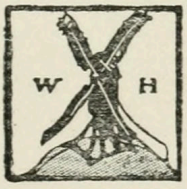
AFFAIRS OF WEST AFRICA

BY

EDMUND D. MOREL
(E. D. M.)
MEMBER OF THE WEST AFRICAN SECTION OF THE
LIVERPOOL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1902

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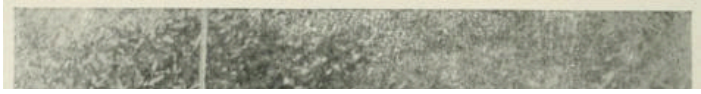
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ON FISHING BENT—SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

Whatever its defects—and, no doubt, they are many and various—the Author claims for this volume that it is, at least, an honest attempt to deal with the problems, racial, political and commercial, yearly increasing in magnitude, connected with the administration of Western Africa by Great Britain and by the other Powers of Western Europe which participated in the scramble for African territory. As such it is respectfully submitted to the thinking Public. The Author considers it advisable to state that he has no commercial interests in West Africa, and is, therefore, uninfluenced by considerations of a personal nature, in emphasising the importance of the part played by the merchant on the West African stage. He also deems it right to say that the West African Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce is neither responsible nor answerable for the opinions expressed herein. The Author hereby acknowledges the courtesy of the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the Editor-Proprietor of *West Africa*, the Editor of the *Contemporary Review*, and the Editorial Committee of the *Journal of the African Society*, in permitting the incorporation of certain matter contributed by himself, from time to time, to those publications. His sincere thanks are due to Major Ronald Ross, F.R.C.S., F.R.S., C.B., for the chapter

which that distinguished scientist has specially written at the Author's request. To other kind friends and acquaintances who have good-humouredly submitted to cross-examination, and have allowed themselves to be victimised by the Author's importunities generally, grateful appreciation is due, and is thankfully acknowledged.

HAWARDEN, 1902.

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*Photographs marked thus * are reproduced from "Adamawa" by kind permission of Mr. Ernst Vohsen (Dietrich Reimer). The author is indebted (through the*

kindness of a friend) to Dr. Maclaud, of the French Guinea Administration, for several of the photographs here reproduced.

FOREWORD
MARY KINGSLEY

> "Mary Kingsley—the heir and sustainer of a great name, one of the ablest of that remarkable band of wandering writers, men and women, who are the eyes and ears of our nascent Empire, who are bringing home to England, that weary Titan, her tasks, her faults, her problems—Mary Kingsley has gone from us."—Mrs. HUMPHRY WARD.

Those who had the honour of knowing Mary Kingsley, and corresponding with her on West African affairs, who have studied her writings and her speeches, who realise all that this "good woman with a gigantic intellect" might have done for the Empire in West Africa had she lived, can with difficulty reconcile themselves to the inscrutable decree of Providence which robbed us of her presence. One of her greatest admirers to whom I was expressing the other day much the same feeling, expressed a different view. "Miss Kingsley's work was done"—he said in effect—"she was the pioneer, she showed the way. That was her allotted task: the fruit of her labours will come in due season." It may be so. Indeed, when we think of what Mary Kingsley accomplished in the few short years which she devoted to West Africa, the thought arises whether there is not an element of unconscious selfishness in the desire that she might have been spared. The nature of the work she had undertaken, the intense fervour with which she devoted herself body and

soul to preaching the morals it was given her to inculcate, the utter brain weariness which at times she was fain to admit—no mortal being could have endured for very long so perpetual a mental and physical strain. It was a passing heavy load for a weak woman of indifferent health to bear, and in death Mary Kingsley has perhaps achieved a greater triumph, a success more striking and profound, than living on she would have attained. Death has had the effect of rapidly fertilising the seeds she sowed, and from her ashes have sprung forces gathering daily in power which, united in a common aim, are taking up her burden and carrying it along the path she pointed out, assured that every year will bring fresh helpers, be the obstacles ever so great. *La verité est en marche*, and although the spirit of the hour is not precisely favourable to that patient investigation of West African problems which affords the only guarantee of political and administrative success, the phase is but a fleeting one, and when the present fashionable policy of force and hurry is found by practical tests to be even more sterile in useful results than the apathy which preceded it, the main truths Mary Kingsley taught will appeal to thinking men with an eloquence all the greater for having been temporarily obscured.

On the personal aspect of Mary Kingsley's character one would fain dwell at length. Few women, I believe, have inspired all sorts and conditions of men with so intense a respect, so wondering an admiration. Few women are able, as Mary Kingsley was able, to draw forth, by the magic of her earnest personality, the best in a man. She was so unassuming, so unaffected, such a womanly woman in every sense of the word, that it appeared almost incredible she should have grasped the

essentialities of West African politics with such comprehensiveness and scientific perception; mastered, as no one had done before—in the sense, at any rate, of being able to impart the knowledge to the world—the intricacies of native custom and native law, or have affronted the physical perils she made so light of. Eminent politicians and administrators, distinguished men of letters, world-renowned scientists, commercial magnates, were regular visitors at her modest residence, and one and all drew from her inexhaustible store. The least of those to whom she extended the privilege of her friendship were always welcome, and never failed to leave her presence without feeling that her words of sympathy and encouragement were a fresh incentive to push onward, never losing hope and fortified against disappointment. The truest, kindest, staunchest friend that ever breathed—such was Mary Kingsley; and we who knew her, and have lost her, know also that something has gone out of our lives which can never be replaced. In a passage of singular beauty, Mrs. Alice Stopford Green thus closes a tribute[1] to the dead friend whose work she herself is doing so much to carry on: “She laid her armour down when she asked to be carried out to the unfathomable Ocean, alone in death as she had been alone in life, going out with her last wish from the bitter strife of men to the immensities where she sought the will of God.”

PART I

CHAPTER I
FIVE YEARS OF BRITISH TRADE WITH WESTERN AFRICA

"West Africa, that great feeding-ground for British manufactures."—MARY KINGSLEY.

One still—but too often, alas!—meets with people who wonder why England should bother about West Africa at all, and pooh-pooh the idea that we have interests there at the present time worth looking after, while as for the future possibilities of that huge country as a field for British enterprise, they simply will not trouble themselves to give the matter a moment's consideration.

Now figures are very uninteresting things, no doubt, to the average reader; but they possess a practical significance superior to any number of the most glowing dissertations, and I trust my readers will forgive me if I make, as a basis of justification for inflicting this volume upon them, a few sets of figures which I would respectfully suggest as worthy of their attentive consideration. The statistics are compiled from the Custom House returns, and they show the extent, nature and distribution of British trade in Western Africa during the last few years. In perusing them, three facts should be borne in mind: first, that, although Europeans have been engaged in commercial transactions on the West Coast for upwards of five hundred and fifty years, those

transactions were, prior to the abolition of the over-sea slave trade, confined, with very few exceptions[2] —so far as the exports from West Africa were concerned—to the human cargo, and to gold dust and ivory: that the trade in palm oil and kernels, which are now the staple articles of export from West Africa, is therefore of comparatively recent growth, and that the mahogany trade and the rubber trade have only come into existence—to any appreciable extent—within the last few years, a fair indication of the fertility and producing power and almost boundless resources of West Africa. Secondly, that the extensive business relationship which has been built up between Great Britain and West Africa, in the shape of a legitimate commerce, has grown to its present proportions under circumstances absolutely disadvantageous to development, without railways, with but few roads, with intertribal wars often preventing the circulation of trade for months at a time, by merely scratching the surface of the most prolific region in the world. Thirdly, that the figures given below do but show the actual volume of Britain's trade with West Africa and the wages earned by thousands of English men and women who directly and indirectly benefit by that trade; the British capital invested in West Africa in factories, machinery, craft for navigating the rivers, coaling depôts, surf-boats and lighters, stores and the like, to which must now be added railway material, dredging apparatus, batteries and soon, we may hope, cotton gins, not to mention a fleet of some sixty steamers employed in the carrying trade and passenger traffic —all these things have to be taken into account in estimating West Africa's worth to Great Britain.

The total values of British produce and manufactures[3] shipped to the *British possessions in*

West Africa in the five years 1896-1900 were respectively as follows:

1896	£1,828,395
1897	1,763,461
1898	1,999,505
1899	2,116,080
1900	2,148,149
Gross total	£9,855,590

Percentage of increase in five years, 17½ per cent.

The total values of British produce and manufactures shipped to the *possessions of Foreign Powers* in West Africa in the five years 1896-1900 were respectively as follows:

1896	£970,080
1897	1,002,318
1898	1,247,994
1899	1,490,603
1900	2,145,349
Gross total	£6,856,344

Percentage of increase in five years, 121 per cent.

If we add these two totals together, we find that the value of British produce and manufactures shipped to *West Africa* in the period mentioned was £16,711,934, which is a percentage of increase of 138 per cent.

From the British export trade we turn to the British import trade with West Africa.

The total values of raw produce imported by Great Britain *from British West Africa* in the five years

1896-1900 were respectively as follows:

1896	£2,223,925
1897	2,153,412
1898	2,352,285
1899	2,427,946
1900	2,137,023
Gross total	£11,294,591

The total values of raw produce imported by Great Britain from the *possessions of Foreign Powers* in West Africa in the five years 1896-1900 were respectively as follows:

1896	£333,803
1897	553,130
1898	622,287
1899	651,043
1900	806,077
Gross total	£2,966,340

These two totals added together show that Great Britain imported West African produce in the period under review to the amount of £14,260,931.

The value of Great Britain's direct commerce with West Africa in the five years 1896-1900 was, therefore, £30,972,865. To this might be added a further sum of £1,750,888, representing foreign and colonial merchandise shipped to West Africa from British ports in the years mentioned.[4]

It is interesting, and valuable, to see which, among the possessions of Foreign Powers in West Africa, were the chief absorbers of British goods and the chief exporters of raw produce to Great Britain.

Examination yields the following knowledge:

Principal possessions of Foreign Powers which absorbed in five years £6,856,344 of British goods:[5]

	French. £	Portuguese. £	German. £	Otl
1896	348,258	402,445	68,355	1
1897	401,224	360,121	91,320	1
1898	531,848	438,320	109,580	1
1899	693,255	503,788	126,047	1
1900	709,900	1,084,072[6]	120,910	2

Principal possessions of Foreign Powers which exported to Great Britain in five years £2,966,340 of raw produce:

	French. £	Portuguese. £	German. £	Others £
1896	203,442	33,937	42,001	54,
1897	312,430	116,554	68,194	55,
1898	431,192	85,544	35,165	70,
1899	461,267	68,021	48,736	73,
1900	534,727	75,037	94,681	101,

The French possessions are, it will be observed, far and away our principal markets and our principal suppliers among the possessions of Foreign Powers. Our exports to and imports from the French possessions amounted together to £4,627,543, or just under 50 per cent. of our total export and import trade with the possessions of Foreign Powers together. The increasing importance of the French possessions in West Africa as a market for the sale of British goods and as suppliers of British home markets is a fact which it is of the utmost

consequence for British statesmen to lay to heart. The subject is one which I shall refer to later on. It is already one of the dominant factors of West African politics affecting Great Britain, and is destined to become so more and more as the years go on, for France is in a territorial sense the mistress of West Africa, and may become so in a commercial sense as well.

The general conclusions to be drawn from a study of these figures are various. First and foremost there is the clearly established fact that British trade with West Africa is expanding enormously and has almost unlimited prospects before it, now that serious and concentrated efforts are being made on all sides to open up the untapped wealth of the interior by the means of roads and railways and by the improvement of navigable waterways, while the cessation of intertribal warfare in many districts must entail a large increase in the population, and therefore, in the native capacity for production and purchase. It is also demonstrated that every year West Africa absorbs a larger quantity of British manufactured goods: that the exports of British manufactured goods are steadily increasing to British West Africa and increasing to an extraordinary degree to the possessions of Foreign Powers in West Africa, especially to the French possessions: that Great Britain is consolidating her hold upon the carrying trade of West Africa as testified by the increased quantity of foreign and colonial manufactures shipped to West Africa from British ports: that the Continent—Germany[7] chiefly—is receiving a greater amount of raw produce from the British possessions in West Africa, a deduction which can be fairly drawn from the stationary aspect of the importation by Great Britain of such produce from

her own West African possessions. And the final conclusion is this, that, in view of the restricted extent of the British possessions in West Africa, compared with the possessions of Foreign Powers in that part of the world, the latter offer a very much vaster field for the sale of British goods. Consequently, it is the bounden duty of the British Government and the British Chambers of Commerce, while in no way neglecting the brilliant possibilities which the British West African possessions offer under wise administration for the enterprise of Englishmen, to be ever on the alert to look to the future and to protect British trade with the possessions of the Foreign Powers in West Africa against legislation tending to close the door of those possessions against it; and to insist that, whenever international treaties guaranteeing freedom of trade to the subjects of all nations exist in West Africa, they shall be rigidly adhered to by the signatories. In this respect British diplomacy has shown itself singularly lax. But the mischief already committed may even yet be remedied, and further dangers which loom ahead averted, if the British public will only realise before it is too late the enormous issues at stake.

CHAPTER II
THE OLD AND THE NEW

> "The past has gone with its follies and its waste.... Let us then face the present and contemplate the future."

In the previous chapter we discussed in practical fashion the grounds upon which the British public is called upon to devote more attention to the affairs of West Africa than it does at present, and an attempt—I hope a successful attempt—was made to show how very short-sighted and singularly misinformed is the opinion which would disinterest itself from a part of the world where the possibilities of commercial development are so strikingly manifest. There has never been such urgent need for an intelligent appreciation, on the part of the British public, of the problems which confront this country in West Africa. In a few short years the policy of Great Britain in West Africa has undergone a complete change. Events have followed one another with bewildering rapidity. Official indifference has been galvanised into life by French activity, and after a brief but dangerous period of international rivalry, British political rights have been established over a considerable extent of territory, not, however, nearly so considerable as a pacific, consistent, well-thought-out programme adopted some years previously would have brought, had our merchant-pioneers been listened to, and had successive Governments been able to throw off the paralysing influence of the resolution of 1865. There is a story told of a certain Minister in charge of the Foreign Office—it was

related to me by one of those present at the interview—which illustrates very forcibly the feeling which prevailed in Government circles in those days. A deputation of merchants waited upon his Excellency with the request that he would permit the hoisting of the Union Jack on certain parts of the West African littoral where British merchants had long been trading, and where the rulers of the country were genuinely desirous of receiving a British protectorate. *Pro-formâ* treaties were produced by the deputation between these rulers and the resident merchants. The merchants asked for no reward. There was no question of expenditure involved. All that the Government was required to do was to meet the wishes of the chiefs. The deputation pointed out that, so far as the relations between the natives and the commercial representatives of Great Britain were concerned, the acceptance of the Government would in no wise alter them, but would simply have the effect of cementing a friendly understanding which already existed. But, urged the deputation, the treaties, if agreed to by the Government, would prove an invaluable diplomatic instrument if the time came, as it seemed likely to do, when England might find herself faced in West Africa by foreign competition. The Minister flung the treaties across the table.

It was a time of wasted opportunities, when a little political foresight would have conferred upon this country great future benefit, and it seems extraordinary, but is unhappily true, that the same failure to look ahead as regards West Africa appears to afflict our Foreign Office to-day despite the lessons of the past. Of this, more anon.

But if successive Governments showed

unpardonable negligence in safeguarding British interests in West Africa, for decade after decade, down to the very time when the French had worked their way so far southward into the natural *hinterlands* of our old Colonies that action became imperative if anything was to be saved from the wreck, the British press and public were greatly to blame also. I well remember that at the very height of the recent Anglo-French controversy which culminated in the Convention of 1898, when rival English and French expeditions were rushing hither and thither through the territories west of the Niger, and when British and French efforts were concentrated upon wringing out of the unfortunate Borgu Chiefs all sorts, kinds, and conditions of agreements, sowing Union Jacks and Tricolors by the wayside, the well-known editor of an equally well-known newspaper to which I then contributed, asked me to show him Nikki[8] on the map, as he had not the least idea where it was.

Mr. Chamberlain came into power just at the moment when French enterprise in the West African uplands had reached its maximum of threatening intensity, and he set himself to vigorously counteract it as far as he could. The invertebrate policy had, however, compromised the situation almost beyond remedy, and had it not been for Mr. Joseph Thomson's success in obtaining treaty rights with the Emirs of Sokoto and Bornu in 1884 on behalf of the National African Company of Merchants—subsequently the Royal Niger Company—and, it may be added, for the loyal adherence of those native States to the treaties passed with the Company, the magnificent possession of Northern Nigeria would have gone the way of Futa Jallon, of Mossi, and of so many other countries lying at the back of our

Colonies; that is to say, would have fallen into French hands. The man who deserves the most credit for saving Northern Nigeria to the Empire is Sir George Taubman Goldie, and however one may deplore some of the uses to which he put his Charter —things we are paying for now in the French Congo and elsewhere—it is but common fairness to assert that, if it had not been for Sir George Goldie, the possessions of Great Britain in West Africa would have been reduced by about one half. It is a matter for some surprise that the Government should not have succeeded in securing the continuation of Sir George Goldie's co-operation in West Africa after the Royal Niger Company's Charter was cancelled. An old opponent has lately said of him that "there is no one more competent to guide our West African Administration on practical, humanitarian, economical, prudent, and statesmanlike lines, no one more fitted to take a high position in West African affairs political and commercial," a statement which will meet with wide acceptance.

But this, after all, is ancient history, and what we are chiefly concerned with now, is the present. What we are called upon to seriously consider is the general trend of England's policy in West Africa, administrative, financial, political and commercial. Internationally, we are secure in the possession of our territories. The only rivalry we have to fear is the peaceful rivalry of commerce, but commerce is the explanation of our presence in West Africa: it constitutes the sinews of our administration, and its requirements demand the constant vigilance, the most careful attention of the official world.

It is the bounden duty of those who, believing in the immense importance of West Africa to Great

Britain, and similarly believing that the present policy which is being pursued by Great Britain in West Africa is open on several grounds to grave objection, to say so, and to give their reasons for saying so, with the assured conviction that, however unpopular their arguments may be, the general interest demands that they should be put forward.

CHAPTER III
THE REAL AND THE IDEAL

"The nature of the natives, the climate, everything is against precipitate and hasty action. To advance slowly, leaving no bad or unfinished work behind, to gain the respect and liking of the natives, and only to use force when compelled as a last resource to do so, are the means which in my humble opinion lead to success in West Africa. To quote from the words of a celebrated French traveller: 'Do not let us dream of a hasty transformation of Africa. Let us employ a method, slow but sure. Let us try and teach the natives what knowledge we have acquired, and not try and make them learn in a few years what it has taken us twenty centuries to learn.'"—SIR CLAUDE MACDONALD in Liverpool, 1892.

"These figures are surprising. One would naturally have expected that as the trade increased the proportion of expenditure would have decreased.... From that date, however, the expenditure has advanced by leaps and bounds, and in 1900 amounted to 28 per cent. of the exports. In other words, the expenditure has increased more rapidly than the trade.... If, however, the expenditure had been on the basis of former years ... we could have given over £1,000,000 worth additional European goods in exchange for the same amount of produce. In other words, the heavier the expenditure the higher price must the merchant ask for his European goods, or the less he is able to give for native produce. This must have the double effect of reducing the demand for manufactures and diminishing the energy of the natives in gathering produce. There is another possibility which should not be lost sight of: our colonies are

> hemmed in by our French and German neighbours. If in consequence of increased expenditure and the resulting heavier taxes we are unable to offer the natives as large a quantity of manufactures and as good a price as our competitors are enabled to do, produce which is grown on the borders of our Colonies may be diverted to foreign territory with a consequent loss of trade to this country."—Mr. ARTHUR HUTTON, President African Section, Manchester Chamber of Commerce.[9]

A wise man has said that there is no way of conveying a rebuke so efficiently as upon the back of a compliment, and as a preliminary to criticism of certain phases of British administration in West Africa, a measure of praise is both just and needful. To avoid personalities—whether in the sense of praise or otherwise—should be the constant endeavour of any critic in approaching the subject under discussion, because it is primarily the system, and not the agents of the system, which is in question. Unfortunately the Crown Colony system being what it is, a despotism—though by no means necessarily a tyrannical despotism—there is great difficulty, if not actual impossibility, in altogether avoiding the personal equation.

The revolution in British West African policy is indelibly associated with the advent to power of the present Colonial Secretary, the Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain. His entry upon the scene was contemporaneous with the culmination of certain events which must infallibly have modified our previous attitude in relation to West Africa whoever the statesmen responsible at the time might have been. The point need not be laboured, but it is often overlooked. Be that as it may, it is an undoubted fact

—a fact redounding greatly to Mr. Chamberlain's credit—that no Colonial Secretary before him has displayed so lively and personal an interest, both publicly and privately, in the affairs of British West Africa, an interest which has continued unabated during the entire period of his administration. In specific directions the result has been all to the good. Railways, the preliminary surveys of which had been made by direction of Mr. Chamberlain's predecessor, the Marquis of Ripon, before he quitted office, have been constructed; others are commenced; the routes of more have been surveyed. The study of malaria has received the right honourable gentleman's warmest support. A general publicity has been given to British West Africa by its identification with so powerful a politician as Mr. Chamberlain, which has materially contributed to remove it from the rut of oblivion and popular ignorance. It may also be added that the Colonial Secretary's confident public declarations in respect to the future of the gold-mining industry in the Gold Coast has done much to attract capital to that Colony, and that the damper which he recently felt it wise to apply to the introduction of the more undesirable elements connected with the revival, under modern conditions, of gold-mining enterprise in a part of the coast celebrated for its former export of the precious metal, was entirely to his honour, although it would perhaps have been more useful had it come somewhat earlier in the day; while the memorandum he caused to be drawn up in September 1901 embodying the principle of treating native labourers on the Gold Coast, is perhaps the most admirable document ever issued from the Colonial Office.[10] In like manner, it can be taken for granted that all officials in West Africa are animated by the best of

intentions, and however profoundly one may differ, from time to time, from certain of their actions, it is always essential to bear in mind that the system under which they work—the inconvenience of which not a few of them in private conversation readily admit—leaves the door wide open to the commitment of errors for which the system is in the first place responsible, while the climate is most trying to the constitutions and temper of Europeans. But it is unreasonable, and subversive of the true interests of the Empire, that the tendency should be encouraged to denounce honest criticism of a specific act of policy in West Africa with which this or that official must in the nature of things be associated, although he need not be, and often is not, the originator of it, as a personal attack upon an absent man, to be resented as an outrage and stigmatised almost as a crime, as an offence at any rate against common decency and fairness. The contention is absurd, and mischievous and unfair. The autocratic power which the Crown Colony system confers upon West African Governors, District Commissioners, and military commandants makes it absolutely essential that independent criticism, so long as it is legitimate, should be exercised by the public at home, whether or no full sanction has been obtained by a particular official from the Colonial Office for the application of measures giving rise to criticism, or whether the measures have been initiated by the Colonial Office itself. By public criticism alone can we hope to avoid the repetition of such deplorable mistakes as led to the Hut Tax war in Sierra Leone and the last Ashanti outbreak; the framing of legislation far in advance of the needs of the country and antagonistic to native feeling, which interest and duty alike imperatively demand, should be taken into consideration; the

constant recurrence of punitive expeditions, which in another portion of our Tropical African Empire have worked such incalculable injury; and financial embarrassments, outcome of mismanagement, extravagance, and errors of policy.

There is always danger in reaction, as in the body physical, so in the body politic; and it is not altogether astonishing, perhaps, that the long spell of official apathy in West Africa, being suddenly changed to precipitate action, should have given rise to some objectionable features. But it cannot be admitted that the latter, instead of being a passing phenomenon, should take permanent root, and become part and parcel of the new order of things. If this be the case, we shall presently be witnessing yet another reaction in West Africa, and with embarrassed finances, a yearly expenditure far in excess of any visible increase in producing power, increased taxation, a native population alienated and disorganised, and energetic rivals forging ahead while we continue to struggle painfully in a quagmire of self-imposed difficulties, the public will lapse once more into its old attitude of indifference tinged with dislike, until some brilliant gentleman at the Foreign Office, deeming the moment opportune, hands over a further slice of British West Africa to a Foreign Power, in exchange for cod-fisheries, or something equally vital to the Empire's prosperity. [11] The forward policy in West Africa has had its uses; it has served its purpose. We are secure in the possession of a large territory some 700,000 square miles in extent, unsurpassed in natural wealth by any other region in the globe, containing a population of probably 30,000,000 to 35,000,000 souls, of whose habits and customs we possess but the haziest knowledge, whose very languages we are in the main

ignorant of; a population composed of the most diverse elements, the resources of whose widely scattered habitat are barely tapped, whose willing co-operation, which is essential to the success of our rule, can only be gained by scientific, painstaking study and the most tactful, sympathetic treatment. Now should be a close time for British West Africa. The country needs political rest. It has been turned topsy-turvy by European rivalry; old landmarks have been swept away; the boundaries of Native States altered to suit the exigencies of European diplomacy; immemorial trade roads interfered with. The native requires breathing space. Official activity should in the main be limited to the construction, with due regard to method and economy, of certain indispensable public works, collecting data concerning the native peoples and respective regions in which they dwell, strengthening native authority so rudely disturbed by recent events; in protecting commerce, encouraging capital, fostering native industries—perfecting those in existence and preparing the ground for others; in short, a work of gradual, sure, systematic consolidation. It should be our object to intermeddle as little as possible with native institutions, abide with scrupulous exactitude to both the spirit and the letter of our treaties with the Chiefs; develop the native peoples along the lines of their own civilisation both in the case of Mohammedans and Pagans; use conciliation in preference to dictation, gold rather than the sword. Administrative extravagance should be rigidly held in check for fear of burdening new Colonies with a load of debt; the soldier and the policeman should be kept in the background, only to be used as a last extremity. Commerce, good roads, *and statesmanship* should be our preferable choice of weapons for

mitigating evils, some at least of which the example of Europe in the past has intensified, others lying in deep-rooted religious beliefs, requiring careful preliminary investigation and thorough understanding before being made the object of official action, and then only of a repressive nature after every pacific inducement had been tried in vain. Patience, more patience, and again patience. That should be, ought to be, the corner-stone of British policy in West Africa. It was the tortoise that won the race; not the hare.

Unfortunately the hare is the more popular beast just now, and the forward policy is as much in evidence in British West Africa to-day as it was five years ago, with the result that what may have been justifiable then bids fair, if it be not stopped in time, to be disastrous now that the necessity for it has passed away with the close of international competition. Energy is being misapplied and misdirected. Let it be conceded that the existing basis of rule in West Africa, the Crown Colony system, is the worst in the world to stand the strain of a naturally active directing influence at headquarters; let it be admitted that it is a clumsy, inelastic instrument which allows the governed no voice in the government, which places the suppliers of revenue, both direct and indirect, in the position of having no effective control over the expenditure of that revenue, which permits of the jeopardising of years of commercial effort by some ill-considered legislative act—let these and many other counts against the Crown Colony system be admitted. The fact nevertheless remains that that system is capable of reform, of modification, of being moulded in accordance with the requirements of the case. The task should not be beyond the capacity of statecraft.

Is it to be seriously maintained that British statesmanship has sunk so low that machinery suitable to a bygone age cannot be improved and brought more into line with our altered situation: that we must needs cling to every ancient wheel and rivet though they be clogged with superfluous matter, and eaten through with rust? If the machine which it was sought to preserve intact had done yeoman service in past days, there might be some excuse for hesitating to supply it with new works. But that is emphatically not so with the West African machine.

And it is positively heart-breaking to see that the last few years, far from bringing any reforms, far from holding out the hope of reform in the future, have but accentuated the evil. We cannot, it is true, lose any more territory, unless we care to give away that which is assured to us by international agreement. But in almost every other respect the Crown Colony system, as it prevails in West Africa, and under the new circumstances in which it is performing its functions, is building up a legacy of trouble which can only be contemplated with equanimity, or viewed with indifference, by the thoughtless; by those good people who refuse to walk save in pleasant places, who constitutionally dislike criticism as much as a cat objects to a wetting.

Haste and hurry are the order of the day in British West Africa. Expenditure is going up by leaps and bounds,[12] altogether apart from expenditure on public works. In the case of public works, large and costly undertakings are arranged for on the most unpractical lines, with no effort to benefit by competition, no putting out to tender, no safeguards

without which a business man of ordinary intelligence will surround himself in order that he may be sure of getting the best value for his money. An extraordinary theory in economics has become fashionable. It is that the higher the revenue of a given West African Colony the more prosperous that Colony must be, quite oblivious of the effect which every increase of taxation has upon the volume of trade in the way of reduction, and driving it away to the neighbouring territory of a foreign rival. If a West African Colony shows in a given year an increase of £10,000 in revenue, obtained from increased taxation, jubilation in official quarters is excessive: but either nothing is heard of the falling off in trade accompanying the increase in revenue, or it is explained in some other way. The fact that there is a gain in revenue is held to be proof positive of an abounding prosperity and wise management. Every fresh increase in revenue is followed by a corresponding increase in expenditure. The one is made to keep pace with the other. It does not always succeed, because the expenditure is not infrequently in excess of the revenue *quand même*. It is also becoming the usual thing to financially assist these Colonies by "loans" or "grants-in-aid" or "advances" quite on the West Indian model, while the official reports invariably lead off with the reassuring statement that "this Colony has no public debt": a little farther on, casual reference to the "grant-in-aid" may be discovered by the aid of a microscope, tucked away in some obscure corner, a footnote for choice. Lagos, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, are all at the present moment in the enjoyment of Imperial loans: Sierra Leone for the Railway and the late Hut-Tax war, Lagos for the Railway, the Gold Coast for the Railway and Ashanti war, Nigeria for

the purchase of the Niger Co.'s treaties with the natives (the terms of which we have not adhered to), and for raising an army. Meantime, our neighbours the French are—in their West Coast Colonies proper, where comparison alone is possible—making their own Colonies pay a considerable part in the expenses of Railway construction; taxing their trade less, spending less on administration, governing more cheaply and quite as well—better by a long way in some cases.

The producing power of our Colonies, that is to say, the export trade, the only true test of prosperity in West Africa, is either increasing slowly by comparison with the expenditure, or it is stagnant, or it is retrogressing. When it is increasing, the increase is much below the corresponding ratio of increased expenditure. "Large doses"—veritable purgatives—of European conceived legislation are being thrust down the throats of the bewildered natives. The number of Ordinances passed in the British West African Colonies during the last few years, especially in Southern Nigeria,[13] is simply amazing. Most of them are far in advance of the times and cannot but remain a dead letter because, thank goodness, the existing machinery is not yet sufficiently extensive to carry them out. To make as few Ordinances as possible, and to ensure that such as are made shall be permanently useful, does not appear to enter into the official conception; and in the face of the growing objections to this rapidity and fertility of the official brain in forming premature legislation, not only on the part of the natives who are getting more and more confused, and—as the French put it—*déséquilibrés*, but by all people in affairs on the Coast who would desire that officialdom should move more slowly, carrying at each step real and understanding

consent: the work of drafting portentous decrees, the exact meaning of which the very lawyers at home cannot comprehend, or reconcile with avowed intentions, goes merrily on.

Punitive expedition follows punitive expedition. We have had a war in Sierra Leone, a war in Ashanti, two expeditions in the Gambia, a big expedition up the Cross River in Southern Nigeria, together with minor affrays, while in Northern Nigeria, which so far is producing no revenue and has not attracted a single merchant (and but one exploring expedition for possible mining purposes), one punitive expedition succeeds another at an interval of a few weeks at most. I will not now labour the case of Northern Nigeria, as that most interesting portion of our West African dominions is discussed at some length farther on, but it is quite evident that the attention of Parliament to the expenditure of Northern Nigeria is becoming increasingly urgent. Lagos alone, under the able guidance of Sir William MacGregor, has known the blessings of peace. Long may it continue to do so.

Specific instances and examples of these general statements will be found scattered throughout this volume. It was, however, necessary to place them in collective form. In the next chapter, endeavour will be made to briefly indicate the lines upon which certain reforms might be attempted and the reasons for those reforms. Official optimism notwithstanding, it is an undoubted fact that, if something is not very shortly done to improve the prevailing system, the majority of the British West African Colonies will drift into a morass of financial confusion paralysing to their development and progress, while the native population within them will be comparatively poorer

than in the neighbouring Colonies of commercial rivals.

CHAPTER IV
SOME NECESSARY REFORMS

> "It is well known also that this personal system, at its best, is full of abuses of the worst kind politically; the Administrators and those who influence them, get to have favourites, and even chiefs have their legitimate power, influence and dignity interfered with because they refuse to pay homage to their views. In consequence of all this, an apparently successful Administrator is usually and sharply followed by even worse confusion and more protracted wars than were known before his advent. It is the history of all weak despotic systems, having no basis in the country or among the people sought to be governed or influenced."—"The Crown Colonies of Great Britain" (chapter vi. West Africa), by C. S. Salmon, formerly Colonial Secretary and Administrator of the Gold Coast, &c.
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> "The inhabitants of the country and the mercantile community who provide the whole of the revenues, have no voice at all in the governing of their Colonies and the expenditure of these revenues, and I sincerely hope that the day is not far distant when the African community will rise up and protest against this Crown Colony system of government"—Mr. ARTHUR HUTTON, President of the African Section of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. (Extract from speech delivered.)

It will, I think, be conceded that, notwithstanding the extraordinarily important and revolutionising discoveries of Major Ross, to whom the entire credit of recent demonstrations belongs, the admirable work performed by the Liverpool[14] and London

schools in the study of tropical disease and sanitary improvements on the West Coast, the chances of British West Africa ever becoming a possession where English men and women can flourish and multiply, is excessively remote; so remote, indeed, as to be outside the sphere of useful discussion. In fact, with the one possible exception of the Futa-Jallon uplands, when the Konakry-Kurussa railway line has connected them with the coast, West Africa as a whole is unsuitable, and will, according to all reasonable supposition, always remain unsuitable for European *colonisation*. The dominion of British West Africa must, therefore, be regarded not in the light of a colony properly so called, but as a vast tropical estate.

From that postulate arises a query, or rather, series of queries. What are we in West Africa for? What do we hope to do there? What object took us there? What main purpose keeps us there? The answer is not for a moment in doubt. Commerce took us to West Africa; commerce keeps and will keep us in West Africa. It is the *fons et origo* of our presence in West Africa. The day that it ceases to be so, West Africa ceases to be of use to the Empire. It will become a costly plaything, and the British people is too essentially practical a people to care long for toys of that kind. As in every other part of the world, commerce in West Africa is the outcome of supply and demand. There is a demand for the products of West Africa on the markets of the world, and there is a demand in West Africa for the products of European industrialism. The increased circulation of a portable currency in West Africa in the shape of silver coinage will facilitate the operations of commerce, but will not dislodge or alter the fundamental nature of that commerce. The

development of a mining industry in this or that portion of West Africa will, while it lasts, modify the conditions of trade in the portion affected, but commerce will remain the backbone, as it ever has been, of European intercourse with West Africa.

There is nothing that need occasion regret at the contemplation of the truth. Commerce is the greatest civilising agent. The steps upward in the ethical development of the human race have been synonymous with the spread of commercial relations, and the creation of the means and measures whereby their promotion has been successively extended. The most backward peoples to-day are, generally speaking, those whose secluded habitat renders their commercial transactions with the outside world scanty and precarious. In these days, when the noble meaning which attaches to “philanthropy” and “civilisation” is made the cloak to cover in West Africa so much that is vile, the excuse both sincerely and hypocritically given to explain away so much that is in painful contradiction, one needs, perhaps, to be reminded that such commonplace things as commerce and improved means of communication will do more to benefit the native than any number of attempts to impose laws and institutions unfamiliar to him, by violent even if well-meaning measures of so-called reform.[15] As a nation we should gain much and lose nothing in frankly admitting to ourselves that it is due neither to a desire to mend the ways of priestly theocracies, nor to alter the tyranny of the strong over the weak, which has led to the incorporation within the Empire of some thirty-five millions of West African natives, but the belief that West Africa constitutes a vast outlet for the free and unfettered development of British trade, and an equally vast field for the

cultivation of products of economic necessity to ourselves. Thorough realisation of the fact would lead to more accurate appreciation and a truer sense of the direction which our policy should take in West Africa, if ultimate success and not failure is to attend it.

Commercial development is then in an especial and peculiar degree the *raison d'être* of our presence in West Africa.

Now what are the principal factors in British West African commerce, and how are their claims to consideration in the administration of British West Africa treated under the Crown Colony system? Obviously the two principal factors are the European merchant and his customer, the native. The merchant directly supplies, the native indirectly supplies, the revenue which pays for the salaries of the officials and the general up-keep of the government, and if it be true, as it undoubtedly is, that the burden of taxation ultimately falls upon the native producer, it is equally true that, without the enterprise of the merchant, there would be no revenue and consequently no local funds for the support of administrative machinery. It follows, therefore, as a matter of simple justice, that the merchant should have a voice in the framing of legislation calculated to affect the internal politics, and consequently the commerce of our West African possessions. Apart from its justice, the claim of the merchant to representation in the affairs of our West African Empire has many features in its favour. He enjoys an expert's knowledge, gained by long years of actual contact with the peoples of Western Africa. Experience has given him an insight into their customs and laws; an acquaintance with their

peculiarities, with the working of their minds, with their inbred conservatism, which officials whose residence in West Africa—broken, as it is, by long intervals of leave—is usually of a very temporary or flitting nature, cannot hope to attain at any rate with the same completeness; and a mastery, even if it be only an instinctive mastery, of certain special characteristics which underlie native conceptions, and which have to be reckoned with in dealing with them. The merchant is consequently well fitted to be a most valuable assistant in the administration of British Western Africa.

The fact is recognised by the French and Germans who share with us the vast proportion of influence in West Africa properly so called. Ever practical, the Germans have created an Advisory Board (*Kolonial-rath*) to their Colonial Office, composed for the most part of the leading men in the West African trade. The present Colonial Advisory Board has twelve merchants sitting on its Council.[16] In French West Africa, but on somewhat different lines, the merchant is similarly treated, and just recently the representations of the French merchants to M. Décrais, the then Colonial Minister of France, averted a great evil threatening the Ivory Coast in the contemplated cession to King Leopold's nominee, M. Empain, of a practical monopoly over the whole of the gold-bearing districts of that dependency, although M. Empain[17] had the most influential support at his back.

The French system, though far from perfect, is incomparably superior to anything we have in this country. It differs somewhat in the various Colonies, but is substantially composed of two Organisms, the Metropolitan Organism and the Colonial Organism.

Under these dual Organisms, every Colony which is not directly represented in the French Parliament is represented at the Colonial Office by a delegate elected by vote of the white inhabitants of such Colony. In French Guinea, where the administration in force is in advance of that of any other French (or English for that matter) West African possession, a commercial delegate is regularly elected, and at the present moment a merchant, M. Gaboriau, representing the interests of that Colony, is attached to the Colonial Office. The weak point in the arrangement is, that the officials in the respective Colonies as well as the merchants have the right to vote in the election of a representative, with the result that very often the officials are in a majority. When that happens, a French politician, who can use his influence in promoting the officials who vote for him, is appointed. Each colony possesses a "Superior Council" or "Administrative Council" composed of the Governor, the heads of departments, and two or more merchants. In Senegal the merchant councillors have always enjoyed considerable power, and no step affecting the interests of the Colony is ever taken without the concurrence of the great Bordeaux merchant firms, which between them centralise the ground-nut trade (they themselves built it up), the staple industry of Senegal. Moreover, Senegal is particularly favoured in that it boasts a Deputy in the Chamber and a local General Council which enjoys large financial responsibility, the merchants—provided they do not fall out among themselves—being always in a majority in the said General Council.

With us matters are altogether different. England, which passes for a country where common-sense is the cardinal virtue, refuses to her merchants any

recognised *status* in the administrative machinery of West Africa. It has been accurately asserted that the merchant is the *uitlander* of British West Africa. He is seldom, if ever, consulted in the affairs of the country, and although Mr. Chamberlain has on more than one occasion given verbal assurances that no legislative acts affecting the natives (and *de facto* calculated to influence native production—or, in other words, trade) would be promulgated without previously being submitted to the merchants for their opinion, decrees of the highest importance embodying a kind of revolution in our historical native policy in regard to the laws of native land tenure have just become law in Southern Nigeria, not only without the merchants being consulted, but without their being advised in any other way than by a perusal of the published Ordinances in the local Government Gazette. From time to time—and during the last two years with increasing frequency, consistency, and earnestness—the Liverpool and Manchester Chambers of Commerce, which between them represent the majority of the commercial interests of Great Britain in West Africa,[18] have approached the Foreign and Colonial Offices on their own initiative, sometimes supported by as many as ten or twelve other leading chambers in the Kingdom voicing industrial interests more or less directly affected by specific occurrences. When—I am speaking now of recent times—the Foreign Office has been either memorialised or waited upon by deputations from the Chambers, the question at issue has been one of international import, such for instance as the differential tariff against British goods in the French West African Colonies (1898), and the violation of the Berlin Act in the Congo Basin (1901 and 1902). In the first case, the action of the

Chambers was surprisingly successful; in the second case, success has not yet attended their efforts.

When, as in the majority of instances, the Colonial Office has been waited upon or written to, the object has referred to some legislation either contemplated or assented to, or to some measure of internal policy towards a native tribe or ruler. I cannot find that the Colonial Office has on any single occasion, in a matter of importance, consented to adopt the views of the men who, as subsequent events have manifestly proved, saw clearer than the permanent officials, and whose advice, if taken, would have avoided the perpetration of serious mistakes. In 1895 the Manchester Chamber and the local Chamber at Cape Coast strongly advised "that the King of Ashanti (Prempreh) be allowed to reserve all the rights that he now exercises over his people," but that a British resident should be established at his Court, as the best means of ensuring a lasting peace with the Ashanti people, who, if they had erred, also had—as is historically admitted—grounds of legitimate complaint against the British authorities on various occasions. Prempreh, however, was arrested and deported, and from that moment the Ashantis never ceased to intrigue against the British until their discontent, fanned into flame by the injudicious proceedings of Governor Hodgson, broke forth once more and led to the last sanguinary expedition, which involved an expenditure of a quarter of a million of money.

But the most notable instance at once, of the value of the merchants' expert knowledge and of the fatuity of lightly rejecting their counsel, is provided in the lamentable chapter in the history of Sierra Leone which began with the enforcement of the Hut

Tax Ordinance in 1898, and which is not yet closed, whatever officialdom may say to the contrary. As I propose discussing this subject in some detail later on, it is sufficient to state here that the merchants almost went on their bended knees, figuratively speaking, in seeking to turn the Colonial Office from its purpose; that they entirely failed; that they were met by official assurances which were afterwards shown to be entirely erroneous; that their predictions and warnings were fulfilled to the letter; that their views were subsequently substantiated in every respect by the Special Commissioner despatched later by the Colonial Office to make investigations as to the origin of the rising, and that the persistent refusal of the Colonial Office to abide by the Special Commissioner's report has reduced our oldest West African possession to such a condition that, if the railway now in course of construction through the eastern district does not—and there appears little or no hope that it will—entirely alter the present state of affairs, Sierra Leone under the present *régime*, and with the pressure of French competition in the neighbouring territories, is irretrievably ruined.

Is it not time that in this respect at least something was done to bring the management of British West Africa more into line with modern requirements, and at a period when the commercial position of Great Britain in West Africa is everywhere threatened by foreign competition, to establish some working arrangement—call it a West African Council or Advisory Board or anything you please—whereby the accumulated experience of the men who are supplying the Government with the wherewithal to govern, should be used as an auxiliary force for the promotion of the general interests of Great Britain in West Africa? The nucleus of such a council or

Advisory Board could be at once supplied.

It is said that the merchants cannot agree amongst themselves. The plea lacks in truthfulness, and it is permissible to doubt whether it is sincerely put forward. Unquestionably there are rivalries in the West African trade. What trade is without them? But to argue that competition in trade is a bar to co-operation in matters affecting the general welfare of the country is a very narrow-minded position to take up. It is converting a legitimate, natural, and healthy phenomenon into a disqualification which nothing justifies. Where should we be in West Africa to-day but for our merchant pioneers? Suppose they had endorsed the official resolution of 1865 by withdrawing from the Coast, would the Union Jack be floating in West Africa except in Sierra Leone to-day? If the merchant had been devoid of political conception, and content to let his horizon be confined to those petty but inevitable aspects of commercialism which consist in under-selling a competitor, would not the abandonment of the Gold Coast have followed the battle of Katamansu, and would the richest portion of the Niger Valley be a British Protectorate to-day? Let those who suggest that the British merchant in West Africa is incapable of rising above sordid motives of self-interest remember MacGregor Laird. The merchant has everywhere preceded the administrator in West Africa. In his case the old adage must be reversed. It has been the flag which has followed trade, not trade the flag.[19]

It is also said that the merchants are not unanimous with regard to certain features of West African policy. But can any one single out a body of men among whom variations of opinion on specific

points do not occur? Do all the members of a Cabinet invariably see eye to eye on a particular measure to be introduced? Are not the very modifications which any given Bill must go through before being finally drafted and approved by the Cabinet as a whole a guarantee that legislation evolved from the interchange of ideas among the sundry persons concerned—and who, unless they be devoid of individuality, cannot all think alike on every point—will be the better for the destructive and constructive criticism to which it has been subjected? The merchants are in substantial agreement in what they consider the vital principles of British policy in West Africa, principles which informed public opinion is at last beginning to realise the urgency of upholding. No material divergency of views will be found among merchants as to the absolute necessity of respecting native land tenure, the need of careful finance, the danger of constant military operations, the indispensableness of preserving native institutions. If there be a charge against the merchants, it is that they have not hitherto sufficiently exercised their power of influencing successive Governments. They have not risen as they should have done to the height of their duties and responsibilities. They have allowed outsiders to perform a difficult and generally ungrateful work, which they themselves should have taken in hand—that of calling public attention to the urgency of reforms in West African administration. At critical moments they have been weak-kneed, and fearful of giving offence when they should have been resolute in standing by convictions which they knew to be sound. Their attitude is now happily undergoing a change which, if maintained, is bound to have lasting results for good.

At no previous period in the history of British West Africa has the co-operation of the great merchant community in the task of administration been so pressing a necessity as it is to-day. Never could better use be made of such co-operation by the department responsible for West Africa as at present. In the increasing notice which is being given on all sides to West African affairs consequent upon the remarkable growth of European relations with that country and with the birth in West Africa of a modern mining industry, a host of dangerous advisers is arising. We see old errors creeping back in the guise of new verities, old misconceptions gaining fresh lease of life, exploded theories crowding forward to mislead and confuse. Appeals to force as the solution of all difficulties arising out of contact with a primitive people, contemptuous disregard of native laws and customs—the "damned nigger" theory in all its perennial beauty, insistent requests for lavish expenditure, heedless of plain economic facts, and so forth—these are the order of the day. Upon elementary errors of geography are grafted the crudest notions of the political and social condition of the Negro, the most amazing ignorance of history and past experience in every branch of West African lore. By a plausible inversion of facts, opponents of the wild and whirling talk indulged in regarding West Africa are denounced as sentimentalists, although it so happens that the denouncers draw the material which serves them as a basis for their contentions from that very discredited sentimentalism responsible for so many errors in West Africa, which portrays the native as an abject being, brutish, lazy, and degraded, greatly honoured by the bestowal of a bible, a suit of clothes; and a shilling, with a possible extra threepence thrown in

as subsistence-money, for a hard day's work. No doubt it is possible to exaggerate the importance of these *ad captandum* effusions, but their volume is, perhaps, calculated to momentarily drown the voice of reason. Parrot-like reiteration, if sufficiently sustained, is apt sometimes to impress.

At such a time the assistance of a trained body of men thoroughly conversant with the affairs of Western Africa, in a position to point to past experiences, to vested interests, to technical knowledge as their claim to competency, and to the feeding of the administrative machine as their claim to consideration, ought surely to commend itself to the Authorities. To persist much longer in the rejection of that assistance would be equally short-sighted and unjust.

Another and an equally important question connected with the management of our West African Possessions, is the question of the Crown Agents. If any one attempted to define the duties of that body, he would be hard put to it to do so. They are here, there and everywhere, and their interference puts a premium upon extravagance and waste. The Crown Agents are an anomaly which ought to disappear. At present they constitute a sort of half-way house between the Colonial Office and the West African Governors, and are a positive obstacle to sound finance and good business methods. Enough examples of the extraordinary ways of the Crown Agents could be given to fill a volume. The West African Colonies are hampered right and left by the powers conferred upon this body. The Colonies are not allowed to purchase what they require in the shape of stores, equipment, material and so forth on the open market. Everything has to go through the

Crown Agents, with the natural result that the Colonies have to pay 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. more than they would have to if allowed to invite tenders on their own account. Look at the way in which these railways have been and are being built.

The construction is, apparently, the monopoly of one particular firm (under the direction of the Crown Agents); a firm which, as far as can be gathered, had had but little experience in railway construction before, metaphorically speaking, falling upon its feet in West Africa.

The same firm holds the position of "consulting engineers" to the Colonial Office. Surely it is anomalous, from the purely business point of view, that a firm retained as "consulting engineers" to a Government Department in charge of West Africa should also be the actual constructors of the West African railways! The two parts strike one as incompatible. Consulting engineers, one would imagine, would be advisers and arbiters. All contracts should be publicly and openly tendered for. A very widespread impression prevails that the time and cost expended in the construction of these railways have been very great. The Gold Coast Railway was begun in February 1898; it is officially estimated to reach Kumasi early in 1904. Assuming that it does, it will have taken six years to build, which works out at about twenty-eight miles per annum—the distance from Sekondi to Kumasi being 169¼ miles.

It is as yet too early to say definitely what the cost of the line will average per mile. Official estimates, we know, are not always reliable. In this case, even the official estimate is very high, viz. £8000 per mile for the Sekondi-Tarkwa section, and £6300 per mile

for the Tarkwa-Kumasi section.

That dissatisfaction with the policy pursued up to the present (that is to say, the policy of constructing these railways under the "Department System," or, otherwise stated, leaving their construction to the Crown Agents), is not confined to merchants, mine-managers and other revenue-payers of the West African Colonies, but is held by competent and highly placed officials, I reproduce the following remarks of Sir William MacGregor, made on the occasion of a visit to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1900, and in reply to the following question of Mr. Arthur Hutton's[20]:

> "Do you think, from what you have seen, it (*i.e.* railway construction) would be better done by contract?"
>
> SIR WILLIAM MACGREGOR: "I believe at the present moment—and I have said so to the Secretary of State—*I believe there would be men living who are now rotting in their graves, if it had been taken out of the control of the Crown Agents*...."[21]

It is competently estimated that the Lagos railway, begun in 1896, will have cost £10,000[22] per mile by the time its 125 miles are in full working order—an enormous rate. The Crown Agents, through whom the moneys have been advanced to the Colony, exact 5 per cent. interest, whereas with the security they have to offer, they should easily be able to get them—and probably have got them—from the Treasury at 3 per cent. Why should the Colony be saddled with an extra 2[23] per cent. interest and find its liability for the current year on the railway loan increased to

the enormous total of £54,000, or, say, 22 per cent. of the entire revenue?[24] Why should all indents be sent through the Crown Agents? The delays which this ridiculous system entail are only second in point of importance to the squandering of the public funds which goes on under it. The Crown Agents appear to think that they know more about the material needs of the Colonies than the officials in charge of the Colonies themselves. Two instances have been recently brought to my notice which would be laughable were they not so deplorably unbusiness-like. A certain West African Colony required a two-ton engine for a short, light railway. The request was duly put forward. After months of delay an eight-ton engine was sent out, too heavy, of course, for the rails to support it. It was entirely useless. Again, a scheme was drawn up for the construction of a bridge by the local official responsible. An estimate was made, and the plans and so forth were forwarded home. The bridge was urgently required. Months elapsed; then the Crown Agents, who knew nothing of the local conditions, instead of despatching the materials, sent out an entirely different counter-scheme, far more elaborate, far more costly, and totally unsuited to local requirements. The Colony is still waiting for its bridge.[25] I can only repeat that, whether avowed or not—in many cases, of course, it manifestly cannot be avowed—the Crown Agents are looked upon in official and commercial circles in West Africa as an unmitigated nuisance and a stumbling-block to progress.

The needs of British West Africa at the present time may be resumed thus: (1) A Council or Advisory Board in which the merchant element shall be widely represented; (2) Tight control over the military

element—fewer punitive expeditions, and more tact and patience in dealing with native races, the officials whose administration is virgin of wars to be looked upon as deserving of prior promotion; (3) Economy in Administration; (4) Thorough financial overhaul; (5) Elimination of the Crown Agents; (6) Open tenders for all public works; (7) Sanitation; (8) Scientific study of native peoples, laws and languages; (9) Scientific study of native products and improvement of native industries; (10) Maintenance and not murder of native institutions, upholding and strengthening of the power of the Chiefs; non-interference with domestic slavery in the Protectorates; preservation of native land-tenure; (11) A Civil Service on the lines of the Indian Civil Service; (12) A Civilian Governor-General.

PART II

CHAPTER V
THE DISCOVERY OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

The nineteenth century will ever be memorable for the exploration of the interior of the African Continent. It is difficult to realise when we read in the daily newspapers of steamers plying upon Tanganyika, ocean steamers of 4000 tons burthen ploughing their way through the brown waters of the Lower Congo, gun-boats patrolling the Niger, railways piercing alike the deserts of the Eastern Sudan and the forests of Equatoria, telegraphs extending in a network of lines across the Western Sudan and athwart the Great Central Lakes—it seems difficult, I say, when we read of these things to remember that at the close of the eighteenth century the interior of Africa was to all intents and purposes a blank, and that, even within the memory of most of us, the extent of geographical knowledge we possessed respecting vast regions many times larger than European Russia had made no progress since the days of Herodotus and Pliny. What a colossal work it has been, this solving of riddles which had baffled the world for ages upon ages! What prodigies of labour, of courage, of self-abnegation have been required to triumph over the obstacles which nature and man united in opposing to the early pioneers of African research! How many splendid lives have been immolated upon the altar of the African Moloch!

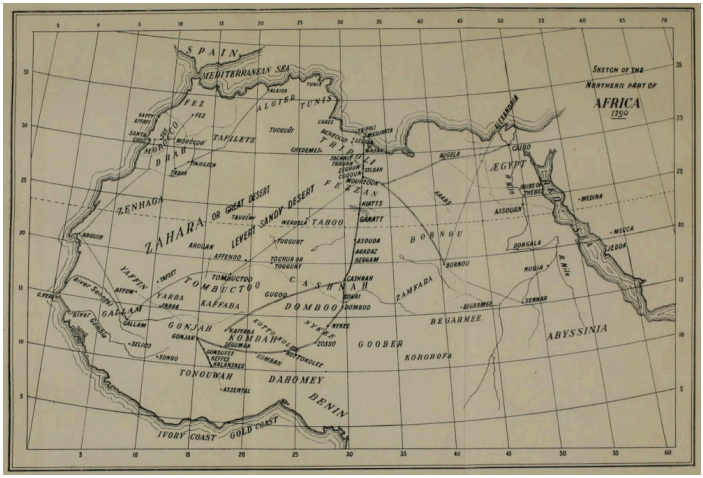
Notwithstanding the remarkable progress in medical science and hygiene, and the potentialities of the modern rifle as a weapon of defence against the attack of man and beast, the difficulties of the African traveller at the present day are sufficiently great. Deadly maladies beset him on every side, and the chance of coming to a sudden and violent end is ever present. But these difficulties are as dust in the balance compared with the sufferings and privations which the first explorers of unknown Africa had to endure. Think of Park, and picture to yourself the position of a lonely European wandering about inland Western Africa in a thick blue fustian coat, with gilt buttons, keeping his precious notes in the crown of a top-hat, and kicked, buffeted, spat upon, treated with contumely and scorn, subjected to every possible insult, over and again a slave, exposed for hours at a time in a burning sun without water, often on the verge of starvation, racked by disease, and in so miserable a plight upon many occasions that death would have been a welcome relief—yet triumphing over everything and finally returning, notes and all, to his own land. Park's experiences naturally occur to one in relation to the subject which it is proposed to treat in this chapter, because Park was the real discoverer of the Niger, which had been known in a vague manner to the ancients, and also to the Arabs (who, however, wrongly ascribed to it a westerly course, and identified it with the Nile), [26] and laid the foundation of that remarkable series of explorations which ultimately ended in Lander's supreme success.

In 1805 Park set out once more on his second and fatal journey, with the firm conviction that he would be able to prove to the world the accuracy of his own theory, viz. that the Niger and the Congo were one

and the same. The peripatetics of that eventful voyage are known to every student of Africa. After incredible hardships, Park managed to descend the Niger as far as Bussa. There, in sight almost of the goal of his ambitions he perished, victim of a cruel fate, which drove his boat upon those treacherous rocks, since celebrated for having brought two Christian nations to the brink of war. There are aspects of Park's character which leave something to be desired, but his defects are lost sight of in the magnificence of his courage, his indomitable will, and the never-failing optimism with which he pursued his task, undeterred by disappointment and unshaken by adversity. As an example of human perseverance and fortitude carried to its highest limits, Park probably holds an unique position among African explorers.

Park's tragic end increased the desire of Englishmen to solve the mystery of the Niger's course, and in 1816 the British Government organised a dual expedition on a large scale for this purpose. One section, under Captain Tuckey, ascended the Congo, and the other, under Major Peddie, endeavoured to reach the Niger by a more southerly route than that adopted by Park, the idea being that both sections would ultimately meet somewhere in Central Africa. How fantastic was the scheme does not need to be pointed out, but it must be remembered that in those days the consensus of learned opinion favoured Park's theory of identification concerning the Niger and the Congo. The expedition was an utter failure. The Niger section excited the resentment of the natives, and had to return after losing its chief. Captain Tuckey ascended the Congo as far as the first cataracts, which had baffled the Portuguese for 200 years, and

then leaving the River, pushed North, along what used to be the old caravan route, to the Upper River, now covered by the Matadi-Stanleyville railway, constructed by Colonel Thys. He managed to strike the Upper River in the neighbourhood of the modern Leopoldville, but the trying landmarch had played havoc with his followers. Sickness broke out, and finally the expedition had to return with a loss of 75 per cent. of its European members. Several lesser attempts followed. They all ended disastrously, and it seemed as though the Dark Continent refused to yield up its secrets. But Englishmen were not to be beaten. The Western route was indeed given up as impracticable for a time, but what could not be accomplished from the West might be achieved from the North. True, the Desert had to be faced and traversed. But where the Phœnician and the Roman had dared and done, the Englishman might surely follow. The Desert had not balked the Sectaries of Mohammed, and long caravans, conducted by Tripolitan merchants, yearly made their way across those dreary solitudes. Why should not a party of Englishmen attach themselves to one of these caravans, and, protected by the influence of the British Government, armed with the authority of the Pasha of Tripoli, succeed in reaching the fertile countries of the South, whence rich supplies of ostrich feathers, skins, ivory, gold dust, and slaves found their way to the ports of the Northern littoral?



SKETCH OF THE NORTHERN PART OF AFRICA

For many years the African Association had been collecting materials with a view to a possible penetration by the Northern route. Once the idea found favour with the authorities, Mr. Lucas was despatched by the Association to Tripoli. He did very little in the way of exploration, but brought back many interesting facts confirming Leo Africanus' description in respect to the existence of flourishing kingdoms far away to the South, where arts and crafts had attained a high degree of development. Ritchie and Lyon followed Lucas. Lyon managed to reach the southernmost limits of Fezzan, on the borders of the Desert.[27] The Desert itself remained uncrossed, however, and the mystery of the Niger still unsolved. Then it was that the British Government determined to make a great effort to solve the problem, and fitted out an expedition, which did not, it is true, fulfil all that was expected of it, but which succeeded, nevertheless, in throwing a vivid light upon unknown Central Africa, and in disclosing to an astonished world the remarkable

civilisation which, under Arab, Berber, and Fulani influence, had arisen in the heart of that black "Sudan" the "land of infidels," and in popular conception,

> "Of the cannibals that each other eat,
> The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders."

And so the subjects of this sketch enter upon the scene—three men, Clapperton, Denham and Oudney, none of them perhaps conspicuous for ability, or qualified to make the most of their discoveries, yet animated all three with the ardent love of adventure for which their race has ever been famous, and whose united exertions enabled Western Europe to estimate the political and social conditions prevailing in the richest, most populated, most fertile, and undoubtedly most interesting portion of the Dark Continent. It is peculiarly fitting that the region which these Englishmen were the first Europeans to visit, and which we now designate by the name of Northern Nigeria, should have been ultimately incorporated with the British West African Empire by the foresight of another Englishman, Sir George Taubman Goldie, and the diplomatic ability of the gallant Joseph Thomson. A word now as to the three companions. Of Denham and Oudney, we know little beyond what can be gathered from their own writings; Oudney was a medical man, and Denham held the rank of Major in the army. Oudney was the real leader of the expedition, with which he had been entrusted by Earl Bathurst, then Secretary of State for the Colonies; but his untimely death had the result of depreciating the part which he personally played during its first two years' work. Clapperton has written of him that he was "A man of

unassuming deportment, pleasing manners, steadfast perseverance and undaunted enterprise; while his mind was fraught at once with knowledge, virtue and religion." Major Denham's action in joining a raiding party into Mandara (Eastern Bornu) has somewhat tarnished his reputation, in my humble opinion very unjustly, although it is quite true that his action in this respect was the cause of serious embarrassment to Clapperton later on. In criticising Denham's conduct on this occasion, we must bear in mind in the first place that the Empire of Bornu, at that period, owing to various dynastic revolutions, and to the pressure of its powerful enemies on the East—Baghirmi and Wadai—was in a state of more or less constant warfare both within and without, and that warlike expeditions were constantly taking place, faction fighting against faction and tribe against tribe, warfare being in fact a more or less permanent institution in the social life of the country. And in the second place, we must also recollect that the members of the expedition had been instructed to examine and report upon all the various phases of life in the countries which they might traverse. Now it was impossible for Denham to obtain a thorough knowledge of the habits of the people without personally investigating the manner in which they waged war upon their neighbours. Apart, therefore, from the natural predilections of his soldierly instincts, which would lead him to find particular interest in matters of this kind, it may be assumed that Denham considered it his duty to act as he did. Years afterwards, Barth found himself in much the same predicament. As it happened, the adventure nearly cost Denham his life. The raided proved too strong for the raiders, and, assisted by the Fulani cavalry, completely defeated the latter.

Denham's escape was a marvellous one. He lost everything, and was wounded in three places.

An account of Clapperton's life is contributed by Lieut.-Colonel Clapperton in the preface to Clapperton and Lander's journal of the second expedition to Sokoto, published by Murray in 1829. Hugh Clapperton was born in Dumfriesshire in 1788. At the age of thirteen he went to sea as an apprentice, and subsequently entered the Royal Navy. He served in the *Renommée* and *Venerable*, and visited the East Indies. He then went to the Canadian Lakes, and participated in the American War of Independence. In 1816 he got his commission. A year later the British vessels on the Canadian Lakes were paid off and laid up, and Clapperton returned to England on half-pay. In 1820 he met Dr. Oudney in Edinburgh, and struck up a friendship which resulted in his accompanying the latter to Africa. Of intellectual attainments he had none, but he was large-hearted, generous, and tolerant; courageous in the extreme, gifted with an iron constitution, and of great physical strength. So much for the personal characteristics of the trio. We may now examine the nature of their work. The narrative of the expedition in which all three took part is chiefly contributed by Denham. While Denham was compiling their joint notes, Clapperton started for Africa again, and reached Sokoto from Badagry on the West Coast. The story of Clapperton's second journey was written by himself, and afterwards published by his faithful servant Richard Lander, who was destined ultimately to follow the Niger down to the sea, thus finally solving the great problem in the attempted elucidation of which Park, Tucker, Clapperton and many others perished.

The primary, and in many respects the main, obstacle which had to be overcome by Oudney and his companions, was the crossing of that portion of the Sahara which lies between Murzuk and Bornu, and which, to use Denham's words, "Is made up of dark frowning hills of naked rock, in interminable plains, strewed in some places with fragments of stone and pebbles, in others of one vast level surface of sand, and in others, again, the same material rising into immense mounds, altering their form and position according to the strength and direction of the winds." Caravan routes across the desert had existed for many centuries, and the commerce of the Central Sudan, with the parts of North Africa, was still an important one. The route which the travellers hoped to take, in company with a party of merchants, was the shortest and safest one, that which starting from Tripoli passes through Murzuk and Bilma to Kuka, then the capital of Bornu, situated on the shores of Lake Chad. The expedition arrived at Tripoli in November 1821, but did not reach Murzuk, capital of Fezzan, until the 8th April 1822. Here the Englishmen met with such a discouraging reception from the Sultan that on the 12th May, finding no chance of making any progress whatever, Major Denham started back to Tripoli to interview the Pasha, by whom the British Government had been promised every possible assistance. The Pasha proving as lethargic as his prototype at Murzuk, Denham left Tripoli in a white heat of indignation to report his conduct to the British Government. This did not suit the Pasha at all, and he sent three despatches after the irate Englishman begging him to return, as he had arranged for an escort to accompany the expedition to Bornu. The despatches reached Denham while the

boat he had taken passage in was quarantined outside Marseilles, and he forthwith set sail once more for the Barbary shore. On the 29th November 1822, or a year after landing at Tripoli, the expedition left Murzuk, and set out upon its way to Bornu under the guidance of Bu-Kalum, a merchant of repute, much enamoured of pomp and show, and not over energetic in his movements. Within a few weeks' march from Murzuk the members of the expedition were able to appreciate all the horrors of the trans-Desert slave trade in the sight of "more than 100 skeletons, scattered over the line of route, some of them with the skin attached to the bones."

On the 13th January they reached Bilma, famous for its salt pans, and on February 4th the discomforts they had endured in the desert received ample compensation by a view of "the great Lake Chad, glowing with the golden rays of the sun in its strength." The natural emotion of the travellers is thus expressed by Denham, whose descriptions in the general way certainly do not incline to the picturesque:

> "It conveyed to my mind," he writes, "a sensation so gratifying and inspiring that it would be difficult for language to convey an idea of its force and pleasure.... My heart bounded within me at the prospect, for I believe this lake to be the key to the great object of our search, and I could not refrain from silently imploring heaven's continued protection, which had enabled us to proceed so far in health and strength, even to the accomplishment of our task."

CHAPTER VI
THE DISCOVERY OF NORTHERN NIGERIA—(*cont.*)

On the borders of the Lake the travellers observed the cotton shrub growing well and innumerable flocks of waterfowl disporting themselves. So tame were the latter that when approached they "merely changed their position a little to the right or left." Following the Western shore of the Chad, the travellers pushed on to Kuka. Within a few days' march of that once-flourishing city they began to realise how erroneous were the popular ideas of the "Sudan." Instead of "ragged negroes armed with spears," who, with the assistance of a few Arabs, managed to terrorise the country, the travellers were astonished to see a dense cloud of cavalry riding towards them, the guard of honour sent by the Sheik of Bornu to bid them welcome. With loud cries of "Blessing, blessing! Welcome! welcome!" the black warriors, clad "in coats of mail, composed of iron chain," bore down upon them in orderly array, waving swords and spears. Surrounded by this imposing mass of horsemen they entered Kuka, and were received in audience by the Sheik. After a short residence in Kuka the companions separated, Denham going off with Bu-Kalum on the raid which turned out so disastrously for all concerned in it.

The energetic Major subsequently visited a large portion of the Eastern parts of Bornu, located and ascended the Shari as far as Logon, then the capital of an important kingdom, and explored a considerable portion of the Eastern shores of the Lake. The information he collected in the course of his peregrinations and the maps of the district which

he compiled were of very great value. The Southern and Eastern shores of the Lake were entirely unknown, the Lake itself practically unlocated, and the existence of the Shari unsuspected. It has always appeared to me that Denham never received the credit which was due to him for his exploring work. In view of his unscientific training, he was unable to turn his discoveries to the best advantage, but all things considered, his investigations proved in the main surprisingly accurate. His ignorance of African history, too, was very much against him. He was distinctly an unlettered man, neither possessed of a ready pen nor imbued with much imagination. The natural result of these shortcomings is apparent in every page of his Journal. We find him recording the most trivial incidents, and almost neglecting the social, political and ethnological problems with which he came daily in contact. The same lack of study and intelligent research—of education, really—is visible, but perhaps to a lesser extent, in Clapperton's writings.

It was in a sense a new world which the explorers had entered, a world of absorbing interest, where Eastern magnificence and barbaric display mingled with the naked barbarism of Africa; where semi-Arabised potentates went a-warring with mail-clad knights, and powerful Barons brought their contingent of retainers to assist their liege lord in his campaigns of plunder and conquest. The travellers had left nineteenth-century England, had plunged into the Desert, and had emerged therefrom amid a feudalism which recalled in many ways that of their own land in the Middle Ages. What an opportunity was theirs in this region, which for centuries, by reason of its fertility, had proved a magnet to attract the migration of races from the North, West, and

East! Some twenty years later a man with a truly scientific mind went over the same ground, and then, and only then, did people realise all that Denham and Clapperton had left untold. But, although it was reserved for the genial and cultured German who succeeded Denham to show how profound is the gulf between a character such as Barth's, studious and observant, replete with historical lore and scientific attainment, and men like Denham and Clapperton, notable only for their courage, dogged perseverance, and love of adventure, yet the prestige of the former, which increases rather than diminishes as our knowledge of these regions in question becomes more extensive, can never rob the Englishmen of the right of priority of discovery. They were the first white men to reach the Chad, to discover the Shari, to explore Bornu, Sokoto, and part of Kanem, and to describe, however indifferently, the wonderful social fabric, the picturesque civilisation, teeming with energy and industrialism, which existed, and exists, in the upper portion of the Niger Basin.

While Denham bent his steps eastwards, Clapperton and Oudney left Kuka in a westerly direction with the intention of entering the Empire of Sokoto, founded by Othman Fodio (the Fulani reformer during the first years of the nineteenth century) out of the heterogeneous and mutually antagonistic Hausa States. Of this Empire and the remarkable race which created it, the travellers had heard a great deal while in Bornu. The two States were for the time being at peace, and the Sheik Mohammed-el-Kanemy, the virtual, and subsequently the absolute ruler of Bornu, made no opposition to the Englishmen's visit. Shortly after leaving Katagum, at the small village of Murmur, Dr. Oudney, who had been ailing for many months, died,

much to Clapperton's distress. The sad event did not, however, deter his companion from pushing onwards, noting as he went the extraordinary beauty and fertility of the country, the numerous plantations of cotton, tobacco and indigo, the rows upon rows of date-palms, the splendid cattle, the luxurious foliage, and the industry of the inhabitants, tending their flocks and herds, toiling in the fields, carrying fruit and butter to the markets, weaving and dyeing their handsome cotton cloths. On January 19, 1824, Clapperton reached Kano, the great Emporium of the Central Sudan, his first feeling being one of disappointment, which was not diminished by the circumstance that, although he had donned his naval uniform, no one took the slightest heed of him, "but all intent on their own business, allowed me to pass by without remark." This little incident, trivial in itself, throws an interesting sidelight upon the character of the gallant sailor, who was imbued with a proper sense of the dignity befitting his position and never failed to uphold it, as witness the following conversation which took place between him and the Governor of Kano. There is, by the way, a passage in this short dialogue which may be commended to the attention of certain missionary enthusiasts at the present time:

> "'How do you do, Abdullah (Clapperton's native name)? Will you come and see me at Hadyja on your return?' I answered, 'God willing,' with due Moslem solemnity. 'You are a Christian, Abdullah?' 'Yes.' 'And what have you come to see?' 'The country.' 'What do you think of it?' 'It is a fine country, but very sickly.' At this he smiled, and again asked, 'Would you Christians allow us to come and see your

> country?' I said, 'Certainly.' 'Would you force us to become Christians?' 'By no means; we never meddle with a man's religion.' 'What,' said he, 'and do you ever pray?' 'Sometimes; our religion commands us to pray always; but we pray in secret, and not in public, except on Sundays.' One of his people abruptly asked what a Christian was? 'Why a Kaffir,'[28] rejoined the Governor. 'Where is your Jew servant?' again asked the Governor; 'you ought to let me see him.' 'Excuse me, he is averse to it, and I never allow my servants to be molested for their religious opinions.' 'Well, Abdullah, thou art a man of understanding, and you must come and see me at Hadyja.'"

Clapperton came very satisfactorily out of that interview, but he did not fare quite so well in a later colloquy with Sultan Bello, the ruler of the Sokoto Empire, who asked him one day whether he was a Nestorian or a Socinian. The puzzled Englishman, who probably had never heard of either sect, excused himself by replying that he was a Protestant. The fact of having such a question put to him thousands of miles in the interior of the Dark Continent, supposed to be the abode of primitive savagery, was sufficient evidence of the intelligence of the inhabitants, of which he received abundant proof every fresh day he prolonged his stay in the country. Under the able guidance of Bello, Othman's successor and "a noble-looking man," as Clapperton calls him (with the aristocratic and finely cut features peculiar to the Fulani), the statesmanlike qualities of the ruling race and the wonderful commercial and industrial activity of the Hausa population, reached their full development, and law and order reigned throughout

that portion of the new States which had accepted the Fulani dominion. The country had been divided into Provinces, to each of which Governors were appointed. Trade was encouraged, industries protected, and manufactures promoted. Prosperity was everywhere apparent, and, to quote the words used by Clapperton in the course of one of his interviews with Bello:

> "The people of England could all read and write, and were acquainted with most other regions of the earth; but of this country alone they hitherto knew scarcely anything, and erroneously regarded the inhabitants as naked savages, devoid of religion, and not far removed from the condition of wild beasts; whereas, I found them, from my personal observation, to be civilised, humane, and pious."

Clapperton very much desired to continue his westward journey, and, if possible, strike the Niger, follow it to its mouth, and thus attain the supreme object of the mission; for the information which the traveller had obtained in Sokoto made it a practical certainty that the Niger discharged itself somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. But Bello objected, alleging the disturbed condition of the westward country, which had not yet been subjected. Much to his disappointment, therefore, the Englishman was compelled to forego his plans. He, however, parted on the best of terms with his enlightened host, who gave him a letter to the King of England, and begged him to return at the earliest possible opportunity. The letter is worth reproducing here:

"Bello to King George IV.

"In the name of God, the merciful and the clement. May God bless our favourite prophet Mahommed and those who follow his sound doctrine. To the head of the Christian nation, the honoured and the beloved among the English people, George the Fourth, King of Great Britain. Praise be to God who inspires, and peace be unto those who follow the right path. Your Majesty's servant, Rayes Abdullah, came to us, and we found him a very intelligent and wise man; representing in every respect your greatness, wisdom, dignity, clemency, and penetration. When the time of his departure came he requested us to form a friendly relation and correspond with you, and to prohibit the exportation of slaves by our merchants to Ataghar, Dahomi, and Ashanti. We agree with him upon this, on account of the good which will result from it both to you and to us; and that a vessel of yours is to come to the harbour of Racka, with two guns and the quantities of powder, shot, &c., which they require; as also a number of muskets. We will then send our officer to arrange to settle everything with your consul, and fix a certain period for the arrival of your merchant ships, and when they come they may traffic and deal with our merchants. Then, after their return, the consul may reside in that harbour, viz., Racka, as protector, in company with our agent there. May God be pleased. Dated, 1st of Rhamadan, 1239 of Hejra. April 18, 1824."

Furnished with this letter, which he might well regard as a signal proof of success, and which

augured a promising development of relations in the future, Clapperton travelled back to Kuka, where Denham joined him in due course, after his return from the Chad. The homeward journey was accomplished without mishap, and on January 25, 1825, the survivors of the mission reached Tripoli, after four adventurous years, replete with interest to their country and to the world.

As already stated, Clapperton, when he parted company with Sultan Bello, did so with the full intention of returning at the earliest opportunity. Bello had shown himself most eager to establish durable relations with Great Britain, and had suggested that a British vessel should go to "Racka," there to deliver the warlike stores which were to cement the understanding between his Christian Majesty King George IV. and the Fulani Ruler. Clapperton found the British Government eager to profit by the opportunity of concluding an alliance with so influential a potentate, and lost no time in giving Clapperton (who was raised to the rank of commander) authority to organise another expedition. Clapperton himself was all enthusiasm. On the 27th August 1825 he left England in H.M.S. *Brazen*, in company with his trusted servant, Richard Lander, and attended by three companions, Mr. Dickson, Captain Pearce, and Dr. Morrison. Dickson, for some unexplained reason, landed at Whydah with the intention of reaching Sokoto alone, and was never heard of again. Disappointed at not meeting any of Bello's messengers at Lagos, which it appears had been arranged, Clapperton started his inland march from Badagry, after trying the Benin route and being dissuaded from adopting it by an English merchant established in that river. Shortly afterwards both Captain Pearce and Dr. Morrison contracted

fever and died. Clapperton and Lander pushed safely onwards through Yoruba and Borgu, and arrived without further calamity at Bussa. The river was crossed below the rapids, and the expedition duly reached Kano by way of Zeg-Zeg. At Bussa, Clapperton gathered valuable information with regard to Park's untimely end, fully confirming the previous information which had reached England.

Everything seemed to promise well for the ultimate success of the mission. Unfortunately, however, there were a number of causes at work destined to wreck the sanguine hopes of its leader. As Clapperton neared his destination, a doubt of the reception awaiting him at Sokoto appears to have weighed heavily upon his mind. In the first place, Bello's messengers had not put in appearance at Lagos; then the seaport of "Racka," mentioned in Bello's map, did not exist as such, which latter circumstance caused Clapperton to entertain serious misgivings as to his former host's good faith. The absence of the messengers can easily be explained in view of the disturbed state of the country between Yoruba and the Niger, for the Fulani were then extending their conquests southwards, and the entire region was in a state of effervescence; but the misunderstanding about "Racka" is certainly strange. It is difficult to believe that Bello purposely intended to mislead. Bello had spoken of the "harbour" of Racka, but as is pointed out in the introduction to Clapperton's journal, the Arabic word Bahr, used in the manuscript, does not necessarily signify sea, but any collection of water, whether lake or river.[29] On Bello's map the Niger is designated as the "sea." It is probable, therefore, that Bello was perfectly honest in describing "Racka" as a "harbour," and that the *bahr* of the manuscript should more correctly have

been translated by “river” instead of “sea.” Racka, however, turned out to be an inland town, and the fact strengthened Clapperton’s suspicions. How the confusion arose it is impossible, on the documentary evidence available, to determine, but it seems obvious that Racka must have been meant for Rabba, an important town on the banks of the Niger, some distance below Bussa, and at one time the capital of the kingdom of Nupe.

To this error of interpretation and geography was really due Clapperton’s subsequent misfortunes, because, had the suspicion that Bello was playing him false been absent from his mind, the intrepid Englishman would hardly have adopted the unwise attitude which he subsequently did in his negotiations with the Fulani monarch. That attitude proved his undoing, and the direct cause of his death. His mental condition did not enable him to grasp the fact that the entire state of affairs had changed since his first visit. Sokoto was then at peace with Bornu. But in the interval war had broken out again. Now, in addition to the presents that Clapperton had brought to Bello, his baggage also contained a number of presents, including war-stores, for the Sheik-el-Kanemy, ruler of Bornu, who had become Bello’s deadly enemy. It was manifestly impossible for Bello to allow these presents to pass through the country at such a time, and he wrote to Clapperton to that effect. To this Clapperton rejoined that he had been instructed by his Government to go to Bornu, that he had a letter from Earl Bathurst to the Sheik-el-Kanemy, and that he was in duty bound to carry out his mandate. This insistence aroused Bello’s mistrust, which seems to have been intensified by reports, doubtless spread through the instrumentality of Arab merchants dreading

commercial competition, that Clapperton was a spy sent on behalf of the English Government to obtain information with the idea of facilitating a future invasion of the country by the British. Clapperton repeatedly, and with growing exasperation, pressed his wishes upon the Sultan, and Bello, with increasing distrust, as repeatedly declined to entertain them. The strain and the mortification were too great, even for Clapperton's splendid constitution, and when Bello, yielding to his own suspicions, and to the advice of his counsellors, demanded the production of the presents intended for the Sheik, Clapperton fell seriously ill. After hovering between life and death for many days, he finally expired in the arms of his devoted servant, Lander.

Thus terminated a career of unbounding usefulness. To England and to science Clapperton rendered great services, and had his intellectual capacity equalled his courage and determination, those services would have been even greater than they were. Of him we may truly say that he was a fine type of the English gentleman of the old school, without much erudition, but simple, God-fearing, honest, manly, a credit to his country and to his race.

CHAPTER VII
THE HAUSAS AND THEIR EMPORIUM.

"The province of Kano is the garden of Central Africa."—Dr. BARTH.

It has been said of the Hausas that they are "superior both intellectually and physically to all the natives of Equatorial Africa." The statement strikes one as being exaggerated. The intellectual average of the Hausa is undoubtedly lower than that of the Fulani, who, thanks to their genius for combination, administrative capacity, religious fervour, fighting superiority, and moral influence, completely defeated and subdued their former masters, although the numerical odds were greatly in favour of the latter. Again, the physique of the Hausas, though usually good, is certainly inferior to that of several of the Senegalese races, the Krus, the Kaffir stock, and probably also to one or two of the Bantu offshoots now inhabiting the basin of the Upper Congo. Much has been made of the fact that 500 Hausas trained by British officers beat off several thousand Fulani at Bida. But what chance have Fulani horsemen against Maxim guns and repeating-rifles? The Baggara Arab, universally reputed the bravest of the brave, fared no better against Macdonald's trained Sudanese.

These remarks are by no means put forward to depreciate the Hausa race, which is undoubtedly a very fine one, but by way of protest against the somewhat hysterical estimates concerning this people which find favour among those who profess to look upon them as excellent material for proselytising purposes, and are ever representing

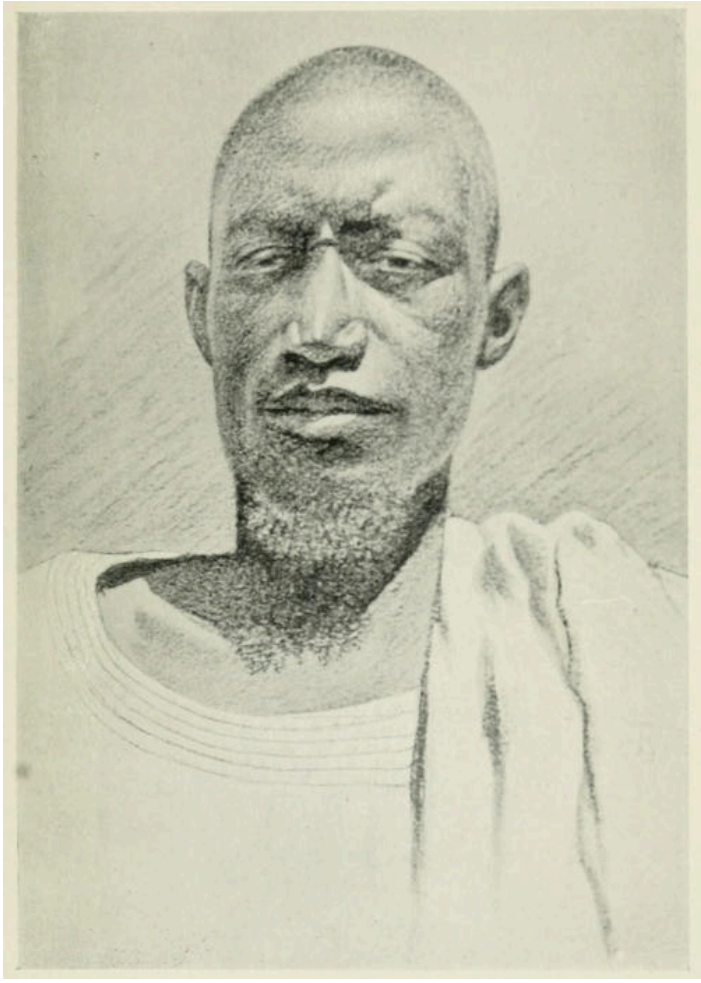
them to us as cruelly oppressed, groaning under the tyrannical sway of the wicked Fulani. The fact is, that a great deal of sentimental nonsense has been said and written, principally by the missionary element, about the Hausas, who are generally content with their lot, and having accepted Islam do not suffer from the predatory incursions of the conquering race. Fulani and Hausas grow up side by side: unions are frequent among them, and the well-to-do Hausa enjoys a somewhat similar position in relation to the ruling class as represented by the Fulani, as did the merchant classes in the old days in our own country in relation to the nobility and governing classes.

It seems fairly well established that at least a portion of the Hausa[30] race inhabited the beautiful and mountainous region of Air or Asben, at the time (about 700 A.D.) when the Berbers—the modern Tuareg—driven south by Arab invaders, crossed the desert into Air and made themselves masters of that region.[31] These Asben Hausas belonged to the family or clan of Gober. They were the Goberawa, who claim to be the oldest and noblest branch of the Hausa race. This claim is very generally admitted by Arabic historians, and is expressly mentioned in the curious Fulani history of the Sudan communicated to Clapperton by Sultan Bello, son of Othman Fodio, in 1828.[32] Bello says of the people of Gober that they are “free born, because their origin was from the Copts of Egypt who had emigrated into the interior of the Gharb or Western countries.” This statement is particularly interesting as regards the possible Semitic or Eastern origin of the Gober family of the Hausas. Dr. Barth, whose authority in all matters relating to the ethnology of Western Central Africa still remains uncontested, although fifty years have

now elapsed since his wonderful series of travels was accomplished, attributed to the Goberawa an original relationship with North Africa. The theory is borne out by the traditions of the Hausas themselves, who trace back their descent to a Diggera mother, the Diggera or Deggara being a Berber tribe which, at some remote period, was predominant in the city of Daura, one of the oldest centres of Hausa influence. To this day some of the Hausa Mallams speak vaguely of a former relationship with the East, and Canon Robinson during his stay in Kano was informed by "the most learned man in that city" that the Hausas migrated in early times from the Far East, beyond Mecca.[33] It is much to be deplored in this connection that the national records of the Hausas should have been destroyed by the Fulani at the taking of Katsena. Nevertheless, we may reasonably hope, now that the relations of Northern Nigeria with the outside world are bound to become more frequent, some further light may be shortly forthcoming which will help to elucidate a problem fraught with great attraction to all students of West Africa.

After their expulsion from Air by the inflowing tide of Berber immigration, the Hausas gradually spread west and south, and in course of time formed themselves into seven states, viz. Gober, Daura, Biram, Kano, Rano, Katsena and Zeg-Zeg.[34] In Hausa mythology each of these States represented one of the seven legitimate children, offspring of the Diggera mother already alluded to, to each of whom was respectively given a task to perform. Thus Gober was the warrior *serki-n-yaki* (*serki*, Prince: *n*, of: *yaki*, fighting); Kano and Rano the dyers *saraki-n-baba* (from the abundance of indigo *marinas* or dyeing pits which represent one of the most considerable

national industries of the Hausas); Katsena and Daura the traders *saraki-n-Kaswa*, and Zeg-Zeg the purveyor of slaves *serki-n-bay* which, by the way, affords incidental proof, if any were needed, that in the matter of slavery the Hausas can hardly claim superior moral characteristics over their Fulani conquerors. Disputes between these various States were frequent, and although peopled by the same race, they were constantly in open warfare against one another. So great, indeed, was their mutual antagonism, that when the Fulani uprising took place in Gober, a considerable number of Hausas, principally from the province of Zanfara, rallied round Othman's standard, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Fulani against their own compatriots.



A PURE-BRED KANO MAN (HAUSA)

Prior to their more or less forced conversion by the Fulani early in the nineteenth century, the Hausas were Pagans. True, the Hausa King of Katsena embraced Islam about the seventeenth century, Katsena at that period being the most flourishing city of Hausa—the "Florence of the Hausas," as

Richardson[35] calls it—in regular communication with Arabs from the East, and where the Hausa language attained its greatest richness and purity of form. But the great mass of the Hausa people were unaffected by the event. The precise nature of their rites before the conquest remains obscure. It appears possible however that, at one time, the Hausas, Songhays, and other tribes of the Niger Basin were snake worshippers. The Arabic historians Ahmed-Baba, Edrizi and El-Bekri state that in the time of the first Songhay king—placed at 679 A.D. by Dr. Barth, at 776 A.D. by others—the natives rendered homage to serpents. Colonel Frey,[36] in his interesting and ingenious study, suggests that this worship may have extended to the *manatus* or *manatee*, that curious and somewhat uncanny creature being an inhabitant of the Niger River.

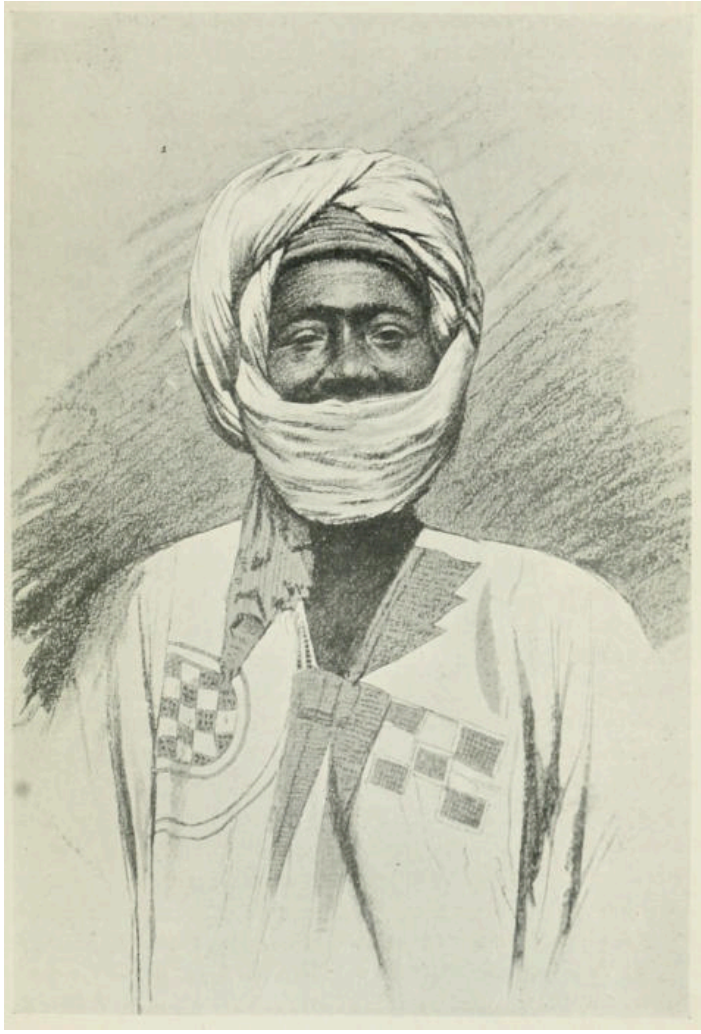
Be that as it may, with the dawn of the nineteenth century a higher ideal and a purer faith rose up in Hausaland, and gained ground with marvellous rapidity. No doubt the result was not obtained without bloodshed, without cruelty, without what Joseph Thompson called “the terrible clamour and dread accompaniments of war.” Nevertheless, it was accomplished, and none but the wholly fanatical will deny that the Hausas have greatly benefited thereby. To an unbiased mind it must appeal as little short of marvellous that, in a period comparatively so short, a whole race should not only have been converted to Islam, but have remained devoted to its precepts when a lapse into Paganism would have been easy and, in a sense, natural. Apart from the added dignity which the acceptance of Islam imparts to individuals in their intercourse with their fellows in a pagan country, the explanation is probably to be found in the fact that, after the Fulani had

unquestionably established their political domination over the Hausas, they none the less persistently continued their religious propaganda by peaceful means, and that, although a sense of security seems to have temporarily dulled their political instincts, it has had, on the contrary, a vivifying effect upon their religious ideals. It is, in any case, notorious that Islam, through the medium of Fulani preachers, is steadily sweeping down the River Niger, penetrating into pagan villages, amid the swamps and forests. The pagan Igarras whom the Niger Company long thought would constitute a solid bulwark and a sort of buffer-state against the invading tide, are now being fast won over to Islam, and Fulani *fikis* are even met with behind Akassa, a few miles from the seaboard itself.

It is no easy matter to correctly estimate the Hausa population in Nigeria, but of true Hausas there must probably be five or six millions, besides the numerous half-breeds of mixed Hausa and Fulani, Hausa and Kanuri, Hausa and Songhay, or Hausa and Tuareg blood, the latter of whom are chiefly to be met with in the northerly districts of the Sokoto Empire, and are of less muscular build than the true Hausas. The Hausas are incontestably the traders of Africa. Their commercial aptitude is renowned from the borders of the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Guinea; from the Gulf of Guinea to the Shari; from the Shari to the Red Sea. They are great travellers and have even been met with on the Sangha, the Ubanghi, and the Congo. Every North African port has its colony of Hausas. The same may be said of the West African Coast ports. There is not an important trading centre in the Niger bend but shelters a family or two of Hausas. Every year numerous Hausa caravans leave Nigeria for the

countries lying at the back of the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, and Liberia, to gather the far-famed Kola or *guro* nut, the fruit of *Sterculia acuminata*, which they convey with infinite care—delicately wrapped in leaves—and sell at an enormous profit in Kano, Gando, Zaria, &c., from whence the nuts are again transported to Bornu, Wadai, and even as far as Khartoum.





A HAUSA FROM YOLA

If the trading instincts of the Hausas are remarkably developed, their industrial enterprise is still more so. It may with safety be declared that the product of their looms and dye-pits constitutes the most extensive article in the internal commerce of

the Dark Continent. Kano is the head and centre of this intrinsically native industry, which is unparalleled in Africa, and Kano is, and in all human probability will continue to be, Manchester's great rival for the African interior markets. Kano has been termed the Manchester and Birmingham of the Sudan, and having due regard to local circumstances and conditions, the comparison is strictly just.

The number of Europeans who have visited Kano may still be counted upon the fingers of both hands. Arab merchants from North and East Africa have, however, been regular frequenters of the city since the conquest of Hausa by Othman Fodio, and for some considerable time past Kano has sheltered an Arab Colony with a recognised "Consul" who enjoys considerable influence. Its resident population has been variously estimated at thirty thousand to sixty thousand and its floating population at sixty thousand to two millions,[37] including the most varied elements, Hausas, Fulani, Kanuri, Baghirmis, Wadaiens, Arabs, Tuaregs, and Jews; merchants from Egypt, Tunis, Tripoli and Fezzan, from the Niger Bend, Adamawa and the Eastern Sudan. The city itself is of enormous extent, containing within its encompassing wall, which is reputed to be no less than fifteen miles in circumference, large tracts of land under cultivation. This immense wall played an important part in the periodic wars with Bornu at the beginning and middle of the past century. If the citizens of Kano did not think themselves sufficiently strong to meet their aggressors in the open, they simply shut the gates of the city and lined the walls, and the Bornuese hosts, deeming discretion the better part of valour, never attempted an assault. The situation of Kano is fairly elevated and otherwise good, but is unhealthy owing to the presence of large

pools of stagnant water into which refuse of all kinds is indiscriminately pitched. The city is divided into different quarters, the Fulani quarter, Arab quarter, Hausa quarter, and so forth. The market is held daily and the most bewildering diversity of articles are always on sale: native cloths, silk embroidered *tobes*, leather and brass ware, ivory, weapons, rough agricultural implements, silver and brass ornaments and trinkets, antimony, ostrich feathers, live stock—cattle, horses and sheep—and foodstuffs innumerable. Long files of asses pass through from the distant Chad laden with natron for Nupe, and arrive from the Niger Bend weighed down with kolas. Camels are permanently in evidence, whether carrying on their sturdy backs salt-cakes from Bilma or European merchandise from Tripoli. Brilliantly attired Ghadamseen and Arab traders caracole on gaily caparisoned steeds, and the fierce-eyed, black-lithamed Tuareg of the desert (many of whom, by the way, are extensive property owners in Northern Nigeria) scowls darkly from the back of his swift-footed *mehari*. In this great city throbs and vibrates an industrial vitality unequalled in Africa.[38]

CHAPTER VIII
THE HAUSAS AND THEIR EMPORIUM—(*cont.*)

> "Travellers who have been in the country tell us that Kano, which is the Manchester of Nigeria, has an attendance annually at its market of over one million persons."—*Extract from a speech by* Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.

The reputation of Kano as a manufacturing city is of comparatively recent growth, and although the Hausas have manufactured cotton for a considerable time (how long is uncertain, but we do know that their leather-ware[39] was widely sought after as far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century), the importance of Kano as a trading and manufacturing emporium only dates from the Fulani conquest and the destruction of Katsena by Bello. The Hausa cottons of Kano are in demand throughout the whole of the Islamic world of North, West, and central Africa. Lieutenant-Colonel Monteil, one of the few Europeans who have visited Kano, gives it as his opinion that the inhabitants of two-thirds of the Sudan, and nearly all the inhabitants of the Central and Eastern Sahara, clothe themselves in Kano cottons; while Dr. Barth estimated the annual export of cotton from Kano to Timbuctoo alone to amount in value to some £5000. The principal cotton articles manufactured by the Hausas at Kano are the *Tobe* or shirt for men; the *Turkedi* or women's dress; the *Zenne* or plaid; and the black veil or litham invariably worn by the Tuareg and very often by the Fulani, Kanuri, and Arab. The *tobes* are dyed various colours, while the *turkedi* are always of that deep, dark blue obtained by repeated washings in indigo-

pits for which the province of Kano is famous. Of the plaids a large selection is produced, varying in colour and in texture, some being composed of a mixture of silk and cotton, others of cotton only, others again of pure silk. Dr. Barth, speaking of this cotton industry of Kano, and remarking that the Province which produces it is also able to supply the corn necessary for the sustenance of its population, and possesses besides splendid pasture land, says: “In fact, if we consider that this industry is not carried on here as in Europe, in immense establishments, degrading man to the meanest conditions of life, but that it gives employment and support to families without compelling them to sacrifice their domestic habits, we must presume that Kano ought to be one of the happiest countries in the world; and so it is, so long as its Governor, too often lazy and indolent, is able to defend its inhabitants from the cupidity of their neighbours, which, of course, is constantly stimulated by the very wealth of their country.” What the lazy Fulani Governor of Barth’s days could not do, British power can, and indeed has; and having done so, is also able to ensure that by judicious management the national, social life of this interesting country shall continue in that state of happiness which struck the great German traveller.

In addition to its cloths, Kano produces excellent leather work, principally sandals, sword-scabbards, riding-boots, shoes, despatch-bags, water-bottles and saddles, and annually exports large quantities of tanned hides. The people of Kano also produce iron weapons, rough agricultural implements and sword-hilts for German blades, which are, or used to be, imported from the north. The following estimate of the total trade of Kano, carefully compiled from Dr. Barth’s calculations, will give some idea of its extent

and value at the time (1851) of the German explorer's stay in the city. The sterling is arrived at by reckoning one million *kurdi* or cowries—the chief currency in Kano—at £100.

EXPORTS.	
Cloths	£30,000
Slaves	20,000
Sandals	1,000
Miscellaneous leather-work	500
Total	£51,500
IMPORTS.	
Kola nuts (from West Coast hinterlands)	£10,000
Ivory (from Adamawa)	10,000
Salt (from the interior)	8,000
Coarse silk (*viâ* Tripoli)	7,000
Arab dresses (from Tunis and Tripoli)	5,000
Beads (Italy, *viâ* Tripoli)	5,000
Sword-blades (from Germany, *viâ* Tripoli)	5,000
Manchester goods (*viâ* Tripoli)	4,000
Muslins (England, *viâ* Tripoli)	4,000
Rose oil (*viâ* Tripoli)	5,000
Copper (from Wadai and Bahr-el-Ghazal)	2,000
Woollen cloths (*viâ* Tripoli)	1,500
Spices and cloves (*viâ* Tripoli)	1,500
Sugar (from France, *viâ* Tripoli)	1,200
Tin	1,000
Egyptian dresses	1,000
Needles (from Germany, *viâ* Tripoli)	800
Common paper, ditto	500

Razors (from Syria)	300
Total	£71,800

To which might be added a transit trade in natron, passing through Kano from Bornu on its way to Nupe, yielding about £1000 “passage-money.” The remarkable total of £123,300 is thus arrived at.

Of late years the trade of Kano, both in respect to imports and exports, has undergone some change, and is bound to become still more modified as time goes on. For instance, the buying and selling of slaves is a thing of the past, or soon will be. The imports of ivory from Adamawa are nothing like what they were in Barth’s time. The internal salt trade has largely been extinguished, the native article being unable to compete with European salt. But with this exception—salt—the increased importation of European goods into the Niger and Binue since 1880, that is to say, since the spread of British commercial enterprise in the Upper River and its tributary, does not appear to have affected the caravan trade of Kano with the Tripolitan ports, *viâ* the oases of Bilma, Fezzan, and Murzuk. In 1897, for instance, the British Consul for Tripoli estimated the goods sent to Sokoto (for Sokoto read the State of Sokoto, of which the city of Kano is the commercial and industrial centre and the terminus of the Tripoli caravans, the trade of the city of Sokoto being insignificant) by caravan across the desert at £46,000. These figures compared with Barth’s tables of Tripoli imported goods are actually more considerable than the total value as estimated by Barth half a century ago. This is a very important fact, and by bearing it well in mind we shall avoid falling into an error which might have unfortunate consequences. Then, again, a comparison of the

articles imported in 1851 and 1897 is instructive as affording proof of the conservatism of the African and the old-established nature of this trade.

DR. BARTH'S ENUMERATION, 1851.

Coarse silk, Arab dresses, sword-blades, Manchester goods, muslins, rose oil, woollen cloths, sugar, spices and cloves, needles, paper.

FOREIGN OFFICE REPORT, 1897.

Cotton and woollen cloths, silk waste, silk yarn, box rings, beads, amber, paper, sugar, drugs, tea.

We may go even farther back than this. According to the exceedingly interesting and minute accounts of "Shereef Imhammed" and "Ben Ali, a Moorish trader," given in the first published proceedings of the African Association in 1791, the trade between Tripoli and the Kingdom of "Cashna," *i.e.* Katsena (Katsena being then in its prime), consisted of the following articles:

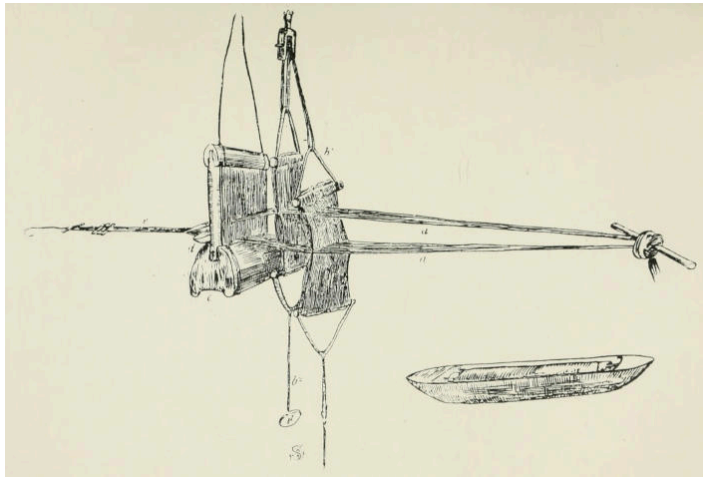
IMPORTS TO KATSENA FROM TRIPOLI.

Red woollen caps, check linens, light coarse woollen cloths, baiza, cowries, barakans or alhaiks, small Turkey carpets, silk (wrought and unwrought), tissues and brocades, sabre-blades, Dutch knives, scissors, coral beads, small looking-glasses.

EXPORTS FROM KATSENA TO TRIPOLI.

Cotton cloths, slaves, goatskins "of the red and yellow dyes," ox and buffalo hides, gold dust, civet.

The “slaves” item is another proof that the Hausa Kings of those days were extensive slave dealers. It is curious to notice that in the map attached to this old work, a reproduction of which faces page 38, Kano does not even appear, which shows that at that period it had little or no importance as an industrial centre.



HAUSA LOOM AND SPOOL

The articles imported in 1897 were, therefore, substantially the same as in 1851 and even in 1791. Then as now, English cotton and woollen goods figured prominently amongst them, and it is evident that up to 1897 large profits were to be earned by Europeans (indirectly) and Arabs (directly) in the caravan business between North Africa and Nigeria. Seven years after the opening in regular form of the Western fluvial route, Northern Nigeria is seen to have been importing from Tripoli more goods than in 1851.

It is not due then to commercial development from the south, but to another reason, that the caravan

traffic with Tripoli has fallen off since 1897. That reason is to be found in the internal political convulsions of which the Chad basin has been the scene for the last eight years, and to the external political confusion brought about by the action of European Powers, or rather of one European Power —France. When Rabah conquered Bornu in 1893-94, the Ghadamseen merchants suffered heavy losses through the sacking of Kuka, and trade was entirely stopped for a time. Rabah saw his mistake, and endeavoured to remedy it by liberal promises of future support and protection. He kept his word, and trade revived. Then came the advance of the French down the Shari, followed by a renewed period of anarchy in Bornu, as Rabah hurriedly flung himself across the river into Baghirmi to arrest the march of the invaders. Under Fad-el-Allah, Bornu became a cockpit of internecine strife. With the consolidation of French influence in a portion of the Chad region the merchants of the north took heart of grace once more, but the recent pillage of sundry rich caravans by the Kanem Arabs, various confederations of Tuareg and other adherents of the Sheik-Senussi, has demonstrated that at present the French are unable to ensure the safety of caravans, however desirous they may be to do so. These repeated blows have played havoc with the Nigerian-Tripoli caravan trade, and those merchants who are still bold enough to face the risks favour the Wadai route. In 1900 the caravan trade with Wadai was still important, amounting in the aggregate, according to the French Consul at Tripoli, to £210,000, imports and exports included. But it is quite certain that 1901 and 1902 will show a notable decrease of those figures.[40]

Are we to conclude, therefore, that Kano's internal trade with the north and east has gone never to

return, and that the caravan traffic is a thing of the past? That is the view which appears to be generally adopted.[41] I confess that I do not share it, and it would certainly be an immense misfortune for Kano and Northern Nigeria generally if such were, indeed, the case. The main sources of Kano's wealth and prosperity do not depend upon the influx of trade from the south, but upon the industry of its inhabitants in catering for the requirements not of Europe but of Africa. It is a great *dépôt* of Negroland for Negroland, and if Kano could no longer find purchasers for her cotton and her leather work, her prosperity must needs decrease and her wealth decline. Now it is obviously in our interest that this should not happen. It should be the object of our policy to maintain, strengthen and assist the commercial and industrial position of Kano, the centre of Hausa activity, the magnet which attracts a flow of internal commerce from all points of the compass. How can that best be done?

In the first place, it is necessary to understand the main caravan system of North-West Central Africa. The accompanying map (facing p. 84) shows the principal routes, and a broad survey of the subject induces the belief that it is the interest of both England and France to encourage the revival of the caravan traffic between Kano (or, in other words, Nigeria) and Kano's interior markets, or, at any rate, to do nothing to still further curtail it. The wider the stream of internal trade both in and out of Nigeria the greater the prosperity of the country, and it would be as equally pedantic for us to object if the French, who are in more or less theoretical possession of the majority of Kano's markets, succeed in eventually diverting *in toto* the caravan traffic from the Tripoli route towards Timbuctoo and In

Salah, as it would be for the French to interfere with a possible re-opening of the long-abandoned eastern route (not marked in the map) towards the Nile. But there should be an understanding between the two Powers on the subject of this internal trade, which is centuries old, and which certainly cannot be displaced in a day; in fact, never can entirely be displaced, except by oppressive and selfish interference, either on the part of the French or ourselves. Any action tending to compel a diversion of trade in such or such a direction would prove in the long run to be anything but advantageous to the Power which attempted it. For instance, if France were to start putting prohibitive taxes on exports and imports to and from Kano over the frontier in order to forcibly confine the circulation of trade to certain channels, it would lead to serious trouble with the natives, which would cost more to cope with than any prospective profit to be derived from such action. Similarly, if the authorities of Northern Nigeria were to actively discourage Kano's trade with the territories under French protection, in order to develop Kano's trade with the south, it would only lead to a decrease in the productive capacity of Kano, and consequently lessen the prosperity of Northern Nigeria as a whole.

Economic changes are bound to occur, especially when the British and French railway systems proposing to tap the Niger valley are more advanced, but there is plenty of scope for both to earn an honourable livelihood, and the central fact to be borne in mind is that Kano's trade is, and must be, as previously stated, more of an internal than an external one. Before Kano can purchase such cottons, woollens and other articles as it absorbs, from the south, that is to say, from European merchants, it

must be in a position to give, in return, articles of African produce that will pay the European merchant to buy. To suppose that Kano will be able to do so until the iron horse has penetrated well over the Kano side of the Niger, or until a carriage-road the model of the one the French are building from Conakry to Futa-Jallon connects a navigable point on the Niger with Kano, is to cherish an illusion. Transport charges would kill any chance of profit in a transaction which differs in every particular from the nature of Kano's internal trade. The one would be a direct transaction, to stand or fall on its merits; the other can best be described as a multiplicity of transactions with the purchasing commodity represented by native cloth, a useless article so far as export to Europe is concerned. In fact, it is no easy matter to determine how Kano will be able to feed a railway from the coast without the creation of some great industry suitable for European export, corresponding with the oil-palm industry of the coastwise regions. One thing at least is certain, that if through extravagance in construction and working, or other causes, the section of an eventual railway from the coast to Kano, which passes through the oil-palm bearing regions cannot be made to pay, the economical outlook for the railway when it leaves the oil-palm zone is anything but cheerful. Of course, where the main purpose is strategic, considerations other than commercial come into play, and the matter assumes a different aspect.

To resume, it would seem really desirable that a mutual arrangement between England and France should be arrived at as regards freedom of circulation for the internal traffic of the Chad region. I urged that course in the *Pall Mall Gazette* when the negotiations for the Convention of 1898 were

pending. Recent events suggest that the proposal might still be adopted with advantage to both parties concerned, and as a measure both just and wise in the relation it bears to the legitimate interests of the natives.

It remains to be said in this connection that the principal articles imported into the Upper Niger by the Niger Company, which up to the present has enjoyed the monopoly of the Upper Niger trade, are salt, brass, copper and iron rods, white damask cloths, white brocaded cloths, indigo-dyed cloths (in imitation of, but inferior to, the cloth produced from native looms and dyed in Kano), cowries, rice, yarn and gunpowder. The salt which is imported chiefly from England has a large sale, being greatly superior to native manufactured salt from Bilma and the shores of Lake Chad. The copper, brass and iron rods are chiefly used for conversion into arrow-heads. As for the cloths, they do not equal the products of the Kano looms, and unless of the finest white damask, are rejected by the Mohammedans. They find, however, a ready sale among the Pagans. These cloths are, as a rule, exchanged against ivory, gum, bees-wax or rubber, bought by Hausa traders, who in turn take them to Kano and there exchange them for native-made cloth.

I have entered rather fully into the trading and industrial statistics of Kano because, apart from the interest naturally attaching to the commercial life of one of the most flourishing cities of Africa, the centre of a great industrial and agricultural district, a knowledge of these particulars enables one, I think, the better to realise what are the distinctive characteristics of the Hausa race—Kano being pre-eminently Hausa. The Hausa is primarily and

essentially the business man of Africa. He is not and never will become a governing personality. His aims are commercial, and he neither seeks nor desires any other state. Of political ambition he has none, and although strongly attached to the Mohammedan faith, and good-humouredly contemptuous of his pagan customers, he is quite content that they should remain pagans to the end of the chapter, willingly resigning the attractions of proselytism into the hands of the Fulani. Withal he is a cheerful, happy-go-lucky sort of person, generally kind to his slaves, and content to gang his own gait in his own way. That is the natural state of the Hausa. If we take him away from his business habits and fashion him into a soldier, we perforce place him in the midst of artificial conditions of life, where his individuality become lost. He is then merely interesting in the sense that our other African levies are interesting, that is, from an exclusively military point of view.

The Hausa can be drilled into a good soldier, and under decent treatment will show much patient endurance and bravery. Like all Negroes, if adequate supervision be lacking, he will take advantage of the prestige attaching to his uniform to tyrannise over the aborigines among whom he is quartered.

In his military capacity the Hausa has rendered good service in the Benin and Ashanti campaigns; in the course of innumerable skirmishes on the lower Niger, throughout the operations so admirably carried out by Sir George Goldie against Nupe and Ilorin, and so on. It should, however, be remembered that on those occasions where the Hausa soldier has fought under the British flag, he has gone into battle with the consciousness of possessing weapons which gave him an incontestable superiority over his

antagonist. He has never been called upon to face a native force officered by Europeans, and armed with quick-firing rifles similar to his own. His capacity to rise to the occasion if necessity demanded it need not be queried. That is a matter upon which military men personally acquainted with the Hausa's qualities and defects as a fighting unit are alone competent to give an opinion.[42] But until the Hausa has been put to the test, it may be well not to found too high an estimate of his military abilities, bearing in mind that, unlike the French West African recruits, he does not come of a fighting stock.



HAUSAS DRILLING

As already stated, it is in his natural sphere of commerce and industry that the Hausa shines. In that respect he stands without a rival on the continent in which he lives. His manufacturing skill is not only remarkable for Africa: it puts Europe to the blush. For closeness, durability and firmness of texture, the products of his looms and dye-pits eclipse anything that Manchester can produce. In a land of reputed indolence, his activity is as conspicuous as his enterprise. He makes an ideal commercial traveller,

peddling his wares over enormous distances, and seldom failing to secure a considerable profit on his transactions.

The Hausa has so identified himself with the commercial requirements of a vast region that his language has, throughout it, been adopted as the necessary vehicle of inter-communication for all that appertains to trade and commerce. The Hausa language is *per se* specially well fitted for extensive propagation among African races. Reclus[43] has said of it that by its fine sonorousness, the richness of its vocabulary, the simplicity of its grammatical structure, and the graceful equilibrium of its phrases, Hausa deserves to rank among the foremost languages of the Dark Continent; and Sir Harry Johnston includes it with English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili among the great languages of New Africa.[44]

The first vocabulary of Hausa was compiled by Mr. James Richardson, who, in company with Dr. Barth and Dr. Overweg, crossed the desert to Lake Chad in 1850-51.[45] Upon his return from Africa, Dr. Barth himself published a work upon the Hausa, Fulfulde and Kanuri[46] languages. Messrs. Schön[47] and Krause subsequently devoted much study to the subject, and the former issued a remarkable book on the Hausa language in 1876, of which there appeared a revised edition in 1885. Later on, Mr. John A. Robinson, M.A., a scholar of Christ College, Cambridge, made further researches into Hausa during his stay at Lokoja. After his death the Hausa Association was formed (1891) with the object of continuing his labours, and in 1894 the Reverend Charles Henry Robinson, M.A.—now Canon Robinson of Ripon—was despatched by the

Association to Kano. Canon Robinson and his companions Dr. Tonkin and Mr. Bonner spent three months in Kano, and in due course the former published an account of his experiences[48] which excited much attention, coming as it did so soon after Lieutenant-Colonel Monteil's remarkable journey from St. Louis to Tripoli through Kano had revived the world's interest in the famous Hausa city. Since then the Hausa Association has published four works on the Hausa[49] language. In 1897 the Cambridge University appointed a University Lecturer in Hausa, and the authorities of Christ's College established a Hausa scholarship open to graduates of the University or others who have passed an examination in at least one Semitic language. The initiative thus displayed by the Hausa Association[50] and by Canon Robinson is worthy of all praise, and it is greatly to be hoped that further efforts may be forthcoming which will extend so useful a field of inquiry to the other great languages of Northern Nigeria, Fulfulde and Kanuri.

The Hausa language appears to belong to the Hamitic group, although it contains numerous Semitic idioms, and also a large number of words borrowed from the Arabic.

Some controversy exists as to whether Hausa can be properly considered a written language or not. Canon Robinson stoutly maintains that it is, and even goes so far as to assert that there is no race north of the Equator, nor indeed in all Africa outside Egypt and Abyssinia, which has reduced its language to writing, or made any attempt at the production of a literature.[51] That is, as Americans say, a tall order, and I beg leave to doubt the accuracy of the statement. Sufficient interest attaches to the point to

merit a cursory examination.

In the introductory remarks to his "Magana Hausa" already referred to, Mr. Schön speaks of himself as the writer of a "previously unwritten language"—meaning, of course, Hausa. Commenting upon that passage in the preface to the "Hausa-English Dictionary," Canon Robinson infers that, when Schön wrote the words quoted above, he was probably unaware that the Hausa possessed any kind of literature at all. That seems to me a gratuitous assumption, for Barth, who came before Schön, and whose works Schön would naturally have consulted, more than once declares categorically that the Hausa language is *not* a written language. Yet Barth knew perfectly well that the Hausa had possessed historical manuscripts, since he lamented their destruction by the Fulani at the capture of Katsena, which was then, as Kano is to-day, the seat of culture of the Hausa race. It may therefore be asserted with every probability of exactness that Schön spoke *en pleine connaissance de cause* when he referred to himself as the writer of a previously unwritten language. Now, can the existence of a certain number of manuscripts in the Hausa language, and written in Arabic characters, be considered sufficient proof that Hausa itself is a written language? If so, then Fulfulde is a written language, because Bello committed to writing in the language of his race, and in Arabic characters, a history of the Sudan; and Kanuri is a written language, because Koelle[52] published in 1854 a Kanuri grammar founded upon a collection of manuscript literature in the tongue of the Kanuri and in Arabic characters. In that case it follows that, contrary to what Canon Robinson affirms, the Hausas are not the only African people north of the Equator, outside Egypt and Abyssinia, who have reduced their

language to writing or aimed at producing a literature. If the first claim is tenable, if, that is to say, Hausa is a written language, then the second claim put forward is not tenable. I do not propose to continue this appreciation into more technical channels, which would probably be wearisome to the reader, and will content myself with quoting from a letter received by me some little time ago from a British Officer then in charge of the Military Intelligence Department of Northern Nigeria, whose knowledge of Hausa has been officially declared to be "unique." Being unable to reconcile Canon Robinson's statements that it was a written language, with the facts as they presented themselves to me, I finally turned to my correspondent, whose competency I was well aware no one would venture to dispute. This is what he says:

> "Robinson's Hausa Grammar was universally pronounced a failure by all officers of the West African Frontier Force, and they could make no progress by using it. I have already told you that the natives say they could not understand him. Moreover, one hardly talks the same class of Hausa to any two Hausas consecutively; but after a couple of minutes' conversation with a native one knows his dialect, and what words to use, and how to pronounce those words, the pronunciation varying considerably.[53] The Hausa writing, very little of which exists, is simply Hausa written phonetically in Arabic characters, there being no recognised way of spelling one word, which fact alone proves how little the written language is used. Nowadays Hausa is scarcely ever written, except isolated words, such as 'Sariki' and 'bature.' The Hausa

writing is called ‘Ajumi,’ and when such words are used in an Arabic letter, it is usual to prefix the word ‘Ajumi,’ in order to warn the reader that the following words are Hausa, not Arabic. The Arabic used is primitive, but correct. As the Hausa vowel sounds cannot always be correctly represented by the Arabic vowel marks, there is only the context to guide one in many Hausa written words, and the task of spelling out every word phonetically is a laborious one, especially when the proper sound cannot in all cases be represented. I have seen some of the most learned Mallams in Nigeria experience great difficulty in reading Canon Robinson’s specimens of Hausa literature. Canon Robinson attaches much too much importance to the Hausa writing. The few specimens that exist are interesting as curiosities, but the language is useless as a means of communication.”

CHAPTER IX
THE NATIONAL INDUSTRY OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA

The palm-oil tree is the staple product of the whole of the coastwise regions of West Africa from Sierra Leone[54] right down to the Lower Congo. The Niger Delta may be considered as the central region of its production. Since regular administration was set up in the rivers,[55] the output of the oil and kernels of the palm-oil tree has been as follows:

OIL.

Year.	Quantity.	Value.
1892-93	10,079,039 gallons	£482,803
1893-94	12,207,658 ”	637,625
1894-95	Not ascertainable	505,637
1895-96	10,672,106 gallons	514,303
1896-97	9,350,559 ”	465,583
1897-98	8,476,955 ”	410,134
1898-99	8,113,820 ”	397,870
1900[56]	Not stated in C. O. report	491,131

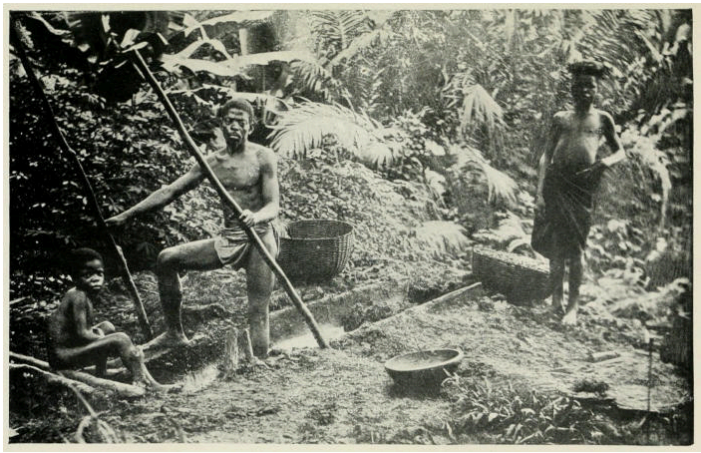
The great majority of the oil is sent to England, but France takes a considerable quantity (£70,880 out of the total of £491,131 in 1900), and Germany also purchases a fair amount (£28,094 in 1900).

KERNELS.

Year.	Quantity.	Value.
1892-93	34,710 tons	£301,483
1893-94	39,224 ”	334,144

1894-95	Not ascertainable	295,313
1895-96	36,640 tons	296,397
1896-97	38,043 ”	290,125
1897-98	39,529 ”	295,545
1898-99	40,528 ”	305,791
1900[57]	Not given in C. O. report	430,016

The output of kernels seems to be steadily on the increase. Germany is far and away the largest purchaser of Nigeria’s kernels. In 1900 she took more than two-thirds—to the value of £346,997—of the total for that year.[58] Thus in eight years the fruit of the palm-oil tree in Nigeria is seen by these figures to have yielded no less than £6,453,900. The production has certainly been greater, as the Niger Company’s exports of oil and kernels are only included for 1900, the quantities and values for the preceding years not being publicly accessible.



MAKING PALM-OIL

The chief centres of palm-oil production in the

Niger proper as distinct from the Delta, or, in other words, in the territories formerly under the administrative sway of, and still almost entirely tapped in a commercial sense by, the Niger Company are Ogute Lake, Atani, and Onitsha. The Ogute Lake produces about 4500 casks of oil annually; it is connected by the Orashe River, for small craft drawing four feet in the dry season and eight feet in the rainy season, with Degama, but is only open from the Niger River during the rainy season (for craft drawing seven feet) or say from August to the end of December. It is about seventy hours distant from Burutu. Atani yields about 6000 casks per annum. It is open from the sea *viâ* Burutu or Akassa all the year round. Distance from Burutu about two and a half days. Onitsha will probably exceed before long the other two districts mentioned as a productive centre, the population being very dense; distance from Burutu, three days. For kernels, Assay is the chief centre, producing about 6000 tons annually. It is open all the year round from Burutu for craft drawing about five to five and a half feet, and between July and October the rains permit of navigation for craft drawing up to twelve feet; passage from Burutu, twenty-four hours. Illushi, Idah, Lokoja, Egga, Jebba, and Shongo are other important centres.

The commerce derived from the oil-palm tree, apart from its paramount importance in a commercial sense, has many and varied features of interest. It was, for example, so far as the oil is concerned, the trade which first took the place of the slave traffic. The beverage extracted from it is mentioned in some of the oldest references to the Dark Continent—thus we know that Cambyses “delighted” in its flavour, and Herodotus tells us that

amongst the gifts with which he despatched the mission of the Ichthyophagi to Ethiopia was “a cask of palm-wine.” Collecting the palm-tree’s fruit may also be said to be the national industry of the West African Negro almost all along the coast—certainly in Southern Nigeria.[59] It is an industry which permanently employs hundreds of thousands of Negroes, men, women, and children, and gives work to many thousands of white men, from the merchant to the steamship owner, from the manufacturer to the chemist. Often in watching the long files of carts conveying the bulky barrels in which palm-oil is shipped home from the west coast, passing along the Liverpool streets, or the rows upon rows of these casks and heaps of palm-kernel bags piled up on the dock’s side, have I marvelled at the ignorance of those persons who inform us that the native of West Africa will not *work*. Not work, with this testimony to his labours! Not work, when hundreds of English workmen are busy unloading, rolling and carting these proofs of the Negro’s industry every month in the year, every week in the month, every day in the week almost! Not work, when it is borne in mind that this brilliant yellow stuff with the penetrating smell, shipped in hundreds of thousands of gallons from West Africa, is brought down to the coast bit by bit, in small receptacles, often from considerable distances inland, on the heads of these idle and lazy people; that the kernels in those greasy, dirty-looking bags have each been extracted with infinite trouble from an extremely hard shell, that 400 of them are required to make a single pound of kernels, and that the market value in Southern Nigeria of those 400 kernels, to the native, is the maximum sum of one penny! A stone-breaker’s job in this country is not looked upon as a sinecure, but I beg leave to doubt

whether the stone-breaker would be content with one penny per every 400 stones he breaks.



DUKE-TOWN, OLD CALABAR, SOUTHERN NIGERIA

There is not another tree in the whole world which produces money with so little expense as this particular crop. In Nigeria the oil is prepared usually in small quantities, in the small villages scattered over the country. After being prepared, it is in many instances carried by women and children to some central native market, situate as a rule on the edge of a waterway. There it is bought by the middlemen so called, who are really the carriers of the country, and put by them into the casks previously supplied by the European merchants. The casks are packed away in canoes, and the middlemen paddle down through the creeks for distances varying with the length and character of the waterways, to the merchant's factory at the mouth. The merchant then pays for the oil, gives the middleman an empty cask in exchange for the full one, and ships the latter by the first steamer that comes along, the middlemen coopering it up and making it as sound as possible before starting off on

their homeward journey. Palm-oil is used in the manufacture of soap and candles.[60] It is also employed in South Wales and the States in the preparation of tin plates, the plates when white hot being dipped in palm-oil, which gives them their smooth and glassy surface. The demand for palm oil increases annually, and for many years to come is likely to keep up with the supply.

The transaction which takes place between the merchant and the middleman native is the simplest feature of the trade. Before that stage has been reached there are ramifications innumerable. A middleman chief, for instance, will send ten or twelve canoes up the creeks with goods which he has purchased on trust[61]—a large proportion of the trade is still carried out on the trust system, credit being given as between the merchant and the middleman, the middleman and the producer, and again the producer with other producers further afield, the nearest producer becoming thus a middleman or carrier for his more distant countrymen—each of the canoes being in charge of one of his "boys," with enough men to convey the craft to a certain market. There that particular canoe remains until the goods it has got on board are sold and the canoe is full of oil. The same thing occurs in the case of every market in the district, and so on all over the country, the canoes sometimes remaining several weeks away.

Apart from the porterage, purchase, putting into casks, conveying by water, final sale and shipment, which employs such numbers of natives in their respective *rôles*, there is the collection and preparation to be taken into account before a complete idea can be formed of the varied stages the

palm-oil industry goes through until the product is landed on our shores. There is, first of all, the process of climbing the tree to get the fruit, which, of course, is at the top. After removing the fruit the natives are able, when the nut is properly ripe, to shake it out of the spiky casing in which it grows. The nut is something like a plum-stone, only bigger, and contains the oil to the thickness of about one-eighth of an inch. Inside is the kernel, itself enclosed in a very hard shell. To extract the oil the outer skin or shell has to be split or peeled off. The nuts are usually flung into an old canoe, the natives trampling upon and crushing the outer skin, and then put into boiling water, which brings the oil to the surface. But there are a good many ways of preparing the oil, and its different characteristics were at one time supposed to be due to different ways of preparation on various parts of the coast. That does not appear to be the opinion now, for the theory is hardly sufficient to account for the extra quantity of glycerine such as is met with in Bonny and Old Calabar oil, and the larger proportion of stearine[62] which exists in the hard kinds of Brass and New Calabar. We have now come to an end of the history of the collection of palm-oil, and the second use to which the oil-palm lends itself arrives upon the scene.

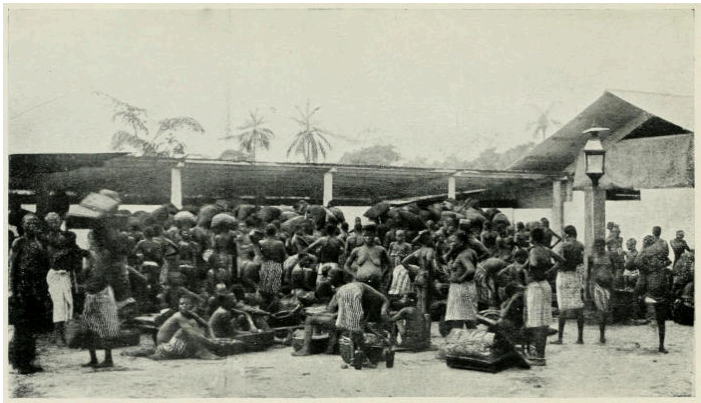


FILLING PALM-OIL BARRELS, SOUTHERN NIGERIA

With the breakage of the nut and the extraction of the oil, there is left the kernel in its covering. The kernel trade did not become general[63] until a few years ago, the kernel being usually either left to decay or to reproduce, and for a considerable time it was pointed out that hundreds of thousands of pounds were annually lost in this way. But within a comparatively recent time the natives have been induced to break the hard shell in which the kernel is enclosed, and the latter are shipped home in yearly increasing quantities from Nigeria by the merchants, who dispose of them to the African Oil Mills[64] or some other seed-crushing establishment in Liverpool, or send them to Hamburg: Germany, as already stated, being the largest buyer. The kernel yields an oil which in its concrete form is white in contrast with the yellowy-red or deep red or ochre colouring of the oil in the nut itself, and is the principal ingredient in Sunlight and other soaps of a similar character. In its chemical properties it is almost identical with the oil pressed from the inside of the

cocoa-nut—*i.e.* copra—which is known as "cocoa-nut oil." It is exclusively used in the manufacture of soap.

Owing to the very great labour entailed in cracking the shells, a task generally performed by putting the nut on a stone and breaking it with a stone or stick, and the immense amount of time wasted by so primitive a method, it cannot but be a matter for astonishment that some mechanical contrivance has not been devised and put to general usage whereby the process might be accelerated and facilitated. It is certainly not due to any fear of exhausting the supply by too rapid production, for, so far as any conclusions can be based upon the quantity of oil brought down to the factories, Nigeria is still a long way off producing anything like the full quantity of kernels available. The fact is that several attempts have been made in this direction, but with one exception[65] they have failed, and the failure has discouraged further efforts. Cracking machines of various kinds have been imported, but through neglect, the deadly effect of the West African climate upon machinery of any kind—more especially perhaps in so very humid a part as the Niger Delta—and other causes, they have speedily become "old iron."



A PALM-KERNEL MARKET IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

Although it may seem presumptuous for an outsider to make such a suggestion, I cannot but think that something more might be done, in a systematic and concentrated way, to bring about so great a reform as the cracking of the kernel-shells by machinery could not fail to be; quadrupling as it would the total production, and releasing a large amount of labour, which could be turned into other channels. In view of the very meagre remuneration which the native is willing to accept per pound's weight of kernels cracked by hand, it is difficult to understand how any real trouble, that decent wages and tactful management were capable of overcoming, could be apprehended in the utilisation of sufficient labour to keep the requisite steam-power at work, more especially as, it is known, the shells would provide a fairly efficient fuel ready to hand. Moreover, would machinery elaborate enough to necessitate steam-power be absolutely essential? Could nothing be invented in the way of importing automatic hand-cracking machines, the cracking taking place under white supervision at the factories, and the middlemen carriers bringing in the

undecorticated nut, instead of, as at present, the kernel itself?[66]

There seems to be much need in this great oil-palm industry, as in other native industries in West Africa, of co-operation among the official and commercial classes, which make up the white population—missionaries excepted—for the adoption of some thorough and comprehensive plan of teaching the natives more scientific methods of production. It is no use saying the thing cannot be done. It can be done, and has been done. The most notable example is provided in the history of ground-nut cultivation in Senegal, which has by no means reached perfection,[67] or anything like it, and yet is now realising a million sterling per annum. That striking result was attained by patient, continuous and unflagging perseverance on the part of the Bordeaux merchants, coupled with the friendly support and assistance of the Government, without coercion of any kind. It took some time, of course, but the results have thoroughly justified the policy pursued, and Senegal to-day[68] is the foremost vegetable-oil producing country in the world. We hear a great deal about technical education in West Africa, carpentering, brick-making, and so forth, all very admirable in their way, but the time and money spent in these directions could be more profitably engaged by perfecting the *existing native industries* of West Africa, and by creating new ones, which would do more than anything else to increase the prosperity of the country, and at the same time be based upon sound science, for the natural instincts and aptitude of the Negro are pre-eminently agricultural. Far more lasting good could be achieved thus.

Officials and merchants working side by side for a

common aim, and science—that is what West Africa needs. What a reflection it is upon our Administration in West Africa, that the commercial position of Sierra Leone, for instance, should be declining, year by year, largely owing to a passion for keeping up a form of taxation which is repugnant to the natives, and does not even pay the cost of collection, when thousands of pounds annually are wasted in the Sherbro district alone by the natives merely collecting the kernels, leaving the oil to rot off—all for want of encouragement, and the teaching of scientific methods of production, while acres upon acres of rubber-producing land in Lagos have been impaired by a similar absence of preliminary common sense. Perhaps the most curious feature of the whole business is that which consists in turning round and blaming the native for wilful destruction which—in the latter case mentioned—he was never taught how to avoid. If the oil-palm industry were taken in hand in practical fashion, there is no possible doubt that an enormous development would ensue. But while the want of sympathy and combination, one might almost say the latent opposition, between the official and merchant class continues, I cannot see that matters will be different to what they are. The remedy lies very largely with the Authorities.

CHAPTER X
THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORTHERN NIGERIA

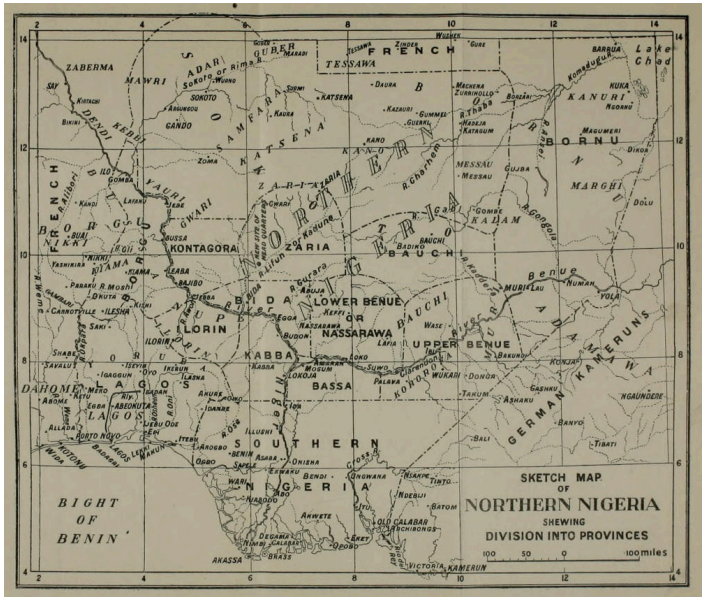
The Empire has few more experienced servants in the Tropical African field than Sir Frederick Lugard. Like every other man who has become prominent, he possesses critics, and no doubt, like every one else, has made mistakes, but, speaking generally, he is very highly thought of. Whether General Lugard, with his military instincts and training, is the right man in the right place, is a matter upon which opinion may differ. Among military men who have served England in Equatorial Africa, no one more distinguished could have been chosen. The only reflection which his appointment gave rise to was an impersonal one. Nobody doubted his capacity, but it was suggested that the delicate problems of internal politics existing in Northern Nigeria required civilian rather than military habits of mind to cope with.

Those problems are infinitely complex. Seldom did a situation call for greater display of tact, sympathy and wise discernment. Seldom was there a more abundant supply of combustible material ready to take fire upon the initiation of a policy which should lack these qualities. Never a field more promising of desirable results to reward a just and humane stewardship, whose highest aim should be the contentment and prosperity of the people committed to its charge, and whose guiding spirit should be patience, and, as Sir Andrew Clarke puts it, “use of the power of imagination.”

Northern Nigeria, it need hardly be observed, differentiates absolutely from the southern province,

in the nature of its soil, configuration, altitude, vegetation: in its ethnologic material, in religion, culture, social condition, political organisation. We have passed out of the pagan belt, and are in contact with a more advanced type of civilisation; we have left the forest and merged into the plain, into open park-like country, sparsely timbered as a rule when compared with the southern regions; pasture land, agricultural land covered with fields of waving millet and *masara*, peopled by splendid herds of cattle, where horses and long-nosed sheep are reared. Animism or fetishism no longer predominates; a revealed religion has replaced it. Semitic infusion is now everywhere apparent. It is a new world we have entered—a strange jumbling of two continents, an amalgam of cross-migratory currents severally attracted by the fertility of the soil; an industrialism at once remarkable, deeply interesting and of great promise. A rough feudalism, a loose central authority, a barbaric splendour in the midst of primitive surroundings, a system of rule superior to anything we have yet encountered, and of which the strongest binding cord is religious faith; large cities, extensive cultivations, tanneries, dye-pits, looms. A number of States, owning allegiance—more religious and racial than political—to a supreme chief, and appointing their own district governors, treasurers, war ministers, judges; controlling their own armies, managing their own exchequers. Society divided into two distinct classes—the aristocrats and the plebs—which correspond to divergencies of race, each class confined to its own quarter, rarely mingling in licit intercourse, perhaps more so than formerly, yet perpetuating a strain of pure stock which must have existed in Africa for at least two thousand years. Away from the towns, in favoured districts,

herdsmen of Semitic blood; planters, agriculturists. In the towns, statesmen, warriors on the one side; on the other, manufacturers and traders. Riven through the country, highways of commerce, centuries old, branching to north, east and west, over which the tramp of feet and hoofs resounded when Rome held North Africa, and built her forts to the desert's edge —aye, and beyond what man and nature have made the desert's edge—oxen and mules carrying natron, and asses bearing kola, camels with salt, Eastern spices, and bales of cotton from far-off Benghazi, cotton brought from Manchester, silks from France, needles and writing-paper from Germany, beads and looking-glasses from Venice; richly caparisoned steeds with their gaily-clad riders, *meharas* swift of foot, with the *lithamed* Tuareg bestriding them; the Fulani shepherd driving along his flocks. Over there by the lake, herds of elephants roam untroubled, while the Shuwa, with his hair trimmed *à l'Egyptienne*, wanders restlessly, as though seeking to pierce the mystery of his origin.



SKETCH MAP OF NORTHERN NIGERIA SHEWING DIVISION INTO PROVINCES

Into that country the white man has come in accordance with the ancient prophecy, descendants of the white man who first visited it. The same race, the dominating race, which ever aspires after empire, and which, on occasion, forgets that the sword untempered by the plough has proved disastrous to many Empires.

As before stated, two years elapsed between the advent of the Crown Colony system in Northern Nigeria and the publication of the first report by Sir Frederick Lugard. With no official data available whereby the Commissioner's policy or the Government's intentions could be gauged, the public were only able to judge of the trend of both one and the other through the scanty information communicated by the news agencies, or by the

vehicle of private letters from Europeans resident in Northern Nigeria. It cannot be said that such news as did filter through the thick veil in which Northern Nigeria lay wrapped prior to the belated publication of Sir Frederick Lugard's report in February 1902 was of a reassuring nature. On the contrary, while necessary police-work in Bornu was so entirely neglected that the French found themselves compelled by a combination of local circumstances to practically run that country for us, to give sanctuary to its lawful ruler, to beat off and finally track to his lair the man who, following his father's evil way, was creating a desert wherever he passed; events in Sokoto, which had been in constant treaty relations with Great Britain's representatives since 1884, seemed to justify the worst fears, and to corroborate the late Mary Kingsley's prediction that "three months of Crown Colony form of government in the Niger Territories will bring war, far greater and more destructive than any war we have yet had in West Africa, and will end in the formation of a debt far greater than any debt we now have in West Africa, because of the greater extent of territory and the greater power of the native States, now living peacefully enough under England, but not England as misrepresented by the Crown Colony system." The news received was exclusively of a military nature. It recorded the exploits of numerous expeditions against native rulers, the "smashing" of this Chief and the other, foreshadowed a large increase in the Frontier Force, and a further extension of the area of punitive undertakings. Every steamer for Burutu had its complement of officers on board for Nigeria, and the military element appeared to reign supreme. At the same time the propagandist efforts of Bishop Tugwell at Kano, which should never have been

allowed, resulted in what was predicted of them when started, viz. failure, utter and complete. Disappointment had its inevitable sequel in the shape of a strengthening of the repressive theory for Nigeria by the apostles of peace. Bishop Tugwell's chief assistant, the Rev. J. A. E. Richardson, on his return hastened to get himself interviewed by Reuter, described "the Emir of Sokoto and the King of Kano as the chief opponents of civilisation in this part of the world," and expressed his hope that the former would be speedily "dealt with." In the same interview, this youthful and enthusiastic reformer was fain to admit the existence in the territories of the aforesaid "opponents of civilisation" of "fields upon fields of cultivated land," houses "splendidly made," "broad thoroughfares," "big, beautiful gardens," &c. The existing "civilisation," although not of the Exeter Hall pattern, had at least something to recommend it! The theme was taken up at home by another bishop, who delivered a sermon which was simply an appeal to brute force in Northern Nigeria, and provoked a good deal of comment. Observers noted an almost exact parallel between Northern Nigeria and East Africa, where the havoc wrought by the unchecked forces of militarism and religious bigotry is of public notoriety.

When Sir Frederick Lugard's report appeared its pages were eagerly scanned, and it was with intense relief that a clear, definite line of action was traced therein, and that an apparently determined intention was noted to make a stand against certain undesirable features of policy which had already become conspicuous. In fact, so outspoken were some of Sir Frederick Lugard's remarks that it was permissible and legitimate to suppose that many of the things which had occurred did not meet with his

approval. Another reflection suggested itself from a perusal of the report, viz. that the Commissioner was being hampered in the pursuance of his task by the absence of the right type of political assistants. Events subsequent to the report have tended to confirm rather than weaken that impression, which, however, is, after all, but an impression, and cannot at present be asserted as a fact.[69]

The chief points to be gathered from the report, as bearing upon the Commissioner's policy, were (1) maintenance of Fulani rule, (2) necessity of taking in hand the affairs of Bornu, (3) advisability of accepting with great caution mere accusations of slave-raiding, (4) harm perpetrated by crude information, (5) recognition that more good can be effected "by getting into touch with the people" than by "a series of punitive expeditions and bloodshed," (6) no compulsory religious training.

A programme such as this cannot fail to command universal approval, and if Sir Frederick Lugard is determined to unflinchingly carry it out he can count upon the thorough-going support of every single person in this country who takes a lively interest in British West Africa. Nay more, he can rely with confidence upon receiving the most strenuous backing should it at any time become apparent that, in his attempt to get his own way, he is not being sufficiently seconded by the Home Authorities, or that the policy of Downing Street in specific directions makes the attainment of that programme difficult if not impossible. Having said so much, it is to be hoped that any criticism directed to the affairs of Northern Nigeria may not be misunderstood in the quarter where one would greatly desire it to be looked upon in the light of a friendly attempt to

assist, and not as criticism is so often regarded on West African matters, as being due to a carping desire to find fault on the part of those who, while fully entitled to speak their minds, are distant from the scene of action, and have none of the worry and trouble involved in actual contact with, or direct responsibility for, the questions upon which they write.

CHAPTER XI
THE FINANCES OF NIGERIA

On June 30, 1899, a Treasury Minute informed the Royal Niger Company of the intention of her Majesty's Government to revoke their charter. At the end of 1899 Sir Frederick Lugard proceeded to Africa to take over the Niger Company's territories in the name of Great Britain. On January 1, 1900, Crown Colony Administration was established in the Niger Company's territories, following its similar establishment in the Delta, which had taken place some years previously.[70] In February 1902 the Government condescended for the first time—in the face of public pressure—to publish a report by Sir Frederick Lugard, *dated London, May 1, 1901*. The report, which is very interesting, but in many respects incomplete, notably as regards finance, only brings us down to March 31, 1901, so that, although we are now well on in the third year of Crown Colony Administration in Northern Nigeria, this single report is the measure of the confidence which the Government sees fit to repose in the British people, concerning the direct responsibilities they have acquired over some twenty-five million natives of Africa.

There are several reasons why the public should not rest content with such meagre information. The first reason is financial. The expenditure of the two Protectorates—Northern and Southern Nigeria—is assuming very large proportions, a heavy load of debt weighs over them, and not only is there not the slightest sign of an effort to wipe off that debt, but almost every month that passes sees an extension of

liabilities. The present condition of our national finances does not justify a continued attitude of indifference towards the expenditure of public funds on an increasing scale in Nigeria. On the other hand, our main object in West Africa being what it is, viz. commercial in nature, there is extreme unwisdom, from the ordinary business point of view, in neglecting to ascertain how the largest and most important of our estates in West Africa is being managed, and if the outlay is giving now, or is likely to give in an appreciably near future, those returns which the public is justified in expecting.

What, then, are the facts as to the financial situation of Northern and Southern Nigeria? In the first place, there is the debt of £865,000 incurred by the Government in buying out the Niger Company. This debt is, while it exists, a bar to progress, and at a Conference held in London on September 20, 1900, we find Sir Ralph Moor, Commissioner for Southern Nigeria, admitting the fact. When a speaker at that Conference urged that more should be spent on technical education in the Protectorate, and that the necessary amount might be paid out of the surplus revenue, Sir Ralph Moor quickly retorted that they had no surplus revenue, but were “in the unenviable position of owing her Majesty’s Treasury £800,000.” So much for the debt, and the obstacle to desirable improvements which its existence entails.[71]

The debt notwithstanding, the administrative expenditure of Southern Nigeria steadily increases. In the year 1899-1900[72] it reached the figure of £176,128,[73] being an increase of £29,383 over the preceding year, and exceeded the revenue by £12,000. No figures are yet available of the expenditure of Northern Nigeria since the

substitution of the Crown for the Niger Company in the *rôle* of Administrator, but a reference to the estimates of March 31, 1902, shows that Northern Nigeria received a grant-in-aid of £88,800 in 1900-01, and another of £280,000 in 1901-02, which includes the provision of £200,000 for the West African Frontier Force voted in 1900-01. We are, therefore, confronted with a minimum expenditure for Northern Nigeria in two years of £368,800. At this rate it is difficult to see how Nigeria is ever to become self-supporting. Such an enormous expenditure could only be warranted by an extraordinary development in trade, or by the creation of means of communication for that development, to be looked upon in the light of expenditure on capital account. It is all very well to call it "Imperial expenditure." Of course it is "Imperial" expenditure, and so is every penny spent in the furtherance of British trade abroad "Imperial." What we have to try and form an opinion upon is whether the administrative expenses of Nigeria are in any way proportionate to the interests which the Administration is supposed to be promoting there. If it is, well and good; if it is not, reform is required.

The relation of the expenditure to the trade of Nigeria is comparatively easy to establish. The total trade (excluding specie) of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1898-99 amounted to £1,477,398, and the total trade of Nigeria—that is, the Niger Coast Protectorate plus the territories of the Niger Company—in 1900 (excluding specie) was £2,113,878. If we deduct, therefore, the one set of figures from the other we can arrive at a close approximation of the trade done in the former Niger Company's territories included since 1900 in the Protectorate of Nigeria. The trade of the Niger

Company's territories in 1901 was, therefore, roughly £650,000, of which it is quite safe to assume that Northern Nigeria did not produce more than one-third, if it produced that, the bulk of the trade being confined to the Niger Company's territories in the Lower River. The trade of Northern Nigeria would thus be represented by some £216,660 out of the total of £650,000. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that it rose in 1901 to £250,000, the total for the two years 1900 and 1901 would be £466,660. Now Northern Nigeria, as already stated, received for the same period £368,800 from the Imperial Exchequer. Pursuing the same method of illustration for the export trade as for total trade, the export trade of the Niger Company's territories works out at some £360,000, of which, say, one-third from Northern Nigeria, or £120,000. Putting it down at £140,000 in 1901 gives a total of Northern Nigeria's export trade, or, in other words, Northern Nigeria's producing capacity for the two years mentioned of £260,000, so that Northern Nigeria is in the disastrous financial situation of spending more than it produces. The one-third basis of calculation is a large and generous one, and Northern Nigeria's share of responsibility in the debt is not included in the reckoning. The position then, so far as Northern Nigeria is concerned, is unmistakably clear. Northern Nigeria is at present a financial burden to the Empire. Eight years' experience of Crown Colony Administration in the Niger Delta, where the machinery set up is not nearly so elaborate as in Northern Nigeria and where the natural exploitable riches are far greater, is hardly calculated to cause feelings of confidence as to what eight years of a similar system will lead to in Northern Nigeria. In the three years ending December 1899 the Niger

Delta (excluding therefrom the Niger Company's territories) produced a trade which averaged in value £1,800,000, of which over £1,000,000[74] represented exports. Under the Crown Colony system, with its expensive machinery necessitating taxation to keep up, its military expenditure, and the absence of all commercial co-operation in the Administration, the value of exports has only once (1893-94) managed to rise above £1,000,000, while with that one exception the highest and lowest figures have been £844,333 and £750,223 respectively, and the total volume of trade for any given three years has never reached the average figure of £1,800,000. The totals of the three years prior to 1900 were respectively £1,441,383, £1,389,922, and £1,507,288. Making every allowance for the fall in the market price of certain products during recent years, which, by the way, has been to some extent counterbalanced by the increased export of new articles, the conclusion to be derived from these figures is that the Crown Colony system in Southern Nigeria has not yielded results which the country has the right to expect, and the moral is that, whatever may be the position of affairs in other British possessions in West Africa, Englishmen should really pull themselves together and seriously consider whether the brilliant future which Nigeria should have in store for it is to run the risk of being compromised just for want of a little courage in facing the facts as they are.

CHAPTER XII
MOHAMMEDANS, SLAVE-RAIDING, AND DOMESTIC SERVITUDE

It has been truly remarked that more permanent good can be accomplished "by tact and gold with Mohammedan chiefs in West Africa than by the Maxim and the rifle." That is a policy which has had much to do with our great and striking success in India. Its application to Afghanistan has within recent years been amply justified by results. Why should it not be followed in Northern Nigeria? Which is cheaper, an output of £5000 per annum in subsidies, or the expenditure of much larger sums in military operations? What is more likely to conduce to the prosperity of a vast densely populated tropical estate where the white man cannot settle, to gain your own ends peaceably, albeit not so speedily as might be desired, or to use force and face the dislocation of the existing social system which violent measures entail? Few people, if they will but calmly consider the matter, can fail to endorse the quotation given above. In Northern Nigeria the question is not merely one of expediency; it affects the honour of England.

When MacGregor Laird started on his pioneering expedition up the Niger which laid the foundations of British trade in the Upper River, his instructions from the Government ran as follows: "It is most desirable to impress upon the chiefs that you are there as traders, not as colonists, not as acquirers of land, but simply as traders and for the protection of trade." When Lord John Russell despatched Captain Trotter and Commander William Allen up the Niger

in 1840, he recognised the advisability of subsidising the native chiefs: "he himself (the chief) shall have for his own share, and without any payment on his part, a sum not exceeding one-twentieth part value of every article of British merchandise brought by British ships and sold in his dominions." When Mr. Joseph Thomson concluded in 1884, on behalf of the National African Company, a treaty of amity and friendship with Umoru, Emir of Sokoto, "King of the Mussulmans of the Sudan," he undertook on behalf of the Company to pay the Emir 3000 bags of cowries (roughly £1500) per annum. When that treaty was confirmed with the Emir on behalf of the Royal Niger Company (the designation of the National African Company when it received its charter) in 1890, and again with the Emir's successor in 1894, the payment of the annual subsidy was confirmed. It was distinctly stipulated in those treaties that the Royal Niger Company "received" its power from the Queen of Great Britain and that "they (the Company) are her Majesty's representatives to me." In the eyes of the Emir, therefore, the Company was just as much "Great Britain" as a consular representative, or a High Commissioner. In exchange for this annual subsidy, the Emir of Sokoto transferred "to the above people (the Company) *or other with whom they may arrange*, my entire rights to the country on both sides of the River Benue and rivers flowing into it throughout my dominions for such distance from its and their banks as they may desire." The Emir also bound himself not to "recognise any other white nation, because the Company are my help." In a letter dated April 27, 1894, the Prime Minister of Sokoto repudiated any intention of treating "with any other from the white man's country except with the Royal Niger Company,

Limited." Separate subsidies were also paid by "her Majesty's representatives (the Niger Company)" to Gandu, as well as to the rulers of Nupe, Adamawa, and other important vassals of the Emir of Sokoto. That, at any rate, was a well-defined political relationship. By it the Royal Niger Company were able to secure this vast and populous country to Great Britain, and by it peace was, with the exception of Nupe[75] and Ilorin, preserved. Whatever may be said of the merits and demerits of the Royal Niger Company as an administrative body, it must be readily granted that a coherent policy was here applied, and that its results were, from the Imperial standpoint, exceedingly satisfactory. The nature of the bargain was precise. The Emir of Sokoto and his vassals conferred extensive rights upon England's representatives and agreed to treat with no other country but England on the basis of a subsidy of £1500 per annum in the case of Sokoto, and sums varying in importance in the case of Sokoto's vassals. The bargain was—according to the terms of the treaty—binding upon the Niger Company and its successors. The Emir of Sokoto kept to his share of it, and at a time when France endeavoured, through Colonel Monteil, to upset the Company's treaty, the Emir loyally observed his obligations.[76] The Company no less loyally observed theirs. It is humiliating to have to confess it, but the British Government has been less loyal than the Company, and less loyal than the African chief whose loyalty enabled England at a critical moment to uphold the claims of her representatives to political influence over Sokoto. The Crown, it seems, has declined to fulfil the obligations imposed on England by these treaties, while reaping to the full the advantages which the existence of the

treaties confers. The first public intimation that the Imperial Government had broken faith with the Emir of Sokoto was made by the Rev. J. A. E. Richardson, already alluded to. His statement ran as follows: "The yearly payment in form of gifts which was made to the Emir of Sokoto by the Niger Company has not been continued by the Imperial Government, and quite recently the Emir flatly refused to allow the erection of a British telegraph line." No official announcement has been made on the subject, nor has any member of Parliament taken the trouble to inquire. But there is not, I think, any doubt whatever that the Imperial Government has, in point of fact, done this thing. I have made careful inquiries in quarters likely to be well informed, and it seems that it was considered *infra dig.* for a Government to politically subsidise a West African chief. That is an extraordinary doctrine. Since when has it been considered *infra dig.* for Englishmen to keep their word with native potentates? Since when has it been thought a criterion of Imperial rule to show native rulers that England's promise is not worth the paper upon which it is written? Is that what has been called the "new Imperialism"? Is it astonishing that the Emir of Sokoto should, in the face of such a repudiation of treaty obligations, "flatly refuse" to allow the erection of a telegraph-line or anything else? Is it not a terrible handicap upon the professed intentions of the most well-meaning administrator, to be confronted at the outset with so powerful a cause of native suspicion and hostility?

Let us observe, for a moment, how the successive stages of British action on the Niger must appear to the native rulers of the country. We start off by saying that we have come to the country as merchants and nothing more, not as acquirers of

land, but simply as traders. In 1870 the Emir of Nupe, Maroba, is found co-operating with Bishop Crowther—an earnest and godly man—to facilitate the operations of merchants at Lokoja. In 1884 Mr. Joseph Thomson is able, without any show of pomp or power, to induce the Emir of Sokoto, supreme ruler of the whole country, to sign a treaty of enormous importance, which practically amounts to a Protectorate, in exchange for a yearly subsidy. Sixteen years later a British Government ceases the subsidy, and follows up that performance by initiating a policy of active interference in the Emir's dominions. As this costs money, the next step will very probably be that the Emir and his subjects will be expected to contribute towards the up-keep of the Administration, and England, having agreed through her representatives to subsidise the Emir in return for advantages conferred, will end by making the Emir pay for permission to remain in his own country. "It seems really incredible," remarked the *Morning Post* the other day, commenting upon the fighting with the Emir of Kontagora,[77] "that a great Empire administering savage countries should have no other weapon save an appeal to arms." It has other weapons, and the most potent of them is the one upon which the Indian Empire has been reared. That weapon may be described thus, "Keep to your plighted word."

The cause of the repeated military expeditions of which Northern Nigeria is the scene, is said to be slave-raiding. "Slave-raiding" is an evil which no one can possibly defend. It leads to great misery, to depopulation and devastation. Its agency is violence. To suppress it is the duty of every European Government. On those points there can be no difference of opinion. The difference comes in when

the means adopted to do away with "slave-raiding" are examined. At present but one remedy has been devised and put into practice in Nigeria. It consists in opposing violence by violence. It has the merit of simplicity, but at best it is but a crude way of procedure, and its efficacy as a reforming agent is open to doubt. "The very foundation," says Carl Schurz, "of all civilization consists in the dispensation of justice by peaceable methods, instead of the rule of brute force," and he adds a sentence well worth thinking over: "Although a course of warlike adventure may have begun with the desire to liberate and civilise certain foreign populations, it will be likely to develop itself, unless soon checked, into a downright and reckless policy of conquest with all the criminal aggression and savagery such a policy implies." It is impossible not to feel the force and the truth of this sentence when the history of British East Africa is studied. These "nigger hunts," to use the term, not of a "deluded philanthropist" or "impracticable sentimentalist," two of the many choice epithets with which people who do not believe in the practical advantages of "nigger hunts" are consistently assailed, but of a specially gifted officer, have worked incalculable mischief, and have put back the hands of the clock for many years. "Some of the wars and the punitive expeditions of the past few years," remarks Professor Gregory in his admirable and impartial work,[78] "have been no doubt inevitable and just. They have been the 'Cruel wars of peace.' But some of the military expeditions in East Africa have been simply criminal in their folly and thoughtlessness." Yet the Home Authorities defended all these expeditions, and covered the perpetrators of blunders with its sheltering wing, to the detriment not only of the general interests of the

Empire, but of the efficiency of the public service, by discouraging officials who had a different conception of the duties of their position, but who saw, by experience, that to get up a row with the natives, to fight some brilliant action and get their "heroism" talked about, was the surest way to obtain promotion. That, I am afraid, is in West Africa also a motive power to advancement.

In his report Sir Frederick Lugard shows that he is alive to the abuses which a too constant "appeal to arms" may give rise to, and how the designation of "slave-raiding" can be converted into a mere excuse to justify acts of injustice and oppression. "Though force," he says, "must be occasionally applied to bands of recalcitrant robbers, I am convinced that a few such lessons will suffice, and that the district officer, with tact and patience, aided by sufficient civil police, can achieve the pacification of the country effectively, and that parsimony in the appointment of these officers, and of their native staff of police, &c., would be a policy of false economy, resulting in unnecessary bloodshed." And again, "It is my conviction that throughout Africa—East and West—much injustice and oppression have been unwittingly done by our forces acting on crude information, and accusations of slave-raiding, &c., brought by enemies of the accused to procure their destruction."

What is the genesis of this slave-raiding we hear so much about? In the first place, it must be obvious to all who have studied the history of inland Western Africa with any degree of attention, that a great deal of what is called "slave-raiding" is not "slave-raiding" at all, but military operations undertaken by the rulers of Mohammedan States for the suppression

of risings against their authority, rendered weak by ineffective organisation, and by the absence of adequate means of communication. Sir Frederick Lugard has thrown useful light upon other circumstances which may lead to wrongful accusations of slave-raiding.[79] But, taking the first case, how often may not an expedition entered upon by a Mohammedan Emir against his pagan subjects in West Africa be as justifiable, if reckoned by the same standard, as the chastisement of a tribe by the representatives of a European Power for resisting a tax enforced by that Power, and considered by the tribe excessive and unjust? The only fair and rational interpretation of slave-raiding, properly so-called, is the incursion of an armed band, without previous provocation of any kind, into a peaceful district, followed by the capture of a number of prisoners of war who are subsequently sold into slavery by the victors. That is a condition of affairs by no means peculiar to West Africa. It prevailed in Europe and in Great Britain at a period when civilisation was infinitely more advanced than it is at present in West Africa.

The motive forces to which slave-raiding is due in Nigeria are: (1) economic necessities, or, in other words, the revenue needs of native rulers, requiring many prisoners of war who, as has been well said, serve the double purpose of cheque-book and beast of burden; (2) the incidental effect of conquest; (3) the direct incitement given to intertribal wars by white men on the West Coast of Africa for a period extending over several centuries, a system which, by the way, prevailed not farther back than slightly over fifty years ago on the Niger; witness Richardson's and Barth's representations to the Government of the day. Those three causes are common to, or have been

common to, West Africa as a whole. To them must be added, in the case of Northern Nigeria and other countries in West Africa converted to Islam by the sword, religious zeal. Let us take those causes severally one by one and examine them.



A MOHAMMEDAN CHIEF AND HIS STANDARD-BEARER

With regard to the first, it must be patent to all who can look at the matter with unprejudiced eyes that, until native rulers in Northern Nigeria are able to count upon a source of revenue replacing that which they lose by the disappearance of raiding operations for slaves, and until a portable currency can be introduced into the country to take the place of the human currency—that is, slaves—the economic *raison d'être* of raids will remain; and that is why, apart from any other considerations, a subsidy to the native rulers on the part of the European "over-lord" cannot but prove itself an instrument for good, pending the slower but certain modifications which the creation of roads, railways, the development of trade which should ensue from

their creation, and the introduction of an easily portable currency—such as silver coinage—cannot fail to bring with them. When in course of time such development takes place, matters should be so arranged that the rulers of the country benefit by the growth of trade in their respective districts, or, in other words, that a portion of the revenue derived by the Administration from trade in a given district should accrue to the ruler of that district, and be expended in the improvement of that district.

In all communities where the ethical standard of the people has not been influenced by the Christian ideal, the enslavement of prisoners of war has existed from time immemorial. The moral standard of the Fulani Chieftains of to-day is not lower than that of Imperial Rome, and for many, many centuries after the tragedy of Golgotha, men enslaved one another in England and in Europe as the natural sequel to warfare.

As for the heavy load of responsibility which England shares—and to a very large extent—with other Powers towards the native of West Africa in her actual *rôle* of inculcator of the higher principles of morality, it cannot too often be called to mind. It is not so very long ago—a mere nothing in the history of nations—that Englishmen hounded on these native chiefs against one another, supplied them with arms and ammunition, excited their fiercest passions, pandered to their worst vices, and all for what? To secure, under circumstances of cruelty more aggravated because more protracted, those very slaves which Englishmen to-day are but too ready to liberate, by killing the descendants of the chiefs who formerly supplied them with the objects of their desire!

Religious fanaticism has ever been attended with outrages upon humanity, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. In considering the case of the Fulani conquerors of Nigeria, we must, if we are just, recollect how relative good and evil are in matters of this kind, how dependent upon those hundred and one things which make up hereditary instincts and environment. Have the Fulani committed more atrocities than Christian Europe (although far behind Christian Europe of those days) perpetrated upon the Jews? Can we turn over the pages of Gibbon and condemn to the death penalty these wanderers in Darkest Africa, when we read of the deeds of Christians amid "civilised" surroundings, where art and crafts, the ease and luxuries of life, culture and refinement had reached, comparatively, so high a stage—a stage which West Africa had never known? Are the episodes of Saint Bartholomew and the persecutions of "bloody" Mary not vividly within our recollection? Do not the lessons of history suggest that "civilisation" would best fulfil its mandate, and rise to the level of its claims, by drawing upon an abundant store of patience in dealing with the evil of "slave-raiding" in Nigeria and elsewhere in West Africa? And if there be a fair prospect, as there undoubtedly is, of removing the causes, economical and otherwise, which produce slave raids, by peaceful methods, to employ the ways of peace rather than the sword, although the process be a slower one, we can have made but very few real strides in the last two thousand years if statesmanship be not equal to the task. This is sentimentalism, you will say. Well, it is easy to call names, but the following passage indicates, at least, that a British Government was not ashamed once upon a time to preach much the same doctrine:

> "While you describe the power and wealth of your country, you will, in all your interviews with the African chiefs and with other African natives on the subject of the suppression of the slave trade, abstain carefully from any threat or intimidation that hostilities upon their territory will be the result of their refusal to treat.... You will allow for any hardness of feeling you may witness in them on the subject of the slave trade, a hardness naturally engendered by the exercise of that traffic, and in some cases increased by intercourse with the lowest and basest of Europeans. You will endeavour to convince them by courtesy, by kindness, by patience, and forbearance of your most persevering desire to be on good terms with them."[80]

At what period, and under what circumstances, has this persevering desire to establish friendly terms, as a basis upon which to work to do away with the internal slave-trade of Nigeria by the exercise of courtesy, kindness, patience, and forbearance been consistently applied, or been given a fair chance? We should be hard put to it to supply even one instance, in a given district.[81]

So much for the moral aspect of the question. There is another aspect to which the most unsentimental of mortals will not deny the attributes of severest practicability. I refer to the effect of these wars, nominally undertaken for the suppression of slave-raiding and the upsetting of priestly theocracies in West Africa, upon the well-being of the inhabitants and upon the prosperity of the Colonies themselves. Those who may be inclined to look into the matter may peruse with advantage that very able

volume, “Ashanti and Jaman,” by Dr. Richard Austin Freeman, one time Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Anglo-German Boundary Commissioner of the Gold Coast.[82] Sir Frederick Lugard in his report writes: “Already, with the removal of the fear of the Fulani, each petty village is claiming its ancient lands, or raiding those of its weaker neighbour, and interminable feuds are the result.” That passage entirely confirms Dr. Freeman’s opinion with regard to the forcible splitting up of the Ashanti confederation after the Wolseley expedition. The latter part of it is almost word for word that of a letter which lies before me at the present moment, and which I received from an Englishman in the Niger shortly after Sir George Goldie’s brilliant but inconclusive campaign against Nupe. “The whole country is confused”—wrote my correspondent—“the central authority having been suppressed; each man raids on his own.” In point of sober fact, almost every war waged in West Africa has a deteriorating effect, unless it be followed immediately by constructive action, which in the vast majority of cases is impossible owing to the vastness of the country. We read of a chief falling foul of the British Authorities and being deposed. If captured, he is marched off to the coast and deported; if he succeeds in escaping, the chances are he will rally some followers round him and prove a source of trouble for a considerable time. However that may be, he is at any rate replaced by some other individual who may or may not have, according to local custom, a right to the chieftainship. A resident with a small escort may or may not be left in the capital. Now, bearing in mind that in Nigeria a district over which a particular chief holds at least a nominal sway is sometimes as large as Wales or larger, no great

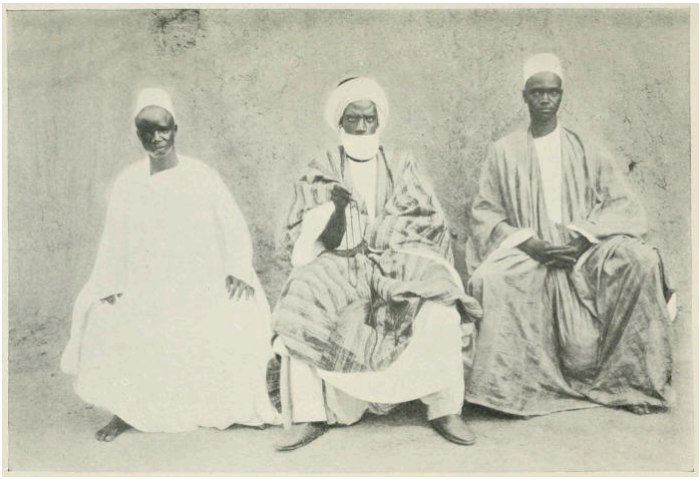
amount of imagination is required to picture what but too often happens. Let us, for the sake of argument, consider Wales an inland kingdom, and imagine it under the feudal system, the King aided by his barons ruling the country, with many abuses no doubt, but still ruling it after a fashion and able to make his power felt. At a given moment the King quarrels with a neighbour. The neighbour enters the country, defeats the King's armies, marches on the capital, captures it and the King together. The King is taken away a prisoner and the conqueror remains in the capital with a small force, ignorant of the language of the people, of their history, traditions, customs and laws. He will not be attacked because it is known that his soldiers possess weapons which kill easily at 300 yards, which mow down men in heaps, and which it is as futile to attempt to face as it is to stand against the roaring tornado hurtling through the forest. But for obvious reasons it is also known that he cannot effectively hold the country. Result number one: all semblance of authority within gun-shot of the capital has disappeared. Result number two: every ambitious baron develops schemes of aggrandisement, starts foraging in the property of his neighbours, who do ditto with religious unanimity; another party remains faithful to the deposed King and intrigues to get him back; another may take the part of the dummy appointed by the conqueror, presuming that step to have been adopted. Sequel: disorganisation, widening of area of disturbance, social chaos, impoverishment of the country.

This is not, indeed, the exception but the rule in West Africa. The facts are on record. I have quoted two eminent authorities in specific instances and mentioned one other case. But the examples are numerous, and were it necessary one might amplify

them considerably. Sometimes the effect is chiefly commercial, as in the case of Nana, ex-chief of Lower Benin.[83] Since his removal after the war in that district the volume of trade has fallen considerably, which has been a bad thing, of course, all round, from the point of view of both revenue and commerce. Speaking generally, the only logical outcome of a punitive expedition in West Africa is the replacing of what has been pulled down by something else which shall answer to the needs of the people in the same way, or a military occupation of every yard of the country. West Africa being what it is, the thing cannot be done, and the consequence of punitive expeditions in that part of the world, no matter what the motives, alleged or real, may have been, is ninety times out of every hundred reactionary, sterile, and morally destructive. Hence, whether it be a matter of slave-raiding or fetishism, or disputes about land, or difficulties about trade, punitive expeditions are things to be avoided, and the Administrator who avoids them is the type of man which West Africa needs most.

A reference to the question of slave-raiding in Nigeria would be incomplete without mention being made of domestic slavery, or more properly termed domestic servitude. I remember assisting, not so long ago, at a lecture by a missionary on Northern Nigeria. With great impressiveness the lecturer announced that a large proportion, four-fifths I think he said, of Hausas in Nigeria are slaves. There was no doubt of the effect of the statement upon the audience, composed of benevolent, well-meaning people, who conjured up at once the most horrible visions. The mere enunciation of the fact, or alleged fact—because, from what I have been able to ascertain, the estimate is widely exaggerated—is

calculated to horrify a public ignorant of the nature and characteristics of domestic slavery in West Africa, and there can be as little doubt that such is the deliberate and perfectly sincere intention of the individuals who make these bald statements, as that their after consequences upon the public mind are harmful. All are agreed that the intestine warfare which results in the capture of many prisoners and their conveyance over large distances always involves great hardships and sorrow, and very often fearful sufferings upon the victims. But the weight of evidence is decidedly against the supposition, still so widely entertained, that domestic slavery in West Africa is what the unscientific advocates of its hasty abolition, regardless of the obvious political objections to such a course, would have the public believe.



MANDINGO MUSLIMS

Nay more, while it may be fully admitted that a condition of servitude is indicative of a state of society which we happily have grown out of, and

which in itself is essentially opposed to the moral law, no impartial student will be prepared to deny that the condition of tens of thousands of toilers in this country is infinitely worse than anything which prevails under the West African native system, where poverty at least is normally non-existent. The latter, it is true, are technically free, but to them actual freedom would, if exercised, lead to starvation pure and simple. They are bound in chains more enduring than any forged by native blacksmiths in Nigeria. The "White Slaves of England" was an appropriate title to a series of terrible articles published a short time ago in a popular London magazine, the absolute accuracy of which has since been acknowledged. "The West African slave"—a celebrated French explorer and administrator has said—"is not so unhappy as many people who live round us and whom *we will not see*." That is the simple truth. Between the domestic servitude of Nigeria—where any form of paid labour is unknown as a native institution—and plantation slavery under European supervision there is all the difference in the world. Compared with the latter, the former is relative bliss. Degradation was the keynote of the one. The other permits and frequently leads to equality between the owner and the servant. Under the European system the slave was a dog and worse than a dog; under the West African system the slave is part and parcel of the social life of the people, a member, and not unfrequently an honoured member, of the family.[84] With the second generation, the distinction between the owning and serving class in West Africa is less pronounced, and with the third generation, if it has not already been practically effaced, the distinction is simply theoretical. Slaves then own slaves of their own, while still theoretically remaining slaves

themselves. Once a slave is incorporated in a household he usually remains a fixture, is decently treated, and, if his conduct is good, his material prosperity rapidly increases. It is the commonest thing in the world for a slave to rise high in his master's favour, and even to hold lucrative and responsible positions. All the relations of domestic life in three-fourths of the Niger territories are based upon the system of domestic slavery, and there is no question which requires to be approached by the authorities with greater breadth of comprehension, with greater largeness of views, with a more sincere resolve to resolutely set aside all appeals, by whomsoever uttered, to bigotry, passion, or prejudice.

The harm which hasty legislation tending to violently interfere with the entire social fabric of a people and with a custom centuries old entails cannot be exaggerated. It spells utter disorganisation, and has already worked incalculable mischief in the British West African possessions by destroying the authority and influence of the chiefs and breaking up the whole labour of the country. The lesson has been learned rather late in the day, and there is hope that it will bear fruit, but the influences on the side of error are very strong at home, and it never seems to occur to those amongst us whose profession in life is the inculcation of the moral virtues, that we have no greater right to destroy or abolish domestic slavery without compensation of some sort, if only that of substituting railway transport and portable currency in West Africa, than we had in the West Indies or in South Africa. Why should West Indian planters and Cape Colonists receive compensation for the loss of their slaves, and the African chief nothing—except bullets? The policy of the sword and the application

of twentieth-century legislation to twelfth-century conditions, however good the intentions, are, in the main, Imperial mistakes, for which England may indirectly pay, but whom the present generation of natives and the generations which come afterwards do—and will—suffer in their persons. "It is understood"—cabled Reuter's agent on the Binue on September 21, 1901, subsequent to the capture of Yola—"that Government will not interfere for the present with domestic slavery, the evil effects of such a policy being still felt in the provinces of Nupe and Ilorin. It upset the internal economy of the whole country, and the male slaves, instead of working on their master's farms, became rogues and vagabonds, and the women something worse." What a biting satire upon the notion that immemorial customs can be changed by a stroke of the pen without breeding disorder and social chaos! The question of domestic slavery in Nigeria may best be approached by once again recalling that great truth, "God's design in the perfecting of man's mind is evolutionary and not revolutionary."

CHAPTER XIII
THE PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS OF NIGERIA

The difficulty in estimating the producing capacity of the enormous territory of Nigeria is not in stating what *natural* products of economic value grow there, but what do not. Nigeria is the tit-bit of West Africa, and practically every form of vegetable growth peculiar to West Africa, or shared by West Africa with other and less favoured tropical portions of the globe, is to be found within its extensive limits. A soil of surpassing richness; numerous waterways, a prolific, industrious population—all the elements are there to make of Nigeria under wise management a second if smaller India, but an India unvisited by drought, or those fearful scourges which are so terrible a drawback to the internal prosperity of India; perchance a happier, richer India.

With the exception of the oil-palm industry, everything is in its earliest stages in Nigeria. Development is rudimentary. Deducting palm oil and kernels, the value of the whole of Nigeria's exports in 1900—the only year available—amounted to the relatively small sum of £212,457. Rubber, ivory, timber, ground-nuts, fibres, coffee, cocoa, gum copal and shea butter are amongst the other products exported. The white sweet-smelling flowers of the rubber vine are one of the commonest sights in the forests of Nigeria. The tree, shrub and vine rubber are all met with. The value of rubber exported from Nigeria in 1900 was £137,289. It may increase to almost any figure if the authorities will but take warning by the sad experience of Lagos, enlist a brigade of trained rubber-workers to instruct the

chiefs in the science of collecting, and prevent—which they can easily do—grossly adulterated rubber from leaving the country, and so preserve a high standard of quality, for, in the present sorry condition of the rubber market, low-class rubbers are almost unsaleable. Here, again, one is compelled to preach, if it be for the fiftieth time, co-operation between the officials and the merchants. In French Guinea, the evils of adulteration (for which, by the way, the merchants were, I am afraid, primarily responsible) have been successfully combated by a working partnership, so to speak. It is not necessary to impose restrictions upon the freedom of the native in collecting this product in his forests, but it is essential to maintain a *permanent* staff of native rubber-collecting instructors. It would cost very little, and the experiment, if patiently and intelligently pursued, would give magnificent results.

Next in importance to rubber comes ivory, which, however, must be regarded as a temporary commerce. Almost the whole of the ivory trade of Nigeria hails from the Binue region, and for many years Yola was the principal buying depôt of the Niger Company, as much as forty tons being sometimes purchased there in the course of the year. The consequences of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1893 and the Franco-German Convention of 1894 are calculated to greatly diminish the trade. The ivory business is entirely in the hands of Hausa traders, who make, or used to make, most of their purchases in the famous markets of Banyo, N'Gaundere, and Tibati, carrying the teeth overland to the Binue and then conveying them across the river, to dispose of either at the Niger Company's pontoon at Yola or factories at Ibi, Lake Bakundi, Lau, and Amageddi, or at Kano, where it was sold for

cloth and found its way eventually to Europe, *viâ* the desert route and Tripolitan ports. This is still done, but, for the reason stated, the volume of trade is almost certain to diminish as the years go on. When the ivory is sold to the Niger Company, English manufactured cloths are purchased in exchange, and this again is bartered by the Hausa traders against the superior article of native make in Kano. Sometimes salt, tobacco, copper-rods, and gunpowder are in request by the ivory traders, instead of cloth. It is always an open question with Hausa traders which pays them best, the single transaction if they sell direct at Kano, or the double transaction involved by sale to the Niger Company. The chief currency of these regions is now the cowry shell, and cowries have a native market price just like anything else; for example, a hundredweight of salt will equal 25 heads of cowries, or roughly 12*s*. 6*d*. When a tusk is brought to the factory it is weighed on a butchers' steelyard. The tariff per pound is 10 heads of cowries. If the tusk weighs, say, 28 lb., it fetches 280 heads of cowries, about £7, or £560 per ton in barter goods, but the price actually paid for mixed ivory in the Binue has been under £500 per ton for many years past. The arrival of an ivory caravan is always the occasion for a great deal of excitement. Some of these caravans stretch over a mile in length. First comes the trader and his friends on horseback, followed by the trader's wives and the various members of his household. Behind them come the slaves, weary and footsore (slaves of Hausas be it noted—not of Fulani), struggling under their valuable loads. The tusks are carried sometimes on the heads and sometimes upon the shoulders. Of course, these caravans can only travel in the dry season, for during the rains the long marches would

be attended with enormous difficulty. There are plenty of tricks in the ivory trade, and our Hausa friend is very fond of putting heavy substances in the hollow of the tusks, knowing well that if he is undetected the increased weight will add to his profit. The Hausas call ivory "owry"[85] and elephants "giwa." They very often bring the flesh of the animal, which fetches higher prices in the native markets than beef or mutton.

Gums, of which there exist many different kinds in Nigeria, also constitute a source of future riches. There is gum arabic (*Acacia senegalensis*) which oozes from the bark—much like sap from a venerable cherry—and the "copals" found in solidified, translucent lumps, by digging at the roots of acacias, and which sometimes fetch as much as £80 per ton on the European markets. Very beautiful some of these specimens are, varying in colour from pale lemon to deep orange-yellow, and clear as the finest amber. These graceful gum-trees form in many places a notable feature of Binue scenery, and abound in many parts of Bornu, and it is not an unusual circumstance for a Bornuese cavalcade, including several individuals wearing the old-world surcoats of chain armour which has so excited the interest and curiosity of travellers in that country, to arrive at a trading-station on the Upper Binue with a load of gum arabic for sale. The natives of Hamarua (Muri), too, are noted gum-collectors. As in the case of almost all Nigerian products, the absence of competition among European purchasers (the Niger Company, it must always be remembered, has been the sole trader in these regions) has hitherto prevented the natives from bringing in very large quantities of gum, and where ivory is to be got, it is hard to induce Hausas to go in for laborious gum

collecting and picking. There can be little doubt whatever that the gum trade is susceptible of being increased to thousands of tons per annum. The supplies must be almost inexhaustive. After many years of assiduous collection, the Kauri pine forests of New Zealand still furnish 8,000 to 10,000 tons per annum of fossil gum, more or less similar to the West African "copals." It can be said without fear of exaggeration that there are hundreds of thousands of tons of this valuable product in West Africa waiting to be dug up. One fine day the fact will be better realised than it is at present, and we may then expect to see a remarkable development in the product. Among other valuable trees freely growing in Nigeria, but of which the economic aspects have not yet been thoroughly studied, two at least deserve special attention. They are the Kedenia (Kedenya) or Shea-butter tree (*Butyrospermum* or *Bassia parkii*[86] —the *beurre de Karité* of the French), sometimes, and erroneously, called the tallow-tree, and the papain or paw-paw (*Carica papaya*). Shea butter has of late appeared as a regular if small export from the Niger.[87] Large forests of it are to be found in the Lagos hinterland, and also in Dahomey, where the French hope to exploit it when their railway enters the zone of production. Shea butter fetches about £24 to £26 per ton in Europe. It contains certain medicinal properties of a purgative nature, I believe, and is said to form a component part of the well-known Elliman's Embrocation. By the inhabitants of Nigeria the butter of the Kedenia is held in high esteem, and is put to a number of varied uses: medicinally, for cooking purposes, &c. The Fulani dose their horses internally with it, and also rub it on the sores which the cumbrous high-peaked saddles of the country frequently produce on the backs of their steeds. The

Kanuri, or Bornuese, use it to light their lamps with, and other tribes believe it to be a sure cure for rheumatism. There seems to be a possibility of the shea-butter tree being put to a second use; recent experiments have shown that the latex furnished by this tree contains properties similar to gutta-percha. [88] The butter- or tallow-tree (*Pendatesma butyracæ*), which is often confounded with the shea-butter tree, is an entirely different tree, belonging to the genus *Guttifera*, whereas the shea butter is of the genus *Sapotacæ*. The French appear to have been the first to make any economic use of this tree, and for the first time last year, when a trial shipment of nuts was forwarded from Conakry to Marseilles by the leading French firm of merchants in the former place. The nuts when crushed were found to yield a valuable oil possessing ingredients which render it particularly applicable for the manufacture of candles. That wise and brilliant administrator, the late Dr. Ballay, Governor-General of French West Africa, left a legacy of priceless worth behind him in the shape of officials reared in his school and imbued with his sentiments, and M. Cousturier, the present very able Governor of French Guinea, has taken up this subject of the tallow-tree nut—"lamy" as it is called—most energetically, in co-operation with the council of merchants established in that Colony. My latest information on the subject is that further shipments of "lamy" nuts from French Guinea have taken place to Marseilles, Hamburg, and Bremen, and that the prospects of disposing of the nuts to seed-crushers at remunerative prices is assured. It remains to be seen whether the nut can be produced in adequate quantities in French Guinea. I have not been able to positively ascertain whether the tallow-tree occurs in Nigeria, but there is every probability that it does,

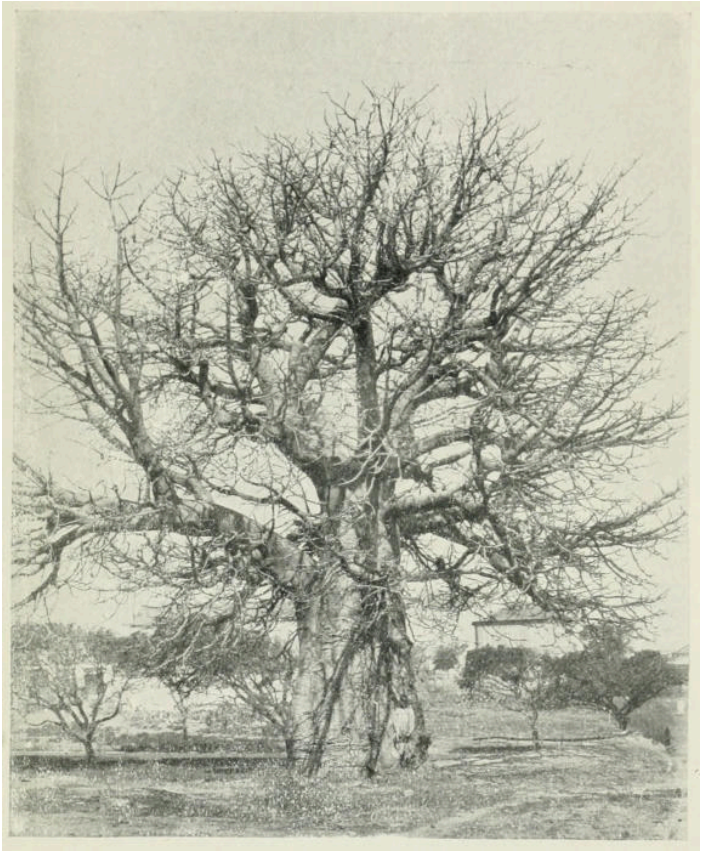
and if so, it will be another vegetable product of value to be added to Nigeria's long list.[89]

Seldom is it that on village market-days in Nigeria the golden pear-shaped fruit of the *paw-paw* does not appear for sale. The natives look upon paw-paw fruit in the double light of a delicacy and article of considerable utility. The juicy milk of the fruit, and the large, handsome leaves contain the singular property of making hard meat tender, a peculiarity which has given rise to many "travellers' tales" on the coast. The toughest steak is rendered soft and agreeable to the palate by being rubbed with the juice of the paw-paw, or wrapped round in its leaves. The active principle of the dried juice of the paw-paw is somewhat akin in nature to pepsin, and is regularly used as a substitute for the latter in France and Germany. So far, the demand is small, but there seems every likelihood that it will increase. In connection with the future development of the paw-paw in Nigeria, it is interesting to note that a small factory for the preparation of pepsin from this fruit has been established within recent years in the Island of Montserrat. In addition to the trees already mentioned, the kola (*Sterculia acuminata*, sometimes termed the *Sterculia cola*), the gutta-percha, the giant baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) or monkey bread-fruit tree, and the bamboo palm (*Raphia vinifera*) must be briefly touched upon. The kola-nut is to the Fulani, the Hausa, the Kanuri, the Songhay, &c., what coffee is to the Arab and opium to the Chinese—a never-failing panacea. So indispensable is the kola to the daily existence of the native of Northern Nigeria, so enormous the demand, that the Hausa journeys thousands of miles to the districts of the Niger bend (the Gold Coast hinterland chiefly), and even to the Gambia hinterland and the valley of the Senegal, to

barter his blue cottons for this much-sought-after fruit. European science will, no doubt, eventually succeed in so improving the quality of the Nigerian kola as to make these long journeys yearly less necessary. Kola plantations should then become a lucrative feature of Nigerian industry.

Gutta-percha is as valuable an article of commerce, and as greatly in demand for European manufactures, as rubber itself. In Nigeria gutta-percha is collected immediately the rainy season is over, the sap at that time of year flowing more freely from the tree. In coagulating, the milk assumes a reddish tinge.

The baobab has been aptly termed the monarch of the African vegetable kingdom. From the bark of the *kuka*, as the Hausas call it, excellent ropes and strings for musical instruments are fashioned, while the fruit, when crushed and dried, furnishes the natives with an excellent substitute for sponges.



A BAOBAB
THE GIANT OF WEST AFRICAN FLORA

Vast groves of the bamboo palm (*R. vinifera*) exist in many parts of Southern Nigeria, and although but little utilised at present, experiments have demonstrated that the fibre derived from the branches of this palm is capable of producing an excellent and durable bass[90] somewhat similar in quality to that which is obtained from the allied spices, the *Raffia ruffia* of Madagascar, the demand for which on the European market is already

extensive.

Date palms, dum palms, and cocoa-nut palms, lemons, bananas, plantains, sweet potatoes, yams, sugar-cane, hemp, tobacco, benni seed,[91] pepper, cassada, castor seed, capaiva—Nigeria produces all these in more or less abundance, according to the locality, and also ground-nuts and large quantities of capsicums (red pepper). The valuable indigo plant is widely cultivated by Hausas and Fulani, and Kano owes much of its wealth to the dyeing industry carried on by the natives. The native-woven Kano cloth, dyed a deep indigo blue, is renowned all over Northern, Western and Central Africa. With European skill, the cultivation of indigo in Nigeria may possibly have a future before it, although the present outlook is not encouraging.

The cotton shrub grows luxuriantly in Northern Nigeria, and the cloth manufactured from it by the natives can favourably compare, for durability and fineness of texture, with the best Manchester article. There may yet be a great cotton industry in Nigeria, but the subject of cotton cultivation in West Africa is sufficiently large to justify a special chapter.

Ebony, mahogany and other valuable cabinet woods abound in the enormous untapped forests of Southern Nigeria, and if no peddling restrictions are placed upon the development of the timber industry, it should reach large proportions. Sapelli is beginning to have some importance as the foremost port of shipment for Southern Nigeria timber.

Nigeria also produces cereals in plenty, such as maize or Indian corn, millet, rice, barley, guinea corn, gero, &c., and on the high plateaux coffee, tea, and perhaps vanilla could be grown.

As far as minerals are concerned, silver,[92] tin, antimony and stone potash[93] are known to exist in several parts of Nigeria, but none of them, save the latter, have been worked. When the country has been better explored and surveyed, gold and copper may also be found (small quantities of gold dust are sometimes sold by the Kanuri to Fezzan and Ghadamseen merchants), but their presence in any extent is at present problematical.

Tin is known to exist up the Binue, and an English Syndicate has been formed to explore and report upon the tin-bearing possibilities of certain districts. The Niger Company are about to start prospecting operations, and the Germans are also said to be studying the same subject at Garua.

Such, briefly enumerated, are the chief natural products of Nigeria, the most fertile and prolific portion of the Central African Continent, towards which has gravitated a commercial movement from north, east and west for centuries past. Such eminent authorities, in their respective ways, as Barth, Nachtigal, Monteil, Thomson, &c., speak in terms of unbounded admiration of the fruitfulness and the beauty of these regions, and all the information brought by travellers and explorers of lesser importance only tends to confirm the assertion of the great geographer Reclus, that the countries of the Chad Basin are the richest in Africa.

CHAPTER XIV
RUBBER-COLLECTING IN NIGERIA

I have already briefly alluded to the vegetable products of Nigeria. The collection of rubber, however, presents many features of interest, and deserves more extended treatment.

Of late years the West African rubber industry has grown enormously. In some cases the increase has been phenomenal. The Niger Coast Protectorate and the Gold Coast have within the space of six years more than doubled their rubber exports. The performance of Lagos has been still more remarkable, although unfortunately the wastefulness, or perhaps it would be fairer to say the lack of scientific knowledge on the part of the natives in tapping the trees and vines, has led to a notable falling off in production during the last three years. It seems evident that Western Africa may in time rival Brazil as the rubber-producing country of the world.

The rubber found in West Africa is of various kinds. The place of honour, so far as our own Colonies are concerned, may be given to the rubber-tree properly so-called, *Kickxia Africana* (the “Ere” or “Ireh” of the natives), and a beautiful tree it is, springing up clean and smooth to a height of sixty feet. Then come various species of *Ficus*, and last, but not least, the *Landolphias*, or rubber-vines.

In Nigeria rubber is found, roughly speaking, from Abutshi, 120 miles up the river Niger, as far as Jebba on the Niger and Yola on the Binue. We will suppose that a rubber-collecting expedition has been decided

upon by the inhabitants of some village fifteen or twenty miles from the river side (rubber in Nigeria is scarce on the actual river banks).

Soon after dawn all the available men and women gather together—a light-hearted, jabbering crowd. Extraordinary animation reigns throughout the village. The ground is strewn with the implements necessary to the rubber-collector's art, and with the victuals essential to the sustenance of his body while the work is being pursued. They include such varied articles as calabashes, "matchets," knives, dried yam in bags, and fresh water in bottles which once contained that delectable, throat-peeling liquid known as Hamburg gin. Mingled with them, in apparently hopeless confusion, numerous spears and flint-lock guns lie scattered. There is generally something or other on the prowl in an African forest in the shape of leopards, or "humans," or spirits—and it is just as well to be prepared for any emergency. Hence these warlike accompaniments, calculated to deceive the inexperienced into a belief that raiding and not rubber is in question.

Through the village and beyond it, passing plantations of millet, yams, Indian corn and cassava, winds the caravan, until the fringe of the forest looms near. Then, abruptly parting with the bright sunlight and the waving fields, we plunge headlong into an atmosphere of gloomy, fantastic weirdness, and disappear amid the silent shadows of the giant trees. By this time the caravan is reduced to single-file formation. It has stretched out for a mile or more along the narrow curling path, which often takes the form of an almost complete circle, those who compose its extreme rear being within hailing distance of the leaders, while between the two

extremities and the centre is a broad belt of impenetrable bush. And what a solemnity broods over all! Everything is hushed. The bare feet of the natives sink noiselessly on generations of fallen, rotting leaves. The air is damp, humid, and enervating. We glide along in the semi-religious light as though oppressed by some vast, undefined, awesome presence. It is a world of great black shadows and mysterious depths; and within it the soul shrinks and falters beneath a weight of indescribable, all-potent, unnerving melancholy. A hot breath, laden with sickly and overpowering perfume, rises in stifling gusts till the brain reels, and you long with a great yearning for air and light and waving fields. And then, suddenly, a glimpse of Paradise. Shattered by lightning, or perchance, riddled by the larvæ of some monstrous coleoptera, a forest giant has tumbled headlong, tearing by the impetus of his fall a great rent in the sombre dome above, through which, though chastened and subdued, the sun's rays filter down upon the path beneath. There, in that temporary clearing, Nature seems to have lavished all her gifts. Festoons of glorious orchids stretch out their capricious blooms, asking to be plucked. The wild tamarind, with its exquisite, plum-coloured, plush-like fruit, invites the touch. Round flowers and fruit flutter countless brilliantly coloured butterflies, and the glimpse of a deep tropical blue, far, far overhead, completes the fairy sight. No palm-fringed oasis among shifting sands can be more blessed to the traveller than these gem-like clearings amid the sullen gloom of the tropical forests of Western Africa.

But to return, with apologies for this digression, to our rubber-collectors. No sooner has the member of a caravan—every one acts, as a rule, independently of

his fellow—pitched upon a spot which seems propitious, than down comes the load off his head. A little preliminary in the shape of refreshment is ever conducive to good labour, so recourse is had to the *ci-devant* gin-bottle and the dried yams. These inner cravings having been satisfied, the rubber-collector makes with his "matchet" a number of transverse incisions in the bark of an adjacent rubber-tree, or vine,[94] as the case may be; hangs his calabashes (empty gourds) beneath the cruel rent, sees that the sap is running; looks round for more trees, makes more incisions, hangs up more calabashes; and then, feeling fully satisfied with his labours, casts himself down upon the ground and lies there awhile, heedless of the crawling legions of the insect fraternity. Every now and then he will lazily rise and make the round of the trees he has tapped, to assure himself that the sap is flowing freely into the calabashes. A really good workman will collect three or four pounds of rubber a day, so that, taking an average of, say, two pounds for each individual, a caravan numbering one hundred and fifty souls will gather a considerable quantity of the stuff in a comparatively short time. The sap is then boiled in an iron pot to make it coagulate, salt and lime being sometimes added to help the process of solidification. It is then rolled into balls. When the calabashes are full the homeward march begins.

The home-coming of the caravan is marked by congratulations on the part of those who stayed behind, and every proud owner of a calabash or two of rubber recounts to the members of an admiring household the wild and terrible adventures (in the shape of spooks, leopards, and what not) which have befallen him in the forest.

The last stage in the business, so far as the native is concerned, has then to be carried out. The rubber having been collected, it must be sold. So off goes the collector to the nearest trading station with the spoil. Now, if the commercial ways of the Heathen Chinee are dark, the ways of the Heathen son of Ham are much the same on occasion. The rubber, he knows, is bought by weight. Primitive reasoning convinces him that if he rolls his rubber round a stone or bullet, not only will the ball weigh more, but he will be able to make more balls out of the rubber he has collected. The consequence is that the European trader, when he cuts the rubber ball in two (being used to these little pranks), frequently comes across a stone, bullet, or other heavy substance embedded in the centre, to the unbounded astonishment, needless to remark, of our friend the collector, who cannot for the life of him understand who placed it there, and asserts, with much emphasis and gesticulation, that only a ju-ju or spirit of the most depraved character could have played an honest man so low-down a trick.



WASHING RUBBER

When the rubber has finally passed into the white trader's hands, after the preliminary native preparation, it is still found to contain a large proportion of water (about 10[95] per cent.) and emits a most disagreeable odour. This water has to be ejected before the rubber is fit for the European market. The balls or cakes are therefore placed in a pressing machine, resembling an ordinary mangle, then cleaned of the impurities which may still remain, and finally cut into strips, soaked in sea-water to prevent "sweating," and shipped in wooden casks.[96]

The rubber trade of Nigeria is only in its infancy, and the advent of competitive private enterprise into the Niger territories should have the effect of stimulating the industry to a notable extent.

The unfortunate destruction of the rubber trees and vines in the Lagos forests has been instrumental in producing a *furor* of restrictive legislation on the part of the authorities. There is grave doubt as to whether this method of approaching the subject is not mistaken and likely to defeat its own ends. It is incongruous, to say the least of it, to first of all encourage the native to exploit a new product, to give him no scientific instruction or training in the process, and then, when the inevitable happens, to express great indignation at his villainous capacity for mischief, and frame legislation calculated to interfere with his free use of his own property! It is not the general custom of the native to destroy a product out of which he makes money. In the case of the oil-palm, in the usage of which they have been long accustomed, the native chiefs themselves legislate against over-tapping, witness the "porroh" of the Mendis. It is a matter of instruction. It is

notorious that the crisis in the Lagos rubber industry is entirely attributable to the gross foolishness displayed by the authorities in the first instance in not taking the necessary means to teach the natives the art of rational production. What is wanted is the creation of small centres of instruction in every district, where the natives could come for information, where various products could be shown, tested and commented upon. The official in charge would have no powers whatever conferred upon him in a political sense, but would be connected, of course, with the Government. His duty would be that of instructor, supervisor, guide, and assistant. He would certainly be welcomed by the chiefs, so long as they were assured that his *rôle* was entirely divorced from political designs. The experience would cost very little, and the benefits accruing therefrom, both as regards the perfecting of existing native industries and the stimulation of new ones, would be considerable, and would do away with the necessity, or alleged necessity, of subsequent legislation of an irritating character. A little more of that sort of thing and a little less blood-letting and "murder of native institutions," as Miss Kingsley used to put it, in order to improve them, would be very desirable.

CHAPTER XV
THE FULANI IN NIGERIA

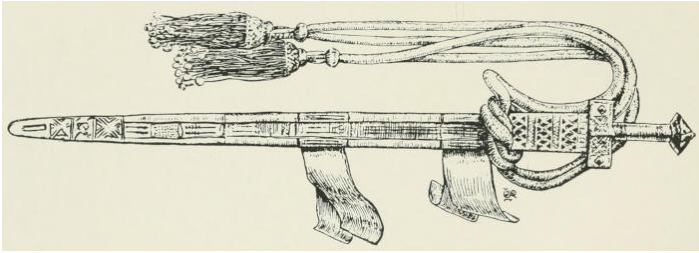
> "Remember that Paradise is found under the shadow of swords. These wretches are come to fight for an impious cause. We have called them into the right way, and to reward us they threaten us with arms. Meet this attack with courage and be certain of victory for the Prophet has said, 'Even if a mountain is guilty against another mountain, it is swallowed up in the earth.'"—The speech of OTHMAN, the Fulani conqueror of Hausa, to his soldiers on the outbreak of war.

"The King of Gober took many of their cows. The Phulas said nothing. He returned again to seize their cows. The Phulas said, 'Is it right on us to take vengeance?' But the King of Gober took some of their cows and returned them to them, saying, 'Let there be peace between us; you leave this place and return to some place near me.' They replied they would not go. In the morning he commenced fighting with them, with one thousand horse soldiers to seize the Phulas; but they drove him back with great force. From that time he did not make open war with them again; but he brought poison, put it into the water, and all who did drink of it died. After this the Phulas made war with him, and when they had conquered his people, they caught many of them and made them slaves; in this way it was that the Phulas got possession of Gober. In the same way it was that they sent their people to all parts of Hausa and fought with the Pagans."[97] Thus does a native version explain the origin of the great Fulani uprising in the Hausa States in the early part of last century which

started a great wave of Muslim conquest, sweeping southwards from the Chad Basin almost to the ocean. "We will dip the Koran in the sea," swore the conquering host of white-clad horsemen, and but for the concentration of the agricultural Yorubas, which checked their advance and led to their overthrow, by a night surprise, outside the walls of Osogbo,[98] they would have fulfilled their vow.

The story of the Fulani revolution—misnamed by some "invasion"—in Hausa has been often told, sometimes correctly,[99] sometimes with obvious bias against the reformers, and *minus* several important facts, such, for instance, as the co-operation which the revolutionists sought and found among the Hausas themselves. To describe it once again would be superfluous. Suffice it to say that "victims of persecution," as their own records assert and as Barth confirms, and as we are at least as warranted in believing as those other accounts which make them out to be the oppressors rather than the oppressed; in much the same position of social and political inferiority to men whose intellectual superiors they are, as their compatriots find themselves to-day in Borgu, the pastoral Fulani of Northern Nigeria, remembering the performances of other of their brethren when similarly situated, and acting under the influence of their mallam Zaky, or Othman Dan Fodio, to give him his European appellation, flung aside the crook, took to the sword, and with the name of "Allah" on their lips completely subjugated in a few short years the mutually antagonistic Hausa States, made themselves masters of the principal cities, converted the natives to Islam, and so ably and justly administered the country,[100] that, in Clapperton's words, "The whole country, when not in state of war, was so well

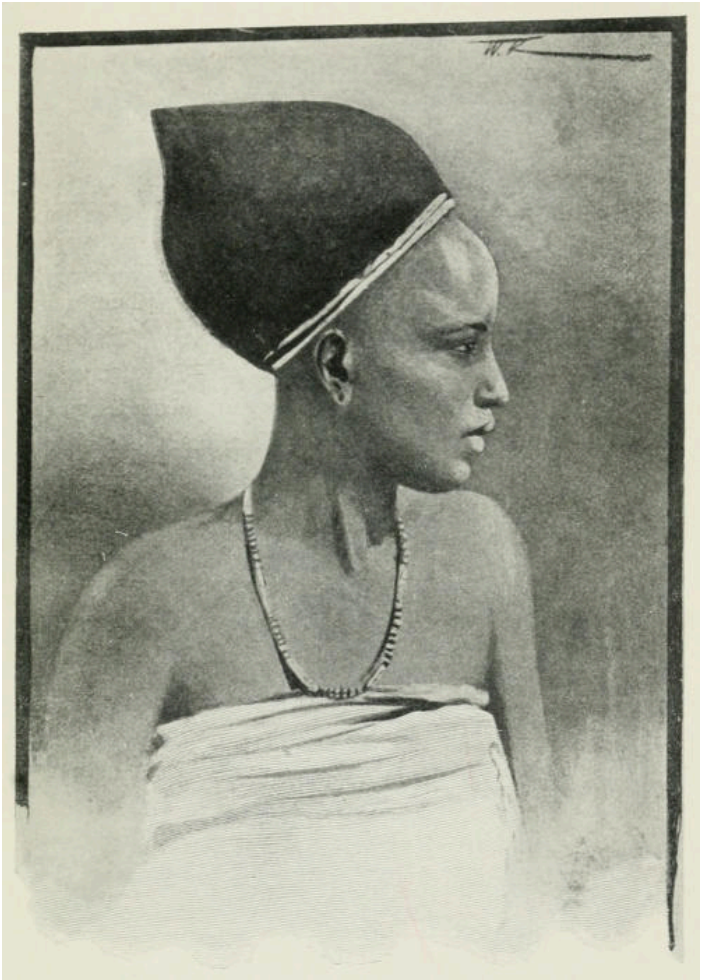
regulated that it was a common saying that a woman might travel with a cask of gold upon her head, from one end of the Fellatah[101] dominions to the other."[102] From cattle rearers and herdsmen the Fulani temporarily became warriors, administrators and statesmen, a minority retaining these attributes to this day, while the bulk of the people continue their usual avocations. Their capacity for combination enabled them to overcome the Hausa States, perpetually engaged in intestine quarrels; their statesmanship induced them to foster and encourage the caravan trade with the Tripolitan ports; their administrative genius was observable in a hundred ways, not the least in obtaining their revenue by the maintenance of existing forms of taxation.[103] Their intense religious zeal has been so communicative that the Hausas have never even fractionally relapsed into Paganism.[104] When we contemplate the achievements of the Fulani in Nigeria we are lost in wonder, and there is no difficulty in endorsing what Sir Frederick Lugard has said of them—and what many French administrators and officers have said before him—"they are born rulers and incomparably above the negroid tribes in ability." What potent allies these men can be to the wise administration which makes use of their services in Western Africa, which gains their confidence and enlists their sympathies!



FULANI SWORD

The wholesale manner in which the Fulani have succeeded in stamping their individuality upon the races with whom they have come in contact is astonishing. Everywhere in their wonderful *trek* from east to west, and from west to south, from the valley of the Senegal to the valley of the Binue, new and more virile generations have sprung up beneath their fertile tread, destined in the course of time to found for themselves separate kingdoms, almost to become separate nationalities. Thus in Futa Jallon, that mountainous region abounding in the fine cattle the Fulani themselves introduced in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, and which before the French occupation supplied the Freetown markets with fresh meat, we find the Fulani powerfully affecting the ethnic elements of the country by their unions with the indigenous Jalonkes and Mandingoes. In Senegambia, a well-nigh distinct race has arisen in the Tukulors, Fulani crossed with Joloff and Mandingo. Hausas and Kanuri of Bornu, Tuareg of the southern confederations, and Susus from the Northern Rivers[105] have all received an infusion of Fulani blood. And yet the pure Fulani element has preserved itself, and while absorbing countless tribes and becoming itself greatly modified in certain districts, has succeeded in perpetuating the parent strain which has never been absorbed.[106] At the present time may be found, scattered throughout the Western Sudan, in the Futa Jallon highlands, and in the regions abutting upon Lake Chad—in Adamawa notably—the same type of nomadic herdsmen, refined, hospitable and courteous in demeanour, simple and patriarchal in his habits, with clear-cut features and copper-coloured or olive-tinged complexion, who tended his hump-backed cattle and

roman-nosed sheep a thousand years ago in the oasis of Tuat and the plains round Timbuctoo. And by his side, his wives, rejoicing in a greater degree of liberty and authority in the household than any of their African sisters, with the charm of another land upon them, soft-eyed, spice-loving daughters of the East, from whence they came in those dim and distant days shrouded in impenetrable mist.



PURE-BRED FULANI GIRL, ADAMAWA

The history of the Fulani is not confined to Nigeria. Their rise to power in the old Hausa States, and the foundation of the Sokoto Empire is, as we have seen, quite a modern event, and it is only partially accurate to say that their dominating influence in inland Western Africa dated from the Jihad of Othman. The latter's successes certainly inspired the Fulani (but perhaps more especially the cross races of Fulani blood) west of the Niger to warlike deeds. The Fulani revolution in Hausa was followed by the Fulani uprising in Segu against the pagan Bambarras and Soninkes. Timbuctoo fell into their power in 1826. Mohammed Lebo started a crusade in Massina, directed as much against the pagans as against his co-religionists and compatriots, for their lack of zeal and the impurities which had crept into their religious observances. After Mohammed Lebo, the great Tukulor chief, El-Haji-Omar, a man of remarkable ability, belonging to the fanatical sect of the Tijaniyah, gathered an immense host around him, by means of which he waged war on all and sundry, showing particular animosity towards the parent stock from which he sprang. But his religious zeal was untempered by political purpose, his constructive powers appear to have been small, he fought entirely for his own hand, and his collision with and subsequent defeats by the French resulted in the revolt of those who had suffered from his excesses. It is a curious fact that he should have finally been driven to desperation and suicide, and his power extinguished, by the Fulani themselves, notwithstanding the ties of blood which bound them to the Tukulors, from among whom Omar naturally obtained most of his recruits. Nevertheless, El-Haji-Omar is still a name to conjure

with in the Western Sudan, and other adventurers of his type have from time to time given the French a deal of trouble. But the Fulani had been masters in a considerable portion of Western Africa long before Othman raised his standard in Gober of Hausa. In the next chapter endeavour will be made to search the earliest records throwing light upon the presence of the Fulani in Western Africa. This will help us to approach the problem of the origin of a race which constitutes the ruling factor in the foremost, in point of size and importance, of the British Protectorates in West Africa.

CHAPTER XVI
THE FULANI IN WEST AFRICAN HISTORY

"In every kingdom and country on each side of the river there are some people of a tawny colour called Pholeys.... They live in hoards or clans, build towns, and are not subject to any kings of the country, though they live in their territories: for if they are ill-treated in one nation they break up their towns and remove to another. They have chiefs of their own, who rule with so much moderation that every act of government seems rather an act of the people than of one man.... They plant near their houses tobacco, and all round their towns they open for cotton, which they fence in together; beyond that are their corn-fields, of which they raise four kinds.... They are the greatest planters in the country, though they are strangers in it. They are very industrious and frugal, and raise more corn and cotton than they consume, which they sell at a reasonable price, and are very hospitable and kind to all; so that to have a Pholey town in the neighbourhood is by the natives reckoned a blessing.... As they have plenty of food, they never suffer any of their own nation to want; but support the old, the blind, and lame equally with the others; and, as far as their ability goes, assist the wants of the Mandingoes, great numbers of whom they have maintained in famines."—FRANCIS MOORE on the Fulani of the Gambia (1734).

"A race in which self-reliance and colonising instincts are prominently developed. Education and mental training are carefully attended to. In every town and village are men who devote themselves to the instruction of youth. Nearly every man and woman can at least read Arabic. Under the enlightened rule of Alimami Ibrahim

> Suri, life is held in reverence, property is sacred, robbery committed in the highway is punishable with death.... There is a woman in Timbo who knows the whole of the Moallaket by heart, an accomplishment in Semitic lore which many an Oriental scholar in Europe might envy."—DR. BLYDEN on the Fulani in Futa-Jallon.
>
> "They occupy a high place in the scale of intelligence."—BAIKIE on the Fulani of Northern Nigeria.

The earliest mention we have of an Empire existing in West Africa is contained in the *Tarik*,[107] a history of the Western Sudan, written in the seventeenth century by one Abderrahman ben Abdallah ben Imran ben Amir Es-Sa'di, and apparently ascribed by Barth in error to the celebrated *savant* of Timbuctoo, Ahmed Baba. That Empire was the Empire of Ghanata, so called from its capital Ghana, which has been identified with Walata or Biru. The spread of the Empire was enormous and extended to the Atlantic, embracing the valleys of the Senegal and the Gambia. Ghana was situate in the central province of the Empire, by name Baghena, the modern Bakunu according to Commandant Binger. The *Tarik* states that twenty-two kings had reigned in Ghanata prior to the Hejira. Barth approximated the foundation of Ghanata to 300 A.D. It was attacked and defeated in the eighth century[108] by a Berber tribe (Zanaga, Senhaja?), the invaders subsequently succumbing, at what period is obscure, to the Mandingoes—or Mandingo-Fulani, *i.e.* Tukulors—who from its ruins constructed another Empire which grew to even larger proportions, that of Melli, Melle,[109] or Mali, as it is variously spelt. Who were the original founders of the Ghanata or Walata Empire?



FULANI CHIEF—FUTA JALLON

Dr. Robert Brown, in his most admirable edition of Pory's translation of Leo,[110] says: "Walata is the Arab and Tuareg name, while Biru is the one applied

to it by the Negro Azer, a section of the Aswanek, who are the original inhabitants of the place." At the time the above was written no complete copy[111] of the *Tarik* was obtainable, and Dr. Brown was unable consequently to consult the work, and to observe how closely it corroborates Barth's famous chronological history of the Songhay. Had he done so the passage in question would, no doubt, have undergone modification, for the *Tarik* distinctly tells us that the name of the original founder of the Ghanata (Walata) dynasty was Quaia-Magha,[112] and Magha, as M. O. Houdas points out, is a Fufulde word meaning "great." Thus it is legitimate to assume, in view of the absence of rebutting evidence, that the original founders of probably the oldest Empire in West Africa, of the first Empire at any rate of which record is left to us, were of Fulani blood. In any case, it would appear to point conclusively to the existence of the Fulani language, and therefore to the presence of the Fulani in the Senegal region of West Africa from the very earliest times.

It may be argued that a single word is a slender basis upon which to construct a theory. But when it is borne in mind (1) that the ensuing historical record of the very same region, 1500 years later, viz. the arrival at the court of the Bornuese king Biri of two religious chiefs *of the Fulani of Melle*, proves the presence of the Fulani in the country which the *Tarik* asserts was ruled over by a king with a Fulfulde[113] affix to his name; (2) that every successive account, both Arabic and European, referring to the same region corroborates the circumstance, it will be conceded that the assumption goes far beyond mere plausibility. There is every reason to believe that the Fulani were numerous in the Empire of Melle[114] (if, indeed, the rulers of that Empire were not of mixed

Fulani blood, which seems probable[115]), sometimes in the ascendant, sometimes the under-dogs, according as their political fortunes rose and fell. [116] In the middle of the fifteenth century they were certainly the ruling race in Baghena (the central province, as already stated, of the Ghanata Empire, which seems to have preserved its name subsequent to the Mellian conquest), having succeeded apparently in getting the upper hand. We know this from the Songhay records, which tell us that at that period Askia, the powerful Songhay king, "conquered Baghena and slew the Fulani chieftain Damba-Dumbi."[117] Thirty years before that event the chief of Baghena was also a Fulani, as is testified by the records of Askia's predecessor. About 1450 Ca-de-Mosto speaks of "el rey dos Fullos" on the banks of the Senegal. Later on, John II. of Portugal sends an embassy to Tamala, "powerful king of the Fulas." De Barros, the Portuguese historian, refers to a great war, "incendia de guerra," in the Senegal country (1534). Masses of Fulani, says de Barros, left the country of "Futa"—probably Futa-Toro—in a southerly direction. So numerous was the host, he continues, that "it dried up the rivers in its passage." Marmol also refers to this southward movement. The Fulani, "who had raised so formidable an army in the southern parts of the province of 'Fura' (Futa) which borders on Mandingo, which they were marching against, that they pretended it dried up rivers."[118] No doubt that was the beginning of the Fulani migration into Bondu and Bambuk, to be followed at a subsequent period by a continuation of the movement into Futa-Jallon. The *Tarik* gives us the story of the foundation of the Fulani State of Toro by Salta Tayenda, "the false prophet," in 1511.[119] According to the *Tarik*, the Fulani were ruling as far

eastward as Masina in the fifteenth century, and Barth's chronological table of the Songhay mentions an expedition by a Songhay king against the Fulani of Gurma, still farther east.

Coming to a later period, we have Jobson (1628) talking of the Fulani as oppressed by, and in subjection to, the Mandingoes in the Gambia region. In 1697 the Sieur de Brüe pays his first visit, on behalf of the French Senegal Company, to the court of the Fulani ruler on the Senegal River. Labat's description of the event is most picturesque. They were the days when African monarchs were treated with respect by the European who desired to trade with their subjects. Even the cynical prelate to whom we are indebted for the relation of Brüe's voyage, and who chuckles over the small villainies practised upon the Fulani by the Company, expresses astonishment with the Fulani institutions, the judiciary and administrative systems, the agricultural and commercial aptitude of the inhabitants. "As far as the eye could reach," he says, quoting from Brüe's papers, "not an inch of ground was left uncultivated or neglected." Farther on he speaks of "vast plains covered with cattle." "They"—the Fulani—he continues, "cultivate the soil with care and make abundant harvests of large and small millet, cotton, tobacco, peas and other vegetables, and they rear prodigious quantities of cattle." In short, we find the same well-defined characteristics in the Fulani Empire in the Senegal of the seventeenth century as are observable in their Empires of more recent date. Herdsmen and agriculturists by nature, they produce, when circumstances have placed the government of the countries in which they have settled into their hands, a class of statesmen and administrators.



HALF-CASTE FULANI GIRL—FUTA-JALLON

I have quoted a considerable number of authorities —the list might easily be extended—to show that the Fulani have lived in the Senegal and Gambia region

from remote times, and that their identification by the *Tarik*, and by Barth, with the Ghanata Empire, estimated by the latter to date back to A.D. 300, is, therefore, inherently probable. From the region in which they have alternately been rulers and ruled, and where they reside to-day under French domination, the Fulani have gradually spread themselves south and east, throughout almost the entire region of inland Western Africa. The movement continues and is one of the most interesting ethnological factors in Western Africa. On the west, the forest belt has prevented the Fulani from reaching the ocean, although on two occasions they were very nearly doing so, from behind Lagos in the middle of last century, as mentioned in the previous chapter; from behind Sierra Leone about thirty years before their defeat at Osogbo, their cavalry (as in Yoruba) being ineffective against the opposition of the forest dwellers, Sulimas and others —the free Negroes of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, upon whom Downing Street in its wisdom imposed a property tax in 1898. Ashanti tradition mentions the advent of "red men" from the interior as a contributive cause of their migration southward.[120] To-day the Fulani have reached the borders of the great Congo forest, and according to some accounts are present in very large numbers on the Sangha River.[121] Will they seek to penetrate the forest or will they turn aside, oblique to the north,[122] once more and, as though impelled forward by an inscrutable decree of Providence, gravitate imperceptibly towards the spot where they crossed into the Dark Continent from Asia, and first set foot upon that African soil which for some four thousand years has been their home?

CHAPTER XVII
ORIGIN OF THE FULANI

> "The most interesting of all African tribes.... A distinct race."—DR. BARTH, "Travels in Central Africa" (5-volume edition).

Of all the mysteries which lie hidden, or but half unveiled, within the bosom of the still mysterious Continent of Africa, there is none that presents a more absorbing or more fascinating interest than the origin of the race which has infused its individuality throughout inland Western Africa, and whose fertilising influence is visible from the banks of the Senegal to the Chad.

In the previous chapter it has, I venture to believe, been fairly established that the Fulani are indubitably associated with our earliest available records of Western Africa, and that, with the exception of Hanno's narrative (touched upon presently), every important reference, spread over many centuries, to the portion of Western Africa between the tenth and twentieth parallels of North latitude, bears witness, directly or indirectly, to the presence of the Fulani within that region at a remote period.[123] Whence came this people, which differentiates so radically in colour, form, habits, customs and manners from the Negroes among whom they have settled, and which dominated in the valley of the Senegal as far back as the fourth century?

Their own legends; their complexion and structure; their mental development and physical characteristics, all point emphatically to the East as

the cradle of the Fulani race; a “distinct race,” as Dr. Barth truly says, and not the bastard product which some would make out.



LOW-CASTE FULANI, WESTERN SUDAN

Before attempting to piece together the various threads which in the aggregate amount, in my humble opinion, to a virtual demonstration, it may be well to state that the Eastern theory numbers opponents who, from their position and attainments, compel our attention. There are those who entertain the belief that the Fulani belong to the Berber stock. There are others who think—and this I cannot but regard as wildly improbable—that the Fulani are of Nigritic extraction. M. Marcel Dubois, the brilliant author of “Timbuctoo the Mysterious,”[124] whose treatment of the Fulani is anything but impartial, categorically denies the Eastern theory. “It was from the West,” he says, “from the Senegalese Adrar (Aderer of British maps), from the land of sand extending north of the Senegal that they came.” “The Foulbes,” he continues, “had been driven towards the Sudan, very probably when the Moors, expelled from Spain, invaded Adrar.” M. Dubois finds corroboration

of his views in a passage of the *Tarik* (which, being written by an Arab, is necessarily biased against the Fulani) to the effect that the "Foulbes originated in the country of Tischitt." I venture, very respectfully, to differ from M. Dubois. According to Leo, the Moors or Berbers conquered Ghanata in the eighth century, the ruling caste at that time, as both the *Tarik* and also Barth's records lead us to infer, being of Fulani blood, which in itself casts doubt upon M. Dubois' assertion. But the more one endeavours to reconcile M. Dubois' contention with existing records, the less sound does it appear. The Moorish power in Spain was not finally extinguished until towards the close of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, it may be said that the Moorish cause was lost in Europe, and that their expulsion commenced with the defeat of Salado in 1340.[125] We can, therefore, for the sake of argument, take the middle of the fourteenth century as the period, approximately, when the Moors began to be "expelled from Spain." This would be about the time when, in M. Dubois' view, the Moors were driving the pastoral Fulani towards Aderer, "the land of sand." Now, apart from the self-evident contradiction of a people whose wealth has ever been in their flocks and herds, originating in an arid district (sand not usually being associated with pastures), the Fulani were in point of fact already considerably farther south. Was not the market of Jenne (on which M. Dubois has himself thrown such a glamour of interest) attended as early as 1260 by Fulani?[126] Did not the King of Bornu receive a Fulani deputation from Melle between 1288 and 1306?[127] Is it conceivable that the Fulani, compelled to evacuate Aderer in the middle of the fourteenth century, would have ruled over vast tracts of

territory as far south as Gurma, only one hundred years later? M. Dubois will have to bring forward a great deal of evidence—certainly something more than his own assertion, and an obscure passage in the *Tarik*—to upset the Eastern theory of Fulani origin.

Of native traditions among the Fulani attributing an Eastern origin to their race we have no end, and although too much significance need not be attached to them, they must not on that account be overlooked. There is generally a foundation of truth in native legends of this kind. Anthropometrical studies, or rather craniological studies, are, however, extremely valuable. Although carried out to a small extent so far, they appreciably strengthen the Eastern theory. Dr. Verneau, whose reputation as an anthropologist is well known, has recently published[128] the results of an examination of five skulls of Fulani chiefs from Futa-Jallon. The first three belonged to individuals known, when alive, to the French authorities of that Colony. The other two were brought home by Dr. Maclaud, who has travelled extensively among the Fulani, and to whom I am indebted for several of the photographs here reproduced. None of the originals were Fulani of the pure type. The one approaching nearest to purity was Alfa-Alliu, who was condemned to death for an unprovoked attack upon a French convoy. Of this individual's skull, Dr. Verneau reports: "Alfa-Alliu belongs by his cranial and facial characteristics to the sur-based (vaulted) pentagonal type which enters into the composition of the present population of Erythria and the ancient population of Egypt." Of two other skulls out of the five examined, Dr. Verneau remarks: "Their owners, no doubt, had a certain amount of negro blood in their veins, which

resulted in a thickening of the osseous frame and in a notable prognathous accentuation....[129] Nevertheless, these two chiefs were not negroes; the width of the forehead, the prominence of the bones of the nose, the proportions of the nose itself, and the form of the chin, preclude any connection." Of the two remaining skulls, Dr. Verneau concludes thus: "I will not further insist upon the cephalic character of these two deeply crossed Fulani. I would merely observe that, notwithstanding the mixed breed, they present two cranial forms which we find wherever the influence of the Ethiopians has been felt." It is necessary to add that by "Ethiopian," Dr. Verneau—as he is careful to explain in the opening lines of his paper—designates the Abyssinian type, holding that the synonymy given to the terms "Negro" and "Ethiopian" is a popular confusion. Élisée Reclus, in his great geographical work, also states that the formation of the Fulani cranium has affinities with the Egyptian type. To this testimony may be added, that the most recent studies in Berber anthropometry tend to divorce the Berbers from the ancient Egyptian and the Eastern stock.[130]

Dr. Blyden, who visited Timbo (the capital of Futa-Jallon, one of the most important Fulani centres in West Africa) in the seventies, and who, like Dr. Bayol and others, was immensely impressed with what he saw, remarks in a report to the Government of the time (to which I have been able, through the doctor's kindness, to have access): "On entering a Fulah town the first thing which strikes a stranger is the Caucasian cast of features, especially among the older people; yet every now and then, in the children of parents having all the physical traits of the Semitic family, there recurs the inextinguishable Negro physiognomy."[131] "It is evident," the doctor goes

on to say, “that while there is a large infusion of foreign blood among the people, there is still the influence of a powerful race-stock which has thoroughly assimilated the alien elements, and this may be judged from the strong pride of ancestry which they possess, their respect for the past and their care for posterity.”

D’Eichtal sought to trace in the Hovas of Madagascar a relationship with the Fulani, which would, obviously, connect them with the Malays—the object of d’Eichtal’s treatise. The sole basis of the theory was a chance similarity in certain words; but were d’Eichtal right, we should have to admit a complete reversal of the cycle of Fulani migration, which is quite impossible. Fulfulde cannot as yet be definitely classed among the languages, but, so far as our knowledge extends, it has Semitic antecedents. When we endeavour to find some other links, connecting the Fulani with the East, several circumstances arrest our attention. The first is provided in a passage of Hanno’s “Periplus”; the second, in the invasion of Lower Egypt by the Hyksos; the third, in the Hebraic tendencies and peculiar familiarity with Hebrew legends observed among the Fulani; the fourth, in an attachment to their cattle so remarkable as to suggest a far-off bovine worship. These points may be severally examined.



PURE-BRED FULANI GIRL—FUTA-JALLON

When, towards the close of the sixteenth century B.C., the rulers of Carthage conceived a scheme of over-sea colonisation which should redound to the glory of the Empire and free it at the same time from a portion at least of the undesirable elements of the population, they despatched an armada of sixty ships

containing some thirty thousand souls, under the command of a worthy magistrate of the name of Hanno, with instructions to pass through the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) and to lay the basis of a colony somewhere beyond them. The fleet appears to have navigated the West Coast of Africa until it reached the Senegal, the Carthaginians proceeding for some little distance up that river, subsequently pushing southward to the Gambia and farther still to the "Southern Horn," which it has been sought to identify with Sherbro Sound.[132] This meeting of Phœnician culture with aboriginal primitiveness on the West Coast was, as Sir Harry Johnston has strikingly put it, "The first sight that civilised man had of his wild brother since the two had parted company in Neolithic times." And yet in one respect this general statement is open to doubt. It was not only Negroes with whom the Carthaginian navigator came in contact.

On his return, Hanno wrote an account of his wanderings, in the Punic tongue, termed a Periplus or circumnavigation, which he dedicated to Moloch, the deity of the Carthaginians, in the Temple of Cronos. Through the enterprise of Greek scientists, the relation of Hanno's voyage has been preserved to us. About three centuries after its completion, Ptolemæus Claudius, a Greek geographer and historian, published eight volumes of geographical research. The portion relating to Africa was mainly founded upon Carthaginian material and included a translation of Hanno's "Periplus." From Ptolemy's description, we gather that in the neighbourhood of the Gambia (Stachir) the Carthaginians came across a people of a lighter hue than the Negroes. These people the author calls "Leucæthiopes." Pliny also speaks of the "Leucæthiopes," placing them,

however, a couple of degrees farther north. Thus five hundred years B.C., Carthaginian navigators reported in West Africa the existence of a people to whom the epithet of “black” did not apply, in the same region in which eight hundred years later—that being the first reference to West Africa which has come down to us—we hear of an Empire whose rulers were “white,” founded by a monarch with a Fulfulde affix to his name.

Who could those light-complexioned “Africans” have been? Not, assuredly, Arabs; still less Bantus. With the Berber tribes the Carthaginians were in touch everywhere, in Mauritania, Numidia, Cyrenaica. From the Berbers, Carthage drew her mercenaries, who often enough proved more dangerous than useful. The colonists would have recognised the type had they met with it in West Africa, and if the “Leucæthiopes” had been Berbers they would have been differently described in the “Periplus.” Indeed, there is some ground for believing that the colonists numbered Berbers among their ranks. Moreover, the Berber occupation could not at that time have extended as far south, by at least fifteen degrees, as the Senegal-Gambia region. There is not, so far as I am aware, any record extant suggesting the presence of the Berbers in the valley of the Senegal until the eighth century A.D. To what race, then, could the “Leucæthiopes” have belonged? To what race but the Fulani, to whom the description given by Hanno could alone—bearing in mind the period of the expedition—by any possibility apply? That is link one.[133]



FULANI HOUSE—FUTA-JALLON

The invasion of Lower Egypt by the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings from the East is one of the obscurest stages of Egyptian history. Professor Lepsius believed that the invasion of the Shepherds occurred during the thirteenth dynasty (which, according to the same authority, began in 2136 B.C.), and ended about 1626 B.C. with the expulsion of the Shepherds. About 2000 B.C. then—a little earlier or a little later, according to other authorities—Egypt, being at that time under the Theban dynasty, was invaded by vast hordes of Asiatics, who brought with them enormous quantities of cattle and sheep.[134] It would seem as though some great internal convulsion, the cause of which can only be conjectured, had precipitated into the fertile valley of the Nile a number of nomadic pastoral tribes, by nature herdsmen, shepherds and agriculturists, but converted for the time being either through famine, scarcity of pastures, pressure of other tribes behind them, or spontaneous race-expansion, into a warlike and conquering people

which swept onward in irresistible strength until they reached a land suitable for their herds—their only wealth. The distinctive character of their occupation is preserved in their name—Hyksos or Shepherd Kings. After a sanguinary struggle, the invaders succeeded in fairly establishing themselves in Lower Egypt, and gradually extended their influence over Upper Egypt, where, however, they were unable to gain complete mastery. Their supremacy lasted about five hundred years. They were finally overthrown and driven out of the country by the representatives of the old Theban dynasty under Misphragmuthosis and Thoutmosis, somewhere about 1636 B.C., if we adopt the estimate of the celebrated Egyptologist, Professor Lepsius. What became of them? The Egyptian scribe, Manetho, contends that they crossed back into Asia, but the statement is very doubtful, and his further assertion that they occupied Judea and founded Jerusalem is scouted by the learned.

Is it not legitimate to suppose that a portion, at any rate, of so enterprising and courageous a people, which must have been extraordinarily numerous to have held sway over Egypt for so considerable a period, should have preferred to plunge into the unknown West, in search of fresh territories where their herds might find sustenance, rather than ignominiously return in the direction from whence they came? For five hundred years Africa had been their home. Africa offered them extensive pastures for their cattle. They must have largely mingled and intermarried with the Egyptians. Family and historical ties bound them to the African soil. They had become adopted children of that Continent, which in all ages has exerted a peculiar fascination

over the various immigrant peoples that have entered it. History, I believe, contains not one single instance of a people which, having once settled in Africa, has left it again. The Shepherds had risen in Africa to a position of paramountcy. Out of the undisciplined host which spread itself like a torrent over the Nile Delta, a race of statesmen had evolved capable of ruling what was perhaps the mightiest Empire of the then civilised world. It is incredible to imagine that a whole people could have been driven in a fixed direction, as Manetho would have us believe. Tens of thousands must have been employed, as their compatriots the Hebrews were employed, by the victorious Thebans, in raising those mighty monuments of stone whose ruins to-day provoke the wonder of all men. Many more must have escaped westwards, and gained with their belongings the fertile plains of inland Cyrenaica, and, through the ages, pushed on and on, ever seeking pastures new, until in the course of a thousand years the Carthaginians found their descendants in the rich valleys of the Senegal and Gambia—with their national characteristics preserved, their "powerful race stock" unimpaired, their "strong pride of ancestry" remaining, their ways adapted to their new environment.

Others again may have migrated south and have largely influenced the composite ethnic elements of Erythria, of which the nomadic cattle-rearing Wahuma of Uganda would appear to be an offshoot —the Asiatic origin of the latter being generally admitted. So much for link number two.

The advent of the Hyksos in Lower Egypt was approximately contemporaneous with Hebrew emigration from Mesopotamia to Palestine. Three

hundred years later, in 1700 B.C. according to Biblical records, when a grievous famine lay upon the land, the famous Israelitish *trek* into Africa began, upon the direct invitation of Egypt's ruler, in whose employ Joseph had risen to a position of great influence. The new-comers established themselves in the fertile province of Goshen,[135] east of the Nile, where the river branches as the prongs of a fork. Who was the reigning Pharaoh at the time? The gap in Egyptian history unfortunately prevents an answer. But that, unless the most competent Egyptologists are hopelessly wrong, he was one of the Shepherd Kings, cannot be doubted. And, apart from the similarity of dates, there are inherent reasons which still further fortify what may almost be said to be a certainty. The Hyksos were a conglomeration of Asiatic herdsmen whom circumstances had forced into the valley of the Nile. The *rôle* of warriors and administrators which they assumed was probably an accident, the result of finding a powerful nation in occupation of the land they coveted, and whom they had to subdue before being able to occupy. That they succeeded is proof, not only of their courage but of their political genius and power of organisation—qualities for which the Fulani are to-day conspicuous, notwithstanding the demoralising tendency of contact with intellectually inferior races. It was their political genius which led the Hyksos to invite an influx of Israelites, Asiatics like themselves, of the same Semitic origin and the same Monotheistic leaning. The wisdom of the policy is apparent. The Hyksos knew well that their rule was unpopular, that the Princes of the overthrown Theban dynasty were continually intriguing against their domination in the southern provinces, and that their hold upon the country depended upon the

number of their adherents in the north. They set themselves, therefore, to encourage Asiatic immigration. Inversely, it was but natural that, when the representatives of the old Theban dynasty once more came into their own, the Israelites should have been specially marked out for resentment.

The administrative seat of the Hyksos was Memphis, the city sacred to the worship of the bull Apis. At first the Hyksos replaced the worship of Apis, incarnation of the divine Osiris, by their own divinity Set, but they were compelled by the pressure of public opinion to allow the revival of the national cult. After suffering a temporary eclipse, bull-worship continued as before. It is, indeed, open to question whether the Shepherds themselves, and their compatriots the Israelites, did not end by adopting, partially at least, the divinities of the conquered. Can we not trace, for instance, in the incident of the golden calf erected by Aaron in the wilderness, and the employment of golden calves by Jeroboam, in order to symbolise the deity, the strong hold which bull-worship had taken upon the imagination of those pastoral Semites, the Israelites, whom the Hyksos, pastoral Semites like themselves, had invited to reside with them in the land of Goshen? What more natural that, being herdsmen, and taught by long years of experience to look upon cattle-rearing as their natural avocation, the Semitic invaders of Egypt and their allies should have been predisposed, and insensibly drifted, towards the adoption of the religion which they found existing in the country they had conquered, and of which the chief symbolical deity was a bull?



FULANI CATTLE-PEN

Now is it not a very singular fact that the Fulani should be the only people in Western Africa whose former religious beliefs have been associated, by those who have lived amongst them, with an ancient bull-worship, the former cult of Egypt? The unusual regard they have for their cattle, even after Islam has been established among the great bulk of them for upwards of nine centuries, is singled out for special notice on the part of numerous observers. Reclus deems the circumstance to be worthy of notice: “The scrupulous care,” he says, “which they devote to their cattle-pens has something in it of a religious nature.” Here and there, in the Western Sudan, tribes of Fulani are met with, whose members have remained pagan, and their paganism, in so far as it has been observed, consists in a superstitious reverence for their cattle, almost amounting to adoration. Among the Mohammedan Fulani the *bororo*[136] is still pre-eminently the national representative of the race, and the purest types are found among the *bororoji*, rather than amidst those of

their countrymen who have become over-lords, administrators and land-owners on a large scale. "The Foola nation," says Winterbottom, "is the only one in this part of the coast to whom the title of *armentarius afer* can be justly applied."[137] Many and various are the stories told by French officers serving in the Western Sudan of the curious affinity between the Fulani and their cattle, an affinity which is a perpetual subject of comment among their Negro neighbours.[138] Clapperton tells us how the cattle respond at long distances to the shrill cry of the Fulani herdsman, who, by the way, is said never to employ a dog.[139] One of the most remarkable French stories is that related by an officer operating in the Baol district of the Western Sudan. In the course of a day's work the officer had commandeered some cattle from the natives; among the animals was a fine black bull obtained from a group of wandering Fulani herdsmen. When night fell, the cattle were duly penned and a *Spahis*[140] posted as sentry over them. Towards midnight the officer was roused from sleep by the *Spahis* informing him with much solemnity that it would be necessary to slaughter the black bull at once. "Are you mad?" cried the astonished Frenchman. "Not at all, Lieutenant," replied the soldier imperturbably; "it is the cattle that are mad, for the Fulani are calling the bull—listen." Stepping out into the moonlight the officer listened. Presently from a neighbouring hill came the sound of a plaintive chant. At the same moment a violent disturbance took place among the cattle. The officer hurried towards the pen followed by the sentry, the chant meanwhile continuing in a cadence of inexpressible melancholy. The commotion in the pen increased, and before the Frenchman could reach it, one of the beasts was seen to clear the

enclosure at a bound and crash through the bush, following the direction of the sound and bellowing loudly the while. It was the black bull. He had broken the halter which bound him and leapt a palisade five feet high! With the disappearance of the bull the chant abruptly ceased. Next morning the Fulani were nowhere to be found.[141]

The Hebraic flavour—if one may put it so—which seems to permeate many of the Fulani customs, especially among the less contaminated elements of the race, has been recorded by careful observers. A friend, an officer in the employ of the Northern Nigeria administration, who was intimately acquainted with the Fulani, whose language he spoke, and who possessed considerable erudition, had prepared a number of notes for me on the subject, which, unfortunately, I never received, owing to his death while serving in Africa. One custom which had specially impressed him among the pure Fulani was the habit of setting aside the firstborn. He found that the Fulani woman of unmixed blood in the Binue region never suckled her firstborn, but consigned it to the care of friends, and completely disinterested herself from its future career, while bestowing upon the second child, and subsequent children, the usual motherly solicitude. He connected this singular custom with a distorted rendering of the punishment visited upon the Egyptians in the time of the Captivity.



A HALF-CASTE FULANI GIRL AND A SUSU

The lecture delivered in 1886 by Captain de Guiraudon (who published a Fulfulde manual, and who resided for several years in the Fulani country in Senegambia) before the seventh Congress of Orientalists contains some interesting references to the subject under discussion. In the course of his

relations with the Fulani, De Guiraudon was particularly struck with their peculiar knowledge of Jewish history. So familiarly did they speak of the chief Hebrew personalities of the Old Testament, and so well posted were they with the principal events related in it, that they could not, argued De Guiraudon, have acquired their knowledge merely through Arabic sources. They referred to those times as though dealing with their own national records. Moses and Abraham might have been individuals of the same race as themselves. “In their oral legends Moses plays a very important part, and although certain passages of the Scriptures are transformed or rather assimilated, they have so intense a Biblical and Hebraic tone as to exclude all Arabic influence.” De Guiraudon noted, however, that their Israelitish chronicles ceased after Solomon. “What they knew of the miracles of our Saviour was so distorted and erroneous as to prove that the New Testament had reached them from afar, in a vague and fragmentary condition.” De Guiraudon’s conclusions are best given in his own words. “It would seem as if the Puls (Fulani), if they themselves did not profess the Jewish faith, which I would rather be disposed to affirm than deny, were at least in permanent contact with the Jewish people in remote times, and that, influenced at one time or another by the Israelites, they received Old Testament legends directly from them.”

Dr. Blyden also testifies in an indirect way to the close acquaintance of the Fulani with the history of ancient Hebraic personalities. “They hold the language of the Koran,” he remarks, “in the greatest veneration, affirming that it is the language which was spoken by Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, and Ishmael. The descendants of Ishmael, they contend,

have never been in bondage to any man; and that during the bondage of Isaac's descendants in Egypt the language lost its purity and copiousness."

It is significant that the son and successor of Othman Dan Fodio, sultan Bello of Hausa, second Fulani ruler over the Hausa States, in the history of the Sudan written in Arabic characters which he gave to Clapperton, describes the "Tow-rooths," who may, I think, be identified with the Torodos (a sect of Fulani greatly looked up to), as "having originated from the Jews."[142] Mungo Park, when writing of his experiences among the Mandingoes—who appear to have been converted to Islam by the Fulani, with whom they have been in close relationship, amiable and the reverse, for many centuries—observed a similar widespread knowledge of incidents in Old Testament history, such as the death of Abel, the lives of the Patriarchs, Joseph's dream, and so on. Winterbottom is equally emphatic. "The customs of these people (the Fulani)," he says, "bear a striking resemblance to those of the Jews described in the Pentateuch, and after Mohammed, Moses is held by them in the highest estimation." There is some uniformity, too, between the following descriptive passages. The first is from Kenrick (American edition), the second from Laing's history of the Sulima people and their relations with the Fulani:

> "The Jews were commanded, on the day of the Atonement, to provide a goat to carry the sins of the people, and the high-priest was to lay his hand on the head of the goat and confess the national sins. So among the Egyptians whenever a victim was offered, a prayer was repeated over its head, if any

> calamity was about to befall either the sacrifices or the land of Egypt, 'it might be averted on this head.'"
>
> "Musah Bah (a Fulani chief), shortly after his installation, ordered a great feast to be held, and, inviting to it all the head-men of Jallon Kadoo, explained to them the nature of the Mohammedan faith and told them that the Foulahs had come to settle in their country with a desire only to do them good and to show them the true road to happiness. He then ordered a large wafer of country bread and a bleeding sheep to be placed before him, and invited all those who wished to be instructed by the priests of Futa-Jallon to place their hands upon the bread and touch the sheep, which all the head-men did."

The motives were different, but the Fulani ceremonial savours greatly of the Old Testament. So much for the remaining links.

Enough has been said, I think, to show that there is a vast field open to systematic inquiry and investigation, which may possibly lead to discoveries of a most interesting and important kind. Having examined the links one by one, let us see how they look when riveted together and what conclusions they suggest. The straight-nosed, straight-haired, relatively thin-lipped, wiry, copper or bronze complexioned ("pale-gold" as one writer puts it) Fulani male, with his well-developed cranium, and refined extremities; and the Fulani woman, with her clear skin, her rounded breasts,[143] large eyes,[144] antimony-dyed eyebrows, gracefulness of movement, beauty of form, coquettish ways and general

attractiveness—are Asiatics. They are the lineal descendants of the Hyksos, having migrated westwards with the overthrow of the Shepherd conquerors. Their customs bear record to their progenitors having been influenced both by the cult of ancient Egypt and by the Israelites, whose presence in the Nile Delta was contemporaneous with Hyksos rule. Their presence in West Africa dates back at least 2500 years. To dogmatise on such a subject would be foolish; to claim having evolved an original theory would be impertinent. But I am not aware that the Eastern theory of Fulani origin has been hitherto worked out with any attempt at consecutiveness, or an endeavour made to amalgamate and give in connected form—however imperfectly—the chief factors for further study which may be usefully followed up by some one more competent than the author.

And what is to be the policy of Great Britain, of France and of Germany towards this wonderful race? Surely it should be dictated in the first place by a desire to preserve. With their faults—and what race is devoid of faults?—the Fulani have admirable qualities which can fit them to be worthy and reliable co-builders and assistants in the task which the Powers have undertaken in Western Africa. Their virility has hitherto been equal to all the calls upon it. They retain “the strong pride of race.” They possess in the highest degree the attributes of rulers. It would be a misfortune indeed if, with the advent of the European, possessed of those swift engines of destruction he is at times so prompt to use in the name of civilisation, the Fulani should disappear from the regions they have leavened with their intelligence.

PART III

CHAPTER XVIII
SANITARY AFFAIRS IN WEST AFRICA

(By Major RONALD ROSS, F.R.C.S., F.R.S., C.B.,
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The first question which any one who has studied the history of West Africa will ask, is this—Why has the country developed so slowly? It is actually nearer to Europe and more accessible than several tropical countries, which have certainly progressed far more towards civilisation—such as the West and East Indies, Central America and the seaboard of China; it is, generally speaking, a rich country; with a fertile soil, sufficient rainfall, large rivers, good harbours, fine, well-watered plains, a vast population, and a climate not excessively hot. One would expect to find here flourishing settlements, large cities, a prosperous agriculture and a great commerce; but what we really have is a series of second-rate, if not third-rate, settlements which are just able to hold their own in the midst of the forests and marshes which surround them; and a native population which can scarcely be considered other than barbarous beyond a short distance from the settlements referred to. The discrepancy between the expectation and the fact is remarkable. India, for example, with her vast tracts of well-cultivated lands, her cities, her ports, her universities, her thousands of miles of railway, her society, and her well-organised Government is

far indeed above West Africa. If the best West African province could be transferred bodily to the East and placed alongside even such outlying parts of India as Assam and Burma it would look very shabby in comparison. The principal West African towns seen by me, Lagos, Accra, and Freetown, cannot for a moment be compared with the great Indian capitals and stations such as Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Rangoon, Secunderabad, Allahabad, Delhi, Benares, Pindi, Lahore. In general appearance, construction, and style of living they are on a level with such "benighted" spots as Moulmein in Burma, Nowgong in Assam, or Masulipatam in Southern India. West Africa possesses no Simla, Bangalore, Darjeeling or Ootacamund.

The whole country reminds one chiefly of the derelict Coromandel Coast minus its principal city. Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether in extent, fertility and natural resources West Africa is really far below India. Europe has been trading with West Africa for centuries; it has long drawn from it many valuable commodities; it has explored it and made settlements in it which have lasted for hundreds of years. Why has not Europe done more for it, then? The question is really one of great importance in the philosophical history of civilisation, especially in these days when civilisation tends so strongly to overflow from the temperate climates into the tropical ones. Here we have two countries equally gifted with natural resources and equally exposed to the civilising irradiance of Europe. Yet, while India is of itself already one of the great Powers of the world, the other still remains in the condition of a newly discovered continent, to be opened up in the future.

Of the three reasons usually assigned for this

curious fact, the first generally given is that in India Europe found a certain degree of civilisation already existing before her advent; while in West Africa she started to work upon a completely barbarous country. No doubt this has much to do with the result; but we must remember that many countries now far ahead of West Africa were little or no less barbarous than West Africa a few centuries ago—such as many portions of tropical America, Burma, and the Islands of the Pacific. It can scarcely be said that the antecedent semi-civilisation of India and China has been always favourable to progress, nor that a basis of complete barbarism is always fatal to it. Another reason, perhaps more frequently given, is that the natives of West Africa are incorrigibly indolent. Yet it is by the labours of these very people, controlled by Europeans, that the prosperity of the Southern States of America has been established. In my humble opinion the West African should be very good material for civilisation. Compared with the East Indian, he is perhaps not so patient, laborious, or thrifty; but, on the other hand, he is much more vivacious and virile; he is not hampered by the restrictions of caste; he is physically strong and healthy; he is capable of producing men who are intellectually not a whit inferior to the average European; and above all, instead of adhering obstinately to his own customs as the Indian so often does, he always shows a remarkable desire for the customs and culture of Europe. In fact, I personally feel, though I may be wrong, that these people are better material for civilisation than East Indians, and I do not think that the backwardness of West Africa can be wholly or even largely assigned to defects in their character.

To many of us the real reason for this

backwardness appears to be undoubtedly the so-called unhealthiness of the West African "climate" for Europeans. It is impossible to deny the fact that the European cannot live on the West African Coast in the same security against disease as he enjoys in the East and West Indies; and in my opinion it is this fact, and not the original barbarism of the natives, or their indolence, which retards progress here. The agent of civilisation dies on the threshold of the country which he comes to develop.

It would require a large volume to deal adequately with this important subject, and I can only attempt an outline here. We shall first ask what is the cause of this unhealthiness, and secondly, what is the remedy.

I shall not attempt to give any statistics of mortality among Europeans or natives, because what statistics exist are not at all reliable. But the fact that the country is extremely unhealthy for Europeans is universally accepted; and is, moreover, demonstrated by the high rates for life-insurance, by the large amount of leave which Government grants to its employés, and by the difficulty which all employers experience in obtaining European agents for West African work, even for high pay. In fact, the country is so notorious in this respect that it is unnecessary to labour the point farther.

What are the causes of the unhealthiness of West Africa for Europeans? The first series of causes are undoubtedly a group of infectious diseases, certainly or probably due to parasitic invasion of the body. These are principally what is known as malarial or intermittent fever, with its most dangerous variety, blackwater fever; various other fevers, dysentery, and according to many physicians, yellow fever. The

first attacks the European with greater force than it attacks the habituated native, but nevertheless produces great havoc among native children. It is so prevalent that new-comers frequently succumb within a few weeks after arrival, while old residents often suffer from relapses during the whole of their stay in the country. In addition, epidemics either of this fever, yellow fever, or some allied disease, sweep through the settlements, causing great mortality among the Europeans; dysentery and bowel complaints are scarcely less to be feared in some parts. The records of West Africa are blackened by these terrible plagues, which time after time have blotted out the names of the most daring travellers, the most capable governors, and the most enterprising traders; which mutilate the lives of those whom they do not kill; and which hamper every political or commercial enterprise by striking down or intimidating the agents who are sent out to execute it.

But we must not imagine that these are the only factors of the total result. The heat and moisture of the climate are most enervating to Europeans. The general absence of good food—good meat, bread, vegetables, and milk—tends to produce dyspepsia and melancholy. The absence of most of the comforts and amenities to which Europeans are accustomed in their own home—good houses, good servants, society and exercise, not to mention the absence of wives and children—depress the mind; and when this general outline is filled in by such details as the ever-present dread of serious sickness, the constant stings of insects, the unsavoury surroundings of a squalid native population, it must be confessed that the colonist has much to depress him. What wonder if, in such circumstances, alcoholism and debauchery

sometimes complete the sketch! The fact is, that what we call the "unhealthiness" of West Africa is a complex due to many causes which assist each other. People are apt to fall into a vicious circle from which it is hard to escape. I may say, indeed, that the whole of West Africa has fallen into this vicious circle and has not yet escaped from it. Let us consider the point farther.

When we find much sickness in a given country we are too inclined to think that the sickness is entirely due to certain natural conditions which are present in that country and which render it unhealthy. We forget that the sickness may be due, not to the country itself, but to the fact that the inhabitants do not take proper precautions against the diseases which persecute them. Now the whole trend of sanitary science has been to show in a convincing manner that the great infectious diseases are preventable, if only the proper precautions are taken. Time after time we have witnessed the entire disappearance, or at least the partial disappearance, of such diseases from whole countries. For example, small-pox and typhus have almost vanished from the great States of Europe—at least we may say so when we compare their prevalence in the past with their prevalence at the present day. Typhoid and diphtheria are diminishing daily. Malarial fever and dysentery, which were formerly scourges of parts of Britain, have almost entirely gone from the country. Even in the tropics we shall find numerous instances of the same kind. Calcutta was once a hot-bed of fever and cholera, and was probably as fatal to Europeans as West Africa is now said to be. Rangoon was deadly when the British first went there. A century ago cholera often swept away whole regiments in India. We now look in vain for this state

of things. As a whole, India is perhaps as healthy for Europeans as England is—at least if we exclude the enervating effects of mere heat; and, indeed, I think that in some respects, in the absence of colds and chest complaints and in the benefits of open-air life and exercise, Europeans in India are more fortunate than their brothers at home.

Such facts alone clearly demonstrate that many diseases are not dependent upon natural factors beyond human control; but science has reinforced the argument by showing that a number of infectious diseases are due to microorganisms which spring from previously diseased persons and not from the air, soil, or water of localities. When, therefore, we speak of a given place being unhealthy, we merely mean that from some cause or other infectious disease is readily propagated from the sick to the healthy in that place. This may in part be due to the local conditions as regards heat, moisture, and so on being especially favourable to the transmission of the disease germs; but it may also be due to the fact that no precautions are taken to check this transmission.

Thus in the case of West Africa we may ask, Is the local sickness really due to the climate being specially favourable to the transmission of disease; or is it due to the neglect of proper precautions? I would not be prepared to say that as regards heat, moisture, and profuse vegetation—conditions long known to be particularly favourable to malaria—West Africa differs much from Calcutta or Rangoon. So far as nature goes I can see little difference between West Africa and other tropical regions which I have visited. On the other hand, I see the greatest difference in the mode of life adopted by Europeans in West Africa and in India; and I am

convinced that the excessive mortality amongst them is due largely, if not principally, to this cause, added to the imperfect condition of public sanitation in the country.

My own visits to West Africa have been short and limited. I have thrice lived in Freetown for brief periods, and have paid flying visits to Bathurst, Accra, Lagos, and Ibadan. But though my experiences of the country were thus brief enough, I was always in a position to see a good deal in the time at my disposal, and my powers of sanitary observation, so to speak, were previously exercised by eighteen years' employment in the Indian Medical Service. Moreover, for the last three years I have been in constant communication with many old residents on the Coast, and I have also learned much from the members of several expeditions sent there by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and by reading numerous reports on the sanitation of the country. I state these facts simply in order to enable the reader to judge of the value of my testimony on the points under consideration. I do not pretend that a greater experience would not have increased that value; but at the same time it should be remarked that a sanitarian of any experience, like a trained physician, can often make a correct diagnosis in a comparatively short time; and that it is not necessary to examine every town in a country in order to arrive at a general conception of its sanitary condition. Moreover, the towns which I have seen are the capitals of four out of the six British Colonies on the Coast.

In my experience, such as it is, the mode of life of Europeans in West Africa is not suited to the tropics.

Take the houses to begin with. They are not

generally good. It is absolutely essential in the tropics to have good roofs and large airy rooms. Our wise forefathers recognised this early in India, and built the great solid structures which are such a prominent feature of Calcutta and Madras and many Indian stations. I have seen nothing of the kind in West Africa. Even in Lagos and Accra the houses can be described only as second-rate. In Freetown they are simply execrable; and it is monstrous that Englishmen, much more ladies, should be compelled to live in them. It should be remembered that many of these West African hovels are built by Government. In Ibadan I saw a magnificent iron house which I was told cost the Government £6000, but which is so ill-designed and ill-placed that in the heat of the day the inmates are compelled to go outside and sit under leaf shelters! Then again, in India the Europeans and some of the better class natives live in a separate quarter; but in West Africa this seems to be the case only to a limited extent; while in Freetown the Europeans often live over native shops. Remembering that infectious diseases are communicated from the sick, we shall easily understand why the absence of a separate quarter is so dangerous to health. Those absolute essentials to comfort in the tropics, punkahs and mosquito-nets, which are invariably used in India, are often the exception in West Africa, or were so until quite recently.

As regards food, we find little efforts made to help the African colonists to obtain good provisions. Fresh milk and butter often cannot be got at all, even where cattle exist in plenty. Government sometimes maintains, at considerable cost, botanical gardens for various economical purposes. I was told that these gardens used to grow vegetables for the Europeans

until stopped by a mandate from England, on the ground that a Government botanist is not a vegetable gardener!—a type of the hopelessly unpractical spirit which has crept into all British administration. As a result the colonist has to fall back upon native vegetables, to which he is not accustomed. The meat is generally poor and coarse, and no proper effort is made to improve it. Ice—another essential in the tropics—cannot generally be obtained. I was gravely informed that ice-machines will not work in West Africa. It is difficult to see why this is the case, because they will certainly work in the hottest and dampest parts of India. Aerated waters have to be imported and cost about sixpence a bottle; I suppose that they, too, "cannot be made" in West Africa. In India they are made everywhere and cost about a penny a bottle. Singular effect of the West African climate!

What are more necessary anywhere than exercise, recreation, and society? In India the smallest station has its gymkana; its polo, tennis, cricket, and even football; its dinners, its afternoon parties, its balls; its shooting and riding. As for West Africa, though, owing to the intelligent encouragement of the Governors, much attention is now being given to this subject, things are very different. A resident of Sekondi told me that their "only amusement is to drink." So it seemed. In many places horses do not exist, because it is said they do not live there. So far as I know, Government has never attempted the slightest scientific inquiry into this most important matter, although probably the disability is due merely to some easily preventable parasitic disease. In Freetown many people take no exercise at all and are carried about even for short distances in hammocks. In up-country places, I hear, the dulness

of life, owing to the absence of recreation and exercise, is often intolerable and heart-breaking.

Turning now to affairs of state sanitation, let us first ask, what would have been the logical and business-like course for adoption by Government from the earliest days of these Colonies? Seeing the obvious fact that all development of the country was being retarded by the sickness and mortality among the European Officials and traders, a practical Government would from the first have strained every nerve to remedy this state of things. It would have spent every available penny in the sanitation of the coast towns, which are, in fact, the portals of the continent. It would have kept these scrupulously clean, swept and drained. It would have housed its employés thoroughly well in quarters removed from the infectious vicinity of the poorer native locations. It would have encouraged the traders to do the same for their agents. It would have organised farms for the purpose of producing good fresh food—meat, milk, butter and vegetables. It would have created or endowed places of exercise and recreation. It would have attempted to add in every possible way to the comfort of the Europeans, who are the backbone of the Colonies, knowing that reasonable comfort is half the way to health and happiness, and that senseless and unnecessary discomfort is more than half the way in the other direction. It would have taken scrupulous care of the water supply; of the conservancy; of the drainage of swamps. It would have insisted on the adequate sanitation of native locations near European locations, in the interests both of natives and Europeans. It would have maintained an up-to-date medical and sanitary department, provided with sufficient powers and funds for its work. It would have kept accurate

statistics of sickness and mortality, especially among the Europeans. It would have ordered numerous scientific investigations into the causes of the most disastrous West African diseases, both among men and domestic animals. Above all, it would have put the direction of sanitary affairs into the hands of the ablest scientific men it could procure.

Now I do not wish to take the *rôle* of the fault finder; but I must say, so far as I know—and I hope I may be mistaken—the Colonial Office and the West African Governments and municipalities can scarcely be said to have given adequate attention to a single one of the items in this programme—at least until quite recently. Consider the question of surface drainage for instance. It has been well known, since the time of the Romans, that surface-drainage removes malaria; and malaria is the principal enemy of the West African Colonies. Surely, then, the most obvious considerations should have induced Government to reclaim the large marshes existing in the vicinity of the principal settlements. A small annual expenditure, if persisted in, would have gradually done the work; and, as Sir William MacGregor once observed, the local Governments have had at their disposal for years large gangs of gaol prisoners who could, with advantage, have been employed on such useful labours instead of shot-drill. But no; the marshes have been allowed to exist as they were. It is only quite recently that the swamps of Lagos and Bathurst have been touched. In Freetown the swamps existed in almost every street in the native quarters during the rains, and were, in fact, actually made by incompetent engineering efforts and maintained by the grossest sanitary neglect—the roadside drains being generally nothing but series of deep pools full of stagnant water

seething with insect life. Yet this town was called the white-man's grave; and Heaven was blamed for causing a disease which man could easily have prevented if the most elementary teaching of sanitary science had been attended to. Even after the connection between stagnant water and malaria was fully verified and explained by the discovery (completed in 1899) that the disease is carried from the sick to the healthy by certain kinds of mosquitoes which breed in stagnant puddles, no spontaneous effort was made by Government to improve the surface-drainage in Freetown.

In 1899 the Liverpool School took the trouble to send out an expedition which made a complete map of the mosquito-breeding puddles in the town; and next year the Commission of the Royal Society extended our observations. Two years later, however, another expedition of the Liverpool School found that everything had been left in exactly the same old state, except that the salary of the chief sanitary official had been largely increased. Not a puddle, not a ditch had been drained; not a single effort worth mention had been made, to act upon the new discovery which was of such importance to these Colonies; and it was not until the advent of the new Governor, Sir Charles King-Harman, assisted by the Liverpool School, that any adequate attempt was made to clear and drain Freetown. In the other Colonies progress was equally slow, until Sir William MacGregor and Dr. Strachan commenced their anti-malarial campaign in Lagos. The central authority, the Colonial Office, instead of forcing on measures in a brisk, business-like way, contented itself with publishing good advice which every one had heard a dozen times before. The Governments of the Gold Coast (Sir Matthew Nathan), of the Gambia (Sir

George Denton), are now pushing on in this direction; and we can only hope that the progress will be maintained in the future in all the Colonies.

The other items of the programme mentioned above have also received little attention. The medical and sanitary services have not been kept in an up-to-date condition.

For instance, in 1880, Laveran discovered the parasite which causes malarial fever; but even twenty years later there were few doctors who used the discovery for the proper diagnosis and treatment of the fevers prevalent on the Coast. In most cases they were not even provided with microscopes for the work. In these respects the West African medical services were only on a par with the other State medical services; which, while they often contain exceedingly smart men, are generally wanting as a whole in scientific ability and push, and in the influence which they should exercise in the government of the countries to which they belong. A high official once informed me that of all the men under his orders the doctors had the least sense of duty. This is little to be wondered at, since, in my experience, efficiency does not lead to advancement in these services, and the most perfunctory men reach promotion as readily as the most meritorious. I have noticed a dozen instances of the almost complete indifference to science shown in these public medical services. For example, when the first Liverpool expedition reached Sierra Leone in 1899, the principal medical officer of the R.A.M.C. forbade us to feed mosquitoes upon his cases of malarial fever for experiment, though neither he nor his subordinates took the smallest trouble to prevent their men from being bitten night and day by the

insects in the barracks and hospitals. We were convinced that this order was given simply out of wilful desire to obstruct us. Similarly in India a military doctor once forbade me even to prick the fingers of his patients in order to study their blood. The manner in which the R.A.M.C. authorities interrupted the researches of Colonel Bruce, F.R.S., on tsetse-fly disease and horse sickness in South Africa, and in which the Madras Government persecuted Dr. King for his small-pox work, is well known. It would be folly to expect that services administered in this manner could ever take a leading part in organising great campaigns against disease in the colonies; and I fear that, until Sir William MacGregor led the way in Lagos, the West African medical services, even though they have possessed many able men, have done little to improve sanitation in that country. The fault is entirely with the chief offices of Government, which too often appoint and retain as heads of their medical departments men who have no scientific status or even scientific knowledge, and at the same time take no trouble to promote the deserving. I have known many instances of this. It would be much better, in my opinion, to fill such offices from the ranks of able civil practitioners or scientists at home, rather than to select men who have no other claim to the post than long official service.

One of the greatest defects in the sanitary administration of West Africa has lain in the constant refusal of Government to investigate the causes of sickness by making use of the services of experts. Government argues that it is not its duty to investigate disease; but is it not? It admits the duty of maintaining expensive medical services, but not that of helping those services to increase their

knowledge of their business! A logical position truly! In my own humble opinion the Colonial Office ought to have spent at least £5000 per annum during the last fifty years for investigation of the causes of sickness in West Africa alone. Do not talk to me of want of funds. There are plenty of funds, but they are thrown away on military expeditions; on the salaries of useless legal officials—chief justices and attorney-generals of little villages; and on building houses such as the one I referred to at Ibadan, which cost £6000, enough to pay for sanitary researches for years, and is uninhabitable! It is a case illustrating that peculiar form of mind which looks upon all research and investigation as idling and waste of time and money, a frame of mind which seems to be specially a British one. We have yet to learn the obvious fact that, if we wish to get a thing done, we must first make suitable inquiry as to how it should be done. Disease cannot be removed from a continent merely by establishing a medical service; we must also help the service to perfect its knowledge. The hand is not the same thing as the brain. In West Africa we have long possessed the hand, but the brain has been wanting.

The truth is that the defects of the West African sanitation are really due to the fact that the colonial councils are almost entirely in the hands of certain castes which are not scientific castes, and which care little for sanitary matters. I mean the politicians, soldiers, tax-collectors and legal people. To these it is a matter of little moment to cleanse streets, to purify towns, to banish disease from thousands of homes. It is not given to them to stand powerless by the side of death-beds and to hear the cries of the bereaved at the moment of bereavement. If they have money to

spend, do they spend it for the purposes for which it was really chiefly taken from the tax-payer—for conservancy and hygiene? The filthy condition of most native towns in the British tropical possessions gives the answer. No, it is a finer thing to build a grand new post-office or law-court, or to conduct a forward military policy which will find its place in the home papers and delight the heart of the British greengrocer (and voter) at his breakfast table. Well, after all, it is human nature—each man for his own caste. As for me, I have been too long an official myself not to understand these little matters.

I have said that West Africa has fallen into a vicious circle, and the nature of this vicious circle will now be apparent. The unhealthiness of the Coast for Europeans tends to check their activities in all directions; and in return this detrimental effect on their activities tends to check their efforts towards ameliorating sanitary affairs. The two conditions work hand in hand. It is impossible to remain blind to the disastrous economical effect of the unhealthiness. It leads to a constant change in the working staff of the country, not only in consequence of death and sickness, but also in consequence of the frequent furlough which is rendered necessary. From the highest to the lowest, few Europeans remain in West Africa for more than two or three years at a stretch; and many Government officials are entitled to leave after one year. This has the effect of rendering all business discontinuous. As soon as a man has started a piece of work he is called away from his efforts, and is obliged to leave everything to a successor. In India the period of residence in the country before furlough can be demanded is five years at least, and even then the break in the business which occurs during the furlough is often

very mischievous. How much more so must be the interruption which occurs in West Africa every year or two! The same thing prevents people in West Africa from taking sufficient interest in the homes of their exile. Many of them have told me that all the time they are in the country they are indifferent to what happens, that they simply live from hand to mouth, careless of their surroundings and longing only for the day when, if fate spares them, they can escape once more for a brief interval to Europe. It is this feeling which makes them indifferent to the houses in which they live, to the food they eat, to their surroundings—and sometimes, I fear, to their duties. The danger, discomfort and *ennui* of life are so great that a chronic condition of callousness inimical to all serious effort is frequently arrived at. We must remember these facts when we are inclined to blame them. What wonder then that a matter like sanitation, which requires such constant endeavours, is apt to be neglected. Thus the circle comes "full round" again; and the neglect of sanitation leads to the paralysing unhealthiness which leads to the neglect of sanitation. I have observed the same thing elsewhere—notably in the unhealthy planting districts of India.

What must we do to mend this state of affairs? Well, the vicious circle must be broken at all costs.

But how? I think that there is really only one way in which it can be done, and that is by the introduction of a new force into the vortex. I mean public opinion and public effort at home in Europe. These must be roused for the sake of our countrymen in West Africa. This country should be made to understand that it has something more to do than to watch processions of colonial troops and to brag of

its Empire. It is its duty to see that the Empire which it boasts of is properly administered, and that our countrymen who are sent to carry on the affairs, both official and commercial, of that Empire are not left to die there unnecessarily. This duty has certainly been most grossly neglected in the past. It should be the work of all of us, especially of those who govern the country, of the wealthy merchants who trade with it, of the rich people who do not know what to do with their money, and of men like myself, who are hired to study and teach tropical sanitation—it should be the work of all of us to see that it is not neglected in the future.

As every one knows, this new force has already come into being. Every day sees some notice of West African affairs in the Press. The able Governors of the Colonies are, I think, doing all for the cause which their limited means allow. The merchants of Liverpool and London have come forward most handsomely with their tropical schools, which I make bold to say are doing well also. A single philanthropist has actually drained and cleaned the houses in Freetown *pro tempore*, at his own expense, and last, but by no means least, many young pathologists have given their time and risked their health for the cause.

But what are the exact steps which should be taken? I have already indicated these above. It is the duty of the Government to see that the principal settlements are kept scrupulously clean and drained; to construct and publish proper statistics of sickness and mortality among the Europeans; to appoint whole-time health officers; to enforce sanitary laws; and to encourage the building of good houses and the establishment of dairies, settlement farms,

gymkanas and other institutions or trades which are likely to conduce to the comfort and health of the colonists. Thus Government has a great deal to do. It has only begun as yet.

But it is not Government alone which must act. Sir William MacGregor recently pointed out to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce that men who carry on business on the Coast have much to do for their employés—to give them good houses, to force them to take proper precautions against malaria, and to add to their comfort in every possible way.

Then there is the philanthropist millionaire. I wish that we could get hold of him in earnest. Sir Charles King-Harman once told me that £100,000 would reform the West Coast if presented as a free gift, by enabling Government to start gymkanas, dairies, and such like for the Europeans. So it would; and the money ought to be obtained.

Lastly, the Colonial Office ought to do one thing—a thing which was recommended by a deputation which waited upon the Colonial Secretary some time ago. That is, it ought to appoint a Sanitary Commissioner on the Indian model, to make constant inspections of sanitary matters in the West African Colonies, and to report directly to the Colonial Office. We were told, however, that the scheme was too costly, and otherwise impossible. But shortly afterwards a gentleman with a large salary was appointed in order to inspect the knapsacks, &c., of the black troops—a much more important matter than any sanitary business!

I may mention here an opinion which I frequently heard expressed on the Coast, namely, that the West African Colonies have now outgrown the present

system of control by small detached Governments placed under an office in London. It is contended that the whole country should be administered by a Governor-General on the Indian lines. I fancy that sanitation would not lose by the change.

Such are my humble opinions on sanitary matters in West Africa. They are given in response to an invitation from the author of this book; and, of course, exigencies of space have prevented my dealing with many points which should be dealt with in a complete survey of the subject—which would require a book for itself. I have thought it best to say exactly what I think without much reservation; but, of course, my views may, perhaps, not be so sound as I imagine. It would be the grandest thing in the world if sanitary science could give to civilisation such a glorious gift as West Africa; and I believe that it will. But the thing will be done only by straight speaking, hard hitting, and the most indomitable action.

CHAPTER XIX
LAND TENURE AND LABOUR IN WEST AFRICA

> "In dealing with the natives, one must never touch their rights in land."—SIR WILLIAM MACGREGOR.
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> "The so-called labour problem is, in my opinion, created by the people who complain of it, and not by the natives, who are perfectly willing to work when fairly treated."—Mr. J. A. DAW, of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation.[145]
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> "I know the Gold Coast natives well, and I repeat, you can get all you want out of them, if people will only realise that the native is a human being, and not an animal or a machine."—Captain DONOVAN, late of the Gold Coast Police.[146]
>
> "Nothing in all the history submitted on this subject is more misleading, untrue, and unjust than the reiterated statement that the chiefs and people of Western Africa are unfitted for peaceable self-government. It is not pretended they will reach for the present any Western European ideal, but they will not lag behind some people who claim to be better. The people do not want war; the very facility with which their disputes are temporarily adjusted serves to show this disposition. The Coast is far from having recovered from the dire effects of the slave trade. The chiefs are weak, and much of their power is taken from them by the very British Administration which scolds them for their non-success."—C. S. SALMON, "The Crown Colonies of Great Britain."

If there is one thing more than another upon which the most competent students of West Africa are agreed, it is the tenaciousness of the West African

Negro to his landed rights. Land tenure in West Africa has been properly described as a "cult." The most experienced English, French and German observers have noted this characteristic. Wherever it has been adequately studied, the system of native land tenure, in its tribal, family, individual and commercial aspects, is found to be at once simple in its broad lines, elaborate in its details, and approaching in many respects to the most advanced democratic conceptions of Western Europe. Before the torchlight of scientific inquiry, the old idea of the Negro being more or less of an animal, incapable of evolving any rational or consistent policy; too backward to frame anything approaching an unwritten code of law; his every act of life being merely the outcome of natural instinct, can no longer be entertained. And to the knowledge that these beings, who were thought irrational, and inconsequent to the extent of being the half-devil, half-child of popular imagination, has been added the conviction that the commercial and political success of the Powers of Europe in their West African Possessions depends for its attainment upon the recognition of native law in respect to property.

But although the testimony to this effect is shared by those who have the largest experience of West Africa, and although evidence is accumulating on all sides which corroborates in the most ample manner the statements of Ellis, Sarbah and Mary Kingsley, [147] it is nevertheless unhappily true that the tendency on the part of the European Powers, not only to interfere with the native law of land tenure, but to frame legislation without regard whatever for its importance in the relationship between the European and the Negro, is increasingly manifest. It would seem as though, having discovered that the

West African Negro is not a brute but a man, evidence which establishes the discovery is deliberately set aside; because it is so much easier to go on treating the native as a brute, that is to say, as a being deprived of the faculty of reasoning, and who, on the principle of "a woman, a dog and a walnut-tree, the more you beat 'em the better they'll be," will come fawning to our feet in abject humility upon every fresh exhibition of our superiority.

It is very curious to observe this conflict of forces; painstaking research, its published results, and the influence it wields, *versus* impatience and disinclination to investigate on the one hand; and selfish material interests on the other. The future of European political and commercial enterprise in West Africa is largely bound up with the struggle for the capture of Public Opinion which is going on in this country and on the Continent. At present, the purely materialistic notion, assisted by its twin-brother Indifference, is in the ascendant. Apparent success having been secured in that part of tropical Western Africa where, under the tuition of his white masters, the native has become a mere machine for the production of dividends to European company promoters, a great impetus has been given to the conception, popular in so many quarters, that the *raison d'être* of West Africa and the West African is their exploitation by Western Europe, on such lines and in such fashion as the peoples of Western Europe see fit. The European Governments are alternately allowing themselves to be dragged along this perilous path whose ultimate destination is the abyss called Failure, or are hanging back from it, beset with doubts. But the danger is acutely realised by many, and as it gathers in extent and consistency, is being energetically opposed. The merchants, English,

French and German, are, as a body, unanimous in condemnation. The exceptions to the rule are exceedingly few and far between. The best type of Colonial Administrator in West Africa also is utterly antagonistic, and amongst the still restricted but daily growing section of the Public which follows the affairs of West Africa with intelligent interest a strong feeling of protest gathers volume every day. These forces are numerically inferior, but they carry great weight, and if they can succeed in combining they must ultimately win the day. But the struggle will be long and bitter.

An attempt has been made in this volume to show (1) the unwisdom of interfering too rapidly, and without sufficient care and thought, with native customs generally, and (2), as regards the evil of slave-raiding, the advisability of seriously considering whether force is the only weapon which a great Empire can forge to suppress it. In the latter case, the Powers are able to put forward a plea justifying interference, insomuch as the evil is an active one. The only difference of opinion, as already stated, is the form which such interference should take. In the former case the evils, if some of them are evils—a matter which admits of a good deal of qualification—are of a kind that patience, tact, and time—time above all things—will prove the most efficient means of combating. But in respect to native law of land tenure, we are not confronted with any evil. On the contrary, the system of native land tenure is essentially just, thoroughly adapted to the needs of the country and its people, a striking refutation of the “arrested development” theory as applied to the Negro, and *per se* an eloquent vindication of the Negro’s claim to consideration at the hands of the European invaders of, and settlers

in, his country. There can be no justification whatever for the break-up of land tenure, or for the alienation of native property, under any pretext. It is morally indefensible, and what is morally indefensible is seldom politically wise.

In West Africa, the circumstances being what they are, interference with native property is bound to affect, not in theory but in practice, the interest of every single individual in the country. In the coastwise regions of West Africa proper, as far south, that is to say, as the Rio del Rey, where Bantu culture begins, it may be accepted as a rule (whatever differentiation may exist in the system of land tenure in widely removed districts), from which the departures are extremely rare,[148] that every square yard of the country is *owned*. Sarbah for the Gold Coast; Clozel and Delafosse for the Ivory Coast; Ellis for Yoruba; Mary Kingsley for the Rivers; Bohn for French Guinea; Fabre for Dahomey, have borne witness in their respective fields of observation to this fact—that there is no land without an owner. There is also a vast amount of untabulated corroborative information from almost every part of the Coast. South of Rio del Rey the land customs of the natives have not been the object of so much inquiry as north of it, and there the population is not in the main so dense, but what gleanings are available to us appear to be conclusive on the same point: in all inhabited districts land is never without an owner, whose claims, whether tribal or family, are as sacred in native unwritten law as they would be if duly set forth in a legal document, in accordance with the full requirements of European jurisprudence.

It is easy to understand why this should be so. The

native lives on the produce of his land. He not only lives upon it, it is also his wealth, his currency, his medium of exchange for European goods. The products which he gathers in his forests, the plantations he makes in the clearings and the plains, these are at once his sustenance and his cash. Is it astonishing, therefore, that he guards his land and all that grows therein, or is built thereon, with passionate jealousy; and that, whereas he can be induced without difficulty to lease his property rights under certain conditions to Europeans for even a long term of years, he can seldom be brought, save by physical compulsion, to alienate them for ever? Ought it to be matter for surprise that legislation calculated to hinder his free use of the products of his land, or action of which the logical consequence is to reduce him from the position of land-owner to tenant, either provokes him to pit his spears and flintlocks against the repeating-rifles of the despoilers, or breeds in him such utter confusion of mind, such bewilderment and terror, that,

> Fleeing to the forest's dim recess,
> He broods in sullen unproductiveness,
> Plunged in deeper savagery,
> Witness to the high morality
> Of Christian peoples?

Strange, indeed, does it seem, with the burden of historical proof to the adaptability of the Negro; with the abundant and cumulative evidence of his willingness to trade, to learn, to take on new industries, to everywhere follow up his natural profession of agriculture; with the actual and daily evidence of his enterprise and producing capacity in the existing oil-palm, ground-nut, mahogany and rubber industries; strange, indeed, that European

statesmen worthy of the name should for a moment entertain the idea, or lend ear to the suggestion, that in a country like West Africa, where the white element compared with the black is as a grain of sand on the sea-shore, and where the European can attain nothing that is permanent or lasting without the willing co-operation of the Negro, the spontaneous production of the Negro as a free man, in the enjoyment of the fruits of his own land, can be replaced by the forced production of a serf deprived of his lands, his freedom, and his individuality!

If in one sense the question of native land tenure in West Africa is distinct from that of native labour, it is in another way closely allied to it, and to treat of one without referring to the other is difficult, if not impossible. But it is equally difficult, when once the labour problem is raised, to confine oneself to West Africa only; for the theory of "assimilation" is very much to the fore just now, and although the conditions prevailing in West Africa differentiate absolutely from those in Central, East, and South Africa, the same general arguments are made to apply more or less to all four. I must, therefore, crave the reader's indulgence if I wander somewhat afield.

There is not the least shadow of doubt that the tendency to go past the law of native land tenure in West Africa owes its origin in large measure to the oft-repeated statement that the Negro will not work. Numbers of people have for some time past been assuring the Public that West Africa can only be developed by compelling the native to work.[149] It is, of course, assumed *à priori* that the native of West Africa does not work. How the contention can be justified in the face of demonstrable and easily accessible facts to the contrary, we need not pause to

inquire. It suffices that the contention exists, and that there is not a paper dealing with African affairs in Great Britain, or the Continent of Europe, which does not contain in almost every issue some reference to the matter. Nor is discussion limited to such papers. In the speeches of public men whose interests are associated with Africa; in conferences, in books, pamphlets, and not infrequently in the daily press, the subject crops up again and again. The refrain is usually much after this style: “The native will not work. We have to work and pay income-tax. Why should not the native? What is the use of Africa to us if the native refuses to work? It is intolerable. He must be made to work.”

It must be admitted that the spirit of the hour is admirably suited to act the part of receiver to these laments. The signatory powers of the Berlin Act have allowed the gradual establishment and consolidation in Western Central Africa of an institution the existence of which is based upon repudiation of the inherent right of the native to his land or the fruits thereof; and upon forced labour on the part of the dispossessed for their despoilers. What wonder that the public of France and Germany, observing the enormous profits derived by people immediately connected with this institution, and led astray by the apathy of their statesmen to the evil, should put down to political ability what is merely outrage; and impatient at the comparatively slow progress of their own possessions, should begin to loudly call for the adoption of a similar system therein? “The King of Belgium has succeeded in making the natives work. He and his coadjutors are reaping a huge harvest. Belgian industry is the gainer. Antwerp has become the first rubber market in the world. Why not imitate the King of Belgium?”



THE IDLE NATIVE! MARKET SCENE IN WEST AFRICA

It would be grossly unfair to describe this mental attitude on the part of public opinion in France and Germany as having been due, or as being due, to a natural callousness. At one time, indeed, the proceedings of the Congo State were severely condemned in both countries, and not farther back than 1895 Count Alvensleben, German Ambassador in Brussels, was carrying on a correspondence with the then principal Secretary of the Congo State anent the payment of rubber premiums by the Congo State to its agents and the trading operations of that State, couched in such language as would have brought about between two European Powers an immediate rupture of diplomatic relations. But wealth commands great power, and its rapid acquisition is a blunter of conscience. The Belgian financiers who control the two great Trusts in the Congo State—the *annexes* of the Domaine Privé Trust and the Thys Trust—were desirous for their own ends of still further extending their power. They managed to obtain the co-operation of many highly placed

persons in France and Germany, and to secure the assistance of an important section of the Colonial Press in the two countries. The result is seen in the creation of what is known as the Concessionnaire *régime* in the Colony of French Congo; its partial adoption in the French Colony of Dahomey; its attempted establishment in the auriferous French Colony of the Ivory Coast; and its introduction into German Cameroons, where, however, experience has led to a revulsion of feeling as healthy as it is encouraging. In other words, the indifference of the Powers to the violation of the Berlin Act by the Sovereign of the Congo State has involved the application of the new slavery to another vast tract of territory in Africa. Public opinion has been worked to such good purpose that the lucubrations of a Carl Peters or Camille Janssens are not only listened to with patience, but are regarded by many as the embodiment of a rational colonial policy; while in France, open appeals have for the past year and more been uttered every day in favour of a *régime* of forced labour at the point of the bayonet. The theory that the Negro will not work and must be compelled to do so has, therefore, made strides rapid enough among the Western nations on the Continent of Europe to satisfy the fondest hopes of its promoters.

In England the modern school of thought in African affairs shows a like tendency. We hear in various forms how essential it is to inculcate the African with the notion of the “dignity of labour.” As we are here dealing with West Africa, it would be out of place to discuss at any length the labour questions connected with South Africa. But it is only too obvious that the financiers of the Rand and their friends at home are the leading spirits through whom

British public opinion is being influenced towards coercion in the matter of native labour in Africa as a whole, just as the Brussels and Antwerp financiers who run the Congo State are the instruments whereby similar notions are propagated on the Continent of Europe. As already stated, special conditions, as well as the nature of the native population and, indeed, nearly all attendant circumstances, differ profoundly in West Africa and South Africa, but it is necessary to indicate the prevalence of a common shade of thought which it is sought to apply in practice wherever the European has secured a sufficiently strong hold upon the Dark Continent. In a fascinating volume of African travel recently published by a brilliant young explorer, Mr. H. S. Grogan, can be found embodied, in a style distinguished for its honest vulgarity, frank brutality and entire absence of those hypocritical sophistries so much in vogue, the views of the "modern school" as to what is, or what ought to be, the inter-relationship of European and Hamite in Africa.

Here are a few samples of his arguments:

> "But few people at home," he writes, "realise what an alarming and ever-growing difficulty has to be faced in the African native problem. It is a difficulty that is unique in the progress of the world.... Under the beneficent rule of the white man he thrives like weeds in a hot-house.... What is to be done with this ever-increasing mass of inertia? We have undertaken his education and advancement, as we have carefully explained, by the mawkish euphemisms in which we wrap our land-grabbing schemes. When we undertake the education of a child or beast we make them

> work, realising that work is the sole road to advancement. But when we undertake the education of a nigger, who, as I have endeavoured to show, is a blend of the two, we say; 'Dear Nigger, thou elect of Exeter Hall, chosen of the negrophil, bread-and-butter of the missionary, darling of the unthinking philanthropist, wilt thou deign to put thy hand to the plough, or dost prefer to smoke and tipple in undisturbed content? We, the white men whom thy conscience wrongly judges to be thy superiors, will arrange the affairs of state. Sleep on, thou ebony idol of a jaded civilisation, may be anon thou wilt sing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.' ... A good sound system," proceeds Mr. Grogan, "of compulsory labour would do more to raise the nigger in five years than all the millions which have been sunk in missionary efforts for the last fifty.... Why should not other peoples be called upon to work for the cause of progress? Throughout Africa the cry is, 'Give me labour.' There is a sound maxim in the progress of the world: 'What cannot be utilised must be eliminated.' And drivel as we will for a while, the time will come when the negro must bow to this as to the inevitable. Why, because he is black and is supposed to possess a soul, we should consider him, on account of that combination, exempt, it is difficult to understand, when a little firmness would transform him from a useless and dangerous brute into a source of benefit to the country and of satisfaction to himself."

What a typical passage is this! The Negro lazy and degraded, useless and dangerous: the European doing

all the work while the Negro smokes and drinks—whether imported European liquor or liquor manufactured locally is not stated: narrow-minded visionaries at home preventing the salvation of Africa in the shape of compulsory labour on the Rand mines which constitutes "education": the perfection of morals that result from such education, and so forth! The crowning folly is conveyed in the words "what cannot be utilised must be eliminated," which, I suppose, means a "thinning-out process"—such as Professor Gregory tells us has been accomplished only too successfully in Unyoro, where "it has been estimated that in the four years following the establishment of British rule the population was reduced to a fourth"—in order to prevent the too rapid propagation of these "hot-house weeds!" And yet what Mr. Grogan says is repeated by many and believed by more—the mass who swallow this tainted diet as though 'twere nectar, and absorb these grotesque distortions as if they were gospel truths.

Let us endeavour to examine this question in a practical, temperate, and impartial spirit. According to ethnologists, the true, uncontaminated Negro is only found in West Africa, roughly from Senegal to the Rio del Rey. He inhabits the coastwise regions and the forest belt. The innumerable creeks and forests of the Niger Delta shelter the purest specimens, ethnologically, of his race. South of Rio del Rey the Bantu stock begins, and predominates as you work southward. Behind the forest belt the true Negro stock has become changed and modified by infusion of Berber and Fulani, and also, but to a lesser degree, of Arab blood. In the Niger bend, in the regions round about Lake Chad, in Northern Nigeria this blending of races has created a

bewildering variety of mixed types, while here and there both the invaded and invading elements have preserved their purity—for instance, among the Negroes, the Bambarra of the Upper Niger; among the Berbers, the noble Imosagh; among the Arabs, the Shuwa; among the Fulani, the Pullo herdsmen of Futa Jallon, Adamawa, Bondu, and of many other parts of the Western Sudan. Leaving west for east, you have the Shoa, Galla, Somali, and Jew in Abyssinia and its confines; then the Bantu—product, as Dr. Voight thinks, of Semitic and Negro mixture—spreading southwards, inwards and westwards; universal everywhere, right down to the Cape—the Masai, Wahuma, Pigmies, Hottentots; and, in the French Congo, the Fans, presenting small channels of ethnic divergence in a vast sea of Bantu stock.



WEST AFRICAN “YOUNG HOPEFULS”

Throughout all this huge expanse of territory the soil is in the main so fertile that it produces with little trouble everything which the native requires for his subsistence and his comfort, where his sense of what constitutes comfort has not expanded as the

result of intercourse with a higher ethical development—a "higher civilisation," to use the hackneyed term. The climate being mostly hot, it militates against great physical energy, which, moreover, is not, and has not been, economically necessary for the African for countless generations. The degree of development of the native depends upon the extent of his contact with, or remoteness from, influences tending to create in his mind fresh ideas; a higher conception of arts and crafts—influences which may have filtered through to him either by the medium of trade, successive migration, conquest by a more advanced race, or the infiltration of a revealed religion. The more inaccessible the region, the further inland the people, the wider removed from highways of commerce their situation, the more primitive their state. That is logical, although there are, of course, exceptions. But that in his primitive state the African is the "useless and dangerous brute" which the shallow materialism, the frenzy for expansion, the unthinking, rather blatant callousness of the hour would make him out to be, is one of the many fictions which pass for truths about Africa. The Wa-Kavirondo are the most primitive people in the Uganda Protectorate. They go absolutely naked, are more moral than their partly clothed neighbours, and are agriculturists. "Wherever they settle, the jungle around them is soon converted into fruitful fields, yielding sweet potatoes, or various forms of corn. Those who can afford it keep goats and sheep, and the wealthy have herds of cattle," says Dr. Ansorge, adding that among them, "where the European villain with his lies and frauds has not yet made his appearance, the white man's simple word is equal to a solemn and a binding oath." In most parts of Africa, south of the

equator—in the huge central portion at any rate—in the Upper Nile valley, the region traversed by Mr. Grogan, the native has never had the motive, the spontaneous impetus to produce more than his needs required or his fancy led him to. Yet he works in iron, moulds pottery, has in many cases a highly developed artistic instinct,[150] manufactures cloth and ingenious and elaborate weapons of offence, has some notions of harmony, and often enough a vein of true poetic instinct. When local conditions have been favourable to the evolving of important social agglomerations, a native state form has grown up which was a cause of abundant astonishment to the early European travellers in Central Africa. Yet, as far back as we are able to plunge in the dim recesses of the past, these millions of natives—this "mass of inertia"—were entirely cut off from intercourse with the outside world, isolated from all contact with the "superior" races. A few stray Egyptian traders probably penetrated to the head waters of the Nile and the Great Lakes. Later on, a handful of Arabs wandered inwards from Zanzibar, but until Burton, Speke and Grant, Livingstone (working from the south), Baker, Emin, and Stanley revealed the interior of Africa, its inhabitants had been innocent of all communication with the higher culture. One need not inquire whether the lot of these people has been much brighter since the advent among them of the half-caste Arab slave-trader, the Belgian ivory and rubber hunter, the over-zealous European missionary, and the land-grabbing fever of the Powers. An estimate on that point must be largely a matter of opinion. But to expect that these natives are going to willingly emigrate *en masse* to the Rhodesian mines, hire themselves out for the performance of arduous labour, dig, delve, undertake

plantation work and the like with the zeal of a European workman anxious to earn a living wage, is a piece of consummate folly. They can only be induced to do so by the most tactful treatment; by the payment of a decent wage; by the selection of European agents possessing some sense of proportion, and at least a rudimentary knowledge of the teachings of history. To attempt to revolutionise these peoples' conceptions in a few years is madness, and to try and drive them by coercive measures constitutes a policy at once immoral, short-sighted, and disastrous.[151]

Until quite recently British West Africa remained unaffected in any material sense by the gradual gravitation of European public opinion towards the use of coercion in dealing with the African, together with the non-recognition of native land tenure and the various concomitants of the "exploitation" policy. The birth of a scientific gold-mining industry in the Gold Coast, however, has let loose a flood of ignorant talk about West Africa, and raised up a whole host of evil advisers who are busily intent in introducing South African methods in the West African goldfields. Constant complaints are being raised about the scarcity of labour, the indolence and the slothfulness of the native. Experienced men like Mr. Daw, of the Ashanti goldfields, have not hesitated to speak out boldly against these views; and so far the Colonial Office,[152] to its honour be it said, has refused to yield to the clamour, and has declined to repeal the law on the acquisition, extent, and registration of mining concessions whereby the rights of the native owners of the soil are amply safeguarded. In that respect the Concessions Ordinance must rank as the most equitable legislative measure for the protection and

preservation of native land tenure which exists in West Africa. It is true that of the numerous complaints which the Ordinance has given rise to, those that refer to the actual working of the measure are justified. The machinery for registration is hardly complete enough, and in that and some other respects matters might be improved. It is also true that cases have occurred where native chiefs have, knowingly or unknowingly, sold their properties twice over, and thus perpetrated a fraud which, no doubt, is exceedingly reprehensible; but certainly not more so than the numerous frauds deliberately consummated by sundry Gold Coast company promoters in foisting upon the British public bogus concerns, causing pecuniary loss to hundreds and thousands of English men and women. The African chief who indulges in sharp practice can be punished in the Gold Coast, but his European prototype generally manages to escape the clutches of the law. It is to be hoped that the Colonial Office will maintain the Concessions Ordinance in its integrity, while perfecting the machinery to administer it, for the law, as a law, is a credit to British justice in West Africa.

On the other hand, it is much to be regretted that the Colonial Office should have framed a code of laws and regulations in respect to the development of forest products and the attribution of forest reserves, in Southern Nigeria, which have given rise to grave objection, and must continue to do so. The effect of these regulations in the aggregate is to authorise the High Commissioner to issue any rules he chooses with regard to all kinds of forest produce, not excepting the produce of the palm. No proper distinction is drawn between so-called “waste”[153] lands and forest lands at the disposal of the native

and the Government respectively. Natives are to be compelled to take out licences to enable them to do what they have hitherto done without restriction. The licences are to be granted by the Government officials. Half the money goes to the local treasury, the other half to the native owner, but only if he can show that he is entitled to it! The native is tried, under the penalties provided by the proclamation, by the European officer and not by his own local court. All this is bad and short-sighted policy. It must inevitably tend to suggest to the native mind that the Government is taking entire possession of his land. His rights of land tenure are being treated as though they had ceased to exist, and had been vested in the Government. We are officially assured that the native chiefs are satisfied that this is not the case, and that they welcome these regulations. It is impossible to regard these assurances otherwise than with scepticism. In Southern Nigeria the Crown Colony Government is a despotism absolute and entire. There is no legislative council; there are no native newspapers. The native has no means of ventilating his grievances. The powers of the High Commissioner are more sweeping than that of the Tsar of all the Russias. There is no check upon him, no control of any kind. He does exactly what he likes, and "force" in Southern Nigeria, in other words, punitive expeditions are but of too frequent occurrence. For upwards of three-quarters of a century the natives of Southern Nigeria have been encouraged by successive British Governments in the belief that they were free to utilise the products of their own forests. I defy any jurist to say what amount of freedom they will enjoy if these regulations are carried out to the letter. I have sought the opinion of English lawyers not unversed

in native law on this matter, and they have been anything but impressed with the justice or legality of the measure. The regulations have been compared to a retrogression "to the days of William the Conqueror." "The interpretation of the Commissioner's powers, under this Ordinance"—I am quoting from the letter of a lawyer to whom I submitted the measures in question—"are far too arbitrary. What privileges are left to the native who, you will remember, is the owner of the soil? It seems that he is in the unfortunate position of being the owner of his land without being able to obtain the slightest advantage from that land, and if he attempts to deal with the products thereof, even with the very best intentions, he is liable at the will of the Commissioner to imprisonment or fine as provided by the Bill. This is surely not the intention of the framer of the Bill; at least I hope not." The Chambers of Commerce on the one hand, and the Aborigines Protection Society on the other, have protested against this reactionary legislation, which shows that both in commercial and philanthropic circles a similarity of feeling exists in regard to its tenour. It is one thing "to protect the forests from destruction," which is understood to be the motive of these regulations, and no reasonable being would object to the framing of common-sense rules for the preservation of rubber trees and vines (although it is not rules but *instruction* which is required) and certain young hardwood trees of slow growth; but it is quite another thing to introduce a series of cast-iron laws of this wholesale character, of doubtful legality, of still more questionable expediency, inevitably calculated to lead to friction and distinctly prejudicial to the development of legitimate commerce. The Crown Colony system in the Rivers

has not been such a brilliant success that it can afford to deliberately run such risks! These proclamations, it may be added, were passed into law in Southern Nigeria without the merchants who supply the whole revenue of the country being advised or even consulted. Such is the business-like method with which we conduct our affairs in West Africa!



AN IBO FAMILY GROUP—SOUTHERN NIGERIA

In Lagos, where a similar measure was introduced (it should be stated that the law is of home manufacture), it met with considerable native opposition, and passed through several stages of amendment before becoming law. In Lagos there is a

legislative council on which natives sit—in a minority it is true—and there are local newspapers. Channels exist, therefore, through which native opinion can make itself heard. There is also, happily, a Governor of the widest sympathies, of great and extensive knowledge and experience. Under his auspices we may feel assured that nothing will be wittingly done to alienate native rights in land. The Bill, as amended, provides that it shall be open to the duly constituted Native Councils, or Governments, of the inland protected States, to construe its clauses in accordance with native custom and usage; and as the chiefs are just as interested in preserving their forests as the legislators or the merchants, we may feel tolerably sure that the objects aimed at will be secured. Moreover, it is further provided that the Native Councils shall themselves issue licences when required, the proceeds of which shall come to their own local treasuries entirely; and shall themselves inflict fines under their own law, and in their own courts; and the Governor is further recommending that the Government reserves shall be conveyed under lease.[154] There you observe the difference between the two procedures. The one arbitrary, dogmatic, despotic—the other such as it is seen to be. If any difficulties arise in Lagos in the course of the working of the Bill,[155] it will not be for the want of doing everything possible to avert them, of surrounding the rights of native land tenure with safeguards which, so long as they are adhered to, will be sufficient to protect them, of imbuing the native mind with the feeling that the Administration intends to conform to the traditions of native usage; but they will be due to the principle involved in the Bill, the principle, that is, of a *primâ facie* right of interference, directly or indirectly, on the part of the

Government, in the affairs of native States, whose internal independence in contradistinction to their external relations is guaranteed by treaty. On that point opinion will differ, and some of us will continue to think that, in all matters affecting native industries, instruction is better than restriction.[156]

CHAPTER XX
A COTTON INDUSTRY FOR WEST AFRICA

Within the past few months a subject of the greatest possible moment to West Africa, and of vital importance to no inconsiderable section of the inhabitants of Great Britain, has been discussed in concrete fashion, and there is every reason to hope—nay more, to feel assured—that practical results will follow. I refer to the movement for the promotion of cotton-growing in West Africa.

What has already been done may be stated in a few words. On May 8 a memorable meeting was held at the Albion Hotel, Manchester, under the auspices of Mr. Arthur Hutton, the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The Chambers of Commerce of London, Liverpool, and Oldham were represented at the meeting, together with the managing director of the British West African Steamship Lines, Sir Alfred Jones,[157] the Oldham Cotton Spinners Association, the Manchester Cotton Spinners' Association, various other associations of a similar character from Blackburn and other Lancashire towns, the West African merchants, cotton merchants, brokers, weavers and manufacturers, &c. The object of the meeting was to widen the area of cotton cultivation under the British flag, more especially in West Africa, and before the close of the proceedings a "British Cotton Growing Association" had been formed with a preliminary capital of £10,000, to be exclusively devoted to experimenting in West Africa and other over-sea possessions. This meeting was followed by another held in Manchester in June, in the course of which

the decision arrived at previously was confirmed and enlarged, and it was decided to raise a fund of £50,000. The resolutions passed at this second meeting were as follows:

RESOLUTIONS.

"(1) That, in the opinion of this meeting, the continued prosperity of the British cotton industry depends on an increased supply of cotton, and it is desirable that our sources of supply should be extended.

"(2) That in order to attain this end an association be formed, to be called the British Cotton Growing Association.

"(3) That its principal object be the extension of the growth and cultivation of cotton in British colonies, dependencies, and protectorates.

"(4) That a guarantee fund of £50,000 be raised, to be spread over five years, no guarantor being required to contribute more than one-fifth of his total guarantee in any one year.

"(5) That this association shall have power to form a subsidiary company, or companies, and to dispose of any of its assets to any company thus formed, on conditions that subscribers to this association have the first option of taking up shares in any such company in proportion to their subscriptions.

"(6) That a general committee should be appointed.

"(7) That this general committee should

appoint from their number members to form the executive committee.

"(8) That the executive committee shall immediately collect all the available information on the subject and despatch expert expeditions to report on the best methods of procedure, and shall have power to (*a*) acquire land on which to make experiments and to establish plantations; (*b*) distribute seed among the natives to encourage them by advice and assistance to grow cotton on their own land, and to engage experts for this purpose if necessary; (*c*) establish stations to buy and sell cotton, or any of its by-products, animals, implements, or any other articles or goods necessary for the expeditions; (*d*) to adopt any other means that may suggest themselves from time to time to attain the object in view.

"(9) That the general committee issue a report once each half-year of the work which has been done."

A third meeting took place at the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce on July 14, in the presence of Sir William MacGregor, Governor of Lagos, and Sir A. King Harman, Governor of Sierra Leone, when practical ways and means of promoting the cultivation of cotton in their respective Colonies for export to Europe were debated.[158]

Having thus briefly indicated the various measures adopted, we may profitably inquire into the origin and causes of the movement. That inquiry cannot fail to impress the thinking public with the importance of the issues. With every year that passes Great Britain is becoming more than ever dependent upon the

United States for her cotton supply, and with every year that passes the increase in the cotton production of America accentuates itself by comparison with the production of other countries. Thus in the decades 1870-80, 1880-90, and 1890-1900 America has produced 4½, 6½, and 9½ millions of bales, while India has produced 2, 2½, and 2 millions; Egypt 384,000, 400,000, and 700,000; and Brazil 600,000, 300,000, and 380,000 in the same period. The gradual position assumed by America as controller of the world's cotton is, therefore, clearly apparent, and although the production of Egypt and India is increasing, the ratio of increase when compared with America is trifling, while the production from countries outside India and Egypt is decreasing.

That is one consideration. Another consideration is this. Forty years ago England took the bulk of American cotton. To-day the Continent, thanks to the growth and to the marvellous success of Continental spinners, takes one-third of the entire American crop.

Yet another factor is the increase in the American consumption of cotton. A few years ago the American *consumption* of cotton was almost *nil*. America now consumes a third of her produce. In the opinion of some experts—although in some quarters a contrary opinion is held—America will consume by the end of next year at least one-half of her production.

Now these are very serious facts for industrial Lancashire. The terrible distress which visited Lancashire in the days of the American Civil War is still sufficiently recent to be remembered, and one shudders to contemplate the consequences which would ensue if anything should again prevent Lancashire from obtaining her share of the cotton

crop of America, with nothing but the existing inadequate supplies from other parts of the world to fall back upon. The danger is a very real and pressing one. As matters stand at present, Great Britain is practically at the mercy of the United States, and in a position of almost entire dependence upon the market manipulations of American speculators, in whose power it is to regulate the price to suit their own convenience. So unsatisfactory is the actual condition of affairs, that for the past three years it has hardly paid importers to ship cotton to Liverpool. The fear of an American syndicating of cotton is not, perhaps, altogether groundless in these days of vast trusts and combinations, while the competition from Continental spinners, and, above all, increased American consumption, make the outlook as gloomy as it well can be. It is therefore imperative that something be done to increase the area of cotton production under the British flag. So much for the wider aspect of the question.

Those to whom this matter specially appeals have naturally enough turned their eyes towards West Africa, and it is in connection with the possibilities of the development of an export cotton industry in that part of the world that some remarks may fittingly be made in this volume. I say an “export” industry, because, as we know, a native industry to supply local wants has existed in West Africa for centuries past. We have seen, for example, the paramount part which the cotton industry plays in the prosperity of Kano and Northern Nigeria generally, where, in addition to supplying local wants, manufactured cotton cloths are an article of barter; in some regions indeed a veritable currency, sent far and wide to countries of inland Western Africa where the excellence of the Kano article is in perpetual

demand. But what is true of Kano is true of many other portions of West Africa. The cotton shrub (*Gossypium herbaceum*)[159] is met with in a wild state all over West Africa, and cultivated very extensively. Wherever Islam has spread, cultivation has increased, but in pagan communities the manufacture of cotton cloths is indulged in to no inconsiderable extent. The pagan tribes of Sierra Leone, of the Gold Coast and Liberia, turn out the most beautiful cloths. Their excellence and felicity of design are such that no one who has seen them can fail to be impressed with the capacity of the races, with their primitive appliances, which produce them. The endeavour to promote cotton cultivation on a larger scale in West Africa will not be, therefore, a new thing, and what might have been an initial difficulty is happily non-existent.

Nor will West Africa be called upon for the first time in its history to supply Europe with raw cotton. When the American Civil War broke out, high prices were offered for West African cotton, which was universally pronounced by experts to be of excellent quality. Cotton was exported in its raw state from the Gold Coast, Fernando Po, Lagos, the Gambia, and Angola. Indeed the export was continued long after that, and between the years 1878 and 1885 raw cotton to the value of £56,501 was shipped home to Europe from the Gold Coast and Lagos. Even before the American War, as was recently recalled to memory by Mr. Elijah Helm,[160] himself a Quaker, the constitutional objections of the Quakers to utilise the products of slave labour led to the formation of a small association, which imported cotton from West Africa of a quality so good, and in quantities so considerable, as to provide for the not very extensive wants of the Quaker fraternity.

But with the close of the war, and the considerable fall in price since those days, the West African export cotton industry has become virtually extinct. A very little, I believe, still finds it sway to Europe from the banks of the Volta and from Angola, but that is all, with the exception of the Togoland experiment of last year, of which I shall speak later.

The four main requirements for the successful cultivation of cotton are: (1) a suitable soil, (2) adequate irrigation or a regularly recurring rainfall, (3) sufficient labour, (4) transport facilities. British West Africa can, in the main, give the first three, in some places better than in others. British West Africa's capacity to furnish the fourth depends upon whether the grassy upland plains of the interior may be considered more fitting or less fitting than the swampy, better-watered regions of the coast. If the former be thought the most likely, the country behind Lagos alone affords the necessary qualifications at present. Lagos, moreover, is particularly fitted in respect to the third requirement, that of labour. A railway 125 miles long runs up from Lagos town to the interior, passing through the naturally rich and productive belt of forest, where it is hopeless to expect, and where it would be dangerous to attempt to promote, cotton cultivation. But beyond the forest belt a park-like country opens out of an area of some 10,000 square miles in extent, the greater proportion of which would be suitable to the cultivation of cotton, and would go far to justify and hasten, if taken up in earnest, the extension of the existing railway line to the Niger. If, therefore, it be a question of experimenting in a region of grass-covered plains—similar to those of Texas—Lagos, by reason of its railway, is the only British colony where such experiments can at present be undertaken. The

intelligence of the Yorubas, their agricultural and industrial capacity, the dense agglomeration of population met with in the country, the need of providing or strengthening the *economic*, as opposed to the strategic, argument for a continuation of the line (let us fervently trust under different conditions) to the Niger; all those factors render it in the highest degree to be hoped that Lagos may be chosen as a centre of activity for the new movement. Lagos, let it never be forgotten, is one of the doors of Northern Nigeria.

If, on the other hand, the consensus of expert opinion favours the low-lying coastwise regions, where fluvial transport to the actual port of shipment is relatively easy, the Gambia and Southern Nigeria primarily suggest themselves. Those possessions seem to me to offer advantages over Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. The present condition of Sierra Leone is not encouraging. The railway, if it achieves anything at all, which is doubtful, can only do so by increasing the yield of the fruit of the palm, and by bringing the interior oil-palm districts into closer touch with the coast markets. This may enable that unfortunate Colony to bear the heavy burden under which it is now staggering. To cut down the forests in the Eastern districts of Sierra Leone in order to plant cotton would be suicidal. In the Gold Coast, again, there is an opposing factor in the shape of the gold-mining industry. The mining companies are perpetually grumbling about the scarcity of labour, for which in many cases they have themselves to thank. Their demands upon the population have already resulted in drawing away a number of people from their usual avocations, with the result that the export of timber is decreasing; and any further

deviation of available labour, such as the cultivation of cotton would necessitate, would seriously affect the producing capacity of the country, not only as regards timber, but in respect to other natural and cultivated products, such as palm oil and kernels in the first category, and cocoa in the other.

For the Gambia, on the other hand, the advent of a new industry would be a boon. The Gambia entirely relies for its existence upon the ground-nut. It is always a bad thing to have all your eggs in one basket. When an article like the ground-nut is in question, it is very bad, because you are at the mercy, as it were, of the seasons. The ground-nut is necessarily a fluctuating article on that account, and one year may produce a fine crop, to be followed the next by an indifferent one. Sir George Denton—the genial and popular Governor of the Gambia—intended, I know, to try and start a better system of irrigation in certain parts of that Colony, in order to widen the extent of ground-nut producing land, and any such project would be all to the good, of course, for cotton cultivation. The population of the Gambia being mostly Mohammedan and largely composed of those most enterprising people the Mandingoes, and Mandingoes crossed with Fulani blood—remnant of the old empire of Melle—a cotton industry (to which they are long inured) could be started with so much greater hope of success from this fact.

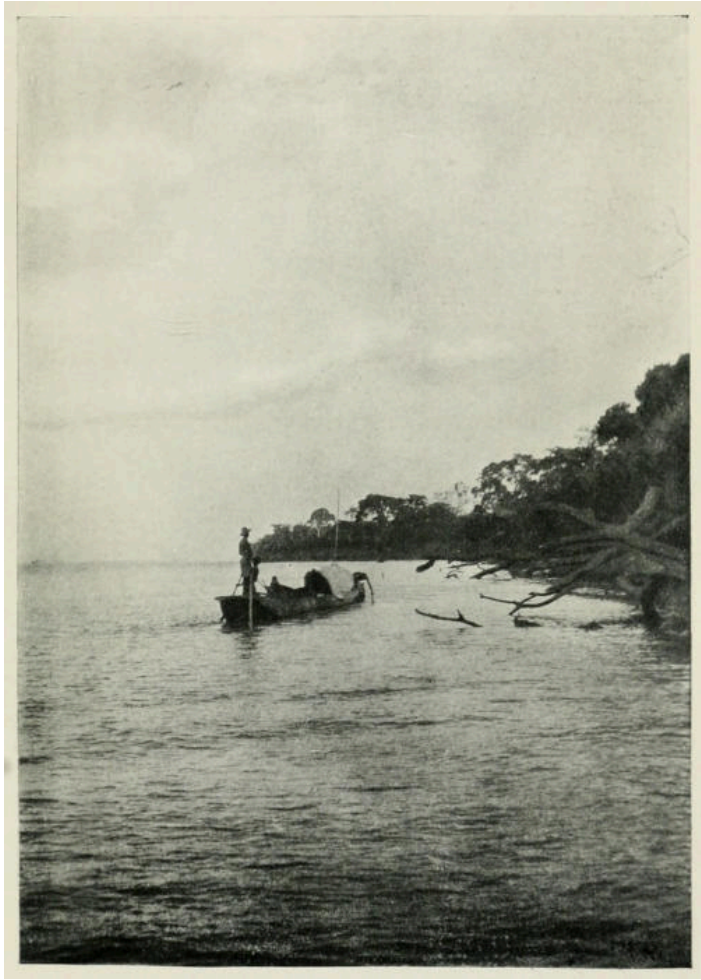
In Southern Nigeria[161] the field is vast. You can march for miles on either bank of the main river through a cotton-growing country. The density of the population varies, of course, in different districts. Fluvial means of transport abound. The people, it is true, are not blessed, or cursed, with many wants; but there is no valid reason why, with a little

painstaking care and sympathetic treatment; with improvements in the production of kernels which, as already suggested, would release a considerable amount of native labour for other pursuits; with a greater display of combination between the official and mercantile class; with a good deal less blood-letting, fewer punitive expeditions, "clearing away of the refuse of the population," "drastic measures," and so forth; the natives of Southern Nigeria should not be induced to take up cotton cultivation for purposes of export.

Granted the necessity; given the soil, irrigation rainfall, labour and transport, as specifically mentioned above; admitted an experience in cotton growing, spinning and weaving among the natives; what remains to be studied in this great enterprise destined, let us hope, to make of British West Africa a great cotton-producing country on which England can count in case of need; to assist in freeing us to a large extent from a position of dependence upon America, and so prevent the accumulating dangers of the hour, and of which the creation cannot fail to confer the greatest benefit upon the British West African possessions?

Obviously the first consideration is one of price. Can a cotton industry in West Africa be made to pay? Can sufficient inducement be offered to the native to encourage him to produce cotton for export? Can West African cotton compete with any degree of success against the American product in the matter of price? On what lines can a cotton industry in West Africa be promoted? Based upon the data available, which are not, of course, by any means complete, the general consensus of opinion amongst experts appears to be that, with the inculcation of scientific

methods of cultivation, the treatment of the cotton shrub as an annual instead of a perennial, the introduction of the necessary implements and of ginning and compressing machinery it will be possible to make cotton-growing profitable. In this respect the experiments of the Germans in Togoland are particularly interesting. To Germany belongs the credit of initiating the new cotton movement. From the German Colony of Togo came last year, for the first time in its history, fifteen thousand marks worth of cotton. The conclusions of the German Agricultural Committee were precise. The absence of adequate transport facilities alone prevented the complete financial success of the first experiment. Further, it was shown upon analysis that, of the various types of cotton raised from American, Egyptian, Indian and native seed, the type raised from the native seed produced, as a whole, the best staple, equal in quality to average American. This absence of transport is likely to be remedied in time, as a survey is now being made for a railway from the coast to Misahöhe. Meanwhile the Germans are so far from being discouraged that a company is, I understand, about to be brought out for the express purpose of developing the cotton industry in Togo[162] with a capital of £37,500.



TRAVELLING ON THE NIGER IN THE DRY SEASON

The French are also devoting a great deal of attention to the subject just now. Some years ago the then military Governor of the French Sudan, Général de Trentinian, took the matter up. Nothing came of his efforts, but M. Roume, the new Governor-General of French West Africa, has now adopted it as one of

the planks of his platform, so to speak. He is anxious to establish a cotton industry in Senegal, which, like the Gambia, lives upon ground-nut production. More ambitious schemes are vaguely mooted, and some enthusiasts already speak and write as though the valley of the Upper Niger were about to be converted, as it were by a flash of the magician's wand, into a rival of the Southern States. That with its magnificent soil and splendid natural irrigation the valley of the Upper Niger may some day fulfil the aspirations of the French is, perhaps, more than possible.[163] But we are a long way off that yet.

It seems difficult, then, to believe that this simultaneous impulse on the part of competent men in England, Germany and France can be founded upon a miscalculation in respect to working expenses, and I think we may feel tolerably certain that, if cotton costs an average per lb. of 2⅛ *d.* to produce in Texas, such parts of West Africa as can be endowed with similar facilities in respect to machinery, and where transport, either by rail or water, is available, will be able to produce cotton at a lower figure; and as the interest of the West African shipowners is to fill their ships homeward bound from the West Coast, we may also presume that they will make reasonable concessions to encourage the industry.[164]

There remains the question of how to set about establishing a cotton industry in West Africa upon a sound basis. Shall it be attempted in the form of plantations managed by white overseers and with paid native labour; or shall it be left very largely to native initiative, and develop itself on the lines of a native industry—as, I believe, is the case in India? I think that all who have some knowledge of West

African matters will unhesitatingly pronounce in favour of the latter solution. West Africa is essentially a country of native industries, and the best economic results have been obtained in West Africa when the motive power all through has been the native, with the European as teacher, instructor and guide, but *not* as manager or director of native labour.[165] In the construction of public works the same phenomenon is observable in a somewhat different form. Experience has demonstrated that where the recruiting of labour for railways or road construction has been left in the hands of the chiefs, requisite labour was forthcoming, and sufficient left on the farms to allow usual production, and therefore the export trade has remained unaffected; whereas when recruiting operations have been directed by Europeans outside the authority of the chiefs, labour was indeed obtainable, but at the cost of disorganising the general labour supply of the country and consequently affecting adversely the export trade.

A knowledge of these facts suggests, therefore, that the cotton industry can be promoted with the greatest chance of success by interesting the rulers of the country and their councils in the movement; by giving the chiefs the benefit of expert advice; by enlisting their sympathies and good-will; by supplying them with cotton seed, implements, and possibly hand-gins, gratis; and so on. Here at least the necessity of proceeding on lines of instruction entirely is manifest. The object is to improve an existing industry, to greatly enlarge and systematise it, *to get the people of the land interested in it*. If the native can see a profit in the business, he will take it up. That is morally certain. It has been so in every branch of West African commerce. So keenly has the

native embraced new trade outlets offered to him that upon occasion he has, when uninstructed in the art of production, compromised the future. Absolute and entire co-operation of officialdom and commerce is essential if the cotton movement in West Africa is to be attended with success. The Germans may here serve us as a model to imitate. The home Government, the local Government; the forces of industry and commerce in Germany, and in the particular Colony where the experiments are being made, have vied with one another in the effort to achieve an aim of common interest to all. Centres of instruction have been established in the Colony; model farms have been created; Negro farmers from the States have been brought over through the instrumentality of Mr. Booker T. Washington, the distinguished Negro scholar and manager of the Tuskegee Institute.[166] In all these matters the official world has worked hand in glove with the commercial world.

It is equally important that the cotton associations and merchants should be in earnest. No mere pecking will suffice. Disappointments and delays must be discounted in advance. There are sure to be plenty of both. Ginning and compressing machinery must be set up either on the coast, or, if it be decided to try Lagos, at large centres such as Ibadan and Abbeokuta; and preferably what is known as the "American round lap," which ensures simultaneous ginning and compressing in 250 lb. round bales, instead of the more cumbrous and more expensive separate ginning and compressing machines, which produce the 500 lb. square bale. In short, the movement must be engineered, from the beginning, on a real scientific basis. If Togoland with its transport difficulties has been able in the first year's

experience to export 70,000 decimal pounds of cotton, what may not be achieved by those of our West African Colonies where transport facilities exist; where the population is at least as dense if not denser; and where British subjects have been in contact with the natives for periods ranging from fifty to one hundred years?

I cannot leave this subject without referring to the indirect relation it bears to the Negro problem in the States. At present all is vague and uncertain. We cannot tell what may be the outcome of the movement; but if it be a success, what vistas does it not open up for the future! We have seen how the Germans have invited the co-operation of American Negro cotton farmers. The few who have gone out—the German reports assure us—have elected to remain. More, it is announced, are to follow. What would the attitude of the American Government be in the face of a steady flow of emigration on the part of the coloured population of the Southern States, to help to build up in its country of origin what it has built up in America? In what light would the Americans regard the up-springing of a great cotton industry in West Africa? If, as events seem to indicate, America is likely to become on an ever-increasing scale the principal consumer of her own raw cotton, would such an occurrence be viewed with equanimity by the American public? Or if not with actual equanimity, with at least the feeling that the danger, presuming it to be one, might be cheerfully faced if a deeper peril could thereby be diminished, and in time perhaps altogether removed? Could white labour in the American cotton plantations, with the exception of the more swampy and malarial regions, be substituted for Negro labour, in the event of appreciable emigration? These

are questions for American statesmen and thinkers to answer. If American intelligence can perceive in these tentative suggestions a clue, be it ever so faint now, of future potentialities, a clue worth following up and investigating, let America remember that a million square miles of African territory, which was declared in 1884 internationally free commercial land, and in the consolidation of which under its present *régime* America is to a large degree responsible, is in the grip to-day of a band of greedy monopolists in whose bowels reside no scruples, no pity, no humanity; who are sowing red ruin wherever their influence can be asserted. If America ever seriously turns her attention to West Africa as a solution of the greatest problem of her internal politics, let her cast her eyes upon the Congo State, misnamed Free—the abode of cruelty and persecution, of slavery and reaction.

CHAPTER XXI
THE MAHOGANY TRADE

> "The traveller who wanders through the dim recesses of the tropical forest of Western Africa soon feels the sense of its beauty lost in that of its mournful grandeur, and there steals over him a profound feeling of solitude and a deep consciousness of the solemnity, majesty, and utter loneliness of this great, gloomy wilderness."—Dr. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

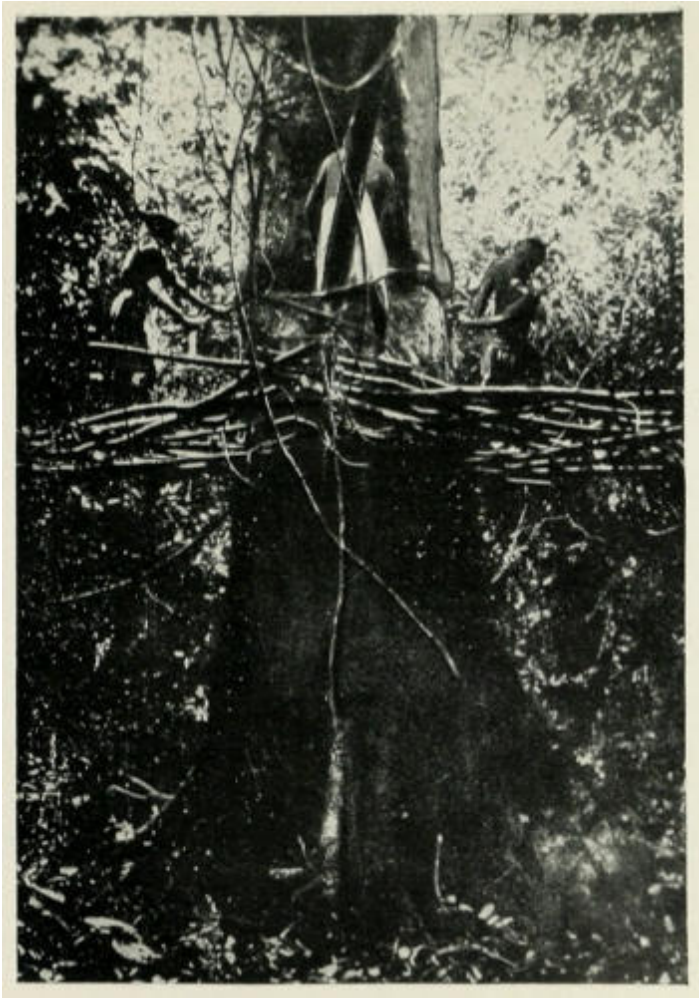
The great forest region of Africa is one of the wonders of the world. It is a moot point whether Africa should be described as possessing two forest belts or only one. Roughly speaking, the forest region takes the form of an inverted hatchet or axe, with French Congo, the Congo Free State, and a portion of the Great Lakes districts as the blade; while the West Coast, from Sierra Leone downwards, provides the handle. There are gaps here and there; in the Cameroon hinterland; among the mangrove swamps of the Niger Delta, and behind Lagos on the Niger side. The forest is densest in the Upper Congo, where Stanley, we know, struggled in it for many weary weeks, as though held in the grip of some hideous nightmare from which there was no escape.

In this natural hot-house, always bathed in an atmosphere of humidity and steam, vegetation flourishes in the wildest profusion and exuberance, and with the widest diversity of size and species, from the mighty *bombax* to the creeping lichen. So abundant is this luxurious growth, so thick the canopy formed by the spreading branches and

creepers overhead, that, save here and there, where some giant has fallen and broken down the surrounding undergrowth, leaving a gap overhead through which the sunlight penetrates flickeringly, the forest is plunged in eternal gloom. This gloom and the silence which accompanies it are the two great characteristics of the African forest. Except for the occasional chattering of monkeys, the crash of a falling tree, or the far-off chirrup of birds, who seek the sunlight in the topmost branches, the silence broods everlastingly. The effect of living amongst this gloom and silence is most depressing to the European, and it is no matter for surprise that the terrific solemnity of their environment should have exercised a profound influence upon the naturally superstitious minds of the native Africans who dwell therein. It is amongst the dwellers in the forest region that we find the lowest type of African humanity[167] and the most sombre developments of African religious conceptions. All European travellers who have spent some time in this great forest region have been alike impressed by its grandeur and its melancholy, and their descriptions bear witness to the way in which their feelings have been wrought upon by the natural phenomena with which they were surrounded.

It is only within quite recent years that European enterprise has concerned itself with the potential riches of this vast forest region, or rather of that portion of it which it is as yet possible to commercially develop, viz. the belt on the West Coast—or, to refer to the illustration given above, the handle of the axe. The results already achieved in a short period of effort, which can hardly be called more than tentative and unsystematic, are such as to warrant the most sanguine expectations for the

future, when facilities of transport shall have brought the main portion of the forest region within reach of the European markets. It is curious to observe how, in its main lines, the trade of Western Africa has arisen in a succession of well-defined stages. The earliest trade was in gold-dust, and, so far as we know, confined to gold-dust, unless the gorilla (or more probably the chimpanzee) skins brought home by Hanno be counted as trade—which would be a somewhat humorous classification. Then ensued a long period of absolute neglect of West Africa by civilised man. When once more the latter turned his attention to that part of the world, gold was again the principal item of trade, accompanied by ivory, and later on by slaves—the later a monstrous evil, whose Nemesis is to-day making itself felt in the United States. The gold trade died out, the ivory trade languished, and the gum, palm oil and kernel trades came into existence, to be followed by the rubber trade, and lastly by the timber trade—principally confined to mahogany. On the principle of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, the gold industry is now again reviving, although on very different lines from the old barter system. That is, of course, a general statement. There have been, now and then, exceptions to prove the rule, and so far as timber is concerned, a not inconsiderable business was carried on in the Gambia and Sierra Leone some fifty years ago.



FELLING A MAHOGANY-TREE



SQUARING THE TREE

Sir Alfred Moloney, however, was able to write in 1887 that, after having made many inquiries, such timber trade as had previously existed “may be said to have altogether ceased or to have sunk into the export done in dye-woods and ebony.” The following tabulated statement shows how insignificant was the

timber trade in West Africa between the years 1878 and 1885:

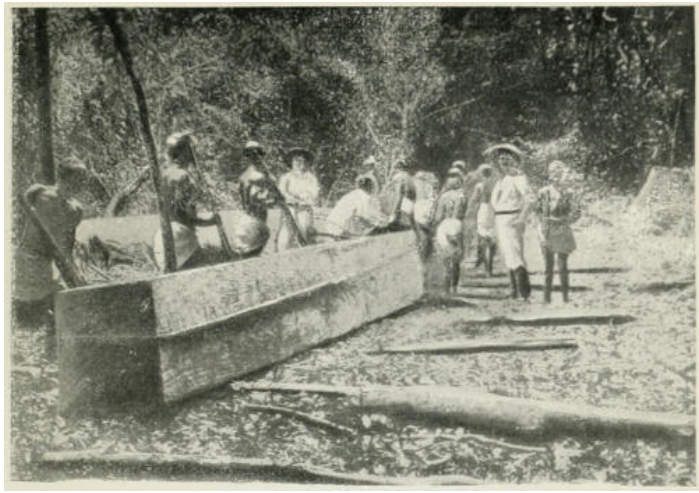
WOOD AND TIMBER EXPORTS FROM WESTERN AFRICA, 1878 TO 1885.

Year.	Articles.	Countries whence imported.	Quantity. Tons.	Value. £
1878	Wood and timber unenumerated	From the West of Africa, not particularly designated	Nil.	Nil.
1879	”	”	”	”
1880	”	”	1733	14,89
1881	”	”		No mentio
1882	”	”	1458	10,75
1883	”	”	1441	11,10
1884	”	”	1395	9,98
1885	”	”	1181	9,56

In 1889 the total import of African mahogany was only 68,000 feet, and in 1890—or a little over ten years ago—it did not amount to more than 259,000 feet. To-day the mahogany trade has grown to be one of the most important branches of commerce in West Africa. Enormous quantities of logs are shipped home from the Gold Coast, Lagos and the Ivory Coast, and the mahogany exports from the Niger Coast Protectorate,[168] which were started in August, 1899, produced 23,983 superficial feet in the year 1899-1900.

The industry is carried on by two categories of shippers, viz. the European merchant established on the coast, who either employs native labour to cut

down his own trees, or who buys timber direct from the native; and the native merchant who ships home on commission. The chief centres of the mahogany trade on the coast are: for the Gold Coast—Axim, Twin Rivers, Sekondi and Chama; for the Ivory Coast —Assinie, Half Assinie, Lahou and Grand Bassam; for Southern Nigeria—Benin and Sapelli. Lagos timber is carried round to Forcados in branch boats, and there shipped on the homeward-bound steamers. The South Coast mahogany trade is chiefly confined to Botica Point, Gaboon, Eloby and Mayumba, although a few logs have been sent home in the steamers of the Cie Belge Maritime du Congo, from near Boma in the Congo Free State. The South Coast timber trade appears to be dying out, owing chiefly to the pale colour of the wood, which does not now commend itself to buyers.[169] The vast forests of the Upper Congo cannot, with advantage or profit, be tapped until the Congo Railway Company lowers its preposterous rates, and until the administration of the country is in other hands than the monopolist clique which controls it.



DRAGGING THE SQUARED LOG THROUGH THE BUSH



SAPELLI, SOUTHERN NIGERIA'S PRINCIPAL TIMBER PORT

It may be interesting to give the actual exports of timber from the Gold Coast and Lagos from 1895 to 1899, showing the wonderful strides which have taken place. The Gold Coast, it may be stated, has a total forest area of 12,000 square miles.

EXPORTS FROM THE GOLD COAST.

Year.	Value.
1895	£28,245
1896	52,234
1897	90,509
1898	110,331
1899	87,076

EXPORTS FROM LAGOS.

Year.	Value.

1895	Nil.
1896	£275
1897	8,271
1898	12,944
1899	34,737

Liverpool, Havre, Hamburg, Marseilles and Bordeaux absorb nine-tenths of the exports of mahogany from Africa, but a certain proportion finds its way from those ports to the United States.[170] Of the ports mentioned, Liverpool holds far and away the first place. The statistics of Liverpool imports from 1889 to 1900 inclusive will be found in the Appendix.

In view of the evidence given of the phenomenal increase of the mahogany trade, it seems almost incongruous to say that the existing condition and the future prospects of the trade have, for some months past, been causing much apprehension in West African commercial circles. The truth is that the growth of the trade has been checked, and for the last twelve months has even been showing signs of decay. There was a decreased export in 1901 of over 11,000 tons, and the figures for the first six months of the present year show a further decline, although prices have considerably advanced and the demand for good logs exceeds the supply.

It is a fact recognised by all the interested parties that the export of mahogany from West Africa has received a serious check. What are the reasons? They differentiate with the localities. In the Gold Coast the falling off which has occurred is due, in the first place, to labour being attracted from the timber to the gold-mining industry, and to the needs of railway construction. Many thousands of natives have thus

been drawn away from timber-felling to work on the railway; for the mines, or as carriers for the various prospecting expeditions into the interior. A second contributory cause has been the necessarily trade-disturbing element of warfare, otherwise stated, the Ashanti War, in the shape of the general unrest and disorganisation brought about by the excessive demands for carriers, &c. In the Ivory Coast, prospecting expeditions have also affected the output. As far as Lagos is concerned, the remarks of the Governor in the last report of that Colony for last year afford the requisite explanation.[171]

The freight question is undoubtedly held to militate against the development of the timber industry, and it had been freely prophesied that the effect would begin to make itself felt last year. How much the decline was due on the whole to high freights, and how much to other causes mentioned, it would be difficult to say. With the technicalities of the subject I will not bore my readers. Suffice it to say that the principal objection which is advanced against the steamship owners, is the way in which the system known as the "sliding scale" is worked out. At present logs over two tons pay increased freight, and a further increase is made upon logs of three tons and upwards. It is urged that, if the principle of the bigger the log the better the timber were sound, this would be all right enough; but it so happens that the average sale price of a one-ton log is much the same as that of a two-, three- or four-ton log, except when the heavier log is what is termed a good "figured"[172] log. Figured logs fetch any price, according to the fancy of the purchaser, and in such cases the question of freight is a bagatelle. But the vast majority of the logs do not possess these qualifications, and the increased freight on the

heavier logs tells very heavily against the merchant, and may even go so far, when low prices prevail on the home market, as to render any profit on the sale impossible. Of course, the steamship owner has his reply ready; and, so far, he considers it good enough to justify the existing rates.

When all is said and done, the fact remains that the timber trade is languishing. It would be a thousand pities to allow this to continue, if it can be avoided. A trade once abandoned or paralysed is not easily restarted. It is in the interest of all the parties concerned to arrive at a *modus vivendi* which shall allow the native who cuts and squares the wood, the merchant who ships it, and the steamship owner who carries it, to make a profit. In this as in other respects one would like to see some systematic measures of instruction adopted, under joint official and commercial auspices, to show the natives how the best logs can be selected for felling, which would avoid the sending home of a mass of worthless and immature timber calculated at times to flood the market and depreciate prices, while damaging the forests in Africa.

CHAPTER XXII
ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

The steady and continuous spread of Islam in the western portion of the Dark Continent is a fact which no one acquainted with the subject will attempt to deny. It is, indeed, so well established that to specialise particular instances where it has been observed would be a needless undertaking. It is everywhere palpable, striking, impressive. It can no more be disguised or ignored than the concurrent circumstance of relative failure on the part of Christian missions. While Mohammedanism continues to gain converts far and wide; to absorb whole tribes; to filter down the rivers to the ocean; to pierce the forest belt, with hardly a check—save here and there, as, for example, among the Ibos on the Niger—Christianity makes no headway in the interior; and even in its confinement to the coastwise region, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, some of the Europeanised towns on the coast, its progress is slow, so slow, indeed, that well-informed observers are not wanting who believe that it is losing rather than gaining ground. At any rate, it is not, I venture to think, an exaggeration to say, Christianity is maintaining itself with difficulty among heathen communities in West Africa, and beats in vain against the strong tide of Mohammedanism.[173]

It cannot be without interest to Englishmen whose West African Empire covers so large an area, and numbers between thirty and forty millions, to devote careful attention to a subject which is fraught with such far-reaching importance, and which it is

imperially necessary for Great Britain to take into serious consideration as constituting a factor which has to be reckoned with and appreciated at its proper value. On that account it may not be out of place to discuss in a general way the whole subject of Mohammedanism in West Africa. The problem is a great one, and although there is no pretence here to more than touch the fringe of it, even a tentative effort is, perhaps, of interest to the daily increasing section of the public, which begins, although still but dimly, to realise the nature and the extent of the responsibilities Great Britain has undertaken in West Africa.

Rejecting, as, in my opinion, we can do with safety, the legend that attributes the existence of Mohammedanism in Walata (Biru), the seat of the Ghanata Empire as early as the sixtieth year of the Hejira, or about 682 A.D., there is yet good reason to believe that Islam crossed the Sahara, and became powerful in the Western Sudan, earlier than the eleventh century A.D., which is the period assigned to that event by the majority of authorities. We know positively that the fifteenth prince of the first and Za dynasty of the Songhay, Za Kasai, was converted to Islam in the year 1000 A.D.[174] From El Bekri we glean that Mohammedanism had taken such firm root in the Songhay Empire about sixty years after the conversion of Za Kasai (1067 A.D.) that none but a Muslim could be king. In the reign of Yusif Ibn Tashfin, the founder of Morocco, 1062 A.D., many Negroes, according to Leo Africanus, became followers of the Prophet. Barth's invaluable "Chronological Table of the History of Bornu" shows us that Islam was introduced into Kanem (and Bornu)[175] in the reign of Hume, the first of the Muslim rulers of that extensive Empire (1086-89),

and the circumstance that this potentate died in Masr (Misr)—*i.e.* Egypt, infers that he was either on his way to or from Mecca.[176] Now it seems inconceivable that Gao or Gogo, the capital of the Songhay Empire, which was situate on the Niger about 500 miles in the heart of the country of the Negroes, should have yielded to the influence of Islamic preachers who came from the north, before the introduction of that religion in the intervening region comprised between the southern limits of the Sahara and the Western Sudan. That it should have struck the Niger, and followed it as providing the swiftest vehicle of penetration inland before permeating the countries that lay on either side of the river, is natural enough, and we find indirect confirmation that it did so in the circumstance that the other great Negro kingdom contemporary with Songhay, that of Melle or Mali, which had succeeded Ghanata, only embraced Islam in the person of its king, Baramidana, in 1213, or about two centuries after the conversion of Za Kasai. It may therefore, I think, be assumed, without departing from the limits of inherent probability, that if the existence of mosques in Walata were relegated to 900 A.D. instead of 682 A.D., the former date would approximately represent the truth; and that Mohammedan proselytisers must have been busily at work in the Senegal about that time or a little later, pushing southwards and eastwards from thence, until they reached the Niger, and pursuing their course onwards to the most important city on its banks, Gao; reaching it, as already stated, in the opening years of the eleventh century,[177] and having met with success, continuing their triumphal progress to the third great Negro kingdom of West Africa, Kanem.[178]

The introduction of Islam revolutionised Western Africa. His first contact with a revealed religion powerfully affected the naturally intense spiritual nature of the Negro. What was the precise nature of the religious beliefs entertained by the Songhays, Mandingoes, Fulani, Hausas and other tribes inhabiting the Upper Senegal and Upper Niger at the time of the advent of Mohammedanism it is difficult to say. It may have been the animism which, under its modern appellation, Fetishism, is met with to-day in its purest form among the true Negroes of the coastwise swamp and forest regions. Or, as is much more probable, it may have been a form of pantheism allied with animal worship inherited from contact, at a remote period, with Egyptian culture; as witness the *Tarik's* description of the original fish-god of the Songhays, believed by some authorities—and not without reason—to have been the manatee; [179] the alleged regard of the Mandingoes for the hippopotamus;[180] and the strong presumptions of an ancient bovine worship among those Fulani who have remained faithful to their original calling of *bororoji* (herdsmen) as distinguished from their more ambitious countrymen of the towns, whom destiny has fashioned into statesmen, diplomatists and warriors. Whatever those beliefs may severally have been they were flung aside, and Islam struck so deep that the Negro became in time not only as zealous, but upon occasion more zealous than his Semitic teachers. Under the fostering impulse and care of the new religion, these backward regions, says Thomson, [181] commenced an upward progress. A new and powerful bond drew the scattered congeries of tribes together and welded them into powerful communities. Their moral and spiritual well-being increased by leaps and bounds, and their political

and social life took an altogether higher level.

> "Islamism is in itself stationary, and was framed thus to remain; sterile like its God, lifeless like its first principle in all that constitutes life—for life is love, participation and progress, and of these the Coranic deity has none. It justly repudiates all change, all development, to borrow the forcible words of Lord Houghton, the written book is there the dead man's hand, stiff and motionless; whatever savours of vitality is by that alone convicted of heresy and defection."[182]

The underlying thought in the above passage is evidently comparative. The writer is unconsciously drawing a comparison between the two great revealed religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, as such. But as we are here concerned merely to treat of the performances of Islam in West Africa, and of the effect upon the *Negro*, primarily of Islam, indirectly of Christianity, it can without hesitancy be asserted that what may be partly true in the description given of Islam in its relation to mankind as a whole is wholly false as regards its influence in West Africa. To the *Negro* the God of Islam is not sterile: Islam is not lifeless. It is a living force, giving to its Negro converts, as Mr. Bosworth-Smith says, "an energy, a dignity, and a self-respect which is all too rarely found in their pagan or their Christian fellow-countrymen." Individually and collectively the Negro has progressed since Islam crossed the desert, and just as to the Negro fetishist of the forest and the swamp religious conceptions permeate every act, preside over every undertaking and insinuate themselves in every incident of his daily existence, so

Islam, where it has laid permanent hold upon the Negro, claims from him an allegiance entire and complete.

We need not seek for proof of this. It is writ large over West Africa. Negroes, not by dozens or by scores, but by tens of hundreds, traverse thousands of miles on foot from the innermost parts of the Mohammedanised Continent; from Senegal, from the Niger Bend, from Bornu, from Hausa, from our Coast Colonies of Sierra Leone and Lagos, to perform the Haj, the sacred journey to Mecca, which every true believer should accomplish at least once in his life. A clergyman belonging to the Church Missionary Society, writing from Tripoli,[183] recently spoke of "a ceaseless stream of Hausa pilgrims continually passing through Tripoli on the way to Mecca after a wearisome tramp across the desert," a significant admission from such a source. This "ceaseless stream" is not confined to Hausa. It flows from all parts of Western Africa. It has flowed thus for many centuries, and the volume, far from diminishing, increases. That is not the sign of sterility. Burton, during his stay in Mecca, was witness of the extraordinary influence wielded by Islam on the Negro mind. The case, as he remarks, was not an exceptional one.

> "Late in the evening," he says, "I saw a negro in the state called Malbus—religious frenzy. To all appearance a Takruri,[184] he was a fine and powerful man, as the numbers required to hold him testified. He threw his arms wildly about him, uttering shrill cries, which sounded like *le le le le*, and, when held, he swayed his body and waved his head from side to side like a chained and furious elephant, straining out the deepest

> groans. The Africans appear unusually subject to this nervous state, which, seen by the ignorant and the imaginative, would at once suggest 'demoniacal possession.' Either their organisation is more impressionable or, more probably, the hardships, privations, and fatigues endured whilst wearily traversing inhospitable wilds and perilous seas have exalted their imaginations to a pitch bordering upon frenzy. Often they are seen prostrate on the pavement, or clinging to the curtain, or rubbing their foreheads upon the stones, weeping bitterly, and pouring forth the wildest ejaculations."

Dr. Blyden, speaking of the native Moslems of Sierra Leone, has said, "Wherever they go, they take the Koran with them. In a wreck or a fire, if nothing else is saved, that book is generally rescued. They prize and honour it with extreme reverence and devotion.... I have known them to pay as high as five pounds sterling for a Manuscript Koran and think it cheap." One might fill a volume in giving concrete instances, as well as general statements founded upon the personal observations of travellers in all parts of Western Africa, to prove the inapplicability as concerns West Africa of Palgrave's passage quoted above, a passage which I have specially chosen because it represents, unfortunately, what may be called "home opinion" on the subject.

It can, no doubt, be said with truth, that the majority of West African Mohammedans cannot read Arabic, and that a large proportion of them only know the ordinances of the Koran by hearsay; but this, far from being an argument against the influence of Islam in West Africa, is but an added

proof of the grip which Islamic thought has attained over the African mind, and of its having supplied the Negro—not through specific rules, regulations and ordinances, but in its main conception—with something which he required both in a spiritual and material sense. It is, moreover, advisable to accept with caution the general statements attributing wholesale ignorance of letters to Muslims in West Africa. Blyden gives a long list of works which he observed in a Mallam's house in the Sierra Leone hinterland. The *Tarik* tells us that, not long after the introduction of Islam in West Africa, many Negroes rivalled their Semitic or Berber teachers in knowledge and erudition. Barth met in the wildest parts of Adamawa a Fulani from far-off Massina carrying a considerable number of Arabic books as *trade*. Many other instances could be given.

Islam in West Africa is, indeed, a living force and a most powerful agency "everywhere knitting the conquerors and the conquered into an harmonious whole,"[185] and Englishmen must regard it as such. It confronts them more particularly in its political aspect in Northern Nigeria; and in Sierra Leone, the Gambia, the Gold Coast, Lagos, and to a much lesser degree, in Southern Nigeria, in its social aspect. People in England appear strangely unacquainted with these facts. West African Mohammedanism is presented to them in distorted shape by those who have interest in so doing, and to whom the public ear is more readily accessible. But the local authorities in the West African Colonies realise the state of affairs; and what is more, are rapidly coming to the conclusion that the Mohammedan section of the community is not only the most orderly and the most progressive, but necessitates, both as a matter of duty and of policy, recognition on the part of the

Government. Within the last few years Mohammedan schools have been established with official sanction and support in all our Colonies; a mosque built by the late Shitta Bey has been opened at Lagos[186] by the (then) Governor in person, and in Sierra Leone a Director of Mohammedan Education has been especially appointed at a fixed salary per annum.

As with Great Britain, so with France, but to a very much greater degree. France's African Empire is almost wholly an Islamic one, and confining ourselves to that part of it which is properly West African, the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants are Muslims. With the exception of a small section of Bobos, Diakankes and Bambarras, a larger but declining section of the Malinkes and a few wandering Fulani in the more remote districts of Barani, Fuladugu, Bobo-Dialassu, &c., the whole of the Western Sudan is more or less Muslimised. In the north of her colony of Guinea, France has the large Muslim Fulani State of Futa-Jallon; in Senegal, Mohammedanism has spread right down to the ocean; in the Chad region, in Baghirmi and a considerable distance up the Shari, Islam has flourished for at least four centuries, and through Fulani cattle-rearers and Hausa traders, the tenets of the Prophet are being propagated as far south as the Shari, Sangha and Ubanghi. The French have established numerous schools at which the sons of Mohammedan chiefs receive instruction on Western lines. Among such schools may be mentioned those of Kayes and Medina. Special instructors appointed by the French Government teach Arabic side by side with French, and every effort is made by France to secure Muslim co-operation on lines of Western thought in the great work which she has taken in hand. The French African Committee go so far as to

print a special bulletin in Arabic, which, together with the Arabic newspaper *al Mobacher*, published in Algeria, is distributed gratuitously to a large number of influential Mohammedans throughout the Western Sudan, especially in such centres as Jenne, Timbuctoo, Nioro and Sokolo. Needless to say these publications are largely composed of laudatory articles calculated to inspire their readers with the justice, generosity, and liberty of French political conceptions. The French seem to be adopting in this, as in many other respects in West Africa, a very enlightened attitude. At the Kayes school, for instance, they have appointed a special teacher from Algeria to superintend instruction in the Arabic tongue.[187] Moreover, in order to make clear to the Muslim population that their sons can attend the Government schools without fear of having to listen to teaching conceived in a spirit of hostility or criticism towards Islam, the French authorities not only permit but encourage the presence during class time of the Muslim schoolmasters themselves, thus removing the natural suspicion of Muslim parents, and at the same time making allies of the "marabouts." This line of conduct, it may be added, is especially embodied in the instructions given to all District Commissioners.

How comes it that Islam has succeeded with the West African Negro when Christianity has fared so badly? Islam has marched from triumph to triumph among the Negroes, but of the greatest effort ever put forward by the Christian Church in West Africa, that by the Portuguese in the Congo in the sixteenth century, there remains little or no trace, and the results of more widespread but less consistent (because rent by internal differences) efforts of to-day cannot be termed otherwise than profoundly

discouraging, when one considers the lives expended in a fruitless task; pitifully sterile, when one is aware of the large sums that have been, and continue to be, spent in the attempt. It would seem as though the failure of the Christian Church in North Africa, and the failure of Roman Catholicism in South West Africa, in the sixteenth century, were to be repeated in these later days by the multifarious sects and denominations the monotony of whose painful struggles to gain a foothold on the western shores of the unfathomable continent is only varied by the jealousies and recriminations which they indulge in towards one another.

The Protestant churchman is wont to ascribe the failure of Christian propaganda in South-Western Africa in the sixteenth century to Roman Catholicism, which to him is the embodiment of an evil little if at all removed from the evil of Islamic doctrine.[188] I have heard English and French Roman Catholics attribute it to the inherent incapacity, or weakness, or corruptibility—according to the particular views of the individual—of the would-be converters, the Portuguese. Persons devoid of special religious prejudices are sometimes inclined to argue that the mere fact of the slave trade being in existence contemporaneously was in itself sufficient to account for it. Upon examination none of these views appear very conclusive. Protestantism has not fared better in West Africa than Roman Catholicism. Indeed, it may be doubted whether it has fared, on the whole, quite as well. No argument worthy of serious attention has been adduced to prove the exceptional unfitness of Portuguese prelates to successfully accomplish the task they had begun, nor does the decline of the political influence of Portugal in West Africa provide a fitting explanation, because

the flimsy nature of the first apparent successes of the Roman Catholic Church had become evident before that decline took place. As for the alleged slave-trade deterrent, it was, contradictory as the statement may appear, probably no deterrent at all, but rather the reverse; for the policy of the Portuguese consisted in promoting friendly relations with the more powerful potentates of the littoral, and in supplying them with guns and gunpowder to make war on the inland tribes. The latter, and not the coastwise natives, were, in the main, the chief sufferers by the slave trade; and the coast people, being guaranteed from molestation, would have no occasion to invoke the miseries inflicted upon them by the Portuguese traffickers in human flesh, when approached by the Portuguese inculcators of Christianity. In fact, if the political acts of professing Christian nations in West Africa are to be considered as a factor in the measure of success, or failure of Christian propagandism in West Africa—a debatable proposition upon which I propose to refer later on—it may without hesitation be affirmed that recent developments of European policy have done more to prejudice the natives against the doctrines of Christianity, as propounded by European teachers, than the slave trade with all its savagery and horrors.



A SUSU MALLAM

We must go deeper than this, and in doing so try and clear our minds of preconceived opinions, no easy matter when certain errors have been so

persistently dinned into our ears that they have come to be regarded as cardinal articles of faith; and those who in this respect occasionally venture to disturb the serenity of our convictions are looked upon as outside the pale of respectable society. One of such preconceived opinions is embodied in the quotation from Palgrave's "Arabia" already commented upon. Another bears on the nature of Islamic proselytism in West Africa. It is an ingrained belief with most people that Mohammedanism in West Africa has ever been propagated by brute force; is ever and always associated with "slave-raiding." The mere epithet of "slave-raiders" applied in Reuter's telegrams to a tribe with whom trouble has occurred, is sufficient to justify in the eyes of the public any expeditions of a punitive kind which the authorities in their wisdom think fit to organise, against those who have incurred the displeasure of a District Commissioner or Military Commandant. Far be it from me to assert that occasions do not arise when the adoption of punitive undertakings is not only an unavoidable necessity, but a positive duty owed by the Suzerain Power to its protected subjects. But I would venture respectfully to suggest that the term "slave-raiding" is much abused, not a little distorted, and sometimes most unfairly applied. It is used almost exclusively in connection with Mohammedan tribes. When a difference comes about with pagans, we are told that it is caused by a predilection to human sacrifices. A reference to the frequent collisions which have taken place between Great Britain and the natives of Western Africa during the last six years will show that, either as a primary or an accessory cause of the difficulty, human sacrifices are invariably given in the case of a pagan community and slave-raiding in the case of a Mohammedan community.

There could be no greater error than the prevalent idea that in West Africa, Islam has attained its remarkable successes *manu militari*. Most of Islam's triumphs in West Africa have been won by the peaceful sect of the Quadriyah, founded by Sidi-Abd-el-Kader-el-Jieari in 1077 A.D., first introduced into West Africa in the fifteenth century; and the work accomplished by this sect has been more enduring and more widespread than that of the other great order in West Africa, the Tijaniyah, which believes primarily in the sword as a means of conversion.

> "In the beginning[189] of the present century[190] the great revival which was so profoundly influencing the Mohammedan world stirred up the Quadriyah of the Sahara and Western Sudan to renewed life and energy, and before long learned theologians or small colonies of persons affiliated to the order were to be found, scattered throughout the Sudan, on the mountain chain that runs along the coast of Guinea, and even to the west of it, in the Free State of Liberia. These initiates formed centres of Islamic influence in the midst of the pagan population, among whom they received a welcome as public scribes, legists, writers of amulets, and schoolmasters; gradually they would acquire influence over their new surroundings, and isolated cases of conversion would soon grow into a little band of converts, the most promising of whom would often be sent to complete their studies at the chief centre of the order; here they might remain for several years, until they had perfected their theological studies, and would then return to their native place, fully equipped for the work of spreading

> the faith among their fellow-countrymen. In this way a leaven has been introduced into the midst of fetish worshippers and idolaters which has gradually spread the faith of Islam surely and steadily, though by almost imperceptible degrees. Up to the middle of the present century[191] in the Sudan, schools were founded and conducted by teachers trained under the auspices of the Quadriyah, and their organisation provided for a regular and continued system of propaganda among the heathen tribes. The missionary work of this order has been entirely of a peaceful character, and has relied wholly upon personal example and precept, on the influence of a teacher over his pupils, and the spread of education."

The Quadriyah order, moreover, is not animated by hostility towards Christians, in which it differs materially from that of the Tijaniyah. The French find it advisable to co-operate politically with the former sect. "It is," writes Captain Morrison in the interesting report already alluded to, "our business to see that the Negroes, Moors, Tuaregs and other inhabitants of the Western Sudan should become more affiliated to the Quadriyah (Kadria). It is, thanks to the spirit with which the Imam of Lanfiera inspires his adepts, that friendship and protection have been granted to all our explorers in that region." M. le Commandant Binger thus describes the work of Quadriyah Muslims in the important city and country of Kong, in the hinterland of the Ivory Coast, which he was the first to discover and bring to the notice of Europe:

> "A hundred years ago, the influence of the

Muslim community of Kong did not extend beyond a few miles of the city. Surrounded on all sides by pagan tribes who existed by rapine and brigandage, the people of Kong could not carry on trade and dispose of their cotton goods without great loss, consequent upon the exorbitant taxes imposed by the pagan kinglets, non-payment of which involved the pillage of caravans. What did the Muslims do? They established Mohammedan families from Kong in all the villages situated between Kong and Bobo-Dialassu first, and between Kong and Jenne afterwards. It took them fifty years to settle one or two families in each village. Each of these immigrants organised a school, asked some of the inhabitants to send their children there, then little by little, through their relations with Kong and other commercial centres, they were able to render service to the pagan king of the country, to gain his confidence, and gradually to take part in his affairs. If a difficulty arises it is always a Muslim who is appealed to. Even if he be quite alone in the country, the king will empower him to negotiate, because he is usually able to read and write and has the reputation of being a good and holy man. If the Muslim ambassador fails in his mission, he proposes to the pagan king that the mediation of the people of Kong shall be invoked. Thus the country becomes placed under the protection of the Mohammedan States of Kong. Gradually Islam makes progress. More Muslim families settle among the pagans, who do not fail to become converts. The latter quickly recognise that the one means of finding aid and protection

> wherever their travels may lead them lies in the adoption of Islam.[192] Moreover, have not the pagans a significant example before them? Do not the Muslims live in comparative ease and comfort? The pagan, while acknowledging that it is commerce and industry that render Mohammedans prosperous, attributes much of that prosperity to the Supreme Being, and the Muslim takes care to point the moral, 'God wills it thus.' It is clearly apparent from the above that the Islamic propaganda of Kong is carried on by persuasion. Force is but rarely employed, and only against pagan peoples composed of thieves and brigands, and when the Kong Mussulmans are driven to make use of it."[193]

The practices of the Kong people in this respect are not at all peculiar to themselves. We find the same procedure mentioned by Thomson, Barth, and numerous other explorers; and the influence of Islam among the Hausas could never have been maintained if to the early conquests of Othman Fodio had not succeeded the peaceful efforts of the Muslim teacher, schoolmaster and priest. Dr. Blyden once described to the writer the incidents relating to the conversion of one of the largest pagan towns in the Sierra Leone hinterland, the knowledge of which he gleaned from the inhabitants themselves in the course of his travels in the Protectorate. On a certain day the inhabitants of the town observed a man, black like themselves, but clad in a white garment, advancing down the main street. Suddenly the stranger prostrated himself and prayed to Allah. The natives stoned him and he departed. In a little while he returned, and prostrated himself as before. This time he was not stoned, but the people gathered about

him with mockery and reviling. The men spat upon him and the women hurled insults and abuse. His prayer ended, the stranger went away in silence, grave and austere, seemingly oblivious to his unsympathetic surroundings. For a space he did not renew his visit, and in the interval the people began to regret their rudeness. The demeanour of the stranger under trying circumstances had gained their respect. A third time he came, and with him two boys also clothed in white garments. Together they knelt and offered prayer. The natives watched, and forbore to jeer. At the conclusion of the prayer a woman came timidly forward and pushed her young son towards the holy man, then as rapidly retreated. The Muslim rose, took the boy by the hand and, followed by his acolytes, left the village in silence as before. When he came again he was accompanied by three boys, two of them those who had been with him before, and the third the woman's son, clad like the rest. All four fell upon their knees, the holy man reciting the prayer in a voice that spoke of triumph and success. He never left the town again, for the people crowded round him beseeching him to teach their children. In a short time the entire population of that town, which for three centuries had beaten back the assaults of would-be Muslim converters by the sword, had voluntarily embraced Islam!

It is in incidents such as these, which are by no means rare in West Africa, that the moral force of Islam lies, and which is largely accountable for its astonishing successes. The fanatical zeal of an Ahmadu, a Samory and an El-Haji-Omar are but drops in the ocean compared with the systematic moral suasion exercised by Islamic teachers, who, carrying no staff or scrip, relying solely upon the

inward strength derived from contact with a higher creed, brave the perils and discomforts incidental to their calling with a sublime indifference only met with in Biblical narrative. There is a passage in Arnold's "The Preaching of Islam" which accurately interprets the misconceptions which exist on the subject of Islamic propaganda in West Africa:

> "Unfortunately," says that author, "for a true estimate of the missionary work of Islam in Western Africa, the fame of the *jihads*, or religious wars, has thrown into the shade the successes of the peaceful propagandist, though the labours of the latter have been more effectual to the spread of Islam than the creation of petty short-lived dynasties. The records of campaigns, especially when they have interfered with the commercial projects or schemes of conquest of the white man, have naturally attracted the attention of Europeans more than the unobtrusive labours of the Mohammedan preacher and schoolmaster.... These *jihads*, rightly looked upon, are but incidents in the modern Islamic revival, and are by no means characteristic of the forces and activities that have been really operative in the promulgation of Islam in West Africa; indeed, unless followed up by distinctly missionary efforts, they would have proved almost wholly ineffectual in the creation of a true Muslim community."

CHAPTER XXIII
ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

Being now perhaps in a somewhat more open frame of mind with regard to the work of Islam in West Africa, we may attempt to investigate the methods of Islam and the methods of Christianity in their relationship to the Negro. In this manner we may hope to come to still closer quarters with the subject, and by so doing arrive at a tolerably clear impression of its various phases. Why does Africa, which was, as has been truly said, "the nursing mother of Christianity," remain impervious to the teachings of the highest religion? Why does Christianity, which has laboured for so many centuries in Western Africa, make no appreciable advance in that country? The failure may, I think, be ascribed to four main causes: first, the refusal to admit that the circumstances which regulate certain natural laws vary with climatic considerations and racial idiosyncrasies; secondly, the tendency which Christianity, as taught in West Africa, has to denationalise; thirdly, the incompatibility between the ideals of Christ and modern conceptions of Christianity; fourthly, the political action of Christian Powers.

For obvious reasons the question of polygamy is a very difficult one to publicly discuss, but the subject of Christianity and Mohammedanism in Western Africa cannot adequately be treated without referring to it. It is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that the refusal of the Christian Church to admit polygamists into its fold is one of the great obstacles with which the Church in West Africa has to contend. That is not

seriously disputed, and yet, so far as can be observed, the chief dignitaries of the Church with whom all decisions affecting missionary enterprise in West Africa must ultimately lie, give no sign that they realise the paramount importance of the problem. Now and again individual utterances are made, which tend to show that some Churchmen, at least, are possessed of a spirit sufficiently broad to approach the subject in more practical fashion. A well-known Canon of the Church once remarked that, "owing to polygamy, Mohammedan countries are free from professional outcasts, a greater reproach to Christianity than polygamy to Islam." Although the first part of that statement may not be accepted *ad literatim*, there are, unfortunately, sufficient data to show that the morals of Mohammedan communities in West Africa are higher than those of the Europeanised West Coast towns, where alone Christianity has gained a sort of foothold, and where a monogamous Christianity has been preached off and on for centuries past. And it is, at any rate, true that in West Africa the Mohammedan is, as a rule, distinctly averse to relationship with public women; and also, as a rule, jealously guards the honour of his wives and daughters.

Let us consider for a moment how this refusal on the part of the Church to receive polygamists appeals to the Negro in relation to Christianity. If there is one social feature of the Negro which all observers are agreed in recognising, it is the sincerity and depth of the link between mother and son.[194] With what sort of feelings, then, must the Negro look upon a religion which, according to its expounders, brands his parents with immorality? In very truth, whether we approach this great subject from a standpoint of

common sense and severe practicability, or whether we claim to study it on moral grounds alone, only one conclusion can be arrived at. To offer Christianity to the Negro at the price of repudiating the members of his household is unreasonable, preposterous, unjust, and even cruel. It is unreasonable, insomuch as it ignores the most fundamental laws of human affection which exist in more or less developed form in every community and under every clime. It is preposterous, because it displays an extraordinary ignorance of the customs of the Negro and the strength of the family tie, and all that appertains to it among the Negroes. It is unjust, because it would deprive the rejected women (and children) of all they possess, cover them with shame and obloquy, thus deliberately inciting them to lead immoral lives. It is cruel, because, with an entire inconsequence and heedlessness of after effects, it would break up a social system consecrated by immemorial usage. There is a noble passage in Faidherbe's great work which I cannot refrain from quoting in this connection:

> "Certain people," said that distinguished Frenchman, "would seem to desire that the natives should be induced to repudiate their wives and to retain but one. This method appears to me to be thoroughly immoral. What! Our object is to strengthen family ties, and we would begin by disorganising the family! We should commit a great injustice, and we should be displaying a singular callousness towards the women and children, if we professed to grant to the native the title and privileges of a citizen on the condition that he kept one wife and expelled the others. We should place venerable

> fathers of families in the position of sending away, with their children, wives with whom they had lived for fifteen, twenty, or thirty years. And how would they distinguish between their wives?... Disorganisation would be complete."[195]

There is another aspect of the question which cannot fail to arrest the attention of all enlightened and truly Christian men. Is polygamy a necessary institution on physical grounds for the Negro *in Africa*? The evidence in a corroborative sense is not to be lightly dismissed. Without stopping to discuss the generally admitted theory that the sexual side of man's nature becomes more pronounced as the tropical zone is approached, it is incontestable that a well-grounded belief exists in West African educated native circles that the effects of monogamy upon the Negro *are racially destructive*. Dr. Blyden's testimony in this respect may not, perhaps, command universal acknowledgment, but the following passage from his writings is well worthy of note:

> "Owing," he says, "to the exhausting climatic conditions, the life and perpetuity of the population depend upon polygamy. The difference is marked between children born under monogamic restrictions and those whose parents are polygamists. In the one there is the evidence of physical deterioration and mental weakness; in the other are manifest physical vigour and mental activity and alertness. In the one there is the sad evidence of arrested growth, suppressed physical development, and intellectual sluggishness; in the other there is astonishing muscular strength and fully

> developed chest—a reproduction of their fathers'—not weaker, but wiser than their fathers', when not diverted from aboriginal simplicity by alien influence."

The exhausting climatic conditions of which Doctor Blyden speaks is accountable for a custom, almost universal throughout West Africa, among both Mohammedans and pagans; which, although it may have some drawbacks attaching to it, must nevertheless be assumed to entail preponderating advantages for the racial welfare of the people, or it would hardly have been so widely adopted. I refer, of course, to the extensive period of lactation—three years as a rule—during which time husband and wife have no connection; connection, indeed, generally ceasing when conception has taken place. The custom is attributive to the belief that too frequent child-bearing is injurious to the health of the mother and the offspring, in view of the climate.[196] This is a point which also deserves the most attentive consideration. The instinct of primitive peoples in such matters is generally found to be based upon knowledge born of experience. The only portion of the Dark Continent where orthodox Christianity has made any appreciable inroad is Uganda. Now what does Sir Harry Johnston tell us in his last report? He says there is a serious decrease in the birth-rate of the Bantu Waganda. He quotes Monseigneur Strachir's opinion that one of the causes of this state of affairs is the introduction of monogamy, consequent upon the spread of the Christian faith.

> "In many parts of West Africa," continues Sir Harry Johnston, "where Christianity prevails, but where there is very little result other than

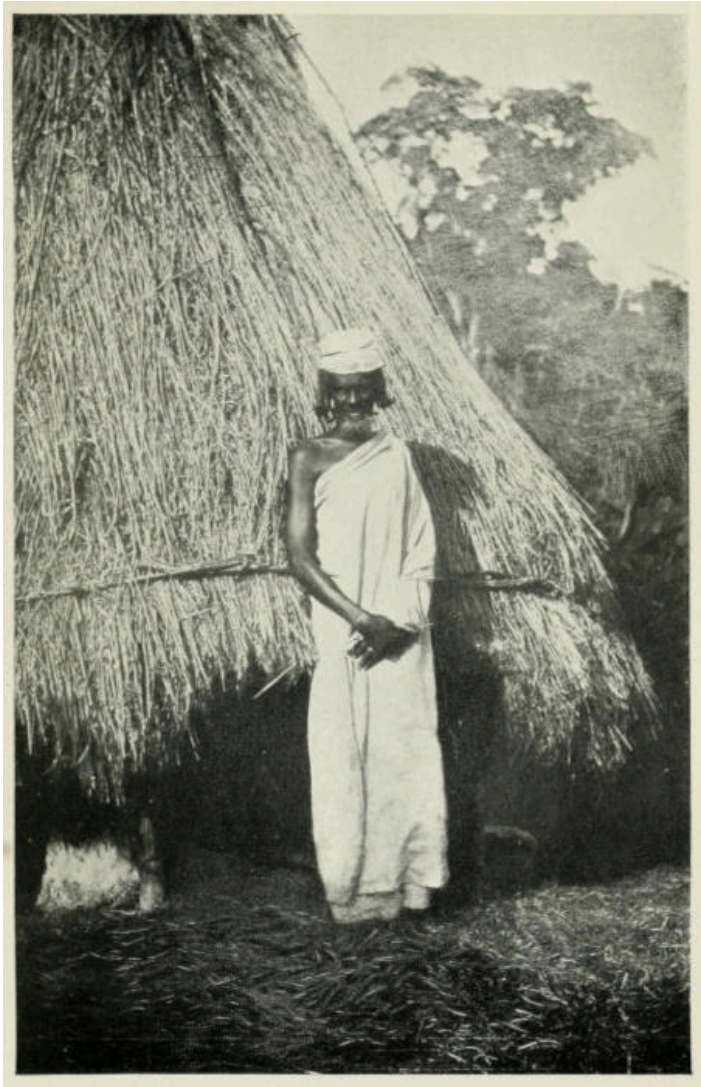
> pious utterances from the mouth, ostensible monogamy is corrected by the possession of recognised or unrecognised concubines, and by a general promiscuousness in sexual matters. But in Uganda, Christianity seems to have taken such a real hold upon the people that, though by no means free from immorality—as no nation or community is free from the same tendency—they really seem to be striving at genuine monogamy and the exclusive possession of one wife for a partner. As the Baganda women are certainly very poor breeders, this means that the majority of couples only have one child. In fact, the birth of a second child on the part of the wife is such an unusual occurrence that the wife, in consequence thereof, is given a new and honorific title."

A Liberian Bishop—one of the kindliest of men—to whom I showed the above passage, replied sententiously that the ways of the Almighty were unfathomable, but that the disappearance of the few could not be held to weigh in the balance as compared with the salvation of the many; which seemed to me to bear a curious analogy to that passage in "Azurara" in which the old Portuguese historian, apostrophising Prince Henry the Navigator on the occasion of the first appearance at his court of West African slaves, torn with every accompaniment of barbarity from their homes by those gallant knights Antam Gonçalvez and Nuno Tristram, exclaims:

> "O holy Prince, peradventure thy pleasure and delight might have some semblance of

> covetousness at receiving the knowledge of such a sum of riches, even as great as those thou didst expend to arrive at that result?... But thy joy was solely from that one holy purpose of thine to seek salvation for the lost souls of the heathen. And in the light of this it seemed to thee, when thou sawest those captives brought into thy presence, that the expense and trouble thou hadst undergone was nothing: such was thy pleasure at beholding them. And yet the greater benefit was theirs, for though their bodies were now brought into some subjection, that was a small matter in comparison with their souls, which would now possess true freedom for evermore."

I hope it will not be thought that these references are made with any idea of depreciating the efforts, and in some respects surprisingly successful efforts, of Christian propaganda among the Bantu races of the Uganda Protectorate. The point under discussion is not the evangelising success of the Church in Uganda, but the physical effects of a monogamous Christianity upon the races of Africa.



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I have been at great pains to obtain all the evidence available bearing directly or indirectly on this subject, and in the aggregate it bears out what

precedes. The highest type of the Christian educated Negro urges that an entire latitude should be left to the aboriginal element in the matter, and although professing monogamists themselves, they strictly maintain—whether rightly or wrongly is not for the layman to decide—that in so doing the Church would not be acting contrary to the principles of divine revelation.[197]

I have given as the second contributory cause of the non-success of Christian missions in West Africa the tendency to denationalisation. It is unhappily true that the Christianised Negro becomes to a large extent denationalised, and the reason of it lies in the methods employed to convert him. Islam, on the other hand, not only encourages the spirit of nationality in the African, but intensifies it. The Muslim Negro is elevated among his pagan neighbours; he gains their respect and increases his own. Islam takes the Negro by the hand and gives him equality with all men. From the day the pagan adopts Islam, no Semite Muslim can claim racial superiority over him. Islam to the Negro is the stepping-stone to a higher conception of existence, inspiring in his breast confidence in his own destiny, imbuing his spirit with a robust faith in himself and in his race. Christianity does not do this for the Negro. Its effect, indeed, is quite contrary. Instead of encouraging, it discourages. Instead of inculcating a greater self-reliance, it seems to lessen that which exists. The Christian Negro for the most part is a sort of hybrid. He is neither one thing nor another. His adoption of European clothes causes him to be looked upon partly with suspicion, partly with ridicule, by his pagan fellow-countrymen; although they make use of his services as clerk or secretary when occasion requires it. Mohammedans treat him

with undisguised contempt. More bitter perhaps than anything else is the scorn which Europeans themselves bestow upon him. Question any white official, military man, trader or traveller, as to his impressions of the West African native. He will tell you that the pagan native of the interior is more often than not a fine fellow, one of nature's gentlemen, hospitable, kindly, simple, courteous; that the Mohammedan native is a splendid man, with a carriage full of pride and self-reliance, arrogant may be, haughty, but singularly dignified, with a conscious superiority and quiet confidence stamped all over him. But the Christian Negro is seldom spoken of without opprobrium. His vanity, his conceit, his "veneer of civilisation," the vices he has acquired and so forth, are the inevitable theme. His unfortunate habit of adopting the latest vagaries of European fashions, both in his own person and in the person of his women folk, is the butt of constant sarcasm, as are the accounts of the solemnisation of the Christian form of marriage in a native West Coast town. Even the missionaries are compelled, although with natural unwillingness, to admit an unpalatable fact. "There are a great many natives on the coast and in Lower Nigeria," writes Canon Robinson, "who call themselves Christian; there are distressingly few converts.... My advice to travellers on the coast in search of trustworthy servants would be to prefer the heathen or Mohammedan to the professing Christian, because a bad religion sincerely accepted, or even no religion at all, is to be preferred to a religious profession which is only a sham." A humiliating confession, humiliating to the Christian Church, humiliating to European civilisation. What between one thing and another, the Christianised Negro is a *déclassé*, a *culotté sans culottes*.[198] Of course there

are exceptions, but they are relatively scarce, and consist in the main of natives who have acquired wealth by commerce (wealth being a safeguard to open obloquy all the world over, no matter what the colour of the possessor's skin), and who either through the enjoyment of special educational advantages, or because they are men of unusually high character and intelligence naturally, have succeeded in grasping the true Christian ideal and have gained moral and spiritual ennoblement thereby. It is my privilege to number such a man among my friends. But I greatly doubt whether he would feel at ease in travelling or sojourning alone in the interior, even among the tribe to which he belongs, in his own country of origin. There seems to be a barrier between the Christianised Negro and his non-Christian countrymen; a barrier which excludes sympathy, and which European policy tends to still further accentuate.

To what are these things due? To no one particular circumstance, but to a whole set of circumstances, which together produce the effect. To the general, omnipresent suggestion—possibly quite unintentioned in many cases—of the Negro's inherent racial inferiority, inculcated by European missionaries. To the never absent, one might say inevitable insistence, whether outspoken or only understood, upon a great intellectual, social, moral gulf which yawns between the Negro and his Caucasian instructor; a gulf that can never be bridged by Christianity, as taught in West Africa by Europeans.

The third and fourth contributory causes, viz. incompatibility between the ideals of Christ and the modern conceptions of Christianity, and the political

action of Christian Powers, may be treated together, for they are closely allied one to the other; as, indeed, they also are to the third cause, upon which I have briefly touched. There is a striking passage in the last literary contribution on West African affairs, penned by Miss Kingsley on that fatal voyage to the Cape, which puts in more pregnant language than I could hope to do the underlying thought expressed above:

> "I know," wrote Miss Kingsley, "that there is a general opinion among the leading men of both races that Christianity will give the one possible solution to the whole problem. I fail to be able to believe this. I fail to believe Christianity will bring peace between the two races, for the simple reason that, though it may be possible to convert Africans *en masse* into practical Christians, it is quite impossible to convert the Europeans *en masse* to it. You have only got to look at the history of any European nation—the Dutch, the Spanish, the Italian, the German—every one calling themselves Christian, but none the more for that tolerant and peaceable. Each one of them is ready to take out a patent for a road to heaven, and make that road out of men's blood and bones and the ashes of burnt homesteads. Of course, by doing this they are not following the true teachings of Jesus Christ, but that has not, and will not, become a factor in politics."

The bewildering contradictions between the ideals laid down by Christ, as taught by the expounders of his word, and the practical effect of that teaching as exemplified in the conduct of Europeans and

European Governments, confronts the Negro at every turn. The more intelligent he is, the more advanced in the social scale, the more puzzling does it become. Is it a question of charity? The Muslim propagandist speaks of Christ with deep respect amounting to reverence. He is *Kalima*—the Word; *Masih*—the Messiah; *Qual-ul-Haqq*—the Word of Truth; *Ruh*—the Spirit (of God). He is "One illustrious in this world and in the next": "One who has near access to God." The Christian missionary speaks of Mohammed "as an impostor;" "an arch impostor;" "a man full of evil and wickedness." Islam is a "bad religion": "its ways are the ways of darkness": "it is Satan's work," and so on. Is it a question of self-abnegation? The Bible and the Koran utter the same precepts in almost identical terms. But what a difference in the spiritual practice of their respective expounders in West Africa! The Muslim preacher follows out the letter of his book. He goes on his way alone and unattended, carrying neither purse nor scrip. He lives the life of the Negro, enters into his pursuits, shares his hardships and his pleasures, assimilates himself in every possible way with those whom he hopes to convert. The European missionary is compelled, by the exigencies of the climate very greatly, to attend primarily to his own comforts. He travels with a long file of carriers bearing his baggage; preserved foods, linen, camp impedimenta and what not. Some of the most earnest missionaries keenly realise the drawbacks which such procedure must entail in the prosecution of their work, both physically and morally. They are deeply sensible of the adverse influence which it cannot fail to exercise over their labours. We have seen an English prelate, high up in the hierarchy of his Church, suggest a decrease in his salary, in order that the balance might be devoted to

the appointment of another helper in the great cause. [199] On the other hand, we find in the works and letters of prominent missionaries engaged in the West African field, egotistical essays of the following description: “Care must be taken that the waterproof cloak is *stitched*. Sponges, bath-towels, &c., will suggest themselves. Do not forget the table-linen; a neatly arranged table helps to tempt the appetite, which is often fastidious. Antibilious compounds are worth in my judgment *two guineas* a box.” The above passage is derived from a book recently published, written by a missionary with nine years’ experience in West Africa. The articles mentioned by the writer are recommended by him as indispensable to the welfare of a teacher of the Gospel in West Africa. The following is a typical passage culled from the epistolary effusions published from time to time in the organ of the Church Missionary Society from the pen of a most energetic Bishop, who has been endeavouring with singular ill-success, and not without some danger of arousing disturbances, to evangelise the Hausas. “We are all well.... Our appetites are enormous. We have plenty of food. We receive presents of food from the people every day—rice, onions, corn, maize, fowls, bananas, &c. B—— shoots a good many partridges and guinea-fowl, and we have a good reserve of European and English stores.” That these little peculiarities do not in the slightest degree detract from the sincerity of the writers may be accepted without reserve. All we are here concerned with, is to consider the general effect which these conceptions of the methods of propagating Christianity in West Africa are likely to have upon the African. Are men who profess so tender a regard for their well-being calculated to make much headway in an evangelical sense? It may

reasonably be doubted.

Is it a question of vice? The Mohammedan preacher does not leave a stone unturned to combat drunkenness in every form, and to a very large extent he succeeds. The sobriety of the great mass of Muslimised Negroes no longer requires to be demonstrated. Laxity in this respect is the exception which proves the rule. The European missionary also denounces drunkenness, and with a fervour at times which is not always discriminating. But he is terribly handicapped (1) by the European trader, about one-fifth of whose total trade consists in the importation of freshly distilled liquor, often but not invariably containing various impurities, and in quality not exceeding that which is sold in low public-houses in this country, and which freely mixed with water may not be very injurious, but drunk neat, as for the most part it is, in the *coastal* regions of West Africa, is—we have overwhelming testimony to that effect—harmful;[200] (2) by the European Governments who, although they do now and again raise the duty on spirits in deference to public opinion, tacitly encourage a traffic without which their whole administrative machinery would become temporarily paralysed, seeing that from 45 per cent. to 75 per cent. of the revenue of their Colonies is derived from this traffic. These circumstances may, or may not, be preventable. They exist, and cannot be ignored. As for another kind of vice; the life lived by many white men in West Africa is not, perhaps, calculated to give the Negro a high idea of the morality of Christian Europe. His occasional visits to Europeanised coast towns—presuming him to be living some distance in the interior—do not probably imbue him with the notion that his trousered countrymen are the gainers in moral ethics, through contact with European

civilisation; nor, unhappily, can it be said that the tales and personal experiences related by those of his educated brothers who visit our great cities are of a kind to lessen the impression he may already have formed as to the results of twenty centuries of Christianity in Europe.[201]

Is it a question of gauging the true inwardness of the doctrine of peace and love? It is to be feared that the political aims of European Powers in West Africa are too often associated with Maxims and Martinis to admit of much doubt on that score. The Negro is a shrewd man, and he distinguishes professions from actions. The readiness with which the white interlopers in his country appeal to the sword as the shortest cut to the solution of a misunderstanding is instructive. The hastiness with which his habits and customs are trampled upon by his would-be elevators; the cheerful alacrity he is expected to show in swallowing innovations thrust upon him at what, to his conservative prejudices, appear to him a moment's notice; and, finally, the increasing desire on the part of his European friends to appropriate his most precious heritage, his ancestral lands, and the fruits thereof, for their own use—all these things, whether in fashionable parlance they be the "inevitable" accompaniments of opening up West Africa by Western Europe or not, constitute those contradictions of which I have already spoken, and whatever else they may do, militate against the spread of Christianity in the land of the Negroes.

Is there a remedy, and if so, on what lines is it to be sought for? There is only one *native* Christian State in Africa—Abyssinia—and its Christianity is declared by eminent divines to be tainted with all sorts of heresies and objections. But it has endowed

Abyssinia with sufficient vitality to enable her to repel Mohammedan invasion for a long term of centuries, and the strong religious zeal of Abyssinia's warriors was not a negligible factor in beating back the unjustifiable aggression made upon the independence of that country by Italy. To-day the Emperor of this African Christian State is, with one exception, probably the most powerful native ruler in the world. No doubt, it does not enter the heads of European statesmen to encourage the growth of a similar State in West Africa; which, indeed, is an obvious impossibility for many reasons. Yet Abyssinia provides a moral for the Christian Church. The Christianity of Abyssinia is an *African* Christianity, originally taught by an *African*, perpetuated by *Africans*. Orthodox or unorthodox, it has shown itself suitable to the necessities and the requirements of Africans; and if Christianity in West Africa, is ever destined to make appreciable progress, it will be when it is provided with its only feasible agent, a West African Church: a Church designed to respond to the needs of West Africa, which are not the needs of Europe; a Church whose servants shall be neither Europeans nor repatriate "Afro-Liberians," but West African Negroes, imbued with the instincts and patriotism of race; a Church founded upon an enlightened acquaintance with nature's immovable laws; upon principles of true science, which is true religion; upon a wise recognition that what is good and proper and right for one great branch of the human family may be bad, improper, and wrong for another.

PART IV

CHAPTER XXIV
ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS IN WEST AFRICA

The subject of the relationship between England and France in West Africa is one to which every year that passes adds importance. The French have during the last few years left us far behind in Western Africa, so far as territorial expansion is concerned. They have now a great Empire there. They have acquired it by dint of persistent, far-sighted, courageous effort; qualities which it is regrettable to state have been conspicuously lacking on the part of the British official world. If a tithe of the energy which has distinguished Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Bristol merchants in Western Africa had been displayed by successive British Governments, the possessions of Great Britain in West Africa to-day would be infinitely more extensive than they are.

In addition to getting the better of us, in a territorial sense, France—whose possessions touch our own at almost every point—is steadily becoming a serious commercial competitor. It is with that commercial competition that we shall have to reckon in the future to an increasing degree. It is of two kinds. There is legitimate competition and unfair competition. In either case it behoves us to carefully study its nature and consequences; to draw the necessary lessons therefrom; to candidly acknowledge in a spirit of tolerant common sense

that in many respects the cause of its pressing hardly upon us is due to superior management on the part of the French; to appeal to the spirit of equity and fair play in our neighbours, when, as is the case in some parts of their West African possessions at present, British merchants, who have powerfully contributed in creating the trade of those very possessions, are getting neither fair play nor just treatment; and generally to brace ourselves together, realising that in West Africa, as everywhere else, the old position of undisputed commercial supremacy which Great Britain was able to maintain at one time with very little trouble, can no longer be retained unless we shake off our facile opportunism and tackle the new conditions in a scientific manner.

Of early French enterprise in Western Africa very little seems to be known by the average Englishman; and yet the French were among the very first pioneers of Western Africa—probably the very first—before the Portuguese, at any rate, by at least 100 years. After the remarkable studies recently published in the French African Committee's journal by Commandant Binger, the distinguished chief of the African department of the French Colonial Office, there is not, I think, any alternative but to accept as conclusive the French claim of being the first Europeans to visit the West African coast. Spanish and Genoese navigators; the former hailing from Catalonia, the Lancashire of Spain, may possibly have been contemporaneous with the French. But, apart from French testimony, it is affirmed by eminent Spanish authorities themselves, such as Navarette and Viera, that the French preceded their own countrymen. The Canaries were discovered by a Genoese of French descent, and with a French name, Maloisel to wit, about 1275 A.D. They were also

conquered by a Frenchman named De Béthancourt in the first years of the fifteenth century. In the beginning of the fourteenth the West African coast as far south as the Senegal certainly, and Sierra Leone probably, was regularly visited by French ships. So much has now been established. Whether French ships then pushed south to the Gold Coast is not quite so clear. Personally I incline to the belief that this has also been satisfactorily made out, and the confirmatory testimony of Villaut-de-Bellefonds no longer stands alone.

The paucity of historical and documentary evidence has hitherto been the principal objection to the French claim of priority. It has, of course, been made the most of by Portuguese historians. But, apart from the circumstance that Commandant Binger has now been able to partly fill up the gap, and apart from the eminently reasonable explanation of Labat that the old records of the port of Dieppe, from whence many of the French ships bound to the West Coast started, were destroyed by the bombardment of that port in 1694, there is very good reason, to my mind, why the Portuguese on the one hand should possess such splendid and unique accounts of their early exploits in West Africa from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards; and why, on the other hand, the French, who arrived on the scene at least a century before them, should be so poorly represented in their own national archives. The reason is this. The enterprise of Portugal in West Africa—which has so incomparably enriched the domain of geographical knowledge—was, from the first, an official undertaking. It was conceived by Prince Henry the Navigator, one of the most remarkable figures in history, and all the resources of the science and literature of the age were invoked by

him to give to the new epoch of discovery a national and historical permanency, which should be the means of reflecting glory for ever on Portuguese annals. Very different was the enterprise of the French. It was in no sense official, but private. It was undertaken not by renowned knights and important personages in kingly service, but by hardy, illiterate, independent mariners and merchants of Normandy. The object was not, as in the case of the Portuguese, fame, geographical discovery, and religious zeal, but trade. The men who fitted out the French ships and sent them on their perilous course were Dieppe, Rouen, and Honfleur merchants; and the French vessels returned, not with captives forcibly torn from their homes with every accompaniment of cruelty in order to convert them to a faith of peace, charity, and good-will, but with ivory, spices, and gold dust. That was the earliest form of trade in West Africa by the people of Western Europe. The slave trade came afterwards. To this day a local industry in ivory carving exists at Dieppe, and every one who has visited that quaint old seaport has noticed the numerous ivory ornaments displayed in the shop windows. If, therefore, the British merchants can claim to be the latter-day pioneers of commercial enterprise in West Africa; if during the century that has just closed their commercial aptitude and initiative gained for them the foremost commercial position on the West African littoral, it was French merchants who originally led the way. We have too often led the way ourselves in most parts of the world to begrudge the French this honour, so far as Western Africa is concerned. Rather should it be a bond of respect, the twin sister of sympathy between us and our neighbours.

The first recorded instance upon which

Englishmen and Frenchmen met off the West African coast resulted, curiously enough, in an alliance. It happened in this way. One William Towerson, in the course of a voyage to Guinea in 1555, being pursued by some Portuguese brigantines, opportunely came across a fleet of French ships, with whom he joined company for safety. The alliance does not seem to have been a very satisfactory one, as it turned out; still, it was an alliance, of sorts. This first meeting took place some thirty-five years subsequent to the earliest known appearance of an Englishman in West Africa, in the person of one Andrew Battel, of Leigh —whether an ancestor of the three old maids of that ilk, history sayeth not—who put to sea in a Portuguese slaver, and after many extraordinary adventures amongst the natives of Angola, succeeded in getting back to his native country. The beginning of the sixteenth century marked the awakening of Englishmen to the potentialities of the West African trade. It had been preceded by a notable slackening in the energies of Normandy merchants. The Hundred Years' War with England had crippled enterprise of any kind in France. The House of Valois was in a parlous state. The great war which began in 1337 and continued, with occasional breaks of short duration, until the marvellous successes of the Maid of Orleans compelled the English to give way, was marked by the crushing defeats the French sustained at Crecy and Poitiers at the hands of Edward III., and at Agincourt at the hands of Henry V.; and, to make use of some quoted words, "The State was reduced to bankruptcy, the nobility excited to rebellion, and the mass of the people sunk in barbarism."

No sooner, however, had the victories of Joan of Arc infused new vitality into the French, than we find renewed evidence of the enterprise of Dieppe

and Rouen merchants in West Africa. The revival of that enterprise coincides with the entry upon the scene of English merchants: Windham, Hawkins of evil memory, Rutter, Baker, and others, and the records bear witness to the contemporary presence of French trading vessels on the West Coast from Senegal to the Gold Coast. Recent discoveries of old manuscripts, dating back to 1574, at Honfleur prove that from that year to 1583—a space of nine years—thirty-two French vessels left that port alone for West Africa. For some time English and French got on well enough on the West Coast. The power of Portugal was fast decaying, and adventurers of all nationalities, notably the Dutch, were hurrying to the spot. Then came more wars between English and French, with their natural effect upon commercial transactions in West Africa. In 1696 the French destroyed the British settlement at the mouth of the Gambia. For the next hundred years or so relations between the Europeans established or trading on the West Coast appear as a tangle of animosities. Every one seemed to be fighting his neighbour, and pirates of all nationalities attacked every vessel they came across, including those owned or manned by men of their own race, even Gambia Castle, garrisoned by a British force, being on one occasion captured and sacked by a notorious British pirate named Davies, presumably a Welshman! Notwithstanding all this dire confusion, the English were gradually getting the upper hand all down the coast. In 1794 Sierra Leone was bombarded by a French squadron without the authority apparently of the Revolutionary Government then in power. Twenty years later, the power of Napoleon having collapsed, all that was left to France by the Treaty of Vienna was her settlement on the coast of Senegal.

England remained in a preponderating position politically and commercially on the West African coast. Such, too, was her position in the main until the revival of a French Colonial policy, under the impulse of those far-seeing statesmen Gambetta and Jules Ferry in 1883. At any period between 1815 and 1883 England had the opportunity of creating an extensive Empire in West Africa and annexing practically the whole coast.

And here the curtain rings down on the old *régime*, and a new chapter in the history of Anglo-French relationship in West Africa begins.

To whom should be properly attributed the initiation of the scramble for Africa? It has been a cause of considerable inconvenience to the Cabinets of Europe, and of still greater inconvenience, we may feel tolerably certain, to the natives of Africa. Each Power that participated in it throws the onus on its neighbour. So far as West Africa is concerned, whatever claim or credit may be taken, the French must, I think, be held guilty or meritorious, according as individual opinion may differ. The scramble in West Africa arose from what, for want of a better description, may be termed the discovery by the French of the West African hinterlands. When Gambetta and Jules Ferry awoke the slumbering colonial instincts of their countrymen, inland West Africa was to all intents and purposes a blank. Englishmen and Frenchmen sat on the coast, the former doing a large trade and the latter little or none. In two places only were organised attempts at interior penetration being made. On the Lower Niger, Englishmen were pushing their trade inland. On the Senegal, the era of political conquest begun by Faidherbe was being slowly developed, despite many

difficulties and set-backs. The political energies of Great Britain were paralysed by the resolution arrived at in 1865 to abandon all Government action in West Africa, with the possible exception of Sierra Leone. France was still feeling the effects of the disasters of 1870.

With the propaganda of Jules Ferry and Gambetta in favour of a policy of Colonial expansion, a change came o'er the spirit of the dream as regards West Africa. Backed by a strong body of opinion; supported by men of note, such as M. Waldeck Rousseau, as he has himself recently reminded us, French activity in Western Africa became very pronounced, and the work once begun was not abandoned on account of the temporary reverses suffered by French arms in Tonquin, which drove Ferry from power and broke his heart. French missions, generally of a peaceful character, started eastwards and southwards from the Senegal, and northwards from the coast, to explore the unknown interior. They reported it to be a fairly salubrious, fertile, cereal-producing and cattle-rearing country, unobstructed by dense forests such as are met with inland from the West Coast proper to a depth varying from sixty to two hundred miles. This country was inhabited by intelligent races relatively advanced in the scale of civilisation, possessing flourishing industries and commercial aptitude. The French found regularly constituted States, more or less Muslimised, and in some of which social law and order had reached a high stage of development; large towns of 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants with regular market-days, where iron smelting was highly advanced, where the natives dressed in handsome clothes of their own manufacture, and used leather sandals, sword-belts, and scabbards, despatch-bags,

and saddles fabricated by themselves. It was a revelation. The chief drawback about this vast inland region, which seemed to offer such brilliant prospects under able administrative supervision, was its liability to be swept by fire and sword at any moment by some over-zealous adherent of a certain militant sect of Mohammedans, which enjoyed great influence in the Western Sudan. These French agents were generally well received, and by their means vast stretches of hitherto unknown country were opened up and brought to the knowledge of the world.

Out of these discoveries was born the desire—the very natural and legitimate desire—on the part of the French to build up a mighty empire in West Africa, a black Indies, which should rival the Indies of the East in extent, in wealth, and in the prestige which its acquisition would confer. Exploring and semi-political missions were followed by expeditions of a definite political character, and district after district, State after State, tribe after tribe, came under French influence; by peaceful means in the majority of cases. All this time the English were doing nothing, in an official sense. Liverpool men were calling upon the Government to wake up to what was going on, but their efforts were entirely unsuccessful. Wider and wider grew the sweep of the French net, closer and closer to our own Colonies, which it threatened to throttle in its meshes. Sierra Leone became encircled on three sides by French territory; the magnificent country of Futa-Jallon, the Switzerland of Western Africa as it has been called, which had been visited at various times by agents of the Government of Sierra Leone (notably Dr. Blyden), of which it formed the natural hinterland, was acquired by France without firing a shot. The Gold Coast, and Lagos, and

what is now known as Northern Nigeria—whose safety the Convention of 1890 was supposed to guarantee—were in imminent danger of sharing a similar fate.

I have often seen it stated, even by authorities of no mean order, that the French were permitted or allowed to carry out the great task of securing the hinterlands of Western Africa. In point of fact, the statement is very misleading and has had a somewhat mischievous effect. England was not in a position to allow or disallow. The French conceived a plan and carried it out in the face of tremendous obstacles; they were prepared to undergo sacrifices which we were not prepared to accept, and such being the case, they were answerable to none but themselves. Their success and our failure was the due measure of their enterprise and our apathy.

When the future of our Colonies appeared thoroughly compromised by the cutting off of the interior markets, the British Government suddenly realised that Liverpool and Manchester merchants had been clearer-sighted than British officialdom, and at the last moment efforts were made to secure for the British Colonies such of the hinterlands which remained unabsorbed. Then arose a very delicate position, which taxed the diplomatic resources of both Powers to the uttermost. British and French officers with excitable native troops under their command, remained facing one another in the far interior a few hundred yards distance for weeks at a time, awaiting instructions from the irrespective Governments. To the good sense, tact, and mutual esteem of these officers is due that peace was preserved between England and France. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to these men, who, suffering

from the debilitating effects of the West African climate and the hardships attendant upon West African travel—neither of which are conducive to sweetness of temper, managed to keep their heads. Mainly thanks to them the quarrel was adjusted without bloodshed, and the Anglo-French Convention of 1898 was signed. It left our Colonies of the Gold Coast and Lagos greatly circumscribed, but assured us in "Nigeria" a magnificent territory some 504,000 square miles in extent.

The era of territorial rivalry between Great Britain and France in Western Africa has, it may be legitimately assumed, quite passed away. We continue to be rivals in commercial matters, but that is a peaceful rivalry—or should be—which ought not to exclude friendship. Nevertheless, as trade questions are often converted into fertile causes of dispute, it is essential that Englishmen and Frenchmen, in order to work harmoniously together in the future, should thoroughly understand one another's points of view in this connection. We, as a nation, are free traders. The French, as a nation, are protectionists. It would be absurd and undignified for us to complain of the different economic standpoint taken up by our neighbours. Moreover, there are various degrees of protectionism in France. There is the extreme school of M. Méline, which, if its doctrines were strictly applied to the French West African Colonies, would ruin them in five years. There is the school which upholds partial protectionism in France, but favours freedom of trade in the French Colonies. The latter is happily gaining in strength. We should endeavour as far as in us lies to work with the representatives of this school. One of the clauses of the 1898 Convention, which caused a great outcry in France when it

became known, stipulated that no differential treatment was to be meted out to British trade throughout a considerable part of the French West African possessions for a term of thirty years. The following extract, bearing on this subject, from an address read by M. Bohn, the head of the largest firm of French West African merchants, before the Marseilles Geographical Society, in September 1898, three months after the Convention was signed, is interesting:

> "A certain colonial school," said M. Bohn, "starting from the premise that the only object of colonies is to favour the outlet of goods manufactured in the mother country, demands the application of prohibitive tariffs upon foreign goods imported into our colonies. This system, which contributed so powerfully to lose Spain her finest colonies, flourishes in Gaboon, which is the least prosperous of our colonies, and which only subsists at all by constant grants in aid from the metropolis. These examples are hardly encouraging. On the other hand, we are able to see that those of our colonies which are developing themselves in the most rapid and satisfactory manner are those where no differential tariffs exist.... From that point of view it is certain the Franco-English Convention of June 1898, by abolishing for a period of thirty years all differential duties in the Ivory Coast and Dahomey, has assured for that period the commercial prosperity of these colonies."

That notable statement and others like it (the truth of which has been amply borne out since) show that

experienced Frenchmen engaged in the West African trade realise, as we do, that a policy of free trade is one which in West Africa spells commercial success by the nation which adopts it. The existence of such views in France is a very encouraging sign for those who firmly believe that trade is the greatest progressive agency which can be brought to bear upon the relations between Western Europe and Western Africa.

Recent events are proving that a natural community of interests exists between British and French merchants in Western Africa; that they will have to fight a common foe, the Concessionnaire, and that every action calculated to bring them into closer relationship is a step in the right direction.

CHAPTER XXV
TEN YEARS OF FRENCH ACTION IN WEST AFRICA

The history of France's action in West Africa during the last ten years has been so remarkable that it deserves to be recorded in some detail, and where possible her policy may be usefully compared with our own. On January 23, 1892, the Paris *Figaro* published a literary supplement entitled "Our African Domain," in which was set forth by various competent authorities—amongst whom was Captain Binger;[202] Emile Masqueray, the well-known student of Algerian problems; Georges Rolland, one of the foremost advocates of the Trans-Saharan Railway; and "Harry Alis," the redoubtable Colonial propagandist, Lord Cromer's *bête noire*, whose tragic end will be in the recollection of many—the past achievements, actual position and future aspirations of France in Western and Central Africa. The supplement was divided into five parts, entitled respectively "Algeria"; "Penetration towards the Chad"; "Senegal and Dependencies"; "Our Position on the Gulf of Guinea"; "Congo and Chad." At the time this supplement appeared, the revival of Colonial ambition in France, which owed its inception largely to the foresight and courage of Jules Ferry, had taken firm root among the *élite* of French public opinion. But although the seed where it fell gave forth lusty fruit, the sowers were relatively few, and the area under cultivation was still but small in 1892. The Chamber of Deputies was slow to grant fresh credits. Politicians as a whole viewed the eloquence of Eugène Etienne and other exponents of the Ferry school with ill-disguised

nervousness, if not with positive apprehension, fearing that the country was being turned from its true business of guarding against possible aggression from Germany, and was playing into Bismarck's hands by rushing into Colonial adventures which it was known that Bismarck, for his own reasons, was desirous of encouraging. No one party or rather group cared to identify itself too closely with the expansionists, remembering the whirlwind of popular passion which assailed and overwhelmed *le Tonkinois*. On the other hand, it was not wise to entirely dissociate one's self from a movement which was steadily gaining a hold over the masses. So Parliament vacillated, and, swayed by contrary winds, voted funds one minute and sought to withdraw them the next.

The *Figaro's* supplement was widely criticised. The schemes it elaborated were not merely ambitious, they were gigantic. "Our policy," it argued, "is to make one homogeneous entity of Algeria, Senegal, and Congo *viâ* the Tuareg-Sahara and the Central and Western Sudan." The timid Deputy shuddered at the prospect. What must have been, even to the master-minds who initiated the policy, not much more than a fond hope strengthened by an unshaken faith in the destiny of the country; what, in the eyes of those who opposed it, appeared as a monstrous figment of the imagination, is to-day in its main lines a reality! How has it been accomplished?

"Our intentions are pure and noble, our cause is just, the future cannot fail us," wrote Faidherbe in 1859, and, on the whole, despite errors, despite the effects of temporary reaction coming after acute disappointment, despite some individual instances of cruelty and oppression, events have justified

Faidherbe's confident declaration. The work of France in Africa during the last ten years and more has, in the main, been a work of progress tending to benefit the populations with whom she has come in contact. Notable exceptions there have been, of course, especially during the years 1897 and 1898, when the scramble for West Africa was at its height, and under the spell of an insensate rivalry deeds were committed by all the parties in the struggle which cannot be too strongly condemned. To France's debit account must be placed the ruthless proceedings of Bretonnet in Borgu; the needless bloodshed of which Mossi, Kipprisi, and Gurunsi were the scenes; the inevitable barbarity which characterised Marchand's hunt for carriers in the Upper Ubanghi and Bahr-el-Ghazal. These incidents in themselves are odious and reprehensible; but it is only fair to recognise that they were the outcome of international jealousies the responsibility for which was collective rather than single, shared in by other Powers as well as by France herself. In what may be regarded as France's own sphere of influence, acts have also been perpetrated from time to time which call for censure. The punishment meted out to certain towns hostile to the French in the Western Sudan have been altogether disproportionate to the offence. In the case of the French officers Voulet and Chanoine, an incalculable amount of suffering was inflicted upon the unfortunate people on the western banks of the Niger. But from these isolated transgressions against the principles of humanity, culpable as they have been, the records of no European Power in Africa are free; and they cannot, in the circumstances of France, be held to negative or even weaken the advantages she has undoubtedly conferred upon the population of the Western and

Central Sudan, nor yet tarnish the great reputation France has achieved in the emancipation of millions from centuries of tyranny and invasion. If she has had her Voulets and Chanoines, France can show in the persons of her De Brazzas, her Bingers, her Monteils, her Crozats, her Foureaus, Noirots, Gentils, Hoursts, and Lenfants, performances which the subjects of other Powers may have equalled but have not surpassed; always excepting Barth, whose moral grandeur towers high above that of all his competitors on West African soil.

From the time when the Sieur de Brüe—one of the clearest-headed Frenchmen who ever served his country in Africa—paid ceremonious visits to the King of Kayor and the "grand Seratik" of the Fulas at the close of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century; from the time when raiding bands of Trarza Moors, extending their depredations to the very confines of St. Louis (1840-60) compelled Faidherbe to take the offensive against them, to the present day, it has been the lot of France to find herself confronted in West Africa with races differentiating in every respect from the true Negro of the coast regions—the people whom England had, up to 1900, been chiefly concerned with. Eight years before, a certain Select Committee of the House of Commons, frightened at the responsibilities England was assuming in West Africa, pusillanimously recommended the abandonment of all our settlements except Sierra Leone, thus enunciating a policy the evil effects of which continued until 1895 and greatly limited our footing in West and Central Africa; France had just emerged successfully from a death grapple with one of the most powerful individuals that ever sprung from African loins, el Haj-Omar, the great Tukulor Mallam and warrior.

Looking backward at that long vista of years, when France was slowly but irresistibly thrusting her influence into West Africa, *viâ* the Senegal and Upper Niger, by pouring out her treasure and the blood of her sons like water; while England remained supine on the coast heedless of the representations of her merchant-pioneers, it was not surprising that, awakening almost too late from our lethargy, we should have found the French, having triumphed over their obstacles in the north, forging southwards and cutting off our rich hinterlands in the interior. Writing to the Marquis of Dufferin in 1892, Lord Salisbury contrasted the policy of Great Britain and France in Western Africa. "France," wrote Lord Salisbury, "from her basis on the Senegal Coast, has pursued steadily the aim of establishing herself on the Upper Niger and its affluents.... Great Britain, on the other hand, has adopted the policy of advance by commercial enterprise." There was, indeed, on the part of Liverpool, Manchester, and Bristol merchants, plenty of "commercial enterprise," but it would have been difficult for Lord Salisbury to have quoted a single instance where that "commercial enterprise" had constituted "a policy of advance."

It is due to the type of native inhabiting the chief radius of France's operations in Western Africa, that her task has been rendered so dangerous and so difficult, and its fulfilment so remarkable. Criticise as we may, and often enough unjustly, because ignorantly, the colonising capacities of our Gallic neighbours, and the fluctuations of their colonial policy, it is beyond question that no nation on earth could have achieved what she has achieved in Western Africa, without the possession of a doggedness and determination for which we do not —to our own injury, be it said—even now, give her

the credit which she deserves. For centuries upon centuries the enormous tract which lies between the edge of the Sahara Desert and the fringe of the tropical forest belt—consisting for the most part of grassy uplands varied by wide plains of amazing fertility, by reason of the yearly overflow of the waters of the Niger—had been the cockpit of Africa. Empire after empire rose and fell; invasion and counter-invasion swept devastatingly over the country. The splendours of Jenne and Timbuctoo vanished with the sway of the Songhay, beneath the bullets of Morocco's musketeers. Fulani domination arose and gave way before Tukulor cruelties. Semi-negro kingdoms came into being, declared their independence of this or that conqueror, only to be subdued, while their victors had, in turn, to bite the dust before some stronger foe. The mingling of races in that vast region has no parallel in Africa. Ages ago the pastoral Fula—veritable Asiatic—had settled therein with his flocks and herds, destined in time by the sheer force of superior intellect to become the master where he had been either the guest or the despised tenant. Later came infiltrations of the Moorish element proper; pastorals also these, emigrating from the plateaux of Adrar to the well-watered valley of the Niger. Tuaregs, the redskins of the Sahara, descendants, as some affect to believe, of those tall, fair-haired, long-limbed warriors of Northern Europe who, about 1500 B.C., advanced slowly through Gaul and Spain, and crossing the Mediterranean in ships, landed on the North African Coast, ever pushing southwards, overcoming the terrors of the desert and reaching the green pastures beyond, but repairing the greater part of the year to the desolate Saharan solitudes of which they remain the virtual masters, though Foureau and his *tirailleurs*

have for the first time in history passed through without paying the toll. Arabs too, but again later, and generally speaking farther south and east in Kanem, Wadai and Baghirmi, where Lamy met his death and Gentil was fighting two years and more; Arabs from the north with caravans of merchandise, and other Arabs from the east; Shuwas, of whom no man knows the history or the origin. They intermarried, these tawny, straight-haired nomadic strangers, with the aboriginal blacks, or raped their women, as the case might be; and from these unions, legitimate or otherwise, through long centuries, there sprang into existence fierce cross-races and wild, reared in war, nurtured in an atmosphere of turmoil and brigandage; negro Fula, negro Moor, negro Arab, exaggerating the savage instincts of the parent stock, whom they turned and rent when strong enough. One such hybrid product became in time the scourge of the Western Sudan—the Tukulor, offspring of Negro (Joloff) and Fula, unsparing, ruthless, dreaded alike by Fula and Negro, and whose atrocities are written in letters of blood from Toro (Senegal) to the frontiers of Hausa.

In this medley of races there came in the tenth century of our era the first whisperings of a revealed religion. The whispering quickly changed to the deep hum of many voices proclaiming aloud the word of the Prophet. Islam spread with inconceivable rapidity. The Fulani became speedy converts, but the arts they employed to win over their pagan neighbours were usually peaceful. Not so with the Tukulors and the other cross-races. They saw in it naught but a fresh incentive to warlike deeds, and soon professed Mohammedans were not merely massacring the infidels, but waging battle against their more peaceable co-religionists. As though this

were not enough, another fruitful cause of bloodshed and disturbance was fated to arise, and still further plunge in woe this distracted country. The Portuguese adventurers on the coast, in the course of their professed desire to save the soul of the Negro, made a discovery, to wit, that the muscular development of the Negro eminently fitted him for manual labour. From that discovery dates the most atrocious traffic the world has ever witnessed. In their greed for slaves, the Christians of Western Europe and of America—without distinction of nationality, though perhaps the Portuguese and English were the worst offenders—set tribe against tribe; and the better to stimulate the industry, imported wholesale guns and gunpowder, objects which they ascertained the Negroes greatly coveted. The blacks waged war right merrily upon one another, and their so-called prisoners of war filled the slavers' hulks. Presently the tawny races beyond the forest belt joined in the game, desiring above all things the acquisition of guns and the wherewithal to use them, which meant power and increased facilities for plunder. Slave-raiding then assumed almost incredible proportions. Internecine warfare received a new and terrible impetus. No excuse, whether valid or imaginary, was henceforth needed to attack one's neighbour; and where in former days contentment might have been secured by a rich booty of cattle and sheep, the requirements of the case now necessitated the capture of the human animal himself. In such a country, desolated by centuries of strife; among such a people, upon whose vices Europe had grafted her own; under such circumstances, has lain the destiny of France in Western Africa.

A favourite argument used by those who favour a

militarist policy in Northern Nigeria consists in pointing to the action of the French in the Western Sudan. It is held by some to be inconsistent to express approval of the military trend of French policy in regions adjacent to Northern Nigeria, and to disapprove of it in Northern Nigeria itself. I do not think that the charge of inconsistency will bear examination. In the first place, we should be careful not to generalise. In West Africa proper—that is, in the coastwise regions, the home of the true Negroes—the military policy has, on the whole, been rarely resorted to by the French. In the Western Sudan, although, no doubt, a good deal of bloodshed might have been avoided at different times, I fail to see myself, bearing in mind the object of French policy, how that object could have been obtained without military conquest. As far as the purely moral aspect of the matter is concerned, the right of any European Power to interfere in the internal affairs of West Africa may be queried; but if a given region can, in West Africa, be pointed to where the results of such interference are of a beneficent nature, that region is the Western Sudan. France is restoring to the enormous expanse of territory between the Niger and the tropical forest belt the prosperity which it possessed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the Songhay, when Jenne was the granary and the store-house of the Niger countries. She is laying the basis of a prosperity far greater than in those days, because she is able to bring peace where the Songhays could not. Having conquered the cross-races, she wisely refrains from either interfering with their customs, such as domestic slavery, upon which the social fabric of West Africa depends, or from allowing, save in strictly circumscribed limits, Christian propaganda among them, being well aware

that such propaganda in Mohammedan communities but newly subjugated is the certain precursor of trouble, bloodshed, and fanaticism. She has hunted down and destroyed the four tyrants who successively barred her way to the interior, and who had perpetrated untold miseries upon hundreds of thousands of human beings—El-Haji-Omar, Amadu, Samory and Rabah. Had she been able to acquire the services of these men, it would perhaps have been better, but the body of evidence is against the possibility of her power to have done so. But there is a limit to approval of French military action, and if, now that France's political influence is internationally secure in the regions east and north of the Chad, she chooses to embark open-eyed in a struggle with the Senussi, she will be making a grave mistake. Unless deliberately incited by unprovoked aggression, her game there is to sheath the sword and give diplomacy the innings, and those Frenchmen who see the danger of precipitate, immature action in Wadai and Kanem, and are strenuously agitating against it, are wise in their generation.[203]

But, taken all in all, the circumstances in which England finds herself in Northern Nigeria, and the circumstances in which France found herself in relation to the Western Sudan before the conquest, are widely different. The aims pursued by France in the Western Sudan, and by the English in Nigeria, were not in their inception the same. The regions coveted by France were for the most part widely removed—at immense distances indeed—from her basis on the coast and her basis on the Senegal River. To make her claims to those regions *internationally* valid, it was requisite that France should wield some tangible influence over them, and in many cases that

was impossible without conquest.

But the British in Northern Nigeria were very differently placed. Northern Nigeria was the prolongation, so to speak, of the British base in "the Rivers." It lay immediately at the back of them. The possession of the Niger's mouth facilitated the extension of British influence up the River and its affluent the Binue. Moreover, British merchants and explorers had ascended both the Niger and the Binue many years before; they had paved the way for what was to follow; and for fifteen years before the advent of direct Imperial control in Northern Nigeria, its native potentates had been united in close ties of political relationship with a British Chartered Company. The Government stepped into the shoes of the Chartered Company, not to play the *rôle* of *conquisitador* and initiator, but to reap crops sown for it; to consolidate work already half accomplished. It should, in parenthesis, be stated that France manages the Western Sudan, a territory very much larger than Northern Nigeria, and where a state of continuous internecine warfare had existed for centuries, with an army not more than 3000 strong. Again, if warfare has attended the establishment of French influence in the Shari region, it has been due to special circumstances. Thus Gentil acquired a Protectorate over Baghirmi without firing a shot. It was only when the country which France had placed under her protection was invaded and laid waste by Rabah that military action became a duty.

No comparison is really possible between the respective parts of Great Britain and France. Both are distinct, and must be judged according to their antecedents and special features.

In Northern Nigeria[204] we have to do with native

rulers with whom we have been in treaty relationship for fifteen years, and in commercial relationship for longer still. They are our wards, we are in a fiduciary capacity towards them; they are our *protégés*. We undertook by treaty to subsidise them; we pledged ourselves by treaty "not to interfere with the customs" of their people. It should be our object, following the precepts of Sir Andrew Clarke, to make those rulers "far bigger" men than they are, not to break them. They come of a proud race, a capable race, of superior mental calibre, possessed of statesmanship and skill. They have played a great part in the history of Western Africa. Barth, who knew them well, has said of them that "they are the most intelligent people in Africa." To reduce them to impotence; to scatter their power; to break the organisation they have created into small pieces would be politically foolish, practically unwise, morally unjust, Imperially disastrous. To strengthen their rule where weak; to perfect it where oppressive; to assist them, work with them, and through them along their natural lines; to interfere as little as possible with the customs and habits of themselves and their people; to respect their religious beliefs; to work gradually, peacefully, tactfully, for the attainment of the only conceivable objects which have taken us to their country—commercial development, advancement, prosperity—those should be the political principles guiding us in Northern Nigeria.

The accomplishment of the colossal plan sketched out by the *Figaro* in 1892, viz. the unification (if the word be permissible) of the French possessions in Africa by expeditions from north, west, and south, designed to meet on the shores of Lake Chad, may now be briefly given. It is a stirring tale. The first

attempt—if we exclude that of Flatters from the north, of which the purpose was limited—was made from the south, by the blue-eyed, fair-haired enthusiast, Paul Crampbel. He fell assassinated by Rabah's emissaries at El Kuti on April 15, 1891. Dybowski and Maistre, sent out by the French African Committee in Crampbel's footsteps, had to retire without doing much more than useful exploring work. Then came Gentil's turn, a modest naval lieutenant who, profiting by Rabah's complications in Bornu, succeeded after incredible difficulties in reaching the mouth of the Shari (after signing a treaty of Protectorate with Baghirmi) and floating a small steamer upon the waters of the mysterious lake. But the success was short-lived. Rabah recrossed the Shari, forced the French to retire, and once again swept Baghirmi with fire and sword. France hurried fresh reinforcements to the spot, and these under Bretonnet were attacked by Rabah and decimated. A further and more vigorous effort was required.

And here the scene shifts to the north. In October 1898 that intrepid explorer, Foureau, left the oasis of Sadrata, near Wargla, in Algeria, at the head of a force of picked men, 310 strong, consisting of troopers from the Senegalese and Saharan *tirailleurs*, than whom there are probably no more splendid fighters in the world, unless it be our own Sikhs. Foureau was accompanied by three civilian friends. Commandant Lamy led the military portion of the expedition, which comprised four other officers besides himself. The object of the expedition was to cross the Algerian Sahara and reach the Chad, while Gentil and Bretonnet gained a firm foothold on its shores by working upwards from the Congo and Ubanghi. Foureau and his companions plunged into

the unknown desert, and for ten months entirely disappeared from view. Frequent rumours of a wholesale massacre reached Europe, and remembering the fate of Douls, De Palot, Dournaux-Dupérré, and Joubert, Flatters and Bonnier, at the hands of the fierce nomads who roam the desolate wastes through which Foureau had to pass, France held her breath. If Foureau fell, it would not only be a frightful disaster, fraught with peril to French policy throughout her vast Mohammedan zone in Africa; it might also mean a revulsion of popular feeling, a hanging up of cherished schemes for a generation or more. But Foureau did not fall or fail. He reached the Asben oases in safety, and demonstrated to timid minds that the Tuaregs, when confronted by a well-armed and disciplined force, skilfully led and sufficiently numerous to inspire respect, prefer, in the main, to hold themselves at a distance.[205]

Again the scene changes. The plan was half-performed. The third advance came from the west by the way of the Niger Bend. It was at first attended by the direst results. The gallant Cazemajou met a cruel and treacherous death at Zinder. Voulet and Chanoine, who succeeded him, showed what evil unlimited authority and the disordering effects of the African climate can work upon ill-regulated minds. Denounced by one of their subordinates for barbarous conduct towards the natives, they, having already forgotten the ordinary dictates of humanity, forgot alike honour and patriotism, foully murdered the superior officer who had been instructed to replace them, tore off their uniforms, declared themselves renegades, and perpetrated the wildest excesses. But their shrift was short, and they soon met their fate from the rifles of the native soldiers

they had temporarily led astray.

The French Government, however, did not relinquish its determination. The fragments of the Voulet-Chanoine mission were got together, and under the joint leadership of Captain Joalland and Lieutenant Meynier reached the Chad, subsequently joining Gentil's forces in the Lower Shari. By this time Foureau had also gained the Chad. The three missions, which after so many vicissitudes thus met together in their common goal, were immediately called upon to face a new and most formidable danger. Against the town of Kusri or Kusseri, where the French had established their headquarters, Rabah was marching at the head of 5000 men, of whom 2000 were armed with guns of various patterns. He had also three fieldpieces, captured from Bretonnet. The French disposed of a total strength of 774 officers and men—the latter natives without exception—with four fieldpieces. They were assisted by 1500 Baghirmi auxiliaries, who do not appear to have been of much use, contenting themselves with looting after the battle was over. Rabah pitched his war camp three miles from Kusri, and awaited the onslaught of the French. It proved to be irresistible. Rabah himself perished. His losses amounted to 1000 killed and wounded, and his camp, with the whole of its contents, fell into the hands of the French. The French losses were severe. They included the brave Lamy, Captain Cointet, a white non-commissioned officer and seventeen men killed. Their wounded amounted to sixty, among them Captain Lamothe and Lieutenants Meynier and Galland. But the victory was complete, and Rabah, the noise of whose conquests had filled Central Africa for close upon a quarter of a century; whose destructive strides had left a bloody track from the Bahr-el-Ghazal to the

Chad; Rabah, the last of the great *conquisitadores*, had gone the way of El-Haji-Omar, and of Samory. The plan elaborated by the *Figaro* eight years previously was an accomplished fact.

Since Rabah's overthrow the French have been engaged in systematically consolidating their hold upon the Central Sudan and the lower Shari. M. Terrier, the able Secrétaire-Général of the French African Committee, explains in the Committee's Bulletin for April 1901 the procedure which is being adopted. One cannot but be impressed with the grasp, the sagacity, and the statesmanship displayed. The Shari region has been divided into two districts, the most northerly of which abuts on Lake Chad, and includes Baghirmi and the Shari mouths. It is administered on military lines. The southern district, comprising the upper reaches of the river and its affluents, is administered on civil lines. The population of the southern district is composed of Negroes, whose religion is fetishism, or what it pleases us to call fetishism. The northern district is inhabited by various branches of the Negroid Baghirmis; by the Kotokos; by the Shuwa Arabs, and by a few pastoral Fulani. The pagans of the southern district have for centuries been subjected to the raids of the Arabised-Negroes of Bornu and Baghirmi. It was from among them that the principal supplies of slaves which used to find their way across the desert route to Tripoli before the Firman of 1865 were drawn. France, by ridding them of their external foes, claims the right to make them share in her administrative expenses. She is all the more justified in doing so, as for many years to come, and until the Shari is connected with the Ubanghi by a railway, there will be no trade upon which to levy duties in order to obtain revenue. One-half of the population

is expected to furnish carriers, and the other half pays an annual tax of four pounds of rubber per hut, of which two pounds is returned to the chiefs as commission. We are assured—on the authority of M. Terrier—that the chiefs are bringing in the tax voluntarily from long distances. In the northern district, which was directly under Rabah's influence, the French found an existing organisation which they have in the main retained, but the tax levied by the Emir of Baghirmi upon his subjects being considered too heavy, the French have reduced it by two-thirds, thus relieving the population from an undue burden of taxation. The Emir and his chiefs—through whom French influence is exercised—benefit by this reduced tax; that is to say, they keep it for themselves. Contributions of slaves to the Emir and chiefs in the form of tribute by the sub-chiefs are, of course, suppressed. The revenue of the Emir being thus limited, but nevertheless assured to him, together with the continuation of his prestige, the Emir himself, who owes his throne to the French, and has, moreover, been relieved by them of the necessity of paying an annual tribute to Wadai, is expected to furnish annually to the Administration 240 pounds of millet, 500 cloths, and 100 oxen, amounting roughly to £1680.

Here, then, as in the Western Sudan, the words of Faidherbe ring sound; and M. Etienne, speaking at a Conference held the other day at the Paris Colonial School, was only saying what has hitherto been true when he asserted that:

"France can in all sincerity maintain that she has delivered the peoples of inland Africa from an intolerable yoke. She has liberated millions of human beings from sanguinary tyrants who had reduced

them to slavery. She has accomplished a work of emancipation, of liberty, and of generosity." It would be sad indeed if, led astray by evil counsels, France should be induced in another portion of her West African domain, viz. French Congo, to tarnish the great reputation she has undoubtedly built up.

It may be doubted whether the problems with which France has had to contend in West Africa have ever been rightly understood among us, for Englishmen are usually generous-minded enough to appreciate good work carried out by others, even though the others are sometimes rivals. Certain is it that of the nature of French exploits in West and Central Africa the average Englishman is hopelessly ignorant, and even English writers of repute persist in shutting their eyes to the great, the almost revolutionary changes which experience, dearly bought, has wrought in French Colonial conceptions. We have failed as a nation in doing justice to the actions of the French in Africa. We have underrated their capacity and refused to admit the existence at their council boards of a central plan carefully matured which the frequent shuffling of Ministerial portfolios merely retarded but did not alter. At the present moment we apparently will not realise that France is applying to the economic development of her vast territories the same strenuousness of purpose with which she steadily pursued her work of conquest and absorption.

CHAPTER XXVI
THE COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE FRENCH POSSESSIONS

The logic of facts is gradually bringing home to Englishmen that the French have within recent years revolutionised the commercial position of their West African possessions; of those possessions, that is, which are at present commercially exploitable. But a singular amount of ignorance continues to prevail on the subject, and in non-specialist circles the French possessions are still in a sorry condition both commercially and financially. So far is that deep-rooted idea from the truth, that not only are the French doing exceedingly well commercially in West Africa; but they are doing comparatively better than we are. Moreover, their possessions are actually costing less to manage, and economy in administration is not secured at the expense of requisite public works; quite the contrary. The days when Englishmen could represent the ideals of French Colonial management in West Africa in the light of a custom-house official and a soldier; an expenditure overlapping revenue; constant grants from the mother country; an embryonic trade and a growing budgetary deficit, have passed and gone. In some respects the French are turning the tables upon us. Even so distinguished an authority as Sir Harry Johnston falls into the popular error when he says that “with the exception of Tunis, there is not a single French possession in Africa which is self-supporting or other than a drain upon the French exchequer.” It is a complete fallacy, and it can be proved so up to the hilt. Here and there, it is true,

the old, bad, paralytic red-tape conception remains, but on the whole the French possessions north of the Bights are progressing with an astonishing rapidity; able to construct important public works out of their own surplus revenues, and to enter into railway contracts on guaranteed loans of their own raising. Miss Kingsley, in her "West African Studies," suggested that, granting the possibility of France becoming "commercially intelligent," she might "pocket the West African trade down to Lagos from Senegal," and there can be no doubt that if British policy in West Africa continues to be carried out on the present lines, and if French policy in West Africa can escape the contamination of the concessionnaire *régime* applied with such deplorable results in French Congo, France can and will do an enormous amount of commercial damage to our possessions in West Africa, and on a fair field, in legitimate competition. Senegal, French Guinea, the Ivory Coast and Dahomey are all self-supporting, and the growth of trade in these possessions is in all conscience eloquent enough, as the following figures show:

	Senegal	Guinea	Ivory Coast
1889	£1,520,000	£320,000	£160,000
1899	2,920,000	1,000,000	520,000
1900	3,189,400	973,000[206]	686,300

None of our Colonies can show such a rate of progress as their young (Senegal excepted) Gallic competitors. The increase is really phenomenal. In the French Colonies mentioned the expenditure is well within the revenue. In French Guinea conspicuously so. Would that we could say the same of our possessions! In all these Colonies the French are spending less than we are in the work of

administration. In some of them they are nevertheless spending more in public works, and before long their expenditure in that respect will in the aggregate far exceed ours. It will suffice to give one or two instances in support of these general statements.

The position of Dahomey is particularly interesting, because it adjoins Lagos, because Lagos is one of the transit ports for Dahomey, because both Colonies are building a railway in the same direction, and because both Colonies aim at capturing the bulk of the interior trade. Compared with Lagos, Dahomey is, of course, only an infant in years, but an infant of sturdy growth. Its trade has jumped from nineteen million francs in 1893 to twenty-seven million francs in 1900. The growth in its export trade is very noticeable. In 1893 it amounted to £347,258 (8,681,463 francs), and in 1900 had grown to £502,350. In 1893 the export trade of Lagos was £836,295; in 1900 it was £885,111. True, Lagos saw better days in 1896 and 1899 (£975,203 and £915,934 respectively),[207] but the ratio of increase has not been equal to that of Dahomey. In 1894, on an export trade of £821,682, the expenditure of Lagos amounted to £124,819; in 1900, on an export trade of £885,111 the expenditure was £187,124, including £37,214 for public works and £18,169 on account of public debt. In 1900, on an export trade of £502,350 Dahomey spent £119,664, of which £29,000 in public works, and in 1901 contributed £60,000 from its own local revenue for the railway.[208] In 1900 Dahomey spent £8000[209] in military and police; Lagos spent £39,095.[210] For some unexplained reason Dahomey does not export timber, but her exports of palm-oil and palm-kernels are increasing yearly. Dahomey is

now actually exporting very nearly as much palm-oil as Lagos.[211] In palm-kernels Dahomey has not yet reached the level of Lagos, but is forging ahead, having exported 24,211,614 kilos, or roughly 24,000 tons, in 1901, against 21,986,043 kilos in 1900, and 21,850,982 kilos in 1899. Lagos shipped in 1900-1901 over 47,000 tons of kernels. Some years ago the French, annoyed at being dependent upon Lagos as the only port of transit for the trade of their Colony (Lagos is connected with Porto Novo, the capital of Dahomey, by a lagoon, and the facilities of the Lagos route were, and still are, for certain classes of goods very much greater owing to the bar service), constructed at Kotonu one of the few wharves which exist on the West African coast-line. This wharf, aided by the duty imposed on the Dahomey transit trade *viâ* Lagos by the Lagos authorities, has succeeded in its object, and the bulk of Dahomey's trade now passes through Kotonu instead of *viâ* Lagos. In this way has Lagos, for temporary revenue purposes, played into the hands of her competitors. The Colony is also building a railway[212] which is likely to prove a most important undertaking. The fiscal policy adopted by France in Dahomey since the 1898 agreement, abolishing the differential tariff for thirty years, has been well calculated to bring about the conspicuous advancement observable, and unless the railway concessionnaire, under his agreement with the local government,[213] is allowed to interfere in the territories ceded to him with the freedom of trade, and with native rights of land tenure, the wisdom of Dahomey's fiscal policy will continue to bear fruit. Most people will be astonished to learn that Dahomey taxes her trade, in the main, at a lower rate than Lagos, and it is unquestionable that the

circumstance acts in the former's favour and to the latter's detriment. There is so much misconception about on subjects of this kind, which nevertheless have so direct a bearing upon the prosperity and commercial position of our West African possessions and of their rivals, that it has been thought advisable to give in the Appendix as complete a comparative table as possible of the duties in both Colonies.[214] To that list the reader may be referred. On all articles but cottons Dahomey charges lower duty than Lagos. If Dahomey can manage her affairs, and get a surplus revenue to boot by charging 2*d.* a pound on tobacco and gunpowder, and 11*s.* 4*d.* and 4*s.* 10*d.* respectively on rock salt and sea salt, why in the world cannot Lagos do the same, instead of charging 8*d.* and 4*d.* a pound on tobacco, 6*d.* a pound on gunpowder, and 20*s.* on both classes of salt? The answer is, because the Crown Colony system is infinitely more costly than the French system of administration.

France's oldest Colony in West Africa, Senegal, despite the periodic ravages of yellow fever, against which it is to be hoped science will now be in a better position to struggle with success, is in a very healthy condition commercially and financially, although rather too dependent upon a single industry, viz. ground-nut production.[215] Its export trade has increased from £517,934 in 1891 to £1,000,000 in 1900; but its expenditure, instead of increasing in similar or greater proportion, as is generally the case with British Possessions; has remained practically stationary, at about £150,000; while surplus revenues have enabled her to agree to pay a yearly subsidy of £36,000 for a period of twenty-two years to the Western Sudan (Kayes-Niger) railway, from the completion of which she is

sure to largely benefit. In the construction of public works Senegal is easily ahead of any European possession of West Africa. A railway 250 kilometres long connects St. Louis, the capital, with Dakar, the principal seaport, and the best on the coast. St. Louis, Dakar and Rufisque have all been provided with fresh water. The Faidherbe bridge is a great engineering triumph, and the wharves at Rufisque and Dakar are well organised. Surveys for another railway through the Salum district, with prolongation to Kayes, are being undertaken, and there is a project on foot for improving navigation on the Senegal River. Senegal seems destined to have a brilliant future.

The Ivory Coast has come very much to the fore of late as a possible goldfield, to rival if not to surpass the Gold Coast. *Le Transvaal français* is the title already given to it by enthusiasts. Prospecting work is being undertaken, and hundreds of permits have been granted. A good deal of secrecy is being observed in connection with the matter, and a wise check appears to have been kept upon the flotation of bogus companies. There seems to be good ground for believing that auriferous deposits exist in considerable quantities, and recent explorations have revealed the existence of many old native workings, and even of a mine actually being exploited by the natives, that of Kokombo in the Baoule district. Experts think that the Ivory Coast will prove particularly rich in dredging propositions. The Baoule, Indenie, Attie and Jaman countries are reported to be the four districts in the Colony which will repay the gold-seekers. Commandant Binger, who has travelled all over the country, is a great believer in its gold-bearing capacity, and in Dr. Freeman's opinion, South-West Jaman is the gold

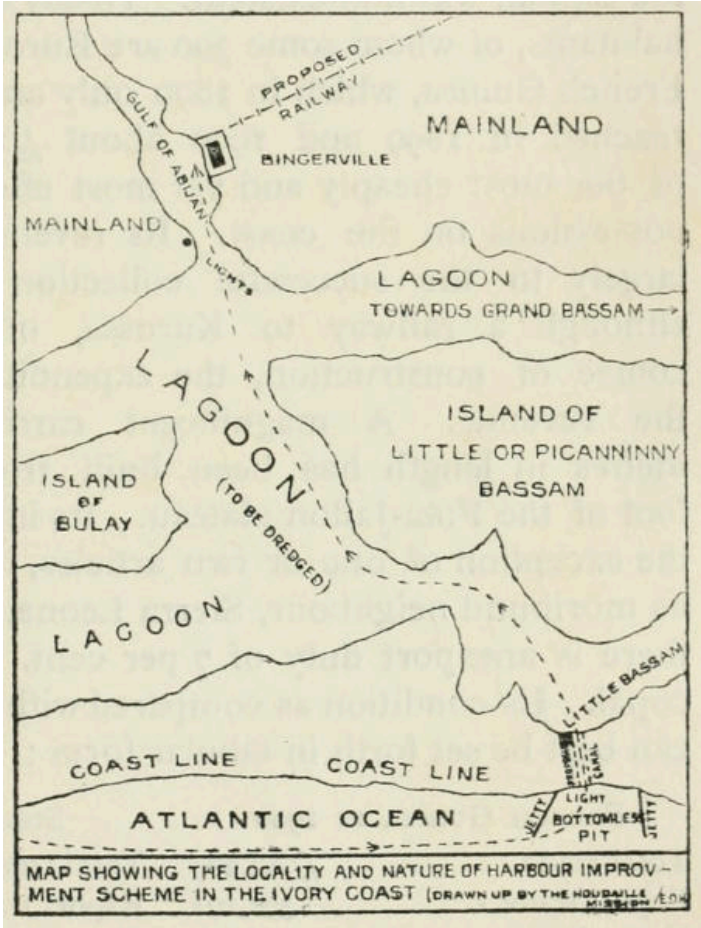
country *par excellence* of the entire region; richer than Ashanti and other portions of the British Protectorate.[216] At the Paris Exhibition of 1900 many samples of auriferous quartz from the Ivory Coast were exhibited, from Kuadikofi, Nangu-Kru, Alepe and Adokoi, and also some specimens of native gold workmanship from Baoule and Jaman which point to a high degree of artistic talent on the part of the workmen. Gold dust has been exported from the Ivory Coast for many years, of an average annual value between 1890 and 1897 of £25,000. At present the trade of the Ivory Coast, which is steadily increasing, is chiefly remarkable for its timber export. The ports of Grand Bassam, Lahou and Assinie are among the most important timber-shipping centres on the coast. In 1892 the Ivory Coast exported mahogany to the value of £23,000; in 1900, to the value of £44,000. Nearly all the mahogany comes to Liverpool, which imported in 1899 from the Ivory Coast 4714 logs measuring 2,727,349 cubic feet, and in 1900, 5748 logs measuring 3,697,416 cubic feet. In the old days the Ivory Coast, the "Elfenbein Küste" of the Germans, was celebrated for the article its name implies.

Writing in 1730, Barbot says that "the inland country affords yearly a vast quantity of fine large elephants' teeth, being the best ivory in the world, most of which is constantly bought up along this coast by the English, Dutch, and French, and sometimes by the Danes and Portuguese." In quaint language, he goes on to tell us how important the ivory trade of the Ivory Coast was in those days, and how the natives profited thereby. "This great concourse of European ships," he writes, "coming hither every year, and sometimes three or four lying together at anchor in the road, has encouraged the

blacks to set so dear a rate on their teeth (*sic*), and particularly on the larger sort, some of them weighing two hundred pounds French, that there is not much to be got by them, considering the vast charges that commonly attend such a remote trade." Barbot describes his own trading operations on the Ivory Coast, and speaks of having "six large canoes about the ship full of fine elephants' teeth, each canoe manned by five or six hands at least—and all lusty, resolute men." Quoting some Hollanders, the same author writes that "it is scarce to be conceived what a multitude of elephants there is about this country." It is quite clear that in those days ivory was practically the only product exchanged by the natives against the iron bars and rings, beads, kettles, cotton, brandy, and other articles brought by European traders in their sailing vessels. Now the ivory trade has practically disappeared, owing, no doubt, to the extermination of the elephants in the coastal regions. What small quantity does come down for shipment appears to be brought by caravans from the Western Sudan. This disappearance of a trade which was flourishing enough at one time to become the synonym of an extensive portion of the West African coast-line, is one of those curious facts of which West Africa affords us so many examples. It seems to me that we have one of the most striking proofs of the highly developed commercial instinct of the West African native, in the circumstance that no sooner has one branch of trade fallen off than he replaces it by another. No doubt the initiative is not his own, but the motive power is, and the very adaptability which he displays in meeting the new demands of commerce affords the clearest indication of the progressiveness of his race. Thus in the Ivory Coast;

the ivory trade has gone, and has been replaced by the oil, kernel, and rubber trade; and, of quite recent years, by the mahogany trade.

So far, the Ivory Coast is the most backward of the French West African possessions in the shape of public works, although there is a wharf at Grand Bassam; but a very big scheme is in contemplation including the construction of a harbour and railway, the piercing of the sandbank at little Bassam opposite to the well-known "bottomless pit" so dreaded by mariners, and the dredging of the Bingerville lagoon. The future of the Ivory Coast would appear to be in good hands, so far as a very efficient staff of administrators is a guarantee; M. Clozel and M. Maurice Delafosse in particular having distinguished themselves of late in studying the aboriginal tribes, and in laying the basis of an intelligent native policy which, if pursued, will make of that possession a second French Guinea. Just now, however, the military element appears to have the upper hand, and there has been a regrettable collision between the French authorities and the powerful Baoules, which has undone the work of years of pacific endeavour, and which might, in the opinion of those Frenchmen who know the country best, have been avoided. Archæological discoveries of profound interest have been made in the Baoule country, pointing to former intercourse with a more advanced people, whom M. Delafosse thinks must have been the Egyptians.[217]



MAP SHOWING THE LOCALITY AND NATURE OF HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT SCHEME IN THE IVORY COAST

French Guinea can serve as a model of what a common-sense, commercial, sympathetic administration is able to achieve in West Africa; and the late Dr. Ballay, its founder and for more than a decade its governor, will rank as the best type of Colonial Administrator, a worthy emulator of his

countryman, le Sieur de Brüe, and of our own Sir John Glover. The strides which French Guinea has made since its birth in 1889 are really phenomenal. In 1890, Konakry, the capital, was non-existent. To-day it numbers 10,000 inhabitants, of whom some 300 are Europeans. The trade of French Guinea, which in 1890 only amounted to £300,000, reached in 1899 and 1900 about £1,000,000. It is one of the most cheaply and yet most effectively administered possessions on the coast. Its revenue is buoyant, owing largely to the successful collection of a poll-tax, and although a railway to Kurussa, on the Niger, is in course of construction, the expenditure is well beneath the revenue. A magnificent carriage-road 137 kilometres in length has been built from Konakry to the foot of the Futa-Jallon plateau. Its import duties are, with the exception of one or two articles, lower than in that of its moribund neighbour, Sierra Leone. On the other hand, there is an export duty of 7 per cent. on rubber and gum copal. Its condition as compared with that of Sierra Leone can best be set forth in tabular form:

French Guinea in 1900		Sierra Leone in 1900	
Total trade	£962,209	Total trade	£921
Export trade	391,191	Export trade	362
Expenditure	116,699	Expenditure	156
Expenditure analysed		Expenditure analysed	
Public works and railway	£57,478	Public works and railway	£36
Other expenditure	59,221	Other expenditure	120

It remains to be said that last year (1901) the export trade[218] of Sierra Leone fell from £362,741 in 1900 to £304,010, reckoning specie, and from

£317,980 to £265,433, excluding specie, the latter figure being the lowest for twenty-one years. At the same time the expenditure increased from £156,421 to £173,457, only £91,976 less than the purchasing power of the Colony.

CHAPTER XXVII
FRENCH AND BRITISH MANAGEMENT IN WEST AFRICA

Apart from the belief, which has been dealt with in the previous chapter, that France cannot manage her West African possessions successfully, another idea appears to be widely entertained. It is said that French methods of rule in West Africa are excessively harsh. I cannot find any evidence to support this view. The records of all the Powers who have possessions in West Africa are tarnished by acts of oppression and injustice to the native, but I have seen no proof that in this respect France compares unfavourably with either England, Germany, or Portugal. On the whole, France's record is perhaps cleaner than that of most other Powers. North of the Bights, the portion of West Africa which has engaged our attention hitherto, I should say the balance of evidence is decidedly to France's credit. That is the opinion of Sir Charles Dilke; it was the opinion of the late Miss Kingsley, and one or two other competent authorities. Speaking in September of last year at a meeting of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, an African of the Africans, and a distinguished scholar, Dr. Blyden, who has had exceptional facilities for judging, and who, withal, holds an official position under the Sierra Leone Government, made a striking reference to the subject.

"France," said Dr. Blyden, "has a peculiar work to do for Africa—a work much needed and suited to the genius of the Celtic race.... The contribution of the French to the civilisation of Africa evidently springs not only from what they have in common with all

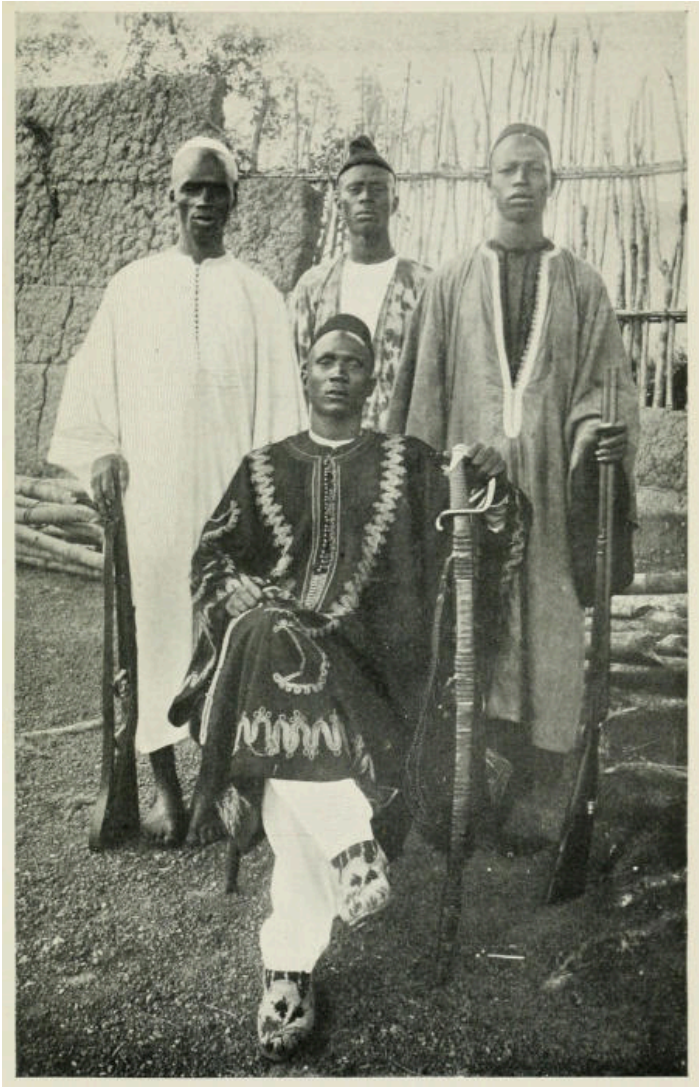
mankind, but from what is special to themselves. France is France. England is England. France can do for Africa what England cannot do, and England can do for Africa what France cannot do. This all thinking Africans recognise, and all gladly co-operate with each nation according to the measure in which their systems agree with native ideas and customs and traditions. And there seems to be more of conformity in the French methods than in the more rigid and unimaginative system of the Anglo-Saxon. Whatever there is among the natives of original, racy, or romantic interest is not perishing under French administration."

That is a true saying, and it goes far towards explaining the political success of the French in West Africa.

It is surely a circumstance which should impress us that the French have been able to successfully apply direct taxation in their possessions without bloodshed or disturbance, while in Sierra Leone we have failed so disastrously. As direct taxation in West Africa is a problem fraught with great danger, one needing the utmost care and discrimination, it seems worth while to give more than passing notice to what has already been done by the French and ourselves in the matter. A poll-tax was applied in French Guinea in 1897. In 1900 it yielded £90,000, and I am informed on good authority that the returns for 1901 will reach £140,000, and will still further increase, as the taxable radius has not yet been reached. It has been peacefully collected. Was this the result of overwhelming military strength? Not at all, for although French Guinea is now about three times the size of Sierra Leone, the military, or rather the police, force of the French Protectorate is just a little

over half what it is in Sierra Leone. The "show of force" theory has, therefore, been conspicuous by its absence. It has been replaced by a plentiful supply of imagination, plus the appreciation of certain scientific facts. What, in the first place, are the scientific facts? The tax in French Guinea is a poll-tax, the tax in Sierra Leone is a property-tax. In the one case there was no interference with native land tenure; in the other there was indirect interference with native land tenure. Mr. Chamberlain[219] himself was "disposed to think that the natives saw in the tax an attempt to interfere with their property." Yet Mr. Chamberlain has maintained the tax. Farther on Mr. Chamberlain says, "that the aversion of the natives to the payment of the tax is not insuperable may be inferred from the fact that a similar tax is levied without difficulty from similar races by the French in the neighbouring territory." There Mr. Chamberlain showed that he was not properly informed. The tax was not a "similar" tax, and the "races" in French territory are not "similar" but dissimilar. What ethnic similarity is there, for instance, between the Fulani, the ruling race in a large portion of French Guinea, and the Mendi, Timini, Konnos and Sulimas of Sierra Leone? Such confusion is extraordinary. The peoples of French Guinea are either Mohammedan, or for the most part inured to direct taxation for many centuries past by Mohammedan conquest.[220] The peoples of Sierra Leone were independent races, who have beaten back every attempt at Mohammedan conquest, and among whom a regularly recurring impost is unknown, and contrary to all native ideas. An almost identical argument has been made use of in regard to the Gambia. We collect a hut-tax in the Gambia; why not in Sierra Leone? For the same reason that what

may be sound in one place is not sound in another. You cannot lump West Africa together and evolve identical legislation for the whole! The passion for assimilation is fatal to good government in West Africa. The peoples of the Gambia are, again, either Mohammedan or have undergone conquest by Mohammedans. The case of the Gambia, moreover, is in another sense quite different from Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is covered with dense forests. Gambia is a small strip of territory on either bank of a river. The villages along its shores can be raked by gun-boats. Every part is easily accessible, and on the other side of the border the French are in occupation. What chance is there of resisting Government demands, even though the tax were bitterly opposed, which is not the case for the reasons already given; although the Gambia natives are probably no more in love with it than we are with our income-tax? Direct taxation is ever unpopular; among primitive peoples particularly so. Finally, the natives of French Guinea are much richer than those of Sierra Leone. So much for the scientific facts. Is it not about time that the Colonial Office took over the services of a trained ethnologist, or created independent native councils in West Africa in touch with the Administration?



SUSU CHIEF AND STAFF

Dahomey and Ashanti also offer a parallel in another way. In Dahomey the poll-tax was applied for the first time since the Conquest (1892) in 1899.

It yielded £8200 in 1899 and £22,290 in 1900. There has been no trouble, and as in French Guinea, the tax has not prevented a steady increase in the export trade, notwithstanding the thousands of able-bodied men employed on the railway. In both Dahomey and Ashanti the people taxed are Negroes, and were formerly subject to an unusual state-form in West Africa, viz. a despotism. They have been conquered, and conquest implies a tacit right to levy an impost. But conquest involves great hardships on the conquered in West Africa. Villages and granaries are destroyed, crops burnt, acres of land laid waste; many of those who would be sowing and reaping and gathering produce have been killed, and general distress ensues. That is the time for the conqueror with his higher culture, and the lofty ideals of the religion he professes, to take the conquered by the hand and try to renovate what he has shattered, but on better lines; to act, since he chooses to call the Negro a child, as a parent, who, after administering castigation, makes friends once more with the offender. Put differently, every assistance should be given, and due latitude allowed to a tribe which has been so unfortunate as to incur the wrath of the superior people, whose reforming zeal is nothing if not drastic. The French gave the Dahomeyans seven years' breathing space before they taxed them.[221]



ASHANTI FIELD FORCE AT CAPE COAST *EN ROUTE* FOR KUMASI

What has been our action in Ashanti? No sooner has a desolating war been ended, a war attended by certain incidents which do not reflect credit upon us as a nation; a war which was caused by a series of official blunders of the grossest kind, than we clap on direct taxation, and in such a form that a premium is put upon future troubles. In fact, shortly after this taxation was announced to the beaten chiefs, yet another rising was only averted by the prompt despatch of more troops to Kumasi.[222] Could anything less imaginative—to put it mildly—be devised than this application of a war indemnity nearly thirty years old, previous non-payment of which was made the excuse for the arrest and deportation of Prempreh and the annexation of the country; and when the revival of the claim by the authorities in 1900 is admitted to have been one of the contributory causes of the last rising? As Sir William Geary pointed out in 1900:

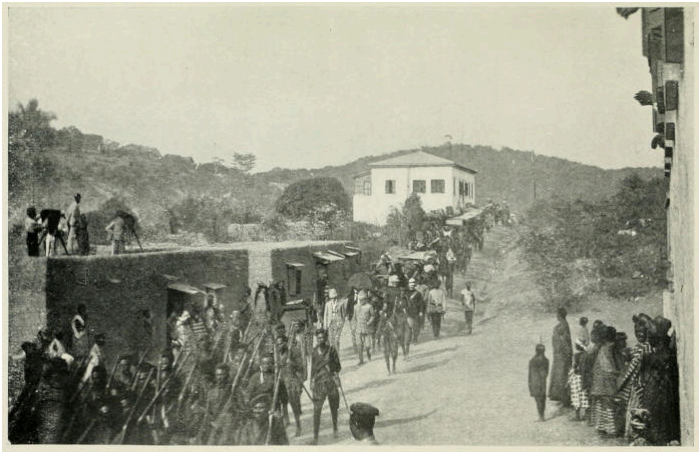
> "To take a metaphor from private property, one cannot foreclose a mortgage, receive the rents and profits of the land, and then beyond that ask for interest on the debt when one has helped oneself to payment. We annexed Ashanti in 1896, and not only have we obtained formal sovereignty, but the matter has turned out a good bargain for us. We are carrying away the natural gold of the country for the benefit of European shareholders. Now we want to tax the natives."

Is policy of this kind calculated to bring prosperity to British West Africa? In 1864 the *Times* expressed itself as follows with regard to the ruler of Ashanti:

> "Instead of harbouring culprits against his crown, instead of disregarding the treaties between himself and us, instead of trying to sap the foundations of his throne, we should strive to cultivate acquaintance with him by the tranquil arts of trade. At the back of his vast dominions, receding to the foot of the Kong mountains, reside natives who owe and yield him obedience. What benefits might be showered on the Protectorate if we would set our heads together to foster and consolidate an intercourse based on amity and on the extension of legitimate traffic!"

Wise words, excellent precepts. Why does not the *Times* preach them now for application in other parts of West Africa, where the Crown Colony system has not yet quite succeeded in undoing the work of generations of peaceful, commercial efforts? If there

be still life left in this miserable residue of the once powerful Ashanti nation, no doubt but that more trouble arising out of the tax will ensue. It does not seem as though the contingency were looked upon as altogether remote even in official eyes, and there are some significant passages in the last Blue Book on the subject. Happily at present we have an excellent resident at Kumasi in the person of Captain Donald Stewart, a man of broad sympathies, and it may be that his personal influence will prevail against the slumbering discontent which the policy of his chiefs renders inevitable in the country, whether it be given open expression to or not.[223]



RETURN OF ASHANTI FIELD FORCE

There is a passage in the evidence of one of the European witnesses before Sir David Chalmers, in the course of the inquiry into the hut-tax war, which explains better than anything else perhaps the difference between the procedure of the French in Guinea and that of the British authorities in Sierra Leone. “They are not so particular there. The great man Alimami Dowla is supposed to collect the tax,

and he brings the money to the Governor and says, 'This is what I have been able to collect,' and the Government say, 'Thank you.'" That is precisely what the French have done all through. They have gone to the chiefs as "big friend"; explained to them that they required money for the railway, roads, and so on; pointed out the advantages; asked them to contribute; presented them with an extremely handsome commission of one-third of the moneys collected (in other words, subsidised them) in their respective districts, and "winked the other eye," so to speak, when the moneys presented have not equalled the amount due. At the same time the prestige of the chiefs has been everywhere upheld; the native courts preserved; vexatious European legal formulas kept out of the country; European merchants encouraged to come in, and regularly consulted in the work of administration; the numbers of officials restricted; economy practised in every branch of the service, and military methods tabooed. Result, a magnificent success politically, commercially, financially. Compare this with what has taken place in Sierra Leone. We are taking away the power of the chiefs instead of strengthening it.[224] The hut-tax was originally enforced in a hasty, not to say brutal manner. Instant payment was demanded. Chiefs were dragged from their villages, treated as felons, handcuffed and marched off to gaol under the eyes of their unresisting people. The Frontier Police, an ill-disciplined force[225] recruited from the dregs of the Protectorate, committed all sorts of abuses, and, to use the words of the Royal Commissioner, "oppressive severity" was exercised, and this most delicate business was approached in a general spirit of "imperious and uncompromising force." A rising very naturally ensued which convulsed the whole

Protectorate. Sir David Chalmers' subsequent report, which condemned the hut-tax and recommended its withdrawal, was not acted upon; the hut-tax has been maintained, and an expensive civil, military and magisterial *régime* set up, unsuited to the country and beyond its power to maintain. Result, the expenditure has risen to about 60 per cent. of the producing power of the Colony, which is steadily decreasing; and the up-keep of the machinery to collect the tax costs more than the tax produces. The Colonial Office, which exhausted itself in ingenious explanations to disconnect the rising with the hut-tax, has recently issued an optimistic statement—on top of many others of a similar kind—containing the report of the new Governor's tour in the hinterland. [226] It seems that everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The natives are delighted with everything, the hut-tax included. The fall in the exports (the true test of prosperity of a West African colony), which have been on the downward grade since the hut-tax was introduced, and were lower last year than they have been for twenty years (the year of the rebellion excepted), is accounted for by "want of activity on the part of native producers," and to the action of the French. With regard to the latter, the French have for many years levied a tax upon native caravans crossing the frontier, and the rapid development and the judicious management of French Guinea have killed the transit trade which used to pass *viâ* Freetown, and is now concentrated at Konakry. Yet, in view of French competition, the authorities deem it politic to keep up the tax and all the incidental expenses it involves. The caravan traffic with the far interior was doomed when the French secured the back country; and the revival of the complaint about taxing caravans strikes one as a

little insincere for several reasons, and among them because, although it is natural that the natives of our Protectorate adjoining the French possession should be sorry to lose the profits they derived from the passage of caravans through their districts, and complain accordingly, no evidence has been adduced to show that the natives from the remoter hinterlands beyond the frontier, which, be it remembered, belong to France, are desirous of travelling all the way to Freetown to dispose of their products, when there are French factories quite as near where as good prices can be obtained for produce. It is curious, too, to contrast these explanations with other official assurances given out both in 1899 and 1900, that the country would soon recover from the hut-tax war and the export trade regain its normal dimensions. French competition is no new thing. To conclude, the export trade of Sierra Leone twenty years ago is given at £366,000 for an expenditure of £72,000: last year the expenditure was £173,457 including the railway expenses, and £154,210 minus the railway expenses. The expenditure has, therefore, excluding the railway expenses, increased by over 100 per cent. in the face of a decline in the producing power of the country. That is the road to financial ruin, and those concerned know it well enough; but until the British public makes up its mind to seriously tackle these West African questions, the few who say so will, no doubt, continue to be looked upon as pessimists, “sentimental theorists,” or fools, until the inevitable day of reckoning comes.

PART V

CHAPTER XXVIII
THE CONCESSIONS *RÉGIME* IN FRENCH CONGO

"What is important in colonial matters is that the Governments, in their difficult and uncertain, but systematic, march, should have increasingly before them the ideal which they proposed to themselves, and which they never lose sight of in the darkest nights, the star which shines in the heavens, and of which the beams are justice and humanity."—M. DÉCRAIS, Colonial Minister in the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet.

"We even think that on account of the difficulty, of the impossibility, in which the natives find themselves of making known their feelings and expressing their grievances, the interests of those natives should be the object of special kindness and solicitude....

"Can we allow these natives to be subjected to the unbridled exploitation, to the economical servitude with which they are threatened? The exclusive right which the Concessionnaires will arrogate to themselves of buying from the natives living upon their concessions at such prices as they, the Concessionnaires, choose to impose, the natural products of the soil, or the harvest which their labour has produced, is but a disguised form of slavery.... In conclusion, we can but say that this Concession *régime* is antagonistic to the well-being, to the material and moral progress of our natives, and to the responsibilities we have assumed in submitting them to our domination."—"Memorial" of the "French West African Company"[227] to M. Décrais.

By one of those extraordinary contradictions of which French history affords so many curious examples, liberty-loving France, with her splendid record in West Africa, having proved her capacity to successfully manage possessions in West Africa; numbering among her officials and merchants connected with West Africa men of the highest moral calibre, imbued with humanitarian instincts and earnest advocates of a sound native policy; has within the last few years sanctioned the institution of a *régime* of territorial monopolies in the French Congo which has already led to deplorable occurrences, and cannot fail to cause still greater evils if permitted to continue. To explain all the phases of this grave departure from French traditions in West Africa would require a great deal more space than is here available. One can only give its origin, indicate its main lines and the events which have hitherto taken place in connection with it, and briefly discuss how it affects the general relationship of Western Europe with Western Africa and the interests of British subjects in the maritime zone of the French Congo.

Some three years and a half ago the huge profits earned by certain rubber companies, so-called, in the Congo State; the enormous premiums at which their shares stood on the Antwerp Stock Exchange; the wild speculations which anything to do with Congo rubber gave rise to in Belgium; the colossal increase in the yearly output of rubber from the Congo State, which from a value of 260,000 francs in 1888 had risen to 15,850,000 francs in 1898,[228] provoked in France—or, at any rate, among some influential Frenchmen, notably in Government circles—a desire that similar results should accrue in the French Congo. “Here,” ran the argument, “we have an

immense territory as rich in forest products, notably rubber, as the Congo State, which is doing very little, which for years has been a drag upon the metropolis; while the Belgians—these new-comers in Africa, these tyros at tropical colonisation—are making fortunes every day. Why cannot we imitate them?" The feeling was thoroughly natural. Those who entertained it, however, forgot four things—three of which may at this stage be referred to—or, if they did not forget them, they at all events brushed them aside in the enthusiasm of the moment. They forgot the causes which had led to the comparative stagnation of French Congo on the one hand and the causes which were moulding a state of prosperity in the remaining French Colonies on the other. They forgot the political ambitions of the astutest diplomatist in Europe—the Sovereign of the Congo State. They forgot *how* the inflated premiums, colossal profits, and the exaggerated production had been and were being brought about. If the latter point did present itself to the minds of a minority, it was assumed that, under a French administration, abuses such as those known to exist in the Congo State were impossible, and that results in every sense equal to those obtained in the Congo State could be secured in French Congo without them. Swayed by these considerations, the French Government and French Colonial public, with the exception of a handful of far-seeing and experienced men, sought to carry out the new programme without delay.

King Leopold foresaw at once the danger and the opportunity; the danger if a sudden influx of French capital into French Congo should lead to the construction of a railway from the French coast-line to Brazzaville on the Upper Congo, to threaten the monopoly of traffic with the interior enjoyed by the

Matadi-Stanley Pool railway; the necessity of averting it by placing the financial control of the French concessions in Belgian hands, whereby the construction of such a line could be delayed *ad infinitum*; and the double advantage of (1) fostering the movement in France, on account of the increased railway freight the development of the movement would bring for the existing Belgian line, to say nothing of the increased customs duties on goods and material for the French Upper Congo (whose only practical route was, of course, *viâ* Congo State territory), which would accrue to the Congo State for the same reason; and (2) of securing for the small but influential Belgian group of which he is the supremely able leader a preponderating position in the possessions adjoining his own.[229] Gathering his financiers and co-partners in that vast Trust—which is called the Independent State of the Congo—King Leopold flung himself into the breach, and with such good effect that French Congo was in an incredibly short space of time partitioned on paper into some forty odd concessions of all shapes and dimensions, with nominal French heads, but with Belgians on the board of administration, a majority of Belgian shareholders behind, with Belgian capital either openly or in disguised form the controlling factor, with strings pulled in Belgium, ideas borrowed from Belgium, Belgian methods of tropical African development and Belgian methods of rigging the home markets writ large all over them.[230] With what consummate skill the Sovereign of the Congo State weaved his nets, flung them forth and landed his fish, only those who have had a glimpse of what has gone on behind the scenes can describe. It would make a curious story, and not an altogether savoury one, and perhaps some day it will be fully told.[231]

The clever manipulating tactics of the king were only equalled by the infatuation, the heedlessness, the utter want of reflection which characterised the action of the French Government of the day and the noisiest section of the French Colonial party. A policy involving the most far-reaching consequences was suddenly adopted with, as a French writer of distinction has said, "une insouciance, une désinvolture presque criminelles." Seemingly hypnotised, France plunged headlong into an abyss whence she is vainly seeking to emerge, and in which she has already soiled her hands, and as De Brazza rather nobly puts it, "compromised her dignity."

Meanwhile the French Congo Concessions are in being, and what has been the outcome up to the present after more than two years of the experiment? The promoters have done excellently well. Floating their concessions at absurd premiums on the Antwerp market, and coming on the crest of the rubber wave, they were able—not in all cases perhaps, but generally—to dispose of their holdings at substantial profits. The shareholders who imitated their example showed prescience, for, with the exception of two companies, there has not been one single transaction this year in the shares of forty-three of these companies which are still quoted in the Antwerp financial and Congo organs! Their paper, in fact, is unsaleable. Several of the companies have fizzled out. Those who have not been allowed to prey on the legitimate barter trade existing in the Maritime Zone are in more or less of a moribund condition, and after squandering their shareholders' money have accomplished absolutely nothing. But what of the effect upon the country? Free trade in the Maritime Zone has disappeared, and with it the

revenue it supplied to the Administration. The export trade has actually decreased. The finances are so gravely compromised that a loan of 10,000,000 francs is spoken of, and at one period last year there was not even available in the local treasury sufficient cash to pay the salaries of officials. All public works and improvements of any kind are, of course, suspended. The local Courts are kept busy with endless litigation between Concessionnaire Companies who accuse one another of poaching upon their respective preserves, the boundaries of none of which have, by the way, ever been delimited. There have been two native risings attended with considerable loss of life and destruction of property, and chaos reigns supreme. The Paris Colonial organs are filled with suggestions, exhortations, threats, revilings, but with the solitary exception of one Deputy[232]—M. le Comte d'Agoult—and a handful of courageous journalists, such as M. Jean Hess, the African explorer, and M. Serge Basset, of *La Revue*, no one of note in French Colonial circles has boldly tackled the subject, gone to the root of it, or preached the only possible solution. The fact that the affair has raised an international problem—or rather two—of great delicacy, may have something to do with the unwillingness to come to close quarters displayed by the leading organs of the French Press. But it is lamentable, in every sense of the word, that France with all her generous instincts should be able on this occasion to record but very few protesting voices against the fatal reversal of the wise and just native policy she has hitherto pursued in the main, and with such conspicuous success, in her other West African possessions.

For it is in the relation it bears towards the natives that the concession *régime* in French Congo offers the

strongest ground for criticism. The saying that "evil communications corrupt good manners" was never more applicable than in this case. Once started on the road mapped out three years ago, subsequent events became inevitable. It would have needed a man of iron—and the warmest friends of the ex-French Colonial Minister, who was not the initiator, but the successor to a heritage of trouble, would not credit him with such proclivities—to have stemmed the tide and refused, even at the risk of resigning, to allow his country to be dragged along the path of reaction towards which the concession *régime* infallibly tended. Step by step the French Government has found itself impelled to gravitate nearer to the Belgian conception. The Concessionnaires found English and German merchants trading peacefully with the natives on what they claimed, according to their contracts with the French Government, to be their own property. Disputes arose, seizures of produce took place, and it became increasingly urgent to define the "rights" of the concessionnaires. M. Décrais hung back a long time, but goaded by nearly all the Colonial and some of the daily newspapers, with constant pressure brought to bear upon him from influential quarters, he was fain at last to take the leap. He took it, and through the Governor of French Congo issued a decree (March 20, 1901) as to which one can only say that, if a few years ago it had been predicted that a French Minister could have framed such a document, the prophecy would have earned the contemptuous unbelief of all Frenchmen, or foreigners acquainted with the part played by France in Western Africa.

The decree declared that one idea dominated[233] the entire concession policy, viz. that the products of

the soil belonged to the concessionnaires, who alone had a right to dispose of them, the natives not being entitled to sell them to any one but the concessionnaires. To tone down the arbitrary nature of this promulgation, mention was made of native reserves, where the natives would be free to do what they liked. But this apparent modification of the absolutism of the decree is entirely illusory for three reasons: (1) the area of the reserves was not delimited, and in view of the enormous difficulty and expense delimitation would involve, could not hope to be for many years to come; (2) a decision of the local courts had ordained that, pending delimitation of the reserves, the reserves were legally non-existent, and that the whole country was therefore exploitable by the concessionnaires; (3) an antecedent ministerial decree had announced that, when the reserves were delimited, the areas reserved should not include any land producing saleable products.[234] Whatever may have been the difficulties with which the French Colonial Minister was beset, the issue of the above decree cannot in equity be defended. It virtually handed over the population of French Congo to the mercy of European speculators, of Belgians grown fat on the misery and the degradation of the natives in the Congo State. It left the door open to the grossest abuses, the most cynical outrages against humanity. It let loose the tongues and pens of all the apostles of force and coercion for Africa. It reduced the natives to the level of servants and serfs of the greedy clique which had fastened its talons in the country, and it strengthened the position of the Congo State in Europe.

Secure in the official recognition of their “rights,” the concessionnaire companies’ next move was

precisely what might have been expected in view of the class of men controlling them. Legitimate commerce having no place in their calculations, they at once started a "campaign" for the purpose of forcing the French Government to coerce the natives into bringing rubber and other forest produce to their factories, on such terms as they, the concessionnaires, chose to pay for the labour expended by the natives in collecting it. While their subsidised organs daily devoted reams to prove that compulsion was essential in dealing with primitive peoples, their agents in Africa hastened, as far as possible, to put these principles into practice. Arms of precision were smuggled into the country, and soon the concessionnaires were attempting on a smaller scale to copy the exploits of their countrymen on the other side of the Congo River. *Facilis descensus Averni.* The agitation was partly met by the application of a hut-tax paid in kind, the produce to be handed in by the natives to the Government authorities, who would dispose of it to the concessionnaires at a nominal price; thus giving an appearance of legality to the transaction, and disguising coercion in the garb of administrative requirements. The Government having accomplished nothing whatever in the way of bettering the country, improving communication, or constructing public works from which the natives might be expected to derive some benefit, the hut-tax was naturally resented; its application in French Congo being, moreover, scientifically unsound, and only feasible of accomplishment by a long course of preparation. Grafted upon the action of the concessionnaires, the measure was followed by outbreaks in various directions, especially among the warlike Fans of the Ogowe and the Upper Sangha

people.

This new step on the part of the French Government stirred up for a time the opponents of the concessionnaire *régime* in France. De Brazza sent a memorable protest to the *Temps*. Its concluding passage is well worth quoting:

> "France has assumed a duty towards the native tribes (of French Congo) who for twenty-seven years have lent their assistance in the work of expansion. These people have received from us the seal of their future liberties.... We must not sacrifice them to the vain hope of immediate results by thoughtless measures of coercion opposed to the generous ideas which our flag personifies. We should be committing a great mistake to discount that result, by enforcing at the present time taxes upon the products of the soil, or by compelling the natives to work in the form of forced labour or military service. It would constitute a great blow to our dignity if such labour and such taxes were converted into a sort of draft-to-order in favour of the concessionnaires.... It is to recall these considerations to men's minds, and to avoid the moral bankruptcy to which economic and financial disasters may lead us, that I have emerged from the reserve I had imposed upon myself."[235]

Just then, too, one of the very few genuine French concerns among the concessionnaire companies, managed by a Frenchman distinguished for his explorations in the country, M. Fondère, wrote publicly to the Colonial Minister, abandoning his

concession:

> "Experience has convinced us," he wrote, "that, notwithstanding any modifications of detail which your department might suggest, either in the administrative organisation of the Congo Colony or in the agreement between the Government and the Concessionnaires, the exclusive monopoly of the concessions is a vain epithet. The right to sell his products to whomsoever he may please cannot be denied to the native, because he has always possessed it. Moreover, all stipulations to the contrary notwithstanding, it would be quite illusory to think of taking this right away from the native. That could only be done by force of arms."

Shortly afterwards, M. Albert Cousin, also a well-known man in French Colonial circles, who had previously been a warm defender of the concessions *régime*, published a pamphlet to the effect that he had changed his mind, and was now convinced the experiment was a mistaken one.[236]

These repeated blows staggered for a moment the defenders of the Belgian conception in France. The newspaper which had the most largely contributed to influence French Colonial opinion even went so far as to admit that it could not but be "very much impressed by the new ideas which are coming to light." The ideas are not new. They are as old as the hills. They date back from the time when man, evolving from the brute, became a law-maker, and decided that certain fixed principles of morality should form the basis of social order.

That temporary hesitation offered a great

opportunity for French statesmanship, but no one came forward to enforce the lesson. And so the powerful influences which had been at work from the first set themselves to destroy the "impression" created. They partially succeeded, but they could not destroy it altogether, and I rather fancy it is becoming more pronounced and will eventually carry the day. One factor, at any rate, is likely to assist its growth not a little—the extravagant demands of the concessionnaires and the violent attacks on the French Government on the part of the Belgian organs devoted to the interests of their compatriots in French Congo. The institution of the hut-tax was merely a sop. It staved off the clamour for a time, but in the nature of things could not last for long. To feed the army of concessionnaires with the proceeds of a hut-tax an army of native levies is required. That is what the concessionnaires claim must be organised, and once more the same strings are being pulled, the same arguments put forward, the same machinery set in motion. The French Government must do what the Congo State has done. It must raise 15,000 or 20,000 men, arm them with weapons of precision and turn them loose upon the population in order to enforce a tribute on the yield of which the concessionnaires shall not only live but run their shares up to high premiums, present respectable dividends to their Belgian holders, and generally make money at the expense of the natives of the French Congo, using the French Government as a sort of decoy-duck the while. I doubt if it will work. I fancy King Leopold and his friends are going rather too far. But one thing at least is certain. Either the concessionnaires, who know nothing of trade and are not concerned with mere matter-of-fact commercial considerations, who have never looked

upon commerce as an element in their "business," will themselves be compelled to throw up the sponge; or they will compel in one shape or another the French Government to give them physical means to establish slavery in the French Congo, as it has been established in the Congo State. To suppose the latter is almost an impossibility, notwithstanding all that has happened, and it is perhaps not displaying too great an optimism to hope that the concession *régime* in French Congo may perish from its own internal corruption. Meanwhile it remains to be seen how that *régime* has affected and continues to affect British interests, and the part it plays in the international situation created by the proceedings of the Congo State.

CHAPTER XXIX
INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS AND MONOPOLY

> "As to the ground on which we contend for the rights we have in the interior of Africa, they have really been our own guiding principles throughout. *It is not territory, it is freedom of trade*, and on that ground we are strong and shall do our very utmost."—Extract from a speech by LORD SALISBURY to a deputation of Chambers of Commerce, 1898.
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> Speaking at Manchester in 1884, Sir H. M. Stanley prophesied, as a result of the creation of the Congo State, an export of British cotton goods to the Congo State of £26,000,000 annually. According to the same speaker, one firm on the Congo River alone imported, in 1879, British goods to the value of £185,000. After seventeen years' existence, the *total* imports of British goods to the Congo State is far below that figure—viz. £133,200 in 1901!
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> The importance of British trade interests in French West Africa may be estimated from the fact that in 1900 the French possessions absorbed British goods to the value of £709,900, and sent £534,727 of produce to British ports.

In the *cahier de charges* or agreements between the French Government and the Concessionnaire Companies the latter were held to respect the "acquired rights of third parties," and the "general rights created by the Berlin Act." Who were the "third parties"? What were their "acquired rights?" What were the "general rights created by the Berlin Act"?

When in the early part of the nineteenth century

the European nations put a stop to the export slave trade, Great Britain, having led the way in securing this reform, entered into treaties with most of the chiefs and head-men along the West Coast, giving some of them subsidies and, by means of consular and naval visitations, encouraging them to give their attention to the gathering of their forest products for sale to Europeans in exchange for the merchandise of Europe. In this way the trade in palm-oil was stimulated in the Niger Delta and Windward Coast; whilst in Gaboon it took the shape of barwood, ebony and ivory, and in the River Congo palm-oil and ivory. At that time there was no European Government established on the African coast between the Gold Coast and Ambriz. The Europeans who settled along the coast traded from their vessels. After the introduction of steam, the European traders (chiefly British) traded in hulks in the Niger Delta, and built houses and stores at various points along the whole coast-line down to Ambriz. Small sailing vessels plied between these trading places and the terminus of the ocean steamers (then Fernando Po, or Cameroons), and sailing vessels from Europe sailed regularly to and fro, bringing their goods and taking home their cargoes of vegetable and animal products. Soon after the establishment of steam the French Government made a treaty with the chiefs of the Gaboon River, by which ground was ceded for a coaling station for the French men-of-war then plying on the African coast to put down the foreign slave trade. Shortly afterwards, an American citizen established in Fernan Vaz discovered a vine, of which the sap, when exposed to the atmosphere, was found to yield india rubber, and in course of time this new industry was fairly started and gradually spread over the adjoining territory. It was a slow

process, but in a few years the gathering of rubber became general in that part of the coast, and in Gaboon the French naval officers saw that there was a trade to be taxed, and forthwith a Custom House was built and duties placed on imports.

When British merchants first established themselves in Gaboon the political authority of the French Government was confined to the Gaboon River estuary, and the up-river trade was carried on at our merchants' personal risk. In order to induce the natives to collect rubber, European traders had perforce to let the natives have goods on credit, as those natives near the coast had to go far into the interior to buy from other natives; who, in their turn, had to be given credit wherewith to buy from natives still farther inland, and induce them to seek the vines and make the rubber. In this way the credit system, as it exists to-day, was created.

In the pursuit of this rubber trade, fostered by British merchants, the natives of Gaboon, crossing their country to the South, struck the Ogowe River, which gave them easy access to a wide field from which to collect produce. In course of time the European traders followed the natives across country, and meeting the river,[237] lost no time in tracing its course to the sea and at once establishing sea communication between Gaboon and the Ogowe. Their example was imitated by the French Government, and in due course possession was taken by France of the Ogowe and Fernan Vaz; but when at Berlin the Governments of Europe settled who were to become the owners of the Congo and the adjoining maritime territories, France had, in point of fact, no political influence south of Fernan Vaz. This expansion of Gaboon was initiated by British

and German enterprise, French white traders coming in after the pioneer work was accomplished. When 2° 30´ of South latitude was fixed as the northern boundary of the free-trade zone, it was expected that that line would include within it the trade of Sette Camma, the trade of which was British and German entirely. The Chambers of Commerce of Liverpool and Manchester set forth these facts at the time: before the treaty was made, and when urging the principle of free trade within the zone fixed by treaty, no idea was in the mind either of the traders, the Chambers of Commerce, or the representatives of the various Governments concerned in the making of the Berlin Treaty, other than that the freedom of trade therein referred to applied to the only known trade in existence, viz. the collection and sale by the natives of the vegetable and other products of their country in exchange for European merchandise. Any legislation, therefore, of which the effect is to alienate the rights of the natives to collect the produce of their country, and to dispose of those products freely to whomsoever they wish, is a direct violation of the principles of equitable treatment towards the natives which animated the Conference and the rights of the signatory Powers of that Conference.

It is then perfectly clear (1) that the “third parties” mentioned in the *cahier de charges* were the European merchants who had created the existing trade of the French Congo, the taxes upon which supplied the local administration with funds for purposes of revenue; (2) that the “acquired rights” of those merchants consisted in the right to continue their trade, the freedom of which was guaranteed under the Berlin Act; (3) that the “general rights created by the Berlin Act” were, on the one part, the rights of

the natives ("whose moral and material well-being" the contracting Powers to the Berlin Act bound themselves to "care for") to their land and the produce thereof; and, on the other part, the rights of each of the signatory Powers to ensure that the principles of the Berlin Act were not violated by any one of the parties to that Act. The way in which the rights of the natives are "cared for" under the concessions *régime* was dealt with in the last chapter. It remains to be said to what usage the "acquired rights" of the merchants trading in the country have been subjected.

Two of the most important firms trading in the French Congo at the time of the issue of the Decree of Concessions (March 1899) were British.[238] They were among the very first to open up the country to trade, their representatives had always been law-abiding citizens under the French flag; they had ever worked harmoniously with the French officers, who from time to time had sought their assistance in developing this or that district, had asked them to send their native traders into such and such a region, and generally encouraged them in every way to promote and extend the area of their trading operations. In the course of over a quarter of a century's trade in the country the British firms had contributed large sums to the local revenue, and had cheerfully paid the enormous differential customs tariffs levied upon British goods, the taxes, the licences, the duties of all sorts affecting the various branches of their businesses prescribed by the law of the land. Their standing was, of course, well known to the French Government, and in a secret letter of instructions[239] communicated to the concessionnaires by the French Colonial Minister, the former were required to pledge themselves "to leave

entire latitude for two years to the existing foreign firms for all the commercial undertakings which they may perform in the territory conceded" to them; and further, that they should propose to the said foreign firms at the end of the two years, and in the event of difficulties arising with the latter, to buy up their establishments. The pledge was duly given. But it was not carried out. The French Government, finding itself incapable of compelling obedience, allowed the matter to slide, and was brought by successive stages in the development of affairs to the issue of the Decree of March 26, 1901 (mentioned in the previous chapter), which declared, as has already been stated, that the products of the soil—that is to say, the only medium of trade in the country—belonged exclusively to the concessionnaires, and that the natives were not free to dispose of them to any one but the concessionnaires. The "acquired rights of third parties," and the rights of the natives, had gone by the board; the rights of England as a signatory Power of the Berlin Act had been infringed; and the Act itself had been violated in one of its most essential articles, viz. Article V., which says that "no Power which exercises, or shall exercise, sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions shall be allowed to grant therein a monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade."

To describe the series of outrages[240] perpetrated by the agents of the Belgian groups, masquerading as French patriots, upon our merchants which took place during the two years that the Concessionnaire Companies had bound themselves to allow "entire latitude" to the firms trading in the country; the protests of our merchants, who were never informed by the French authorities that their *locus standi* had become modified; who continued on the one hand to

pay customs dues on their imports, licences for the factories and native traders, while forcibly prevented, under the eyes of the same authorities and with their tacit assent, from disposing of their goods to natives against produce; the expostulations of Sir Edmund Monson, our Ambassador in Paris; the promises of M. Décrais which were never fulfilled; the actions at law brought by our merchants at great expense in the Congo to test the legality of the concessionnaires' proceedings; the deputation of nine Chambers of Commerce to Lord Lansdowne; the upholding of the concessionnaires' claim by the local courts, whose judgments as *Le Temps* (which has pleaded, together with one or two other French papers,[241] for justice to our merchants) has pointed out, was based not upon law, but upon the Decree of March 1901, which the judges could not go beyond; the persecution of our merchants by the concessionnaires for purchasing produce from their concessions on the strength of the said judgment; the infliction of heavy fines upon our merchants; the entire stoppage of their trade; the seizure of their produce at African ports and even at a French port; [242] the evacuation of our merchants which is now proceeding; the renewed representations of British Chambers to the Foreign Office; above all, the unaccountable lethargy of the British Government, [243] and, with one or two honourable exceptions, [244] the indifference of the British Press—to adequately describe these things would require a couple of chapters at least.

The position to-day is this, that from the greater part of the Ogowe Basin, which alone is unaffected by the Berlin and Brussels Acts, being outside the Conventional Basin of the Congo, our merchants have been expelled, without a penny compensation.

In the Conventional Basin of the Congo, where—as in the Ogowe—our merchants have been established for upwards of twenty years; where their rights to trade freely with the natives are solemnly guaranteed by International Treaties, British subjects are being expelled, not only without compensation but with ignominy and insult, after suffering heavy losses; the trade which they brought into being ruined, the trading stations they have built deserted, themselves arbitrarily removed from regions where they have laboured for so long.[245]

It is a shameful, a discreditable episode. But if it be true that out of evil good may come, there is still some hope that out of the treatment—treatment which to those who know all the details is beyond the reach of Parliamentary language to characterise—meted out to British merchants in the French Congo may come the liberation of the peoples of the Congo State from the Belgian yoke, and an international understanding binding upon the Powers whereby a rational, common-sense, and just native policy may be mutually agreed upon, and the vast region of the Congo Basin thrown open to the legitimate commerce of all nations. The movement against monopoly based upon force in West Africa; against the evil which King Leopold has sown; against the follies as well as the horrors which that evil has engendered, is growing apace. The expulsion of British subjects from French Congo may yet serve as the lever whereby the edifice of fraud and greed and cruelty reared by Africa's self-styled "regenerator" may be overthrown. And the reason is this.

The British Government has for years been pressed to inquire into the doings of the Congo States upon

humanitarian grounds. The German Government, the Governments of the United States and of France have been similarly approached. None of them have taken definite steps in the direction desired. The chief reasons in the case of England, France and Germany are probably three. First, international rivalries in the partition of Africa and the political ambitions which those rivalries have begotten. By a combination of circumstances of which King Leopold took full advantage, the Sovereign of the Congo State has been able to intrigue first with France against England (1892-94), with England against France (1894), with France against England (1897-99). When the expedition of Major Marchand—who would never have reached Fashoda but for the reinforcements in men, ammunition and stores despatched to him over the Congo Railway, through Congo State territory—was seen to be a political failure, King Leopold turned fawning upon England, and attempted to gain our consent to his appropriation of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. With his usual astuteness he endeavoured to strengthen his diplomacy at the Court of St. James by securing, meanwhile, a *fait accompli* in Africa. In this he failed, mainly through journalistic enterprise in exposing his carefully laid plans (that also, by the way, would make an interesting little story). After the Fashoda episode King Leopold was again pro-British for a short time, until he became once more France's good friend, and plunged the French Congo into chaos. In the interval of acting honest broker to England and France alternately, he has tried to play Germany off against England in sundry matters, such as the Trans-African railway scheme. So much for international rivalries on the Western Central African field, in which the Sovereign of the Congo State has held

most of the trumps. To these must, of course, be added other rivalries on a wider field amongst the Powers in question, which tended still farther to paralyse all useful, disinterested and combined action for humanitarian ends in the Congo. The second reason is dynastic. King Leopold is connected with the Royal Families of England and Germany. Only those who are in Court secrets know the exact extent to which the Sovereign of the Congo State has profited by that, to him, happy circumstance. It has, undeniably, been considerable. The third reason is the self-imposed halo of sanctity with which the public press has been gulled for years by the happy knack of attributing abuses of a more than usually flagrant character to individual wrongdoing of agents —a plea used again and again with never-failing results. To these reasons—there are others, no doubt, and two of them are briefly touched upon in the next chapter—are mainly due the failure of the Powers to fulfil their duties under the Berlin Act *upon humanitarian grounds*.

But now an altogether different aspect of the Congo problem has sprung up. So far the Stokes affair[246] has alone provided what might be termed a *material* cause of complaint against the Congo State. The effect of this outrage was modified by renewed international rivalries which occurred shortly afterwards, and even the subsequent appointment of Major Lothaire as Managing Director in Africa for one of the “Companies” in which the Congo State holds 50 per cent. of the shares, and of which King Leopold appoints the agents, failed to exercise the influence which, but for the international rivalries aforesaid, it would otherwise have wielded. But the horizon has cleared of late. The scramble for Africa is over. The Powers are

beginning to think seriously of the immense problems which beset them in Tropical Western Africa. And it is precisely at this turning-point, as it were, in European policy in Western Africa that the material side of the question has risen. England and Germany have both in their respective ways been sharply confronted with the Nemesis of their past indifference to the repeated violation of the Berlin Act by the Congo State. Germany has seen her ivory trade in German East Africa disappear, her protected natives driven out of Congo State territory, forbidden to purchase ivory or produce of any kind from the natives on the Congo side of the German Congo State frontier, because by the laws of the Congo State every product of the forest, whether vegetable or animal—when either is of intrinsic value—belongs not to the native owner of that forest, whose ownership the State does not recognise, but to the State itself. England has seen her merchants expelled from the French Congo by an extension of the system of territorial monopolies involving absolute rights over the products of the soil, inaugurated by the Congo State in 1892. The Belgian conception has thrived upon the Powers' *non possumus*. The African cancer has attacked both banks of the Congo, and wherever spreads the fell disease, liberty, legitimate commerce, free trade, alike for white man and black, disappear.

The Belgian conception of development in Tropical Western Africa is observed a little late in the day to have another side to it. It is not now merely an institution for earning dividends and reducing the African population. It stands forth as a menace to all legitimate European interests in West Africa. What England and Germany could not agree to do when humanitarian considerations alone were in question,

they can no longer ignore with safety to their interests in Africa. The tentacles of the Belgian octopus are flung wider and wider, French Congo, Fernando Po, the Muni Territory, Dahomey, the Ivory Coast and South West Abyssinia are all alike either threatened, or victims to the insidious embrace which breeds death and devastation to the natives of Africa.[247] The treatment of our merchants in French Congo has given a fresh impetus, and an added motive, to the demand of public opinion that the Congo State shall be called to the bar of international inquiry; for if the expulsion of British subjects from a region solemnly declared internationally free commercial land, necessitates specific action on the part of the British Government in the form of a request for arbitration, which is the line I have reason to believe our Government has taken, there remains the larger question behind—the question of the violation of the Berlin Act by the Congo State, originator of the new African slavery. The Upas-tree has thrown up a new sucker, and although the fresh growth may be removed, no permanent good will ensue unless the tree itself be rooted up and destroyed. The whole scheme, the *raison d'être*, the entire future of European action in Tropical Western Africa is involved in this question. If the Governments are still slow in realising it, the people are not.

The well-informed press of England and of Germany is unanimous in calling upon the British and German Governments to act in combination for the suppression of the monopolistic *régime* in West Africa, and its fountain-head the Congo State. The German Colonial Society, with its 32,000 members, has held two great meetings for this purpose, and has passed resolutions of the most emphatic kind, and at

the same time is using its considerable influence to ensure that in the two Cameroons concessions engineered at the same time as the French Congo concessions and by the same means, trade shall be unrestricted and the native free to dispose of his products, to whomsoever he will.[248] In that respect, Germany is trying her best to undo an initial error, committed under false advice, and the full consequences of which are now understood. In England, we are witnessing a happy alliance of genuine philanthropy, of scientific knowledge, and of commerce united in a common aim, testifying to the fact that there never has been a question of African politics where morality and practicability are so closely entwined,[249] and if the British Press as a whole still lags behind, it is only fair to remember that England has but just emerged from a great war which has absorbed for three years the energies of the country. Indeed, when all the circumstances are considered, we should perhaps be thankful for the amount of attention which the Press has given to the subject, while maintaining the view that, in the specific matter of the treatment of our merchants in French Congo, it has displayed singular lack of foresight. In the United States signs are not wanting that the special responsibility incurred by America, which first recognised the International *status* of the International African Association—subsequently the Congo State—is beginning, now that the policy of the State is better known, to weigh with thoughtful Americans, who for many reasons ought not to disinterest themselves from West African affairs; and President Roosevelt has been appealed to, to co-operate with other of the signatory Powers of the Berlin Act to bring about a new Conference. It is to be hoped that the appeal will be heard. America's

position is such that she can act in this matter without a suspicion of selfish motive, and the importance of her moral support at this juncture cannot be over-estimated. In France, it may safely be asserted that the *élite* of the French official element in West Africa is entirely opposed to the monopolistic conception,[250] that the most powerful French merchant firms are profoundly and anxiously antagonistic, and that with few exceptions the best-informed French writers on West African affairs and French local explorers (Mr. Chevalier, for instance) are dead against it. How, then, can we account for what has occurred? Very easily, I think. A grave mistake has been committed. It is recognised, not always publicly, on nearly all sides in France. But the French Government hesitates to admit it, and the incident of the British merchants intensifies the difficulty. Every French Government dreads the parrot-cry of being too friendly to the English, and no one knows better than Lord Lansdowne how that permanent feature in French politics hampers French statesmen. The influence behind the concessionnaires is still strong. They have still the majority of the French Colonial Press on their side—for reasons which need not be too closely inquired into; and King Leopold's personal influence in Government circles (which he takes every opportunity of strengthening, witness, for instance, the despatch of a special envoy of welcome to President Loubet on his return from Russia), is still conspicuous, as every diplomatist in Europe knows. The truth is that the French Government is marking time. The next few months will be crucial ones in the history of the concession experiment. The concessionnaires will make a supreme effort to justify their existence, and to force the Government to raise a large standing

army in the Congo to coerce the natives into collecting rubber. If they fail, the Government may begin to gently remind them that they have fulfilled none of the terms of the *cahiers de charge*, and if England and Germany can succeed in coming to a definite understanding between themselves and the United States, France may be only too glad to fall back upon a joint Conference as the best way out of the *impasse* into which her so-called friends, the Belgians, have plunged her.

It is possible that this forecast errs on the side of optimism, and, in any case, it is but too obvious that the monopolists are very strong and have great wealth and influence at their back. Meanwhile all those to whom the continuation and growth of the Belgian conception in Africa appears as a virulent disease spreading wherever it can obtain a foothold, and to be fought without pause or rest, can best be fulfilling what they conceive to be their duty, by throwing more and more light upon the proceedings of the Congo State.

CHAPTER XXX
THE HISTORY OF THE CONGO STATE

"At the present time the body called the International Association—however startling it may appear to you—is invulnerable and unassailable. All the armies in the world could not reach it. It is impalpable, intangible as air. I call it Benevolence, Charity, Philanthropy—the Spirit of Peace, good-will to all men—Progress. It is here amongst you to-night ... It eludes your armies, it mocks your best efforts; at a whisper it has disappeared and you cannot recall it.... The founders of the International Association have been called dreamers.... Men understand, or think they do, why a George Peabody should invest hundreds of thousands in model lodgings, or a Josiah Mason in an Institute.... They can understand also why an entire nation spent £20,000,000 to free the slaves in the West Indies.... Though they understand the satisfaction of a sentiment when applied to England, they are slow to understand that it may be a sentiment that induced King Leopold II. to father the International Association. He is a dreamer like his *confrères* in the work, because the sentiment is applied to the neglected millions of the Dark Continent. They cannot appreciate rightly, *because there are no dividends attaching to it*, this restless, ardent, vivifying, and expansive sentiment which seeks to extend civilising influences among the dark races, and to brighten up with the glow of civilisation the dark places of sad-browed Africa."—Sir H. M. STANLEY at the London Chamber of Commerce, September 19, 1884.

"Tous les pouvoirs émanent du Souverain qui les exerce par lui-même ou par ses délégués. Il consulte s'il le juge bon le Conseil Supérieur

> siégeant à Bruxelles. Il prend en personne les mesures les plus importantes.... Le Souverain manifeste sa volonté sous la forme de décrets contresignés par le Secrétaire d'Etat...."—M. A. J. WAUTERS, "L'Etat Indépendant du Congo," chap. xxxii., "Pouvoir législatif," p. 433.

Legends die hard. The legend which attributes to King Leopold of Belgium and the Congo State a philanthropic motive in African affairs is still alive among us, although not quite to the extent that it used to be. It would have died long ago but for two causes, the misstatements indulged in by two or three well-known Englishmen and the apparent failure of the British Press, as a whole, to comprehend the *fons et origo mali* which is raising up such terrible future complications for Europe in Central Africa. Upon occasion one is tempted to think—and the supposition is strengthened by such articles as that which the *Times* recently devoted to the Congo annexation debate in the Belgian Chamber—that the curious omission to come to close quarters with the subject proceeds not so much from inability to see things as they really are, as from an unwillingness to criticise the Sovereign of the Congo State himself. Personalities are held to be bad form, especially where Royalty is concerned. If that be, indeed, the real explanation of the whitewashing of the Congo State which finds favour in many quarters, there is nothing to prevent the process from going on indefinitely. I maintain that it is utterly impossible to arrive at the truth, if the king's personal responsibility in the maladministration of the Congo State is to be perpetually shelved. Why should it be? The administrative *régime* of the State, as M. Cattier has truly said, is an "absolute despotism." No one who is acquainted with that *régime* believes for a

moment that a Van Eetvelde, a Droogmans, a Liebrechts or a Cuvelier exist for any purpose than that of carrying out the king's instructions and superintending the routine work which those instructions entail. King Leopold is sole master, and must bear the responsibility for the *sequelæ* of measures which he himself has initiated and, through his agents, caused to be applied. The king has openly and repeatedly claimed for himself this position before the world. He has posed, and continues to pose, as the regenerator of the African. He has put it on record, in a letter to his agents, that "his only programme is the work of moral and material regeneration." He has written of the "results achieved" by the Congo State as being due "to the concentration of all my efforts in one field of action." He has, throughout, loudly insisted upon the purity and unselfishness of his intentions. Adverse comment has been dismissed by him with a loftiness of tone, a simulated consciousness of high purpose, a dignified picturesqueness of expression from which it is impossible to withhold a meed of admiration, as in the case of a play repugnant to one's sentiments but yet so excellently rendered that objection to the theme cannot blind one to the art of the performers. "My aim throughout life has been to find the truth and make the truth known to others. I have often been misunderstood and misrepresented, but we must not be discouraged; let us ever go forward in the path of duty, striving to let the light shine forth." It cannot be a subject of complaint on the part of his Majesty or his Majesty's friends if, under these circumstances, we take the Sovereign of the Congo State at his word; if we recognise that in the management of the affairs of the Congo State he has adopted to the uttermost the proud assertion of Louis

XIV.: "*L'Etat: c'est moi*"; if, making due note that his declared policy has been the regeneration of the African Negro—a policy in the execution of which he shuns not publicity but only desires light and truth—we judge his acts and the consequences of those acts from the standpoint he himself has laid down.

It is essential for our purpose to give an historical retrospect of the events which preceded the General Act of Berlin in 1885.

On September 12, 1876, King Leopold held a conference in Brussels to consider the best means which could be devised in order to open up Central Africa to European civilisation. The "barbarism" of Africa had already begun to perturb his Majesty, who was careful to place on record the absolute disinterestedness of his intentions. Addressing the assembled scientists and explorers,[251] King Leopold spoke thus: "Is it necessary for me to say that in inviting you to Brussels I have not been guided by egotism? No, gentlemen, if Belgium is small, Belgium is happy and content with her lot, ... but I should be pleased to think that this civilising movement had been inaugurated from Brussels." The outcome of this conference was an "International Association for the exploration and civilisation of Central Africa." Its professed objects were exploration, together with the establishment of sundry centres where explorers of all nationalities might refit. Committees for the collection of funds were to be established in all the countries represented,[252] and an Executive Committee appointed in Brussels to manage the funds. King Leopold, who from the commencement was pursuing his own ends—as he clearly showed later—saw to it that the Belgian Committee should be in the forefront of the subscribers, and to such

good purpose that ere long the Association came to be looked upon as a Belgian Organisation.

The association first of all directed its efforts towards the East Coast of Africa; but when Stanley arrived home in January 1878, after having discovered the course of the Congo, the necessity of a change of policy became obvious. The king speedily secured Stanley's services, a "Committee of Studies" for the Upper Congo was formed, and Colonel Strauch was despatched to the Congo as a representative of both the association and the committee of studies. Meanwhile King Leopold's ambitions were slowly maturing, and the theory of an African State in which he would be the representative head was already shaping itself in his Majesty's mind. In a letter which he wrote to Stanley, Colonel Strauch suggested the formation "of an independent confederacy of free negroes, the king, to whom the conception and the creation of such a confederacy would be due, to be president thereof." "Our enterprise," continued Colonel Strauch, "does not tend to the creation of a Belgian Colony, but to the establishment of a powerful *negro kingdom*." This idea appears to have been sedulously fostered by Colonel Strauch among the European traders established in the Lower Congo, with results which afterwards became apparent. Whether it was put forward as a blind or not it is difficult to say. Anyhow, Stanley knocked it on the head. About this time France and Portugal began to evince uneasiness at the somewhat exclusive complexion which the association and the committee were beginning to assume, and there ensued a long intrigue in which the principal actors were Stanley and De Brazza. De Brazza forestalled Stanley on the right bank of the Congo, and Stanley checkmated De Brazza on the left

bank above Stanley Pool. Portugal, whose explorers discovered the Congo's mouth in 1484,[253] whose treaties with the natives undoubtedly possessed greater validity than those concluded by the association's agents, and who still retained commercial interests in the region, now became thoroughly alarmed, and endeavoured, with the assistance of Great Britain, to make good her claims. On February 26, 1884, a Convention was signed between Great Britain and Portugal, the practical effect of which would have been to put a stop to the expansion of the Association in the interior. The Convention was attacked at home and abroad; abroad, from various motives, including the fear that Great Britain's political influence on the Congo would become paramount; at home, because, by the terms of the Convention, the right of Portugal to impose a moderate import tariff was recognised, and it was feared that this recognition might lead later on to the application of differential tariffs to which Portugal was wedded, and because the British Chambers of Commerce and the British Press were deluded as to the real nature of the International Association, which represented itself as devoted to free-trade principles. The Convention was opposed by European merchants in the Congo for the same reasons, backed by the belief that the aims of the Association tended towards the maintenance and strengthening of native rule, which the community of mercantile West African interests well knows to be the best guarantee of the development of legitimate trade.

The Convention was by mutual consent abandoned. Its abandonment was preceded by a remarkable event, viz. the recognition by the United States of the Association[254] as a friendly State. The

king, aided by Stanley, who was still at that time, I believe, an American subject, had played his cards cleverly with General Henry S. Sandford (subsequently one of the two American representatives at the Berlin Conference), and the declaration sent by the former to the United States Government, in which he stated that "the International Association of the Congo hereby declares that by treaties with the legitimate sovereigns in the basins of the Congo and of the Niadi-Kwilu, and in adjacent territories upon the Atlantic, there has been ceded to it territory for the use and benefit of Free States established and being established," appears to have exercised a considerable influence. The "Free States" appealed to American sentiment.[255] Needless to say, the one thing that has not been created in any shape or form in the Congo is freedom either for native States, or native institutions, or European trade,[256] and how General Sandford could have been deceived to the extent of penning the above despatch, in view of the emphatic manner in which Stanley had rejected Colonel Strauch's suggestion in 1878 (which presumably General Sandford had in his mind, although six years had passed since it was made), it is hard to understand. The American recognition of the new status of the association was followed by Bismarck's suggestion of a conference of the Powers, in order to set at rest the rivalries which had arisen in the Congo Basin. The conference first met in November 1884, and subsequently in February 1885. Largely influenced by the decision of the United States, the Powers authorised their representatives to follow the lead of the American Government, and on August 1, 1885, King Leopold had the inexpressible satisfaction of notifying the Powers that the

association would be henceforth known as the Congo Free State, and himself as the Sovereign of that State. In this manner was the evolution of King Leopold from a pure philanthropist to the ruler of a million square miles of territory in Central Africa accomplished. The king, argue his admirers, had come to see that patriotism was a duty greater even than philanthropy. The practical had outweighed the ideal. Very well; but as we study the next stage in this royal metamorphosis, let those who follow us remember the memorable words spoken in 1876 before the assembled scientists and explorers in Brussels: "Is it necessary for me to say that, in inviting you to Brussels, I have not been guided by egotism? No, gentlemen; if Belgium is small, Belgium is happy and content with her lot."

The Berlin Conference laid it down that no import dues should be established in the mouth of the Congo for twenty years. But in 1890 King Leopold, alleging the heavy expenses to which he had been put by the campaign against the Arabs in the Upper Congo, applied for permission to levy import duties. It was the first disillusionment; and the British Chambers of Commerce began to wonder whether their opposition to the Anglo-Portuguese Convention had not been mistaken. The king's request was granted (the Powers merely reserving to themselves the right to revert to the original arrangement in fifteen years), but not without the bitter opposition of the Dutch, who had very important commercial interests in the Congo, backed by the British Chambers of Commerce and all the traders in the Congo, irrespective of nationality. A representative gathering was held in London on November 4, 1900, presided over by Sir Albert Rollit, to protest against the imposition of import duties and to denounce the

hypocrisy which attributed to philanthropic motives the desire on the part of the Congo State so to impose them. The speakers at the meeting drew attention to the strange anomaly revealed by the sight of a monarch who, having spent certain sums with alleged (and loudly advertised) philanthropic motives, now came forward to claim repayment of those sums, just like an ordinary business man, but a business man who, having acquired a vast estate under false pretences, demanded from the victims the wherewithal to pay for its management! They quoted with telling effect Stanley's speech at Manchester on October 21, 1884, given on behalf of the association and against the Anglo-Portuguese Convention, in which he declared that "the £500,000 which it (the association) has given away to the Congo, it gave freely; the thousands of pounds which it may give annually it gives without any hope of return, further *than a sentimental satisfaction*." They were able to show that—even then—King Leopold, notwithstanding his formal assurances to the commercial world that the Congo State would never directly or indirectly itself trade within its dominions, was buying, or rather stealing, ivory from the natives in the Upper Congo and retaining the proceeds of the sale on the European market. They proved that, profiting by the silence of the Berlin Treaty on the subject of export duties, the Congo State had already imposed taxes amounting to 17½ per cent. on ivory, 13 per cent. on rubber and 5 per cent. on palm-kernels, palm-oil, and ground-nuts, the total taxation amounting to no less than 33 per cent. of the value of the whole of the trade. Finally, they had no difficulty in demonstrating that, with all his professed wish to stamp out the slave-raiding carried on by the half-caste Arabs in the Upper Congo,[257]

his Majesty was himself tacitly encouraging the slave trade by receiving tribute from conquered chiefs in the shape of slaves, who were promptly enrolled as soldiers in the State army.[258] The sincerity of King Leopold's solicitude for the natives of Africa was in other respects appearing in its true colours, *vide* the letter of Colonel Williams, a British officer in King Leopold's employ, who, in disgust at the outrages which were taking place on the Congo, denounced them to the king. This letter, from which I give the following extracts, was read at the conference by Mr. Philipps, representing the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. It ran thus:

> "Your Majesty's Government has been and is now guilty of waging unjust and cruel wars against natives, with the hope of securing slaves and women to minister to the behests of the officers of your Government. In such slave-hunting raids one village is armed by the State against the other, and the force thus secured is incorporated with the regular troops. I have no adequate terms with which to depict to your Majesty the brutal acts of your soldiers upon such raids as these. The soldiers who open the combat are usually the bloodthirsty cannibalistic Bangalas, who give no quarter to the aged grandmother or the nursing child at the breast of its mother. There are instances in which they have brought the heads of their victims to their white officers on the expeditionary steamers and afterwards eaten the bodies of the slain children."[259]

The history of King Leopold's action in Central Africa between 1876 and 1890 may therefore be

summed up as follows. First stage: Inauguration of a "movement" for the "exploration and civilisation of Africa" from motives (so stated) of pure philanthropy, devoid of any shade of personal egotism or ambition on the part of Belgium. The expenditure of a certain sum of money for this (alleged) intent. The acquisition of a certificate of high moral purpose. Second stage: The "movement" takes the form of a State, possibly an "independent confederacy of free negroes," with the king as president. This idea is abandoned, and for it is substituted the theory of an "Independent State" administered directly by the king and his representatives. The theory takes root, and by the Act of Berlin is converted into a *fait accompli*. According to this Act, the king becomes sovereign of the "Congo Independent State," and undertakes that the State shall grant no monopoly or privilege in matters of trade, shall watch over the welfare of the natives and shall not impose any import duties. Formal assurances are also given to the commercial world that the State will not trade on its own account, directly or indirectly. Third stage: The State promptly starts trading for ivory in the Upper Congo, and wages war against the natives by means of a cannibal army, raised from slaves captured in war and paid by the vanquished as tribute. Its agents begin to be accused of shocking treatment of natives. Fourth stage: The king asks for permission to impose import duties, pleading the expenses which he is incurring in putting down slave-raiding, and the Brussels Conference grants the request.

It may, I think, be fairly argued that the "sentimental satisfaction" which in 1884, according to Sir H. M. Stanley, was all that the king required as a reward for his out-of-pocket expenses, had assumed

a singularly practical shape in 1890. From a philanthropist to an ivory-trader is a long step.

No sooner had the Sovereign of the Congo State obtained the acquiescence of the Powers in the imposition of import duties, which, it is almost unnecessary to say, enormously strengthened the international position of the State, than the plans which his Majesty had conceived for the development of what was rapidly becoming tantamount to a Belgian possession, manifested themselves. What were those plans and what were their *leit motif*? So far as the plans are concerned, I will come to them later. But their *leit motif* may be briefly stated now. To those who have studied the personality of King Leopold, acceptance of the philanthropic claim put forward by that monarch is simply impossible at any stage of his African undertaking. In any case, the philanthropic claim weakened with every year that passed after 1876. The revelations at the London meeting of November 4, 1890, definitely exploded it. Whoever attributed philanthropy to the Sovereign of the Congo State after that meeting was foolishly credulous, although he might still be honest. Whoever, being acquainted with the edicts of 1891 and 1892, from the time those edicts were thoroughly known in Europe, that is to say, towards the middle of 1892, has endorsed the philanthropic claim must have been guilty of gross deceit. I would go even farther than this, and say that such persons have been guilty of conniving and inducing the public to connive at a crime which has been steadily growing ever since, in the extent and heinousness of its criminality; a crime for which Europe will yet pay dearly.

King Leopold found himself in 1885 possessed of

an enormous territory, in the acquirement of which he had expended a certain sum as an investment. Not being a philanthropist; but, on the contrary, a very shrewd man of business, his next thought was how to get his capital back—with interest. By throwing open the Congo to legitimate commerce; by encouraging and facilitating the trade of all nations as he solemnly undertook to do; by pursuing a common-sense policy towards the natives, the Sovereign of the Congo State might have recovered the original capital he had sunk on the Congo, and even have realised a fair percentage upon it. At the same time he would have laid the foundations of a peaceful and commercially prosperous colony *for Belgium*, a colony with vast resources, a magnificent river system and unlimited future possibilities. That would have been true patriotism, and the ends attained might have justified the not very honourable means employed. King Leopold preferred to adopt another course, which has led him from illegality to violence, and from violence to barbarism. The king's intention all through was to recoup himself for his expenditure at the earliest possible moment. So much for the *leit motif*.

The measures adopted by his Majesty to bring about this desired result were as follows: Five months after the termination of the Berlin Conference, King Leopold issued a decree (July 1885), whereby the State asserted rights of proprietorship over all vacant lands throughout the Congo territory. It was intended that the term "vacant lands" should apply in the broadest sense to lands not actually occupied by the natives at the time the decree was issued. By successive decrees, promulgated in 1886, 1887 and 1888, the king

reduced the rights of the natives in their land to the narrowest limits, with the result that the whole of the odd 1,000,000 square miles assigned to the Congo State, except such infinitesimal proportions thereof as were covered by native villages or native farms, became *terres domaniales*. On October 17, 1889, the king also issued a decree ordering merchants to limit their commercial operations in rubber to bartering with the natives. This decree was interesting merely as a forewarning of what came later, because at that time the rubber trade was very small. In July 1890, the same year as the Brussels Conference, the Congo State went a step farther. A decree issued in that month confirmed all that was advanced in November of the same year by the speakers at the London Conference, held to protest against the imposition of import dues by the State. By its terms King Leopold asserted that the State was entitled to trade on its own account in ivory—the first open violation of his pledges. Moreover, the decree imposed sundry extra taxes upon all ivory bought by merchants from the natives; which, since the State had become itself a trading concern, constituted an equally direct violation of the Berlin Act, by establishing differential treatment in matters of trade. Such were the plans King Leopold made, preparatory to obtaining from the Powers the power to impose import duties.[260] Everything was ready for the great *coup*, which should also inaugurate the fifth stage of his Majesty's African policy.

The Brussels Conference met. The Powers with inconceivable fatuity allowed themselves to be completely hoodwinked, and within a year the greatest injury perpetrated upon the unfortunate natives of Africa since the Portuguese in the fifteenth century conceived the idea of expatriating them for

labour purposes had been committed, and committed, too, by a monarch who had not ceased for fifteen years to pose as their self-appointed regenerator! On September 21, 1891, King Leopold drafted in secret a decree which he caused to be forwarded to the Commissioners of the State in the Ubanghi-Welle and Aruwimi-Welle districts, and to the chiefs of the military expeditions operating in the Upper Ubanghi district. This decree never having been published in the official Bulletin of the State, its exact terms can only be a matter of conjecture; but we know that it instructed the officials to whom it was addressed "to take urgent and necessary measures to preserve the fruits of the Domain to the State, especially ivory and rubber." By "fruits of the Domain," King Leopold meant the products of the soil throughout the "vacant lands" which he had attributed to himself, as already explained, by the decree of 1885. The king's instructions were immediately followed, and three circulars, dated respectively Bangala, December 15, 1891, Basankusu, May 8, 1892, and Yakoma, February 14, 1892, were issued by the officials in question. Circular No. 1 forbade the natives to hunt elephants unless they brought the tusks to the State's officers. Circular No. 2 forbade the natives to collect rubber unless they brought it to the State's officers. Circular No. 3 forbade the natives to collect either ivory or rubber unless they brought the articles to the State's officers, and added that "merchants purchasing such articles from the natives, whose right to collect them the State only recognised provided that they were brought to it, would be looked upon as receivers of stolen goods and denounced to the judicial authorities."

Thus did the Sovereign of the Congo State avail

himself of the additional prestige conferred upon him by the Brussels Conference. He did not obtain his own way entirely, because the years which had elapsed since the Berlin Conference had witnessed the creation of a powerful group of Belgian trading companies, presided over by one Colonel Thys, who afterwards brought the construction of the railway which unites the Lower to the Upper Congo to a successful termination, and who is now probably the largest land-owner in Africa. These companies were doing a large trade in rubber and ivory with the natives. They were well organised, and the man at their head was both capable and fearless. The companies invoked the Act of Berlin, protested against its gross infringement by the State, dwelt largely upon the sacredness of free trade and native rights, pleaded for Belgium and the world at large; and, finding these considerations insufficient, violently attacked the king himself with the avowed intention of forcing him to abdicate his "sovereignty" on the Congo. It is useless to detail the process of an agitation which, if it did nothing else, showed up in lurid colours how much the patriotism of the King of the Belgians was subordinated to the egotism of the Sovereign of the Congo State. The upshot of it was that the king squared the colonel, and the commercial companies of the Rue Bréderode group, as they are familiarly designated, were induced to keep silence by the grant of a trading monopoly over a very large area where they would be free to carry on their business unmolested. His resolute adversary being thus disposed of, the king forthwith issued a decree, dated October 1892, by which he defined the limits of his *terres domaniales*, and crowned the policy he had ever steadily pursued by creating for himself in Central Africa a vast preserve, a *Domaine*

Privé, from which he might draw unlimited resources with a view to his own personal enrichment. The extent of this preserve cannot cover less than 800,000 square miles.[261] The summit of King Leopold's ambition had been attained.

CHAPTER XXXI
THE *DOMAINE PRIVÉ*

> "Our only programme, I am anxious to repeat, is the work of moral and material regeneration."—Extract from a published letter of his Majesty King LEOPOLD II., King of the Belgians, Sovereign of the Congo Free State.

It is to be regretted that writers who, from time to time, call attention to the terrible maladministration prevailing in the Congo State do not, as a rule, strive to bring its *causa causans* clearly before the public. The main issue becomes too often imbedded in a mass of surplus detail, and the bewildered individual searching for light gropes about in despair with an eternal query on his lips—"Why?" Why these atrocities which have been attested by dozens of honourable men[262]—atrocities which the Congo State Administration has long ceased to deny, and now merely attempts to minimise; atrocities of which every mail from the Congo brings additional proof? [263] Why this callous ferocity which appears at first sight to have in it naught but incoherence and downright stupidity, which seems so monstrous as to be almost incredible, and yet is vouched for, not only by travellers and missionaries who have witnessed its effects, not only by those who are in a position to guarantee the authenticity of information received from persons unwilling to allow their names to appear through fear of jeopardising their means of livelihood, but by the actual perpetrators, who, not without reason—although this excuse cannot shield them from execration—throw the responsibility upon the system whose servants they have been? Where is

the underlying motive of it all? The answer to the query is, the *Domaine Privé*. When you have learnt what the *Domaine Privé* is, what it means, what it involves, what it necessitates, what it renders inevitable, the story is told and everything is explained.

In the first place, let these main facts be borne well in mind. The vast territories of the *Domaine Privé* have for eleven years been absolutely closed to legitimate private enterprise. Trade, which in Central Africa means the exchange of European merchandise for raw products, does not exist therein. The native living within these territories has been deprived by Royal Decree of his rights as a land-owner. Property held for centuries by well-defined native laws, vested in particular families and tribes, has been appropriated without consulting the interested parties, let alone compensating them. With the deprivation of his land the native has been dispossessed of the fruits thereof; the rubber growing so luxuriously in his forests he may (by decree) only gather for the State—we will see presently how the "may" becomes "must"; the ivory stacked about his villages is no longer his, but another's; the elephants which roam about his country and damage his plantations he can incur the physical peril of destroying, but may not reap the reward to which he is thereby entitled, for the tusks of the slain beast do not, according to Royal Decree, belong to him. Since he cannot dispose of his produce, which is his wealth and also his currency; since he has lost his rights in his own land; since he cannot even hunt the wild beast which provides him with the wherewithal to make horns for war and the chase, armlets and anklets for his wives, ornaments for his habitation, he is no longer a free agent, but has become *de facto*

a serf. In theory, then, the decrees of September 1891 and October 1892 made of the native throughout the *Domaine Privé* a serf. In theory a serf he remained for a little while. But as the grip of Africa's regenerator tightened upon the *Domaine Privé*, as the drilled and officered army, armed with repeating-rifles, gradually grew and grew until it was larger than the native forces kept up by any of the great Powers of Europe on African soil,[264] as the radius of the rubber taxes was extended, as portions of the country began to be farmed out to so-called "companies," whose agents were also officials of the king; the native of the *Domaine Privé* became a serf not in theory only but in fact, ground down, exploited, forced to collect rubber at the bayonet's point, compelled to pay onerous tribute to men whose salaries depend upon the produce returns from their respective stations—the punishment for disobedience, slothfulness, or inability to comply with demands ever growing in extortion, being anything from mutilation to death, accompanied by the destruction of villages and crops.

The *Domaine Privé* is "worked" in two ways. The country is vaguely divided into districts, and the business of the *Commissaires* of districts, and their agents and sub-agents, is to collect *impôts de nature*, the taxes in kind, which the king levies. There is no limit to this taxation. The *Commissaires* are told to "devote all their energies to the harvesting of rubber," but at the same time to proceed "*as far as possible* by persuasion rather than force." The purport of the instructions maybe briefly summed up thus: "Obtain all the rubber and ivory you can; your future advancement depends upon your energy."[265] Of course, this *régime* in a country like Africa, where the native is not obliged to "work" in order to live,

would be so much beating of the air, if force were not used to give it practical effect. King Leopold understood that well enough, and, to use the expression of a French Colonial writer of repute—M. Pierre Mille—"the basis of the king's economic policy has been the formation of an army sufficiently strong to force the natives to pay the rubber and ivory tax." A large army, chiefly recruited from the Bangalas and Batetlas—both cannibal tribes—was raised, and when not engaged in rebelling against its officers, it has proved only too well its value.

Side by side with the enforcement of the *impôts de nature*, King Leopold bethought him of another scheme whereby to increase his revenue, and, at the same time, to throw dust in the eyes of European public opinion, by professing to sanction private enterprise in the *Domaine Privé*. His Majesty took to farming out portions of his domain to certain financiers with whom it suited him to keep on good terms. "Companies" were formed, in which the State retained a half interest. These companies are supposed to obtain the rubber and ivory they ship home in such large quantities by barter; but as more often than not the king's officials and the companies' agents are the same persons, and as the companies have the assistance of the *Force Publique* (or permission to raise their own forces) to facilitate their commercial operations,[266] we may judge of the amount of legitimate barter trade which is carried on. There are six of these companies[267] in existence. The first group of five consists of the *Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo, the Abir, the Compagnie du Lomami, the Comptoir Commercial Congolais, and the Société Générale Africaine*. The State holds half the shares of the *Abir* and half the shares of the *Société Anversoise*. It has no shares in the

Comptoir Congolais, but receives 50 per cent. of the profits. Its arrangement with the *Compagnie du Lomami* is, I believe, on the same lines as that with the *Comptoir Commercial Congolais*; and with the *Société Générale Africaine* on the same lines as the *Abir* and *Anversoise*. The *Société*, or rather *Comité Spécial du Katanga*, is also a *Domaine Privé* company, but under a somewhat different form. One-third of the profits of the latter institution go to the Thys group of companies and two-thirds to the State. The principal officials of the *Comité Spécial du Katanga*—the sixth *Domaine Privé* company—are Messrs. Droogmans (president and Secrétaire-Général), Arnold, De Keyser, and Lombard. All these men are highly-placed officials of the State. Droogmans is the Minister of Finance, Arnold is director of the Domaine, director of Agriculture, and of "Central book-keeping"; De Keyser is a director of the Finance Department, and Lombard is a director of the Department of the Interior.

The *Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo* being a typical representative, we may examine its condition. It was formed in August 1892 under Belgian law, but reconstructed in January 1898 under Congo law—quite a unique jurisprudence, of which it may be said *summum jus summa injuria*—with a capital of 1,700,000 francs divided into 3400 shares of 500 francs each. King Leopold has conferred upon this company some 12,000 square miles situated in the Mongalla district. Within that large area, of course, no one has the right to enter; in that particular, the Mongalla district resembles every other portion of the Congo *Free* State above Leopoldville, in the sense of being a monopoly within a monopoly. The administrative seat of the *Anversoise* is 104 Rempart des Béguines, Antwerp; its

principal headquarters in Africa are at Mobeka. Its president is M. A. de Browne de Tiège, nominated under the constitution of the company by the king himself. M. de Browne de Tiège is the king's principal financial adviser in Congo affairs, and has several times lent moneys to the State. He has a seat in the House. The administrators are Baron Goffinet, [268] Ed. Bunge, and C. de Browne de Tiège; the "Commissaire" is Count Emile le Grelle. The original shareholders are: the Congo State, 1700 shares; A. de Browne de Tiège, 1100 shares; Bunge & Co., 100 shares; E. P. Grisar, 130 shares; Deyman & Druart, 100 shares—which accounts for 3130 out of the 3400. No one with even a superficial knowledge of Belgian society need be told of the relations between the king and Baron Goffinet, Count le Grelle and E. P. Grisar. The net profits for the four years 1897-1900 have been: 1897, 120,697 francs; 1898, 3,968,832 francs; 1899, 3,083,976; 1900, 84,333, or say a profit in four years of 7,275,838 francs. The "State's" holdings being 50 per cent., its share in the profits would be proportionate. At this point it may be well to remark that the inspired utterances which from time to time appear in the British Press, dated from Brussels, to the effect that the Sovereign of the Congo State does not hold a single share in these companies, constitute, of course, a polite fiction. In all matters affecting the *Domaine Privé* the State is the King. The *Domaine Privé*, let it be reaffirmed once again, is the king's property and his alone. The shares of the *Société Anversoise* have stood as high as 13,730 francs (March 1900), which for a 500-franc share is sufficiently alluring. At that figure, which can be easily verified by the sceptical, his Majesty's 1700 shares were worth over 23,000,000 francs, or say £933,000. During the last two years, outbreaks in

the Mongalla district have been so numerous that the profits of the company have fallen somewhat.

The performances of this particular offshoot of King Leopold's *Domaine Privé* have been worthy of the regenerating nature of the Congo State rule. In 1900, one or two of its agents confessed to killing, by order, 150 natives, cutting off 60 hands, crucifying women and children, and impaling the sexual remains of slaughtered males on the stockade of the villages whose inhabitants were slow in gathering rubber! "*Les scandales de la Mongalla*" led to stormy debates in the Belgian Chamber on July 16 and 17 of last year. It may not be out of place to recall their nature.

> "July 17.—M. VANDERVELDE: We are not anti-colonial in principle.... But we are adversaries of a capitalist colonial policy which entails exploitation, theft, and assassination.... You dare not, in the name of Christian morality, defend the exploitation of the *Domaine Privé*.... Rubber and ivory represent 93 per cent. of the exports.... The *Domaine Privé* produces much more than the budgetary returns. How are these extraordinary results obtained?... The Congo State has introduced forced labour, tribute, paid in kind, and a twelve years' military service.... We protest against this disguised form of slavery. (Applause.) The greatest names in England and Germany have condemned this system. The premiums given to Congolese agents have been repudiated by the honest ones amongst them. (M. DE BROWNE DE TIÈGE interrupts.) M. de Browne de Tiège, who is interested in Congo affairs, must be admirably posted in the Mongalla lawsuit, which revealed

acts of cruelty in his very own district.

"M. DE BROWNE DE TIÈGE: It is false.

"M. MAROILLE: No doubt; like the stories of the severed hands.

"M. LORAND: It is so true that, as a result of what I have stated here, the particular officer whom I challenged to deny the facts has written giving me information, in which he admits that these 'war trophies' were brought in. That is Congo civilisation! On all sides war, massacres, crimes continue there. How can you possibly defend these things?

"M. FURNEMONT: On the coat-of-arms of the city of Antwerp figure cut hands. M. de Browne, who inhabits Antwerp, no doubt considers the emblem very appropriate....

"M. DE SMET DE NAEYER (Belgian Premier): The exploitation of the *Domaine Privé* is conformable with jurisprudence.... People criticise tribute paid in kind (*prestations de nature*). Do they not exist to a certain extent in Belgium? Why suspect the Congo State of cruelty?

"M. LORAND: We are entitled to do so. Remember the 1300 severed hands.

"M. DE SMET DE NAEYER: Faults have certainly been committed, but the State is applying itself to their disappearance. The disinterestedness of the creators of the Congo State will find its reward in the gratitude of the country....

"July 18.—M. LORAND: Your colonial policy is analogous to the crimes mentioned in Article

> 125 of the Penal Code; it is a policy of devastation, pillage, and assassination. [The speaker (I quote from the Parliamentary report of the Belgian papers of that date) then read some correspondence published in the Antwerp newspaper *La Métropole*, in which a series of executions, murders, and expeditions against the Bundjas are mentioned.] 'Are we,' he continues, 'to have another edition of the severed hands incident?'
>
> "M. DE BROWNE DE TIÈGE: That is not the question.
>
> "M. LORAND: Indeed. But it happens precisely to be the question. (M. DE BROWNE DE TIÈGE interrupts.)
>
> "M. VANDERVELDE: Your interest, M. de Browne, is so direct a one in this matter that you might refrain from any participation in this debate."

The cutting-off of hands item is a constantly recurring charge. I have in my possession at the present moment a photograph from the Upper Congo of three natives, a woman and two boys; the woman and one of the boys have their right hands severed at the wrist, the other boy has both hands severed. The correspondent who sent it me—and whom I know to be an honourable man—saw the victims himself, and was satisfied that soldiers of the State were the culprits. I fully believe him, but the photograph, of course, does not prove it.[269]



THE VICTIM OF A RUBBER RAID

A LIVING ILLUSTRATION OF THE "MAIN COUPÉES" DEBATES IN THE BELGIAN CHAMBER. THE BOY HERE PHOTOGRAPHED IS NOW CARED FOR BY A BRITISH MISSIONARY IN THE UPPER CONGO

In November last, an American ex-agent of the *Société Anversoise*, Mr. Canisuis, who served for some time under the amiable ex-Major Lothaire, who, as

already stated, was appointed Director in Africa of this company *after* the murder of Stokes, in a Press interview said: "Last year I was on a rubber expedition with Major Lothaire, and during the six weeks it lasted 900 natives were killed and scores of villages were burnt."

According to this gentleman, the natives receive the equivalent of one penny per pound of rubber, paid in merchandise valued at 100 per cent. above cost price. We knew that before. As things go in the Congo State, that particular rate of pay is even generous. But you cannot get rubber in Africa at even the munificent sum of one penny per pound, and sell it in Europe from 3s. to 4s. per pound, without those gently persuasive methods which find favour in quarters where the "regenerating" instinct is properly developed!

I trust I shall not be unduly troubling my readers if I pass another of King Leopold's *Domaine Privé* companies under review. It is not my fault that the whitewash has been laid on so thickly, and the process of scraping is bound to take some little time —and, from the author's point of view, no little trouble. What company could be better singled out than the *Abir*, the most powerfully equipped of all— the "Queen" of Congo companies as it has been called? Originally the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company, founded in August 1892, and in which Colonel North was at one time largely interested, it was, like the *Anversoise*, reconstructed under "Congo law" in 1898 with a capital of 1,000,000 francs, divided into 2000 shares without designation of value, "giving right of 1/2000 of the *avoir social*." King Leopold has conferred upon this company the monopoly of exploitation in the Lopori and Maringa

districts of the *Domaine Privé*. The administrative seat of the *Abir* is 48 Rempart Klipdorp, Antwerp; its headquarters in Africa are at Bassankusu. The President is M. A. van den Nest; administrators, A. Mols and Count H. van de Burgh; *Commissaires*, Jules Stappers and F. Reiss; Director, Ch. de Wael; Director in Africa, Ch. Sterckmans. I am under the impression that the British interests in the company ceased when it ceased to be a company in the ordinary acceptation of the term, viz. in 1898, as aforesaid. At any rate, I can find none but Belgian shareholders in the documents I have been able to obtain. First and foremost comes the Congo State with its 50 per cent., viz. 1000 shares, the inevitable M. A. de Browne de Tiège being *mandataire* for the State; then M. A. de Browne de Tiège has 60 shares in his own name, and M. C. de Browne de Tiège 50, while our old friend the *Société Anversoise* has 150 shares represented by M. de Browne de Tiège, President, and M. Bunge, Administrator; Bunge & Co. (whom we have seen hold 100 shares in the *Anversoise*) have 50 shares; other shareholders are Alexis Mols, Charles de Wael, F. Reiss, &c.[270] I have used the word *clique* to describe the handful of persons who are running the Congo State (and as much more of Africa as they can lay hands on) with the king as Managing Director. It is an appropriate term, as the particulars given for these two "Companies" show. I may add that M. A. van den Nest, President of the *Abir*, is the original holder of 120 shares in the *Comptoir Commercial Congolais*, of which company M. Alexis Mols is President, while Messrs. Charles de Wael and F. Reiss are also holders, the one to the extent of 100, the other to the extent of 60 shares.[271] Baron Goffinet's name crops up again in the *Lomami*,[272] and so it goes on.[273] These men are the king's bodyguard. I

know nothing of them personally. They may in private life be the most blameless of men, but the extraordinary thing is that Europe should be content to allow 1,000,000 square miles of African territory to be run by this *clique* with its royal head, entirely for their own ends, and to fill their own pockets! Why, in the name of common sense and common decency, should hundreds, if not thousands, of natives of Africa be slain annually on account of this *clique*? It would be grotesque, were it not so horrible; so monstrous as to seem more like a nightmare than a reality.

But to return to the *Abir*. Its net profits in 1897 were 1,247,455 francs; in 1898, 2,482,697 francs; in 1899, 2,692,063 francs. The figures for 1900 I am unable to give, I regret to say. In 1901 the net working profits (*bénéfices nets d'exploitation*) were 2,455,182 francs, and the "profit and loss account" was closed with 2,614,370 to the good. A dividend[274] of 900 francs was declared on each share, and "the State" being the possessor of 1000 shares, it follows that its august Sovereign raked in the nice little sum of 900,000 francs, or say £36,000, for one year's working of this eminently satisfactory "subsidiary" of the *Domaine Privé*. In four years the *Abir's* net profits amounted, therefore, to 8,877,397 francs, nearly nine times as much as its total capital! In June 1899 the shares stood at 17,900 francs per share, and the total value on the Antwerp Stock Exchange of this concern, whose capital is one million, was 35,800,000 francs! But since that date the shares have been up to over 25,000 francs per share! In June of this year they had fallen to a little over 11,000 francs per share. For a considerable time past they have been quoted *in tenths*; that is to say, one-tenth shares are bought and sold, and give rise

to a great deal of speculation on the Bourse. Imagine the fortune which a holder of 1000 *full* shares has had the opportunity of making during the last few years! Those 1000 shares, at 25,000 francs per share, were worth a million sterling! What it is to be a royal rubber merchant in the Congo!

It will have been noticed that the shares of the *Abir* have dropped. The fact is that there have been "indiscretions," and several Belgian newspapers published in October of last year some unpleasant details with regard to the circumstances under which these enormous stocks of rubber find their way to Europe. Amongst other revelations published—all of which purported to come from "a most honourable and esteemed agent" of the *Abir*—were the following: (1) In September 1897, the whole of the Upper Bolombo country was devastated ("*mis à feu et à sang*") by the Dikila factory to compel the natives, with whom contact had not before been established, to make rubber. (2) "On Aug. 24, 1900, I met at Boyela two young women, one of whom was *enceinte*, with their right hands cut off. They told me they belonged to the village of Bossombo, and that the soldiers of the white man of Boyela had cut off their hands, because their master did not produce enough rubber!" These statements appear to have had the effect of depreciating the market value of the shares. But, really, the "bulls" might have been prepared for them. Possibly, they had not read the evidence given a year before by M. de Lamothe, ex-Governor of French Congo, before the Commission of Colonial Concessions held in Paris. M. de Lamothe, who had just returned from five months' sojourn in the Upper Congo, remarked in the course of his deposition that:

> "The Belgians have recently had insurrections in their territory. It is but right to add, however, that they sometimes make use of proceedings towards the natives that Frenchmen would never use.... The *Abir*, for instance, possesses a considerable territory and has even police rights (*sic*) over the natives. From that point of view the rights which its charter confers upon it are exaggerated. *Its agents have applied this so well that they have succeeded in inducing 30,000 natives to leave their territory and take refuge on the French bank of the Congo.*"

Is it necessary to plunge yet deeper into this garbage of human villany and greed? The entire system is based upon terrorism. No man in his senses can really believe otherwise. A volume might be filled with misdeeds which since the days of Cortès and Pizarro have never been equalled, much less surpassed. The habitual *modus operandi* in the Mongalla territory was tersely put by one of the agents of the *Anversoise*:

> "When natives bring rubber to a factory they are received by the agent surrounded by soldiers. The baskets are weighed. If they do not contain the 5 kilos. required the native receives 100 blows with a *chicotte*.[275] Those whose baskets attain the correct weight receive a piece of cloth, or some other object. If a certain village contains, say, 100 male inhabitants (a census is always taken of the village before operations begin) and only fifty come to the factory with rubber, they are retained as hostages, and a force is despatched

> to shoot (*sic*) the fifty recalcitrant natives and burn their village."

There are some districts which do not produce rubber: such a district, for instance, as the Bangala country proper, where hardly any rubber grows. Let it not be imagined that the people of that district are the gainers thereby. They are not subject, it is true, to either the rubber tribute or the rubber-collecting operations of the *Domaine Privé* companies. But their lot is little better for all that. The Bangala country is one of the great recruiting centres of the State for its army.[276] The Bangalas are cannibals, and good fighters. It is also a victualling centre for the State posts. A great deal of information has been reaching me from this district of late. It may be usefully epitomised. First, as to the recruiting. The method adopted is this: A general order is sent from Boma to the Commissaires of Districts to the effect that so many recruits must be sent down. Each Commissaire then sets to work to obtain recruits. There is no system in the demands. Towns are dropped on according to the whim of the Commissaire. A particular village is summoned to supply a certain number of young men. The summons is rarely communicated by a white officer: almost invariably by native soldiers. The summons once made, it has to be obeyed, or the usual punishment is meted out. Nevertheless there has, upon occasion, been active opposition to this forced recruiting. There is always passive opposition. Both men and women object and complain very bitterly, but they have to submit. Mothers, wives, and relatives have been seen crying and protesting against their children, husbands, and relatives being sent away as recruits, for very few ever return; which is not astonishing, seeing that

they serve twelve years. Secondly, as to the victualling-tax. Every month, and sometimes every fortnight, goats, fowls, palm-oil, eggs, and cassava bread have to be supplied to the State troops. The burden is increasingly heavy, because since it was first assessed the population has very much decreased. When accused of extortion the State replies that it pays for its produce. It does pay, at about one-twentieth of the market value. The natives have not infrequently to purchase produce themselves, in order to meet the demands of the State, which they are compelled to dispose of to the State soldiers at a much lower price than they have paid themselves:

> "Every two or three miles a sentry, with a subordinate or two, and two or three servants from the locality, are stationed. It is part of the sentry's duty to see that the tax is taken up regularly, and if he does not do so he is severely reprimanded by his chief. Now a keen-witted soldier will see to it that he is not reprimanded, and an unprincipled soldier will do anything to the people to wring the tax out of them, rather than run the risk of being a marked man in the Commissaire's book."

The oppression and misery which ensue can be imagined. The result of this double pressure for men and foodstuffs has been, naturally, to bring about a great decrease in the population. A correspondent who knows the Bangala country well, tells me that between 1890 and 1895 there was no perceptible decrease in the population. The taxes were first levied in the latter year, and in five years (1895-1900) there has been a reduction of one-half

of the population. This appalling ratio of reduction is partly to be accounted for by the fact that sleeping sickness is endemic in the country, and that the withdrawal of the strongest and most virile elements of the population to serve in the army is naturally followed by a decline in the birth-rate. Those that are left have "the heart wrung out of them" by the food-tax. The people along the river are fast dying out, and the State "is forcing the backwood folks to start towns on the river the better to exploit them." In one relatively small area my correspondent says, "Since 1890, one town half a mile long has disappeared; another, a quarter of a mile long, has also gone; and up a creek where there were 1500 people, there are scarcely 400 now."

So long as Europe tolerates the *Domaine Privé*, so long will these things be—just as long as the regenerator of Africa and his friends can make money out of their philanthropic undertaking and can count upon dishonest, interested, or infatuated friends in Europe to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

There is one other feature of this unsavoury business which must be gone into before we can close the chapter on the *native* aspect of Congo State rule. The Congo State invariably attempts to wriggle out of the responsibility for these horrors, by attributing their perpetration to the "excesses" of individual agents; and M. Jules Houdret, the Consul-General of the Congo State for England, had the effrontery the other day to point to the punishment of some of the *Anversoise's* people as affording a justification for the State's claim to be what it professes, viz. solicitous of the welfare of the natives! It is a barefaced attempt to bamboozle public

opinion, as impudent as the proposal made by the representatives of the Congo State at the Mansion House meeting last May to "inquire" into specific acts of cruelty brought forward. We know what these "punishments" mean. Occasionally, with a grand flourish of trumpets, the State announces that an agent has been punished. The announcement generally follows each fresh crop of revelations. One or two sub-agents are, for the time being, made scapegoats, and everything goes on as before. How could it be otherwise when the SYSTEM ITSELF is what it has been shown to be? The time has gone by when the public can be deceived by these sophistries, by these perpetual and frivolous excuses and denials.

The edicts of the Congo State administration, coupled with certain material facts as to which there can be no dispute, show the main factors, if one may say so, of the system of African tropical development, which it has instituted, to be these:

(1) Alienation of native ownership in land.

(2) Monopoly over the products of the soil.

(3) Natives forbidden to collect those products for any one but the State, or the subsidiary trusts (*Domaine Privé* companies, if that appellation be preferred) created by the State, and in whose profits the State shares, generally to the extent of 50 per cent.

(4) Natives compelled to bring in rubber and ivory, and also recruits for the native army (and for labour in the cocoa and coffee plantations), to the State as tribute, and to supply the subsidiary trusts with rubber and ivory.

(5) The existence of a regular army of fifteen thousand[277] men armed with Albini rifles, and an

unnamed number of irregulars to enforce the rubber and ivory tribute and to "facilitate the operations" of the subsidiary trusts.

(6) White officials in receipt of instructions to devote all their energies to the exploitation of rubber and ivory; in plain words, to get as much rubber and ivory out of their respective districts as they possibly can.

(7) The financial existence of the State dependent upon the rubber and ivory tribute, and upon the profits it derives from its share in the subsidiary trusts.

When on the one side you have the factors already enumerated, and on the other a primitive and—in the face of coercion backed by rifles of precision—helpless population, common sense asserts that gross oppression, violence, and every form of tyranny and outrage must be the infallible outcome of such a system; and it is that *system* which the Powers are morally bound to put a stop to, seeing that it is they who are morally responsible for its existence.

CHAPTER XXXII
THE "TRADE" OF THE CONGO STATE

It is a little surprising to find that M. Cattier, the Belgian Imperialist, whose masterly indictment of King Leopold's administration does him infinite honour, should attempt to defend, not the outcome of the system of the *Domaine Privé* in the shape of compulsory military service for twelve years, forced labour in Government plantations, &c., all of which he condemns, but the legality of the system itself. He states his case as follows. Article V. of the Berlin Act, which forbade monopoly and privilege in the Congo Basin in matters of trade, was meant to apply internationally, and the Congo State was thereby bound not to grant commercial advantages to the subjects of any one nation which it denied to the subjects of another nation. M. Cattier says:

> "The Government of the Congo State could not, therefore, adopt any legislative measure, nor establish any *régime* conceding international monopolies or privileges.... All facilities granted to its subjects in trade matters should be legally extended to the subjects of other nations.... But this does not prevent the Congo State from establishing the commercial *régime* which it thinks advisable, and no objection can be raised against its legislative action, when the measures adopted apply, under the same conditions and in the same manner, to the subjects of other nationalities, including the Congo nationality."

It follows, therefore, according to M. Cattier, that

in attributing to himself all vacant lands in the Congo Basin, from which action arose the *Domaine Privé*, and in farming out portions of the *Domaine Privé* to his financial friends, upon whom he has conferred an absolute monopoly of exploitation in the regions affected, the Sovereign of the Congo State has not violated the Act of Berlin; although M. Cattier admits that by so doing he has committed "a violation of the rights of the natives."

This curious theory of M. Cattier's has been dismissed by Dr. Anton (*Professeur agrégé à l'Université d'Iéna*) as a legal quibble, in which opinion I entirely concur. M. Cattier's views are mutually destructive. Admitting, for the sake of argument merely, that the interpretation he gives to Art. V. of the Berlin Act is, from the strictly legal aspect of the matter, accurate; once M. Cattier attempts to put his case in language that laymen, unversed in legal subtleties, can understand, it breaks down hopelessly. For what does M. Cattier tell us in the passage above? "No objection can be raised against its (the State's) legislative action when the measures adopted apply under the same conditions and in the same manner to the subjects of all nationalities, including the Congo nationality." But the measures adopted do not apply equally to all nationalities! Three-fourths of the Congo State is the State's—that is, the king's—private property, and is closed to the trade of all nationalities, except the Belgian and "Congo nationality;" not in theory but in fact. Can an Englishman, or a German, or a Chinaman if you like, import European merchandise in the territory, for example, acquired by the *Société Anversoise*, and barter that merchandise against the raw products of the soil, on a basis of a legitimate commercial transaction? Of course they may not.

Was not an Austrian arrested—on Lake Moëro, and on, it appears, a British steamer—only a few months ago for trading with the natives in the Katanga region, although he actually had a permit to trade from the Katanga Company, given to him prior to the arrangement arrived at by the Congo State and the Katanga Company to work those territories on joint account? And arrested, too, in such a way that his removal from this world was a matter of moral certainty—handed over to the merciful treatment of King Leopold's cannibal soldiery, to be transported 2000 miles away; he a white man and unarmed![278] What pitiful sophistries are these which attempt the squaring of the Congo circle! The Congo State, which undertook not to trade directly or indirectly in its dominions, has become not only the largest "exploiter" within it, but in the major portion thereof the exclusive "exploiter." The king has translated Article V. of the Berlin Act, which reads that "no Power which exercises or shall exercise sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions, shall be allowed to grant therein a monopoly or favour of any kind in matters of trade," by conferring upon himself an absolute monopoly, which has made of him the biggest ivory and rubber merchant in the world. In this capacity he can export his produce under special conditions, free of dues, which come out of one of his Majesty's pockets to go in at the other. All this is diametrically opposed to the provisions of the Berlin Act.

My object is principally to prove that King Leopold's intervention in the Dark Continent has from first to last been due to selfish motives, and has resulted in the most appalling consequences; whether we confine ourselves to the past and present merely, or whether we look into the future. I must crave

forgiveness for having dwelt so largely upon matters of trade. It was, however, necessary, because the king's native policy is the inevitable sequel of his commercial policy. I must, indeed, revert again to this aspect of the question in order to refute once and for all the untruths so sedulously fostered, that the Congo State is in a nourishing condition and that independent trade is flourishing within it; and in refuting it to show—which is more important—that, were it not for the ivory and rubber which the natives of King Leopold's preserve are forced to produce at the cost of constant warfare, massacres, and atrocities innumerable, the export returns, and consequently the whole trade of the Congo State, would be practically *nil*, or so small as to be unworthy of attention. This can best be done by giving facts and figures which all the ingenious theorising in the world cannot overcome.

The following table shows the relative proportion of the rubber and ivory exports from the Congo to the total exports:

Table I

Year.	Rubber. Francs.	Ivory. Francs.	Total of both Exports. Francs.
1898	15,850,987	4,319,260	20,170,247
1899	28,100,917	5,834,620	33,935,537
1900	39,874,005	5,253,300	45,627,305
1901	43,965,950	3,964,600	47,930,550

If the rubber and ivory exports are deducted from the total exports, it will be seen that—apart from these two products—the exports only amounted in

1898 to 1,993,234 francs, in 1889 to 2,132,422 francs, in 1900 to 1,750,096 francs, and in 1901 to 2,557,844 francs, about 97 per cent. of which was represented in each year by kernels and palm-oil shipped almost exclusively from the Lower Congo[279] to Rotterdam, by the Dutch House *Die Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels Vennootschap*.

The next table provides statistics of the rubber and ivory shipped home by the Congo State, as shipper, being the proceeds of the taxes—*impôts de nature*—levied upon the natives of the *Domaine Privé*. As will be observed, the Congo State is at pains to conceal the real proceeds. Ever since 1893, when the actual returns exceeded the estimates by one-half, the State has never published the former. The correct figures may, however, approximately be arrived at by comparing the estimates with the rubber and ivory disposed of by the State, as vendor, on the Antwerp market. The enormous difference during these last few years between the estimates *and the produce actually sold by the State*, possesses a significance which will not be lost upon my readers. Into whose pocket does the surplus go? But need we ask the question?

Table II
Value of Produce (Ivory and Rubber) derived from the "Domaine Privé" in the shape of Taxes (Impôts de Nature).

Year.	Published returns. Francs.	Actual returns. Francs.	Produce (iv rubber) fr *Domaine Pri* on the An market b State's br Franc
1893	237,057	347,396	Unobt
1894	300,000	}	
1895	1,250,000	}	5,5
1896	1,200,000	} Withheld	6,0
1897	3,500,000	} from public	8,5
1898	6,700,000	} knowledge.	9,0
1899	10,000,000	}	19,1
1900	10,500,000	}	14,991,3

It will thus be seen that, out of a total rubber and ivory export from the Congo State in 1898 amounting to 20,170,247 francs (see Table I.), the *Domaine Privé* taxes produced 9,000,000 francs, or close upon one-half; and that out of a total rubber and ivory export in 1899, amounting to 33,935,537 francs, the *Domaine Privé* taxes produced 19,130,000 francs, or not far short of two-thirds. The illustration is in itself sufficient to destroy the theory of commercial prosperity so assiduously propagated by King Leopold and his friends, in order to deceive public opinion. Such "prosperity" entails the death of many human beings. What could, indeed, be more eloquent of the true condition of affairs! The total exports from the Congo State in 1899 are found (see Table I.) to amount to 36,067,959 francs, of which 33,935,537 francs are represented by rubber and ivory, in which the Congo State's share as tax-gatherer is no less than 19,130,000 francs. The Congo State asserts that it does not trade. It merely

imposes taxes which every "civilised" Power (Heaven save the mark!) has the right to do; yet it incorporates in its so-called trade figures the yield of its taxes! What becomes, then, of this flourishing trade we hear so much about? On the evidence produced, it sinks for 1889 to 16,937,959 francs (36,067,959 minus 19,130,000) instead of 36,067,959 francs, which the world is invited to believe. In reality it does not amount to anything like 16,937,959 francs, for the simple reason that there is no "trade" at all in the Congo State north of Leopoldville; and that, if we extract from the remaining figures the exports from the Lower Congo, where genuine trade, sadly hampered by taxation, alone exists, the balance is represented by the shipments of the *Domaine Privé* subsidiary monopolies in which the Congo State benefits to the extent of 50 per cent.; and by the shipments of the Thys Trust, which is a monopoly within a monopoly, although conducted, it is but right to add, on different lines. Such is the "trade" of the Congo State, the most gigantic fraud which ever came into being to work misery upon mankind.

It would be unjust not to recognise that all this sordid history has aroused loathing and distress in the hearts of many honourable Belgians—not confined to the Party which opposes Colonial policy for Belgium—mainly, as I believe, on the ground that King Leopold, in the course of his illegalities and intrigues, will end by compromising the neutrality of his country. It would be as equally unjust not to express admiration for the indomitable energy displayed by Colonel Thys in constructing the railway to Leopoldville, as to include in the condemnation of King Leopold's POLICY in Africa all the Belgians who have been employed at one time or

another in the State service. Sir Harry Johnston has recently lent the weight of his name in favour of the Congo State, in respect to the "very small portion" of the State which he has visited. Sir Harry Johnston might have added that the rubber laws are not in full operation in the "very small portion" of the country he visited, and that the Belgian officers with whom he came in contact have not been employed in that degrading business, their duties in that particular region being confined to strengthening the obscure political aims which King Leopold is pursuing in the Nile Valley. For a description of the state of affairs prevailing south of the "very small portion" of the Congo State alluded to, Mr. Grogan's volume, and Mr. Robert Codrington's recently published "Travel and Trade Routes in Northern Rhodesia and adjacent Parts of East Central Africa,"[281] together with the revelations attending the treatment meted out to the late Mr. Rabinek by the officials of the State, may be consulted with advantage. It would be an insult to Sir Harry Johnston—who has himself condemned the system of territorial concessions—to suggest that he desires in any way to bolster up the Congo State; but it is certainly a thousand pities that he has committed himself, even partially, to statements which, however accurate in themselves, cannot fail to exercise an unfortunate influence, without making himself acquainted with the general system under which the Congo State is run. When the nature of that system is understood, it becomes an outrage upon common sense and common decency to write one word in extenuation of the system, or of the man who has originated it.

M. Cattier, to whose work I have several times alluded, represents the type of Belgian who,

convinced of the necessity of a colonial programme for Belgium, has sufficient perspicacity to realise, and sufficient courage to assert, that the policy of King Leopold in the Congo State carries within it the germs of death. How true this is, the reader must judge for himself; but it is at least significant that among a section of French Colonial writers who think they see in the recent abandonment of M. Beernaert's Annexation Bill, at the king's dictation, the final postponement by Belgium and the consequent assertion—at some future date—of France's right of pre-emption, are beginning to ask themselves whether the king's ultimate aim is not to continue for some years longer his "ruinous exploitation" of the Congo State; and then, when uprisings have reached such a scale that the king's cannibal army, however large it may by that time have become, is powerless to cope with them; and when whole tracts of the richest and most easily accessible rubber districts have been irretrievably impaired, to offer the squeezed lemon, for a consideration, to his Gallic neighbours. If the pernicious *régime* which King Leopold has inaugurated in Africa were confined to the Congo State, it would still be sufficient, one might have thought, to stir the conscience of Europe, if not for the sake of her own dignity outraged in the violation of solemn obligations, if not for the sake of humanity, then for the sake of the future relations of black man and white man in Central Africa. But, as we have seen, the *régime* is spreading, and with every year that passes it threatens more acutely all legitimate European enterprise in Africa.[282]

This accursed *Domaine Privé*, and all the evils it has brought with it, cannot last for ever. Like all such

"negations of God" it will perish. But what will remain behind for Europe, when the Congo State has passed away, to deal with? A vast region, peopled by fierce Bantu races, with an undying hatred of the white implanted in their breasts; a great army of cannibal levies, drilled in the science of forest warfare, perfected in the usage of modern weapons of destruction[283]—savages whose one lesson learned from contact with European "civilisation" has been improvement in the art of killing their neighbours; disciplined in the science of slaughter; eager to seize upon the first opportunity which presents itself of turning their weapons against their temporary masters; rendered more desperate, more dangerous, more debased than before the advent of King Leopold's rubber collectors, who, by way of regeneration, have grafted upon the native's failings, born of ignorance, the worst vices of the Africanised civilisation of modern Europe—cupidity, hypocrisy, cruelty, and lust.

In their own most obvious interests, for the sake of humanity and right, in the name of enlightened statesmanship and political common sense, the Powers cannot allow the disease introduced into West and Central Africa by King Leopold of Belgium to be farther extended. Nor do their responsibilities end there. The source of the disease must be dealt with. The canker must be rooted out and cast upon the dunghill. The Congo State must be called to account for its crimes against civilisation; for its outrages upon humanity; for the unparalleled and irreparable mischief it has committed.

And what a warning lies here for the Western nations! The Congo State is the living embodiment of the evil counsels, so lavishly, so thoughtlessly given

in connection with native policy in West Africa. In the Congo State we see what these counsels lead to when put into practice. All this talk about the puerility of preserving land tenure, the futility of maintaining native institutions, the efficacy of punitive expeditions, the necessity of teaching the native "the dignity of labour," the cry for territorial concessions, the advocacy of monopoly, and all legislative acts framed in accordance with these views, or with some of them, tend to produce in greater or less degree a state of affairs in Western Africa similar to that which prevails on the Congo. In the case of the Powers, the motives may be of the very best, the intentions honest and sincere; but if once the thin end of the wedge be driven home; if once legislation be passed or acts sanctioned which are founded upon a repudiation of the inherent right of the native to his land and the fruits thereof; if once it be officially admitted that it is legitimate to force the native to give under compulsion that which is purchasable on fair terms, we are committed to a policy of reaction of which no man can prophesy the consequences or the end. To those conceptions Tropical Africa opposes her vastness, her climate, and the prolific nature of her peoples. They can be tried; apparent success may attend them for a time; lasting success they will never secure. Tropical Africa *cannot permanently be held down by force*, and in attempting to do so by placing modern engines of destruction in the hands of Africans, Europe will be but digging the grave of her ambitions on African soil.

But Europe can achieve a great work in Tropical Africa for good, and benefit her own peoples in doing so. To divorce the two is impossible. Evil wrought in Tropical Africa will have its aftermath in

Europe. The European has need of the Negro, and the Negro of the European. In occupying the country of the Negro, Europe has assumed a great responsibility. It is well, perhaps, European statesmen should occasionally be reminded, that for Europe to forget the moral responsibility in pursuing the material ends is to invite a certain Nemesis. These pages cannot be more fittingly closed than by recalling the words of a wise and good woman, who understood the nature and immensity of the problem:

"Not only do the negroes not die off in the face of white civilisation in Africa, but they have increased in America, whereto they were taken by the slave trade. This fact urges on us the belief that these negroes are a great world race—a race not passing off the stage of affairs, but one that has an immense amount of history before it. The moulding of that history is in the hands of the European, whose superior activity and superior power in arts and crafts give the mastery; but all that this mastery gives is the power to make the future of the negro and the European prosperous, or to make it one of disaster to both alike. Whatever we do in Africa to-day, a thousand years hence there will be Africans to thrive or suffer for it."[284]

E. D. M.

APPENDIX

SIERRA LEONE

EXPENDITURE, LOANS, EXPORT TRADE, RAILWAY

	Expenditure 1897-1902.	Export Trade 1897-1902.[285]
1897	£112,000	£361,747
1898	121,000	267,156
1899	145,000	307,929
1900	156,000	317,980
1901	173,457[286]	265,433
1902	177,882[287]	

RAILWAY

	Railway Expenditure 1899-1902. (Included in total expenditure.)
1899	£10,493
1900	23,320
1901	19,642
1902	23,606[288]

LOANS FOR RAILWAY

Amounts advanced to end 1900	£307,539
Loan authorised	631,000

First section, 32 miles, formally opened May 1st, 1899.

Second section, 23¼ miles, “taken over by the open line,” end 1900.

Third section, 80½ miles, in course of construction.

According to the statement forwarded by the Local Traders’ Association of Freetown to Sir A. King-Harman in 1901, the third section of the railway (to Bo) will entail an annual charge on the Colony of £11,000, plus a further sum of £6000 for “increased cost of administering and operating.”

FOR MILITARY PURPOSES

Annual charge of £6000 for eight years from 1899 on account of the sums advanced by the Imperial Treasury for the Hut-tax war.

THE PROTECTORATE

Expenditure 1898-1902.

	Civil.	Military.	Total.	Reven 1898-19
1898	£10,455	£20,634	£31,089	£7,
1899	14,124	25,672	39,796	21,
1900	17,000	23,499[289]	40,499	33,
1901	25,767[290]	23,707[291]	49,474	38,
1902[292]	24,807	24,911	49,718	

GOLD COAST

EXPENDITURE, LOANS, EXPORT TRADE, RAILWAY

	Expenditure 1897-1900 (Inclusive.)[293]		Liabilities incurred 1897-1902. (Incomplete.)	
1897	£406,370	1897	£ nil.	
1898	377,976	1898	265,000	189
1899	309,656	1899	100,000	189
1900	272,303	1900	928,300	189
		1902	1,035,000	190
Total	£1,366,305	Total	£2,328,300	

Expenditure, £1,366,305; Liabilities incurred (incomplete), £2,328,300 Export trade, £3,847,975.

The Gold Coast Report for 1901 has not yet been published. According to the statement made this year before the Legislative Council of the Colony by Sir Matthew Nathan, the Imperial Government advanced £400,000 on account of the last Ashanti expedition, but whether this sum includes the £202,300 advanced for the same purpose in 1900 is not clear. Assuming that it does, the liabilities incurred by the Colony from 1897 to 1902 inclusive will amount: (1) Loans by Imperial Government, £1,491,000; (2) Gold Coast Government Loan, £1,035,000; Total, £2,328,300.

The Ashanti Blue Book (1901) estimated the total cost of administrating Ashanti at about £60,000 per annum. According to Sir Matthew Nathan's statement referred to above, the expenditure in 1902 may be set down at £107,148. Assuming these

figures to be correct, the total expenditure in Ashanti from 1897 to 1902 (reckoning an expenditure of £60,000 in 1901) works out at the very large figure of £319,385, entirely exclusive of grants-in-aid (assuming the £202,300 in 1900 to be incorporated in the £400,000 advance), amounting to £695,000. Up to and including 1900, the revenue of Ashanti was £3406. In the Ashanti Blue Book already mentioned, the annual revenue for Ashanti is estimated at £14,600, less 10 per cent. to the Chiefs (*i.e.* less £1460). Assuming this amount to have been collected in 1901 and 1902, the total revenue for Ashanti from 1897 to 1902 inclusive amounted to £29,686, against an expenditure of £319,385, and grants-in-aid to the amount of £695,000.

These figures should be borne in mind when examining the following tables, which do not go farther than 1900, that is to say, as far as the last issued Colonial Office Report.

EXPENDITURE, GRANTS-IN-AID, AND REVENUE OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND ASHANTI 1897-1900 inclusive

TOTALS

	Expenditure.	Grants-in-Aid.	Revenue.
Northern Territories	£213,338	£195,000	£7,736
Ashanti	175,450[295]	202,300	3,406

DETAILED

NORTHERN TERRITORIES

Expenditure.		Grants-in-Aid.		
1897-98	£121,022	1898	£45,000	1897
1899	54,875	1899	100,000	1898
1900	37,441[296]	1900	50,000	1899
				1900[

ASHANTI

Expenditure. Ordinary.		Expenditure. Extraordinary.		Re
1897	£13,723	1897	£151,614[298]	1897
1898	4,304	1898	603	1898
1899	2,608	1899	20	1899
1900	2,578	1900	Not given.	1900

RAILWAY

Position December 31st, 1901: Completed, say, 45 miles;[299] sum expended, £389,869.[300]

Loans from the Imperial Treasury: 1898, £220,000 (Railway Ordinance);[301] 1900, £676,000 ("certain public works, railway construction," etc.)[302]

Future: Officially expected to reach Obuassi end 1902.

Gold Coast Loan: 1902, £1,035,000, "to defray cost of constructing a railway 169¼ miles from Sekondi to Kumasi."

LAGOS

EXPENDITURE, LOANS, EXPORT TRADE, RAILWAY

Expenditure, 1891-1902-03	
1891	£66,388
1892	86,513
1893	101,251
1894	124,829
1895	144,483
1896	168,444
1897	182,668
1898	203,802
1899	223,289
1900-1901	187,124
1901-1902	231,597[303]
1902-1903	240,718

Liabilities Incurred

"The amount of the debt of the Colony on 31st March 1901 was £972,902. This debt has been incurred solely for the building of the railway from Lagos to Ibadan, the tramway from Lagos to Iddo, the Abbeokuta branch of the railway, and the bridges from Lagos Island to the mainland.

"The Legislature has sanctioned the borrowing of £1,053,700 for these purposes."[304]

It is recognised that the above amount will not be sufficient to defray the entire cost.

EXPORT TRADE

(These figures include the export of specie.)

1891	—
1892	—
1893	£836,295
1894	821,682
1895	985,595
1896	975,263
1897	810,975
1898	882,329
1899	915,934
1900-1901	831,257[305]

Owing to the intelligent way in which the Report for 1900-1901 is prepared, it is possible to separate the specie from the total exports for the years 1896-1900, 1901, as given in that Report. The total exports, less specie, for the above-mentioned period were as follows:

EXPORT, LESS SPECIE

1896	£906,393
1897	740,179
1898	821,112
1899	834,358
1900-1901	705,237

There are special reasons to account for the heavy fall in 1900-1901. Nevertheless, a glance at the expenditure and export columns cannot fail to accentuate the fact that the growth in expenditure is

incommensurate with the increase in the purchasing power of the Colony. The financial future of Lagos now depends entirely on the railway. When the entire sum authorised has been expended, which will be this year, I believe, and other expenses are added thereto, it is estimated that the railway will have cost about £9000 to £10,000 per mile. In this connection the Dahomey figures should be consulted.

The notes in the expenditure column include, of course, moneys expended on public works. The growth in expenditure and the relation it bears to the producing capacity of the country would, perhaps, appear even more clearly if the expenditure totals were given, minus the expenditure on public works. It has not been possible to satisfactorily separate them in every case; but, as a simple illustration, 1893 and 1900 may be compared.

	Ordinary expenditure.	Export trade.
1893	£75,207	£836,295
1900	131,742	831,257

It will thus be seen that whereas, within the period given—eight years—ordinary expenditure has nearly doubled, the producing power of the country is found, at the close of the eighth year, to be stationary. It may be argued, and justly, that the area of the Protectorate has been extended since 1893. But the point is, *the way these dependencies are managed*. Is not the management carried out upon altogether too elaborate and expensive a scale? Does this increase in ordinary expenditure correspond with an increase in the production, that is to say, in the prosperity of the colony and the people of the colony? If it does not, no special knowledge of political economy is required to predict that, if the

system be not modified in the future, the steadily increasing expenditure will, before very long, act as a positive deterrent upon the producing power of the country. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to justify the fear that in some instances this stage has already been reached.

COMPARATIVE TABLES OF IMPORT DUTIES IN VOGUE IN LAGOS AND DAHOMEY

	DAHOMEY.	LAGOS.
Tobacco (manufactured)	2⅛d. per lb.	8d. per lb. Da
” (unmanufactured)	2⅛d. ”	4d. ”
Gunpowder	2⅛d. ”	6d. ”
Trade guns	1s. 7⅕d. each	2s. 6d. each
Kerosene	0⅜d. per gallon	2d. per gallon
Salt rock	11s. 4½d. per ton	20s. per ton
” sea	4s. 10½d. ”	20s. ”
Lead	⅛d. per lb.	1d. per lb.
Coal	Free of duty	Pays duty 10%
Fresh fruit and seeds	”	Pay ”
Tools of all kinds (*i.e.* mechanical, agricultural, etc.)	” [306]	Pay ”
Furniture	” [307]	Pays ”

SILKS, VELVETS, COTTONS AND PRINTS

In Dahomey these articles pay duty on their weight; in Lagos the tax is an *ad valorem* one. How these different duties work out in practice can only be ascertained by giving specific instances. The following examples are taken from actual shipments:

	Dahomey. 50 c. per kilo.			Lagos. 10 per cent. *ad valorem.*		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Silk shipment of £50 value—38 kilos weight	19	0	0	5	0	0
Velvet shipment of £90 value—384½ kilos	7	13	9	7	0	0
Cottons shipment of £52 value—659 kilos	13	3	7	5	4	0
Prints shipment of £100 value—979 kilos	19	12	0	10	0	0

SPIRITS

	Dahomey.	Lagos.	In favour of

Brandy, rum, &c., 18/20 under proof, equals 46° Tralles, at 1f. 20c. per hectolitre per degree plus 5c. for bottles	2s. 1d. per gallon	3s. per gallon	Dahomey.
Gin 0° to 20° Tralles	1s. 9½d. ”	”	”
Gin 20° to 50° ”	2s. 8⅖d. ”	”	”
Gin 57° proof (Sykes)	3s. 1d. ”	”	Lagos.
Alcohol:			
68 over-proof —96° Tralles	4s. 2¼d.	5s. 0¼d.	Dahomey.
60 ” —91° ”	4s.	4s. 9⅗d.	”

THE DAHOMEY RAILWAY

LENGTH—ESTIMATED COST—FINANCE—PRESENT POSITION—GENERAL REMARKS

Kotonu-tcharu (Tchaourou)

Length, 605 kilometres, or 377 miles, in two sections. First section, Kotonu-Acheribe (Atcheribe). Second section, Acheribe-Tcharu.

Length of first section, 186 kilometres, or say 115 miles. Estimated cost of first section, 63,000 francs per kilometre. Estimated total cost of first section, 11,718,000 francs.

In English figures[308]—Total estimated cost of first section, 115 miles long, £468,740, or say £4076 per mile.

It is intended to subsequently carry on this line from Tcharu to Karimama on the Niger.

RESULTS AS FAR AS AT PRESENT KNOWN

Actual work commenced May 1, 1900. In March 1902, 82 kilometres, or say 51 miles, of embankment, earthworks and "ouvrages d'art" complete, were handed over to the Concessionnaire, who is called upon to provide and lay down sleepers and rails, provide rolling-stock, &c. Fifty more kilometres, or say 32 miles, similarly complete, were ready at the date mentioned to be handed over to the Concessionnaire. The Colony, which has itself undertaken the work, has thus prepared in less than two years 132 kilometres, or say 82 miles of line. The chief difficulties met with have been in crossing the swamps between Kotonu and Godomey, the marshy streams of Whydah and the Pahu lagoon, where the earthworks are 26 feet high. To fill up a depression of 16 feet in the centre of the lagoon 40,000 cubic metres of sand and earth were required. A distance of 12 kilometres between Wagbo (Ouagbo) and Taffo required 75,000 cubic metres of embankment. In the crossing of the Lama

2500 workmen were continuously employed for five months in placing 80,000 cubic metres of gravel. All the labour was found in the Colony. The number of natives continuously employed has varied from 3500 to 5000, *entirely recruited through the Chiefs*. There has been no trouble with the workmen, and no police force has been employed on the works. The export trade of the Colony has not suffered during the process, notwithstanding the withdrawal of so large a quantity of labour from the farms; but, indeed, has increased,[309] a tribute to the wisdom of leaving the *recruiting entirely in the hands of the Chiefs*.

FINANCE

The Colony undertakes the cutting embankment, earthworks, &c., everything but the laying of the rails, sleepers, the providing of the same, rolling-stock, stations and so forth.

It has undertaken to advance for five years *out of its own local resources* a sum of one million francs, say £40,000 annually. For 1901 the Colony undertook to provide £60,000, instead of £40,000.

GENERAL REMARKS

The French accurately claim that their railway will carry them much farther inland for a given distance covered than the Lagos railway with the big curve eastward which it takes from Abbeokuta; whereas they are pushing their line almost due north, and at their present rate of progress, in comparison with the time taken over the British line, their iron horse will have penetrated very much farther into the interior than Ilorin, long before the British line creeps up to

that place. Upon this premise they base a number of conclusions, the first and foremost of which is that the French line will thus be able to capture the inland traffic which finds its way into the Lagos hinterland from the Niger, along the Nikki road (the French have a "post" at Nikki, which is a great centre for the caravan traffic), and to drain the western portion of Sokoto, to the detriment naturally of Lagos and Northern Nigeria. Well, in Northern Nigeria we do not seem to care much about trade, the military and political policy being more showy, albeit a nice little bill will have to be met presently, for the showy policy cannot be indulged in in West Africa without having to pay the piper some day. But in the case of Lagos it is a different affair, and the French argument is worth looking into. There can be no doubt that if the Concessionnaire of the Dahomey line lays his rails and provides his rolling-stock at the same ratio of speed as the Colony has performed its share of the work, the contention that the French rail-head will in a couple of years be carried deeper into the interior is correct. That the Concessionnaire will do so is, of course, an assumption. He has been engaged in quarrelling with his contractors for a considerable time, but now it appears he is seriously setting to work; at least, that is the information I get from Lagos. It is equally true that the French line, when it has reached its terminus at the 377th mile, will plunge into a network of trade roads, branching eastwards to Lagos and westwards to Togo, and will have an excellent chance of diverting the flow of the internal commerce from both those Colonies. To that extent Lagos will probably be a loser, because the African is very conservative and will cling to his old trade routes rather than abandon them for new ones, and naturally the French railway will benefit him.

But the French, perhaps, forget that the Lagos line, as far as Ibadan, at any rate—as far, that is to say, as it goes at present—does not rely upon inland traffic for its existence. It will be fed locally by the increased production which will accrue along its line of march by the conversion of thousands of carriers of produce, into cultivators and reapers of produce. Between Ibadan and Ilorin, it cannot hope to do much anyhow. Beyond Ilorin again, increased local production will feed it, Nupe being a rich and well-populated country. If the British line remains stationary at Ibadan for many years, however, the danger from its French competitor, supposing the latter to follow a progressive construction, would certainly become more acute. Here, again, the question of finance comes in, and the French Colony is decidedly better off. What greater contrast could, indeed, be imagined?—Lagos in debt to the tune of over a million, burdened for all time with an annual drain of £50,000, while Dahomey is not in debt to the extent of one penny, and cheerfully advances £60,000 in one year to the works of construction out of its surplus funds! As for the *cost* of construction, if the French estimates hold good, or anywhere near it, the French line will be built at about half the cost of its British competitor.

Since the above remarks were written news has been received that 65 kilometres of the railway were opened to traffic in September, and that rail-head is expected to reach Abomey in January next.

FRENCH GUINEA RAILWAY

LENGTH. ESTIMATED COST. FINANCE. PRESENT POSITION

Konakry-Kurussa *viâ* Timbo

Length, 550 kilometres, or 342 miles.

Highest estimated cost of line, 80,000 francs per kilometre.

Highest estimated total cost, 44,000,000 francs.

First section, Konakry-Kandia, 150 kilometres, or say 92 miles.

In English figures: Total estimated cost of line, 342 miles long, £1,700,000; or say, roughly, about £5140 per mile.

RESULTS UP TO DATE, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF FRENCH WEST AFRICA IN JUNE LAST

The earthworks have reached Kandia at the 149th kilometre (say 92nd mile).

With the exception of two places, between the 27th and 44th kilometre, and between the 90th and 107th kilometre, the earthworks and embankment, &c. are finished and in good condition. One steel bridge thirty-three yards long is already fixed up, and two others are in process of being so. The 34 kilometres which remain are being proceeded with rapidly. Seventeen hundred workmen are continuously engaged thereon. Rails and sleepers are being regularly landed at Konakry. The first locomotive has arrived. By October the rolling-stock complete for the first 150 kilometres, say 92 miles,

will have arrived in the Colony.

FINANCE

For the first section the Colony borrowed from the "Caisse des Retraites," on its own guarantee, eight million francs (£320,000), at 4 10% in August 1899; and four million francs (£160,000) at 4% from the "Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations" in March 1901. The first loan is to be paid back in forty annual payments, and the second in twenty-five annual payments, the two annuities together amounting to 430,000 francs, or say £17,200.

These loans will be further supplemented by drafts upon the Colony's local funds.

WEST AFRICAN MAHOGANY TRADE

IMPORTS OF WEST AFRICAN MAHOGANY INTO EUROPEAN PORTS IN THE YEARS 1898-1901

1898	40,167	tons
1899	48,902	”
1900	55,959	”
1901	44,582	”

DESTINATION OF IMPORTS IN 1901

Liverpool	29,312	tons
London	6,998	”
Glasgow	278	”
Germany	4,735	”
France	3,259	”

IMPORTS, IN SUPERFICIAL FEET, OF WEST AFRICAN MAHOGANY INTO LIVERPOOL FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS

Sup. ft.	1889	68,000
”	1890	259,000
”	1891	1,600,000
”	1892	3,000,000
”	1893	4,984,000
”	1894	4,700,000
”	1895	3,400,000
”	1896	5,098,000
”	1897	8,134,000
”	1898	10,519,000
”	1899	13,508,000
”	1900	14,034,000
”	1901	11,652,000

IMPORT, CONSUMPTION AND STOCK OF WEST AFRICAN MAHOGANY INTO LIVERPOOL 1898-1901

	1898.		1899.
IMPORT	10,519,000	ft.	13,508,00
CONSUMPTION	10,571,000	”	13,496,00
STOCK	633,000	”	645,00

IMPORTS OF WEST AFRICAN MAHOGANY INTO LIVERPOOL FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1901 AND 1902 RESPECTIVELY

January.		February.		M
1901.	1902.	1901.	1902.	1901.

Lagos	1558	799	767	184	38
Benin	202	599	62	376	6
Sapeli	65	49	44	44	5
Other West African Ports	2378	626	505	1130	26

THE GOLD COAST MINING INDUSTRY

Having but casually referred to the Gold Coast mining industry, it has been suggested to me that a few remarks might be contributed to the subject in an Appendix. I am somewhat reluctant to write anything on the point, because I know absolutely nothing about mining; and the opinions I have formed, such as they are, are the outcome (1) of conversations with a number of men who are more or less experts, and have formed their views of the prospects of the Gold Coast mining industry from personal investigation on the spot; (2) the perusal of a quantity of reports by Companies which are operating and prospecting ... and by Companies which are doing nothing at all but squander their shareholders' money; (3) historical research and study of the past performances of the Gold Coast as a gold producer. Beyond that I have no knowledge whatever; nothing but opinions, which perhaps the reader will kindly bear in mind when perusing the following notes.

There is not the slightest doubt that gold exists in considerable quantities in West Africa. The earliest records we have of any trade at all being done on the West Coast of Africa is a trade in gold dust. The external trade of West Africa dates back to the period when the Negroes beheld the Carthaginian galleys bearing down upon their shores. The internal gold

trade of West Africa is probably even more remote—but there we enter the domain of conjecture.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, and so on, obtained enormous quantities of gold from the Gold Coast.

For many years the gold *trade* in the Gold Coast has practically been a thing of the past. The gold *trade*, as a trade, is long since dead.

At the beginning of last century the great gold store—which had been accumulating for ages—of the Coast peoples of the Gold Coast became exhausted. At that period the Ashantis, farther inland, still retained large quantities of gold ostentatiously displayed. James, Bowdich, Dupuis, Hutton, and Hutcheson bear witness to that. With the gradual undermining of the Ashanti Kingdom this store also disappeared.

Coming to more recent times, we find that the geological formation known as "banket" was discovered in 1878 in the Takwa district by a French traveller called Bonnat. That seems to have been the basis of the future modern mining industry in the Gold Coast, replacing the extinct trade.

Many years of disappointment and failure followed Bonnat's discovery, due in a very large measure to the absence of transport facilities and to mortality. However, some of the mines which had come into existence subsequent to the discovery refused to be discouraged, and went on working, more or less half-heartedly, notably in the Wassau and Takwa districts.

In January 1900 the scene changed, as though by a

magician's wand. The man who waved it was a Mr. Stanley Clay, an engineer reputed of considerable ability, in the employ of the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa, which Corporation had been approached by the men who owned the Wassau and Takwa mines. This gentleman reported in effect that the banket formation of the district he had been despatched to examine was so like the banket formation of the Rand as to be hardly distinguishable from the latter. Although some years previous to that report the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, Limited—the parent, so to speak, of the Ashanti mines—had come into existence, I believe I am correct in stating that the remarkable "boom" in Gold Coast mining undertakings practically dates from the favourable report above alluded to.

Be that as it may, the last two years have witnessed the extraordinary movement with which every one is familiar. According to "Wallach's West African Manual" for June 1901, 321 companies had at that time been created, with a total nominal share capital of £25,567,170. "The issued share capital will amount to approximately £15,750,000, if all is fully paid up."[310]

This is truly colossal. But all is not gold that glitters. The boom, prematurely, and to a large extent, dishonestly engineered, collapsed. Deep distrust has taken the place of sanguine anticipations, and public confidence, greatly shaken, is apt to rush to the opposite extreme. The Gold Coast mining industry has many enemies and many unwise friends. The "boom" was, of course, thoroughly unjustified. The public lost their heads completely. Company after company was formed, a large proportion of which hardly knew where their

territory lay, let alone whether it contained any gold. But the public did not care twopence so long as it was a Gold Coast venture, and a great many rascals have done excellently well out of the British investor. Finally, this constant flotation of companies got to be in the nature of a scandal; and the Governor of the Gold Coast, in a courageous speech, which has remained famous, before the local Chamber of Commerce, and for which Sir Matthew Nathan deserves the greatest possible credit, denounced the abuses which the movement was giving rise to. Mr. Chamberlain promptly endorsed the Governor's views, and caused a public statement to be made which fell like a bombshell on the market-riggers. Flotation of new companies after that was an almost impossible task, and the market received a staggering blow from which it has not yet recovered. There is pretty certain to be renewed activity at some not very distant day. Let us hope that the next time it will rest on something more tangible than fairy tales.

That gold exists in the Gold Coast is demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt. That it can be worked at a profit has yet to be satisfactorily proved, even in the case of the properties which are, or will be, in close proximity to the railway now in course of construction. For the purposes of illustration the Gold Coast may be divided into three portions. First, where gold exists in such quantities—other conditions being favourable—that it is reasonable to believe the mines, if economically and wisely administered, will become dividend-producing. Secondly, where gold exists, but not in sufficient quantities—the conditions of mining in West Africa being what they are—to enable the mines ever to become dividend-paying. Thirdly; where no gold exists at all.

Now when it is borne in mind that options have been acquired by individuals pretty well all over the country, and companies have been formed to work those options, it will be easily understood that shares of a considerable number of existing companies are not worth the paper upon which they are inscribed. In my opinion, if Mr. Wallach's "321" companies were divided by six, the residue would be an optimistic prophecy as to the number of Gold Coast mining companies existing ten years hence. This number would be amply sufficient to allow of the Gold Coast to become, what I believe it will become, a gold-producing region of very considerable value. Personally, I am as equally convinced that some of the mines will become good dividend-payers, as I am that the majority are rubbish. The two main difficulties which the mining industry in the Gold Coast have to face are climate and transport.

The first is a very real difficulty, and the public would do well to treat with the utmost scepticism reports emanating from directors of Gold Coast companies, especially those whose properties are situate near the coast; who pooh-pooh the danger of the climate. If Major Ross's indefatigable efforts are backed up by the authorities and the mining companies, we shall see a better state of things before many years are past. But that the climate will always be an adverse element to contend against is positively certain. Those who say the contrary are not dealing honestly with the public.

Many people imagine that transport difficulties will vanish when this crawling single line to Kumasi has been completed. Let those who are inclined to that belief study one of the excellent maps of the Gold Coast mines now available, and see how many

of the properties, out of the total of companies floated, approximate sufficiently to the line to feel its usefulness. Before transport difficulties can be said to be overcome, the Gold Coast must be a network of railways. That may come, but the time is not yet by a long, a very long way.

The alleged labour difficulty I have dealt with elsewhere. It is largely fictitious, as the most reputable companies and the most experienced Europeans will bear witness. The boot, the stick; abuse; inadequate pay; dishonest dealing—so long as these incentives to labour exist on the Gold Coast, and they exist to-day, so long will certain people endeavour to make the British public believe that labour is improcurable in West Africa save by measures of coercion, or by Asiatic emigration, or by draining the other West African colonies of their able-bodied men. Decent wages; just treatment; tactful dealing; a high type of representative—the mining companies which supply these have not, and will not have, occasion to complain. The Administration might play a useful part in imitating the French policy of obtaining labour for the Guinea Railway, viz. through the Chiefs, and through them alone, and refuse to allow authorised or unauthorised recruiting agents.

From the point of view of the investing public, those who contemplate putting any money into the Gold Coast mines should carefully weigh the difficulties mentioned against the counterbalancing reasons for optimism in the facts (1) that some undoubted experts, and some men of undoubted integrity and ability who have a reputation to lose, have staked that reputation upon the existence of “paying” gold in the Gold Coast; (2) that a powerful

corporation has undertaken a heavy liability in guaranteeing a certain sum for a number of years to the Gold Coast Railway; (3) that a very large sum of money has been sunk in the country for the purpose of mining enterprise; (4) that the past history of the Gold Coast is all in its favour. Finally, the investor should discriminate carefully between the companies and "groups" which are justifying, or honestly seeking to justify, their existence and those that are not.

APPROXIMATE AREA AND POPULATION OF THE BRITISH WEST AFRICAN POSSESSIONS

GAMBIA.	Population, 14,260.	
SIERRA LEONE.	Colony, 4000 square miles; population, 136,000.	
	Protectorate, 30,000 square miles; population, 750,000.	
GOLD COAST.	Gold Coast Proper, 40,000 square miles; population, 1,500,000.	
	Ashanti proper. Neither area nor population known.	
	Northern territories, 38,000 square miles[311]; population, 317,964 (C.O. Report, July 1902).	
LAGOS.	Colony, 3460 square miles }	Population,[312] 1,500,000.
	Protectorate, 25,450 square miles }	

NIGERIA. 500,000 square miles; population, 25 to 30 millions.[313]

THE RABINEK CASE

(See Chapter xxxii.)

On October 27th, Sir Charles Dilke, having asked the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs if he could say whether, in the Rabinek case, the prisoner was taken by the Congolese authorities from a British ship in British waters, and, if so, what course his Majesty's Government proposed to adopt, Lord Cranborne, in a printed answer, said: "It is at present uncertain whether Mr. Rabinek was actually on board a British vessel when arrested, or whether the ship was at the time in British waters. Inquiries are, however, being made, and on receipt of definite information his Majesty's Government will be in a position to consider what action should be taken in the matter."

Since the above question by Sir Charles Dilke, the doubt as to the actual place of Mr. Rabinek's arrest has been removed. The Congo State authorities can no longer evade the point. Here is a copy of the *Procès-verbal d'arrestation*, showing conclusively that Mr. Rabinek was arrested *on board a British vessel*.

PROCÈS-VERBAL D'ARRESTATION.

Le soussigné, Saroléa, Louis, Sous-Lieutenant de la Force Publique, commandant la colonne mobile du Tanganyka, stationnée à Mpueto, officier de police judiciaire, a procédé le 15 Mai 1901, à 3 heures de l'après-midi, à l'arrestation du sieur Rabinek en exécution du mandat d'arrêt délivré le 17 Décembre, 1900, à charge

du dit Rabinek par le tribunal territorial d'Albertville. *Le prénommé se trouvait à bord du steamer anglais "Scotia," ancré dans le port de Mpueto.* Le Sieur Rabinek a été remis à M. Chargois ff du représentant du Comité Spécial du Katanga à Mpueto.

Fait à Mpueto, le 15 Mai 1901.

(L.S.) Lieutenant Commandant la Colonne mobile du Tanganyka.

(Sig.) SAROLÉA.

The British Government has now a copy of the above.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *Journal of the African Society*, October 1901.

[2] Among the principal exceptions may be mentioned gum arabic from Senegal, pepper, spices, &c., from the Guinea Coast.

[3] The totals here given do not, of course, include foreign and Colonial merchandise shipped to British West Africa from British ports.

[4] The total volume of trade—British and foreign and coastwise—in each of the West African Colonies in the five years 1896-1900, including specie, has been as follows:

Gambia	£1,797,916

Sierra Leone	4,646,503
Gold Coast	10,393,850
Lagos	8,853,461
Niger Coast Protectorate (and for 1900, "Nigeria")	8,183,288
Gross total	£42,728,479

The trade of the former territories of the Niger Company, from 1896 to 1899 inclusive, is not reckoned in this total, no public figures being available.

[5] The totals given are, of course, exclusive of foreign and Colonial merchandise shipped to these foreign possessions from British ports.

[6] Due to exceptional imports of coal and telegraph apparatus.

[7] German imports, like British imports, are largely for re-exportation to other European and American ports.

[8] The chief town in Borgu on which the Lugard and Decœur expeditions were directing their efforts.

[9] *Journal of the African Society*, January 1902.

[10] This document is published *in extenso* in the annual report of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce for 1901.

[11] The Foreign Office lost us the Cameroons, the French Congo littoral, Futa-Jallon, and heaven knows what besides. In doing so it showed itself the indifferent servant of an indifferent public.

[12] See, more particularly, Appendices and the chapter on the Finances of Nigeria.

[13] "By the end of April 1900," says the

report for Southern Nigeria for 1900, “twenty proclamations were passed.” I should be afraid to say how many have been passed since.

[14] The activity of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine has been phenomenal, and the useful work performed by it is internationally recognised. To the splendid enterprise of Sir Alfred Jones, its initiator and President, is due the astonishingly strong financial position which the School has attained—entirely the outcome of private benevolence.

[15] In the remarkable speech he made at the Lagos Literary Institute—the most able and statesmanlike oration ever delivered by a British official in West Africa—Sir William MacGregor said in reference to the extension of the Lagos Railway: “It would require probably not much greater expenditure than would a number of military campaigns, it would save many valuable lives to open up the country in that way, and it would leave a permanent valuable asset. In this the locomotive would be preferable to the Maxim.”

[16] That admirable German Institution, the *Kolonial Wirtschaftliches Komitee* (Agricultural Committee) might also be imitated with advantage by our Government. Attached to the German Colonial Society, the Agricultural Committee devotes its exclusive attention to a study of the economic resources of the German possessions, giving special notice to cocoa, rubber, gutta-percha, cotton, &c. Experts have been despatched by the Committee to the South Seas to study gutta-percha, to the States for cotton, to Central and South America for cocoa, &c. The Committee is really composed of a trained body of agricultural and botanical

specialists working in the joint interests of the Government and the merchants.

[17] M. Empain has lately been granted by King Leopold a huge concession in the Aruwimi region of the Congo State in connection with the promotion of a railway to the Great Lakes.

[18] The London Chamber being mainly—although not exclusively—concerned with Gold Coast trade and mining developments.

[19] It was entirely owing to the assistance of the African Association's agents that the people of the Niger Delta were induced to accept British protection and consular jurisdiction. By the merchants' good offices, Consuls Johnston and Hewett were enabled to ascend the rivers to places where they would not have dared to enter unaccompanied by representatives of the merchants.

[20] Chairman of the African Section.

[21] Report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1900.

[22] Messrs. Shelford's estimate is £7000 per mile. But this cannot be reconciled with the amount expended. It leaves out of account the cost of bridges between Lagos Island and the mainland, which are part and parcel of the railway scheme. In March of this year the Colony had already expended its loan of £1,053,700, which works out at £8430 per mile. But although the railway has reached its present terminus it is not yet properly finished. Speaking in March, Sir W. MacGregor foreshadowed a further expenditure of £60,000, and added, "the probability is, however, that this will not be sufficient." On the same occasion the Governor, reviewing the state of the Colony, said that one of the two

"principal causes of anxiety" was "the difficulty experienced in getting the railway into working order."

[23] French Guinea borrowed £480,000 at the rate of 4.10 per cent. and 4 per cent. respectively.

[24] 14*s.* 8*d.* per head of the whole population of the territory.

[25] Another incident of the kind is referred to by Sir W. MacGregor in one of his speeches before the Legislative Council. Plans were sent home for a steam-hopper or tramway to remove refuse. The plans were rejected by the "consulting engineers." The Governor sarcastically remarked: "It is doubtful that any remedy that would cost less than £100,000 will ever be approved by the engineers."

[26] The same belief was entertained, curiously enough, by the inhabitants of the Niger Basin itself even in Clapperton's day, as witness Sultan Bello's map, drawn for Clapperton at the latter's request, referred to farther on.

[27] Lyon subsequently gained Timbuctoo from Murzuk, being the second European to visit the mysterious city. It has always remained an open question whether Horneman did not actually cross the Desert and reach the Chad. Denham, indeed, believed that he did so, but no trace of the unfortunate German has ever been discovered from the time he left Murzuk, nearly a quarter of a century before Denham arrived there himself.

[28] Caffre—*i.e.* unbeliever.

[29] For instance, the Bahr-el-Ghazal, Bahr-el-Asrek, Bahr-el-Abiad, &c., all rivers.

[30] Some authors consider the Hausas to be

a branch of the Mandingo race. According to this theory, the Mandingoes are the parent stock, and the Hausas, Songhays, Bambarras, &c., are all offshoots of the same great family. Although there would appear to be a certain basis of probability—especially as regards the Bambarras—in the plea of a common Mandingo origin, our historical and ethnological knowledge of the different races of West Africa, which is still in the embryonic stage, precludes anything in the nature of a positive assertion.

[31] Subsequent to the final overthrow of the Berbers, under Kuseila, by the Arabs in 688 A.D.

[32] "Historical Account of the Kingdom of Tek-roor." By Sultan Mohammed Bello of Hoosa. Denham & Clapperton. Vol. ii., Appendix xiii.

[33] "Hausaland." By the Rev. Charles Robinson. P. 179.

[34] The *Hausa bokoy*, or seven States, as distinct from the *Banza bokoy* or Bastard States, representing the seven other provinces where the Hausa language had partly spread.

[35] "A Mission to Central Africa." By James Richardson. 1850-51.

[36] "L'Annamite mère des langues." Le Colonel Frey. 1892.

[37] Lieutenant-Colonel Monteil's estimate, 1891.

[38] For hours you may wander about noting industrial scenes like these, showing to what a length their advance in civilisation has increased the wants of the people, and produced a necessary division of labour into weavers, dyers, blacksmiths, brass-workers,

saddle-makers, tailors, builders, horse-boys, agricultural labourers, domestic servants, shoe-makers, shopkeepers, traders, and others.—Joseph Thompson, in *Good Words*, 1886.

[39] Leo Africanus tells us that Gober "had a good trade and considerable industry, especially in leather-work" (beginning of sixteenth century).

[40] Since the above was written, Mr. Consul Jago's report (No. 578) on the "Trade and economic state of the vilayet of Tripoli during the past forty years" has been published by the Foreign Office. It is a most interesting document. The Consul gives a table of the value of Tripoli's trade with the Central Sudan States (Sokoto, Bornu, Wadai) for the period 1862-1901 as follows: 1862-71, £318,000; 1872-81, £1,846,300; 1882-91, £1,283,000; 1892-1901, £1,141,700; annual average, £114,725.

[41] Consul Jago appears to favour this view. I venture to suggest that the paragraphs (pp. 7 and 8) in which he refers to the point are open to criticism. Take, for instance, the cost of transport. Notwithstanding that, at first sight, the assertion may appear strange, I believe that, if any one cares to take the trouble to work out the cost of transport of a ton of European merchandise from London to Kuka (1) *viâ* Tripoli and by caravan across the desert, (2) *viâ* Burutu, the Niger and overland, the former route will be found the cheaper of the two. Things do not always appear to be what they are in Africa. If France can come to a working understanding with the Senussis, the caravan trade will revive.

[42] According to Lieutenant-Colonel Pilcher, who commanded the West African Frontier Force in 1898, the Hausa is more

quarrelsome than the Yoruba or Nupe, gets into trouble more often, and is not so quick at picking up drill or musketry (Colonial Office Report, No. 260, West African Frontier Force, June 1899). Other officers eulogise the Hausas, and among military men they are, I think, believed to be superior fighters to either the West Indian or Mendi Negro, while about equalling the Yoruba. The Negro seems to fight more fiercely and recklessly when he has Islam to fall back upon.

[43] "Géographie Universelle," livre xii. p. 587. 1887.

[44] "The Colonisation of Africa," p. 282. 1899.

[45] "Narrative of a Mission to Central Africa."

[46] "The Language of Bornu."

[47] "Magana Hausa." By J. F. Schön, D.D., F.R.G.S.

[48] "Hausaland; or, Fifteen Hundred Miles through the Central Sudan." 1897.

[49] "Specimens of Hausa Literature." "A Hausa Grammar." "A Hausa-English Dictionary." "The Gospel of St. John in Hausa."

[50] Full details are supplied in Canon Robinson's book.

[51] Apart from the question whether the Hausas can claim to have "attempted the production of a literature" any more than the Fulani or Kanuri, there remains the fact—which goes to confute Canon Robinson's somewhat sweeping generalisation—that the language of the Tuareg—the Tamashek—has been reduced to literature in *Tamashek characters*, and that both sexes among the

Tuareg are regularly instructed therein.

[52] "Kanuri Proverbs and Kanuri-English Vocabulary." By the Rev. S. N. Koelle. On page 9 of the introduction to his book, Koelle speaks of the system of orthography followed by him as that of Professor Lepsius, of Berlin, in the pamphlet entitled "Standard Alphabet for Reducing *Unwritten Languages* and Foreign Graphic Systems to a Uniform Orthography in European Letters."

[53] Baikie gives nine Hausa dialects, viz.: "Katshena, the purest and best; (2) Kano; (3) Gober; (4) Daure; (5) Zamfara; (6) Zuzu; (7) Biranta Goboz; (8) Kabi; (9) Shira, or Shura."—"Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue." By William Balfour Baikie. 1856.

[54] It is found in French Guinea, north of Sierra Leone, but is not there the staple product, rubber taking its place.

[55] Southern Nigeria, or rather the Niger Delta, is commonly known as "the rivers."

[56] The figures for 1900 include the whole of Nigeria—that is, the former Niger Company's territories in the Lower Niger, and the Niger Coast Protectorate, now incorporated into Southern Nigeria.

[57] *Idem.*

[58] Germany has a protective tax on kernel or other foreign crushed oil, which enables her to keep the home market to herself, and she has made a profitable use of the cake for feeding cattle, whilst our farmers—largely, I understand, through the operation of the tenant-right conditions of tenure, or perhaps through mere prejudice—refuse to use it to any extent.

[59] In Senegal and the Gambia the ground-nut industry, which is also essentially a native industry, takes its place, the number of palm-trees in those possessions being very scanty—not worth mentioning, in fact.

[60] It is also used for lubricating mixtures for the axles of railway carriages.

[61] Giving out trust is not invariably confined to the European. Native chiefs have been known to give trust to Europeans up to 1000 cases of palm-oil, in days, too, when palm-oil was worth £15 per puncheon. This would represent a credit of £15,000.

[62] In point of fact, palm-oil from the Congo district is the richest in stearine.

[63] The first West African kernels were imported in 1860 by Mr. A. Mackenzie Smith and the late Mr. Charles Lane, of Liverpool. The Old Calabar district led the way in Southern Nigeria. The trade was begun there in a small way in 1864. Benin was the next place in Southern Nigeria to follow suit, and by 1867 the trade was fairly large. By 1880 the trade had spread to the other rivers, New Calabar, Bonny, Brass, and Opobo.

[64] The average crushing of the African Oil Mills is, I believe, about 600 tons weekly.

[65] The exception is the machine erected at the Brass River in 1877 (by the Count de Cardi, I believe) and used to this day by the firm which has the principal trade of this district. It can produce, I believe, forty or fifty bags of clean kernels per day of ten hours. It would require 600 or 700 pairs of hands to give this result in the same time.

[66] I am given to understand that efforts to use hand-crushing machines are being made

by a merchant firm in French Guinea.

[67] An interesting account of this most valuable experiment is given by M. Pierre Mille in the *Journal of the African Society* for October 1901.

[68] Various types of hand-ploughs are now being experimented with in Senegal for the purpose of quickening production.—See *Journal d'Agriculture Tropicale*, September 1901.

[69] Many people, on the other hand, will consider the somewhat elaborate judicial machinery set up in Northern Nigeria as distinctly premature. The administration of English law in West African Protectorates (see p. 16, Northern Nigeria Report), even when modified by native law and custom, is a feature of the Crown Colony system which has little to recommend it. Dr. Ballay's plan in French Guinea was infinitely preferable. In all matters affecting the relations of natives with natives Ballay insisted that native law should be the basis. He declined to introduce all the technicalities of European law among a people whose own laws are founded upon just principles, and, given security in their application, work effectively and well.

[70] August 1, 1891. It was first called Consular Jurisdiction.

[71] Sir Ralph Moor has since declared that Southern Nigeria is in "a very sound financial position." The test of sound finance must be different in West Africa from any other part of the world.

[72] Colonial Office Report, No. 315.

[73] In that year Southern Nigeria spent £30,196 on military expenses and £8236 only

on the “Aborigines” department. Under “Political and Administrative” expenses, £20,327 was absorbed; under “Marine Department,” £32,531; £24,654 only was spared for public works, but “Prisons” necessitated £7200, against £1171 under “Botanical” and £1147 under “Sanitary”!

[74] In 1890 the value of exports from the Delta was estimated at over £1,300,000.

[75] The Nupe campaign was undertaken after great provocation, and is understood to have been carried out with the approval, tacit or avowed, of the Emir of Sokoto, who had reason to complain of the Emir of Nupe’s conduct.

[76] Similarly Nupe refused to have anything to do with Herr von Puttkamer in 1889 without consulting the Company, although the German (or his interpreter) passed himself off as the “Queen of England’s messenger.”

[77] Northern Nigeria.

[78] “The Foundation of British East Africa.”

[79] Colonial Report, No. 346, page 11, par. 2.

[80] Lord John Russell’s Instructions to Captain Henry Dundas Trotter, Commander William Allen, Commander Bird Allen, and William Cook, Esquire, Commissioners for making and concluding agreements with the Chief Rulers of the Western Coast of Africa for the suppression of the traffic in slaves and the establishment of a lawful commerce, 1840.

[81] The absence of any wish to “act otherwise” on the part of the native is invariably assumed in Europe, and but too often by Europeans in Africa. In this

connection the following passage from Clapperton (when travelling in Nigeria) is worth noting: “It was with feelings of the highest satisfaction that I listened to some of the most respectable of the merchants, when they declared that; were any other system of trading adopted, they would gladly embrace it in preference to dealing in slaves.”

[82] Archibald Constable & Co. 1898.

[83] Not to be confounded with the King of Benin who massacred Consul-General Phillips.

[84] Referring to domestic slavery in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, the late Lieut.-Colonel Northcott, C.B., whose death was a sad blow to the Empire and to West Africa particularly, in his report on those territories (Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast—published by the Intelligence Division of the War Office in 1899), says: “The every-day life of slaves differs in no respect from that of the free men. Ground is allotted to them, on which they are free to work for their own benefit, the rule generally being that they may take two days out of every five for work on their own account. With the accumulated results of this labour they are at liberty to purchase their freedom. The price demanded is not excessive, and ranges from £2 to £5, according to locality; but so lightly does the yoke of slavery bear that only a comparatively small proportion seek their emancipation by this means. Slaves may marry, and are encouraged to do so, the children becoming the property of the master. The apparent hardship of liability to sale is in reality not oppressive. The march to the new owner’s place of abode is free from any suggestion of cruelty or force; the slave partakes of his master’s food and

shares his lodging, and he is certain of kind treatment on arriving at his destination."

[85] This is pidgeon-English, the Hausa for ivory tusk (*i.e.* piece of ivory) being *hakorin*, or *hauwin giwa*.

[86] Named in honour of Park, who is supposed to be the first European to have noticed it.

[87] And Lagos again since the opening of the railway.

[88] Up to the present, however, shipments of this prepared latex have met with scant success.

[89] In the "Report of the Sierra Leone Company" (London: James Phillips, printer, 1794) the following passage occurs, which most probably refers to the *Pendatesma butyracæ*. "Butter and tallow tree. This is common in low lands about Freetown; it abounds with a juice resembling gambodge in taint and durability, which exudes after the least laceration, and becomes more coagulated, viscous, and of a darker colour. The wood of this tree is firm, and seems adapted to various economical purposes. The fruit is nearly oval, about twice the size of a man's fist; the rind is thick, pulpy, and of a pleasant acid; in the inside are found from five to nine seeds of the size of the walnut, containing an oleaginous matter, extracted by the natives and used with their rice and other food." A gentleman of my acquaintance who knows this tree, tells me he has seen it growing in Sierra Leone, so that there seems no reason why experiments similar to those undertaken in French Guinea should not be made in our colony, which adjoins that French possession.

[90] Known as “piassava” in the trade. Large quantities are imported from Liberia. It is used in brush-making.

[91] Benni seeds crushed yield a fine edible oil.

[92] On the right bank of the Binue: in the Mitchi or (Munshi) country.

[93] Stone potash used to be a monopoly of the Igarras, who sold it to the down-river tribes, but the Niger Company has taken the monopoly from the Igarras of late years and disposes of it at Lagos, realising, it is said, considerable profit—from 2 to 300 per cent.

[94] He will sometimes cut the vine down and chop it into pieces of about one foot in length the more readily to extract the sap.

[95] Or even 20 per cent.

[96] There are many other ways of preparing rubber: this is one of them.

[97] “A Short Account of the Invasion of Hausa by the Phulas.” By Bashima, a Hausa-Fulani, in the “Magana Hausa” (J. F. Schön. 1815).

[98] About 1840.

[99] And by no one so well as Joseph Thompson, “Mungo Park and the Niger.”

[100] “Othman established the severest punishment upon whoever committed the slightest violation of the law.”—“Travels of Sheik Mohammed of Tunis” (Bayle St. John. London: 1854).

[101] One of the numerous designations of the Fulani.

[102] “Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa,” &c. 1829.

[103] Under the old Hausa *régime* the inhabitants of the Northern Hausa States paid direct taxes to the Kings. According to the curious and interesting records of Assid-el-Haji-Abd-Salam Shabiny, a Tunisian merchant, the Sultan of Hausa imposed a tax of 2 per cent. on all products of the land. The people also paid a land tax, and certain duties were exacted on all goods sold in the market-place ("Relation d'un voyage à Timbuctoo vers l'année 1787").

[104] A missionary has recently admitted that "To the Hausa what is in the Koran is of God, and what is not in the Koran is not worth knowing."

[105] To-day, *Guinée française*.

[106] This is explained by the unwillingness of the Fulani to allow unions between their women-folk and their Negro neighbours.

[107] Recently translated into French by M. O. Houdas (Paris: Ernest Leroux. 1900).

[108] Leo Africanus.

[109] At one time Melle ruled over Songhay and Timbuctoo. In 1329 the Mellians were driven from Timbuctoo by the pagan Mosis (the most powerful pagan kingdom which ever arose in West Africa). The people of Melle reconquered the place, but were finally expelled by the Tuareg in 1433. Melle was subsequently overcome by the Songhay and fell to pieces.

[110] Published by the Hakluyt Society.

[111] We are indebted to M. Dubois for the first complete copy.

[112] The reigning family says the *Tarik* were white and their subjects Wakoris (Mandingoes). This strengthens the Fulani

argument, the complexion of the pure-blood Fulani inclining to white by comparison with their neighbours. In his "Notice Géographique sur la Région du Sahel" (which includes Bakunu, the former Baghena), Commandant Lartigue says of the Fulani still inhabiting that district, "Quelques-uns sont presque blancs; leur cheveux sont à peine crépus, et ils ont les traits fins et réguliers des Européens de bonne race."

[113] The language of the Fulani.

[114] The Empire which, as we have observed, was raised upon the ruins of Ghanata by the Mandingoes, the subject race at the time of the latter's foundation.

[115] D'Eichtal's assertion ("Les Foulahs." Paris: 1842), that the Fulani "to this day" call the whole of Senegambia "Melli," I do not find confirmed, but it is worth mentioning, nevertheless.

[116] The first map in which Melle figures is a Spanish one (1375 A.D.). In the map of Mathias de Villadestes, the Venetian (1413 A.D.), the word "Toucuzor" is written by the side of that of the King of Melli, "Mussa." For "Toucuzor" read "Toukulor" (Tukulor), the cross race of Fulani-Joloff and Fulani-Mandingo.—"Considérations sur la Priorité des Découvertes Maritimes sur la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique."—Binger.

[117] Barth's chronological table of the Songhay.

[118] Marmol—born in Granada, 1580—translated by Nicholas Perot d'Ablancourt.

[119] The *Tarik's* statement that Salta Tayenda fled into "Futa" affords substantial indication of the presence of Fulani in that

country at a previous date, which we know, of course, from other sources.

[120] This tradition obviously refers to Fulani pressure—the root of the word (Pul, or Ful) signifying red, or reddish.

[121] A correspondent of a Paris paper, *La Dépêche Coloniale*, writing from Kunde, on the Sangha River, on December 10, 1901, says: "Our clothes, which are ragged from bush travelling, do not convey a great idea of our influence, especially when compared to the Fulbes (Fulani) in their embroidered cloths and leather riding-boots. They are all on horseback and we are on foot. *There are thousands of them*, and all are armed."

[122] Their presence in Omdurman—that is to say, in the heart of the Eastern Sudan in the Nile valley—has already been noted by Father Ohrwalder. On page 300 of "Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp" (Major Wingate, R.A. London: 1895), we read, "Several of the Fellata, who came from distant parts of Bornu, Wadai, &c., were stopped at Omdurman on their way to Mecca"; and again, on page 305, "The inhabitants of Omdurman are a conglomeration of every race and nationality in the Sudan—Fellata, Takruris, natives of Bornu, &c."

[123] Dr. Barth's estimate as to the date of the foundation of Ghanata is certainly not exaggerated, in view of the *Tarik's* statement that twenty-two kings had reigned before the Hejira.

[124] Ernest Flammarion, Paris. English edition: W. Heinemann.

[125] Toledo was wrested from the Moors in 1085; Saragossa in 1118; Valencia, 1238; Seville, 1248; the Beni-Nasr held Granada until

1492.

[126] De Barros, Barth, *Tarik*.

[127] Makrizi, de Barros, Barth.

[128] *L'Anthropologie* (Tome x., No. 6), of which Dr. Verneau is one of the editors.

[129] In plain language, a prominence of the jaws—one of the characteristics of the Negro type.

[130] Dr. Randle MacIver and Anthony Wilkin, in "Libyan Notes." Macmillan & Co. 1901.

[131] Concubinage with negresses being the natural explanation.

[132] Other authorities, basing their arguments, *inter alia*, upon the assumption that the wild people "covered with hair" encountered by the Carthaginian colonists were none other than the gorillas which Du Chaillu, more than two thousand years afterwards, brought to the knowledge of an incredulous world, and upon the unlikelihood of any of those animals being in Hanno's day so far north, maintain that the expedition reached the Gaboon estuary, or even the mouth of the Congo. The point is never likely to be cleared up. The two sides are stated with great clearness by the late Miss Kingsley in "West African Studies." (Macmillan & Co.)

[133] Lest it be supposed that I am appropriating other people's ideas without acknowledgment, I hasten to add that Major Rennel, in his notes on Park's travels ("Travels in the Interior of Africa." London: 1799) hazards the same suggestion, and Barth and Frey follow suit. But I think that, in the light of our further knowledge of the peoples and history of Western Africa, the identification of

the “Leucæthiopes” with the Fulani becomes a good deal more than a suggestion.

[134] The cattle possessed by the Fulani—who are the herdsmen of West Africa—are the hump-backed Asiatic kind (*Bos indicus*). That was a great point with Faidherbe in favour of the Eastern theory. The Abyssinians’ cattle, it may be observed, belong to the same breed.

[135] “Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said: ‘My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan, and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.’”

[136] Cattle-rearer.

[137] “An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone.” By Thomas Winterbottom, D.D., Physician to the Colony of Sierra Leone. 1803.

[138] The Joloffs (Senegal) declare that the Fulani converse habitually with their cattle.

[139] Moore, writing of the Gambia Fulani in the eighteenth century, says, they manage cattle so well that the Mandingoes give them their own to look after.

[140] Native cavalry soldier.

[141] Related in the French African Committee’s journal.

[142] De Guiraudon was, apparently, unaware of this passage, which has an important bearing upon his statements.

[143] Not pear-shaped, as with the negress.

[144] Barth, Baikie, Gray, Monteil, Mollien, De Giraudon, Callié, &c., vie with one another in their enthusiasm over the beauty of the Fulani woman of pure blood, which is all the more pronounced in view of their ethnic

surroundings. Barth speaks of young Fulani girls whose forms "recall the finest Grecian sculptury." "The women are very beautiful, and possess strange powers of fascination in their large deep eyes," says Monteil. "The women in particular," remarks Gray, "might vie in point of figure with the finest forms in Europe, and their walk is particularly majestic." "The Fulani women, many of whose countenances are resplendent with a veritable beauty" (Reclus).

[145] "West Africa."

[146] *Ibid.*

[147] Witness, for example, the admirable work on land tenure on the Ivory Coast just published by Administrator Clozel; also that gentleman's article in the *Journal of the African Society* for July.

[148] I have not yet heard of any departure from the rule.

[149] "Modern ideas and legislation," says Dr. Alfred Zimmerman, "forbid violent proceedings. The natives should be taught to work by cultivating the sentiment in them that it is their interest to do so. *Experience proves that protection of property is the surest means to attain that end.*"

[150] Paul Kollmann's "The Victoria Nyanza" may be consulted in this connection with advantage. The illustrations of domestic ornaments, of flasks, bark-boxes, drums, &c., constructed by the natives of Usukama and Ukerewe show real beauty of design.

[151] Sir Marshall Clarke's recent report is instructive. Speaking of the natives of Rhodesia, he says: "They work in the mines either from direct pressure brought to bear

upon them by the administration, a pressure only short of force, or the necessity of earning enough to pay their taxes.... This," continues Sir Marshall Clarke, "does not tend to make industry attractive"; and, he adds, "At present there is undoubtedly discontent among the natives."

[152] "The evidence available seems to indicate that the labour difficulty on the Gold Coast may probably be overcome without the importation of labourers from other countries, and that success or failure in the matter is largely dependent on the person in charge of the undertaking. It is very desirable that the persons in charge should be gentlemen and men of education, as it is found that such are more likely to be able to deal satisfactorily with the natives, who generally require to be handled with much tact and judgment."—Par. 9, "Labour Ordinance": issued by Colonial Office.

[153] "According to native ideas there is no land without owners. What is now a forest or unused land will, as years go on, come under cultivation by the subjects of the Stool, or members of the village community, or other members of the family" ("Fanti Customary Law," J. M. Sarbah). What holds good in the Gold Coast is equally applicable to the rivers and to Lagos, indeed throughout West Africa, wherever Negro culture is met with.

[154] In order, of course, to do away with the idea that there is any wish or desire on the part of the Government to alienate the land from the rightful owners thereof.

[155] The amended Lagos Bill exempts from its operation native customary rights and defers to the authority of the Native Councils of the hinterland. Its working depends largely,

therefore, upon the interpretation placed by the Colony's Governor for the time being on the nature of the relationship between those Councils and the Administration. Sir W. MacGregor has passed a Bill (the Native Councils Bill) which, he thinks, will strengthen the position of the Councils. But it is safe to say that, in all matters affecting land legislation in West Africa, the procedure for safeguarding native rights, and in their main lines those rights themselves, should be laid down as clearly as possible in the Act itself.

[156] For an intelligent native view on the subject the reader is referred to the speeches of Dr. O. Johnson, Member of the Legislative Council of Lagos, in moving the rejection of the Amended Forest Ordinance (May 1902). Dr. Johnson's status in the Colony may be estimated from the fact that the extraordinarily able historical address on the native history of Lagos, delivered by him at the Lagos Institute last year, was published as a Government paper in the Colony.

[157] Who, for some time past, has individually done much to stimulate cotton-growing for export in West Africa.

[158] In the manifesto issued by the Association in October there figures a list of Vice-presidents, headed by Sir Alfred Jones, K.C.M.G., and including no less than twenty-two members of Parliament, among whom one notices such well-known names as Winston S. Churchill, R. Yerburgh, Alfred Emmott, Sir William Mather, Lord Stanley, the Hon. Arthur Stanley, the Hon. W. R. W. Peel, C. A. Cripps, K.C. J. H. Whitley, Sir J. Leigh, &c.

[159] Moloney.

[160] Secretary of the Manchester Chamber

of Commerce.

[161] The cotton-producing capacities of Northern Nigeria have already been commented upon.

[162] The *Deutsche Togo-gesellschaft*.

[163] And as with cotton, so with rice—the Songhays were great rice-growers, and *Gao*, or Gago, their ancient capital, is said to mean rice in the Songhay language.

[164] Sir Alfred Jones has voluntarily offered to carry cotton from West Africa freight free for two years, and I understand that Mr. Woermann, of the line of that name, has agreed to ship a considerable quantity of Togo cotton free of charge.

[165] And where the enterprise has been carried out on the household labour plan, which has been compared to the peasant proprietary system.

[166] Chemical manure has been supplied free by manufacturers of the article. An exhibit of cloths manufactured with Togo cotton has been held at Dusseldorf, &c.

[167] Sir H. Johnston's and Mr. Grogan's discoveries have recently emphasised this fact.

[168] Now Southern Nigeria.

[169] And, say the merchants engaged in the trade, to high freights.

[170] The American demand is, I understand, increasing.

[171] C. O. Report, No. 348.

[172] For a technical explanation read the following: "The extremely high prices obtained here for figured logs have naturally excited shippers, especially native traders, and all are

desirous to learn what constitutes figure.... This is a subject difficult to elucidate, but we may say that 'roe' may be described as the curved direction the grain of the wood takes by one ring overlapping the other; to be of any value, beyond ordinary plain wood, it must be of a very pronounced and bold character. This gives the required variation of light and shade."

[173] The conversion of several hundred natives to Islam at Jebu-Ode, one of the large Yoruba centres in close proximity to Lagos, and where the Church has laboured for years, is a recent incident which points in the direction stated.

[174] *Tarik.*

[175] Kanem at the time ruled over what was known later as Bornu.

[176] Makrizi attributes the introduction of Islam into Kanem to Hadi el Othman, who was probably of Fulani origin, although Makrizi does not say so.

[177] Timbuctoo was not founded until about seventy years after the conversion of Za Kasai.

[178] The theory which gives an Eastern origin to Mohammedan proselytism in Kanem seems unworthy of consideration.

[179] The manatee is the *ayu* of the Fulani, and its signification—viz. that of a mythical creature living in the water and dragging any one in who sees it—seems to argue the existence of an ancient superstition. In various parts of the Niger and Binue this strange animal is still regarded with a certain awe, which, however, does not prevent it from being slaughtered, both for its flesh and skin.

The Soninke legend of the water serpent, which each year claimed the handsomest girl of the village as a victim, would seem to bear a distinct relation to this, the former *ayu* worship of the Songhays.

[180] Binger suggests that the word Mande, or Mandingo, is derived from the same root as manatus, and signifies the people of a country where the manatus is worshipped.

[181] "Mungo Park." Joseph Thomson. The "World's Greatest Explorers" series.

[182] Palgrave's "Arabia," vol. i. p. 372.

[183] "Niger and Yoruba Notes," January 1900.

[184] A native of the Western Sudan.

[185] Blyden.

[186] It has been pointed out to me that the Muslim teachers in this mosque do not teach reading, but only the Slate-pattern. That simply shows that Islam in West Africa is capable of being much improved, and should be moulded, if possible, on Western lines of thought; but it does not affect the main argument in the least.

[187] Captain Morrison's report, issued by the Government of the French Sudan.

[188] For instance, read the following passages in "Pilkington of Uganda" (C. F. Harford Battersby). "This is the lost truth, the loss of which gave Satan the opportunity of introducing both Mohammedanism and Popery.... They (the Waganda) have learnt to contend with the three forms of darkness which they will meet in Africa: Heathenism, Mohammedanism, and Popery." And again: "Does it not seem as if the French Mission is just God's appointed instrument to complete

the confusion of Rome in Uganda?”

[189] Le Chatelier.

[190] The nineteenth century.

[191] The nineteenth century.

[192] It is a remarkable fact, frequently borne witness to, that an unarmed Muslim Negro can travel without molestation through vast stretches of country in Africa, a privilege denied to his Christianised compatriot.

[193] “Esclavage, Islamisme, et Christianisme.”

[194] Affecting in many parts the laws and customs of the people in respect to native land tenure.

[195] “Le Sénégal: la France dans l’Afrique Occidentale.”

[196] Negro medical men—I mean qualified medical men—of whom there are a few in West Africa, emphatically corroborate this: and they bring a great many arguments, founded upon actual experience, in support of the contention.

[197] An ecclesiastic well known in the African field, and for whose really wonderful labours I entertain the highest respect and admiration, informed me only the other day that, within his personal cognisance, over 150 couples had been married in Liberia by a certain minister, in a certain district, within a period of five years; and that the total number of births up to date was five, and the survivals two. My reverend friend found in that striking fact (for the truth of which he vouched, and he is a truthful man) a justification of his view that a large proportion of Liberians, that is to say, the descendants of the blacks from the States, led indolent and unhealthy lives. To my

mind, it conveys an eloquent demonstration, that *on West African soil* monogamy for the Negro spells race extinction. Naturally my friend would not admit the conclusion, although in his heart of hearts I believe he is rather troubled on the subject. But he recognised—and admitted—in course of conversation that polygamy was a question which the Church, in her work among tropical peoples, had now to resolutely face and earnestly discuss. There is, I fear, no doubt that the monogamist—or professing monogamist—Liberians are, like the Waganda, dying out.

[198] Politically, the same attitude is adopted by the British authorities; and in the case of the Sierra Leone Hut-tax war, and the Forest Ordinances in Lagos, it has been sought to divorce the educated—and mainly, professing Christian—element of the coast from community of thought, sympathy, and common racial feelings with the non-educated, and mainly pagan or Mohammedan, element of the interior.

[199] "As soon as half a dozen missionaries leave Liverpool," writes the same authority, Archbishop Dobson, "no end of a stir is made about the devoted party, and so forth. I do not mean to be sarcastic about the missionaries, but it does make one a trifle ashamed at times to meet a stalwart trader hereabouts on an occasion, who has been coming here off and on for twenty years, and his chief business is palm-oil, and his best view a mangrove swamp."

[200] It is even admitted to be harmful by Sir Alfred Jones, whose steamers carry a large proportion of this liquor to West Africa, and by a large proportion of the merchants who deal

in it. The merchants are sometimes violently attacked on account of this trade. Personally, I detest the West African liquor traffic. I look upon it in the same light as the opium traffic in the Far East—a blot upon the escutcheon of Christian Europe. But those who denounce the merchants might just as well, and more logically, denounce the Governments. *Per se* the liquor traffic is not a lucrative trade to the merchant, but to the local administrations on the coast it is the backbone of revenue. I was never able to share the late Miss Kingsley's views on this subject, while fully agreeing with her as to the inanity of making the merchants the scapegoats of an evil the responsibility for which is, in a sense, universal. Despite anything that may be said to the contrary, I shall believe that a powerful factor in determining Miss Kingsley's views was the knowledge that, but for the existence of the liquor traffic as a supplier of revenue, direct taxation would be substituted throughout British West Africa owing to the extravagance of the Crown Colony system; and I know that Miss Kingsley strongly objected to the introduction of European spirits into the interior regions by means of the railways. The liquor question would require a special chapter to adequately discuss.

[201] He will, no doubt, be edified to learn that the Cape Government has found it necessary to pass a law imposing a severe term of imprisonment upon white *women* convicted of sexual intercourse with the natives—a circumstance not precisely calculated to increase his respect for our Christian civilisation.

[202] Captain—now Commandant—Binger has for some little time past been in charge of

the African Department of the French Colonial Office. His travels, books, and pamphlets are familiar to every student of Western Africa.

[203] It would seem now that they have temporarily prevailed with the Government.

[204] In the Sokoto Empire (Hausa States) more particularly.

[205] They did it so well that, after the failure of their attack upon the French camp, they denuded the country of supplies and reduced the expedition to terrible straits for a time.

[206] The fall predicted, and officially foreseen, in 1901 has come about, owing to the rubber crisis. The measures taken during the last fifteen months to stimulate fresh industries in the country, and the advance of the railway, will, no doubt, make themselves felt in the next two or three years.

[207] For the Lagos exports and expenditure, see Appendix.

[208] C.O. Report. 1900.

[209] "Rapport d'ensemble." Dahomey, 1900.

[210] For 1902, on a total estimated expenditure of £121,560, Dahomey provides £32,000 for the railway and £11,911 for public works ordinary or, say, a total of £43,911 for railway and public works.

[211] The following statistics of the export trade of Dahomey, compiled from figures recently obtained, are interesting:

QUANTITIES IN KILOS.
(1015 kilos to the ton.)

	Palm-kernels.	Palm-oil.

	1898	18,091,312	6,059,539
	1899	21,850,982	9,650,081
	1900	21,986,043	8,920,359
	1901	24,211,614	11,290,658
	First quarter 1902	6,972,297	3,488,766
Ibid.	1901	4,768,050	1,993,520

[212] See Appendix.

[213] It is worthy of note that the French Government authorises the Administration of the several West African colonies to make their own agreements for railway construction.

[214] So far as the heavier duties charged on spirits in Lagos are concerned, the fact is distinctly to the credit of Lagos.

[215] There is a very curious circumstance connected with the ground-nut trade. All the ground-nuts go to the Continent—both from Senegal and Gambia—the oil extracted, therefrom, or the bulk of it, is used in making margarine, which is subsequently consumed, to a very large extent, by the English people! Why have we not our own crushing-mills? Is it because we are short of milk? It cannot but strike one as peculiar and unfortunate that we should send our West African ground-nuts to France, and afterwards buy from the French the oil the nuts yield for our own consumption! Ground-nuts will grow anywhere in West Africa, and the labour involved in cultivating them is very small.

[216] Belgian syndicates have been trying, and are still trying, to get hold of the French Ivory Coast goldfields. Hitherto they have been defeated by the vigilance of the French merchants; but there is no knowing what may

happen in view of the extraordinary influence which King Leopold appears to wield over the French official world.

[217] "Sur des traces probables de civilisation Egyptienne et d'hommes de race blanche à la Côte d'Ivoire." Masson & Cie., Paris. A pamphlet which ought to be read by all students of West Africa.

[218] Specie is usually included in the trade figures—a very misleading practice.

[219] Sir David Chalmers' report, p. 169.

[220] Like the Susus, for example, who are very numerous in French Guinea, but of whom a few only have settled in the British Protectorate adjoining.

[221] Let it not be imagined that the contrast here made between French political action in Dahomey and British political action in Ashanti implies approval of direct taxation *per se*. It is ever a dangerous experiment in West Africa, especially with pagans, even if conquest has supervened. If the system under which the taxes are collected is not carefully watched, grave abuses are almost certain to follow. Quite recently rumours of oppression in the taxation of the natives in Upper Dahomey have appeared in the French Press. What truth there may be in them I do not know. But it is true, I believe, that the excellent staff whom Governor Ballot gathered round him has left the Colony since Ballot left it, and has been replaced by less experienced and less competent material.

[222] Last Ashanti Blue Book, 1902.

[223] See Note in Appendix.

[224] See the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Gore, Colonial Secretary for Sierra

Leone. Sir David Chalmers' report.

[225] Between July 1894 and February 1898 no fewer than sixty-two convictions—admittedly representing a small proportion of offences actually committed—were recorded against them for flogging, plundering, and generally maltreating the natives.

[226] One of the pet arguments of the authorities consists in invoking the benefits which have accrued to the people of the Protectorate since the passing of the Protectorate Ordinance in the matter of putting down the slave trade. For these benefits the natives, says officialdom, ought to be delighted to pay a tax. Possibly they would have paid it in time, more or less willingly, had they been approached in a different spirit. But, so far as the slave trade is concerned, the argument is singularly weakened by the circumstance that Sir F. Cardew publicly declared in 1895 that the slave traffic had "practically disappeared within the Protectorate."

[227] The French West African Company, *Cie française de l'Afrique Occidentale*, is the largest French firm of African merchants in West Africa. Founded in 1887 with a capital of 7,000,000 francs; total turn-over in 1899, 22,000,000 francs; factories in Senegal, French and Portuguese Guinea, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Ivory Coast.

[228] In 1900, 39,874,005 francs; in 1901, 43,965,950 francs.

[229] The same game was tried with the Germans in Cameroons. To quote from an article in the *National Zeitung*, which, as I have reason to know, may be accepted as authorised: "If in the Congo State itself the

Berlin Act could be disregarded in this way, and the natives obliged to bring in the produce against their will, why could it not also be done in other places? And as the Congo State was itself making the best use of its monopoly, and only gave concessions to others at high prices, the monopolists tried, and not without result, to obtain the same state of affairs both in France and in Germany. In Germany, the German Colonial Society at once protested against this state of affairs. In spite of this, however, several of the Belgian capitalists were able to obtain the help of influential German persons, who obtained from the Government the concession of South Cameroon. This company had obtained the assistance of Colonel Thys for its operations on the Brussels Stock Exchange, and immediately after the flotation of the company the shares were driven up to two or three times their value. Further concessions in the free-trade zone were not conceded, and, with the exception of the North-West Cameroon concession, in consequence of the energetic opposition in colonial circles, no further concessions were, or will be, made in the German territories. The German Government has entirely abandoned this policy of concessions."

[230] It is, of course, no easy matter to get at the precise constitution of these companies, but the following example of one of the "groups" is typical of the majority of them. *Comptoir Colonial français.* Parent company: head offices, Paris; has founded at least six Concessionnaire Companies, of a total capital of 9,650,000 francs; Board of Administration numbers six directors, of whom three are Belgians; two-thirds of the shares held in Belgium; two of the Belgian directors are

directors of the four *Domaine Privé* Companies in the Congo State, whose profits are shared by the State (read the King); the third also belongs to the Congo clique; among the Belgian shareholders are other directors of these same *Domaine Privé* Companies, all men enjoying the confidence of, and closely connected with, the Sovereign of the Congo State. One of the six Concessionnaire Companies of this "group" has specially distinguished itself in the persecution to which British merchants have been subjected—discussed in the next chapter.

[231] Some light has been thrown upon its African chapters by Mr. R. E. Dennett, an Englishman in French Congo, and a recognised authority on the Fjort peoples, in "West Africa."

[232] I should say now, ex-Deputy.

[233] "Une idée domine l'ensemble du système, tous les produits du territoire, concédé quels qu'ils soient, sont la propriété de la Société Concessionnaire. Seuls les agents de cette Société ont le droit de les recueillir ou de les acheter des indigènes qui les ont récoltés; ces derniers ne pouvant disposer librement que des produits des reserves qui leur ont été spécialement attribuées et sur lesquelles je reviendrai, et devant en thèse générale, lorsqu'ils s'emparent d'un produit quelconque du sol en dehors de ces reserves, les remettre aux concessionnaires dont l'intérêt bien entendu, est de remunérer ensuite leur travail."

[234] "Les indigènes ont droit aux superficies qui leur sont nécessaires pour les cultures vivrières correspondantes aux besoins de leur alimentation. On peut leur attribuer une certaine étendue de forêt nécessaire à

leurs besoins de chauffage et de construction, mais ils n'ont pas droit a réclamer des forêts domaniales *dans le but de faire commerce de leurs produits naturels* et de constituer ainsi une concurrence ruineuse pour le concessionnaire" (Art. 18).

[235] The French Government has recently voted De Brazza an annual pension of 10,000 francs.

[236] "Concessions Congolaises." By Albert Cousin, Membre du Conseil Supérieur des Colonies. Paris: Augustin Chalamel.

[237] An English trader, Mr. Walker, was the first to do so. He is admitted by French writers to have discovered the Ogowe.

[238] Messrs. John Holt & Co. and Messrs. Hatton & Cookson, both of Liverpool, and both connected with the West African Trade for upwards of half a century. Mr. John Holt is probably the most enterprising pioneer of Britain's trade in West Africa, possessing trading stations in most of the British and Foreign West African Colonies. He is the vice-chairman of the African Trade Section of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and very few men living have so wide a grasp of West African questions or so profound a knowledge of West African problems.

[239] Whose existence was unknown in England until towards the end of last year.

[240] Seizure of British goods on public roads; breaking open of British factories; flogging of British native agents, &c.

[241] Notably that most excellent monthly, *Le Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française*, through the instrumentality of the two distinguished thinkers and writers who dictate

its policy, Count Robert de Caix and M. Auguste Terrier.

[242] Forty tons of ebony, bought in the usual way by a British firm on the Congo and shipped to Havre in a French ship, were seized at that port (1902) on a mandate of a Concessionnaire Company. This produce has, however, now been restored.

[243] The Foreign Office was warned as far back as the beginning of 1898 by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce of the danger of the possible inauguration of a system of territorial monopolies. Lord Salisbury said it would receive "our most earnest attention," and admitted inferentially that in fiscal questions England had, as a free-trade country, "inferior" means of influencing other countries; "with the occasional exception," added his lordship, "of territorial concessions, we have no means whatever of persuasion." Nevertheless, in the purely fiscal question which formed the principal object of the Deputation of Chambers of Commerce to Lord Salisbury on this occasion, that of the differential tariff in the French possessions, Lord Salisbury was able to get his own way, simply by persuasion, by "influencing France's ideas." Yet in this matter of the French Congo Concessions, in which the purely fiscal question does not enter at all, and where we have an international treaty to work on, Lord Lansdowne has been unable to prevent the expulsion of British merchants from an internationally free-trade zone!

[244] The *Morning Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and *West Africa*.

[245] The German merchants, despairing of obtaining even the most elementary justice,

have evacuated the territory. Our merchants have chosen the nobler part of making a stand for their rights, guaranteed under international law.

[246] To which must now be added the somewhat similar Rabinek affair—an Austrian subject arrested and "removed" by the Congo State in the Katanga district under circumstances analogous, in some measure, to the case of Mr. Stokes.

[247] The other day the then French Parliamentary representative of Senegal, in a speech to his constituents at St. Louis, warned them that the greatest danger threatening their hinterland, the French Sudan, was King Leopold of Belgium and his monopolist gang.

[248] At the great "Colonial Congress" held in Berlin on October 11, Consul Vohsen moved a resolution, unanimously carried, calling upon the Powers to institute proceedings for the revision of the Berlin Act. Consul Vohsen said: "From the very first the Congo State, and recently France in the French Colony of French Congo, have acted against the principles laid down in the Congo Act." ... Referring to the Congo State, he continued: "All so-called countries 'not occupied by natives' situated in the Free Trade zone were, as far back as July 1885, declared the property of the State, and in the year 1892 heavy taxes were imposed upon the rubber trade, which was entirely prohibited in parts of the Free Trade zone. The consequence was that the freedom of trade and commerce guaranteed by the Congo Act was practically abolished. The first condition of freedom of trade for the nations is freedom to the natives, in such a way as to leave them free to dispose of the natural products of the soil and of the chase; which state of affairs

existed before the passing of the Act in all French, English, and German colonies in West Africa, and exists to-day, with the exception of the territories of the Congo State and the French Congo, the very colonies where, strange to say, free trade is insisted upon by Articles I. and V. of the Act."

[249] Among the supporters of the Mansion House meeting of May 15 (held under the auspices of the Aborigines Protection Society) were Mr. John Morley, Sir J. Kennaway, Earl Spencer, the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Avebury, Mr. Lecky, M.P., Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, M.P., K.C.M.G., Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., Sir Mark J. Stewart, M.P., Mr. James Bryce, M.P., Mr. W. S. Robson, M.P., and other politicians of both parties. Five Chambers of Commerce, the African Society, and the German Colonial Society were represented, and Dr. Alfred Zimmermann, *attaché* to the German Embassy in London, also attended.

[250] Commandant Binger's views are well known. M. Cousturier (Governor of French Guinea), in his report on French Guinea for 1901, does not conceal his adverse opinion of Belgian methods of collecting rubber in the Congo State.

The author could produce documentary evidence showing that similar opinions are held by other well-known French officials in West Africa.

[251] Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Russia sent delegates to the conference.

[252] This was done with the exception of England.

[253] Diego Cam.

[254] The original title had by this time been changed to that of “International Congo Association.”

[255] The point is brought out very clearly by Mr. Dennet, our only authority on the Fjort Kingdom of Congo, and the author of several books concerning the Fjort, in a series of interesting letters published last year in “West Africa.” Mr. Dennet, who has lived twenty-two years consecutively in the Lower Congo, positively declares that the treaties made by the Association, and referred to by General Sandford, had no validity whatever in native law.

[256] In his report on the Congo State for 1898, Consul Pickersgill concludes a long enumeration of the taxes levied upon independent trade by the following humorous passage:

“I may sum up this portion of my remarks by quoting the jocose observations of the English and American missionaries, who declared to me that there is nothing free in the Independent State, except fevers; while a Belgian Father with whom I had some conversation on the subject, remarked: ‘The Government taxes even the civilisation we bring.’”

[257] Who held the monopoly of the ivory trade in the Upper Congo, which the Congo State, by exterminating them with the aid of its cannibal soldiery (see Hinde’s “Fall of the Congo Arabs”), became possessed of.

[258] See Mr. Herbert Ward’s “Five Years with the Congo Cannibals,” p. 297.

[259] The whole paragraph might have been written a few weeks, instead of eleven years, ago. The state of affairs pictured by Colonel

Williams has worsened instead of bettered. The evil is more widespread and the means of perpetuating it more extensive and more powerful. Read in this connection the latest revelations by Mr. Canisius and Captain Burrows.

[260] The importance of the 10 per cent. import duty was purposely exaggerated. The amount derived therefrom was trifling. The merchants objected to it on principle. As Sir Albert Rollit justly remarked, “The reason for our opposition is only that they (the import duties) would infringe the great principle of freedom of commerce, which was the very basis of the programme of the Berlin Conference.” It is quite clear, however, that the majority of the merchants also opposed the import duties from a vague distrust of the king’s ultimate intentions, a distrust which events proved to be only too well founded.

[261] The map published by the African Society in the May (1902) issue of its Journal may be consulted with advantage in this respect.

[262] Among whom might be mentioned Augouard, Hinde, Glave, Morrison, Hawkins, Sheppard, Andrew, Sjöblom, Alfred Parminter, De Mandat-Grancy, Rankin, Murphy, Lloyd, Grogan, and many others, without counting Belgian authorities—more numerous than all foreigners put together.

[263] At the present moment heavy fighting is going on in the Welle district, due, as I have reason to know, to the usual rubber taxes. The facts as to this particular rising may, happily, have been made public before the publication of the present volume.

[264] The regular army—*Force Publique*—of

the Congo State is admitted officially (Bulletin, July 1900) to be 15,000, but we know that in addition to this regular force—15,000 cannibals armed with Albinis, sections of whom are continually revolting—the State habitually arms, whenever it deems necessary, thousands of irregulars, cannibals for choice (see the letter written in October 1899 to the king by the acting head of the American Presbyterian Mission in the Kassai district). There is also a large reserve corps, but the extent of it is not known.

[265] It may be usefully noted here that the *impôts de nature* are applied by the Congo State in the so-called Free Trade Zone as well as in the *Domaine Privé*, and until the Kassai district was incorporated in the *Domaine Privé* many and bitter were the complaints by companies operating in the former zone of the unfair competition to which they were subjected by the levying of this tribute. Instances have been given by some of these irate traders where the State's officials have threatened the natives with condign punishment if they did not hand over all their rubber to the said officials. An arrangement has recently been concluded between the State and the Kassai companies—the Kassai district was the only portion of the Upper Congo where independent trade had been allowed—whereby the Kassai companies have amalgamated into a syndicate *in which the State holds one half the interest*. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the Kassai has now been incorporated in the *Domaine Privé*, WHICH HENCEFORTH EMBRACES THE WHOLE OF THE CONGO STATE NORTH OF STANLEY POOL.

[266] Both these facts have been repeatedly asserted. They were proved beyond manner of

doubt last year by the disclosures attendant upon the Mongolla scandals, in which agents of the *Société Anversoise* were involved.

[267] Seven, if we include the Kassai Trust recently formed.

[268] Baron A. Goffinet is "Conseiller de Légation, Secrétaire des Commandements de leurs MM. le Roi et la Reine, Major de l'Etat, Major de la Garde Civique, Aide-de-camp, Ministre Résident." Baron C. Goffinet is "Conseiller de Légation, Intendant de la Liste Civile du Roi, Ministre Résident, Major de la Garde Civique."

[269] I have quite recently received from another correspondent in the Congo the photograph here reproduced.

[270] "Abir (Société à responsabilité limitée) Statuts." Anvers: Imprimerie Ratinckx Frères, Grand Place, 40-42.

[271] "Comptoir Commercial Congolais (Société à responsabilité limitée) Statuts." Anvers: Imprimerie Ratinckx.

[272] "Compagnie du Lomami (Société Anonyme) Statuts." Bruxelles: P. Weissenbruch, Imprimerie du Roi, 45 rue du Poincon.

[273] In chapter xxviii. I referred to the constitution of the *Comptoir Colonial français*, which has managed to secure for its subsidiaries such a respectable slice of French Congo. Well, Alexis Mols is one of the Administrators, and so is A. Osterrieth, a shareholder in the *Abir*, and so is A. Lambrechts, also a shareholder in the *Abir*, &c. &c.

[274] I am afraid Sir H. M. Stanley was somewhat premature when, in 1884, he told

the London Chamber of Commerce that people "could not appreciate rightly" King Leopold's philanthropy, because there were "no dividends attaching to it."

[275] Whip made out of hippo hide—the Congo *sjambok*.

[276] Or was until quite recently.

[277] In Congo circles in Belgium it is suggested that to guard against "attacks which might become too threatening" (by "attacks" is meant exposures in the public Press, and on public platforms in England and Germany) the Congo State should largely increase its standing army.

[278] The author, who may claim to have brought the Rabinek affair to light, is able to state that the British Government is causing specific inquiries to be made through its representatives in Central Africa in connection with the matter. See Appendix.

[279] The trade of the Lower Congo has sensibly diminished since the Congo State came into existence. On August 10 of last year the merchants established in the Lower Congo (of whom there remain a few) petitioned the king to reduce taxation. After pointing out the heavy import and export duty on goods and produce (20*s.* per ton on palm-oil, for instance) and showing how small the existing export trade already was, owing to the taxes and emigration of native labour, due to "the means employed in raising native levies," the petitioners went on to say: "We do not disguise from ourselves that business in the Lower Congo is practically *nil*.... Each of us," continues the petition, "consistently hopes for an increase in trade; but these hopes appear to us more and more unreliable, and the

Government of the Congo State, instead of coming to aid us, imposes increased and too onerous taxes."

[280] The figures for 1900 are based upon the known sale on the Antwerp market by the State brokers in 1900 of 1828 tons of rubber and 153,445 kilos. of ivory, worked out at an average of 6 francs per kilo. for rubber (1115 kilos, to the ton) and 18 francs per kilo, for ivory. I believe a proportion of the produce imported was held in stock on account of the poor state of the rubber market.

[281] "There is no trade, properly so called," says Mr. Codrington, "on the Congo coast of Tanganyika, but all rubber and ivory is regarded as the property of the State, and has to be surrendered by the natives in fixed quantities annually. The natives are, however, continually in rebellion, and the country is unsafe, except in the immediate vicinity of the military garrisons, and within the sphere of influence of the missionaries."

[282] As was anticipated, the acquirement from Spain for purposes of exploitation of a portion of the Muni territory (which was recently handed over to Spain by France) by the Belgian "clique" has been followed by the usual results. A correspondent, whose name commands universal respect, and who is in a position to speak *de visu* on the subject, wrote to an English friend recently that "atrocities" were going merrily on; natives being shot down, and villages burnt in the course of "ivory collecting" by the Belgian concessionnaires; "outrages on the villagers are indiscriminate," the writer adds. The same "clique" is threatening Fernando Po.

[283] Apart from the large quantities of rifles, cap-guns, and ammunition imported

into the Congo State for the arming and equipment of the soldiers, regular and irregular, it is morally certain, although not easy to prove, that the agents of the State and the agents of the *Domaine Privé* Companies encourage some of the biggest and most powerful chiefs of the Upper Congo to obtain ivory for them by presents of repeating-rifles and ammunition. In this connection a M. Léon. C. Berthier, writing from the French Upper Congo to the Paris organ *La Dépêche Coloniale* (issue July 16, 1902), says: "The M'Bomu (a branch of the Upper Ubanghi, which forms the frontier between the French and Congolese possessions, and which pursues its course to the Bahr-el-Ghazal), here very wide, forms the southern base of the square; this is the route where the ivory passes *sous notre barbe* to be sold to the Belgians on the other bank, *who pay for it in Albini rifles*, notwithstanding all the Acts of Berlin and Brussels, which forbid even the sale of percussion-cap guns!" The writer goes on to assert that he has documents to prove his statements.

[284] Mary Kingsley, in the "Story of West Africa."

[285] Excluding specie. The figures are taken from the Parliamentary Report, June 1902.

[286] *Sierra Leone Royal Gazette*, April 18th, 1902.

[287] Estimated. Appropriation Ordinance, 1902.

[288] "Railways and Telegraphs," Appropriation Ordinance, 1902.

[289] Colonial Office Report, No. 324. On page 8 of the same Report the figures a given as £29,126 18s. 7d. I cannot explain the

difference.

[290] *Sierra Leone Royal Gazette*, April 18th, 1902.

[291] *Idem.*

[292] Estimated.

[293] The figures for 1900 do not include the expenses of the Ashanti expedition.

[294] Including exports of specie.

[295] Ordinary for 1897, 1898, 1899 and 1900; extraordinary for 1897, 1898 and 1899.

[296] Sir Matthew Nathan's report on the Northern Territories (No. 357—issued July 1902) says: "The expenditure in 1901 has not yet been completely estimated." Farther on he estimates the expenditure for 1902 at £52,381 11s. 7d. The expenditure is, therefore, largely increasing. The above amount includes £23,038 11s. 7d. or military purposes.

[297] According to Lieutenant-Colonel Morris (C.O. Report, No. 35) the revenue in 1901 was £7415 4s. 3d. It was estimated at £8000; and the estimate for 1902 is also £8000.

[298] Including £97,769 paid back to the Imperial Government for cost of expenditure on Ashanti expedition.

[299] Official statement, dated March 1902:—1st section, 39¼ miles long, open to traffic; and section, of 9¾ miles, "approaching completion."

[300] Colonial Office Report, No. 344:—Sum borrowed to end 1900, apparently £798,000 (£220,000, 1898; £578,000, 1899).

[301] *Idem.*

[302] Railway development, £578,000;

harbour works at Accra, £98,000.

[303] Estimated.

[304] Colonial Office Report, No. 348.

[305] *Idem.*

[306] If for re-sale.

[307] *Idem.*

[308] One mile—1609 metres.

[309] In 1901 there was an increase of 4600 tons of palm oil and kernels exported compared with the previous year.

[310] Wallach.

[311] Late Lieutenant-Colonel Northcote's estimate. It does not include the portion of the Anglo-German neutral territory, which is eventually to be incorporated within the British sphere, according to the Anglo-German Convention of November 1899.

[312] The principal towns of the Protectorate are Ibadan (population 180,000), Abbeokuta (population 150,000), Oyo (population 50,000).

[313] If we assume the population of Northern Nigeria to be 30 millions, this gives us a rough total, exclusive of Ashanti, of 33,218,324 inhabitants to 645,000 square miles of territory; or not far short of the population of France, in a territory as large as France and Germany, with a good half of Austria-Hungary thrown in.

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