of the Hospital, taboos, curses, and magic are without effect.

By no means rare are the cases in which people urge that a sick man from their village should be brought to the Hospital for fear that if he dies they may be suspected of having practiced fatal magic against him. Usually they arrive along with his relations. Even if the patient should die at the Hospital, they can then argue that this is not the result of the magic suspected, for in this place magic would have become ineffective. Of course, such people do not tell us the real reason why they have come to us with the sick person, but sometimes we discover it through some side-channel.

Only we always regret that our patients can so seldom make up their minds to let us understand the misery in their souls. If only they would, how much

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more we could in many cases help them. Psychotherapy to supplement purely medical treatment is often much more necessary among savages than among white people.



Twins are the object of superstitious ideas to a quite peculiar degree. It is quite universal for their birth to be regarded as a misfortune for the family and the village. Among many of the tribes of this region it was formerly the custom to kill the twins immediately after birth. It was believed that otherwise the mother must die, or that, if she lived, she could bear no more children and misfortune would come upon the village.

Where the twins were allowed to live, they were believed to be specially threatened by evil spirits. To protect themselves from these, they have to observe many rules not incumbent on other people.

Among the Galoas, the ancient inhabitants of the Lambaréné district, twins must still be recognizable as such by their names. All twins therefore always bear the same names. The firstborn, whether it be a boy or a girl, is called Wora and the second Yeno.

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After the birth the mother is the object of many ceremonies and for a long time must not leave her hut, because it affords her the best protection against evil spirits, by which she is threatened as the result of the birth of twins.

As soon as the twins can walk and are able to leave the neighborhood of the hut, great ceremonies are held to withdraw them from the influence of the evil spirits which might ensnare them. These and other festivities arranged on account of the twins are a heavy cost to the parents because they have to entertain for several days the host of relations and friends who attend.

The mother must take unceasing pains to treat the two children in exactly the same way. Thus, for example, she cannot dispose them for the night just as she feels inclined, but must sleep lying on her back with one on each side of her. She must also be careful that she gives one exactly the same to eat as she gives the other, and dresses both exactly alike. If visitors come and bring presents for the children, she must not give this to one and that to the other, but must give alike to both.

It is not permissible for the twins to marry at different times. They must celebrate their weddings

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on the same day. Everything is particularly complicated when they are of different sex. Unless these marry at the same time, where the strict custom is followed, the one who remains single must forever renounce the prospect of marriage. He or she is not free to marry later than the other.

If one of the twins should die, the other must not see the body, nor be present at the burial, but must stay in the hut for a long time. A series of ceremonies takes place later to enable him to continue to live. He is really supposed to have died and been buried at the same time as the other.

All the beliefs and customs which affect twins really rest therefore on the idea that they form only a single personality.

Such ideas have even greater force among the Pahouins, who have migrated from the interior, and have preserved primitive conceptions still better, than among the Galoas. If one of the twins is ill, it is the other who receives treatment. I know of a case where a twin died of a severe attack of malaria, because it was not itself, but the other child, who had to swallow all the quinine which the missionary's wife had prescribed and given for it.

There used to live in the district of Samkita a

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woman who made her husband's life a burden because she was constantly worrying about the health of her twin brother living at a distance. If she had a headache, she regarded it as a sign that the brother was seriously ill, and demanded her husband's permission to travel to him in order that she might know what medicine he required and take it for him. At last her husband could do nothing else but consent to the divorce she desired in order that she might always be near her brother and be nursed in his stead.

If a death occurs in a Pahouin village in which twins are living, they must remain secluded in their hut and submit to rites to protect them against the evil spirits guilty of the death of the fellow-villager.

Among the Pahouins, if one of the twins dies, a series of magic rites and ceremonies are required so that the survivor may be separated from the other with whom up to now he had formed a single personality, in order that for the remainder of his life he may be able to lead an independent existence. If these rites are neglected, he, too, in the belief of the Pahouins, must die. Of course, the fetich-doctors have an interest in preserving these beliefs, because

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the performance of the rites brings them in a good income.

Seeing that twins have no full, individual personality of their own, the Pahouins do not regard them as normal human beings. So they are allowed a greater measure of consideration than ordinary people. It is generally assumed that they have bad characters, but cannot help themselves in this matter. If somebody is very irascible, it is usual to inquire whether he happens to be a twin. If he answers that he is, no resentment is felt against him. Custom commands that everyone should put up with the bad temper of twins with patience.

Among the Pahouins and other races as well, twins are forbidden to look at a rainbow, for it is regarded as a sign of misfortune, and when it appears the whole village is in a state of anxiety. As twins are regarded as beings who may attach misfortune to themselves and their surroundings, they must remain hidden from the rainbow. In earlier times it often happened that if a rainbow appeared in the sky when twins had just been born, they were put to death at the bidding of the witch-doctors in order to avert misfortune that threatened the village. And even to-day, among tribes who are still in the

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possession of quite primitive ideas, when a rainbow appears or there is an eclipse of the sun or moon the mother of newborn twins is in fear for their lives.



Anyone who has once penetrated into the imaginary world of primitive man, and knows something of the state of fear in which people may live when they believe in taboos, unavoidable curses and active ju-jus, can no longer doubt that it is our duty to endeavor to liberate them from these superstitions.

Everyone who is "at the front" knows how difficult it is to carry on this war. These conceptions have such deep roots in the world-view and traditions of primitive people that they are not easy to eradicate.

In the eyes of the Africans, the fact that individuals still perish by trespassing against their taboos, by curses of which they are the victims, or by magic to which they are exposed is a proof of the truth of their ideas which it is not easy to controvert. It is difficult indeed to make them understand that in these cases the events are determined by psychical conditions.

When natives in all good faith assure us that they

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have attained to freedom from such ideas, they are by no means always really so advanced. The ideas are still subconsciously present and with any provocation may come to life again.

In our endeavors for the spiritual liberation of the Africans we find ourselves in a tragic position due to the revival of superstition in Europe. This unexpectedly vindicates primitive superstition. The Negroes who read newspapers know from these that there are also white men who believe in supernatural powers which man employs in his service. They spread the news out here and take us to task about it.

And in addition the Africans are made acquainted with the new forms of superstition across the seas by Europeans who make a trade of offering their services in prospectuses sent by post. By the numerous letters of this kind sent to my male nurses I can form some conception of the extent to which this exploitation is carried on. Probably every one of them—and one and another more than once—has sent his month's wages to Europe to receive in exchange his horoscope or a talisman. Formerly they came to ask me to send their money for them, but since they know I forbid the practice, they apply to someone else.

TABOOS AND MAGIC

Some time ago one of my nurses brought me a typed letter in which an astrologer told him that recently, in an hour of meditation, he had felt impelled to concern himself with his case. In this way he had discovered something of great importance to him, which he would communicate in return for a certain sum of money. The Negro stood before me trembling with pride and excitement because a white man at a distance had been thinking about him. When I explained to him that the man was a rascal who had sent the same letter to many other natives, he could not understand. He believed I grudged him the honor that had come his way and the happiness that lay before him. It is pretty certain that he sent the money secretly.

Various enterprises of this nature in various European countries have the addresses of my black nurses and many other natives of the Lambaréné area.

The fact that in Europe a frivolous game is played with superstition constitutes a grave danger for the prestige of the white man among the Africans.

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RIVER BOAT WHICH BROUGHT CASES OF DRUGS



MLLE. KOCH AND PREGNANT WOMAN

CHAPTER FIVE

HOSPITAL STORIES AND SCENES

DURING MY FIRST STAY IN AFRICA, I ORDERED A SET of false teeth from an impression I had taken for a dear old catechist of the Protestant Mission who had not a tooth left. The dentist in Europe who made it was kind enough only to charge for the materials used. So the good old man got a cheap set of teeth which fitted fairly well. But after some time he came to see me again and sulkily asked for his money back, saying he was not satisfied with the teeth. I examined them and found nothing the matter, for they did not press on his gums at any point. I was rather surprised at his demand, and asked what he had to complain about, when he replied, "The new teeth do not fit as firmly as the old ones."

For months he persecuted me with the demand for the return of his money.



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A young girl had a malignant abscess on her eye and Dr. Goldschmid had to remove the eye. After some time she was given a glass eye ordered from Europe. It fitted well and the child quickly got accustomed to wearing it. The parents, who were with her at the Hospital, expressed great satisfaction that she was no longer disfigured by the want of an eye, and also expressed their gratitude because they would after all be able to ask the full price when they gave her in marriage. When they were about to take the girl home, the mother led Dr. Goldschmid aside and said, "But now tell me one thing more. When will the child be able to see with the new eye?"



A sick white man had passed several weeks with us at the Hospital. When he had left, it appeared that the clinical thermometer was missing from his room. We wondered whether he had accidentally packed it with his things, or whether his boy had thrown it away to prevent the discovery that he had broken it.

Every white patient brings his boy with him to clean his room and serve him.

HOSPITAL STORIES AND SCENES

Three weeks later I met the white man over at Lambaréné. "I have something to give back to you," he said, and opening his tin trunk he fetched out the thermometer. Then he told me how it came about that we had lost it. On the evening after his return home, his boy said to him, "Don't forget, sir, to take the medicine under your arm, so that you may keep well." "What do you mean?" "The glass medicine that shines." "Ah," said he, "the thermometer! But we have none here." "Oh, yes," said the boy, "we've got one," and proudly produced the thermometer from a little cardboard box. He had secretly brought it with him out of solicitude for his master.



Dr. Anna Schmitz had performed an operation for cataract on an old woman who was still a regular savage. When the patient felt a burning sensation in her eye on the following days, she repeatedly went down to the river under cover of darkness to bathe it. At last we had to appoint a watchman to prevent her doing this. But in spite of the ablutions in defiance of instructions the eye healed well.

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The day on which the bandage was to be taken off had arrived, and it was possible to make the first test of whether the patient could see anything. The Doctor waved her hand about and asked the woman if she saw anything. No answer. Nor would she count fingers held in front of her. Whatever was tried, there was simply nothing to be got out of her. When the somewhat perplexed and annoyed Doctor, who had nevertheless observed that she was seeing a little, inquired why she did not give the required information, she sullenly answered, "You performed the operation. So you must know whether I can see and how I see."

An old man who came from far in the interior was operated on for cataract by Dr. Bonnema and behaved better. On the evening before he started on his homeward journey, he expressed his joy at his good fortune in having recovered his sight by dancing solemnly round the Hospital. It was a most impressive spectacle.



At one time we had in the Hospital a man named Ebanh Eī, whose huge hernia, at a previous at-

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tempt, had been found unsuitable for operation. Now he had come back to worry us to try again, although we emphasized the danger he would incur. He went on begging until Dr. Schmitz said she was ready for the attempt. Full of joy, he ran all round the wards announcing that he was to undergo a second operation. On the evening before the longed-for day, he decorated the bed he was to be brought to after the operation and strewed flowers over it. The attempt succeeded and the result was good.



As is the praiseworthy habit of surgeons, Dr. Goldschmid, in order to divert her mind and cheer her up a little, once began a friendly conversation with a woman who was lying on the operating-table and had just received the injections for local anesthesia. But she paid no proper attention to his questions and conversation, and when, in spite of this, he continued talking, she interrupted him with, "This is no time for gossip. You should cut."



HOSPITAL STORIES AND SCENES

After a difficult operation, much anxiety was felt about the patient's condition. Dr. Holm, who had performed the operation, crept to her bed three times during the night and lifted the mosquito-net to feel her pulse and listen to her breathing. And three times came the nurse and acted likewise. In the morning when sympathetic inquiry was made as to how the patient was feeling, she answered crossly, "I should have slept well all night, if I had been left in peace."

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We have constant grave anxiety about the patients who have undergone operations for the reason that they will not do what they are told. If they feel inclined, they go and bathe in the river the day after the operation, unconcerned by the fact that they make their bandages wet and dirty. Or the man who must abstain for a time from all food and drink because it has been necessary to put stitches in his large intestine, tired of fasting, the very day after the operation secretly enjoys an ample meal which he has caused his wife to prepare. The people who have gone through an operation also frequently give way to the temptation to insert their fingers under

HOSPITAL STORIES AND SCENES

the bandage to feel the wound, thus exposing it to the risk of infection. It is really no easy matter to be a surgeon for savages.

The remarkable thing is that these dangerous follies do not always have the evil results awaited. Even patients who have succumbed to the temptation to eat and drink the day after an abdominal operation have in some cases survived contrary to all expectation.



Every Saturday afternoon there is a great cleaning-up in and around the wards. All the women who have accompanied their sick relatives to the Hospital are requisitioned for the job. The youngest white nurse has command of the troop. Dominique, one of the oldest male nurses, is given her as assistant.

When everything has been cleaned in and around the wards and in the Hospital streets, groups are formed to collect all the bottles, empty tins and bits of crockery thrown in the grass in the direction of the river or up on the hill. This exercise looks like a multiplied reproduction of Millet's picture *The Gleaners*.

Why are there so many empty tins?

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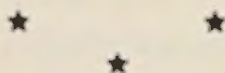
In the Hospital the natives are given empty milk tins and petroleum and petrol tins, which they make use of for receiving their ration of palm-oil, fetching water, keeping salt and palm-nuts, as cooking-pots and drinking vessels. These tins and the bottles in which they keep their rice, when no longer wanted, are carelessly thrown into the grass near the Hospital. Then rain-water collects in the tins and bottles so that they make splendid breeding-places for the mosquitoes that spread malaria. So for the effective prevention of malaria, war against the tins and bottles that lie round the houses is of the first importance.

Dominique, like a sheep-dog, circles round the widely separated troop of women, for otherwise the participants in the great clean-up would gradually disappear into the wards and banana plantations and the white nurse would be left alone in the field. The tins and bottles and rubbish collected fill whole packing-cases, which are carried down to the river on stretchers and taken in canoes to the main current of the river.

Usually, the great clean-up only comes to an end at nightfall. The savages cannot at all understand

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why we make any fuss about cleanliness round the dwelling-places. To them it is nothing that in the course of years mounds of rubbish, old tins and broken bottles grow up around their villages. It is difficult to make them understand that this is the chief reason for the fever from which they and their poor children suffer.



A great proportion of the patients who come to us for operation come from a great distance. They often spend weeks on the journey and arrive half starved and in very bad condition as a result of the long, difficult journey. They often need nursing for several weeks before we can venture to operate.

It sometimes happens too that people for whom an operation is impossible or would give no relief undertake the long trek in vain. How hard it is to make them understand that we cannot help them although we can help others! Once a man who had lost his sight came to us from 350 kilometers (about 230 miles) away because he had heard of the operation for cataract. When we had to tell him that his was not a case of cataract, and that there was nothing

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we could do for him, his despair was most distressing to witness.

The people from the interior have first to undertake a long march through savanna and bush until they reach the river, by whose aid they can reach us either in a canoe or in a steamer. As they have no craft of their own, they have to wait for embarkation till opportunity offers, and sometimes they have to wait for weeks. Either no canoes or small steamers happen to be passing, or they are so full that there is no room for more passengers. It is a puzzle to us how these poor strangers manage not to starve while they are waiting. Most white men who pass that way are kind enough to let the people on the way to the Hospital travel in their motor-boats or steamers.

When the strangers have undergone operation and are again fit to travel, there is the problem of their return home. Now we have to find for them a means of transport with which they can travel upstream as far as where their forest-trail begins. So that no opportunity may be missed, we inquire of the owner or captain of every boat that touches at our landing where it is going to and whether it is of any use for sending home convalescent patients.

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The owners and captains are naturally not very enthusiastic about taking our savages with them, especially as their boat is usually already overloaded. So if we do not take the initiative, question them about the goal of their journey and beg them to take some convalescents with them, they simply proceed on their voyage. When we have ascertained that a boat is available, a male nurse is hastily sent through all the wards with a bell such as railway employees use, shouting, "Opportunity for traveling in the direction of . . . Anybody who wants to go is to come to the consulting-room at once!"

If patients who might travel by this boat happen to be in the plantation gathering palm-nuts, or in the forest getting firewood, or down on the shore fishing, messengers are sent to fetch them as quickly as possible.

In the consulting-room, where all other work is at a standstill, we decide whether the patients concerned are really fit for discharge. Then for each one we write a recommendation to the officials he will pass on his journey. Meanwhile a nurse collects provisions to last each of them several days—rice, cassava, plantains, and dried fish. And each gets a little bag of salt. As salt is the best form of currency

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in the interior, with this he can buy further provisions on his way. He needs it too to pay the ferries when he has to cross rivers. The savages of the interior will render no service to a stranger without payment.

Most of the patients, with a view to their homeward journey, have saved up some of the rice received at the Hospital as part of the rations, and take it with them in bottles. Here they can get as many empty bottles as they want, for they have no value. They lie about in heaps behind the trading posts. But in the interior they are much sought after and quite a sum is paid for them. So each of the people going home takes as many bottles as he or she can carry.

The savages from the interior seldom go home without having bought an umbrella. Without taking it out of its paper wrapping, they tie it on the top of their baggage.

So that they may have something in which to carry their food and other belongings, the nurses give the travelers empty rice-sacks. These are also useful as coverings by night.

When they have received in the consulting-room the letter of recommendation, the supply of food and

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the rice-sack, they are sent to the wards to fetch their things. But they are not allowed to go by themselves. A male nurse goes with each to see that he makes haste and does not go about the Hospital to say elaborate good-bys to all his acquaintances. The captains of the boats are in a hurry to get away, but time is nothing to our savages.

Up to the last moment we are in a state of anxiety lest the captain may get impatient and go off, or that he may after all refuse to take the patients. Doctors and nurses involve him in conversation to divert his attention. In spite of all the trouble we take, frequently two hours go by before the people are assembled and ready to leave. Doctors and nurses are quite exhausted by all the running about and giving orders and shouting. And all the time we are afraid the affair did not go quickly enough and that it will be a long time before that owner or captain will come near us again and run the risk of having to ship convalescents and lose valuable time.

It is but seldom we know in advance that a boat will call, so it is exceptional for us to be in a position to find the people and prepare them for their journey in peace and quiet.

At last all are ready and on their way to the

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landing-stage. Nurses, white and black, keep watch over the procession to see that no one returns to his ward at the last moment and so causes delay.

When the people are stowed on board the boat, they are exhorted for the last time not to be up to any mischief on the voyage. It happened once that a savage amused himself in the motor-boat that gave him a passage by turning a tap and letting the gasoline run out of the tank.

The boat starts. Black hands are waved at parting. Will the travelers survive all the fatigues of their long journey and see their villages once more? Filled with anxiety, we return to the Hospital, whose normal activities have been suspended for the time being.





CLEARING GROUND FOR LEPER VILLAGE



CUTTING GIANT TREE

CHAPTER SIX

MORE STORIES

WHITE PEOPLE HAVE INTRODUCED THE PRACTICE OF putting china eggs into hens' nests to deceive the birds into not noticing that the eggs they lay are taken away every day. But it happens that not only the hens for whom they are intended, but other creatures interested in eggs are fooled by this deception.

The following story is about something that happened before my time. A missionary at the Lambaréne Mission Station was starting on a preaching tour one morning before dawn. In order to take some new-laid eggs as provision for his journey, he opened the little poultry door under the door of the hen-roost and in the dark felt for the nest with his hand. But he encountered a curious experience. His hand touched something smooth and cold that was swinging to and fro in the hen-roost like a pendulum.

A lantern and the key of the door were hastily fetched. When the door was open and the interior of

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the roost was cautiously illuminated, it was seen that the pendulum was a serpent about two yards long with the china egg in its jaws. It had forced its way in through an opening in the palm-leaf mat roof and was hanging over the nest. The hens' eggs had been comfortably swallowed. But the china egg could not be squeezed like the others and had stuck in the snake's gullet so that it could neither get it down nor disgorge it. Defenseless, it had to suffer the death-blow, a sacrifice to the deceit of the white man.

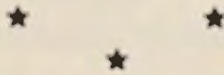


It was in the same hen-roost that my wife later on put a china egg in the nest. As our two small "boys" also liked eggs, they often made a mistake about the contents of the nest. Once they were so thorough in their want of precaution that all the eggs, including the china one, were missing, and this was how their theft was discovered. Of course they assured us by all that was sacred that they had taken nothing, and the hens must have stopped laying.

In the course of the morning, one of the boys came running to my wife with a smile on his face. The hens, he said, had started laying again. The big

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gray hen from Europe had just left the nest after laying a large egg. It was the china egg, which the evil-doers had brought back. Because they could not break this hard-shelled egg, they got the idea that it must have been laid by the European hen and that only the white people knew how to cook it.



A few years ago, the cunning monkey, Upsi, who constantly stole eggs, but never let himself be caught, fell a victim to the deception. Early one morning I met him sitting on one of the posts round the poultry-run with a disconcerted expression on his face, holding an egg in his hand. He did not run away, but remained sitting as if he wanted to appeal to me as a witness of the unheard-of experience he was going through. He banged the egg on the post and it would not break. He rolled it between his hands and it would not be crushed. It availed him nothing when he knocked it harder and squeezed it tighter and even tried the help of his teeth.

Waiting for a moment to collect fresh strength, he looked at me as if he wanted to ask whether I under-

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stood what was the matter. Then I could not help laughing, although that is a thing one should avoid in the presence of an excited monkey, because it only increases his emotion and in some circumstances he may become aggressive. Now he understood that his ill-luck was again due to human infamy.

He told me of his indignation by pulling ugly faces and gnashing his teeth. After he had for some time discharged his wrath over the unfortunate egg, he threw it into the yard, hissed one more imprecation at me and ran off. For several days after I had the impression that he was avoiding me because I had been the witness of his discomfiture.



Very early one morning the noise of an altercation at the Hospital was wafted up to our dwelling-house. In the night a patient had taken another man's canoe and gone out fishing by moonlight. The owner of the boat surprised him as he returned at dawn and demanded for the use of the canoe a large monetary compensation as well as all the fish he had caught. By the laws current among the natives, this was his actual right.

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The case was brought before me and, as often before, I had to act as judge. First I made known that on my land not native law, but the law of reason of the white man is in force and is proclaimed by my lips. Then I proceeded to examine the legal position.

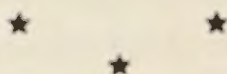
I established the fact that both men were at the same time right and wrong. "You are right," I said to the owner of the canoe, "because the other man ought to have asked for permission to use your boat. But you are wrong because you are careless and lazy. You were careless because you merely twisted the chain of your canoe round a palm-tree instead of fastening it with a padlock as you ought to do here. By your carelessness you led this other man into temptation to make use of your canoe. Of laziness you are guilty because you were asleep in your hut on this moonlight night instead of making use of the good opportunity for fishing."

"But you," I said, turning to the other, "were in the wrong when you took the boat without asking the owner's permission. You were in the right because you were not so lazy as he was and you did not want to let the moonlight night go by without making some use of it."

In view of the established legal usage, I then gave

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sentence that the man who went fishing must give a third of the fish to the owner as compensation, and might keep one-third for himself because he had taken the trouble to catch the fish. The remaining third I claimed for the Hospital, because the affair took place here and I had to waste my time adjusting the palaver.



A young Englishman who had a job in the timber trade once visited the Hospital in a motor-boat with the intention of staying one day. Shortly after his arrival, when I no longer saw his boat at the landing-stage, I asked him why it was not there, and he said he had given the native mechanic permission to go in it for the day to his village up the river. I observed that in this country one keeps one's motor-boat as much as possible under one's own eye. The native could just as well have gone in a canoe to see his family.

Two days later, when the Englishman was wanting to go away, the motor-boat was not there, and it failed to arrive on the following days. He became rather uneasy and asked me for the loan of a canoe that he might go to the village. When he arrived and

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asked the native why he had not returned, he said there was something not quite in order with the screws of the motor. But when he got on board, he found the motor had been taken to pieces and the parts were all lying about on the bottom of the boat.

For when the African had proudly arrived in her and had let the villagers marvel at the motor, they had asked him whether he knew how to unscrew it all and put it together again. Pride forbade him to refuse and admit that like so many natives who call themselves mechanics, he could do no more than set it in motion. So under the admiring eyes of his fellows, in so far as he could he took the motor to pieces and then, with the Stoic equanimity which our natives possess in such predicaments, awaited the course of events.

By good luck, not a screw was lost, so the Englishman was able to put the motor together again. After that he never left the boat with the native.



A timber trader of my acquaintance went down the river in a motor-boat with laborers he had recruited in the interior. In the course of the afternoon

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a plank began to smolder close to the exhaust-pipe, which had become red-hot, whereupon the natives got frightened and wanted to jump into the water, although, as they came from the interior, they could not swim. The white man found it difficult to calm them.

He made use of the opportunity to teach them what to do in case of an outbreak of fire in the boat. He told them that, if they saw flames anywhere, they must not be frightened but cover the fire with the thick cover of tent-cloth which lay under the seat. The cover was for putting over the motor when not in use, to protect it from damp and rain. To give them a thorough lesson, the white man made the laborers practice the stifling of imaginary flames.

When it grew dark, the boy wanted to light the petroleum lamp to hang it in the bows as the boat's light. Unfortunately, he had filled it with gasoline instead of kerosene. This happens not infrequently among the natives here because the tins in which kerosene and gasoline are supplied are so alike that they can easily be mistaken. Hardly had the boy approached the lantern with a match than there shot up a tremendous flame, whereupon, robbed of sense by his terror, he threw it into the bows of the boat

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instead of into the water. Thinking it was an exercise in extinguishing fire arranged by the European, the savages calmly seized the tent-cloth and smothered the flames. If a plank near the exhaust-pipe had not begun to smolder and so given occasion for a lesson to the quite inexperienced new laborers, when the lantern exploded they would all have jumped into the water and been drowned.



When, quite recently, an air-line was established from the Congo over the Sahara to the Mediterranean, most of the inhabitants of the jungle saw and heard for the first time airplanes whizzing by above their villages. In their alarm they went to fetich doctors for information about these phenomena. These, of course, could not confess their ignorance, so they were obliged cold-bloodedly to weave something out of their imagination.

A fetichist from the hinterland of Lambaréné announced, as I learnt from white people in that district, that God Himself was coming down to earth in the big bird to punish men for their sins. And now they must be ready for a month of con-

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tinuous night. On hearing this prophecy, the people hurried to their plantations, cut all the ripe and half-ripe plantains, heaped them up near their huts and placed vessels with water alongside them, so as to have food and drink at hand during the coming weeks.



With every mail there arrives a pile of store catalogues for the natives. My male nurses and their acquaintances delightedly plunge into the pages, in which hats, ties, shirts, collars, shoes, watches and so many other magnificent things are depicted, and talk about them with each other. Some prefer "Apollo" shoes and others prefer "Hermes," some think the tie "Spa" the most stylish, and others the "Ostend." They can spend hours pointing at the pictures, exchanging their views and considering together what they would most like to order.

If the native has any money, he very often gives way to the temptation to send a C.O.D. order and pay the first installment, which commonly amounts to about half the value of the articles. Then comes the day when he finds at the post-office a letter from the firm with the necessary form for obtaining

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the parcel. But now, of course, he has no money to pay the C.O.D. If he fails to borrow it from relations and acquaintances within the prescribed time, the parcel is returned to the firm. Weeks later he receives a communication to the effect that after deduction of all the costs for the parcel he failed to redeem there remains a certain sum to his credit from his first installment, and that he can use this as the first payment for a fresh, relatively smaller, order.

Every post-office in Equatorial Africa must have enough room to store the many parcels which wait—often in vain—to be claimed by natives.

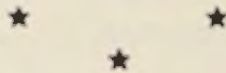
The store catalogues give our Africans riddles to solve to which they are not equal. Some years ago a man in the neighborhood of the Mission Station at Samkita told all his acquaintances he had discovered in a catalogue shoes at incredibly cheap prices, so for weeks they were very envious. The parcel arrived. It contained doll's shoes.

A white man's boy near Lambaréné had ordered a lamp that caught his fancy in the catalogue. A few days after its arrival, he brought it to his master and begged him to show him where to pour in the oil. But the master could not help him, for it was a lamp for electric light.

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A man from the interior told me a native there had informed his acquaintances they would have to help him with the transport of a piano, for he had ordered from Europe a singing wood like that of the District Officer's wife, and it was remarkably cheap. When it arrived he was able to carry it home by himself. It was a doll's-house piano he had ordered.

If the catalogue says the shoe "Oscar" can be had in sizes 5 to 11, the poor African is led to order numbers 5 to 11. If there is a note beside the illustration of the shirt "Augustus" that it may be had "in white, yellow, pink, green or blue," he may mention all the colors when he is meaning to order one shirt. If by ill-fortune, on the title-page of the catalogue the addresses of the firm in various towns are given, he runs the risk of addressing his order to six at once.



One of the nicest and finest men I ever made friends with here was Missionary Rambaud at Samkita. He worked among the wild Pahouins, whom he disarmed by his kindness. Although they were very fond of him, it happened nevertheless that they sometimes played tricks on him.



SCHWEITZER WITH PATIENTS



BUILDING OPERATIONS

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One evening, as was his custom, he was singing hymns to his own accompaniment on the harmonium. Four natives came by and listened with devout mien at the door. When they begged permission to come in to hear the beautiful hymns from quite near, he gave it in spite of the fact that they came from a neighboring village whose inhabitants were notorious thieves and rascals.

After some time, two of the listeners withdrew while he was singing. The others stayed on and told the missionary their comrades had to go on an errand, and would come back to fetch them. They themselves had not been able to make up their minds to leave, for they discerned how much good the hymns were doing their hearts.

To please them, the missionary went on singing, though it was already getting late. Every time he was about to stop, they entreated him to sing this or that hymn as their hearts were not yet satisfied.

At last the other two came back. When he had sung yet one more hymn for them, the visitors departed. Glad to think that good impulses had for once stirred in the four savages he had hitherto known as obdurate, the missionary went to bed.

Next morning he discovered to his horror that the

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Mission storehouse had been completely plundered. Nothing remained of the tools, the cloths, the salt or the tobacco which were kept in store to barter with the natives for provisions to feed the school-children. The lock was undamaged. So the thieves must have opened it with the key, which usually hung on a nail in the missionary's room. The stolen articles were discovered in the village of the four men who had listened so devoutly to the hymns.

While the missionary was singing, the two who went off had taken the key of the storehouse from the nail behind him, and while he had to go on singing for the others they and the village people, completely undisturbed, had cleared out the stores. When the two came back they had hung up the key in its place again.



In the far interior, where the cult of Islam is widespread, young men were making merry over an old one who was a zealous reader of the Koran. "You will soon know your Koran by heart," they said. "Don't you get sick of always reading the same thing?"

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"For me," he replied, "it is by no means the same Koran. When I was a boy, I understood it as a boy. When I was a man in my prime, I understood it as a man, and now I am old I understand it as an old man. I read it again and again because, for me, it always contains something new."



In the country in the direction of Lake Chad, where the people have horses, an official had to bring to a chief a gift of honor of five hundred francs as a reward for services rendered. When he had handed over the money, and the chief was about to ride off, the official admired his beautiful horse and was told that it was splendid at racing. Thereupon he told the chief about the races held in Europe, and in order to make himself agreeable said that at such races his noble animal might perhaps win a prize of two thousand francs. "Indeed," said the African, "then the horse is a bigger chief than I am! I get five hundred francs, but he might get two thousand!"



CHAPTER SEVEN

OYEMBO, THE FOREST SCHOOLMASTER—AFRICAN CHARACTER

WHEN I WAS FIRST AT LAMBARÉNE, THERE WAS working at the Mission Station there, as I relate in *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, an African teacher about thirty years old, by name Oyembo. Oyembo means "the song."

Probably no one was ever more deserving of a name so beautiful than was this black teacher. I at once felt drawn to the clever, kindly, modest fellow. There was something so refined about him that one felt almost shy in his presence.

His wife, too, was a nice, capable woman. And the three little piccaninnies who inhabited the bamboo hut which was the teacher's official residence were wonderfully well brought up.

Oyembo interpreted my sermons at Divine Service. On Saturday evening he came to rehearse with me. I had to repeat the whole sermon sentence by sentence in case there might be any phrases un-

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known to him or not capable of translation into the native language. How careful one must be in preaching not to speak of things of which the Africans can have no notion! There are a number of the parables of Jesus one either cannot use or must re-write because the natives of the Ogowe region do not know what a vine or a cornfield is.

Towards the end of the War, when the Mission was hard up for money and was forced to reduce the salaries of its employees, Oyembo resigned his position as teacher in order to retire to his village on a remote lake in the forest. He had already had difficulty in maintaining himself and his dependents on his meager salary. Now he had to earn in order to support his family. He thought of making a plantation.

When I returned to Africa in 1924, I met him at the coast. With other men from his village he had brought a huge raft of timber down the Ogowe and had earned a good sum of money from the Dutch firm to which he had sold it.

"Oyembo," said I, "you are a made man. Now you are in the timber trade and on the best path to become rich." "I'm getting on pretty well," he replied in his simple way.

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I hardly had time to ask after his wife and children before he had to be off to be present at the delivery and measuring of the raft, while I had to go to the Custom House about my packing-cases.

As a matter of fact I was not sorry that our conversation had to be so short. Oyembo the timber-trader was for me no longer the same man as Oyembo the teacher.

We had all had such high hopes of him as an educator of African youth. We had expected that he would show his contemporaries, whose thoughts were so concentrated on earning money, that there was something higher in life than that, namely, a worthy activity. The others who were with him in the upper school at the Mission and had passed the examination the same year had rejected with contempt the idea of becoming schoolmasters. To go through life with a miserable salary and be occupied from morning to night with stubborn little nigger boys had not attracted them in the least. They knew well enough how great was the need for native teachers. The missionaries entreated them to set the good they might do for their young fellow-countrymen above the earning of money. Each one had a different excuse to explain why with the knowledge

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he had acquired in the upper school at the Mission he must now above all things think of getting a more remunerative post as a Government clerk or in the timber trade. One was obliged to pay his brother's debts, another had debts himself, a third wanted to buy a wife, a fourth needed money for starting a plantation.

Oyembo alone had chosen the ill-paid, hard work of a teacher rather than earn a lot of money. And now—the War was to blame—Oyembo too had come into the timber trade for good. I did not reproach him, but it made me sad.

For a long time I could not get it out of my mind. I did not care to learn more about him by inquiring of the missionaries at Lambaréné. But every time I passed the hut near the boys' school from which he had so often emerged to come and talk to me, I felt a stab at my heart.

But one day when I was present, the missionaries began talking about Oyembo. "Ah," I said, "another who has been lost through the timber trade. I am more sorry about him than about all the rest put together."

"Lost through the timber trade?" exclaimed a missionary. "What do you mean?"

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“Well,” I replied, “I met him at Cape Lopez, when he was delivering a big raft of logs he had cut with his fellow-villagers. And he told me himself that he is now a timber trader.”

“Yes,” said the missionary, “he is in the trade. But he is not lost to the teaching profession. He is developing much more teaching enterprise than when you knew him at Lambaréné.”

Then I learnt the following. When Oyembo went to his village, he persuaded the people there to join in clearing a big piece of forest land in order to make a large plantation of plantains and cassava. Clearing the forest is such hard work, that the natives usually only prepare for cultivation just as much land as they need in order not absolutely to starve. That is why there is frequently famine in those regions.

The government often has to send black soldiers to a village to compel the people to clear enough forest for plantations.

But in his village Oyembo succeeded in getting the people to persevere in the hard labor of felling giant trees and preparing a site for a large plantation. This plantation began to bear when the War came to an end and the timber trade began again. Then the village not only had a plentiful supply of food

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for its own needs, but was able to sell to the timber traders plantains and cassava for their numerous laborers. So it was thanks to Oyembo that the villagers had been stimulated to undertake purposeful work and had become well-to-do.

When he had arranged for the sustenance of life in his village, Oyembo had founded a school. He never thought of asking the government or the mission for a contribution for this purpose, though he had to think of his own means of livelihood. But the children who attended the school could earn their food and money for their books by working in the plantation in their free time. For the plantation was constantly kept up and constantly enlarged. Coffee and cocoa were cultivated in addition to the plantains and cassava.

So in that remote district there arose a flourishing school. And in addition Oyembo was an evangelist and held a service on Sunday.

And he educated not only the children, but the adults as well. He persuaded them to rebuild the village. As a rule the natives lived in their bamboo huts until they rotted and fell to pieces over their heads. Then they would hastily collect the necessary materials to build a new hut quickly, and to have as

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little work as possible they made it as small as they could. But Oyembo taught them to work properly in this matter as well. In the course of some months a village of solid, roomy huts had arisen.

Even from a distance, I was told, this village looked different from others. In the primeval forest, one generally sees an ordinary Negro village only when one is already in it. Thick vegetation reaches right up to the huts. It does indeed demand great labor to clear the forest round a village. So the people generally used to content themselves with cutting the trees for a few yards round instead of making a broad open space.

For when that is done, still more work follows, namely the regular clearing of the bush and elephant grass which constantly crop up again in place of the cleared forest. This needs doing every month, and the people soon get sick of such unremunerative labor. They allow the rank growth around the villages to luxuriate as it will, unworried by the fact that this dense wilderness keeps every breath of air from their dwellings and that the mosquitoes that live in the thickets and high grass bring to the occupants the danger of malaria.

By means of the authority he gradually estab-

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lished over the people, Oyembo brought it about that there was a large open space around his lakeside village.

Of course there was no lack of opposition. The slothful people rebelled against him. There was even a slander circulated to the effect that he urged the village people to work in order to enrich himself.

But Oyembo mastered his opponents. It was not that he forcefully talked them down in the village assembly, for he has no gifts as a speaker. He conquered by the candor and kindness of his personality.

When the timber trade was once more in a flourishing condition, Oyembo proposed that the men of the village should join together under his leadership and take part in it. They had already cut timber in common in earlier days, but the proceedings had been undisciplined and unbusinesslike. When it was a question of felling trees and cutting logs, rolling them to the water and binding them into rafts, many a man had shirked the work under one pretext or another. Many were only concerned to get their share in the advance payment which the white trader had to make for the promised rafts. Whether they were duly delivered later did not trouble them. So

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frequently the logs remained lying in the forest and were spoilt because they had not been rolled to the river soon enough. And if rafts *were* delivered, there always followed disputes as to how the money should be divided.

Under Oyembo's leadership all was different. The work was organized. Book-keeping was introduced and the number of days worked, the expenses and receipts were entered. Every man could be sure that he was paid for what he did. Disorder gave way to order. Much more work was done and much more money earned.

A short time after I had heard of Oyembo's educational activity he came to see me at the Hospital. Now he was once more my old Oyembo. I told him of my pleasure at his activities, and I would gladly have learnt more from his own lips. But I could get nothing out of him. He was too shy to speak of himself.

I was unable to carry out my plan of paying him a visit in his village, 150 kilometers (about 100 miles) from Lambaréné, because I was too busy moving the Hospital to a larger site.

But as our Lord said, the city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, and this I learnt on my homeward

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voyage in 1927. We were sitting together—some timber traders, a missionary and I—talking of our experiences on the Ogowe. The traders had an inexhaustible fund of stories of payments made in advance to Africans without receiving the promised timber, of rafts they had bought only to learn later that they had been sold at the same time to their rivals while the natives pocketed the money from both, of bad wood they had received instead of the good for which they had covenanted. One, however, interrupted these outpourings by remarking, "But they are not all like that. At all events, I got to know one African on whom one can absolutely rely. He lives in the N'Komi district. If you make a contract with him, you can be sure that you will get logs of the stipulated quality and at the right time. And while other natives try to squeeze out one payment in advance after another, this man even refuses such a payment when offered. I couldn't believe my ears when he told me I had nothing to pay until the logs were delivered."

"And his name is Oyembo," said the missionary.

"Yes, that's the man," replied the other.

"I, too, can tell you a story about Oyembo," interposed another trader. "I was in a flat-bottomed boat

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when I was surprised by a sudden storm on that lake in view of a village. The wind was against us. We were beginning to give up hope of ever reaching the shore, for it was only a question of time until our boat, which was filling with water, must be overwhelmed by the waves and founder. Most of the natives who were with us were from the interior and could not swim. I had no hope whatever of help from the village, for natives do not readily risk their lives for other people. And besides, how could they help us? It was only in a big boat with a keel that one could have ventured out into such wild waves. Nowadays the Africans no longer possess such boats, for they don't take the trouble to build them. And yet—through the deluge of rain I saw that a very big boat put off from the land and was coming in our direction. It reached us just as we were beginning to sink. And the men were not contented with saving our lives, but fished up my boxes as well. In the village we were given dry clothes and good board and lodging. The leader put me up in his own hut and had the boxes brought in and opened to dry the contents. Have you ever heard of such a thing in Africa? And next morning, when I gathered up my

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belongings, not a thing was missing. And that too was something new in Africa! But now comes the best of all! When I was saying good-by and expressing my gratitude, and was about to continue the voyage in my boat, which the natives had salved when the storm was over, I asked the head-man how much I owed the village people for their trouble. He replied that they had only done their duty as men and Christians and did not want any present. That is my experience of Oyembo."

It was in such ways that Oyembo had become the teacher of his village. But his influence reaches far beyond the village.

When I saw him recently, he was very worried because elephants had repeatedly devastated the plantations made by his people.



In the course of years I have become ever more aware that many good and fine qualities can be found in our natives along with much that seems strange and uncongenial. We are all too much inclined to judge them by the annoyance and disappointments they cause us when they are in our

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service or when we have business relations with them.

I do not deny that they are undisciplined and in many ways unreliable, and that many of them give way to the temptation to appropriate other people's property and that all too often they are untruthful. But I think I may add in extenuation, that the relationship of employee in which we commonly make their acquaintance is still unusual for people who are accustomed to freedom, and they have not yet settled down to the position. They come to us to earn money for a certain object, generally the purchase of a wife. Service is not a calling, but only a transient interruption of their life as free men. Work is a hard necessity undertaken for the purpose of gaining money, and as far as possible they seek to make it light. They will only gradually, and only in measure as we are able to educate them to it, learn the ideal of the faithful servant which has been formed among us in the course of a long process of development. This explains why they do not show their best side in their relations with us as employees.

And we for our part do not make it easy for them to do so. Long experience and great self-control are needed for the right handling of this curious kind of

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employee. We are constantly tempted to scold them too much and let ourselves give way to humiliating them with scornful remarks. In the constant state of weariness induced by the stuffy heat and of irritability resulting from incessant worry about the smallest things and being obliged always to be prepared for derelictions of duty and foolish mistakes on the part of our staff, we have great difficulty in remaining capable of ruling and educating in the right way.

And, nevertheless, what a number of really faithful servants I have discovered in these years, not only among my own men but among the employees of other Europeans!

The Africans are not made up of faults and stupidities alone, as might appear from the accounts of travelers who have formed their judgment only on the ground of the annoyance experienced with their porters.

Really to understand the African, one must get to know him as man to man. In greater or less degree he will seem to us strange and unattractive, but one must overlook all that and understand his essential nature. Whoever succeeds in this knows how much there is in him that is good and valuable.

What repeatedly impresses me in our natives is

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their kind-heartedness. They are indeed wanting in the direct sympathy with their fellows which compels us to action, a sympathy to which we have been educated by the command of Jesus. Compared with us Europeans, the African is an almost non-social entity, except in the matter of fulfilling the duties imposed on him by membership of family and clan. He is still entirely concerned with himself. But he very often shows amazing coolness in bearing wrong inflicted on him. It seems to me that he is less susceptible to anger and the thought of retaliation and revenge than we are.

A white timber trader, a thoroughly kind but somewhat irritable man, once said to me, "What a good thing it is that the Negroes have better characters than we have." There was a grain of truth in the saying. Every one of us has at some time been put to shame by the way the natives have put up with our impetuous rudeness. They quietly went on with their work and remained as friendly as if they had never had to endure our probably not unjustified, but still, and not for the first time, very excessive abuse.

A European in the Samkita district was engaged in a dispute with the inhabitants of a village lower

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down the river. As he could not induce them to give him the satisfaction he demanded, he determined to bring a charge against them before the district officer at Lambaréné. When he set out on his journey, he had not noticed the approach of a tornado, and was surprised by it just above the village of his opponents. He and his men, clinging to the capsized boat, were being carried past the village. When the people heard their shouts, in spite of the dangerous storm and in spite of the fact that they knew who it was, they hastened to the rescue. They not only brought the men to shore, but salvaged as much of the boat's cargo as was whirling about on the surface of the river. Although they knew why the white man was on his way down to Lambaréné, they did not utter a word to remind him that he had been obliged to have recourse to the help of people against whom he was about to take legal proceedings.

I have known other cases in which Africans have shown remarkable tact. I have often been amazed at the way they have shown it to me.

There is something well-bred about the Negro's tranquil demeanor. By nature there is something, in the best sense, childlike about him.

And I am also astonished at the reflective powers

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which I so frequently meet with in Negroes. They are preoccupied with the questions of existence in a direct and living fashion, although they seldom say anything about such things to us. But on the occasions when this does happen, it becomes evident that they have an inner life which we should never have suspected in them. I have had conversations with Africans that affected me deeply. Doctors and nurses at my Hospital and Europeans of our acquaintance have had similar experiences.

Anyone who has once arrived at knowing the inner personality of the African knows that he has a fine nature in spite of his curious weak points and faults. During the many years in which I have had to do with Negroes, although I have had so many occasions for anger, I have learnt to respect and value them, and I believe this will be the experience of every European who associates with them not alone as a superior but as a human being.





TWO STORKS, WOMAN CARRYING WATER



SCHWEITZER RINGING BELL.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BOYS IN EUROPE

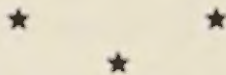
THE DIRECTOR OF A BIG COMMERCIAL FIRM—I KNEW him well—when he and his wife went to Europe to recuperate, took his boy Boussougou with them. When they arrived at Bordeaux, it was explained to the boy in the evening that his employers had rooms on the first floor of the hotel while he was to occupy an attic. A little before eight in the morning he was to come down to perform the usual services.

To take him to his room, his master went up with him in the elevator. When it started the boy was frightened, threw himself on the floor, embraced his master's knees, and whimpered, "Have mercy on me, sir, have mercy!" The master calmed him and told him that this was a box which ran up and down stairs for people. Arrived at the room, he reminded him once more to come to the first floor at eight o'clock in the morning.

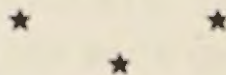
But next morning he waited in vain. He sent up a waiter to look after the boy, and he returned with

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the information that the savage was sitting at the top of the stairs but refused to come down. So the master had to go up. "Why don't you come?" he demanded. "Sir," he answered, "I'm waiting for the box which is to go downstairs with me."



Afterwards they went to the country, to the lady's mother. The good Boussougou, who had been so much described in letters, was given a nice little room with a large bed. "Do you know how to get into a bed like that?" asked his master when he showed him his room. "Come! I'll show you." But the boy was too proud to admit that he needed any instruction. The next morning the master found him lying on the spring-mattress under the other.



One day when the boy had to carry a bag of beans through the street, it burst open. While he was picking up the beans, a lady who was a friend of the family was passing and began to help him. There-

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upon he stopped collecting them himself and let her go on doing it alone. When the beans were all back in the bag, he gave her a penny, saying, "Here—present for you!" With his African mentality, he had only been able to explain the lady's readiness to help by supposing she wanted to earn something.



Early in the autumn the whole household was roused one morning by the boy's cries and lamentations. When his master rushed upstairs, he found him lying in bed, shouting again and again that he was about to die. Yet he looked well and had a good pulse. "What's the matter with you?" demanded his master. "What do you mean by all this howling?" "Sir," he replied, "I'm on fire inside!" But he was quite cool to the touch. "You haven't got fever," said his master, "get up!" "I can't, sir. Oh, the fire! Don't you see the smoke coming out of my mouth?" In Equatorial Africa the boy had never seen his breath, nor had he on the voyage, as it took place in summer. So he was terrified when he encountered this experience on waking that autumn

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morning. His master tried in vain to explain the phenomenon and pacify him by showing him the smoke coming out of his own mouth. At last he was dragged out of bed and taken to the yard. It was only when he saw the horses happily puffing smoke from their nostrils as they drank from the trough that he gradually overcame his fear.



Two timber traders who were friends had taken their boys with them to Europe. These settled into the new conditions pretty well and wore their European clothes in such a way that one could almost forget what they had been before they started on their travels.

The two men started from Paris together on their journey back. In order not to pay for registered luggage, they brought such a number of pieces of baggage on to the platform from which the Congo Express was to start that the third-class compartment in which the boys were to travel was completely filled with what they could not find room for in their own first-class quarters. There was no room left at

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all for other passengers' luggage. They wondered what would happen if the guard intervened, so they determined to stand outside their first-class compartment and await developments.

Every seat in their compartment was filled and so far as they could observe every seat in the whole train. For the Congo Express is the last opportunity of reaching the steamer bound for West Africa from Bordeaux.

In the distance they saw the boys standing in front of their compartment entirely undisturbed. No one came with the guard to get room made for his luggage. Finally, just before the train started, one of the gentlemen ventured near their compartment to find an explanation. The boys were standing there in their fashionable gray overcoats and caps. As soon as anybody was about to get in, they gnashed their teeth and rolled their eyes and said, "This hut for us." So before they even reached the steamer, in spite of the fashionable clothes, they had become real savages again. No one fancied traveling in the same compartment. When the train started, they both stretched themselves out on the seats and slept till they reached Bordeaux, while their masters

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had to sit up all night in their overcrowded compartment.



A planter from above Samkita had taken his faithful cook N'Gema, whom I knew well, with him to Europe. He served him very well while he was on leave.

On the first evening after their return, N'Gema's friends gathered in front of the kitchen to hear what he would tell them about Europe. His master, who had a good knowledge of their language, extinguished the light and listened from the dark veranda. N'Gema described the voyage on the big steamer, the storm at sea, the railway journey, the white men's large huts, the splendid plantations which needed no protection against elephants. And further he told of the forests in Europe where one can walk about without cutting one's way with a machette, of the plantations which produce flour and wine, of the villages in which so many people dwell that they don't all know each others' names, and of more besides. At each item the listeners uttered an astonished "Ah!" and asked to hear more. Then he told them about submarines and airplanes.

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But as the most wonderful thing of all, he concluded with, "In Europe the people work entirely by themselves. There's no need for overseers to stand beside them."



Two boys who had accompanied their employers from a timber-concession in the jungle to their country estate in Europe also had to tell their acquaintances all about the remarkable things they had seen. They related that the most extraordinary thing of all is that in Europe even animals work. To satisfy the curiosity they had aroused by saying this, they had to describe again and again how when they left the ship they climbed into a big carriage to which were attached two animals larger than buffalo, and how the white man had spoken with these creatures as if they were human beings and then they had run now quickly, now slowly, or had stopped. As there are no horses here they did not find it easy to describe these animals to their listeners. They had great difficulty also in explaining the work of oxen when plowing.

In all the accounts given by natives who have returned from Europe, I have always noticed that it

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is not railways and airplanes, but the cultivation of the soil that makes the greatest impression. My own experience on my way home is the same. The city, the hotel, the railway all seem at once familiar again. But then to travel across the country where field follows field—*that* is so unusual and seems to me so grand a thing that I am stirred to the very depths of my being.

In Europe man is lord over the earth. In the primeval forest of Equatorial Africa he is a creature that with difficulty wrests a bit of land from the wilderness. His plantation is always surrounded by forest and sooner or later the forest will swallow it up again. . . .

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LAMBARÉNE,
June 1938