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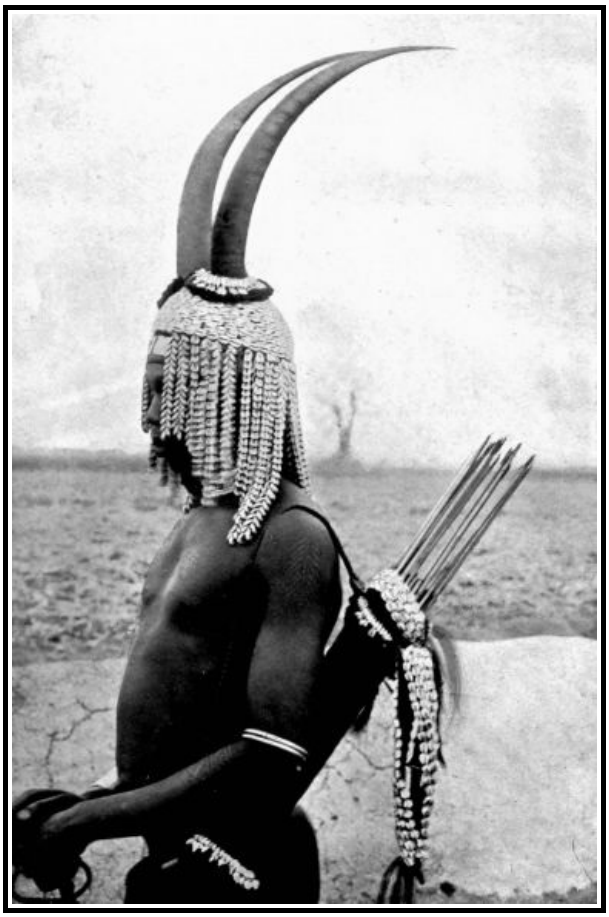
A CAMERA ACTRESS IN THE WILDS OF TOGOLAND



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KONKOMBWA WARRIOR IN FULL GALA DRESS

The helmet is a calabash, elaborately ornamented with cowrie shells, and surmounted by a fine pair of roan antelope horns. Other less lucky warriors, or less clever hunters, content themselves with the smaller horns of the commoner puku antelope. Note the beautifully ornamented quiver filled with poisoned arrows.

A CAMERA ACTRESS
IN THE WILDS OF TOGOLAND

THE ADVENTURES, OBSERVATIONS & EXPERIENCES OF A CINEMATOGRAPH ACTRESS IN WEST AFRICAN FORESTS WHILST COLLECTING FILMS DEPICTING NATIVE LIFE AND WHEN POSING AS THE WHITE WOMAN IN ANGLO-AFRICAN CINEMATOGRAPH DRAMAS

BY

MISS M. GEHRTS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MAJOR H. SCHOMBURGK

WITH 65 ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP

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INTRODUCTION

By Major H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.

It was after my return from my first West African cinema expedition, in June 1913, that I made up my mind to try and film native dramas in their true and proper settings.

My aim was to visualise, as it were, for the European public, scenes from African native life as it once was all over the continent, and as it is even now in the more remote and seldom-visited parts; and it was further my object to so present the various incidents as to ensure their being pleasing and interesting to all classes and conditions of people.

To this end, then, it became necessary for me to find a white woman capable of acting the principal parts, supported by native supers. My thoughts at once reverted to Miss Gehrts, a lady with whom I have been acquainted for some little while, and whom I knew to be a keen sportswoman, a good rider, and possessed of histrionic ability of no mean order.

It did not take me long to persuade her to accept the offer I made her; but her parents raised many objections, based principally on the supposed dangers and privations which they assumed—not altogether wrongly—to be inseparable from the trip. These objections, however, were eventually overcome, the enterprise was undertaken and brought to a successful conclusion, and this book is one result of it.

Personally, I must confess to not being altogether favourably impressed with the ordinary African "travel book" of the typical globe-trotting woman writer: the kind of one, I mean, who either conscientiously and carefully hugs the coast, or else ventures but a little way into the hinterland along the ordinary caravan routes, and then puts upon record a long string of facts and fancies which only serve to raise a smile on the faces of those who really know their Africa, exemplifying, as they almost invariably do, that, with regard to this vast and most wonderful continent, more than perhaps anywhere else, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Miss Gehrts' book—and I say so frankly and freely without fear or favour—is not of this sort. She quitted the beaten track altogether; so much so that north of Sokode she was absolutely the first and only white woman the natives had ever beheld. She had, therefore, the satisfaction of seeing these interesting peoples—the Tschaudjo, the Konkombwa, the Tschokossi, and many others—in their original unspoilt state of free and proud savagedom.

I am pleased to say that she appreciated the opportunities afforded her, using her powers of observation to very good purpose indeed, and with results that were not a little surprising even to old dwellers in the country. For instance, it was she who discovered the curious industry of making beads from palm nuts, described in Chapter VII, as also the unique fortified native village of which a plan and drawing, as well as a full and most interesting description, will be found in Chapter XII.

For these reasons I am inclined to dissent from the view, expressed by her in her foreword, that the book possesses no scientific value. I also disagree with most of what she has written in the opening chapter concerning myself: it is far too flattering.

On the other hand I cannot praise too highly the work done by her in connection with the expedition. I am only afraid that no reader will either appreciate or understand, from her very self-restrained narrative, what she really underwent while acting in the dramatic pieces.

Miss Gehrts also took charge of the commissariat, and I am sure that every member of the expedition will be only too pleased to certify that a better could not have been evolved than the one that was run so easily and beautifully by "our little mother," as the "boys" used to call her.

Finally, I should like to say that this book possesses the distinction of being the first published record of a journey through Togoland ever written by anybody, man or woman, black or white. It is, therefore, in a sense unique, and I wish it all the success that, in my humble opinion, it deserves. I cannot say more: nor can I say less.

HANS SCHOMBURGK.

London, *July 9, 1914.*

FOREWORD

In the beginning, when I first went out to West Africa, it had never entered into my head for a single instant that my experiences there might form the subject of a book. But I fell into the habit of keeping a diary of my journeyings, and afterwards many of my friends, as also other people in a position to judge, seemed to think it almost a pity that the adventures and impressions of the first white woman to travel through Togoland from the sea to the northern border and back again, should go unrecorded. It was pointed out to me, too, that the fact of my being the first cinema actress to perform in savage Africa, and with savages as "supers," would most certainly add to the interest, even if it did not enhance the value, of such a record.

In this way the present volume came into being: a creation born—to be perfectly and absolutely frank—of egoism and flattered vanity. I should like to say at the outset, however, that it does not make any pretence to add to the sum of human knowledge in a scientific sense; it is merely a plain and simple narrative of a girl's seeings and doings amongst strange and primitive folk living in a remote and little known land. Still, should there be found in it anything new of anthropological or ethnological value, it will be to me an added pleasure; for I particularly tried, to the best of my ability, to keep my eyes and ears open for the reception of such. Likewise, I shall be glad if this, my first attempt at authorship, helps to win friends for the colonial cause, and tends to dispel the altogether erroneous idea anent West Africa being, in the sense in which the phrase is usually interpreted and understood, the "white man's grave." x

Speaking for myself and on the whole, I was both healthy and happy out there. I received nothing but kindness from white and black people alike; so much so, indeed, that I have come to love and admire the country into which I first adventured myself with feelings akin to fear and repulsion. Africa, in short, has cast her spell over me, as she does, I am told, over most others. Even as I write these few last lines I can feel "the call of the wild" stirring my blood.

In concluding this brief foreword, I should wish to be permitted to thank His Highness the Duke of Mecklenburg, Governor of Togoland, whose personal interest in the welfare of the expedition, shown in many ways and at divers times, made it possible for us to carry it out in its entirety on the lines originally laid down.

My thanks are also due to Commander Triebe, of the S.S. *Henny Woermamm*, for many kindnesses and courtesies received on the outward voyage, as well as to his colleague, Captain Pankow, of the *Eleonore Woermamm*, for other similar evidences of good-will on the voyage home; to Lieutenant von Rentzel, who so kindly placed his house at our disposal on our first arrival in Lome, the capital and port of Togo; and to Mr. Kuepers, the head-master of the Government school in Sokode, for welcome hospitality freely extended to us. xi

Especially, too, am I grateful to Captain von Hirschfeld, District Commissioner of Mangu, who not only showed us personally every hospitality and kindness during visits extending altogether to over a month, but who also went out of his way, at considerable trouble and inconvenience, to help us in filming many subjects, scenes, and incidents of native life, which we should otherwise hardly have been able to secure; his efforts in this latter direction being ably seconded by his two European assistants, Messrs Sonntag and Gardin.

Mr. Muckè, of Bassari, also showed us many kindnesses for which I am sincerely grateful; and my best thanks are likewise due to Herr von Parpart, District Commissioner of Sokode, whose hospitality on our return journey to the coast made our last evening in the African bush an outstandingly pleasant recollection. Mr. James S. Hodgson, our camera man, besides proving himself a first-rate and exceedingly careful operator, kept us lively of an evening by his clever playing on the mandoline, while his imperturbable good-humour, even in the most trying circumstances, helped to make our trip a pleasant and agreeable one.

Finally, I should wish to thank my friend, Mr. C. L. McCluer Stevens, of "Ivydene," New Malden, Surrey, author and journalist, for the skilful and painstaking manner in which he has edited my rough manuscript and put it in trim for the publishers, as well as for valuable advice and help regarding the treatment and scope of the various chapters and the work as a whole. xii

M. GEHRTS.

LONDON, *July 1, 1914*.

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A CAMERA ACTRESS IN THE WILDS OF TOGOLAND

CHAPTER I

LONDON TO LOME

Actresses who, like myself, specialise in cinema productions, frequently find themselves "up against" all sorts of queer propositions of a business character; and we are not, therefore, easily surprised out of that orthodox professional calm, which we all try, more or less successfully, to cultivate.

When, however, it was suggested to me, early last summer, that I should take a trip into the far interior of Africa, in a district where no white woman had ever been before, in order to play "leading lady" in a series of dramas of native life, I confess to having been for once completely taken aback.

Nor did even the fact that the proposed expedition was being financed and personally conducted by Major Hans Schomburgk, F.R.G.S., the well-known African explorer and hunter, completely reassure me. I hesitated long. But eventually the prospect of shaking the dust of cities from my feet for awhile, and living the (very much) simple life amongst unspoilt children of nature in altogether novel surroundings, tempted me into 18
acquiescence; and—greatly against the advice of my relatives and friends—I "took on" the job.

Largely I was influenced in my decision by the fact of my having known Major Schomburgk for some time previously, for we are both natives of Hamburg.

Although not perhaps so well known in England—outside of scientific circles—as he is in Germany, he can nevertheless, if he wishes to, truthfully lay claim to be one of the most successful African explorers and big-game hunters now living; and as his name will figure pretty prominently in the pages of this book, a brief description of him and his work may not be out of place.

Thirty-three years of age, of medium stature and somewhat slim build, he is nevertheless endowed with great physical strength. The last sixteen years of his life—since he was a lad of seventeen, that is to say—have been spent almost entirely in Africa, hunting, fighting, and exploring.

Speaking English like a native, he served in the Natal Mounted Police, and in the last Boer War, for which he has the medal, with four clasps. As a hunter, it is no exaggeration to say that his prowess is famed throughout Africa. No fewer than sixty-three full-grown elephants have fallen to his rifle, and he once bagged four big tuskers in four shots—two rights and two lefts.

Twice he has crossed Africa. His most adventurous trip—one of five years' duration—was from the Victoria Falls to Angola, Portuguese West Africa, thence back through the Congo Free State, Northern Rhodesia, and German East Africa, coming out eventually at Dar es Salam, near Zanzibar. During the whole of that time he 19
never saw a railway, or slept in a stone house. For an entire year he was exploring the source of the Zambesi, in the Walunde country, which had not been previously visited by white people; and it was during this expedition that he trapped, and brought to Europe alive, a specimen of the East African elephant, a feat that had been frequently attempted before, but never successfully performed.

He was, too, the first white man to secure alive specimens of the rare pygmy hippopotamus, an animal that in its native state is so exceedingly scarce and shy that its very existence even was denied up till comparatively recently by most African hunters and explorers.

Major Schomburgk knew better, however, for he had actually seen one of the miniature creatures during an early trip into the West African hinterland; and in 1911, after infinite difficulty, and some danger, he succeeded in trapping no fewer than five living specimens, and, what is more to the point, conveying them from the interior down to the sea-coast, whence they were safely shipped to Europe.

Two of these are now in the London "Zoo"—one specimen having been presented by the Duke of Bedford, who bought it from Mr. Carl Hagenbeck, for whom Major Schomburgk was acting; the other three are in the New York Zoological Gardens. All five "pygmys," I may mention, were shown to the Kaiser, who was greatly interested in the curious little beasts, and warmly congratulated their captor on his success.

In addition to those mentioned above, Major Schomburgk has also discovered and named many hitherto 20
unknown species of African fauna, including a rare new buffalo, the *Bubalus Schomburgki*.

Nor was this the first cinema expedition that he had organised and led into the West African hinterland. Scarcely three weeks prior to the date when he first approached me with an offer to go out to Togo as leading (and only) lady, he had returned home from conducting a similar enterprise into the hinterlands of Liberia and Togo. But that one was not a success; one reason being, he informed me, that the negative stock he took out was not the right kind for the tropics. Then, too, his camera man proved a failure.

The net result was that the money invested in financing the expedition was practically all lost. This time he hoped, profiting by experience, to attain to far better results, and, after I had signed my contract, he infected me with his enthusiasm, so that I grew quite learned—in theory—about celluloid ribbon, reels, and so forth.

I may say at once that we succeeded even beyond our expectations. In fact, it has been admitted since by experts, that the collection of films we brought back, dramatic, ethnographic, and anthropologic, were the finest that ever came out of the tropics. I can say this without egotism, and even without appearing unduly to flatter Major Schomburgk, since the pictures were not taken by either of us, but by his camera man, Mr. James Hodgson. Of course, we both of us acted in the dramatic films, but that is another matter.

It was on August 26th, following the necessary preliminary preparations in London, that we sailed from 21
Dover in the "good ship"—I believe that is the accepted nautical term—*Henny Woermamm*, bound for Lome, which is the capital and port of Togo, a tiny German protectorate wedged in between the Gold Coast Colony on the west and Dahomey on the east.

The coast-line is only thirty-two miles long, but inland the country widens out a lot, and it was for this

"hinterland"—largely unknown and uncharted—that we were bound.

I must confess to a certain feeling of pleasurable excitement—what girl would not experience such?—on the occasion of this first start on what will in all probability always stand out in memory's record as the longest and most adventurous journey of my life.

Our prime business was, of course, to film pictures, and we set to work promptly. Directly we got on board the tender, we commenced photographing the first scene in a drama entitled *Odd Man Out*, the scenario of which had already been put together in London, and concerning the plot of which I shall have more to say presently.

Naturally our business excited the curiosity of the other passengers, and as the tug drew near to the great liner, I could see that the rails of the decks nearest to us were lined with row on row of the passengers who had joined the vessel at Hamburg, all eagerly intent on watching us and our doings; and as we stepped on board, all eyes were directed at us, and many smiled a kindly greeting. As for me, however, during those first few hours 22
my one wish was to be alone, to arrange my cabin, unpack my belongings, and generally make my surroundings as comfortable and homelike as possible.

It is the fashion of old West African travellers to protest that the pleasures and amenities of the voyage do not really begin until Madeira is passed, but as far as I was concerned I had quite settled down to life on board after our first day at sea. We played the usual ship's games, sang, talked, and I am afraid that most of us, old as well as young, married and single, flirted a little bit. I soon gathered round me quite a small circle of friends. They were mostly men friends, but this was not exactly my fault. An actress is an actress. *Que voulez-vous?*

And here I feel that I must say how greatly I appreciated the kindness and attention I received during the voyage from the ship's officers. The captain, a most fatherly old gentleman, the oldest officer and the commodore of the fleet of mail steamers to which the *Henny Woermamm* belongs, was unceasing in his efforts to do all he could for my comfort and convenience. The food, too, was excellent, and the whole surroundings most comfortable, not to say luxurious; equal, in fact, to those of any first-class hotel.

Curious how one gets used to the throbbing of the engines on board ship, and the vibration of the propeller. When they suddenly ceased, very early one morning, I was wide awake immediately. For a few moments I lay quite still, wondering lazily what was the matter. Then it suddenly flashed upon my mind that we must be at Madeira, and all desire for further sleep promptly vanished. I jumped up, peeped out of my port-hole, saw at 23
once that it was even as I had surmised, and at once I proceeded to dress and hurry on deck.

It was Sunday morning. Before my eyes lay Madeira. Never in all my life had I seen anything one-half so beautiful. I was quite taken aback by the ethereal loveliness of the picture, and could only stand still and gaze at it in speechless admiration.

I was almost the first on deck, and so I had it all to myself for a while, and I could drink in the beauty of it, and enjoy it at my leisure. But soon the other passengers came pouring up from below in ever increasing numbers, and all became bustle, noise, and animation. Native boys swam out and round the ship in shoals, shouting, jabbering, and gesticulating, and diving for pennies which were thrown to them by the passengers.

After breakfast we went ashore, hired a motor-car, and drove up the mountain side to a spot whence a magnificent view is obtained of the whole of the bay, harbour, and town. The road up is exceedingly steep, and it was, take it altogether, the most exciting motor ride I ever experienced. I was, in fact, afraid at times that the car would slip backwards.

But if the ride up was exciting, it was nothing by comparison with the ride down. This return journey is made by means of queer-looking native sleighs over a smooth cobble-paved, but exceedingly steep road. Each of these sleighs will accommodate two passengers, and is manipulated by a couple of natives, who stand bolt upright on the elongated runners that project behind, and guide its course with their feet. 24

It is very like tobogganing, minus the snow and ice, and most of the passengers made light of it, but to my mind it was a rather terrifying and not altogether pleasant experience; for the road is inclined in places at an angle of something like ninety degrees, there are many sharp curves, and the crazy little vehicles fly downwards with the rapidity of lightning. Nevertheless, so skilful are the natives that I was assured that accidents are practically unknown.

After our ride our party went together into the town, and I found it very interesting to watch the passengers busily engaged in buying curios, and specimens of native work, to take home to their friends. Everybody haggled to get the price as low as possible; and yet afterwards, when they got back on board ship, everybody came to the conclusion that they had been "had."

We utilised, too, our short stay on shore to film yet another scene in the *Odd Man Out* drama, this being taken in the gardens amidst beautiful tropical vegetation; and one of the curious island sledges, drawn by oxen, was also introduced. In fact, I may say here that we hardly ever missed a suitable opportunity throughout the voyage to get local colour for this our first cinema play, the early scenes in which are concerned with a young white woman going out to join her husband in the wilds of Central Africa. When later on, for instance, we passed a mail steamer in mid-ocean, the camera was got ready, and I was set to pose and act on deck, with the big ship flitting past in the background as a setting. We had some gorgeous sunsets, too, and these also we 25
pressed into our service, so to speak.

The "Blue Peter" flying from the masthead is the signal for everybody to hurry on board, and soon the anchor is up, the screw starts to revolve, and we resume our journey. Between Madeira and Las Palmas we enjoyed two of the lovely sunsets mentioned above. I never saw anything to equal them, and certainly I could never have imagined anything half so beautiful. If a painter could have painted them exactly true to nature, I am quite sure that he would have been laughed at as a futurist, or something artistically as dreadful; because no one, who had not seen the original, would have believed in the reality of his vivid colour effects.

On the morning of September 1st we passed Teneriffe, but only stopped there for quite a short while to put

off a few passengers. At noon we anchored at Las Palmas, where we had a long wait. A party of us went ashore, and visited the cathedral and the few other "sights" that the place boasts of.

Then we hired a motor-car for a drive up to the Hotel Monte. At least, the chauffeur who drove us called his conveyance a motor-car, but it was the awfullest type of its kind I ever came across. The bumping was terrific, but looking over and under to try to ascertain the reason I discovered to my amazement that one of the wheels was practically destitute of any vestige of a tyre. About every ten minutes, too, we had to stop dead, because the motor got hot, and there was no water available to cool it.

At last, after a thorough shaking-up, the worst I think I ever had in my life, we arrived at the hotel, and had 26
our tea. The view from the summit made amends in part for the disagreeableness of the drive. It was superb. It struck me as being very strange, however, that the one side of the mountain is quite bleak and bare, whilst the other is beautifully green and wooded.

In Las Palmas I saw for the first time women washing the family linen at the sides of the roads in the streams that flow downwards through pebble and shingle. The Las Palmas roads, by the way, are atrocious; but the strongly built mail-coaches, each drawn by six mules, make light of their unevennesses.

At five o'clock we paid a visit to S.M.S. *Bremen*, which lay in the harbour near the *Henny Woermamm*. Three officers belonging to her had accompanied us as far as Las Palmas, and we had been great friends with them, and now they invited us to come on board their vessel for a farewell visit. Champagne was produced, and I took a couple of glasses and found they did me good, the heat being very great, and the ride up to the Hotel Monte and back dreadfully dry and dusty.

Our captain had fixed six o'clock as the hour of departure, but we did not actually start until eleven. The ship seemed almost unnaturally quiet now that the naval officers had left her, for they were always bright and jolly, and I must confess that I had got to like "my little boys in blue," as I had christened them, very much indeed. However, I am naturally light-hearted, so I quickly banished sadness, consoling myself with the reflection that 27
there are, after all, heaps of nice men in the world.

At length Lome hove in sight, and while I was being lowered, together with three other passengers, into the boat that was to take us ashore, the band struck up a song that was pretty popular amongst the passengers on board, "Do you think that I love you because I have danced with you?" and on deck stood an army lieutenant who was going to join his regiment in Kamerun, and with whom I had often danced. I was convulsed with laughter, because I knew that it was all his work. After this ditty came "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and looking back from the boat I saw my dear old captain, and an elderly civilian gentleman who had paid me a good deal of attention, standing on deck with a huge bath towel between them, on which they were pretending to dry their tears. It was exceedingly comical.

Landing at Lome is not at all a simple matter. First one has to be lowered into the boat from the deck of the steamer in what is called a "mammy chair"—mammy being a coast term for woman. It is a sort of wooden skip, something like one of the old-fashioned swing-boats one sees at village fairs.

The passage from ship to shore is exciting, and in bad weather it is even considered dangerous, and there is considerable surf; but the sea happened fortunately to be calm when we got there. Otherwise our arrival was inopportune. On the day before a member of the tiny European colony there had died of yellow fever, and all the flags were at half-mast.

This rather cast a damper over our spirits, although nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy shown 28
us by the Togo officials, from the highest to the lowest. The custom-house officers hurried over the necessary formalities as quickly as possible; and although the governor, H.H. the Duke of Mecklenburg, was unable to receive us, being engaged with Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, who had come to pay him an official visit, he had kindly arranged quarters for us, and done everything in his power to welcome us and make us comfortable.

His adjutant, Lieutenant von Rentzel, who was in hospital at the time, put his house and servants at the disposal of our party, and we had a jolly dinner party there that night, at which I played the part of hostess. He also lent me personally a rickshaw, and a boy to draw it, so that I might be able to see what there was to see in and about the town with the minimum of fatigue and inconvenience.

However, I had not much time to devote to sight-seeing, for very early on the morning after our arrival we set out to journey up country to a place called Atakpame, distant about 110 miles from Lome. A railway runs so far; and at the rail-head civilisation may be said to come abruptly to an end.

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CHAPTER II

HOW WE FILMED "THE WHITE GODDESS OF THE WANGORA"

Oh that railway journey! Shall I ever forget it? The dust and heat were awful, and owing to some unaccountable oversight, nobody had thought to lay in any provisions for the trip, which lasted from six o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon. The only food we were able to obtain *en route* consisted of monkey nuts. Our thirst, however, we quenched quite satisfactorily with luscious, juicy pine-apples, of which the natives brought us unlimited supplies at every stopping-place, offering them clamorously for sale at the uniform rate of one penny each.

Arrived at Atakpame, we were given a right royal welcome by Baron Codelli von Fahnenfeld, who is building for the German Government, at Kamina near by, an immense wireless station, intended to communicate direct with the wireless station at Nauen, just outside Berlin.

The baron first introduced to me my "house," a straw hut, like all the dwellings hereabouts, but, as he proudly pointed out, it was, unlike them, possessed of a cement floor. I duly thanked him, and tried to smile my gratitude. But my heart misgave me, for to my mind it seemed to lack pretty well all the essentials that a dwelling-place should by rights possess.

To begin with, it most certainly was not weather-proof, for I could see, through the interstices of the loosely- 30
thatched roof, the stars twinkling far above. The wind blew in the front and out at the back, and I was conscious, all the time I was dressing for dinner, that I was the cynosure of several hundred pairs of eyes, belonging to as many natives, men and women, who, "clad in the climate," as the saying is out there, crowded in serried ranks all round the wattle walls, anxious for a glimpse through the all too numerous chinks at the wonderful white woman timidly robing and disrobing within.

But dinner made amends for everything. We were the baron's guests for that evening. It was a glorious, gorgeous meal, beautifully prepared and perfectly served under conditions which seemed ideal to me, partly no doubt because they were so altogether novel. The warm African night was absolutely still, save for the continual monotonous humming of myriads of insects. All around was the silent mysterious bush, from which came no sound, either of man, or of beast, or of bird.

And we—we were in a little gastronomic world of our own; a tiny bit of London, or Paris, or Berlin, planted out in the wild. There was the same sheen of damask napery, the same glitter of crystal and silver, the same faint, almost imperceptible perfume of exotics, as one associates mentally with, say, the Ritz or the Savoy. Only the servitors here, instead of wearing black clothes and having white faces, were ebon black in colour, and their liveries were white, all white, from head to foot, save for the silver blazonry of the baron's crest.

Oh, how I enjoyed this my first real meal in the real heart of Africa! The memory of the taste of it lingers on 31
my palate yet, even as I write. Nothing was lacking, nothing was *de trop*. The caviare was as good as the consommé, and both were perfect. The partridge *en casserol* was hot, juicy, and tender. The spring lamb with asparagus shoots was a dream. The peach Melba melted in one's mouth. The coffee was as good as any I have tasted in Vienna, which is only another way of saying that it was the very best possible. The wines, like the liqueurs, were just "it." When my host informed me, over our cigarettes, that all the comestibles came out of cans, I simply could not believe it. But it was the truth, of course, nevertheless. Only canned provisions are available in the Togo hinterland, if one excepts chickens and eggs, and an occasional joint of very tough and very insipid beef.

After dinner, however, came my first real African ordeal. Wishful to do honour to our genial host, I had donned one of my prettiest low-necked frocks, and the mosquitoes took a mean and dastardly advantage of my innocent inexperience. The baron and Major Schomburgk swathed me from head to foot in blankets and tablecloths, so that I looked like an Egyptian mummy. Nevertheless, ere bedtime, I grew unbeautifully speckled, and very, very lumpy.

I had almost forgotten to record that the dinner was served in an open thatched house, like my own, but somewhat larger, so that the insects had free access everywhere. The light came from one of Baron Codelli's acetylene motor-bike lamps, placed at some distance from the table. A lamp placed anywhere on, or near the 32
table, attracts insects in such countless myriads as to render eating and drinking almost out of the question.

I slept fairly well through my first night in the African bush, having previously learnt to lie perfectly straight and still on the narrow camp bedsteads that are everywhere in vogue in Togo. If one wriggles about under one's mosquito-net, or throws one's arms about, the bloodthirsty little brutes are sure to get at one, and then woe betide the sleeper. He, or she, becomes the sleeper awakened with a vengeance.

On rising at sunrise, I asked quite innocently for my bath. My native boy grinned; and pointed to a bucket hanging from the top of a tall pole in the open compound fronting my hut. At the same time he explained by gestures that by pulling out, by means of a cord that was attached to it, the bung in the bottom, I could manage to obtain a very good imitation of a genuine shower-bath.

Nobody seemed to think that there was anything amiss in the publicity that must of necessity have attached to the proposed performance, but I was of a different opinion. I shirked my bath for that one morning, and during the afternoon my boy, acting on my instructions, built a wattle screen round the compound.

I was looking forward to start rehearsing that day on the first of our native plays, which we had entitled tentatively, *The White Goddess of the Wangora*; but then I knew nothing at the time of the delays incidental to any kind of work in which natives play a part.

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR
Painted in Togoland, by Ernst Vollbehr of München.
The native is a Konkombwa.

Time is of no value whatever to these wild and woolly savages, and as we had of necessity to get together a small army of several hundred "supers," literally weeks elapsed before we were ready. I chafed dreadfully at the delay, but there was no help for it. The requisite number of natives had to be laboriously collected from a score or more of villages scattered over a wide area of country, and then, when we had got them together, everything had to be explained to them over and over again through the medium of three or four different interpreters. In fact, it was nothing but talk, talk, talk, palaver, palaver, palaver, from morning till night. 33

There was considerable difficulty, too, in getting them to face the camera. Like most savages, these Togo natives have an inherent rooted aversion to being photographed. Luckily, however, Major Schomburgk had taken moving pictures of some of their villages during a previous expedition he had led into these parts, and some of the very natives we had engaged figured in them.

So, as we had brought a projecting machine with us, we made shift to rig up a screen, and showed them themselves, their wives and their little ones, going about their ordinary avocations in their own homes. The effect was instantaneous. They had, of course, seen ordinary photographs before, but none of them had ever beheld any moving pictures. Now they all wanted to come into one; and whereas before the most of them hung back, they were now only too anxious to push themselves in the forefront of every scene.

Only one act they shirked. This was a battle scene in which several of the warriors were supposed to be slain. We had the greatest difficulty in persuading even one native to "act dead." Their objection, they explained, was due to the fact that they believed that if they played at being dead before the white man's mysterious machine, they would most likely be dead in reality before morning. 34

At length, by the promise of a liberal bonus, one warrior, greatly daring, consented to play the part. The next morning the head interpreter knocked at the door of my hut to inform me that there were "eight dead natives lying in the compound outside."

"What!" I screamed, in great alarm. And, hastily donning my dressing-gown, I ran out.

But I need not have got scared. The eight were not really defunct. They were merely shamming death, and wanted me to see how well they could do it, with a view to being taken on for the part in the forthcoming day's rehearsal.

The one who had played dead the day before had not of course died during the night, as they more than half expected he would have done, and they were consequently now only too willing and anxious to follow the lead he had set them.

At length the long, wearisome series of preliminary rehearsals came to an end. Everybody was supposed to be part perfect, and we made ready to film the play.

Up to this I had, of course, rehearsed in ordinary attire. Now I had to don native dress; and as I am a stickler for realism I insisted—against Major Schomburgk's advice—in playing in bare feet and legs, bare shoulders and arms, and with no head covering.

As the principal scenes were laid out of doors in the middle of the bush, and under a blazing tropical sun, this, as was pointed out to me, was a pretty "big order." Nevertheless, I thought I could "stick it"; and, as a matter of fact, I did, though I suffered for it afterwards. 35

My part was, of course, that of the "White Goddess." I was supposed to have been cast ashore as a babe on the coast of Togo, and taken up-country by the savages who found me, and who afterwards placed me in charge of their principal ju-ju shrine, paying me, in the course of time, almost divine honours.

I had grown to womanhood without ever having seen one of my own colour and race, and when a white hunter (Major Schomburgk) was taken prisoner by the tribe whose high priestess I was, I was naturally attracted to him. Bound hand and foot, he was cast into a hut, preparatory to being put to death. I had to free him from his bonds, and guide him in a wild flight for freedom over rocks and bushes, through foaming streams, and up hill and down dale.

All this I did. It is the great scene of the play, and to film it took one whole day. Major Schomburgk had given strict orders for all our eight hundred or so of supers to muster at 6 A.M. sharp, but with the irritating perverseness of natives they did not put in an appearance until 10 A.M., when, of course, the sun was already high in the heavens.

This added tremendously to my trials and tribulations, and was, in fact, to a great extent the cause of my subsequent breakdown. By noon, when the sun was directly overhead, it was so hot that the operator was 36
unable to bear to touch with his ungloved hand the brass work of his machine.

How I got through the afternoon's work I don't know to this day. I managed it somehow. There is a marvellous sustaining power in the mere nervous tension of acting, and the click, click, click of the camera helps to keep one tuned up as it were. But directly it was all over I fell fainting on my camp bed in my hut, and the doctor had to be called in. My feet were all cut and scarred, and full of thorns and jiggers.[1] My legs, too, were pretty badly scratched and torn. And, to crown all, I had got a "touch of the sun."

[1] Also known as the chigoes and the sand-flea.

The next day I was in a high fever, and the day after that in a higher one. Malaria had gripped me, and I really thought at one time that my first African photo-play rehearsal was going to be my last one. Even the doctor looked grave after the first week or so. "You have got malarial fever," he explained, "and you have got it pretty badly. Your spleen is about four times larger than it ought to be, and if you cough it will probably burst."

As at that time I was troubled with an almost incessant cough, this was not consoling. However, liberal doses of quinine, repeated at frequent intervals, cured me at last, and in order to celebrate my convalescence, as soon as I felt well enough I prepared a little dinner with my own hands, and invited Baron Codelli and Major Schomburgk to my hut to partake of it.

By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

REHEARSING FOR THE CINEMA

Another scene from the moving picture play "The White Goddess of the Wangora." Note the intent look on the little black girl's face, and the pleased expression on that of the authoress. The black lady on the left is the head "super" amongst the native women at Kamina.

By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

PLAYING AN "INTERIOR" SCENE IN A NATIVE DRAMA

The authoress is reclining on a leopard-skin rug, and is supposed to be sleeping, while a "slave-girl"—really a native "super"—fans her with a feather fan. Taken at Kamina.

I rather fancy myself as a cook, and I had prepared, as the *pièce de résistance*, a couple of nice plump fowls. When the dish was uncovered my guests glanced sharply at one another, turned very red, and looked quite 37
uncomfortable.

I could not make out what was the matter, and in my usual impetuous way, I blurted out, plump and plain, the question that was uppermost in my mind.

"Is there anything wrong with the chickens?"

This was too much for their gravity. Both the baron and Schomburgk burst into fits of uncontrollable laughter, and the former ran to fetch his diary.

"Look here," he said, pointing to one of the last entries, "I have already, during the years I have spent in this benighted country, eaten 9863 chickens. Schomburgk has probably eaten *pro rata* at least as many"—the major nodded—"and now you give us two more *as a treat*! O Lord!"

I joined in their laughter then. I had to. And, after all, my little dinner passed off excellently well, for of course there were other dishes. Meanwhile I had learnt one more African lesson. Never, *never*, NEVER offer your guests chicken if there is anything else under the sun obtainable by hook or by crook. Cheese and crackers, if you like; or tinned salmon, or sardines, or even "bully" beef. But the domestic fowl, regarded as more or less of a luxury in Europe, is in Africa absolutely tabu. It is the one article of flesh diet that is all-pervading everywhere out there, and which everybody consequently soon heartily sickens of. As well might one offer a dish of salmon to an Alaskan fisherman; or a ragout of mutton to an Australian boundary rider.

Another lesson I learnt during my long and wearisome illness was never to kill a lizard, the reason being that 38
lizards eat insects, and insects of innumerable and most diverse kinds constitute the principal pests of equatorial Africa. The houses out there swarm with lizards, and they are big ones too, fully eighteen inches or more in length. Nobody dreams of interfering with them. On the contrary, they are everywhere petted and made much of. One old fellow I got quite attached to, and he to me. I always knew him from the others because he had only three legs, having lost the other, probably in an encounter with one of his kind. He was as good as a watch. I used to call him my tea-time lizard, because he always put in an appearance precisely at four o'clock every afternoon.

Schomburgk used to tell me that every lizard was responsible for killing and eating I don't know how many hundreds—or was it thousands?—of white ants daily. Very likely. But all the same the ants did not seem to me to diminish perceptibly. The venomous and vicious little pests swarmed everywhere in incredible numbers. Nothing seemed to come amiss to them. Our operator declared that he once found a lot of them trying to make a meal off a sixteen-pound cannon-ball that he used as a make-weight to the tripod of his machine to prevent it being blown or knocked over, but this I altogether decline to believe. He must have been—well, mistaken. But I can vouch from bitter personal experience that they will devour, in the course of a single night, photographs hung on the walls, and boots left standing on the floor; and once a detachment of them riddled so badly a strong 39
wooden box in which I kept my letters and papers that it fell to pieces in my hands.

Another troublesome insect pest was a kind of big wood-boring beetle, that made its home chiefly in the beams of the roof. These he would riddle so completely that sooner or later the thatch was practically certain to come tumbling about one's ears. While in between whiles he peppered the interior with sawdust from his carpentering operations to such an extent that I was kept continually busy dusting and sweeping it out.

Later, however, when we trekked further up-country right into the real heart of the unexplored hinterland, I learnt that Africa held other even worse insect pests than white ants and wood-boring beetles. But of these more anon.

CHAPTER III

LIFE AT KAMINA

There seems to be no end to trouble when filming cinema plays in equatorial Africa. No sooner had I recovered from my bout of malarial fever than our leader and producer, Major Schomburgk, was stricken down with it, and everything was at sixes and sevens once more.

However, I employed my interval of enforced leisure in making my temporary home as comfortable as possible, and in getting acquainted with the natives, and so managed to pass the time pleasantly and profitably enough.

My nicest hours were those spent before my hut between four o'clock and dark, after the day's work was done. Then I took my tea, and passed the time of day with the women and girls who came with huge calabashes on their heads to get water.

At first they used to hurry by shyly, with eyes downcast, and without speaking. But I laughed and smiled at them, and by degrees, after the first day or two, we became quite friendly. They were chiefly interested in my needlework and my hair. Then one day a thunderstorm broke suddenly while they were near, and I invited them into my hut for shelter and set my gramophone playing. This delighted them immensely, although for a long while they seemed to be more or less frightened of it.

There are some sweet girls amongst them, and many of them are quite modest in their demeanour, and well-behaved, although in the matter of clothes, of course, they have not much to boast of. The young unmarried girls are some of them quite pretty, with lithe graceful figures, beautifully proportioned busts, and well-shaped arms and shoulders.

All of them have to work hard, however, and the existence of the married women especially seemed to me to be one continuous round of drudgery. In fact, the daily life of a native wife out here might well serve the advanced suffragettes at home as a typical, "terrible example" of what my sex has to put up with from "tyrant man."

She has to rise at dawn, sweep out the homestead, fetch water from the river, often far away, do the scanty family washing, tread out the corn, grind it to flour and make it into porridge, gather and prepare for food various wild roots, herbs, and vegetables, cook the family meals, wash and tend the children, and perform a hundred and one other similar duties, while her lord and master is, for the most part, quietly resting "in the shade of the sheltering palm."

Nevertheless, I am bound to say that the women do not appear to mind it, but seem, on the contrary, to be quite happy and contented. And indeed their lives compare very favourably on the whole with the lives led by many married women of the lower classes in the great cities of England, Germany, and elsewhere.

The native husband is, as a rule, of a good-natured and kindly disposition, tolerant to a fault almost, and passionately fond of his children. Domestic quarrels are rare, and "nagging" on the part of the wife—that great source of strife amongst the lower classes in Europe—is practically unknown in Africa. Then, again, if there are no palaces in Togoland, there are likewise no slums. Everybody is well housed, according to native standards, and they have plenty to eat. The children especially are well looked after in this latter respect. There is no "under feeding" of *them*, at all events, and a Togo mother would probably regard as an insult any offer on the part of the State to provide "free meals" for her offspring.

The worst class of natives to get along with are those who have been brought continually into association with Europeans, and have acquired thereby an exaggerated notion of their own importance. Our chief interpreter, for instance, required at first a good deal of keeping in his place, although his views on life and things in general used to afford me considerable amusement.

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CINEMA ACTING IN THE WILDS

The authoress is here shown playing a part in a cinema drama, "The White Goddess of the Wangora." The big trunk in the background is that of a very large "cotton tree," regarded as sacred by the natives. The small tree in the foreground, against which she is leaning, is a pawpaw, valued for its refreshing fruit.

One day, for instance, seeing me rather downcast—it was when I was recovering from my illness—he surprised me by offering to sing to me. I thanked him, and told him to get on with it, expecting to hear some ordinary tuneless native ditty. Instead, he greatly astonished me by singing, in a fairly passable voice, some very nice songs in German. 43

I complimented him, and asked him where he had learnt them. He said, "At the Catholic Mission." Then he went on to inquire whether I had a mother still living, and on my answering him in the affirmative, he remarked: "I, too, have a mother, a dear good woman, and twenty-five brothers and sisters."

I suppose I looked the astonishment I felt, for he hastened to add that his father had five wives. "My father," he remarked, "is a fine big man, with a good figure, and in Togo, if a man has a good figure, he can get plenty of wives."

As my interpreter possessed what he called "a good figure," I asked him if he had many wives. "Oh no," he replied, in quite an offended tone, "I am a scientist, and I only have one wife."

"How scientist?" was my next question, spoken quite gravely.

"Well," he replied, "I understand German."

"And does your wife understand German too?" I inquired.

"Oh dear, no," he answered, "that is forbidden amongst us, because we hold that it is not good for a woman to be educated."

"And why, pray?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "supposing I return home to-night and issue some instructions to my wife, she would probably, assuming her to have been educated, reply: 'Talk to yourself, my husband, not to me; you cannot teach me anything; I am as clever as you are.' As it is, however, she just obeys my instructions, and says nothing. It is better so." 44

I was inclined to laugh just at first at this example of negro philosophy, when it suddenly struck me that I had listened to very similar sentiments expressed by men in far more civilised communities. "The girl I shall choose for my wife," I once overheard an eminent lawyer remark, "will not be one of your new-fangled sort, all fads and fancies, but one of the good old-fashioned kind, who will faithfully minister to the comfort of my home and willingly share my bed."

London lawyer and Togo interpreter—there was scarcely a pin to choose between them as regards their outlook on marital life and its duties and obligations. Both cherished at bottom precisely the same sentiments, and neither's ideal of femininity was one whit higher than the other's.

I also had some differences with my cook. He demanded a lot of money for "extras," and so forth, and the results were, as a rule, distinctly disappointing. I was especially struck with the toughness and tastelessness of the meat served at table, until I discovered, quite by accident, that he was in the habit of making soup out of it for his family and relations, we getting the solid—very much solid—residuum. After that I insisted, much against his wish, in superintending his culinary operations, with the result that we got good palatable food at about one-half the cost.

My best servant, or at all events the one I liked best, was a young girl of about fourteen or fifteen, who acted in our dramas, and was my personal attendant between whiles. She was a really nice little lassie, with no nonsense about her, and an excellent taste as regards the most suitable native attire for me to wear in our 45

various plays, and the best way to drape and arrange it. She, too, was a bit of a philosopher in her way, some of her remarks being exceedingly quaint, and yet sensible.

Once, for instance, when I was attired in evening dress for a certain social function I was attending, she started admiring my costume, and on the spur of the moment I said to her: "How would you like to wear clothes such as I am wearing?" Quick as a flash came the answer: "Ma'am, what one can never own, one must not permit one's self to like." There is a world of meaning in that little sentence—especially for our sex—if one stops to weigh it carefully. Nor does it necessarily apply only to dress, but to—well, other things.

Another use I made of my enforced leisure at this time was to learn to cycle, this being by far the easiest way of getting about in southern Togo, where the roads are fairly good. I had several spills, for it must not be imagined that the Togoland roads, good though they are judged by African standards, are in any way comparable with the macadamised highways one cycles over at home. Still, I persevered, and after a while I became a fairly proficient rider.

One advantage I had, and that was not being hampered in any way as regards dress. One returns to nature in equatorial Africa. No tight skirts, but riding-breeches, in which one can move about easily. No high heels or wafer soles, but good strong boots that are alike serviceable and comfortable. No waved hair, because the waves would not remain in for even half an hour in this hot, damp atmosphere. 46

Of course we were all the while on the look-out for suitable subjects and settings for our pictures. I rigged up a studio out of half a hut, and we filmed many scenes of native life and customs. Amongst other pictures we took was one showing the daily life and work of a native woman, as set forth above. This was entirely my own idea, and when the films came to be developed, and shown in London later on, this one attracted a very great deal of attention indeed.

I found, however, that the native women and girls made far worse subjects for the camera, taking them altogether, than did the men. It was more difficult to get them to pose, or rather, to be strictly accurate, they were always posing whenever the camera started clicking, instead of going about their natural avocations in the ordinary way, which was what I wanted them to do. Their silly giggling, too, used to get on my nerves, and at times made me quite angry.

By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

THE AUTHORESS AND "BODYGUARD" OF TSCHAUDJO HORSEMEN

Miss Gehrts is in the foreground, mounted on her favourite horse, "Nucki." She is really playing in a native drama for the cinema, and her "bodyguard" consists of "supers" drawn from the tribe mentioned above, who are noted for their fearless and splendid riding.

There were other difficulties also as regards the mechanical part of the business. Occasionally the heat was so great that it almost sufficed to melt the films, or even to set fire to them; and they had to be kept stored, therefore, in a special sort of cooling case, built on the principal of the vacuum flask. Later on, when marching in the far north through the Togoland Sudan, the cases containing the films had themselves to be protected from the heat by being swathed in green banana leaves. 47

On October 10th I saw wild monkeys for the first time. Near my hut is a mealie field, and they came there at noon every day to eat their dinners. They are queer little creatures, very cunning and amusing, but very shy, so that it is difficult to get near them and study their antics.

Once or twice I went to a native dance, but I must confess that I was not greatly impressed. It amused me for ten minutes or so, but as the movements are always the same I soon grew tired of watching them. And the noise of the native drums is simply deafening, so much so that it generally brought on a more or less severe attack of headache.

On the night of October the 15th I had quite a little adventure. It was bright moonlight; I could not sleep, and at eleven o'clock, when the whole place was hushed in slumber, I was seized with the desire to climb to the top of one of the great steel towers that have been erected here by Baron Codelli von Fahnenfeld in connection

with the Government wireless telegraphy station, mention of which has been made in a previous chapter.

There are no fewer than nine of these towers, varying in height from about 250 feet, up to about 400 feet, and with an enterprise born of ignorance and inexperience I chose the tallest of them all for my experiment. I thought how beautiful the African landscape would look seen from the top under the light of the tropical moon, and started on my long climb full of hope and enthusiasm. By the time I had reached about a third of the way up, however, all my ambition had evaporated, and I was glad to go slowly back again. I found the climb down even more nerve-trying than the climb up—for one thing the stimulus had departed—and I reached the ground in a state bordering on collapse.

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CHAPTER IV

STARTING "ON TREK"

The first few days of November were spent in packing up our belongings and making ready to start up-country away from the rail-head, and into "the back of beyond," as Schomburgk put it.

The packing process interested me greatly; partly, I suppose, because it gave my housewifely instincts full play. It was like making preparations for a glorified picnic on a gigantic scale. Piles of provender, pyramids of stores of all kinds, cumbered the camp, and it fell to my lot to bring order out of chaos.

Necessaries and provisions for a five months' trip had to be packed, and all the "chop boxes," as they are called out there, had to be carefully marked and their contents scheduled. It was also necessary to see that each box weighed precisely 60 lb., neither more nor less, this being what each porter contracts to carry in Togo.

This was my work, and the motto given me for my guidance was "in every box a little of everything." This obviated the bother of opening a separate box for each article wanted on the march, one or two days' supplies being carried in each box, and used as required, after which the empty box could be discarded, and another one opened.

The most important single article amongst the host of stores was the quinine. Over and over again I was urged to look carefully after this. One can do without food in the bush, I was told; one can even do, for a while at all events, without water; but to be without quinine spells death.

Everybody takes it regularly out there, and quite as a matter of course, the usual dose being thirty-five grains or thereabouts each week. I took my little lot in two separate doses on Saturday and Sunday, and I don't mind confessing that, in the words of the popular ditty of the day, "I didn't want to do it." Only I had to. There was no escape. Schomburgk and Hodgson, our operator, who were the only other white people in the party at this stage of the journey, took theirs on the instalment principle, five grains each evening. But I preferred the other way.

At last everything was ready. Our one hundred carriers, collected and sorted with elaborate care from a dozen or more different villages, made a brave show. Altogether, with our personal staff, interpreters, and so forth, we had a retinue of exactly 120 followers; a greater, I reflected, than any I was ever likely to travel with in future, and certainly far in excess of any that I had been honoured with in the past.

On the evening of the 4th of November we entertained to dinner the good Fathers of the Catholic Mission from Atakpame, who had shown us many kindly courtesies during the time we had spent in their neighbourhood, and on the 5th we said good-bye to Kamina, and started on our journey.

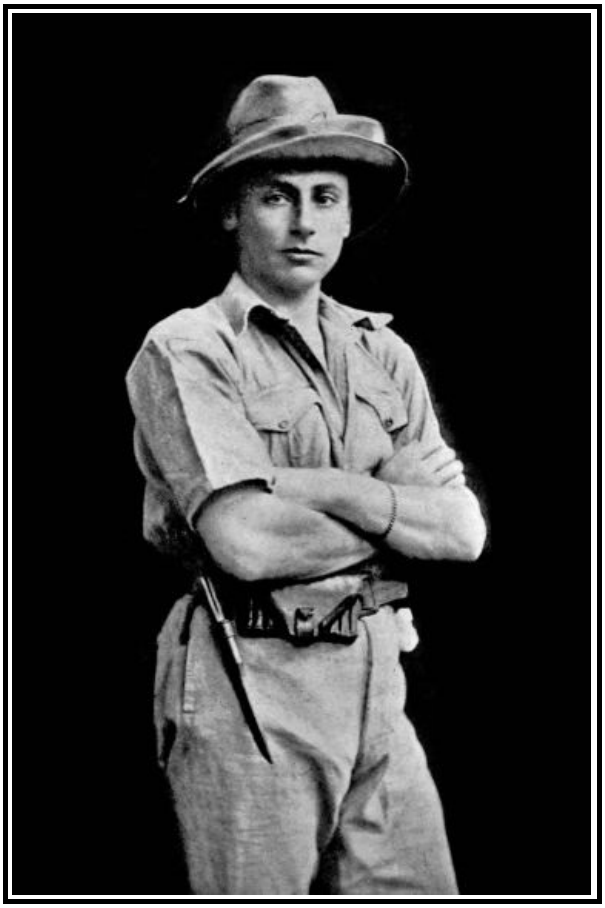


Photo by *A. Mocsigay, Hamburg*

MAJOR HANS SCHOMBURGK

The leader and organiser of the expedition. During the last sixteen years he has only spent about two years outside Africa.

Our object was to film scenes and plays of native life amongst absolutely virgin and unspoiled surroundings, and to this end we intended to penetrate to the extremest northern confines of Togo, as far at least as the borders of the French Sudan. As I have already intimated, no white woman had ever travelled so far afield in this part of Africa before, but we anticipated little difficulty or danger on this account, the natives being reported as quite friendly everywhere along our proposed line of route. Then, too, His Highness the Duke of Mecklenburg, the governor of the colony, had very kindly instructed all district commissioners and other Government officials to render the expedition every assistance in their power; so that altogether we looked forward to a pleasant, if possibly a somewhat strenuous trip. 51

The first stage of our journey was to a place called Sokode, seven days' march, and up to this point there is a very fair road. Consequently we had arranged to cycle so far, the major explaining that we should have all the horseback riding we wanted later on.

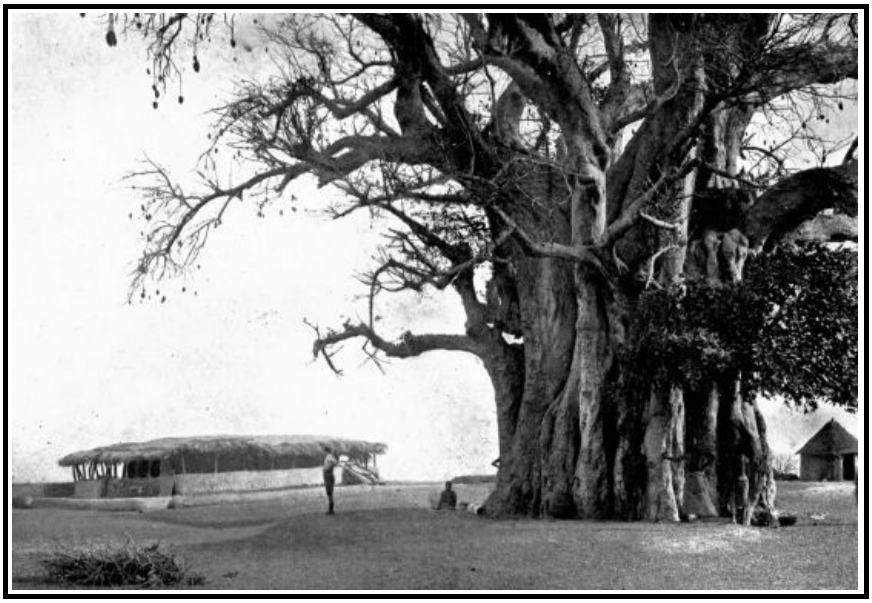
Our first day's trek was to have been a very short one, only seven miles, and so we did not start until four o'clock in the afternoon, having sent on our carriers and instructed them where to wait for us. But once again we had experience of the curious perversity of the African native. Instead of covering a short seven-mile stage, as ordered, they travelled a good fifteen before they condescended to call a halt.

As a result darkness overtook us long before we overtook them, and I had one or two rather nasty spills, reaching camp at last sore, shaken, and bruised. Schomburgk was furious, but was obliged to dissemble a good deal, as at this stage of the journey, with the carriers comparatively close to their homes, any undue show of harshness or temper might easily have resulted in stampeding the whole lot of them. 52

That night I spent on a camp bed in an old deserted straw hut. It was not altogether uncomfortable, but I got little sleep. The carriers were all round me in groups of messes, each with its own little fire, and they were all the time mumbling and talking to one another.

The next day we made a short march, as the rest-house was only about eight miles ahead. These rest-houses are strung out all along the Kamina-Sokode road at distances about twenty miles apart, and each marks the end of a stage. Our operator, Hodgson, should have picked us up here. He had left Kamina the day after our departure, intending to overtake us, but he passed us somehow, and cycled on to the next rest-house.

Naturally we wondered what on earth had become of him, and were beginning to get rather anxious when, about four o'clock in the afternoon, a messenger arrived with news of his whereabouts, and bearing a letter asking urgently for a supply of provisions to be sent on to him, as he had nothing to eat where he was, and had tasted no food all that day.



EUROPEAN REST HOUSE AT TSCHOPOWA

The enormous baobab tree on the right was the roosting-place of innumerable bats, which were greedily eaten, after being killed and spitted over a fire, by the native "boys" attached to the caravan.

By degrees things began to settle down. I had charge of the commissariat and cooking arrangements. The natives I found tractable enough, but woefully deficient in their notions of cleanliness. Most of them entertained the idea that the proper way to wash a plate or a dish was to lick it all over thoroughly. In this way, they explained, they not only cleansed it, but at the same time were able to get at least a taste of the white man's "chop." 53

Water, they contended, was for drinking, not for washing things in. Even to rub over a kitchen utensil with a wisp of dried grass seemed to them a work of supererogation. Eventually I used to boil the water myself in which the dishes were washed up—a necessary precaution against dysentery—and superintend the washing-up operations from start to finish. It was, I found, the only way.

I also had charge of the petty cash book, and used to make small advances to the boys as occasion demanded. They had christened me "The Puss," and applications for money became more frequent and insistent than Schomburgk deemed consistent with good order and discipline. It was, "Please, Puss, give me some pennies," "Me want one shilling, please. Puss," and so on from morning till night.

The climax came on the evening of the second day, when we were about twenty-five miles out from Kamina. Just as I was retiring for the night, a letter was handed to me which purported to come from Messa, our cook, and Alfred, our chief interpreter, but which was really, I found out afterwards, inspired by the first-named individual, although drawn up and signed by them both.

"Dear Puss," it ran, "cook and myself want advance. One pound please. Or more. If not more, less would be good. Farther up in the bush presently we no want one penny. This the last. So please not tell master, because perhaps he make palaver. Good evening, dear Puss. We salute you. Alfred and Messa." 54

Well, I made a bit of a palaver myself about it, for a sovereign seemed a good round sum for a couple of natives to want all of a hurry, but eventually, yielding to their urgent entreaties, I let them have it. We broke camp next morning at three o'clock, so as to avoid marching in the heat of the day. To my amazement and disgust the cook had disappeared. So, too, had one of our bicycles. The chief interpreter, on being interrogated, disclaimed all knowledge of the whereabouts of the absent man. He had, he asserted, merely written the letter to oblige Messa, and had no idea that he intended deserting, as he apparently had done.

Here was a pretty go and no mistake. The major swore fluently; I cried—profusely. Then we both got angry. He said it was all my fault. "The idea of giving a nigger a whole sovereign advance!" I retorted that he ought to have impressed upon me more carefully what mean, underhand skunks niggers were.

Gloomily we marched to the next camp, and I could hear Schomburgk grumbling to himself at intervals whenever I got near enough to him, which was not often. "No cook! Whatever shall we do? And Messa was a good cook. A better one I never had. And good cooks cannot be picked up in the bush like paw-paws." And so on, and so on.

We marched eighteen miles that morning, the longest stage we had done so far, then halted for breakfast.

"Sardines and crackers!" sneered Schomburgk.

"For gracious sake go away somewhere for half an hour," I retorted hotly. "I'm going to run this chop." 55

He picked up his gun, and strolled off into the bush—grumbling. I set to work to prepare breakfast. It was hard work to bring my self-imposed task to a successful issue, for I had only the most rudimentary cooking utensils, and an open fire.

By dint of much labour and perseverance, however, I managed in the end to prepare a very decent dish of eggs and bacon, with hot rolls, and strong steaming coffee. Schomburgk grunted approval when he came to partake of it, and afterwards was quite genial, despite the affair of the missing Messa. "Feed the brute!" I forget the name of the tactful woman who first gave our sex that very excellent piece of advice, but she knew what she was talking about. She had studied men, and to some purpose.

An hour later our truant cook turned up. He explained that just prior to starting on trek with us he had married a young wife, and having regard to her attractiveness and inexperience he had, on mature reflection, deemed it inadvisable to leave her behind. He had therefore gone back to fetch her, borrowing the bicycle and the sovereign for that purpose.

By dint of cross-examination I elicited that he had not left our previous camp until midnight. He had therefore cycled twenty-five miles to Kamina, and the same distance back again, plus the eighteen miles we had marched that morning, or nearly seventy miles in all in rather less than nine hours, a wonderful performance for a native, and on a native road.

I asked him about his wife. "Oh," he replied, "she come presently. She walking." 56

Sure enough she turned up that afternoon, having trudged the whole distance from Kamina, forty-three miles. When I saw her I did not blame Messa for not caring to leave her behind. She was as pretty a girl, for a native, as I ever wish to see. Fourteen or fifteen years old, probably, but quite fully developed and beautifully proportioned, with a pair of roguish alluring eyes, and a face all smiles. She accompanied us throughout the trip, and proved herself quite an acquisition.

As for Messa, we ought of course to have chided him severely. But, as a matter of fact, we were so exceedingly glad to get him back again that but little was said to him at the time. Later on, however, he was taken pretty sternly to task, and warned that any similar breach of discipline would in future be very seriously dealt with.

57

CHAPTER V

ATAKPAME TO SOKODE

I forgot to say that shortly after leaving Kamina, at a village called Anâ, we were overtaken by another caravan convoying a European, a certain Dr. Berger, who was travelling up-country as far as Sokode, with a view to vaccinating the natives there.

The meeting came about in this wise. On arriving at Anâ, we discovered that the rest-house there was already occupied by a Mr. Lange, an engineer, who was building a bridge across the Anâ river.

He was away at work when we got there, and Schomburgk sent his (Lange's) boy to tell him of our arrival. Presently Lange turned up, looking rather perplexed, and not a little worried. The statement made to him by his boy, it appeared, had been couched in the following terms: "Master, two white men have arrived, and one of them looks like a woman."

Lange had guessed from this the identity of our party, for he had known Schomburgk during his previous trip, and had heard of his re-arrival in the colony, and of my presence there with him. His worried appearance, we found out, was due to the fact that he had practically run out of provisions just then, and so was unable to show us the hospitality he would have desired; and he was greatly relieved when we asked him to be our guest during our stay at Anâ. I may add that this was Schomburgk's invariable practice, and I have often heard him inveigh against the thoughtlessness sometimes shown by a certain type of globe-trotting European travellers in Africa in planting themselves upon other Europeans, sometimes for days together, and eating up food which is perhaps badly needed, and may be very difficult to replace. Of course hospitality under such circumstances is never refused. It is the unwritten law of the bush that white man shares with white man. But all the same there are times when it works hardly on the individual who does the sharing. 58

Well, luncheon was served and eaten, and we were enjoying our coffee and cigarettes, when a new lot of carriers hove in sight.

"Hullo!" remarked Lange to Schomburgk, "this looks like a white man's caravan"; and the two fell to discussing the foolishness of the individual, whoever he might be, in travelling thus during the heat of the day.

Presently the owner of the caravan, the Dr. Berger mentioned above, turned up, looking very hot and tired. Of course we made him welcome—it is wonderful how bush life makes one relish the advent of a white stranger—and we spent a very pleasant time together during the rest of the day.

He was the most even-tempered man as regards his dealings with the natives that I have ever come across. Nothing that they did or said seemed to disturb him in the least.

Curiously enough, although he was a Government official, he was travelling unprovided with an interpreter; and he himself, of course, understood no word of any of the native dialects. 59

When he wanted anything he simply asked his boy for it, addressing him at considerable length and with much circumlocution in German. Now this boy, whose name by the way was Joa, had been specially engaged by the worthy doctor because he had represented himself to be a fluent German scholar.

As a matter of fact, beyond a few phrases that he had learned to repeat parrot-like, he knew nothing whatever of the language, and the result of their joint efforts to make themselves understood was laughable in the extreme, and was not rendered the less amusing owing to the fact that the doctor would not allow our interpreter to intervene to straighten out the verbal tangle. He wanted, he said, to train his boy to understand German sufficiently well to minister to his wants.

As a result we nearly laughed ourselves into fits over scenes like the following, repeated at intervals, and with variations, all through the day.

"Joa," the doctor would say, "my friends would like a whisky and soda, and I myself could do with a drop. A small modicum of alcohol, Joa, after the day's march, certainly does no harm to a white man, and may conceivably do him good. Therefore, Joa, you may bring us a syphon of soda, please, together with a bottle of whisky"; and the doctor would imitate in dumb show the process of drawing a cork out of a bottle.

"Yah!" Joa would say, his face all one broad grin; and off he would go to his master's tent, to return presently with—a telescope. 60

"Now, Joa," the doctor would remark genially, "a telescope is a very good thing in its way, but one cannot drink telescopes, Joa. What we now want, Joa, is a whisky and soda, especially the soda." And he would start to imitate the pressing down of the lever of a soda-water syphon.

A new light would then break on Joa's face. "Ah! Yah!" he would cry, and trot off again, to reappear a minute or so later carrying with due care and circumspection his master's double-barrelled rifle, loaded, and at full-cock.

And so the pantomime would proceed, master and man both in the best of tempers, until at last, perhaps at the fourth or fifth attempt, perchance at the tenth or twelfth, the native would hit upon the right article, either by accident, or by the slower process of elimination.

Whereupon the doctor would smile gravely yet pleasantly at us, as if in mild reproof of our unseemly mirth, and remark: "There you are; with time and patience one can achieve anything, even in Africa and with African natives."

On the morning after this little episode we rose at three o'clock in order to cover the next stage, as far as a place called Njamassila, before the worst heat of the day began. This, I may say, was our usual practice henceforward; as it is, indeed, that of all old seasoned travellers in this part of the world.

The distance from Anâ to Njamassila is roughly about twenty miles, and the road in places is not particularly smooth. It was too, of course, quite dark when we started, so that altogether I was not particularly sorry when Schomburgk decreed that I was to do the first part of the journey in my hammock. 61

In this way I was carried about two-thirds of the stage. Then, when it got light, I climbed out, mounted my bicycle, and rode the remainder of the distance. It was rough going, and very cold at first, but I persevered, rather reproaching myself for my earlier laziness. When, however, I discovered on arriving at Njamassila that our doctor friend had elected to be carried the whole of the way, I went to the other extreme, shook hands with myself, metaphorically speaking, and plumed myself mightily on my "wonderful" exhibition of hardihood and endurance. "I intend to cycle the whole of the next stage," I told Schomburgk.

Alas, my pride in this respect, and on this occasion, was of the kind that goes before a fall. Whether or no it was due to my unwonted exertions of the previous day—I had done a lot of running about on foot besides the cycling—I cannot say, but the fact remains that when we struck camp at 2.30 next morning I felt so weak and dizzy, as well as stiff and sore, that I could hardly stand.

Under the circumstances there was nothing to do but to seek refuge in my hammock once more, where, snuggled beneath many rugs and wraps designed to keep out the cold night air, and lulled by the rhythmic swaying of the conveyance, I promptly fell sound asleep.

It seemed to me that I had hardly closed my eyes more than a very few minutes, when I was awakened by hearing Schomburgk angrily inquiring of the hammock boys why they were standing idle, and whereabouts was I. "Master," they replied, "she is inside asleep, and we feared you would be angry did we wake her." 62

All this I heard dimly as in a dream between sleeping and waking. Lazily I lay back, too comfortable even to raise myself on my elbow and peer out; but I was beginning to wonder what was the reason for the long delay, and how soon we were going to resume our journey, when the sound of Schomburgk's voice, once more raised in protest, roused me into instant and complete wakefulness.

It was me he addressed this time, and his words were as follows:

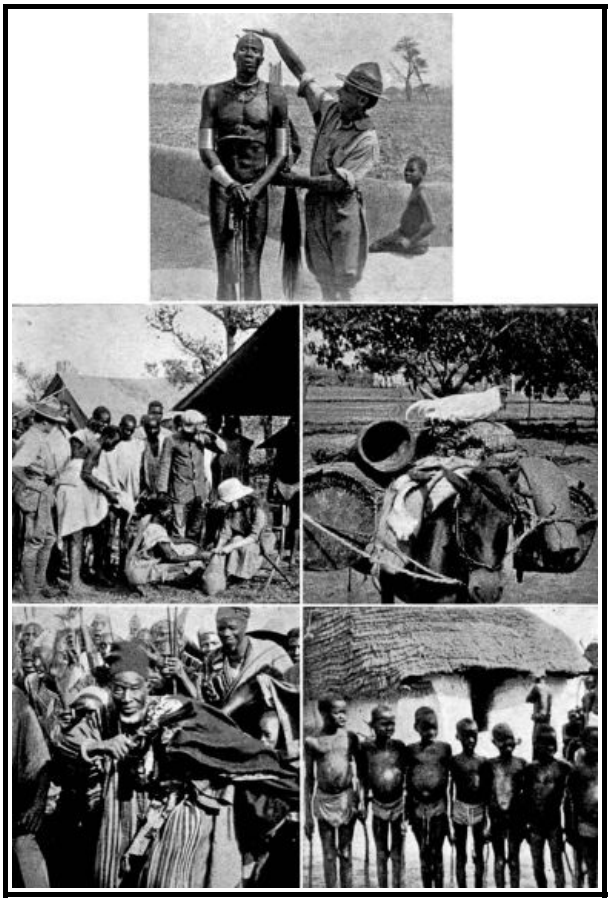
"Come, little lady; are you not going to get up?"

"But why should I get up?" I replied. "What time is it? Where are we?"

"It's eight o'clock," he answered, "and we are at Agbandi."

"What!" I screamed; and, pulling the curtains aside, I bounced out on to the ground.

What I saw made me rub my eyes with amazement. Before me was a new rest-house, and a village that I had never seen before, and preparations for breakfast were, I could see, well under way. Only then did I realise that I had slept right through the entire twenty-mile stage from Njamassila to Agbandi.



REPRODUCED FROM CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS

1. A Konkombwa Giant
2. Paying Carriers in Salt
3. The Old King of Paratau dancing before the Camera
4. A live alarum clock. A cock which accompanied the expedition, and roused them every morning
5. Boy Scouts

In the afternoon, after the worst heat of the day was over, we strolled down to the village. There was very little to see, however, and we were on the point of returning to our camp, when there suddenly confronted us from out of one of the huts the tallest and biggest man I have ever seen, either in Africa or out of it. He stood 63
over eight feet high, and was very broad and immensely powerful, the muscles bulging out under his skin like bosses of beaten bronze.

We would have liked to have filmed him, but unfortunately we did not have our camera with us. Later on, however, we unearthed another giant, of scarcely inferior size, and him we did succeed in photographing, Schomburgk meanwhile standing beside him to show the contrast in size and height, and lifting and displaying at intervals the big man's various personal paraphernalia—his bow and arrows, his spear, and the curious iron rattle which all the Togo natives carry, and concerning which I shall have more to say presently.

Our next stage was from Agbandi to Blita, and at this latter place we were met by a fresh lot of carriers, men of the Kabure tribe, who had been sent down from Sokode to meet us. Our other carriers were sent back to Atakpame.

The Kabures inhabit the Trans-Kara country, and are, as a rule, fine strong men, but the lot we got were rather poor by comparison with the Atakpame people. However, they carried our belongings to Sokode all right, which was all we wanted of them.

They were absolutely the wildest-looking lot of natives I had yet come in contact with. There were ninety of them altogether, and they were all quite nude—not even a loin-cloth amongst the lot of them. Their dialect, too, was quite different from anything I had heard up till now. It sounded to my ears more uncouth and uncivilised, a mere succession of grunts and gurgles.

Here, too, I realised for the first time that my personal appearance might possibly inspire fear, or even 64
disgust and aversion, for when I went into the market-place in the afternoon to have a look round as usual, the children fled screaming with terror, and even their mothers looked askance at me. I did not mind the latter so much, for I had already discovered that the women dwelling in these remote bush villages were not always very pleasant companions to have in too close proximity to one. They are apt to be—well, smelly. But I felt really hurt at the attitude of their offspring, for I am very fond of children, and they of me, as a rule, and in Kamina we had been great chums together. But then in Kamina there were always white people about, whereas I was the first white woman, at all events, that these nude little ebony imps had ever set eyes on. Consequently, I suppose, they regarded me as a sort of pale-faced bogey, to be avoided promptly, and at all hazards.

I slept again in my hammock during our march from Blita to our next halting-place at Djabotaure. This

sounds a bit lazy, I must admit; but then it has got to be borne in mind that this moist, hot West African climate is exceedingly enervating, especially to a European woman, and to an unacclimatised European woman at that. Spend an hour or so in the Palm House at Kew Gardens, and you will get a faint idea of what it is like. The least exertion during the daytime causes one to break out into a profuse perspiration. Worse still, it seems to sap all one's energy and vitality, so that one feels like a wet rag from morning till night. To fight against it is well-nigh impossible. I used to go to bed tired, and wake up more tired. After a while, however, these symptoms entirely 65
wore off, and I became quite strong and well, despite the heat and the constant travelling. Truly the human machine is marvellously adaptable.

It was at Djabotaure that I had quite a little adventure. I was taking my usual afternoon stroll through the village, the men being out in the bush shooting for the pot, when suddenly, from just outside, and in the opposite direction from where I had entered it, there arose a most terrific noise of tom-tomming, mingled with much shouting, the clattering of rattles, and the trampling of horses.

I stood stock still in the middle of the village, not quite knowing what else to do, and in a few minutes a group of five horsemen, looking very fierce and wild, galloped up and halted before me, and these were followed by others, who took up positions to right and left. Meanwhile, our interpreter, who had put in an appearance for once just when he was really wanted, had mutually introduced us, so to speak, and the foremost horseman dismounted and greeted me with stately courtesy. I was, he remarked, the first white woman he had ever seen; and having seen me, he trusted that he would live to see many more. Not a bad compliment for a nearly naked savage to pay one off-hand in the heart of the African bush!

The newcomers were, the interpreter explained, a chief and his retinue from a neighbouring village, and they had ridden into Djabotaure in order to take part in the festivities that precede the great Mohammedan fast of Ramadan.

This, as most people are aware, corresponds roughly to our Lent. It is supposed to commemorate the first 66
"revelation" received by Mohammed, and during the entire four weeks that the fast lasts a strict Moslem may not eat or drink, smoke or bathe, smell any perfume, or even swallow his own spittle, till after sunset.

All this, however, is pure theory, so far as regards the Togo native Mohammedans. They certainly celebrate the festivities which usher in the fast with a tremendous enthusiasm—they kept us awake all night with their singing and dancing—and they are equally enthusiastic over the bairam festival which marks its close. But as regards the actual fast itself, I could not see that it made any difference to them whatever. They ate, drank, and smoked just as they always do; the real truth, of course, being that these people are Mohammedans in name only.

The day following this affair we marched as far as Andasi, our next halting-place, I still travelling in my hammock. I had not yet become acclimatised, and was very weak and languid. For some reason, too, my relays of hammock boys on this occasion proved themselves altogether incompetent, a most unusual thing. They swung me from side to side, tipped me this way and that, and only grinned idiotically when I complained. It was like being out in a small boat in a gale, and I really felt quite "sea-sick" during the last few miles.

The next morning we started at 3 A.M., in full moonlight, to cover the last twenty miles to Sokode, which is one of the largest and most important Government stations in this part of Togo. Wonderfully beautiful are the moonlight nights in Africa, whether, as was the case now, one is on a comparatively open road, or following one 67
of the native tracks that disclose, with each fresh twist and turn, some new vista of silvery enchantment. The grey, mysterious bush takes on, under such circumstances, a hitherto undreamt-of beauty. The many clumps of tropical vegetation in the frequent open glades one encounters, stand out clear-cut and still, looking like white metal trees fragilely carved out of frosted aluminium.

At eight o'clock in the morning we reached a spot about four miles from Sokode, where our horses were waiting for us in charge of a young European, Mr. Kay H. Nebel. Up to this point I had travelled, after quitting the rail-head, entirely by bicycle and hammock; now it was to be principally horseback riding.

Mr. Nebel had been attached to Major Schomburgk's former expedition in the capacity of staff artist, and had been left behind at Sokode in charge of spare stores and equipment when Schomburgk had quitted that place on June 1, 1913. I knew him fairly well, having met him in Hamburg, where my home is.

It seemed passing strange to renew the acquaintance out here in the African wilds. The sleek, well-groomed young fellow I remembered had developed into a typical bushman. His face, neck, and arms were burnt and blackened by the sun to a very deep mahogany colour. He wore a huge cowboy hat, beneath which his long hair fell almost to his shoulders, *à la* Buffalo Bill. His flannel shirt was open at the throat. He looked wonderfully picturesque, and also marvellously disreputable, a sort of cross between a typical grand-opera brigand and a 68
Western American desperado, as depicted on the cinema films in New York and London.

After mutual greetings and explanations we pitched a tent, made a hurried toilet, and changed our clothes, in order to arrive somewhat clean in Sokode, where we found awaiting us a welcome luncheon, the outcome of kindly forethought and hospitality on the part of Mr. Kuepers, the Government schoolmaster at the station.

At Sokode we remained resting during the heat of the day. After which we struck off at right angles into the bush to a village called Paratau, distant about four miles from Sokode.

Here it was our intention to make a rather prolonged stay, in order to film a number of dramatic, and some ethnological scenes.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE CAPITAL OF TSCHAUDJOLAND

Paratau, where our camp was situated, is the residence of Uro Djabo, the paramount chief of the important Tschaudjo tribe. Uro means "king," and it is indeed virtually as King of the Tschaudjo that Djabo is recognised, and subsidised, by the German Government.

In Togo it is customary for white strangers to visit a really big chief like this before proceeding to the Government rest-house, and although I was very, very tired, West African etiquette had to be observed.

I found the Uro a most charming host, and although he was old and fat, and his personal appearance, therefore, was not particularly imposing, he managed somehow to convey the idea of dignity, and the power and ability to command. He received us in great state, surrounded by a big bodyguard of officials and personal attendants, conspicuous amongst the former being his prime minister, Mama-Sugu, an exceedingly tall, well-proportioned, and fine-looking man. In his turban he looked quite young; in fact, I made a mental note of his age as probably about thirty. Afterwards, however, he removed it, and I then saw that he was grey-headed and partially bald. Probably he was about fifty, but this estimate is, of course, only approximate, for natives keep no records of their birthdays, and have only the most hazy notions, consequently, as to how old they really are.

Governments are not remarkable for gratitude, but the German Government has certainly good reason to be grateful to Uro Djabo, since it was to his father and predecessor that it practically owes its possession of Togoland. When the famous Dr. Kersting, the founder and pioneer of northern Togo, first entered the country, he found it inhabited by many distinct and warlike tribes, continually fighting with one another.

Following in a small way the example set by Cortez in Mexico, and by Clive in India, he allied himself with the strongest and most warlike of the lot, the Tschaudjo to wit, and he and the old Uro between them practically subdued the whole country, and placed it under the German flag.

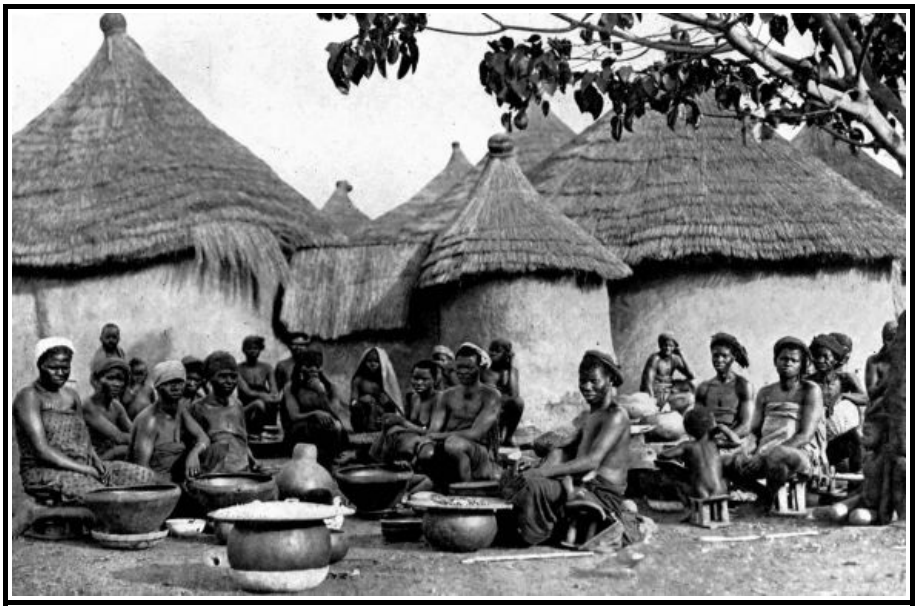
In the course of our somewhat prolonged stay at Paratau I had several chats with Uro Djabo, and he used to hold forth at length, through an interpreter, of course, concerning the former power and greatness of the Tschaudjo people. They were originally it appeared a conquering tribe, like the Masai and the Zulus, and they swept down from the north many years ago, devastating the country as they advanced. They came riding on horses, and as these animals had never before been seen in Togoland, the terror they inspired almost sufficed by itself to ensure the defeat of the aboriginal owners of the soil.

Djabo also showed me over his "palace," a collection of circular huts of various sizes, arranged in irregular zigzag fashion, and connected by a wall. The principal hut, which was very much bigger and higher than any of the others, contained the entrance-hall and stables, and was surmounted by an ostrich egg, the emblem of royalty.

At the other extremity of the space enclosed by the huts and connecting wall a crested crane was kept. Uro Djabo attached very great importance to this bird. It was, I was informed, sacred; and anyone killing it, or otherwise interfering with it, would be very severely punished. The crane knew quite well that it was privileged, and it used to strut up to the cooking-pots when the natives were at dinner, and help itself to any choice morsel that took its fancy. Any ordinary bird acting after this fashion would have promptly had its neck wrung, for hardly anything upsets a West African native more than a liberty taken with his food. But directly the crane appeared, they would all draw away from their cooking-pot, and patiently wait until he had finished helping himself before resuming their meal. I tried hard to get Uro Djabo to tell me all about this bird, but he always avoided the subject, and when I pressed him, he refused point-blank. Nor did anyone else seem inclined to say anything about it, beyond telling me, in awe-struck whispers, that it was the Uro's ju-ju.

Djabo, as I have already intimated, kept up considerable state for a native. He was always accompanied by his band, mostly drum, with one or two reed-like instruments; and by his prime minister, sword-bearer, personal servants, and the like, all elaborately attired in Arab dress. Thus, when one day we asked the old fellow to our house for afternoon tea, he came with a retinue of about twenty followers, completely filling the small compound. He was, however, a most democratic sort of a king. When, for instance, he helped himself to a biscuit, he first took a bite, then handed it round for everybody else to have a nibble at it. When Schomburgk gave him a cigar, all his attendants smoked it after him in turn, each taking two or three big whiffs before passing it along to the next in waiting. I never saw a cigar smoked by so many people, or last so short a while, for each native tried to draw into his lungs as big a modicum of smoke as he possibly could, so that it was burned away and done with in no time. Djabo meanwhile chatted and joked with all and sundry. In fact, the only difference discernible between the king and his subjects was that he sat in a chair, while the others squatted on the ground.

Subsequent to this visit, Djabo received me alone in his palace, and introduced me to his wives. I saw about twenty of them. Two or three were young girls, and fairly presentable; but mostly they were old, fat, and ugly. After the reception was over I complimented him, not upon the beauty or intelligence of his wives, but on the fact of his being able to afford so many of them, for this is West African etiquette. "Oh," he replied lightly, "this is nothing. I have hundreds more scattered up and down the country."



MARKET SCENE IN PARATAU

This is a typical small market, no permanent stone seats being used, such as are seen, for example, in the big market at Bafilo.

Among other presents that Djabo had received from the Government at one time and another was a large and very substantial garden chair. It was of extremely ordinary appearance, and quite out of keeping with the surroundings of the African bush; but old Djabo was inordinately proud of it, and even went to the length of 73
keeping a chair-bearer, whose sole duty it was to look after this one piece of furniture, and to carry it about to wherever his master went. This was a source of difficulty to us when we came to film his Majesty, for he would insist on being photographed seated in it, a proceeding which, of course, would have rendered the picture worthless from our point of view. Eventually, however, after many palavers, and the present of a piece of silk stuff, he consented to dispense with it for that one occasion.

There is a big native market at Paratau, and food is very cheap. Eggs, for instance, can be bought at the rate of eight a penny. Lemons are a farthing a dozen. A fine plump pigeon costs threepence. These sums represent, of course, very much more to a native than they do to a European; but even allowing for the difference in the value of money, I came to the conclusion that the average Tschaudjo man or woman could, if they choose, live far better at a much cheaper rate than can the average labouring man of, say, England or Germany. Certainly the majority of those I met appeared to be well fed and contented.

I have alluded elsewhere to the skilful riding of the Tschaudjo horsemen, and one of the objects of our stay at Paratau was to film them. In this we succeeded perfectly. In fact, I was myself immensely pleased, and even surprised, at the faithful realism of the scene when I came to see it afterwards in London on the screen. Everybody was very much taken by the clever equestrian feats performed by the Arabs at the International Horse Show at Olympia last year. But there were only a few picked men. We were able to film a much greater 74
number of the genuine wild horsemen of the Sudan, and to film them, too, at home among their native surroundings.

By the way I am frequently reminded here, as elsewhere, that I am the first white woman to intrude her presence among these primitive people. The women shrink from me, or look askance, and the children run screaming in terror away from me. Once I got the interpreter to inquire of one sweet little lassie of about nine or ten why she had run from me. He brought the child before me, but for a long time she would not say a word. She just stood still, with eyes downcast, and trembling in every limb.

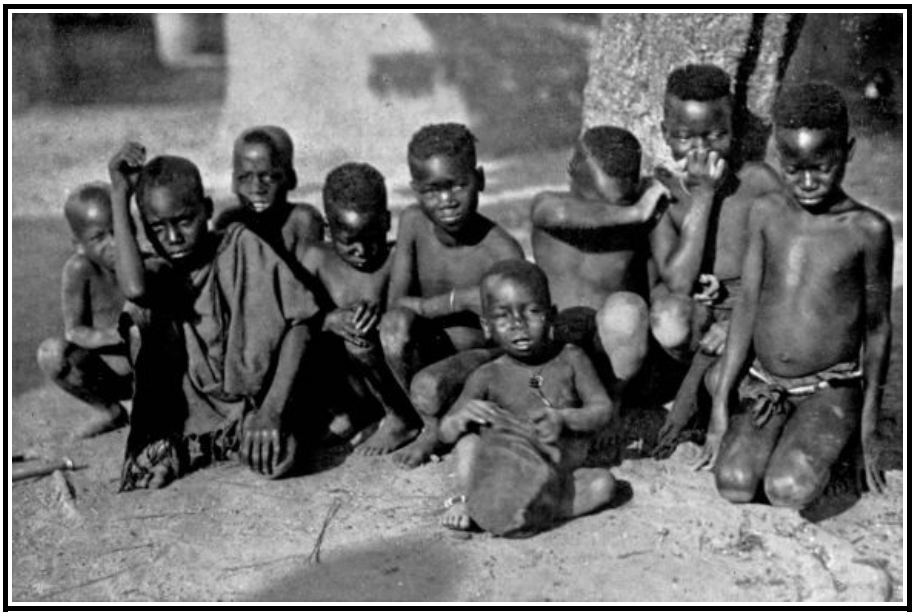
At length she looked quickly up, and shot a hard, swift question at the interpreter.

"No! No! No!" was his reply. "Of course not. Stupid little one! Why do you think such things?"

I asked him what the child had said. He answered that she had asked whether, if she spoke the truth, I was going to flog her.

"Tell her," I said, "that, on the contrary, I will make her a present."

He translated my promise, whereupon the girl, after one quick half-inquiring, half-doubting glance at me, rapped out something that sounded short, solid, and authoritative, like the rat-a-tat-tat of a door-knocker.



NATIVE BOYS AT PARATAU

They were rather shy at having their photographs taken, one even going to the length of covering his face with his arm.

Then it was the interpreter's turn to take refuge in silence. He absolutely declined to translate what she had said, saying that it was too dreadful, was quite unfit for me to hear, &c. &c.

"Very well," I said at last, "I will go and tell Major Schomburgk that you refuse to perform your duties." 75

Whereupon the poor man, driven into a corner, blurted out the message, running his words altogether in his confusion and excitement. "The impudent little wench says," he rapped out, "that shefearstolookuponyoubecauseyouaresougly."

I had to laugh. I simply could not help it. But my mirth had a slight—a very slight—tinge of bitterness in it. To be told to my face that I was ugly! And by this naked little ebony imp.

Well, men, I reflected, had not found me uncomely. And even from my own sex—supremest test of all—I had listened to words of appreciation, and even of admiration upon occasion. So I playfully pinched the cheek of my little critic, and sent her away happy in the possession of a gaudy-coloured silk handkerchief.

This incident broke the ice, so to speak, and soon I was on the best of terms with practically the entire juvenile population of Paratau. They discovered that I was not really an ogre, as they had imagined at first. But I could not prevail upon them to admit that I possessed any claim upon their admiration, whatever I might have upon their gratitude. "Am I really and truly ugly?" I one day asked a little boy, a dear little chum of mine. "Really and truly you are, dear Puss," he replied, with childish frankness. "But," he added in extenuation, and as a balm perhaps for my wounded feelings, "you cannot help that. The good God made you so, did he not? We cannot all be black and beautiful."

Projecting my mind into theirs, and trying to think as they thought, I have come to the conclusion that they 76
regarded me much as a white child regards a black golliwog—a something to be frightened of at first, and yet cherished because of its strangeness and uncouthness. Only in their case the golliwog was alive, and so all the more fearsome until experience had shown them its harmlessness.

After spending about ten days in Paratau, I began to feel my health breaking down. Our camp was pitched close to the old Government station, and the site was by no means an ideal one. My hut, like the others, was close, very stuffy, and almost unventilated. It had no windows, and it was built of the usual wattle and daub, which is all right when fairly fresh, but when old, as this was, it is apt to give off a sickly, mouldy odour. Then, too, there were the smells from the native village—anything but pleasant. While to crown all, the entire place was surrounded by dense fields—you might almost call them plantations—of guinea corn, fifteen to twenty feet high, which effectually shut out any breath of air. Not, however, that this mattered so very much; for the harmattan season had now set in, and the hot, palpitating air was filled with an impalpable yellow dust, like fog, so thick that one could look straight into the sun at mid-day without hurting one's eyes.

One result was that I suffered from almost incessant headaches. Yet I did not like to complain, for we were
now in the middle of a new drama, and I knew that Schomburgk had set his heart on completing it at as early a 77
date as possible. But sometimes, after rehearsing from seven till eleven in the broiling heat, in cowboy dress, and with crowds of perspiring niggers for supers, I felt that I must drop in my tracks from sheer physical exhaustion.

The climax came one day when I had to enact the heroine in a scene where Nebel, who was supposed to be a fugitive from justice, was galloping away across the mountains, and I after him, followed by twenty or thirty Tschaudjo horsemen. Nebel kept turning round in his saddle and firing at me. The horsemen behind were emitting a series of the most blood-curdling yells. And between them they frightened my horse, so that it bolted, and headed straight for the brink of a fairly high cliff, with a lot of rocks and broken ground at the bottom.

Greatly alarmed, I threw away my revolver, and using both hands, and all my strength, I tried my hardest to pull up my frightened steed. He was a grand horse, the best in Sokode, and he and I were great friends. Ordinarily, I could do anything with him, but now he was simply mad with terror, and I was entirely powerless

to even check appreciably his wild race towards what appeared to be certain death for both of us.

Nebel tried his best to stop him by grabbing at his bridle as we flew past him, but the runaway swerved violently, nearly unseating me then and there. The next instant he leapt wildly into the air over rocks and boulders, and I gave myself up for lost.

As luck would have it, however, he alighted on almost the only patch of moderately soft ground that there was anywhere in the vicinity. A yard to the left, a yard to the right, were masses of jagged rocks, and had he come down on these I should almost inevitably have been killed. As it was he stumbled, recovered himself, stumbled again, and again recovered, and then stood stock still, streaming with perspiration and trembling in every limb. 78

I was, of course, riding astride; luckily for me. Had I been in a side-saddle, I do not see how I could by any possibility have retained my seat. As it was I was badly bruised and shaken, and this, coupled with the shock to my nerves, so aggravated my previous indisposition that I collapsed.

"I must go away, and at once," I told Schomburgk that evening, "or I feel that I cannot recover."

To his credit be it said, Schomburgk was most sympathetic. He saw that matters were serious, and although the hour was late, he sent a special messenger to Sokode to tell the authorities there how things stood, and to ask for their assistance. With a promptitude and kindness that I can never forget, the German Government officials set to work at once, collected a hundred carriers from their own working staff, and sent them over to us the first thing in the morning, in order that we might be able to start straight away for Aledjo-Kadara, the sanatorium of Togo.

An hour later we had left our pretty but unhealthy camp at Paratau, and were on the march for the highlands on which Aledjo stands—the Switzerland of Togo as grateful invalids from the sweltering lowlands have enthusiastically christened it. 79

80

CHAPTER VII

ALEDJO-KADARA—THE SWITZERLAND OF TOGO

The march from Paratau to Aledjo-Kadara, or Aledjo, as it is generally called for short, was a very tedious one, and took us two days. One reason for this was that the men so kindly provided for us by the officials at Sokode were ordinary station labourers and not used to carrying; consequently they made but slow progress.

I was carried all the way to our camp at Amaude by hammock, reaching there at two o'clock, accompanied by Schomburgk as escort, but it was getting dark before the rest of the caravan turned up, shepherded by Nebel and Hodgson. They had had a terrible time with the men, and at one period during the worst heat of the day they had almost given up hope of accomplishing the stage at all. The poor fellows staggered in under their loads in a terrible condition, some of them so utterly collapsed that I could not bear to look at them. The baggage was only got up at all, Nebel informed us, by requisitioning the help of the natives—other than carriers—who accompanied the caravan in a permanent capacity. Even the interpreters, and our personal boys, had to take turns in carrying loads, greatly to their disgust, for these people consider themselves to be on a higher plane altogether than the porters. It was as if one should ask the office staff at, say, a big contractor's place of 81
business, to doff their black coats and white shirts, and start in to shovel clay or carry bricks.

As for me, I felt more dead than alive on arrival. My head ached terribly; not the ordinary headache of civilised climes, which if painful is at least endurable, but a burning, throbbing, rending torture, that seemed at times as if it would drive me to the verge of insanity. The heat, the dust, and the added anxiety as to the whereabouts of the caravan, made matters worse. There was no proper rest-house; only a tumble-down hut, dirty and evil-smelling, into which, however, I was glad to crawl and seek refuge from the blinding glare outside. After a while I fell asleep, and awoke feeling much better, but ravenously hungry. As, however, the carriers had not yet arrived, there was no food available, and by the time they did turn up I was nearly dead with hunger. This was not surprising, as I had had nothing to eat for twelve solid hours, from six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night. When the kitchen boxes did at last put in an appearance, we lost no time. The cook was put upon his mettle, and in rather less than a quarter of an hour we were doing full justice to a glorious meal of delicious little Frankfort sausages, tinned vegetables, and potatoes, washed down—this was an extra special treat—by a bumper of champagne, which had been kept cool in bottle by being wrapped in wet blankets. Afterwards I crawled into my hut, wrapped myself in a horse-rug, and with a saddle for a pillow, I cried myself to sleep. My last thoughts were, I remember, of a most doleful character. I wished most fervently 82
that I had never come to Africa; I was quite sure that I was going to die out there in the wilds, and I even contemplated seriously cancelling my contract and insisting on returning to Europe.

Next morning, however, I awoke feeling very much better, and all the dark misgivings of the night before were completely dispelled as soon as I stepped out into the glorious air of the early African dawn. The men, I discovered, had slept out in the open all night, it having been too dark to see to pitch the tents when the last of the carriers with the heavy baggage had straggled in, and the boys too utterly exhausted into the bargain. They, however, like me, were feeling much better, and we made a good start; I on horseback, as I felt that the exercise in the open air was preferable to the stuffy hammock, and might help towards my recovery.

Nor was I mistaken. We were now leaving the lowlands, and mounting upwards, and ever upwards, by a winding serpentine mountain road, and after the first few miles I could feel my health and strength coming back almost with every yard we progressed. I was not destined to reach Aledjo, however, without further mishap. Misfortunes, they say, seldom come singly, and it was most certainly so on this occasion as regards myself. Schomburgk and I had cantered on ahead of the caravan, and on reaching a little native village we called a short halt, in order to rest awhile and allow the carriers to come up. Our two horses were tethered close together, and out of sheer devilment Schomburgk's horse edged back behind mine and bit him on the tail. He lashed out with his hind feet at his offending mate, and, fearing further trouble, I went up to stroke him, and try 83
to pacify him. Usually I could do anything with him. He would follow me about the camp like a dog, whinnying for sugar, and poking his soft nose about my shoulders and bosom. But on this occasion no doubt he was angry and terrified, and the moment I laid my hand on his flank he lashed out with both hind feet, kicking me in the calf of the leg, and sending me flying head over heels clean off the path and into the middle of a small corn patch. Half-stunned and dazed, I tried to pick myself up, but found that I could not stand. The pain in my injured leg was awful. I never experienced anything like it in my life. Schomburgk and the others thought that it was broken, and were naturally very much concerned, since it would have taken at least a week to get a doctor up. They tried to get my riding-breeches off, but I could not stand the agony, and had to beg of them to desist. Meanwhile our boys stood round in a circle, muttering "Poor Pussy! Poor little Pussy!" and showing in their black countenances the concern they felt at my sufferings. I was greatly touched.

After about an hour the pain began to abate, and I was able to endure the removal of my riding-breeches. Then, to my great relief, I discovered that the limb was not fractured, but terribly bruised and swollen. Luckily the horse was not shod, or one or more bones would almost inevitably have been broken. The poor beast was not to blame, and as showing how sorry he was for what he had done, I may mention that for fully a week afterwards he would shrink away and hang his head whenever I approached him. He seemed to know that he 84
had unwittingly caused me pain, and no doubt if he could have spoken he would have told me how he had let fly on the spur of the moment, without looking round, not knowing that it was me, but imagining it to be the other horse, intent on inflicting further annoyance.

When we at length reached Aledjo, the boys, owing to our being delayed by the above incident, had got there before us, and had begun preparations for camping. Now we had heard on the way up that there was a very nice, large dining-table in the Aledjo rest-house, and as dining-tables in the African bush are rare luxuries, affording a welcome change from the usual ricketty folding things carried in a caravan, we naturally looked for it the first thing on our arrival. To our surprise it was nowhere to be seen, and on inquiring we discovered that

it had been calmly annexed by Messa, our cook, who had carted it over to his kitchen, and arranged all his pots and pans on it in beautiful apple-pie order. He was greatly chagrined and annoyed at having to submit to their being all dumped unceremoniously on the ground, and the table returned to its proper place. We dined off it later in state, and enjoyed an extra good meal owing to the thoughtful kindness of the good fathers of the Aledjo Roman Catholic Mission, who sent us over a supply of fresh vegetables, a treat which only a prolonged course of tinned stuff enables one to appreciate fully.

The next day I felt as fit as a fiddle as regards my bodily health, although my leg still pained me somewhat. It is simply marvellous the difference a few thousand feet of elevation seem to make in equatorial Africa. From out 85
of the depths of a steaming cauldron, so to speak, one is transported in the course of a few hours to a region where the air seems as pure and bracing as that of, say, the Austrian Tyrol. Of course it isn't. It is the force of contrast. If a European could be transported straight from such a climate to that which prevails in the dry season at Aledjo, he would probably laugh to scorn its claim to be entitled the Switzerland of Togo. But to poor, jaded me, it was as the very elixir of life itself.

And it is not the climate only. Aledjo itself is a beautiful place, and beautifully situated on a lofty plateau nearly 3000 feet above the level of the sea. Here Dr. Kersting has built for himself an everlasting monument. Foreseeing how in time it would be needed, he laid out the place as a health resort for Europeans, and built beautiful roomy and airy rest-houses overlooking a wide expanse of plain and mountain, the plain in front, the mountains behind.

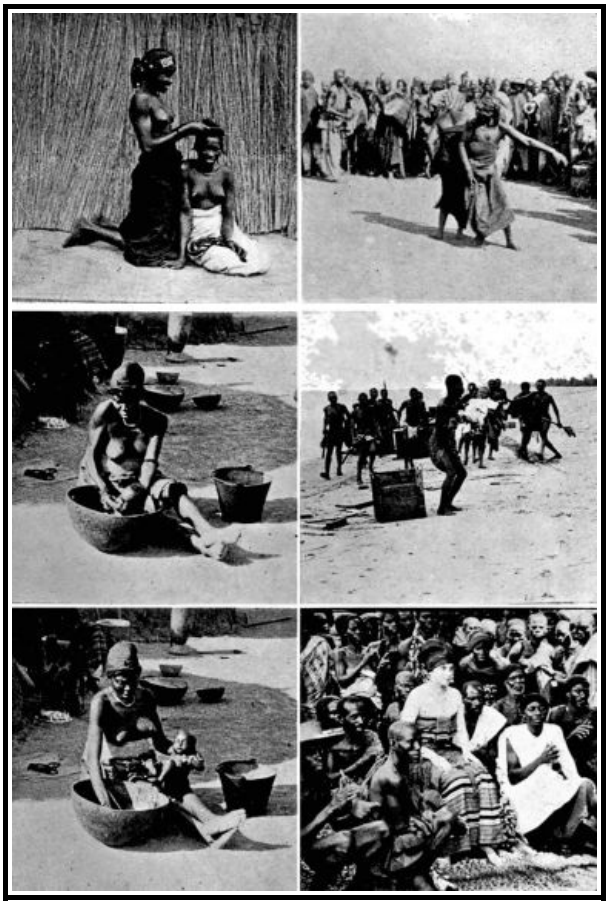
These Aledjo rest-houses consist of a series of enormous round huts, connected by covered corridors. All the rooms are very large, and have big windows and doors, so that the fresh air can come in everywhere. The dining-room especially is big enough for a circus to perform in. And what delighted me perhaps more than all was that there were the very finest set of stables for our horses that I had seen anywhere in Africa.

In time Aledjo is bound to become a place of considerable importance. Already there is in course of erection there a fine Catholic Mission Station. I am not a Catholic myself, nor is Schomburgk, but nevertheless we 86
became great friends with the good fathers who were there superintending the work. We dined together nearly every night, and organised jointly some sports—target shooting and so forth—which were very well attended.

We also utilised our stay here to film what afterwards proved to be one of our very best dramas. We called it *The Outlaw of the Sudu Mountains*, and in the beginning we merely intended to use the play as a sort of setting for the beautiful scenery around Aledjo, much of which is, as I have already intimated, grand beyond description. When, for example, the harmattan is not in evidence, and the atmosphere is consequently clear, one can see right away to the Bassari Mountains, and the lofty outstanding peak of Mafakasa, meaning "Long Gun." At night, too, when the moon is shining as only it does in the tropics, the landscape takes on a new, mysterious beauty, on which I was never tired of gazing. Other nights, when there was no moon, the grass fires lit up the country for miles around, so that I thought I had never seen anything so awe-inspiring and magnificent. These grass fires are started by the natives at regular intervals during the dry season, as otherwise the country would be covered with an altogether too luxuriant vegetation. It is simply marvellous how quickly nature repairs the ravages of the flames. After two or three days, new green grass shoots up through the ash-covered soil, and clothes the whole of the burnt areas with a beautiful carpet of verdure three or four inches high, on which the antelope, and other small four-footed game, feed greedily. The natives call this "the sweating of the country," a 87
most expressive phrase. The flames did not as a rule sweep onward with a wide front, but ate broad streets and roads, as it were, through the bush; and we used to amuse ourselves after dinner of an evening by making imaginary comparisons between these fiery thoroughfares and places we knew. "There is the Strand," we would say, "and over there the Unter den Linden. Yonder are the long-drawn-out lights of the Thames Embankment, and that is the Boulevarde des Italiens. This is the White City, that is Earl's Court, and so on." It was all very amusing, and served to recall memories of home and friends, and of happy hours spent in far different surroundings. Later on, I may add, when our caravan had to make long detours to avoid these same grass fires, I was not so greatly in love with them. Our horses, however, were not in the least frightened of them, which was one comfort. They would even gallop through some of the lesser ones, and seemed to have a perfectly marvellous knack of finding openings in the advancing line of dancing flames, through which they trotted unconcernedly. The reason for this is, of course, that these African horses have been used to grass fires all their lives. An animal fresh from Europe would probably go wild with terror, if confronted with one for the first time.

We evolved the plot of the *Outlaw* film practically on the spot, and I have very good reason to remember it, for while playing in it I met with yet another of those mishaps which seem to be inseparable from the profession of cinema acting. Briefly the story of the play is as follows. A white man is outlawed from amongst his fellows, 88
and takes to the bush, living as a native amongst the natives. Prowling about one day in the vicinity of a settlement, he approaches a farmer's homestead, and is ordered off by the farmer's wife—myself. Cursing and threatening, he goes away to his lair in the hills, where he has collected together a lot of black scalliwags, of whom he is the self-elected chief. He sits apart on a knoll, brooding over the slight that has been put upon him, and vowing revenge.

His chance comes sooner than he had anticipated. From his eerie in the hills he sees me walking along a lonely path, decides to kidnap me, and does so, carrying me, struggling wildly, to his lair, over steep and dangerous mountain tracks. Part of the way led along the brink of a precipice, where the foothold was extra precarious, but of course I had to keep on struggling and squirming, as obviously a robust young woman of two-and-twenty is not going to submit to be abducted in this rough-and-ready fashion without making a fight for it.



REPRODUCED FROM CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS

1. Hair-dressing

2, 3. Baby's Bath

4. Better than the Tango. A curious bumping dance

5, 6. Scenes from "The White Goddess"

It was this that was the cause of the accident. The camera man was grinding away at his machine, and calling out "Capital! Capital! Keep it up! Keep it up!" while Schomburgk sat a little way off on a rock out of range and beamed approval. Everything, in short, was going on first-rate, when suddenly Nebel, who was playing the part of the outlaw, stumbled over a boulder that lay in his way. At the same moment I, over-anxious perhaps to do perfect justice to the situation by making it as realistic as possible, gave a more than usually energetic wriggle. The result was that he lost his balance completely, and we tumbled head over heels on the very brink of the precipice. As the scene had been originally mapped out, he ought to have been carrying me in 89
his arms. But he had insisted that this was not the way an outlaw would carry off a woman, and had hoisted me across his shoulder. As a result, when he fell, I flew clear of him, and landed within less than a foot of the edge of the cliff. Had I gone over, it goes without saying that I should most certainly never have played in a cinema drama again. As it was, I was cut and bleeding, and pretty badly bruised, but my professional instinct caused me to ask almost automatically as they picked me up, "What sort of a picture did it make?" As a matter of fact, except that it did not show the depth of the precipice, it made a very good one, for the operator had never ceased all the while turning the handle of his machine. Nothing short of an earthquake, and a pretty big earthquake at that, would, I am convinced, upset the equanimity of a cinema photographer to the extent of making him stop grinding away at his beloved camera.

Whether it was the effect of this little upset or not, I am unable to say, but the fact remains that soon afterwards Nebel got homesick, and gave out that he must return to Europe then and there. So, as we still had to film one or two scenes in our *Odd Man Out* drama, in which we wanted him to act, we went to a place called Bafilo, only about eight or nine miles from Aledjo, where we had previously decided to act them. I might mention here that all the dramas we played in Togo were entirely the work of Major Schomburgk, who wrote 90
the scenarios, produced them, and also acted in all of them. The germ idea of *The White Goddess of the Wangora*, however, was given him by Mr. L. Dalton, a young London journalist.

We had a tremendous reception at Bafilo, the Uro and all his people turning out to do us honour. It was very flattering, no doubt, but all the same I could not help wishing that they would not be quite so demonstrative. The din was simply terrific, and the heat and the clouds of dust together were well-nigh overpowering.

The station at Bafilo is perched on a plateau, with a sheer drop down to the native town, which is a very large one; and here one night, soon after our arrival, I was witness to a scene that at the time made a deep impression on me. It was pitch dark, no moon, but millions on millions of stars twinkling like points of fire out of a coal-black sky. We were sitting on a sort of platform, which Dr. Kersting had had built on the extreme edge of the plateau, jutting out over the valley. The native village, or rather the cluster of native villages that constitute Bafilo, lay beneath us, but for all that we could see or hear of them they might have had no existence. Neither sight nor sound came from the depths to indicate that hereabouts were the homes of many thousands of people.

I had just commented upon this strange and altogether unusual stillness, when there was borne upwards on

the night air a curious, almost uncanny, sort of rustling sound, like the sudden soughing among trees of a newly-awakened wind, and which yet had something human about it, as of a vast multitude bestirring itself uneasily. Then, all at once, in every village for miles around, thousands of lighted torches twinkled into being, and a chorus of delighted shouts burst from as many savage throats. 91

It was the beginning of the festival of Bairam, the great Mohammedan period of rejoicing which marks the end of the fast of Ramadam, mentioned in a previous chapter. From what I heard and saw, I am quite sure that the Bafilo people paid little or no attention to the fast, but they certainly let themselves go on the festival. Many of them threw the torches that they carried high in the air, so that they resembled very much a flight of rockets. And they seemed to vie with one another in running swiftly about with them all over the place. Eventually they all converged at a level spot just outside the principal village, where the half-burnt torches were thrown together in a huge heap, making a very presentable bonfire. One has only to remember that the Moslem festival of Bairam commemorates the offering of Isaac by Abraham on Mount Moriah to appreciate the significance of this bonfire. But of that these savages knew naught. It was to them just an occasion for merry-making. Had they known of the word they would doubtless have called it a "beano." All that night, at intervals when I awoke, I heard the weird negro music, and the singing of men and women. It sounded not unmusical—heard afar off.

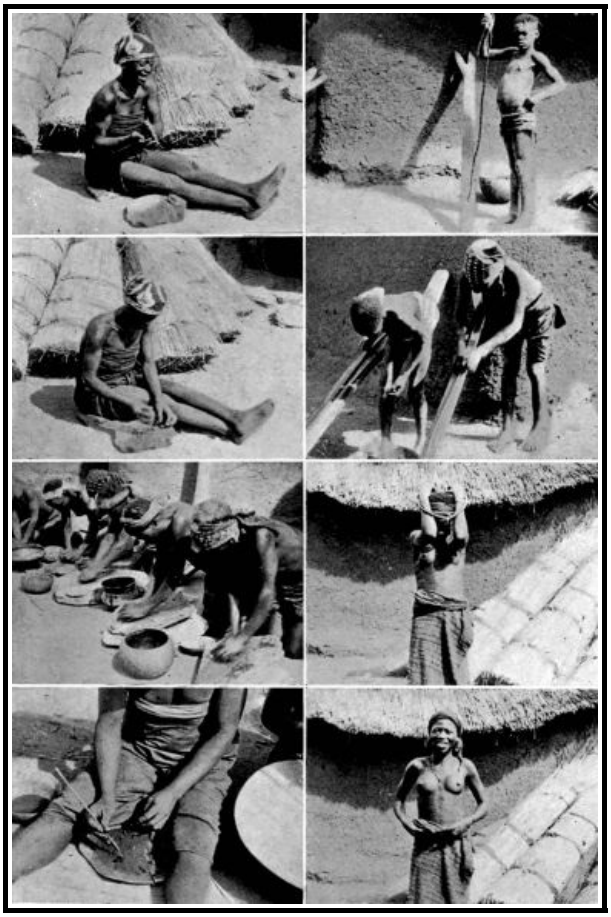
We were kept very busy filming at Bafilo. First we played the scenes in *Odd Man Out* that I wrote about, so that Nebel could leave for home. These occupied us off and on, and counting the preliminary rehearsals, for about a week, from December 1st to 8th, on which latter date Nebel left us, with many expressions of regret and best wishes on both sides, to start on his journey down to the coast. 92

One incident of this drama caused us a good deal of amusement. Nebel, acting the part of the brutal husband, had to throw a plate at my native boy; and in order to get exactly the right expression we decided not to tell him anything about it beforehand. The result was eminently satisfactory from our point of view. Hodgson having been previously warned to have his camera in readiness, Nebel pretended at breakfast-time one morning to find fault with his porridge—served purposely cold for the occasion—and seizing hold of the plate and contents he hurled them at the boy, who was standing behind my chair. I never saw a native so completely flabbergasted in my life. His whole face, attitude, and manner expressed unbounded amazement, not unmixed with fear. I take it that he imagined that Nebel had suddenly gone mad. For perhaps half a minute he remained rooted to the spot. Then he turned and ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the shelter of the cook-house. Of course the nature of the incident was explained to him later on, whereat he laughed heartily, quite entering into the spirit of the joke.

After disposing of the *Odd Man Out* drama, we started on some industrial films, and these I found extremely interesting. Among others we took, was a series showing the various processes in the native cotton industry from start to finish. A great deal of cotton is grown round about Bafilo, and the people are exceedingly clever in cultivating it, preparing it, and making it up into garments.

First we filmed the cotton growing in little plots, or fields, which the natives clear from time to time, in the 93
midst of the virgin bush, and where it was being tended and picked by the native girls. Then we photographed one by one the various processes, such as ginning, spinning by means of hand-worked spindles manipulated by the women, dyeing, and so on, down to the final process of weaving the cloth on the queer, old-fashioned native hand-looms, the pattern of which has been handed down unchanged probably for thousands of years. These looms are most curious, and likewise extremely primitive. The cloth can only be woven on them in strips about four to five inches wide, and these have afterwards to be laboriously sewn together by hand in order to make of them whatever garment is required. The native tailors are, however, marvellously expert with their needles, the stitches they put in being so tiny, and so close together, and the thin strips of cloth so evenly matched, that at a little distance the finished garment appears as if it had been woven in one piece.

The ginning is done by hand, and mostly by the women and girls, who tease it out very finely and quickly. In other parts of Togo, however, I have seen the natives accomplish this same process even more expeditiously by rolling it on a stone. The skeining is done by boys. Men everywhere undertake the important work of weaving, with the one exception that there exists at Bafilo a sort of class, or guild, of women weavers. These, however, work on quite different principles, and with altogether different looms, to those used by the men; and the cloth, 94
instead of being woven in narrow strips, is made all in one piece, and of practically any width. It is a sort of primitive home industry, occupying women in their spare time, and is carried on inside their huts. When we wanted to film one of these women weavers at work, we had to get her to bring her loom out from her hut, and set it up in the open. I may add that these workers' guilds are common in Togo, not only amongst women, but to an even greater degree amongst men. They are very strict and conservative as regards the qualification for admission to membership; and as regards their aims and objects, they correspond in some respects to our European trade unions, while in other directions they approximate very closely indeed to the caste system of India.



BEADMAKING: A NATIVE INDUSTRY DISCOVERED BY THE AUTHOR

1. Ordinary palm nuts
2. Are cracked on a stone
3. The cracked shells are smoothed with water between two stones
4. Holes are drilled in the cracked and smoothed pieces
5. Then strung together
6. And the whole string made round and smoothed with the help of a stone and mud and water
7. The bead belt is put on over the head
8. And worn as a hip ornament by the women

The dyeing is also women's work, a beautiful dark blue colour being obtained from a preparation of native indigo. Most interesting of all from my point of view was the process of spinning. The hand-worked spindles are merely hard round sticks, which are inserted through a hole drilled in a flat disc—more rarely pear-shaped—of soft stone, or of clay baked hard, the weight of which helps to keep the spindle revolving, and also regulates its speed—performing, in fact, the functions of the governor of a steam-engine. The women, who do all the spinning, are marvellously expert with this exceedingly primitive contrivance. Resting one end of the spindle in the hollow of a calabash placed upon the ground, and sanding their fingers from time to time so as to get a grip, they make it revolve evenly and rapidly, and seemingly with little or no exertion. Sometimes one sees a woman 95
revolving the spindle on her knee. A white woman trying the experiment would probably succeed in drilling a hole in her knee-cap, that is, if she continued the experiment for any length of time, but the skin of a native woman's knee is calloused by continual kneeling to almost the consistency of bone. I have occasionally, too, seen a spinner of more than ordinary dexterity throw the spindle away from her, and draw it back by the thread, keeping it revolving in the air all the while.

Another industry which we filmed, and one which, so far as Schomburgk could discover, is peculiar to the district, I can lay claim to be the discoverer of. I was out one day after butterflies, when I came unexpectedly on a number of girls busily engaged, by the banks of a little stream, in grinding and polishing a number of small objects, the exact nature of which I could not at first determine. Inquiry revealed the fact that they were palm nuts, out of which they were manufacturing artificial pearls to make up into waist-belts. By marshalling a bevy of the girls together, and setting them to work, we were able to secure a number of most interesting photographs of their unique industry, showing the whole process, from the first cutting of the nuts, drilling the holes, stringing the "pearls," and so on, down to the moment when the native belle, broadly smiling her manifest delight, puts the finished girdle round her ample waist.

I quite forgot to mention that while we were at Aledjo, Nebel went out one day and shot a "dog monkey," 96
otherwise a baboon. It was as big as me, and looked so human that I could not bear to gaze upon it. In the evening I inquired casually what had become of the carcase, and was informed that our boys had cooked and eaten it. I shuddered. To me it seemed only one remove from cannibalism. Another queer little animal we shot

here was called a rock-rabbit. It was exactly like a rabbit as to the body, but its feet reminded me very much of an elephant's hoofs.

CHAPTER VIII

AMONG THE BAFILO FOLK

Besides the films mentioned in the last chapter, we also took advantage of there being an unusually large market at Bafilo in order to photograph a series of unique moving pictures of this side—a very important one—of the natives' daily life. It was my business, as well as Hodgson's and Schomburgk's, to be constantly on the look-out for fresh scenes and incidents in this connection, and between us we managed to secure a complete representative collection.

To mention but a few of them. In one film boys are seen bargaining for supplies of native sweets, made from flour and wild honey. Payment for these toothsome delicacies, it may be mentioned, is made in cowrie shells, coined money being very rarely used. The value of these shells varies, according to distance from the coast, difficulty of transport, and so on, from about 2500 to the shilling up to as few as 1000. In Bafilo, they were worth about sixpence a thousand. In another film we showed a native barber shaving a baby's head, in accordance with native custom. The baby was held tight in the mother's arms, during the operation, which it did not seem to relish at all, for it kicked and screamed the whole while. After it was over I asked the woman the 98
reason of the custom. "How else would you keep the lice from feeding on its little scalp?" she asked in evident surprise. We also photographed boys engaged in gambling for cowries at a curious kind of native game, the equivalent, I suppose, to our pitch and toss. Only in Bafilo there are no policemen to interfere with the urchins or mar their enjoyment. The kind of dour puritanism that is so prevalent in England—and in parts of Germany, too, for that matter—would find but little encouragement among the Togo people. It was at Bafilo, too, that we filmed a most curious native dance, performed entirely by women and the principal feature of which consisted in violently bumping one another with that portion of their anatomy on which boys are birched at school. It was a most strange and mirth-provoking spectacle, but the women take this particular dance very seriously, and will continue at it for many hours at a stretch, encouraged by the loud yells of approval from the spectators that invariably follow an extra hard bump, and by the terrific tom-tomming of the native band. In yet another film, vultures are seen acting as scavengers; while hard by warriors are engaged in mimic sword-play. The manufacture of leather mats, an industry peculiar to the place, was also filmed—together with basket-making from the stalks of the palm leaf, which we photographed from start to finish. The finished articles are sold for a sum approximating in value to one farthing apiece.

There are many wild animals in the bush round Bafilo, but the hyenas are the most trying. At Paratau we had 99
heard these noisy brutes at a distance, but here they came quite close up. Night after night, one's rest was broken and disturbed by them. I used to get up and throw empty bottles and things out of the window to drive them away, much as one scares off the nocturnal domestic cat at home; but, though they would slink off for a while, they always came back again. Some nights were worse than others. I remember, on one occasion, there seemed to be a regular pack of them prowling round the huts, and their fierce howls sounded quite terrifying. Next morning, Hodgson, who slept in a detached hut some distance away from those occupied by the other members of our party, turned up at breakfast looking unusually pale and hollow-eyed and, on inquiring, we found that he had been sitting up all night with his revolver fearing an attack. Presently Nebel put in an appearance—it was just before he left for Europe that the affair happened—and remarked casually to Hodgson that he had been unable to sleep for the noise, and had at one time been on the point of coming round to his (Hodgson's) hut for a chat. "Good job for you, you didn't," replied Hodgson, wearily. "I should most likely have shot you. My nerves were in such a state that I am quite sure I should have let drive at any living thing [only he didn't say *living*] that had come to the door of my hut in the dark."

There were also numbers of scorpions about the place, and snakes, although for a long time I did not see any
of the latter. In fact, one evening when we were sitting outside our hut on some stones, chatting and enjoying 100
the cool night air, I remarked generally to the men-folk that I did not believe one half of the many snake yarns they were in the habit of telling one another from time to time. "Here I have been at this place for a whole week, and nary a snake," I remarked. "I don't believe that there are any." Hardly were the words out of my mouth, when one of the boys standing near darted forward to where I was seated, and started lashing furiously with a stick at something on the ground at my feet. It proved to be a puff-adder, one of the most poisonous reptiles to be found in the whole of Africa, and its deadly fangs were actually within a foot or so of my lightly covered ankles at the very moment when I was deriding the existence in Bafilo of him or any of his species.

Curiously enough, too, a somewhat similar incident occurred here in connection with a leopard; and this also took place in the evening. The men had been talking about these animals, and of how plentiful they were, until their stories rather got on my nerves. "Oh, bother your leopards," I cried. "I don't believe there is one within a hundred miles." I spoke in jest of course, and looked towards Schomburgk expecting him to laugh. Instead, he held up a warning hand, as if to enjoin silence, while with the other he pointed to what looked to me like a black shadow slinking slowly past where we were sitting, and not more than five or six yards distant. "A leopard!" he whispered. Hodgson and I both laughed, thinking he was joking, and that what we had seen was probably
nothing more dangerous or uncommon than a native dog. We were sitting outside our hut as usual, and without 101
a light, for the night, though dark, was fine and warm. But Schomburgk was quite sure, and he called up the native boys, who lit lamps, and there, sure enough, clearly discernible even to my inexperienced eyes, in the soft sand, was the spoor of a big, full-grown leopard. He must have come our way from the village, climbed up on to the plateau, spotted us, and slunk off between the huts, and so escaped. When we came back from examining the spoor, Hodgson said to me, remembering our former experience with the snake: "Well, you're a prophetess the wrong way about; only say you don't believe in elephants, and I'll go and load my gun."

From the 10th to the 13th of December, I suffered from a relapse of fever, and had to lay up, but during the rest of the time, as I have said before, we were kept pretty busy. There were seven horses to look after, and I usually superintended their early morning toilet myself, taking my coffee by the stables at six o'clock. Every afternoon we went riding, and the mornings were devoted to acting, or filming ethnological subjects. One thing,

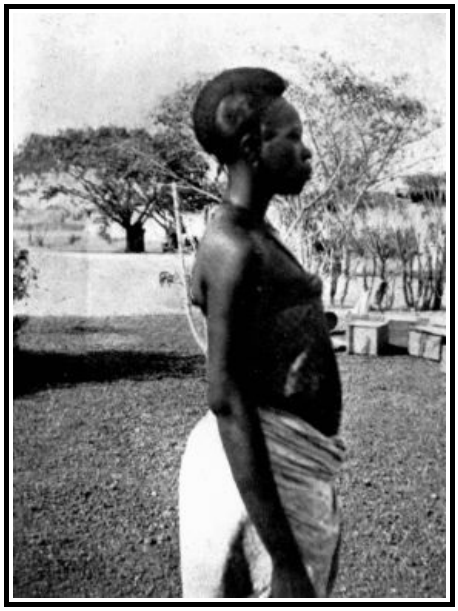
there was no lack of supers for our dramatic scenes at Bafilo. Once, when we asked for fifty negroes, fully a thousand turned up. Naturally they all wanted to be taken on, and the noise and clamour they made was simply deafening.

One day a "woman palaver" caused considerable trouble. The word "palaver," I may explain, stands for anything and everything in West Africa. Originally it meant a talk, a formal conference or conversation. 102
Nowadays any happening in the least out of the common is referred to as a palaver. If, for example, you go to buy a horse—that is a "horse palaver." Does the cook spoil or steal your rations? There follows a "cook palaver." And so on. Most frequent of all, however, are the woman palavers, for my fair but frail sex was, I found, the cause of fully as much trouble in Togo as it is generally credited with being elsewhere. *Cherchez la femme.*

This particular case began in this way. During the afternoon, while the men were away shooting, a native came from the village to complain that one of our soldiers—we had two as escort provided by the Government—had decoyed away his daughter, a girl of fourteen or fifteen. She had, he said, been sent to the market that morning to buy provisions, and the "soldier" had met her, and induced her to go away with him. I called the soldiers before me, and questioned them jointly and severally, but they both denied most strenuously having had anything to say to any girl, one of them adding, with a great show of virtuous indignation, that he had a wife of his own in Sokode. This latter assertion, however, though doubtless correct, did not greatly impress me, because I had only the evening before come across him canoodling one of the native women on the outskirts of the camp.

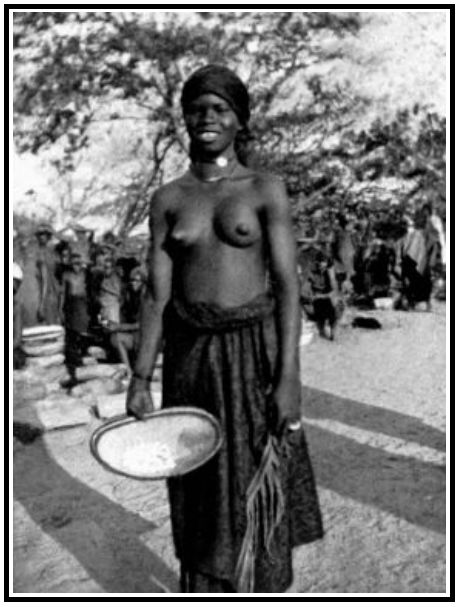
While I was trying to get at the bottom of the matter, Schomburgk returned and, on my explaining to him what it was all about, he called Alfred, our chief interpreter, and ordered him to translate the man's story carefully, and word for word. This, however, Alfred seemed either unwilling or unable to do, so we called in the 103
aid of Mseu, another interpreter, who understood the Bafilo dialect better than Alfred did. Mseu heard what the man had to say, and translated it sentence by sentence, adding voluntarily, after he had finished, that, in his opinion, the man was a liar. I began to think so myself, for it suddenly occurred to me that the two soldiers had been about the camp practically all the morning, and could not, therefore, have been down in Bafilo, philandering with native girls.

The man, however, insisted that what he said was correct, and that his daughter was even now concealed in our camp, so we told him to go with Mseu and see if he could find her. This he appeared unwilling to do, and Mseu also, but Schomburgk insisted, and eventually they went off together, to return presently with the girl. This, of course, was a serious matter, as these sort of "women palavers" may easily lead to grave bother with the natives. So we held a sort of informal Court of Inquiry, and went thoroughly into the matter. In the end we found that it was Mseu himself who had taken the girl away. Schomburgk fined the delinquent ten shillings—a big sum to him—to be handed over as compensation to the girl's father, and gave him the option of taking a letter to the Government Commissioner at Sokode, or of suffering personal chastisement at his hands there and then. He promptly chose the latter alternative, and Schomburgk gave it to him soundly. He yelled like a hyena, and screamed for mercy, to the huge delight of our boys, for Mseu was always greatly interested and pleased 104
when anybody else got a hiding. Afterwards I took the girl aside, and gave her a good talking to, but I am sorry to say it seemed to make very little impression on her. To all my questions as to how she came to act in such a wicked manner—for it transpired that she had gone away with Mseu quite willingly—she would only reply in snappy monosyllables, or by that forward and upward thrust of the chin which is everywhere associated with sulky indifference. Once only did she show any sign of interest or animation, and that was when I asked her if she had gone with the man because she loved him. "Love him!" she cried indignantly. "Indeed no. He is old and ugly. But—he gave me this." And she pointed to a string of common white beads, value perhaps three-halfpence, which she was wearing round her throat. Poor child! To her they were a rope of rarest pearls, and for ropes of pearls, I reflected, European women, dainty and well-educated and well-bred, have ere now been not unwilling to barter their honour.



A Hausa Woman

Note the curious helmet-like way of dressing her hair. This is only one of many similar eccentric methods in vogue amongst these people.



Tschaudjo Girl from Bafilo

The Tschaudjo women are amongst the most modest and well-behaved of the Togo peoples. This young lady took a lot of persuasion before she would consent to pose for her photograph in public, but having done so she put on her pleasantest and most engaging smile.

It was at Bafilo that there also occurred another palaver, in which I was more directly concerned. I was out riding one day, when a native lad of about sixteen or seventeen started dancing and shouting in the path in front of my horse. The more I expostulated with him, the worse he went on, and I was afraid that he would frighten the horse, and perhaps cause it to bolt. Luckily, Schomburgk rode up at the crucial moment, and secured the offender, who proved to be drunk. We handed him over to his chief, who was furious, and promptly ordered him to be flogged. I waited till he was triced up, then interceded for him, but I had the greatest difficulty in inducing the chief to forego the punishment. I do not know whether the culprit was grateful to me or no—gratitude being, to put it mildly, not a strong point in the character of the African native—but he at all events ought to have been, for a chief's flogging is no joke.

An endless source of interest to me during our stay in Bafilo were the long strings of natives belonging to different tribes, Losso, Lamantiné, etc., from the Kabre Mountains—semi-wild people, who were travelling back to their far-off homes after going down to do their tax-work at Sokode, or to labour for wages on the railway at Atakpame and beyond. All these people were accompanied by their women to cook their food, and both sexes were absolutely nude; not even a loin-cloth amongst hundreds of them. Yet, somehow, after the first impression wore off, one saw nothing to cavil at in it. Their black skins seemed quite to do away with the impression of

nudity, and their extremely graceful movements, and modest carriage, made their nakedness seem not only natural, but admirable. The women were especially modest in their demeanour, and the younger girls were even painfully shy. If one spoke to them in passing, one might get a swift shy smile in return, accompanied by a sudden uplifting of the head for a fraction of a second. But if one approached one of them in order to try to converse, they seemed to be absolutely paralysed with fright. Like a startled fawn, they would stand stock-still, and trembling all over, until one was within a yard or so of them, then fly away like an arrow from a bow. 106
Numbers of them carried on their heads big bags filled with salt, the ordinary currency of the Kabre country, and representing probably the wages of the bread-winner for many months. On one occasion a young girl thus loaded stumbled and fell right opposite my hut, the bag burst, and some of the precious salt was spilled and wasted. I felt sorry for her, and went in and got some of our own salt to give to her. But directly I approached her with it, she fled like the wind, after giving one startled scream. However, I went after her, and by the aid of the interpreter I eventually succeeded in calming her fears, and inducing her to accept my salt.

Another thing that amused me greatly, although I was chaffed about it considerably by Schomburgk and the others! The son of the richest native in Bafilo took it into his head to fall violently in love with me. There was nothing offensive about his attentions. It was merely a dumb, dog-like sort of devotion. He would sit for hours silently watching me, would run to anticipate my wants, and was constantly bringing me presents, and expecting nothing in return, a thing absolutely foreign to native methods. Poor chap! I have a pretty little table-cover of native workmanship spread upon the table at which I write these words—his parting gift! I can see him now, the tears streaming down his squat ebony face, as I turned in my saddle to wave him a last farewell—a ludicrous sight, and yet somehow pathetic.

By the way, some of the native cloth-work at Bafilo is exceedingly beautiful. I bought a number of specimens 107
of it, among the best being a handsome toga-like garment of hand-woven blue stuff, elaborately embroidered, and which I am now wearing as an opera cloak in London, where it has been greatly admired. It is woven in narrow strips about two inches wide, and these are then sewn together by stitches so small, even, and regular, that they are practically invisible. It cost me £3, 10s., a big sum out there, and to a native, but then it must be borne in mind that one of these cloaks takes about a year to make.

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CHAPTER IX

ON THE MARCH ONCE MORE

On December the 16th, at five o'clock in the morning, we left Bafilo, where we had been since the first day of the month, and started on trek again, bound for Dako and the north. On the road an incident occurred that upset me greatly. A certain Dr. Engelhardt had died in Togo about three weeks previously of some malignant malady of the fever type. They—Schomburgk and the rest—had given me to understand that he died at Sokode. Now it transpired that he had really died at Bafilo, and in the very hut and on the identical spot where my bed had stood. They had kept this from me, not wishing to alarm me. Now they thought it a good joke to tell me, and were quite taken aback when I got exceedingly angry. They pointed out that the hut had been thoroughly disinfected. But I was not at all appeased. I said they were cold and callous, and many other things, but they only laughed.

The distance from Bafilo to Dako is only a little over twelve miles, yet it took us four hours or thereabouts to cover it, the reason being that the road was so bad. It was all up hill and down dale, and covered with big rocks and loose round stones. As a result, I was quite shaken up and tired on arrival, and the sight of the clean and 109
pretty little rest-house was a welcome one. There was, however, I found, no accommodation for our horses, and we had to tether them all together under a big tree. We took our meals under another tree, and were very comfortable and "picknicky."

Next day, on to Kabu. The going was even worse than on the previous day. Indeed, I have never experienced anything like it, either before or since. The road, a mere native track, crossed at right angles a continual succession of mountain ridges, with narrow wooded valleys in between, along which in the rainy season rapid streams flowed. To ride down the steep sides of many of these valleys was a sheer physical impossibility. We had to dismount again and again, and scramble down as best we could. Even without their riders the poor horses had hard work to keep their footing at times, and one of them nearly met with a bad accident when crossing one river bed that was not yet wholly dry. He had negotiated successfully the exceedingly steep slope down to the river, and was in the act of crossing, when he somehow got his near hindleg between the root of a big tree and the bank, and nearly broke it. He was our best horse too, and my own for riding purposes, and I was fearfully anxious about him until Schomburgk assured me, after a careful and prolonged examination, that beyond a straining of the tendons, there was no harm done.

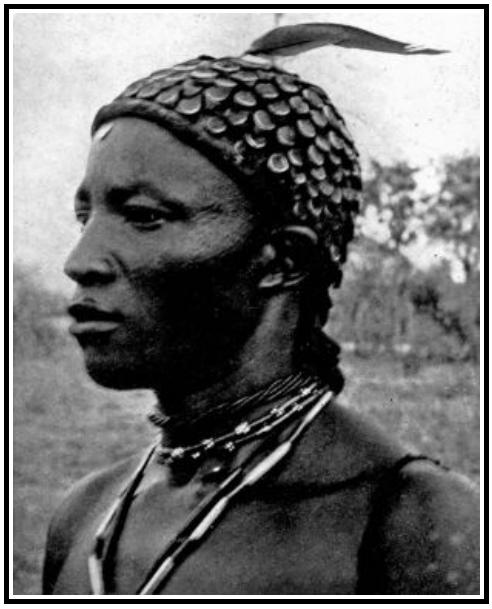
As the day advanced it grew fearfully hot. I kept on asking how much farther it was, and the answer from the interpreter hardly ever varied between "Not far," and "Only half an hour." It turned out to be three full hours 110
from the last "only half an hour," the whole journey occupying from 4 A.M. till 1.30 P.M., so that we were nine and a half hours in the saddle without a break, barring the time that we were climbing and slithering on foot up and down the sides of the valleys. Even the horses felt the strain, and although I had two mounts, and changed them frequently, they were both pretty well knocked up by the time we reached our journey's end. Schomburgk, who knew beforehand that the stage was likely to be a hard one—although even he did not realise how hard—had strongly advised me, before setting out, to wear my pith helmet. But I, with true feminine perversity, had insisted on donning a big slouch hat of the cowboy type to which I was partial. I realised my mistake when the sun was well up, but my pride would not let me admit it. The last few miles were the worst. Only my thick hair, I am convinced, saved me from sunstroke. Once or twice I reeled in the saddle, almost overcome with weariness and the terrible heat. I got, however, but scant sympathy from the men. Schomburgk especially was most rough and unkind, and this was so unlike him, as a general rule, that at length, after one or two half-hearted appeals for sympathy, I got very angry, gritted my teeth, straightened myself in the saddle, and made up my mind to go through with it come what would. Afterwards, when we had camped and rested, he told me that he had acted of set purpose. He had realised that I must be on the very verge of collapse, and knew that if he could succeed in 111
making me angry, I should probably succeed in pulling myself together; while if he started to condole with me, he feared that I might break down altogether. No doubt he was right. Wholesome anger is a good tonic.

Anyhow, I managed somehow to hold out until our arrival at Kabu. Here the chief's hut was placed at my disposal, there being no rest-house, and throwing myself full length on the horse blanket and with my saddle for a pillow, I slept soundly for a full hour. I woke greatly refreshed, and ravenously hungry. Unfortunately there was no food available, the carriers with the chop boxes not having yet arrived. However, the negroes brought us some big calabashes full of native beer. It was the first time I had ever tasted it, and I am bound to say that I found it both refreshing and sustaining. This was lucky, as we had nothing to eat until six o'clock that night. It is a fermented drink made from guinea corn, and is, I was told, highly intoxicating if one drinks enough of it. It has a peculiar sweetish sour taste, not at all unpleasant. After my sleep, a wash, and supper, I felt none the worse for our long march, notwithstanding that it was the worst and longest one we ever did. Here for the first time I saw antelope spoor all along the road, but no antelope were visible. We expect, however, to meet plenty before long, as well as other game, for we are now in the heart of wild Africa—no proper roads, only native tracks, and all round us the shadeless, waterless bush.

Our next day's stage, to Bapure, was a short one. I felt unusually fit and well, and the road being good rode 112
nearly the whole way in a canter. I forgot to say that after Sokode we got a different lot of carriers at each stage; what are called out here "exchange carriers." These are furnished by the chief of each village, on payment of course, and each day a soldier of our escort was sent on ahead to arrange for the proper number being forthcoming. There is practically no difficulty about this so far as Togo is concerned, although in some other parts of Africa, I was informed, things are very different. On the whole trip we only once had any bother about carriers, but I shall come to that later on. I may add that there are two sides to the exchange of carriers. It has its advantages and its disadvantages. One of the principal advantages is that with fresh people each day, one naturally travels faster than with "stale" men. On the other hand, a nucleus of old carriers is to be preferred, because they know the loads, and can consequently pack up very much quicker. Coming up from Atakpame to Sokode it usually took us no more than about half an hour to pack up in the morning and get away,

whereas now our exchange carriers take fully three times as long.

At Bapure, we first came into contact with the Konkombwa, admitted by everybody to be the finest race of savages in Togo. As, however, Bapure is only a border village, the ones we saw here were not, for the most part, pure bred; and nothing like such fine specimens, consequently, as those we saw farther up country. For this reason I will defer my description of them until later.



By permission of Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.

A Konkombwa Warrior

He is not wearing a helmet, or a cap of some kind, as might be supposed, but his own hair, into which is woven a number of little rings of copper and brass.

Camping Out in the Bush

The authoress is sitting outside her tent, busy at needlework. Note the double awning, the bed with mosquito curtain, the portable washstand on the right, and the chairs and tables all made to fold up into a small compass. This photo was taken at Kugnau.

We camped here under a big tree, the roosting place of innumerable tame guinea-fowl, who greatly annoyed us by their incessant cackling. The heat in the middle of the day was very excessive, and in order to get the maximum of fresh air and the minimum of sunshine, we adopted the expedient of detaching the outer canvas roofs over our tents, and using them as awnings. It was surprising what a difference it made. Beneath this awning, and still further sheltered from the sun's glare by the thick branches of a big tree, I enjoyed my siesta in perfect comfort and comparative coolness, whereas when I remained cooped up in the tent, I found it usually impossible to obtain any sleep whatever during the daytime. The fact of the matter is that a tent in the tropics is not at all a desirable kind of dwelling-place. It looks cool, and it sounds cool, but it isn't anything of the kind. On

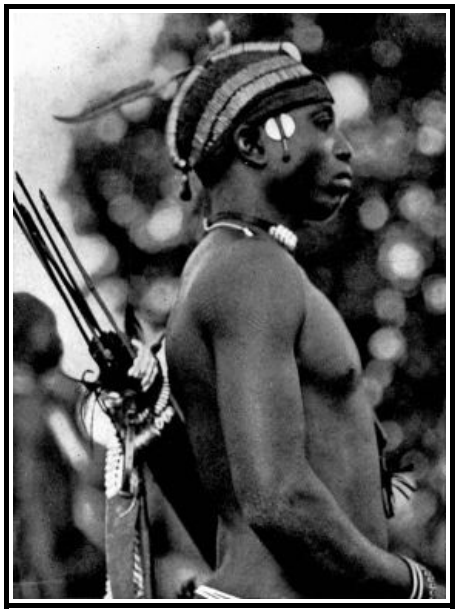
the contrary, its interior is almost always stiflingly hot.

Whilst we were waiting here for our carriers to come up, I was greatly amused by the antics of two travelling coast natives who unexpectedly put in an appearance. They were "beautifully" dressed in what they, no doubt, considered the latest European styles; broad-brimmed straw hats, short tight trousers, and cut-away coats. As soon as they saw us they came swaggering over to where we were seated. Said Schomburgk: "Where do you come from?" "From the coast," they replied. Said Schomburgk: "You look it." That was all. But it was enough. The two "culled gentlemen" beat a quick retreat, and for the rest of their stay they left us severely alone; which was precisely what we wanted. They had two carriers for their belongings, and later on we saw them seated 114
back to back on their boxes in the middle of the village street, each reading a book, while a crowd of gaping bush negroes stood round, evidently greatly impressed, and very much amazed at so marvellous a display of erudition on the part of men of their own race and colour. Of course it was all done for effect.

Although the days in this part of the Togoland Sudan are frequently fearfully sultry, the heat radiates quickly in the thin dry air at this season of the year, and the nights, consequently, are apt to be chilly. On the morning when we left Bapure, for instance, at 5 A.M., it was quite cold, so that my teeth chattered as I dressed myself. A quick short canter, however, soon put the blood into circulation. The first part of our journey was along a picturesque native path, just wide enough to allow two people to ride abreast, and bordered on either side by open bush country. About half-way between Bapure and our next halting-place at Gerin-Kuka, however, we crossed a river, the Dakpe, which forms the boundary between the Sokode and the Mangu districts, and immediately found ourselves on a broad, well-kept Government road. I didn't like it at all. The tortuous native tracks, winding in and out, may not be so good for quick or easy travelling, but they possess the charm of the unknown. When riding along them, one is always wondering what new scenery the next turn will disclose. But this wide straight highway where one could see miles ahead. Bah! There was no more romance or element of uncertainty about it, than there is about Rotten Row.

However, I was soon to be reminded that, road or no road, I was not anywhere in Europe, but in the heart of 115
savage Africa. We had arrived within a mile or two of Gerin-Kuka, when there suddenly sounded ahead of us a most terrific din, and presently there came in sight an immense crowd of Konkombwa people, who advanced towards us leaping and yelling, and brandishing in the air long bows and barbed arrows—the latter, I was informed, poisoned. It was a most imposing, barbaric sight. The savages, all nude, or nearly so, kept up a chorus of yells, a series of long-drawn and sonorous "ha-ha-has," threw their bows into the air, and dexterously caught them again. And all the while they were dancing and capering, and making swift, short darts forward, as if bent on attacking us.

I confess to having been a wee bit frightened at first, until Schomburgk assured me that this was merely their way of saluting an honoured guest, and that the honoured guest on this occasion was myself, the first white woman who had ever adventured herself within the confines of their country. I can quite understand, however, what a welcome of this description might easily be misunderstood, and possibly lead to complications, as it has, in point of fact, upon occasions, and this not only amongst the Konkombwa, but amongst other more or less kindred people, whose customs in this respect are practically identical. In this connection Schomburgk mentioned an incident that came within his own personal knowledge. It happened some years ago, in what is now the north-western corner of Rhodesia, in the bend of the Kafue River. Here a traveller, who shall be nameless, first came into contact with the Mashukulumbwe. This traveller had heard a lot about the fighting 116
prowess of the Mashukulumbwe, in just the same way as I had heard a lot about the fighting prowess of the Konkombwa, and when they came out to greet him, as the Konkombwa came out to greet us, he, like me, grew frightened, and fired and killed one of them. The poor savages, utterly at a loss to understand in what way they had offended, went in a body to the District Commissioner to complain of the outrage, and to ask for redress and compensation. They got what they asked, the money payment they received being afterwards recovered from the traveller, who was severely called over the coals for his share in the matter.



YOUNG KONKOMBWA WARRIOR

These people are an ethnological puzzle. No one knows their origin, and their history is practically non-existent. As regards their appearance, dress, tribal customs, and so forth, they are utterly unlike the other Togoland natives.

A KONKOMBWA DANDY

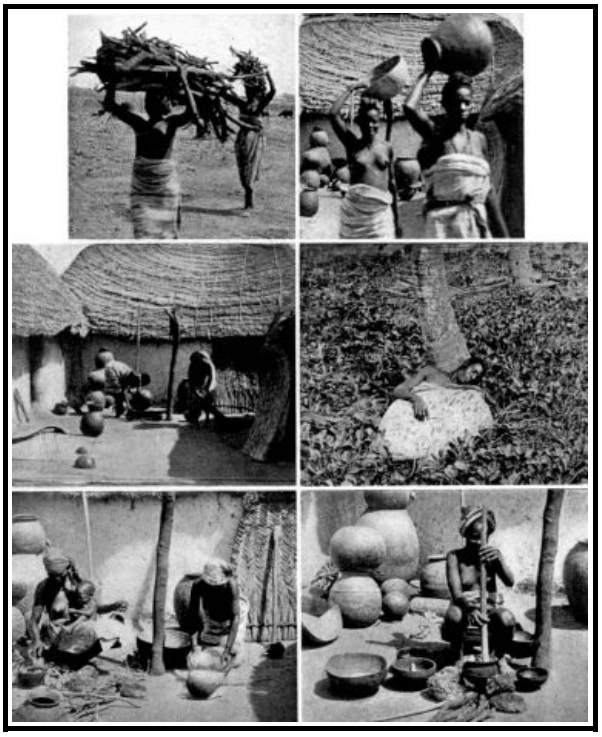
The helmet-like head-dress is ornamented with cowrie shells, as is also the quiver in which he carries his poisoned arrows. This kind of shell ornamentation is peculiar to these people, who have brought it to a high pitch of perfection.

This was the first time I had ever met any real full-blooded Konkombwa, and I was greatly struck with their appearance. Tall, splendidly proportioned, and of fierce and warlike aspect, they carried themselves with a grace and dignity one could not help admiring. They were great dandies, too, for although they wore no clothes to speak of, many of them had little copper plates woven into their woolly hair, or had their heads surmounted with curious helmet-like head-dresses of cowrie shells, topped by antelope horns. The quivers in which they carried their sheaves of poisoned arrows, too, were beautifully designed and ornamented; and round their arms, from wrist to shoulder in some cases, they wore bracelets of brass and copper alternating. These were kept brightly polished, and glistened in the sun as they moved, making an extremely effective picture. So I rode into Gerin-Kuka in state, surrounded by my savage escort, dancing, shouting, and leaping. The noise made my horse exceedingly restive, and I began to fear that I might be unable to control him, so that I was very glad when, after we reached the confines of the village, they suddenly with one accord stopped shouting, and began to sing, a low, melodious, yet barbaric chant, altogether different from any native singing I had ever heard before. The interpreter explained that it was a song specially composed in my honour, and in which I was told that I was more fair than the moon, brighter than the sun, and more graceful and beautiful than a roan antelope.

The rest-house at Gerin-Kuka is very large and comfortable, and beautifully clean. It is square, not round, as is usual with the Togo rest-houses, and this in itself was a change. We were its first occupants, which accounted perhaps for its being so altogether spick-and-span; although as a matter of fact the rest-houses all over Togoland are invariably kept in first-rate order. Only white people are allowed to occupy them, and it is the duty of the chiefs of the different villages where they are situated, to keep them clean. It must not be imagined, however, that it is only the white travellers whose convenience is studied by the Government in this respect. In the neighbourhood of each of the rest-houses for Europeans, there has also been built a compound for natives. Many of these compounds are quite imposing-looking places, being, in fact, self-contained villages, comprising often as many as fifty or sixty round huts, each of which affords accommodation for a native family. The entire compound is called a "songu," and is in charge of a native official called the "sery-chi-songu" (I won't vouch for 118
the spelling), whose duty it is to keep it clean and tidy, and to see that the occupants of the huts sweep them out before they leave in the morning for the next stage of their journey. This sweeping out process, I may mention, is by no means perfunctory, for the Government insists on cleanliness in regard to the native rest-houses, as well as in regard to those used by the whites. But it is not by any means an ordeal. There are no brooms provided, but the natives soon improvise one from the branches of the nearest tree, the work—as usual—falling upon the women, when there are any in the party. One penny a day is charged for the use of a hut, the money being collected by the man in charge of the compound. No party is allowed to remain beyond a certain time—usually three days—at any one rest-house, except in case of sickness. One result of the provision of these compounds, and of the roads the Government have caused to be built, is that there has grown up quite a regular system of travel to and fro between the rail-head at Atakpame, and other parts of Togo, and not only are the roads and rest-houses used by the Togoland natives, but those from the northern parts of the British possessions on the one side, and the French possessions on the other, also come down through Togo to the coast, when they wish to make the journey, in order to avail themselves of the facilities provided.

It was outside the Gerin-Kuka rest-house, by the way, that I first paid our carriers in salt, the currency in general vogue throughout the Mangu district, where we now are. Each carrier received two cupfuls of salt for 119
his day's work. Schomburgk saw nothing extraordinary in this, and rather pooh-poohed the idea when I suggested cinemaing the incident. He consented, however; and afterwards, when we came to show the films in London, this one created quite a lot of interest. People seemed to find it strange that natives could be found willing to carry heavy loads all day in the broiling sun for what was, from their point of view, so altogether inadequate a remuneration.

In the afternoon, the Konkombwa, not content with their magnificent reception in the morning, gave a grand dance in my honour. Afterwards, Schomburgk went out into the bush to look for antelope. He had previously told me that he would not be gone more than about an hour or so, and when darkness came on, and he had not returned, I grew alarmed for his safety, remembering how easy a matter it is to lose one's way in the African bush. Hodgson kept trying to reassure me, saying that it was quite certain that so old and experienced an African traveller as Schomburgk was would not get bushed. As, however, he had not returned by eight o'clock, I ordered out the soldiers to look for him, and fired several revolver shots to guide him in our direction in case he was anywhere within hearing. I also sent natives out with lanterns, and soon the bush all round Gerin-Kuka was alive with twinkling points of fire. At nine o'clock the truant turned up. He had, he explained, struck some fairly fresh antelope spoor, and, urged on by the ardour of the chase, had gone further afield than he had at first intended. As is the way with men the world over, he was not a bit grateful to me for my thoughtful solicitude. 120
On the contrary, he growled and grumbled, saying that the lights of the lanterns had dazzled and confused him, and so caused him to be even longer on the way than he otherwise would have been; also that all the unnecessary hubbub and excitement had made him look foolish in the eyes of the natives. "I am quite capable of looking after my own safety, thank you," he snapped in conclusion; to which I icily retorted that if he thought it was his safety I was anxious about he was mightily mistaken, my only reason for acting as I had done being that I had no ambition to be left stranded alone with a leaderless caravan in the heart of the African wilds. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that after this little passage of arms we parted on not the best of terms that night.



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A Woman's Work

Five phases of a native woman's life are given here. She brings in the firewood and the water, does the cooking, and attends generally to domestic duties and family cares, whilst her lord and master passes the time in pleasant oblivion under a tree.

Reproduced from Cinematograph Films.

Next morning he was all smiles and kindly courtesy, and as I showed by my manner that I had forgiven his boorishness of the previous night, we made a first-rate start. We are now bound for Sansane-Mangu, the northernmost Government station in Togo, by way of Kadjamba and Nali, and are in the heart of the Togoland Sudan. The days are intensely hot, and the nights seem to get colder and colder. This morning, for instance, the frost lay thick on the ground, so that we shivered under our thick wraps. These extremes of temperature are very trying. For at least nine out of the twelve hours of sunshine that one gets in these latitudes, the sun pours down scorching rays from a cloudless sky upon sandy plain and mountain rock, and the whole landscape shimmers and glows like the mouth of the furnace; but with the coming of night a sudden chill seems to fall 121
from the stars, the heat radiates rapidly into space, and the mercury in the thermometer drops often as many as forty or fifty degrees in hardly more than as many minutes. Of course the above applies to the dry season only.

On leaving Gerin-Kuka we did not take the main road, but branched off into a side-path which it is only possible to use in the dry season. After riding a few miles, Schomburgk stopped his horse, and, stooping down, called my attention to a small round depression, or hole, in the hard clay soil. It looked for all the world as if some one had jabbed the bottom of a bucket deep down into the clay when it was soft, and that the indentation so made there had then been left to harden. I looked at it, as he bade me; but I did not see anything very remarkable about it, and I said so. "Perhaps not," replied Schomburgk. "Nevertheless, it happens to be an elephant's spoor, the first you have ever set eyes on." Of course my interest was aroused at once, and I dismounted in order to examine it more closely. Schomburgk explained that it was an old spoor from the last rainy season. I thought the footprint an enormous one, but Schomburgk said that it was made by quite a small elephant. We followed up the spoor for some little distance, and I received my first lesson in wood-craft, Schomburgk pointing out to me where the beast had stopped to feed, breaking off the branches and uprooting a number of small trees, and where he had stopped to rest for a while. In the rainy season all this part of the country is under water and impassable, and the elephants then come here to feed from the mountain country of 122
the north-east, and from the Kara River region, where, in the "gallery forests," as they are called, there are elephants all the year round. Later on, during the next day's march, we struck this same Kara River, and I saw spoor of hippopotami and buffalo. We also encountered immense flocks of guinea-fowl. The flesh of these birds is eatable, but tough.

Kadjamba we found to be quite a small village. We could not even get carriers to take us on to Nali, the next stage, but had to keep those we had brought from Gerin-Kuka. There was only a small rest-house, and I slept under my tent, being badly bitten by mosquitoes, which swarmed about the place in countless myriads. Amongst them were numbers of anophele, the carriers of the malarial fever microbe. Only the female anophele stings, and she has got to be herself previously infected by the fever germ before she can convey infection to the person bitten. Consequently, anopheles inhabiting densely populated regions are far more dangerous than those found in comparatively deserted ones, such as we were now in. In and around the big villages practically every anophele is a germ carrier, and capable of breeding infection, while those breeding out in the bush are comparatively innocuous.

Next day we started at 6 A.M. as usual, and after an hour and a half's ride we reached and crossed the great river Kara, our horses going in up to their saddle-flaps. This river drains the Kabre Mountains, and is one of the

main tributaries of the Oti, the big river of Northern Togo, and which is itself in its turn a tributary of another and yet bigger river called the Volta, which forms the boundary between the British and German territory. In the dry season, which is of course now, the Kara is only about 100 yards wide and comparatively shallow, with a slow, sluggish stream; but in the wet season it is, I was informed, fully 500 yards wide, and so deep and swift as to be quite unfordable. 123

The Konkombwa country, in which we now are, differs from the Tschaudjo country in many respects, and especially as regards the number and extent of the villages. The Konkombwa live in little homesteads of two or three huts, distributed thickly but unevenly all over the country, the reason being that these people are in the main agriculturists, getting their living from the soil. The Tschaudjo, on the contrary, are traders and warriors, caring little for agriculture, and so in the course of ages they have come to concentrate together more and more. Paratau, which may be described as the capital of Tschaudjoland, has a population of several thousand souls, and Bafilo is even bigger.

Two hours after crossing the Kara we rode into Nali, where the chief had laid out all his "presents" under a big tree. The collection made a goodly show; quite a lot of flour, some unground corn, many chickens, and a big pile of eggs. In return we gave him brass, tobacco, and salt, and he retired highly pleased. Later in the day Schomburgk and Hodgson went out shooting, and the latter returned greatly excited. He had seen a school of hippos for the first time. His jubilation, however, over the incident, was greatly marred by the fact of his rifle having jammed in a most extraordinary manner when he was making ready to let drive at them. He had it already loaded at the time with a cartridge carrying a soft-nose bullet for shooting antelope, and pulled the lever in order to extract it, with a view to reload with one carrying a solid bullet. But the case came away, leaving the bullet in the barrel, and as he had no ramrod his rifle was put altogether out of action for the time being. There were five or six hippos in the school, and for days afterwards, Hodgson did not cease to lament having been unable to bag at least one of them. 124

From Nali we rode on in the morning for about ten miles, then camped on the open veldt. There was no rest-house available, of course, and we put up our tents. The next day, December 23rd, we struck camp at six as usual, and after an hour and a half's ride we reached the Oti River. Here we halted, had breakfast, and tidied ourselves as best we could for our entry into Sansane-Mangu, which lay only about another hour and a half' ride in front of us.

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CHAPTER X

CHRISTMAS AT SANSANE-MANGU

Mangu, the northernmost Government station in Togo, is in charge of a District Commissioner, Captain von Hirschfeld, who is assisted in his duties, which are arduous and important, by two other white men, one of whom is a non-commissioned officer, the other a civilian. Between them, these three representatives of a dominant race, carry on from year's end to year's end administrative and executive duties over a tract of country as big as half a dozen English counties, and larger by far than many of the smaller semi-independent German States. It is a country, too, difficult of access at all times, and in the rainy season impossible altogether to traverse in many parts. It is, moreover, inhabited by a people diverse and strange, speaking different dialects, possessing different tribal customs, manners, and beliefs; and in some instances—and in all instances at times—truculent, intractable, and treacherous.

That this vast, far-flung region, in parts even now largely uncharted and unknown, should have been brought, within comparatively recent times, under a settled and stable government, and tribal and internecine warfare practically abolished, speaks volumes, I venture to think, for the character and abilities of the men who 126
have accomplished the task. Earliest among these pioneers was Dr. Gruner, who took the German flag right up to the Niger bend, but who had to withdraw owing to the shortsightedness of the German Parliament. The British Government, by the way, made no such mistakes, I notice. I have read in our history books how, some twenty years ago, Lord Rosebery's Government was on the eve of adopting a similar policy of scuttle in regard to Uganda. But the Rosebery Government went down in response to a popular outcry, and as a result your Union Jack waves over all that portion of East Africa. Our Parliament was subject to no such popular pressure—at all events at that time, and in regard to this matter. But here I had better stop. I am trenching upon high imperial, not to say international, politics, and such things are not for a girl like me.

Let me get back to the Mangu of the present day, which we are now, if you please, dear reader—I like that old-fashioned phrase—approaching on horseback from the lowlands about the Oti River. A big broad road leads up to the station from the Oti, and the station buildings can be seen a long way off, gleaming white in the sunshine, and giving one, even at a distance, the impression of extreme neatness and cleanliness. As our caravan, with its long string of porters, winds slowly upwards, I observe through my field-glasses that flags are flying from every point of vantage, and I guess, even before Schomburgk tells me so, that the decorations are in honour of the advent of myself, the first white woman in Mangu. Presently, Captain von Hirschfeld, 127
accompanied by a mounted bodyguard, canters out to meet us, and I, intent on making as imposing an entry as possible, ride forward to greet him. But alas, for the plans of mice and men, to say nothing of women! A patch of soft sand—a quicksand, no doubt, in the rainy season—lay directly in my path. When my horse reached it, he first sank in it over his fetlocks, then floundered, then fell, pitching me over his head. And in this unceremonious, not to say undignified, fashion, the first white woman made her first entry into the far northern station of Mangu. Captain von Hirschfeld and myself often laughed over the incident later on, but to me at the time it was no laughing matter. Not that I was hurt in the least. The sand, fortunately, was soft, and the floundering kind of stumble my horse made resulted, so far as I was concerned, in a subsidence rather than a fall. But I was deeply mortified. I had looked forward to making quite an impression, and the only kind of impression I accomplished was the one made by my face in the sand when I fell.

The full name of the station—I fancy I have mentioned this before somewhere—is Sansane-Mangu, meaning "the place where warriors meet." Once upon a time it was the gathering-place of the natives when their young men met together to set out on one of those wild forays so dear to savages the world over. The exact place of meeting was a big baobab tree, still standing, and about this tree the new station of Mangu has been built, with a view to breaking the fetish spell which in the estimation of the natives stills hangs round it. The old station at 128
Mangu, founded by a Lieutenant Tiery, was in a different spot, overlooking the Oti River. It was a small station, but very strongly fortified; a fort, in fact. Of this station, only the walls remain. The interior of the site is used as a European cemetery. Three white men lie there. Two died, the third was killed in warfare with the Tschokossi, a tribe inhabiting the country to the north and west. The unhealthiness of the site, more than anything else, caused the old station to be abandoned. The new station was founded by a Captain Mellin, who died a few years back. A little while ago the Tschokossi rose in rebellion, and tried to capture this station, and they very nearly succeeded. There was some sharp fighting, one white man and a good many native soldiers being killed. As an act of expiation, after the rebellion had been crushed, they were forced to build, near their principal village, an immense stone pyramid, with a cross on top.

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TAMBERMA FORT

This building, of native construction, stands in Mangu, the northernmost Government station in Togo. It was erected by a tribe of natives so called, and is now used as a mosque by the Mohammedans in Mangu. The portrait is that of the authoress.

Captain von Hirschfeld, who, throughout this and our subsequent stay at Mangu, was hospitality personified, had got everything ready for us. A nice house was placed at our disposal, all swept and garnished, very large, airy, and roomy, with a fine broad verandah. Close by our house was an extraordinary-looking building of native construction called Tamberma Fort. This was built many years ago by a tribe of natives of that name, who live in the extreme north-eastern corner of Togoland. These Tamberma were, and still are, a very wild, warlike, and truculent people. The German Government, I ought to explain, exact what is called a head tax of six shillings a 129
year from each native. It is the equivalent of the British "hut tax," and, like that impost, it has been the cause of endless trouble and bother with the negroes, who in Togoland are called upon, under its provisions, to either pay the tax in cash, or work twelve days on the Government roads, buildings, etc. Now six shillings sounds a very small sum to a civilised white man, but to a semi-wild negro, who never sees any coined money whatever from year's end to year's end, it is, of course, an altogether impossible impost. He has therefore to work it out, and in the case of a distant tribe this means a long journey forward and backward to their homes, with their wives and their little ones, all of which not infrequently involves considerable hardship and privation, for, of course, the negro has to provide food for himself and his family on the journey, though not while he is working out his tax. No wonder he resents the hated impost, and tries to evade it whenever possible; for the native is constitutionally incapable of looking ahead, and cannot be made to see that the work he is called upon to do is for his own benefit as much as, and even in a sense more so, than for that of his white masters. He sees, of course, that the roads he builds, he is able presently to travel over with an assurance unknown in the old days; that the *songus* he erects shelter him and his family when he is on the move; and that the net result of all this easy intercommunication is a general cheapening of commodities, and the opening of new markets for those he produces. But all this weighs in the balance very little against his innate conservatism and rooted aversion to 130
settled labour.

Well, these Tamberma people came down once to Mangu from their mountain fortresses in the far north-east; then, having finished their allotted task, they packed up their belongings and returned to their homes. And they never quitted them again—at least to come to Mangu. For shortly after they got back to their own country, a new boundary line was drawn between the German and the French possessions in this part of Africa, and the Tamberma country was intersected by this line. The result has been considerable confusion, some of the tribe owning allegiance to one government, and some to the other. Things, however, are now likely to straighten themselves out before long, the Tamberma having, by mutual agreement between the two governments, been given a year in which to decide under which they will come, and this year expires shortly. Meanwhile Tamberma Fort, erected by them as a memento of their visit, still stands in Mangu, a conspicuously picturesque object. It is, I may add, at present used as a mosque by the Mohammedans at the station, who have agreed to keep it in order in return for the privilege.

All round Mangu are big plantations of different kinds of valuable timber, a sort of experimental arboricultural farm. All this work has been done at the initiative and under the personal supervision of the officials there, and they have also carried out many other improvements. The place is, in fact, a little island of civilisation set in a wilderness of savagery, the new station house there, Schomburgk considers, being the finest 131
and handsomest building of its kind in the whole interior of Africa. The country round the station, and especially to the north, is typical of the Sudan, the soil mostly a hard dry ironstone formation. It is on the whole of somewhat arid appearance, but grass grows freely in many parts, and along the banks of the streams, and for a considerable distance on either side one gets a belt of riverine vegetation—trees, osiers, and the like.

Mangu during the harmattan season, which lasts from October to the end of January, is an altogether delightful place of residence; no mosquitoes, pleasantly windy, cool at night, and not too hot by day, because of the harmattan, the sun's rays being unable to penetrate the dry yellow mist. During the rest of the year, however, and especially from May to August, Mangu has been not inaptly described as "Hades with the lid off." Not only is the heat terrific in the day-time—one cannot, I was assured, walk across the square without dripping with perspiration—but it is hardly any cooler at night, while to keep things lively there is an almost continual

succession of thunderstorms of appalling intensity, the rain descending with tropical violence at an angle of forty-five degrees or thereabouts, and beating right into the houses, so that at times the people prefer to go out into it at once and have done with it, rather than try to take shelter inside, when it is practically unobtainable. These storms do not last long enough to cool the air, but the lightning seems to take a special fancy to strike the station or the village, one theory advanced to account for this being that there exists beneath the place a 132
subterranean stream of water, which attracts the electric fluid. How feasible this may be, I do not know; but it is a fact that Mangu is very unfortunate in this respect. During the last rainy season, for instance, two natives were killed in the village by lightning, and one here in the station. The lightning also struck Captain von Hirschfeld's house, and went through his writing-table, destroying a lot of papers, he himself only escaping death by a miracle.

We spent Christmas at Mangu, and had a real good time. We ate our Christmas dinner in Captain von Hirschfeld's house, a fine, handsome stone building. It was only finished last October, and when inside, and especially of a night, one can hardly realise that one is in the heart of Africa. We had part of a young pig for our Christmas dinner, and I was present at the killing of him. I must confess that the sight rather sickened me, though later on I became quite an expert butcher. Curious how one sheds the veneer of civilisation in the wilds. After quitting Mangu for the north, we were destined to be absolutely cut off from the outer world for a while, and we relied almost altogether on our guns and rifles for fresh meat for the pot. Then it was the men who hunted and killed the game, and I who prepared and cooked it. In like manner, I take it, did the women of the Stone Age.

At Mangu, however, we were, of course, still in touch with civilisation, and our Christmas dinner, besides being something of a curiosity in its way, was exceedingly nice. I append the menu:

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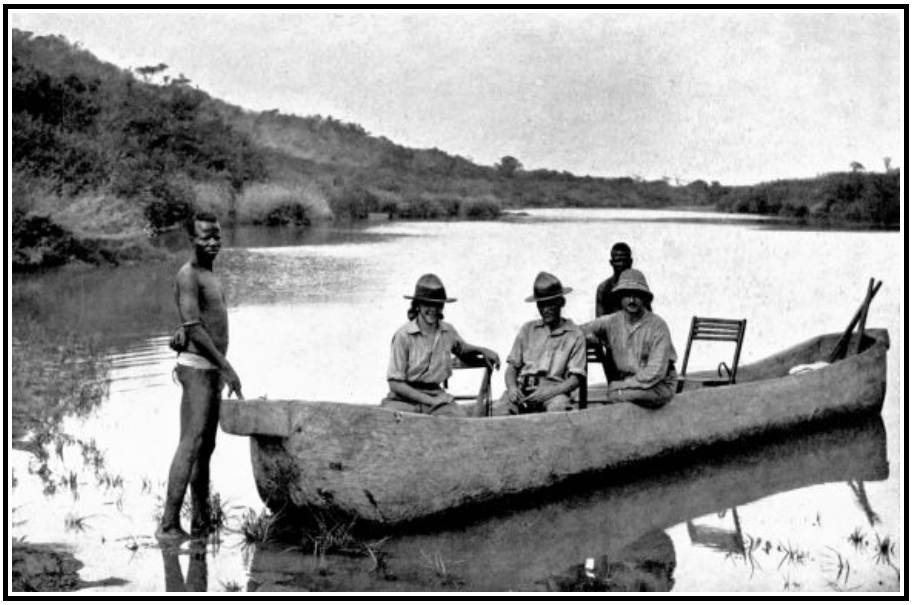
Caviare sans Ice.
Asparagus Soup.
Oti Fish.
Ragoût à la Mangu en escallop.
Saddle of Pork à la Konkombwa.
Peaches à la tin.
Frothed White of Eggs, Cream, Sauce Vanilla.
Cheese sticks.
Coffee. Liqueurs.
Wines.
Madeira. Claret. Champagne.

On the dinner-table was a miniature Christmas tree, which had been sent all the way from Germany by Captain von Hirschfeld's mother, and after we had finished eating we gathered round it and toasted absent friends in champagne. I had not looked forward at all to this particular Christmas. In fact, I had rather dreaded it, fearing that it would bring with it more of regret than of pleasure, but as a matter of fact I thoroughly enjoyed it. For one thing, I found it hard to realise, owing to the climate and surroundings, that it was really Christmas; for another, everybody was so kind and hospitable that one could not help feeling merry and jolly. On New Year's Eve we had another little party, and on the stroke of midnight we set fire to about three thousand feet of old celluloid films. The inflammable stuff blazed up fiercely of course, directly a match was applied to it, and made a splendid bonfire.

I have alluded already to the big plantations round about Mangu. Most of these are thriving, but as regards some of them, considerable damage has been done by a species of beetle with huge saw-like forceps. It was pitiful to ride along the plantation roads, and see hundreds and hundreds of fine trees all dead or dying, killed 134
by these insect pests. Every effort has been made, Captain von Hirschfeld told me, to extirpate them, but in vain. In the plantations are many small antelope and immense flocks of guinea-fowl and francolin, the latter a bird resembling a partridge. The best sport of all, however, was afforded by a bird called out there a koran. It is a most comical-looking creature, not unlike a miniature ostrich, but, unlike the ostrich, it is a good flier. Schomburgk was quite an expert in shooting them; right and left—bang! bang! They were excellent for the pot, yielding two distinct kinds of meat, white and brown, arranged in layers like a cream and chocolate sponge-cake. They were so plump and fat that I used to cook them in their own grease, and we all agreed that they were better done that way, being delicious eaten hot, and even better cold. There were also quail in great numbers all round the station, which I used to roast, and serve on toast in the approved fashion. We also had antelope, as many as we cared to shoot. Their meat, which had a pleasant gamey flavour, made a nice change. The only drawback was that we had to eat it too fresh, as of course everything goes bad if kept overnight in this climate.



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CANOEING ON THE OTI RIVER

This photograph was taken near Mangu. The portraits are those of Miss Gehrts, Major Schomburgk, and Captain von Hirschfeld, District Commissioner. The canoe is a heavy dug-out one, of exceedingly primitive construction.

The Oti River furnished us with fish in abundance. We rode down to it nearly every day, and once we went for a cruise in it on a big dugout native canoe. We started at seven in the morning, and got back at eleven. We were not able to go far, as the water was nearly at its lowest, but still it was very pleasant, and the scenery was very beautiful. Towards the end, however, the sun's rays, reflected back by the almost stagnant water, made things very oppressive. What it must be like in the summer I can only faintly imagine. From a sand-bank where he had stalked it, Hodgson shot a very fine paauw—a kind of bustard—with his rifle at about sixty yards, the bullet passing clean through its neck. It was, of course, a fluky shot, but Hodgson was awfully proud of it, nevertheless. 135

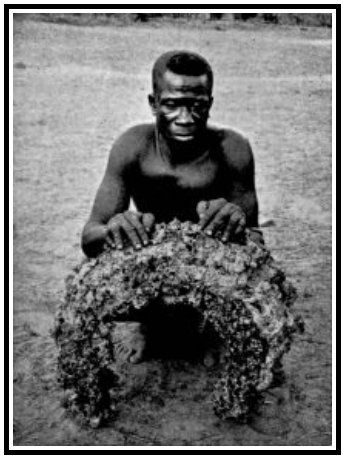
Early in the morning of December 30th, word was brought to us that the natives were gathering for a grand combined fishing expedition, and, of course, we rode out to see the fun, taking our camera and operator with us. They caught any number of fish, but in a way that I fear would hardly appeal to any genuine disciple of Isaac Walton. Still it was very interesting, and we secured some good pictures. The natives had previously built a number of dams parallel to each other across the river in a shallow and still reach, and they now proceeded to bale out the water from each inclosure until there was only liquid ooze left, in which the fishes hid, and whence they were presently scooped up by hundreds of natives armed with calabashes. Afterwards the master of the ceremonies distributed the catch to the perspiring fishermen. They were mostly of the barbel species, and of very moderate size; but there was one big fellow, which we purchased, and afterwards ate for dinner. He was very nice, unlike many of the Togo river fish, which are about as tasty as blotting-paper flavoured with mud. 136

We took no dramatic films at Mangu, but plenty of ethnological ones. Cinemaing had now become more difficult than ever, for the intense dry heat kept continually cracking the wood of the cameras, until both Hodgson and Schomburgk were well nigh in despair. Every evening almost they were kept busy repairing the damage done during the day-time, filling the cracks with sealing-wax, which they afterwards smoothed down with hot knives, and covered with sticky tape. We had only brought two cinema cameras with us—in addition to three ordinary ones—and the woodwork of one of these had got so badly warped by the heat on the road up as to interfere with the working of the mechanism, rendering it utterly useless. Consequently we were relying on the one machine; and if anything happened to put it out of action, the whole expedition would come automatically to an end, since no other cinema camera could be bought nearer than Europe. I never saw so much care lavished over an inanimate object, as was bestowed on that machine. Talk about a mother with a new-born babe! Why, that bit of brass and woodwork was watched over by Hodgson as though it had been the apple of his eye. He scarcely ever allowed it out of his keeping, whether on the march or in camp, and a boy was detailed to do nothing else all day long but rub it over with palm-oil.

Amongst other interesting films we took at Mangu was one showing portions of the new stone station in process of construction, with, as a contrast, the old wattle-and-daub buildings still standing in close proximity. 137 The scene here during the hours when work was in full progress was most animated, and our cameras did full justice to it. In one picture an endless row of carriers is seen bringing up the hewn stones from the quarry. In the next native workmen are burning lime in a native kiln. Another picture shows forty stalwart negroes carrying between them an immense baulk of timber, hewn in the mountain forest country many miles away; they had been carrying it after this fashion for eight whole days at the time our photograph was taken. The skilled masonry work is being done by long-term prisoners, many of them in chains, and in charge of armed soldiers. The head mason, I was informed, was a murderer.

After taking this film we rode down to the quarry near the Oti which furnishes the stone. Here were hundreds of natives working out their tax. The quarry, which is a very large one, and seems capable of indefinite extensions, was only discovered quite recently by Captain von Hirschfeld. On the way to it we passed a large "songu," or native resting-place, equivalent to the rest-houses of the whites. Here we saw specimens of races and tribes from all parts of Western Africa, and even parts of Northern Africa, collected together—Hausas

from Nigeria; Fulani, with their comparatively pale complexions, and clear-cut European looking features; squat, coal-black, pagan tribesmen from the Kabre Mountains, and the central forest region; Fulbe, from the far interior of the central Sudan; stately Arab traders from Timbuctu, and beyond, clad in flowing snow-white robes; naked Gourma people, fierce and wild looking; and many stalwart Konkombwa, upright and graceful as ever, but *minus* their helmets and head-dresses; while in and out among the motley throng, naked little children swarmed everywhere, and perfectly nude women and girls, bearing on their heads calabashes of water, or pots of food, trod gravely and sedately to and fro, their brass anklets glittering in the sun, and making music as they moved. It was as picturesque a scene as any I had ever beheld in my lifetime, and certainly more so than any I had yet come across in Togo. 138



NATIVE PIG IRON FROM A FURNACE AT BANJELI

CHIEF'S COMPOUND IN A TSCHOKOSSI VILLAGE AT MANGU

These compounds are where the wives are housed, and they also contain the chief's "palace," his stables—if he is well enough off to possess horses—and other "offices."

On January the 2nd, in the morning, a soldier came to say that a hyena had been caught in a trap overnight, and we at once saddled up our horses and rode out to have a look at it. The soldier led us to the place where the trap had been, but both it and the hyena had vanished. Investigation showed that the powerful brute had torn up the anchor which held the iron gin-trap in position, and had walked off with the whole contrivance. However, we knew that it was impossible for him to rid himself of the trap altogether, so we followed up his trail to a patch of jungle grass a considerable distance away, where he had hidden himself, and a soldier went in and pulled him out, trap and all. The poor beast howled horribly, and no wonder, for its mouth was all torn and bloody, where it had tried to bite away the iron of the trap. It was no goodly sight, and I was glad to turn away my head while Schomburgk put an end to its misery with a bullet from his mauser. In the afternoon came huge flocks of vultures to feast upon the carcase, and again we put our camera into requisition, getting some fine pictures. They are loathsome-looking creatures, these carrion-eating birds, but of course they are invaluable to the squalid African villages, where they act as general scavengers, and are rarely, if ever, interfered with. 139

Mangu is plagued with bats—millions on millions of them. I would not have credited it if I had not seen it with my own eyes. If I write that there came at dawn out of a single small hut, twelve to fifteen thousand of the creatures, darkening the air for quite a distance around, I should hardly expect to be believed. But it is so. One of the interpreters told me that on one occasion a deserted hut where there was a rookery—or should it be a "battery"?—of them, was sealed up, and sulphur burned inside. And when they unsealed it in the morning, they counted above eighteen thousand carcases of bats.

We got plenty of milk at Mangu, making a welcome change of diet, also native butter. This latter is good for

cooking, but one cannot eat it on one's bread, owing to its rancid taste, even when freshly made. As regards the milk also, one has to be very careful to see that the calabashes are clean. I always saw to this myself, for native servants, as I have already stated elsewhere, have no idea of the importance of hygiene.

One evening, shortly before we quitted Mangu for our "farthest north," Captain von Hirschfeld told us about a number of most interesting records concerning the days of Dr. Gruner and the earlier pioneers, which are preserved here. Schomburgk was greatly interested in them, and urged the Captain to have them published, which he said he would probably do shortly. 140

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CHAPTER XI

OUR "FARTHEST NORTH"

On January 11th, 1914, we left Mangu, where we had been since December the 23rd, and resumed our journey northward. Beyond Mangu, Togo has not yet been opened up, nor is the country considered altogether safe for Europeans. We only went there by special permission of the Government, obtained through H.H. the Duke of Mecklenburg, and he only granted it because Schomburgk was personally known to him as an old and experienced African traveller, who could be trusted to treat the natives well, to neither do nor say anything to provoke them, and who yet was capable of holding his own in an emergency if he were attacked.

Before setting out, too, Schomburgk had to sign an official document, promising only to go north along the Oti River, and not to attempt to enter the Gourma country. He was also warned to be on his guard against the Tschokossi people in the villages of the extreme north, as these were reputed to be shy and suspicious of white strangers entering their territory. As a matter of fact, Schomburgk insisted, in talking the matter over with me, that the Tschokossi are nowhere dangerous if properly handled, and that there was likewise little or nothing to fear from the Gourma people living in German territory, although he admitted that occasionally parties of 142
Gourma come over from French territory as far as Panscheli, whither we were bound, and that these strays are apt to be troublesome, and even truculent. Indeed, only quite recently a German officer traversing the very district into which we were about to penetrate, and having with him a big escort of soldiers, was attacked by prowling savages, who shot a flight of poisoned arrows into the tent where he was asleep. According to the version of the affair I heard, he must have escaped death by a miracle. He was, I was told, lying down asleep when he was awakened by the "plunk, plunk, plunk," of the arrows striking and penetrating the taut canvas. Jumping up, he ran to the entrance of the tent, whereupon the lurking savages shot another volley, one of the arrows glancing from the tent pole behind which he was standing, and wounding him on the forehead. With commendable presence of mind, instead of going after his assailants, he at once sat down upon the ground, and called to his native boy, who there and then set to work to suck the poison from the wound. In this way his life was saved, for although he suffered great agony, and was seriously ill for quite a long while, he recovered in the end. He was lucky, for, as a rule, the least scratch from one of these poisoned arrows proves fatal. I made many inquiries during my stay in the country, and afterwards, as to what was the particular poison used by the natives on their arrow tips, but I could get no proper information, or rather, I should say that what I did get was extremely contradictory. A Doctor Porteous, a friend of mine, assured me that he had analysed some of it taken 143
from a freshly-smeared arrow, and found it to be a preparation of digitalis, made from a native plant of the fox-glove variety. On the other hand, I have talked with people who claim to have actually seen the natives poisoning their arrows by the simple process of sticking the points in a lump of putrid meat, and leaving them there for a while; while yet others assert that the poison is a preparation of rotting vegetable earth taken from the nearest bog-hole. There may be some truth in this, for it is known that people wounded by the arrows frequently succumb to tetanus. The probability is that no one poison is used at all times, and by all the tribes, but that different kinds are utilised as opportunity offers.

It was on a Sunday morning that we quitted Mangu, and Captain von Hirschfeld, with his usual kindness, made all arrangements for carriers and so forth, and also stored our spare baggage against our return. Our first day's march was only five miles, and, travelling as we did along the Oti valley, in which the natives had just been burning the grass, it was anything but pleasant riding. The air was filled with a black impalpable dust, which got into my eyes, down my throat, up my nostrils—everywhere. The heat was terrific, and caused one to perspire freely, so that our faces soon took on a most unbeautiful streaky appearance. The water I washed in when we camped became of the colour of ink, and the consistency almost of pea soup; and when I unbound my hair, showers of blacks descended from it to the ground.

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By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

AN UNFORTIFIED TSCHOKOSSI VILLAGE

The semi-wild Tschokossi of the extreme north of Togo are great believers in fetishism and fetishes. In the above photograph a field fetish, in the form of two calabashes joined together, is seen in the tree on the left; this is supposed to make the corn grow plentifully. In the centre is a pedestal-like arrangement of hard clay; this is for the sacrifice of fowls. Other fetish emblems are seen on the huts, and elsewhere.

Schomburgk wanted to camp at a village, but I was greatly taken with a very pretty spot, lying fifteen feet or so up on a bluff in a bend of the river, and from which a beautiful view could be had over the surrounding country. To this Schomburgk objected, saying that the wind was likely to prove troublesome by day, and that at night we were pretty certain to be eaten up by mosquitoes. I persisted, however, and in the end he allowed me to have my way. Afterwards, I wished he hadn't. His prediction was verified. Very much so, in fact. As the day advanced, a hot wind swept across the Oti plains in fierce eddying gusts, bringing with it more clouds of black dust from the burnt veldt; and at night the mosquitoes were so bad that we couldn't sleep, exactly as he had foretold. I never encountered anything quite so bad in the way of insect pests as were these mosquitoes on the banks of the Oti. The boys had to light fires of green boughs to drive them away, and while they were crouching over them, half-suffocated by the smoke, Schomburgk started to tell me about some mosquitoes he once encountered in the Congo forest region. "Why," he remarked, "we used to shoot them like game with our revolvers as they sat perched on the boughs of the trees above our heads, and so big were they that several of them weighed a pound." "Get out," I retorted indignantly, "there are no such insects anywhere in the world." "It is the literal truth I am telling you," he replied, gravely, "several of those Congo mosquitoes weighed a pound." "Yes," put in Hodgson slyly, with a laugh and a wink at me, "*several* of them. Several thousands—or millions if you like." Then, of course, I saw the joke, such as it was, and we all laughed. 145

The place near to which our camp was pitched was a small Tschokossi village called Bwete. The people were very wild in appearance. The Tschokossi living in and about Mangu were comparatively civilised, but these were just savages pure and simple. The men wore only small loin slips of undressed bark, the women bunches of green branches before and behind. These they renewed daily when they went down to the river to wash in the early morning. Each woman or girl plucked a few branches, thereby possessing herself of a new dress. In this respect these children of nature go one better than ourselves. No civilised woman, I take it, be she ever so wealthy, has a new dress *every* day. Schomburgk considered these umbrageous costumes hideous, but I thought them very pretty, modest, and becoming. Certainly, on hygienic grounds, the custom has much to recommend it.

In the afternoon all our boys went down to the river to bathe in a big deep pool, in which I had previously observed several crocodiles disporting themselves. I was horrified when I saw them, and called to them to come out, telling them what I had seen; but they only laughed at my fears, and went on swimming, skylarking, and splashing about. The natives assert, and probably with truth, that whereas for one man to venture alone by himself into a crocodile-infested pool would be for him to court almost certain death, a number of them can go in together with impunity. Doubtless the reptiles are frightened at the noise and the splashing, and lie low instead of attacking, fearing for their own safety. 146

On the road to this village a pet monkey we had bought earlier in the trip got loose, and bolted across the veldt. It was being carried shut up in a hen-coop, and probably resented the indignity. We were greatly perturbed, for we had all of us become more or less attached to the "comical little cuss," as Artemus Ward would doubtless have called him, and we did not want to lose him. The boys tried their hardest to catch him, and failed; but directly Schomburgk called him, he came to him, and rode coiled up on the front of his saddle for the rest of the day.

Shortly after this episode we came upon a very picturesque little lake, a really pretty sheet of water, long and narrow. We had been on the look-out for this, because before we left Mangu one of the officials there told us that he had recently shot a big bull hippopotamus here, and Schomburgk was anxious to film one or more of these creatures. So we circled the entire lake, going up one side and down the other, examining it carefully. There were lots of water-fowl, but no hippos, big or little, male or female. When we reached camp, our boys told us that they had seen a big herd of antelope. This was tantalising, for we wanted meat for the pot, and we had seen nothing of them. The natives are still busy at their favourite pastime—at this season of the year—of burning the grass on the Oti flats, and the wind, as usual, blew the calcined debris into our eyes and noses. Anything but pleasant!

Next day we resumed our march. Our intention had been to follow the Oti, but the river winds in and out just 147
about here in the most bewildering and tantalising manner, and our soldier guide from Mangu, in attempting a short cut, lost his way. We passed through or round a number of dirty Tschokossi villages, but the people were sullen and suspicious, refused to answer our questions, or replied only in non-committal monosyllables. These people live, like the Konkombwa, in tiny hamlets of two or three families, and, to judge by their replies to our requests for information, one would have imagined that no such river as the Oti existed anywhere in Togo, let alone close to where they lived, moved, and had their being.

At length, thoroughly vexed and tired out, hot, dusty and thirsty, we halted at noon at a place called Magu, and put up our tents under some low, withered trees. It proved to be a most uncomfortable camping ground. The black dust settled everywhere. The sun beat down with a perfectly awful intensity, and it was practically impossible to obtain shelter from the heat, the country all round being low bush, interspersed with open veldt. Late in the afternoon, after a rest, Schomburgk set out to try and find the Oti, and returned in a little while with the somewhat comforting news, under the circumstances, that it was only about a quarter of an hour's march ahead. And yet the people here had assured us that it was "very far away." This shows what reliance is to be placed on the word of a wild native. Schomburgk further told us that on the way back from the river he had sighted a roan antelope, but that it was too far off for him to be able to get a shot. Another disappointment! 148

Before going to bed that night Schomburgk instructed the interpreter to rouse us at 5 A.M. Presently I heard him calling out as usual that it was time to get up, and in obedience to the summons I arose, though feeling unusually sleepy. I put this down, however, to the tiring events of the day previous, and, having washed and dressed, I went outside the tent. To my surprise, I found the moon still high in the heavens, and only then did it occur to me to look at my watch. The time was 2.30 A.M. After saying some things the reverse of complimentary to the interpreter, I re-entered my tent and lay down, intending to try and get to sleep again. But meanwhile Hodgson, who had also been awakened, had started a long confab with one of the native boys. Hodgson was a first-rate operator, and a very decent sort of a fellow to boot, but he was one of the most confirmed chatterboxes I ever came across. I used to tell him that he would talk to his own shadow, if there was nothing and nobody else to talk to. In this respect he was the very reverse of Schomburgk, who, like most men who have lived long in the wilds, was a very quiet, reserved sort of man.

At five o'clock, we rose finally for the day, and resumed our march in the direction of the Oti, striking it, as Schomburgk had already told us we would, in from fifteen to twenty minutes. We are now in an utterly wild country, where few, if any, white people, whether men or women, have ever been before. There are no paths, and the native tracks—one cannot call them trails—lead nowhere save from village to village, or possibly to 149
water-holes, or river fords, as the case may be. For the most part we tried to follow the Oti, but the wide bends it made, and the nature of the banks in places, rendered this at times an absolute impossibility.

We are in a fine game country, and we saw many troops of antelope. Flocks of guinea-fowl, too, ran along in front of the horses; francolin flew up in coveys of ten and twelve; crested crane kept passing overhead on their way from one feeding-ground to another, uttering their haunting rasping cry. It was a beautiful sight to a city-bred girl. I felt I was really near to Nature at last; that here was God's big "zoo." I did not want to talk—only to listen and look. I am beginning to understand now how it is that all the white bush people are quiet men, who think a lot, but say little, like the famous parrot of immortal memory. Crossing, as I have already said, a succession of big bends, we were mostly out of sight of the river, but when we did catch a glimpse of it I could see that it was covered with ducks, teal, and all sorts of water-fowl; while every thicket and clump of trees we came to held colonies of bright-hued land birds, blue jays, sun-birds, and so on, whose gorgeous plumage, flashing in the sunshine, was a source of never-ending pleasure.

It was concerning these fine-feathered birds that Schomburgk and I had "words" one day. I badly wanted him to shoot a few specimens, and preserve them for me, as I had reason to know that he is an exceedingly skilful amateur taxidermist. But he politely and firmly declined to do anything of the kind. He is in favour of the 150
protection of wild birds, and holds strong views about killing them in order to strip them of their plumage. "We might," he said, "take back to Europe hundreds of pounds' worth of feathers and skins from this district, but to do so would be a crime against Nature and against Nature's God." I replied that I didn't want to do murder for money, but that I would like a few specimens for my own personal use and adornment. "Besides," I added, "you kill birds for the pot—francolin, quail, and so forth—and what the difference is between killing them to eat and killing them to wear, I cannot for the life of me make out. So far as I can see, it makes precious little difference to the poor birds." To this Schomburgk retorted that men must eat, and women too for that matter, but that the latter need not stick feathers or stuffed birds in their hats. Eventually, however, he did so far do violence to his principles as to shoot me a single sun-bird, out of the many hundreds that were flying about. These little creatures are exceedingly beautiful; purple red about the body, with lovely blue heads, a splash of blue at the root of the tail, and very much elongated and very brilliant tail feathers. Schomburgk, also, yielding to my earnest entreaties, shot me a blue jay, and gave to Hodgson permission to shoot me one other. These have been greatly admired since in London, for, of course, we took care before shooting them to select perfect specimens in full plumage. But I wish my fair friends could have seen them as I saw them first, when the feathers were alive. The difference between the plumage of a stuffed bird and a living one, or even one recently killed, is very 151
marked. It is the difference between a woman's own hair and a made-up switch, between a peroxide blonde and a real one.

These bright-plumaged birds, by the way, do not sing. A few of them whistle, but mostly their cries are coarse and rasping ones. The reason is, of course, that they rely upon the beauty of their colouring to do the work of sex attraction. It is wonderful, when one comes to think of it, how always and everywhere it is love, love, love, that makes the world go round. To it we owe the beauty of the colouring of the sun-birds, the tail feathers of the bird of paradise, the song of the nightingale, and these in their turn, no doubt, in the dim, distant past, gave birth to painting and to music. No doubt the first Tschokossi belle who tore down a green branch to deck herself withal, was moved in the first instance by sex attraction, and the same holds good to-day of a frock by Worth.

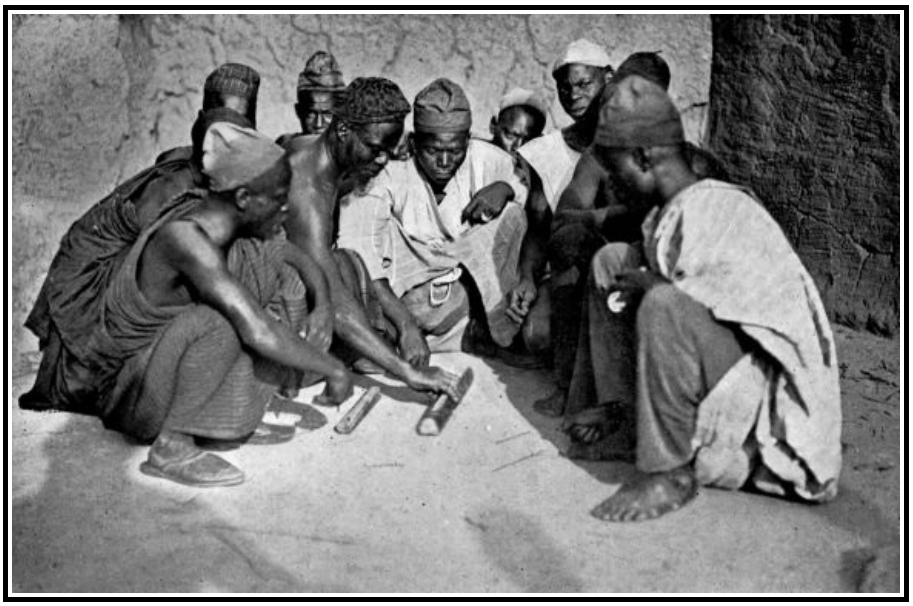
It is astonishing how tame the antelope, and four-footed game became—so far at least as I personally was

concerned—as we trekked farther into the wilderness. They seemed almost to have lost all fear of me whatever. The pretty little puku antelopes used to stop and gaze curiously at me until I was within a few yards of them, and once a couple of reitbuck got up right in front of my horse, and stood stock-still staring at me. I called to Schomburgk to bring his rifle, but by the time he got to me they had galloped off.

On the morning of January 13th, after following the Oti for about eight miles, we debouched on to a big open 152
plain, and Schomburgk and Hodgson rode on ahead along the river bank to explore, leaving me to lead the caravan across the flat. The going for the horses soon became exceedingly bad, so that we could only move at a snail's pace. It is the kind of country that is known out here as "yam-field country"; for the following reason. The natives, when they cultivate their yams, hoe up a little hillock round each plant. Now in the rainy season the country we are crossing—part of the Oti flats—is all under water, and when this dries up it leaves a lot of little hillocks, which the sun presently bakes into the consistency of bricks. Hence the name!

Owing to the recent firing of the old grass, however, there was plenty of fresh green stuff in the interstices between the hillocks, and this furnished fodder for countless troops of antelope. I never saw so many together at one time before. Some of the herds we encountered numbered between thirty and forty head. While Schomburgk and Hodgson were with the caravan, they were shy, but with me riding alone it was quite different. They seemed instinctively to realise that they were in no danger. They would stand still gazing stolidly in my direction until I was within thirty or forty yards of them, before gracefully cantering off, afterwards stopping every now and again to turn round and stare inquisitively at what was evidently something quite new to them. Others would simply trot a little way to one side of the path we were following, then line up to see us pass, like soldiers on parade.

It was while I was gazing admiringly at a row of these pretty little creatures, that my boys drew my attention 153
to a big moving object in the distance, whispering excitedly: "Look, missy—some big meat!" The native, I may explain, calls all game "meat." Focussing the object through my field-glasses, I saw that it was an unusually fine specimen of a roan antelope, the size of a small horse. These roan antelopes are, of course, quite different from the small puku, and other similar varieties; they are, in fact, the second biggest of the antelope species, only the eland being larger. This one, to the unaided eye, looked like a blue-black shadow moving obliquely across the bright sunlight, and I do not suppose I should ever have noticed it had it not been for my boys. With the glasses, however, I could see distinctly the beautiful dappled skin, note the proud carriage of the creature's head, and watch its long tail swaying rhythmically and regularly to and fro as it switched the flies from its hind quarters. It was moving across our track well in advance, and was evidently travelling from the river, where it had been for its morning drink, back to the safety and shelter of the bush beyond. When I first focussed it, it was going quite leisurely, but after I had been observing it for about a minute or two I saw it stop suddenly, and gaze anxiously in my direction. Evidently it had got our wind. It started to throw up its head in angry defiance. Then it began to paw the ground, and a moment later it was off and away like an arrow from a bow.



NATIVES GAMBLING

This game is played with the hollowed-out rib of a palm leaf, into which small round stones, or beads, are dropped through a hole in the centre. Both skill and luck enter into its composition.

Presently we breasted a slight rise, and then rode down into a sort of circular depression, in the centre of 154
which was a small "vley," or hollow, where the water collects from the rainy season. It was literally covered, and also surrounded, by an immense collection of birds of all kinds, amongst them being about a hundred marabou. My heart gave a great bound at the sight of these latter, and for the first and last time during our journey I regretted that I carried no gun. Here were hundreds of pounds' worth of the most beautiful and highly-prized feathers in the world within easy reach of me, and I couldn't get one of them. I could easily have shot them had I a weapon handy, for they allowed me to come quite close to them, before lazily rising, only to settle again a few hundred yards farther on. Later on I told Schomburgk about them, and begged him to go back and get me at least one bird; but his reply was a blunt negative. "I've told you already I will not shoot these beautiful creatures," he said. "But marabou feathers!" I replied, almost crying with vexation. "You don't know what they mean to a woman. And such splendid specimens too. Why they are practically priceless." To all of which, and

much more on similar lines, he listened in silence, only shaking his head doggedly from time to time. However, I was destined to get my marabou feathers later on, and that, too, without doing violence to Schomburgk's feelings by killing even one single bird. But that is another story, which will come in its proper place. These marabou birds, by the way, were first discovered to exist in Togo by Schomburgk during this very trip, he coming across a flock of them accidentally, just as I had done. When we went back to Mangu, and he told them 155
there what he had seen, they absolutely declined to believe him, holding that he must have mistaken some other commoner species of the crane family for the rare and valuable marabou stork. Our old friend. Captain von Hirschfeld, was especially emphatic on the subject, saying that he had resided in the country for years, that he had travelled all about it on his official tours of inspection, and that if there were any such birds in Togoland he would have been sure to have come across them. We were standing on the square in front of the Captain's house when this conversation took place, and Schomburgk, happening to glance up, remarked quietly to von Hirschfeld: "Why, there's one flying overhead now," at the same time handing him his glasses. "By gad, you're right," cried the Captain, after he had focussed the bird, "I can see the tail feathers plainly." And from now on therefore the *Leptoptilus crumenifer* will figure in the list of birds indigenous to Togo. I may add that after coming to London I made frequent inquiries in the millinery shops of the West End for African marabou feathers, but never once did I succeed in getting even a peep at the genuine article. Those I was offered, and at very high prices too, were mostly of the far less valuable Indian variety, though others were not even derived from any of the cranes, but were the product of all sorts of birds, including vultures.

After leaving the vley where the marabou were, we rode on and on across the shadeless, waterless, sun-baked plain. The heat was terrific, and the guide seemed to have completely lost his way. I confess to feeling 156
anxious, and at length I called a halt, feeling that we might as well be sitting still, as to go on travelling in a direction that might be a wrong one. In about an hour Schomburgk and Hodgson turned up. They had been following the course of the river, scouting, taking compass bearings, and doing a little mapping. They had found that the Oti took another big bend just here.

Schomburgk took over command of the caravan from me, and set a course due north, towards a fairly large village called Sumbu. Soon afterwards we quitted the plain, and climbed up on to a plateau. Everybody was very tired, including myself, and I quite understood now why natives preferred to go nude, or with only a loin-cloth. One never realises how utterly ridiculous and superfluous civilised clothing can become, until one travels in the African bush during the heat of the day. We passed many dirty little Tschokossi villages, mostly deserted or in ruins, but saw no inhabitants. At last, when we were beginning to despair, we discerned in one we sighted some slight signs of life; a stray chicken or so, and a mongrel dog. Riding up to it we found it to be quite a small hamlet, inhabited by a mixed lot of Tschokossi, and some Fulani, who were looking after their cattle. The Tschokossi, I may explain, are not themselves cattle-breeders. All the stock they own comes down to them from the north by way of trade, and always in charge of the Fulani, who, in regard to their knowledge of cattle and their ways, may be termed the Masai of Western Africa. These Fulani drovers, being mostly poor men in their 157
own country, or at all events cattle-less, which amounts to much the same thing, are only too glad to remain and settle down amongst the Tschokossi for a while, and look after their herds. They receive as their reward the milk, and at stated intervals a calf or two. These latter increase and multiply, and in time each Fulani possesses a herd of his own, and returns to his own land a rich man, judged by Fulani standards. I was greatly interested in these people, who are, as I think I have already mentioned, of an altogether different type to the ordinary negro tribes dwelling in this part of Africa. I found them quite intelligent to talk to. They possess clear-cut features, approximating to the European standard, light chocolate-coloured skins, and some of the women I saw were by no means bad-looking. The Fulani as a class are supposed to be of Arab and Berber blood, with a dash of the negroid. At this village we called a halt, and partook of a hurried lunch, which was greatly improved by a big calabash of fresh milk brought us by the Fulani herdsmen.

After lunch Schomburgk and I cantered on to Sumbu, about two miles distant, leaving the caravan to follow. On the way two reitbuck got up, and stood looking at us not ten yards away. Schomburgk's language at not having his rifle with him was, to put it mildly, not elegant. Personally, I was glad that he hadn't got it with him, but I did not tell him so. The beautiful creatures were so close up, that I could see the look of startled terror in their lovely big brown eyes, and I was pleased when they scampered away, even though their meat would have 158
come in most handy for the pot. At Sumbu, we pitched our camp on a promontory overlooking the Oti, which is here bordered with fresh grass, very pretty. The outlook, too, over the plains to the north and west was very cheering, with herds of puku grazing quietly at intervals as far as the eye could reach. We intend staying here four or five days.

CHAPTER XII

AMONG THE SUMBU SAVAGES

We carried out our intention, as narrated at the end of the last chapter, and stayed at Sumbu several days, making short excursions into the surrounding country, and a dash north-east as far as the French frontier. We have now traversed Togoland from end to end, and I can flatter myself that I am at all events the first white woman to go farther than Sokode, and only one or two, at most, have ever been so far as that.

The people about here are a very wild and mixed lot. Besides the native Tschokossi, who are indigenous to the soil, so to speak, there are many others—Gourma people from the northern plains, Fulani from the central Sudan, Ashantis from the neighbouring British dominions, and Dahomeyans from across the French international boundary, with a sprinkling of individuals belonging to other tribes and peoples from various districts and states, who, for reasons best known to themselves, have sought sanctuary, as it were, in this remote and seldom-visited region, within comparatively easy reach of three different frontiers.

On the afternoon after our arrival the men went out shooting, and I noticed directly that our boys kept close round my tent, and that their usually merry countenances wore an exceedingly staid, not to say sombre, aspect. 160
As this was so entirely unlike their conduct under normal circumstances, I asked them the reason for it. They answered that they were afraid to venture outside the camp. "People here," they said, "very bad people; they very much kill."

This was not very reassuring, and when Messa, the cook, came presently to tell me that he was unable to get any fowls, the interpreter having reported that the people in the village refused to sell, I felt rather uneasy. From where I was, I could see the natives sitting about outside their huts, each one with his bow and quiver of poisoned arrows beside him.

However, I reflected that I had to get dinner somehow against the return of the hunters, so calling the cook I ordered him to come with me to the village. At first he refused, saying that he was frightened. But I told him that if a woman could go there, surely a man could, and eventually he consented, very reluctantly, to accompany me. When we approached the place, the children all ran away screaming. This did not trouble me greatly. I had become used to it. What I did not like was that the women, in obedience to gestures from their men-folk, also went away—where I could not see. This I interpreted as a pretty bad sign, for it is well known that the African natives invariably send away their women and children when mischief is brewing. The men sat still, and scowled at us in silence, making no move, and speaking no word.

At this moment I must confess to feeling very frightened. I remembered the gruesome incident of the white 161
man and the poisoned arrows. The affair had happened quite close to where I then was. It was likely, indeed probable, that some of these very men who sat there scowling at me, had been concerned in that cowardly and treacherous attack. However, I reflected that having adventured myself amongst them I had got to brazen it out. It would never do now to show the white feather, for if we retreated we must of necessity turn our backs upon them—we could not very well retire facing them and walking backwards all the way to the camp—and a flight of arrows let fly on the impulse of the moment would mean the end of the pair of us.

So, stalking along till I came close up to them, I said, addressing one of the biggest of the groups of squatting negroes, that I wished to buy a fowl. Nobody took the slightest notice. I waited a matter of thirty seconds or so, then fixing one of the least truculent-looking of the savages with my eyes, I addressed my request to him personally. I told him that I wanted a chicken, that I was willing to pay anything within reason for a chicken, but that a chicken I must have. Thereupon the man rose, caught a fowl, and handed it to me, still without speaking.

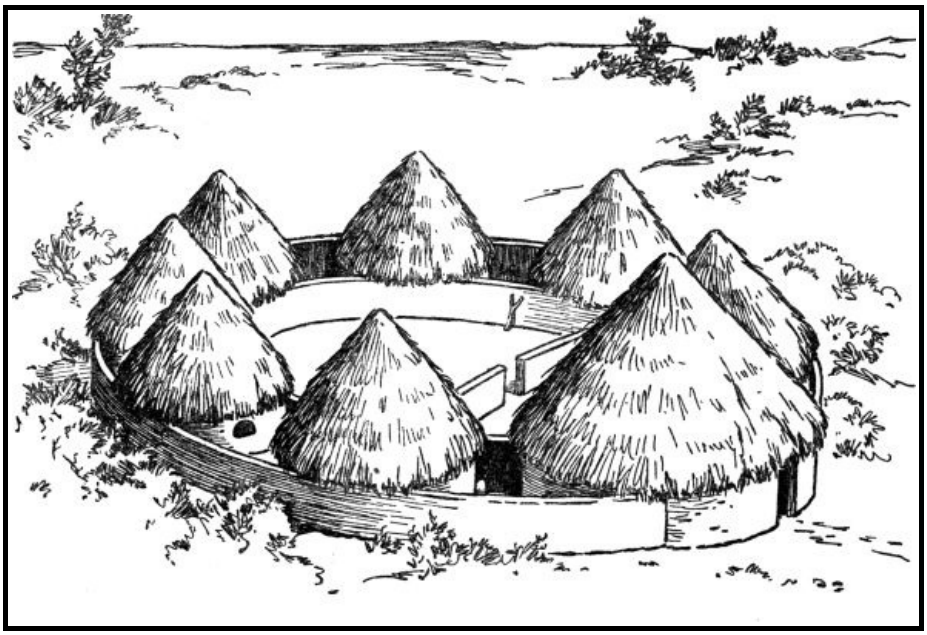
I had not brought with me any salt—the usual currency of the country—so I gave him a whole sixpence in cash. It was probably the first coined money that he, or any of those sitting near him, had ever seen. Everybody pressed round to examine it, and everybody started to express his opinion concerning it. The jabbering was terrific, and hearing the din the women came running up, and even the children ventured near, their wide-open 162
eyes fixed in staring astonishment at the stranger white woman who had dropped from the skies, as it were, into their village, in order to bargain for chickens with tiny bits of metal. Eventually, after being passed from hand to hand all round the circle, the sixpence was returned to me by the man to whom I had originally tendered it, and who now, opening his mouth for the first time, condescended to explain that the price of his chicken was half a cupful of salt—*i.e.* about three-halfpence. I told him that the sixpence I had given him was worth two whole cupfuls of salt, and ought therefore by rights to purchase four chickens, taking the birds at his own valuation, but that as he had been the only one to oblige me by selling me what I wanted, he could keep the sixpence and I would keep the bird.

He shook his head. Obviously he did not believe me. Most likely he thought I was trying to obtain his valuable chicken in exchange for a worthless fragment of metal, which, assuming him to be fool enough to accept it, his wife would promptly annex as a neck ornament, and which, even at that, would not be much of an ornament. Luckily at this juncture a much-travelled native from a neighbouring village—he had once been as far as Mangu—put in an appearance, and on being appealed to, and after an examination of the sixpence, was able to confirm to his fellows my statement as to the seemingly fabulous value of the coin. At once the spell was broken. Obviously a person who, like myself, was willing to buy chickens at four times the ordinary market 163
rates, was an individual whose acquaintance was worth cultivating.

From being almost openly hostile, the villagers went to the other extreme, and became embarrassingly friendly. Everybody crowded round, the women especially evincing the liveliest curiosity. They felt my clothes, my arms, my neck, my hair; especially my hair, bombarding me with questions concerning it meanwhile. Was it all my own? Did all white women's hair grow straight like mine? What made it so shiny? Did I put palm oil on it? These, and other even more delicate questions concerning the inner mysteries of my toilet, were flung at me by

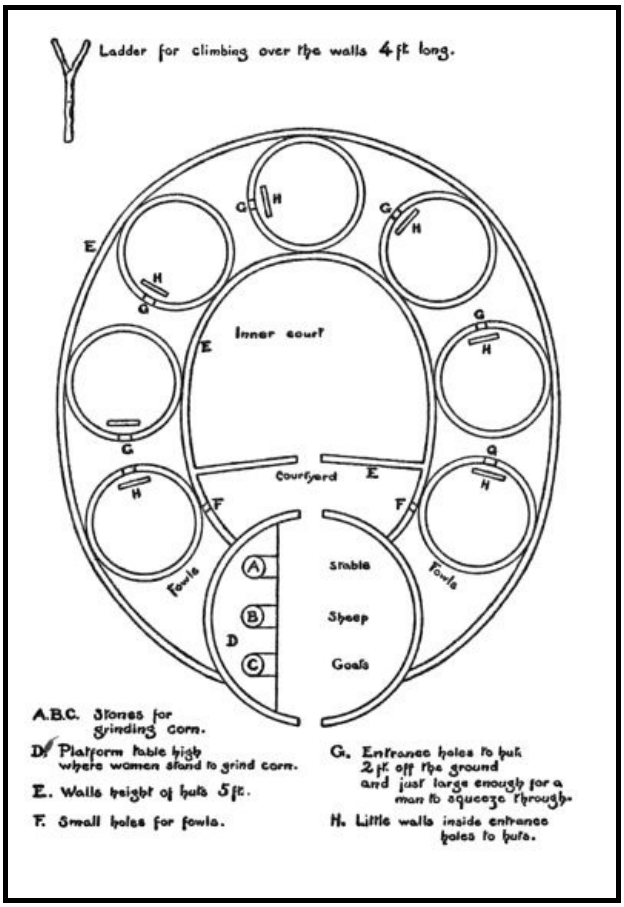
all and sundry. To distract their attention from the subject, I picked up and fondled a little urchin of three, or thereabouts. At once every woman in the place ran to fetch her own offspring, and held them up for my approval and admiration. A happy thought struck me. I had in my pocket several lumps of sugar, which I carried about with me to give to the horses. Taking them out, I distributed them amongst the nearest children. They took them, but had evidently no idea what to do with them. One little girl, placing her lump in a calabash, started to bore a hole in it with a thin piece of pointed iron, like a skewer, obviously with the intention of hanging it round her neck as a charm, and seemed greatly disappointed and annoyed when it broke into several pieces. Meanwhile, I had bitten a lump I had reserved for myself in halves, and putting one part in my mouth, handed the other half to a little boy standing near me, who, greatly daring, licked it. His delight was promptly 164
manifested in his face. I doubt whether Charles Lamb's mythical Chinaman showed a more intense appreciation of the flavour of roast pig, when tasting it for the first time, than did this little Tschokossi savage on first sampling sugar. After indulging in several more licks, he handed it to his mother, who started licking it in her turn; and who, like her child, showed her manifest appreciation of the delicacy after the first lick. Other women were not slow to follow her example. Soon the place was full of women and children licking lumps of sugar, the novel delicacies being passed from hand to hand, and from mouth to mouth, the recipients meanwhile "ul-ul-ulling" in gleeful anticipation and excitement. After this little episode, whenever I showed my face in Sumbu, I was sure to be followed by crowds of children, begging for some of my "white honey rock," as they not inaptly christened it.

The ice once broken, I became very friendly with the Sumbu people, so much so that I asked the chief to show me over his village. He readily agreed. It was a most extraordinary place, unlike any I had ever seen or heard of, and merits a detailed description. The village itself is egg-shaped, the huts round, and placed closely together, not more than two yards apart, all round the rim of the oval, the roofs overlapping in such a manner that the edges of the opposite down-sloping eaves practically meet at a height of about three feet from the ground. The huts are completely joined together all the way round by two walls, an outer wall and an inner wall, the same height as the huts, the outer wall protected by thorn bushes. The entrance hole—one cannot call it a 165
door—to each hut is two feet from the ground, is round in shape, and of a diameter just sufficiently large to allow a full-grown native to squeeze through feet foremost. The only entrance to the village is through a fair-sized doorway in a big hut at one extremity of the oval. This big hut is a sort of communal one, and is used, as regards one side of it, for the women to grind the corn on stones placed upon a hard clay platform the height of a table; and as regards the other side, as a sort of club-room for the men to sit in during the rainy season in the daytime, and as a stable for the sheep and goats at night. At the opposite end of this big hut is a second fair-sized doorway giving access to a courtyard. From the level of the first two huts (see plan) to right and left of the big communal hut a straight wall is carried right across from wall to wall, dividing the inner egg-shaped inclosure into two unequal portions, the larger portion being on the far side of the wall. This intersecting wall has a doorway in the centre through which admission is secured to the other further portion of the inclosure, and from this far inclosure only can access be had to the huts.



Sketch of a Fortified Tschokossi Village

These curious villages are only to be found nowadays in the extreme north of Togo, and are rare even there. They are relics of the days when inter-tribal warfare was endemic. The village itself is in effect a cunningly devised native fortress, and each house is a fort.



PLAN OF THE VILLAGE SHOWN OPPOSITE

Ladder for climbing over the walls 4 ft. long.

A.B.C. Stones for grinding corn.

D. Platform table high where women stand to grind corn.

E. Walls height of huts 5 ft.

F. Small holes for fowls.

G. Entrance holes to hut 2 ft. off the ground and just large enough for a man to squeeze through.

H. Little walls inside entrance holes to huts.

And not even then directly. When I arrived in this inner space, after being politely conducted by the chief through the communal hut, and across the courtyard, I naturally thought to see some signs of human habitation, and looked round for the doors of the dwelling-places. To my great surprise, however, there was nothing to be seen but the bare inner wall; and the chief, his eyes twinkling at my obvious bewilderment, presently reared 168
against this a forked stick, and motioned me to climb up it, using it in fact as a ladder. I did so, though not without some slight misgiving, and stepping over, and down the other side, I found myself in a sort of well-like space between the inner and outer walls and two of the huts. From here only could access be had to the actual dwelling-places of the Tschokossi, through the small round holes mentioned above, and which were placed close up under the low overhanging eaves. Even, however, after squeezing one's body through this hole, one has not yet reached the actual interior of one of the houses. One is faced by yet another blank wall, round which one has to negotiate a careful passage in pitch darkness. This inner wall is intended to prevent anybody from creeping in under cover of darkness, and shooting off poisoned arrows amongst the sleepers inside, a pleasant practice to which both the Tschokossi and the Gourma are said to be only too frequently addicted. The whole series of elaborate precautions dates from the days when inter-tribal warfare, instead of being sporadic, was endemic. Every one of these villages is in fact a fortress, and every house is a fort. To storm such a place would be exceedingly difficult, at least for savages armed only with bows and arrows; to surprise it would be impossible, especially in view of the fact that the two blank spaces contained between the outer and inner walls and the big communal entrance hut and the two nearest to it on either side, are utilised to keep chickens in, and
these creatures would at once give notice, by their unwonted commotion, of the presence of an intruder. The 169
natives dwelling near Mangu, as well, of course, as those living to the south of it, have now entirely given up building these fortress villages, the necessity for them having ceased to exist. Nor is it likely that even the Tschokossi of the extreme north of Togo will build any more, when those they are now dwelling in are abandoned, or fall into ruin. I learned later that these Tschokossi people are supposed to have learnt the art of building these curious villages from the Gourma people, with whom they are intermixed.

I forgot to say that after I had bought the chicken, and had handed it to Messa, at the same time telling him that I was about to go inside the village at the chief's invitation, he tried earnestly to dissuade me from doing

anything of the sort. "Oh, but I am going," I replied, "and you will come with me." Whereupon he threw up his hands with an expressive gesture, and declared that he was afraid. "I will go and call Alfred," he suddenly ejaculated, after a few moments' cogitation, "him big man, him no frightened," and off he went at a great pace, before I could stop him. Alfred, I may explain, was our chief interpreter, and stood six feet three inches in his bare feet.

Well, I waited for him to put in an appearance until I grew tired; then I went alone into the village, to the great delight of the old chief, who seemed vastly to appreciate my reposing such implicit confidence in him, and started off explaining everything to me with great volubility. Of course I could not understand a word of what he 170
said, so on second thoughts I decided to go outside again and wait until Alfred turned up. This he did soon afterwards, walking very slowly and reluctantly, and evincing the greatest indisposition to come with me into the village. At length I got angry with him. "Surely," I said, "if a little slip of a girl like me is not afraid, a long slab of misery like you ought not to be"; and I wound up by threatening to report him to Schomburgk. Only then did he agree very unwillingly to accompany me, at the same time protesting so solemnly and earnestly against the "terrible risks" we were running, that once the thought did flash through my mind that my insistence on the enterprise might possibly turn out to be yet another example of the danger of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. "But then," I reflected, "I am no fool, and Messa is most certainly not an angel"; and I thereupon took my courage in both hands, and in we went, with what result I have already stated. I was greatly pleased and excited at my discovery of this extraordinary village, as also was Schomburgk when I told him about it. It was, he agreed, one more fact added to our anthropological knowledge of darkest Africa; and of a kind, moreover, regarding which nothing has ever before appeared in print.

By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

BASKET-MAKING

This is an important native industry. The baskets are made from the stalks of the palm leaf, and the finished article sells for a sum—reckoned in salt or cowries—approximating to about one farthing.

After this little episode we never had any difficulty during our stay there in getting plenty of chickens from the people at the ordinary market rates, which shows, to me at all events, that by firmness, mixed with kindness, one can do a lot with natives, even very wild ones. Our camp is on a high plateau, very picturesque, and commanding a quite extensive view over the high rolling veldt. Provisions are plentiful, with the exception 171
of eggs, which are scarce just now. The Fulani, however, still continue to bring us milk, and butter for cooking. As their village lies at a much lower elevation than our camp, I am able to see them coming a long way off, and their first advent upon the scene is the signal to begin to get breakfast ready. We use the milk for our porridge and our coffee, but it is always very dirty. Tolstoy was right when he wrote that cleanliness is the hallmark of the classes the world over. The lower down, the dirtier! Most of these people, for instance, are simply filthy, possessing not even the most rudimentary notions of cleanliness. They defecate promiscuously in the neighbourhood of their villages, and they throw out their garbage anywhere. One result is a plague of flies, which settle everywhere, and must be ideal breeders and carriers of disease under the circumstances. At first I was really afraid to use the milk they brought. But by straining it through a clean cloth, and then boiling it, I have managed so far to ward off any ill effects. I have to pay these people in salt for all the milk, butter, and eggs they bring; they absolutely refuse to accept coined money. The rate of exchange has been fixed at one cupful of salt for each big calabash of milk, and the same for a pat of butter. They bring so much milk at one time, that there is quite a lot left over, and the happy thought struck me to make cheese of it. I put it in a big basin, allowed the cream to rise, skimmed it off, put it in a serviette, and hung it up in the branches of a tree. The result was an excellent cream cheese, which, after I added some salt and carraway seeds to it to give it a 172
flavour, proved to be quite nice and palatable. I tried it first on Schomburgk, who liked it immensely. "Who made it?" he asked. "I did," I answered, quite proud, as what woman would not be, of my achievement. "Good!" he cried. "Give me another helping." Presently Hodgson came along. "Have some cheese?" I said. Hodgson eyed the dainty doubtfully, thinking it to be of native manufacture, and he had a rooted aversion and prejudice—not altogether unreasonable under the circumstances—against any article of native-made food. "Who made it?" he demanded, using Schomburgk's exact words. I was just about to answer him as I had answered Schomburgk,

when the latter kicked me violently under the table. I understood, and my lips framed the ready lie. "Oh, the cook, I suppose," I answered carelessly. "Then I don't want any," he replied decisively. Whereat Schomburgk kicked me again under the table, but appreciatively this time; and we finished the rest of the cheese together. Then we both started laughing, and Hodgson grew quite angry, because he didn't know what the joke was. He knows now, however; or he will, at all events, when he comes to read this book.

I had other domestic troubles at Sumbu, in addition to culinary ones. Washing-day was a great trial. Our "washerwoman" was a boy, if you please, and said "boy" was a man, which sounds rather paradoxical, but you will find it is quite right, dear reader, and good sense, if you stop to think for a minute. Well, this boy, or man, or 173
"washerwoman," whichever you please, had one fixed idea as regards the cleansing of clothes, and that idea was the one underlying, according to the old English proverb, the correct treatment of "a woman, a dog, and a walnut tree," as regards all three of which we are assured that "the more you beat 'em the better they be." Only I am convinced that neither woman, nor dog, nor walnut tree could possibly have stood, for any but the briefest period, the terrible beatings that our boy subjected our clothes to. He was a small, undersized man, but very strong and energetic, and with fists like ginger-beer bottles, and he used to pound and tear my delicate lingerie into shreds with his iron-shod paws, as a preliminary to hammering it to pulp on a big chunk of rough stone. Eventually Schomburgk raised his wages, on condition that he didn't work so hard; the first time on record, I suppose, that an employer has so acted. The result was disastrous. From that moment he ceased to take any interest whatever in his washing operations. He just trailed the soiled things in the river for a few minutes, and took them out again. When I, in despair at getting them cleansed, but hopeful of getting them at least smoothed out, suggested damping them down, and ironing them, he compromised matters with his conscience by ironing them wet. "What is the good," he exclaimed when I expostulated with him, "of first drying things, and then wetting them again, in order to dry them yet again with hot irons?" Such logic, regarded merely as logic, was unanswerable, and I was wise enough to at least refrain from attempting the obviously impossible. 174

There were a lot of old people in Sumbu. As a rule one sees few such in Africa. One old chap I especially remember. He used to sit in front of his hut all day, a mere living skeleton, only skin and bones. He looked exactly like a shrivelled-up monkey, or a mummy out of the British Museum. One day, taking pity on him, I gave a woman a lump of sugar to give to him. After he had eaten it, to my unbounded amazement he scrambled to his feet and executed a sort of impromptu war-dance. Later on he told our interpreter that he was now willing to die, having eaten of the white woman's honey rock. The phrase sounds new, but it isn't. It is merely one more variant of the "fate-cannot-harm-me-I-have-dined-to-day" wheeze.

The chief of Sumbu, the same who conducted me over his village, is the ugliest man I ever set eyes on, even in Africa, which is saying a good deal. He was so surpassingly ugly, so perfectly and preposterously hideous, that we took a cinema picture of him. We did not, however, think it necessary to explain to him our real reason for wishing to photograph him. On the contrary, we told him that it was because, besides being the northernmost chief in Togo we had visited, he was also the handsomest, and Europe would be inconsolable if it were to be deprived of possessing a pictorial record of an individual at once so distinguished and so beautiful. Hodgson, our operator, hung back for a while. He said he was afraid the chief's face might break the camera. It didn't. But I am inclined to think that it was a near thing. In justice to the chief, I feel I ought to add that not 175
quite all his ugliness was natural to him, so to speak. It was due in part to his having been pitted by smallpox. He was badly pitted, too. His face would have made a very good cribbage-board, but regarded as a face it was a failure. Even, however, if he had never been pitted, I am inclined to think he would have been sufficiently ugly to have carried off the wooden spoon at even the least exacting of beauty shows. He reminded me of the ugly man immortalised by Mark Twain, who, after having the smallpox ever so bad, was just as handsome as he was before.

In addition to being very ugly, the chief was also very dirty. So were all his people. In fact the Sumbu Tschokossi are about the filthiest lot of savages I have come across up till now. It was only twenty minutes to the river, yet even the younger men's bodies were always grey with ashes, sand, and dirt, and covered with vermin. The women were much more clean to look upon, probably because it was their custom to bathe each day when they went to the river in the morning for water. The younger girls wear brightly polished brass armlets round their wrists and forearms, and the contrasts of these ornaments with their ebony skins, and the green leaves they wear before and behind, is exceedingly effective. Some of the very young unmarried ones are not unbeautiful, but they soon lose their good looks, owing to the hard work they have to do. They are at it from morning till night, carrying water, cooking, hoeing in the yam fields, bringing in fuel from the forest, while the 176
men laze about in the sun, and breed flies. One thing, however; this incessant labour renders them very strong, and strength is a valued asset in a Tschokossi woman. A weak one stands a poor chance in the matrimonial market. "Amongst us, men choose their wives for strength, not for beauty," remarked one burly savage to me. I have heard somewhat similar sentiments expressed amongst our working classes in Europe. And after all, what is the philosophy of these savages regarding marriage but a primitive form of eugenics?

As for the men, they strongly resent the imputation of laziness. "We are fighters," remarked the old chief when I gently tackled him on the subject, "not workers. It is for the women to work, whilst we protect them against outside interference." "But," I said, "there is no fighting to be done now; the land is at peace." "Who knows?" was his somewhat cryptic reply.

If, however, these far northern tribes, the Tschokossi, the Gourma, and others, resent being called lazy, they regard as flattering the charges of treachery and cowardice that are brought against them. They look upon the shooting of a foe from behind with a poisoned arrow, not only as legitimate warfare, but as the very best and highest form of warfare. It is their business to stalk an enemy, to see and not be seen, to pounce upon him unawares; a proceeding which, after all, is recommended by all writers on strategy, and practised by all beasts of prey. It is a fact, too, that a certain kind of cowardice requires a certain kind of courage. The prowling savage who climbs the walls of a Tschokossi village at dead of night in order to take pot-shots at the sleeping 177
inhabitants with his poisoned arrows, is not exactly a coward, however reprehensible his conduct may appear judged from a civilised standpoint. For having accomplished his object, he has to make good his retreat, with an even chance that by that time the whole village is in an uproar, and I can conceive of no less desirable place

wherein to be trapped by a score or so of vengeful enemies, than the well-like space between the huts and the inclosing walls.

I had many talks with the old chief regarding these and other matters, and once he made some sort of an odd remark which caused me to laugh heartily. "Oh then," he said, looking mildly astonished, "you *can* laugh." "Of course I can laugh," I answered. "Why not?" "Well," he replied, "I have never seen a white woman before, but I have always been told that they are unable to laugh."

Although the chief, and in a lesser degree his people, were fairly friendly with me, they continued up to the end to show themselves suspicious and distrustful of our boys, and this distrust showed itself in many curious, not to say inconvenient ways. For example, it was our custom while on trek to allow our personal staff, numbering about fifteen, three-halfpence a day extra subsistence money. With this they used, on arriving at a village, to club together, and engage a woman to buy their provisions and to cook for them; in fact, to board them during their stay there. But in Sumbu no woman could be got to undertake the job, nor would they even sell them provisions until they had exchanged their coined money for salt, the usual currency of the country. 178
With this they were at length able to buy provisions, millet-meal, yams, &c. Then, however, a new difficulty presented itself. They had no one to cook for them, nor had they any cooking utensils of their own. So they came to me, and asked me to lend them one of our pots. Naturally, I declined; I am not over squeamish, but to eat after natives! Faugh! On the other hand, I could not stand by and see the poor fellows go hungry. So off I went to the village, and begged the chief to let me have the loan of a pot. After a lot of palaver he consented, and Schomburgk, at my request, allowed his gun-bearer to be struck off duty in the afternoons in order to cook for them. This arrangement worked fairly well, for natives eat only once a day, of an evening. Then they consume an enormous meal. One can actually see their stomach "swell wisibly," like the Fat Boy in *Pickwick*.

No sooner had this difficulty been settled, however, than another one arose. Owing to the boycott of the villagers, the boys could not even get the use of a hut to sleep in at night, and had to camp out in the open. They complained to me, and I told Schomburgk about it, but found him unsympathetic. "If the Sumbu people won't lend them a hut, they won't, and there's an end of it. I have no right to force them to. Besides, it is good to sleep out in Africa. I've slept out hundreds of nights when hunting elephants, and it never did me any harm, nor will it them. Tell them I said so." I did as I was told, and the boys had to sleep out for the rest of the time we remained 179
in the neighbourhood. But they didn't like it one bit.

In fact, towards the end of our stay here, some of them began to get somewhat surly and discontented, not like their usual selves. One reason for this probably was that, on quitting Mangu, their women had all been left behind there. This had been done at their own wish, as they said they were afraid to take them up-country to where we were going. Nevertheless, they no doubt felt the separation keenly, for natives temporarily divorced from their womenkind are like ships without their rudders. They had all taken it for granted, by the way, that I too was to be left behind in Mangu, and seemed greatly surprised and anxious when they heard that I was going to accompany the caravan. Indeed, just as we were about to start, all our personal boys came to me in a body, and implored me not to go, saying that the Tschokossi of the north were dangerous, and that they feared for the safety of their "little white mother." I was greatly touched by their solicitude, but of course I was unable to accede to their request, even had I a mind to, which I had not. Later on I overheard Asmani, Schomburgk's personal servant, while discussing the journey with another boy, exclaim: "Well, I shall be glad when our little white mother is safe again on board the steamer."

Another source of dissatisfaction, was that there was a shortage of caravan food. For one thing, our European flour began to give out, and we ourselves were obliged to eat bread made half of millet-meal and half 180
of flour. I didn't like it a bit. But for the Fulani, in fact, we should have been, if not exactly on short rations, at all events on restricted ones. These used to bring us, when they came with our daily allowance of milk, huge calabashes of buttermilk, which the boys used to purchase, and mix with their millet-meal, thereby obtaining a welcome addition to their diet.

Meanwhile their clothing, what they had of it, was going from bad to worse. Messa had to cut off the legs of his trousers above the knees, in order to patch the portion covering that part of his anatomy on which boys are birched at school. Alfred, the interpreter, was in an even worse fix, because he had no trouser-legs left to utilise after this fashion. He complained to me, saying that his appearance was not decent. I was bound to agree with him as to this, but pointed out to him that I could do nothing in the matter just then, as we had no spare clothing with the caravan. When we got back to Mangu, I told him, Schomburgk was going to rig out all our personal staff with new clothes; in the meantime I suggested to him that he should wear a "lavelap," which is a West African term for a whole piece of cloth wrapped round the body. "Oh dear no, little mother," he replied, in deeply shocked tones. "An interpreter cannot wear a 'lavelap,' he must at least have a pair of trousers."

Next day I noticed that Messa, who was always a bit of a dandy, had covered his bare legs, from the ankles to above the knees, with strips of white cloth dipped in washing-blue, and arranged like putties. I rallied him on his "improved" appearance, but he only smiled feebly and somewhat sadly, so I asked him what was the matter. 181
Thereupon he confided to me that he was worried about his wife, who was lying ill at Mangu. This was the same young lady whom, it will be remembered, he had gone back to Kamina to fetch while we were on the road up from there to Sokode, and her illness, or at all events the undue prolongation of it, was largely his own fault.

She was always bright and bonny until we got to Paratau. Then, when we resumed our march, she seemed to have changed altogether. She was always tired, and appeared as if trying to elude our observation. Messa, too, got sad and sulky, so one day, after we had camped, I went over to their quarters to try and find out what was the matter. I found the girl sitting disconsolate outside their hut, crying, and nursing a frightfully swollen and ulcerated leg. I went and told Schomburgk, who examined it, and at once diagnosed it as a very bad and greatly neglected case of filaria, otherwise guinea-worm. These dangerous parasites burrow under the human skin, generally in the feet or legs, and the female lays eggs, giving rise to abscesses, and also causing grave functional disturbances. They are removed by very slowly twining them round a stick, and the natives assert, and apparently with some measure of truth, that if the worm is broken in the process, the death of the person affected will ensue. Messa had known all along, it appeared, what his wife was suffering from, but fearing to

have her sent back, had tried to conceal it from us. Schomburgk gave the poor girl some mercurial ointment, and afterwards several of the parasites were removed in the manner described above, many of the natives being exceedingly skilful in this matter. Now, it appeared, he was anxious, fearing a relapse. As a matter of fact, on our return to Mangu, we found the patient practically convalescent. 182

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CHAPTER XIII

BACK TO MANGU

While in camp at Sumbu I had another adventure with a puff-adder, which is, as I have explained elsewhere, one of the most venomous snakes in all Africa. We were sitting outside my tent after dinner, enjoying our coffee and cigarettes as usual, when my personal boy had occasion to go inside on some errand or other. A moment or two later there came the sound of a wild commotion from within. The boy was threshing about with a stick, and calling out excitedly something we could not understand. We jumped up, and the boy came running out, dangling the dead reptile gingerly at the end of his stick. He had, he explained, nearly stepped on it in the dark, and he showed us where it had been coiled, right opposite my toilet table, where I should have stood on entering. The curious instinct natives have about snakes, had warned him of his danger, but had I gone in I should almost certainly have trodden on it; and there would probably have been an end to me for good and all.

Soon after this incident a piece of very welcome news reached us. A native runner came trotting up to our camp with a letter in a cleft-stick, and wrapped in the usual oilskin. It proved to be a cablegram from the 184
Moving Picture Sales Agency in London—the firm that is handling our films—telling us that the first lot of pictures had been received and developed, and that they had turned out very well indeed. Naturally, we were all immensely pleased and delighted, for as we had no proper facilities for developing our cinematograph negatives where we were, we had no means of judging how they were going to turn out, and Schomburgk, with memories of the failure that had attended his efforts during his former expedition, had been all along very anxious about the matter. Now all our apprehensions were set at rest, our spirits soared high, and we opened a bottle of champagne in honour of the occasion. The cablegram had only left London thirty-six hours previously. It had been re-transmitted by telephone from Lome to Mangu, whence it had been dispatched by relays of runners to our camp. The date stamp showed that it had left Mangu at ten o'clock that morning, and it reached us at eight o'clock in the evening, the distance from Mangu to Sumbu being approximately fifty-five miles. When it is remembered that there is no proper road between the two places, nor even a trail in many parts, that the heat in the daytime up here is so terrific that even the natives ordinarily do not care to move about in it, and that the letter had to be carried up hill and down dale, as well as across rivers and streams, it must be admitted that the performance was a good one. It had been brought to us by what is known as "chief's mail," an institution 185
peculiar to Togo. The letter, message, telegram, or whatever it may be, is wrapped in oilskin by the clerk at the issuing office, firmly fixed into the cleft of a stick, and handed to a native runner, who at once dashes off with it to the nearest village along the line of the route it is intended it shall take. Arrived there, he calls out at the top of his voice "Chief's mail!" and hands it to the first native he happens to meet, who at once starts off with it at top speed to the next village, where the operation is repeated. In this way messages can be dispatched to practically any part of the country with marvellous celerity.

Our principal reason for remaining at Sumbu was because we wanted to photograph some pictures of hippopotami, which were reported to be fairly numerous in the Oti hereabouts. Schomburgk wanted to secure a good picture of the ordinary hippo, in order to show the contrast between these big fellows and the pygmy hippopotamus which he discovered in Liberia, and also to show how the one is practically always cooped up in some big pool, while the other, the little one, roams at will all over the place in the forest; otherwise he did not trouble greatly about game pictures. Day after day passed by, however, and we saw none, and Schomburgk began to get anxious. Eventually he sent natives out to look for them, promising a reward to whoever succeeded. That evening a couple of Tschokossi came in, and reported that they had located five of them some few miles up-stream, near a village called Panscheli. This, of course, was welcome news, and very early the 186
following morning we set out for Panscheli, taking our camera with us. We crossed the river, which was fairly deep and infested with crocodiles, without mishap. I was being carried in a hammock, being a bit run down, and I confess to being a little bit nervous, as I was being carried by boys who were new to the business, and didn't know how to handle the hammock properly. Besides this, the responsibility of having to carry a white woman for the first time made them over careful, and their progress was slow and tedious. Proper hammock boys, like those who carried me from Atakpame to Sokode, are exceedingly swift, smooth, and easy in all their movements. They "break step," like stretcher-bearers are trained to do, and sing a curious sort of chanting melody as they trot along, which is very apt to lull one to sleep.

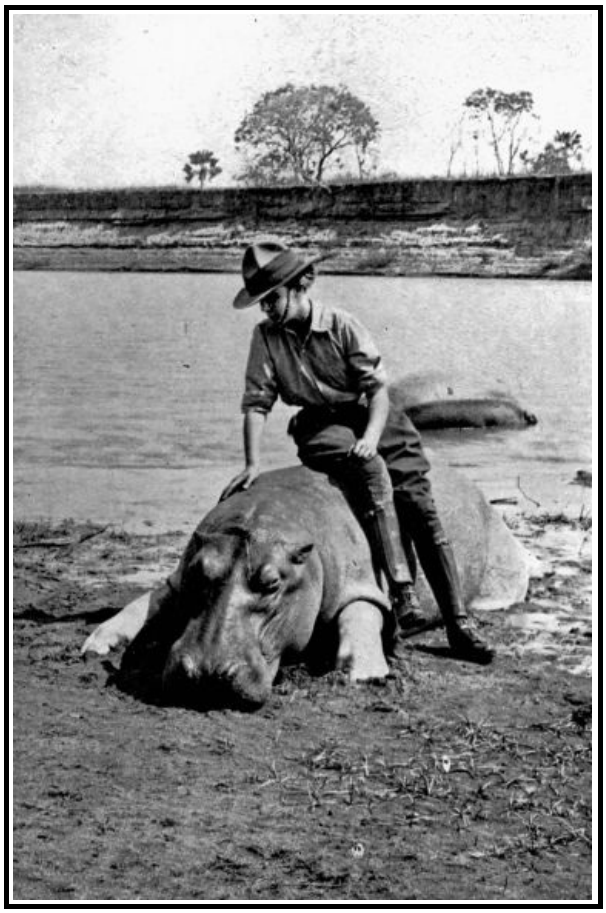
Altogether, what with the crossing, and one or two enforced halts on the way, the journey to Panscheli occupied about two and a half hours, and a little way beyond the village, in a big and very deep pool, we came up with the hippos—one big bull, one big cow, and three smaller ones. This was the first time I had ever seen hippopotami in a wild state, and Schomburgk was rather looking forward to my being impressed at the sight. As a matter of fact, however, I wasn't a bit impressed. The ungainly brutes only poked their heads above water at intervals to breathe, then down again. I was far more interested in those I had seen in captivity at the "Zoo" in 187
Hamburg, and in Regent's Park, London.

So shy and wary were these Oti hippos, that even now we had tracked them to their lair our operator found it impossible to take pictures of them. So at length, hot, tired, and disgusted, we gave it up as a bad job, and Schomburgk proceeded to vent his anger on the crocodiles, shooting six or seven of them. He absolutely refused, however, to shoot any of the hippos, saying that they were harmless creatures, not like the beastly crocs, and that anyway it wouldn't be sport, but butchery, because the poor brutes, although they were in their native element, had not got the run of the river, but were cooped up in the pool, and had to come to the surface to breathe. Eventually, however, he so far relented as to give Hodgson permission to shoot one of the two big hippos, telling him to remain behind for that purpose. "Perhaps," he remarked, "you will never get another chance, and anyhow it will do for meat for the boys."

Meanwhile, on an island in the middle of the pool, I saw the most extraordinary sight I had ever beheld, an incident that I had often heard about, but never really believed. The low sandy islet was covered thick with innumerable water-fowl: teal, egrets, herons, and so forth. And right in amongst them were five enormous

crocodiles, lying basking in the sun with their mouths wide open, and numbers of little white birds running in and out, and pecking with their tiny beaks at the interstices between the big cruel teeth. We promptly tried to 188
cinema the scene, and again we were disappointed; in fact our luck seemed dead out on this particular day. The crackling of the dried grass alarmed the reptiles, and they promptly closed their cavernous mouths, and slid off the island into the river. Whether any of the poor little birds were accidentally trapped inside, under the—for the crocs—altogether exceptional circumstances of the case, I do not know, but Schomburgk said not, as these birds are exceedingly quick in their movements, and the crocodiles are careful not to hurt them. The little creatures are generally known throughout Western Africa as "tick-birds," and they do not go only with crocodiles, but with elephants, rhinoceri, buffaloes, &c., as well as tame cattle and sheep. They feed on the vermin, and especially on the ticks, that infest these creatures; hence their name. Hence, also, the fact that they are never wantonly interfered with by their hosts. Even the stupid crocodile has sense enough to know that it is good for him to be rid of vermin, and to have his great ugly yellow teeth picked and cleansed for him by these indefatigable little scavengers.

Panscheli, where we halted for a brief spell on our way back to Sumbu, is a prettily situated little village of the usual frowsy Tschokossi type. It stands on the left bank of the Oti going up-stream, Sumbu being on the right bank, and is surrounded by broad belts of palm-trees. Curiously enough, the natives hereabouts seem to make no use whatever of these valuable trees.



By permission of *Maj. H. Schomburgk, F.R.G.S.*

AUTHORESS AND DEAD "HIPPO"

This young bull hippopotamus was shot in the Oti river in the far north of Togoland. Lying in the water in the background of the picture is another. These two hippos were the only ones shot by the expedition, although many others were seen and photographed.

Very late that afternoon, while we were resting at our base camp at Sumbu, Hodgson came back and 189
reported that he had shot the two big hippos, leaving the three smaller ones. In acting thus, he explained, he had not wilfully disobeyed Schomburgk's instructions, which were, it will be remembered, to shoot only one, sparing the other four. He had fallen into an error which, Schomburgk remarked, was quite excusable on the part of a young hunter unaccustomed to the ways of these animals. He had shot at one of the big hippos, which sunk, fatally wounded. Directly afterwards the other big fellow popped up, and Hodgson, thinking it to be the same hippo, fired again. Afterwards, when, on coming back to see whether they had risen, he found, not one only, but two dead hippopotami drifting on the surface of the pool, he was greatly surprised and disgusted.

Next day we rode over to Panscheli to see the two hippos, taking our boys with us to get them out. We found the carcases floating on the surface of the pool, surrounded by innumerable crocodiles biting and tearing at them. Despite of this our natives plunged fearlessly into the water amongst them, and fixing long stout coils of native coir rope round the bodies, soon had them hauled up on dry land. A hippo when shot sinks immediately, but only takes about two hours to rise. A crocodile, when fatally hit, jumps clean out of the water, then falls back, and also immediately sinks. But it takes much longer to rise than the hippo; thirty-six hours, or even longer, according to the state of the weather. Consequently none of those shot by Schomburgk on the previous 190

day were visible, but on the island were above a score of the loathsome creatures, gorged to repletion, their jaws wide open, and their living toothpicks, the little tick-birds, to wit, running in and out, and cleansing their mouths from the remnants of their disgusting meal. By the way, Schomburgk tells me that the popular idea regarding the strength and toughness of the "scaly defensive armour" of the crocodile is all moonshine. The so-called "armour" is not really armour at all, but merely a leather-like integument, and a modern bullet will penetrate it almost as easily as it would so much blotting-paper.

While we were up at the island, discussing the chances of a cinema picture, our boys were cutting up the dead hippos. I never witnessed a more disgusting sight. The extremities had been gnawed off by the crocodiles during the night, but the massive trunks, and the huge heads, were intact, and the natives sliced up the meat, entrails and all, and squabbled over the tit-bits, their faces, hands, and bodies smothered in blood. I wanted to get away from the horrible scene, and at my request Schomburgk took me for a short stroll up the river. Here, in a bend on a shallow sand-spit, we came unexpectedly on a number of big turtles. At our approach they popped up their heads like so many snakes, then bobbed down again as swiftly. Schomburgk succeeded, however, in shooting one, and I had visions of turtle soup for dinner. But it sank, and could not be recovered. 191
That night our boys gorged themselves on hippo meat, and the next morning croton oil was at a premium.

On January 16th we broke camp and started southward for Mangu. This is the first stage on our return journey to London, and Schomburgk, at my suggestion, utilised the occasion to take a "travel picture"—this is the technical trade term—showing the making up and starting of the caravan, striking the tents, porters taking up loads, and so forth. It made a very interesting film, but in order to photograph it, we had to get up much later than usual, and also delay the start, so as to get the light, so that our first day's stage was an unusually short one.

We are now marching back across the Oti flats. The season is advancing, and each day that passes, the heat increases in intensity. The very air seems to palpitate with it, and even by eight o'clock in the morning the sun's rays are so powerful that to sit in one's saddle exposed to them is to endure a mild sort of torture. We camped that night in the bush, far from any human habitation, under a big tree. It was near to where I had seen the marabou on my way up, but these beautiful creatures had now all disappeared. The burning sun had drunk up most of the water in the "vley," reducing it to the dimensions of a good-sized puddle, and the little depression, so full of bird life the week before, was now silent and deserted. In a comparatively little while the rainy season will set in, and soon afterwards all this district where we now are will be under water, and consequently of 192
course quite impassable for man or beast. The antelope, which now cover the flats, will retire to the higher ground away from the floods, and only the hippopotami and the crocodiles, and of course the birds, will disport themselves in and about what will be in effect a vast inland sea of fresh water.

Next day we resumed our march, striking a new track a little nearer the river bank. On the way we passed many big heaps of oyster shells. These river oysters are small, but very sweet and nice, and in the season they are consumed in enormous numbers by the natives, who come down to the Oti at this spot on purpose to feast upon them, returning to their homes in a few weeks' time as fat as butter. The native does not trouble about an oyster knife in order to open what journalists of the old school used to term the "succulent bivalves." He just dumps the oysters down near a big fire, and waits for them to open of their own accord. Some of these midden-like piles of old shells are of vast extent, and are probably the accumulation of many years, possibly of centuries. These shells are now used by the Mangu people for making lime, and Schomburgk used to note the whereabouts of the heaps so that they might be able to come up and fetch them away later on.

I was surprised and uneasy at observing, soon after we camped to-day, that several Tschokossi savages, each with his bow and sheaf of poisoned arrows, were prowling about in the bush in the distance, evidently 193
watching us, and taking stock of our movements. We tried to get in touch with them, in order to find out what their intentions were, but directly we made a movement in their direction, they as promptly retired, to reappear once more when we withdrew, and resume their silent spying upon us. It was somewhat disconcerting, but Schomburgk did not attach any very great importance to it. No doubt, he remarked, they were suspicious of our intentions, wondering what we were doing so far away from the beaten track; since even in the more remote parts of Togo, like that where we now are, there are certain well-defined caravan routes, and the natives, treacherous and cunning themselves, are always mistrustful of any white strangers who quit these recognised travel lanes, in order to adventure themselves into the bush on either side.

Nevertheless, when night fell and the camp was still, I felt strangely uneasy. I could not sleep, and the story of the white man so nearly slain in his tent by the poisoned arrows of these treacherous savages kept recurring to my mind again and again. At first a camp in a typical African bush is strangely silent, but after an hour or so there invariably begins a regular succession of noises, continuing till just before dawn. I heard, and perforce listened to them all, on that *nuit blanche*. First it was a horse neighing, then a hyena yowling; monkeys started chattering in the trees, a bush buck was bellowing to its mate. A little later on an old owl started "ter-hoot! ter- 194
hoot!" somewhere near, and some crested cranes answered her with their rasping "honk! honk!" like an asthmatical motor horn. My tent was pitched under some dwarf trees, from which there proceeded a continual crackling of dry branches. Hark! Surely there are human fingers stealthily groping about the outside of my frail dwelling. I creep to the flap and look fearfully out. Then laugh softly. It is only a tree lizard that has fallen from above, and now runs pattering about the taut canvas. The moonlight is flooding the country, and all the landscape for miles around is as a level unbroken plain of snow, or frosted silver, save that here and there a huge mis-shapen baobab rears its contorted form and casts weird black shadows athwart the white brightness. I lie down and close my eyes, determining to sleep, to be startled into wakefulness again this time by the low gurgling cough of a leopard. I go to the tent flap once more, and call softly to the horses, who are commencing to neigh uneasily. As I stand there huge bat-like moths circle about with whirring wings, or dash blindly into my averted face; while from the river below comes an endless, monotonous chorus from the throats of thousands of bull-frogs—"qua-ah! quah-ah! quah-ah!" a million times repeated. At last I feel myself drifting into slumberland. The weary eyelids close peacefully over aching eyeballs. The tired brain ceases to concern itself automatically with things past or with things present. Have I slept, or have I been awake all the time, and only imagined the 195
sleep that came not? I am not sure. But I am at all events certain that I am now wide awake, and that the camp

is in an uproar. One of the horses had got loose, and being a stallion, as indeed they all are, "goes for" the one next him. The two fight furiously. The others start kicking and squealing. The boys rush out, stumbling over the tent ropes in their excitement, and cursing fluently meanwhile in half a dozen different dialects. And above the din I can distinguish Schomburgk's voice, angrily inquiring of the horse boys whose animal it is that has broken loose, and promising punishment for the careless delinquent later on. That morning at dawn comes to my tent the erring one, to beg me to intercede for him with the "master." I promised to do my best. But Schomburgk is adamant. "An example must be made," he says. "It is sheer downright carelessness. No horse can break loose like that if it is properly tethered. Some night we shall have the lot stampeded; or, worse still, one of them will be fatally injured." Suddenly a happy thought strikes me. "It was a leopard," I explain, lying fluently, for the leopard incident happened hours before the horse broke loose. "I heard the brute myself." "Oh, of course, that alters the case," he says. "A horse might conceivably get loose if frightened by a prowling leopard. I will let the fellow off with a talking to." So that little affair ends satisfactorily to all concerned, and I congratulate myself on the fact that although I have lied, I have at least lied for an unselfish object, and to some purpose. Only later on 196
did I learn that Schomburgk knew I was fibbing all the while, since he was perfectly well aware that a leopard will not go anywhere near a horse; only he was glad of an excuse to remit the punishment without injury to discipline.

I start the day's march with aching eyes and head, due to lack of sleep, and an aching heart, also, for I am obsessed with a curious feeling of misfortune waiting for us ahead. In vain I try to shake it off, and when presently a native runner is seen approaching with a letter carried in the familiar cleft stick, I feel as certain as certain can be that he is the bearer of bad news. And so it turns out. The envelope, on being taken from its oilskin wrapper and opened, proves to contain a telegram from Kamina to tell us that Baron Codelli von Fahnenfeld's house there had been burned to the ground, and that all our heavy baggage which we had left stored in it had gone up in smoke. This was indeed terrible news. I cried nearly all day and the best part of the next night. Practically the whole of my personal belongings, including about £200 worth of jewellery, my books and papers, the little presents and souvenirs that I had bought at Madeira and elsewhere out of my hard-earned money as presents for the dear ones at home, my best and daintiest frocks and underwear, to say nothing of other valued odds and ends—all! all! nothing but dust and ashes! It was really too awful. Schomburgk's loss was even more serious than mine, but he took it more philosophically. His manuscripts had gone, his private letters 197
and papers, his army commissions, his medals and decorations, photographs, &c., representing fifteen years' camera work in the African wilds, his diaries, his clothes and uniforms, and a whole lot of other valuable property, much of which can never be replaced. We had intended to camp for the night at a place called Magu, but were so disgusted with fate, and things in general, that, in order to tire ourselves out and keep from brooding we pushed on as far as Najo. Here we camped, spending most of our time lamenting, and the next day, still very much down in the dumps, we rode into Mangu.

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CHAPTER XIV

THROUGH THE KONKOMBWA COUNTRY

I found that the change in temperature at Mangu was very marked indeed since we had left it not so very many days ago. The harmattan was lifting, and the nights, as well as the days, had begun to get very oppressive, so that I had no longer any difficulty in believing the stories that had been told me concerning the tropical intensity of the heat in the rainy season.

This harmattan, by the way, is a bit of a meteorological mystery. In the reference books it is generally described as a hot dry wind, blowing from the interior deserts of Africa, and laden with reddish dust. This may be true as regards its inception, but to describe the harmattan one encounters in Togoland as a "wind," is to convey an altogether wrong impression. It more nearly resembles a dry fog, and is yellowish rather than red, rendering the light effects most unsuitable for photography of any kind, and especially so for cinematographic photography. Its advent is, however, welcomed by the residents of the colony, for it tempers the heat of the sun's rays in a most effective, not to say extraordinary, manner. Directly it lifts, the temperature goes up with a bound, and the heat, which, while it lasts, is at least tolerable, becomes well-nigh insupportable. 199

My second stay in Mangu was not particularly eventful. The men went out every day taking ethnological pictures. This was in the morning, of course, before the worst of the heat began. I put in the time riding round with Captain von Hirschfeld, watching the progress of the building of the new station, and inspecting the soldiers on parade. There are a great many soldiers in Mangu just now, as all the reserves have been called up for training. It is wonderful to see the progress these reservists make, not to mention the raw recruits, in the course of their training. This is limited to ten days, but into that brief period of time there is crammed almost an infinity of hard work. Their ordinary hours of drill are ten a day. No white soldier could, or would, stand it. But the black man seems absolutely to enjoy it.

We took the opportunity of the reserves being called up to film the lives of these native soldiers, photographing them not only while they were at drill and at work, but also while they were at play, and resting in the bosom—or rather bosoms—of their families. Family life, by the way, plays a big part in the existence of the black troops of the Togo hinterland. There is no "marrying off the strength" for the Togo "Tommy." Practically they are all married, and "with leave," and most of them are very much married. An English Tommy, when he has saved up money, and feels like enjoying himself, goes on furlough, and buys beer. The Togo Tommy 200 stops at home, and buys a wife. He has to ask permission first, of course, but this is practically always granted, provided he has enough funds standing to his credit. The cost of a wife in Mangu is about sixteen shillings; in other places it is dearer, in some few cheaper. It all depends on the number of unmarried girls there are available; in other words, on the law of supply and demand. Even in Mangu, however, the price varies. A young and attractive girl of thirteen or fourteen may possibly be worth a sovereign. Girls marry young in West Africa. On the other hand, a strong and experienced woman who is a good cook and housewife, has also a good market value. Practically every soldier in Togoland buys as many wives as he can afford. The German Government—very wisely, I think—does not attempt to interfere with native domestic customs, of which polygamy is one of the oldest and most deeply-rooted. The women do not object in the least. In fact, they rather like it, for many hands make light work, and the more wives a man has to minister to his wants, the less arduous are the duties any single one of them is called upon to perform. Besides, in the days when inter-tribal fighting was the normal state of affairs in Togoland, the women naturally greatly outnumbered the men; for although in no single one of these perpetual little wars was the death roll on either side considerable, the sum total of fatal casualties soon mounted up, and the adult males were, therefore, always in a minority as compared with the adult females. 201 Consequently, if monogamy were the rule, many Togo girls would have been, in the old days, condemned to a life of celibacy, and a celibate female amongst savages is unthinkable.

But I find I am wandering off the track. Soon I shall find myself writing a Togoland "Golden Bough." Let us return to our sheep—in other words, our films. Most of those taken at Mangu, as I have already stated, were ethnological ones, and many of them created the liveliest interest when they were shown later on in London at special meetings of the various learned societies, such as, for instance, the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Royal Geographical Society. But we also utilised this, our second stay in Mangu, to photograph some of the kind best described as semi-dramatic.

One of these was of very special interest to everybody there, natives as well as whites, because it was an attempt to reproduce for the cinema what will presently become Togo history. The incident chosen was the attack on the old station at Mangu by the Tschokossi, mentioned in a previous chapter, and amongst the hundreds of supers, soldiers as well as natives, who took part in the film production, were many men who had been in the actual fighting. We followed the true course of events as nearly as possible in our mimic representation, the authorities kindly placing at our disposal for the purpose practically the entire Mangu garrison. In the film, as finally completed and screened, two patrols are seen going out, one in the direction of 202 Tamberma Fort. The latter is attacked, overwhelmed, and cut to pieces, only one badly wounded man escaping. The other patrol, going farther afield, scouts up to a big native town, and finds the savages there dancing their tribal war dances, yelling death to the Europeans, and generally working themselves into a frenzy. The patrol returns to the fort to report, and on the way picks up the wounded survivor from the other party, who tells them of the fate that has overtaken his comrades. The officer in charge of the fort sends a letter to the commanding officer at headquarters asking for assistance, but before the relief arrives the natives swarm up and attack the fort. The garrison is hard pressed, and the officer in charge, uncertain as to whether his first letter has got through to headquarters, calls for a volunteer to take a second letter. A native soldier steps forward, and quits the beleaguered fort disguised as a Hausa. By taking careful cover he gets through the lines of the besiegers without being noticed, delivers his letter to the officer commanding, whom he meets on the road, and all ends happily, the final scene showing the assault, followed by the arrival of the relieving force and the dispersal of the assailants. Curiously enough, we had considerable difficulty in getting the natives to act as supers in this

film. They remembered the real fighting, and having a wholesome fear of the soldiers, born of actual experience, they were extremely loath to come to close quarters with them.

On January 27th the Kaiser's birthday was celebrated in Mangu, sports and games being organised for the natives, who took the keenest interest in them. A water race for women caused great excitement. They had to run a certain distance, carrying calabashes of water, the prizes going to those who succeeded in spilling least. A blind-fold pot-smashing competition was also the cause of a lot of fun. In the afternoon Captain von Hirschfeld distributed the prizes to the winners, and I also gave away some pieces of silk, cloth, and beads as supplementary ones. 203

One morning an exceedingly smart-looking Hausa, from the heart of the true Sudan, came into the station with a wild ostrich for sale. It was a very fine bird, the biggest in fact, Schomburgk said, that he had ever seen, and he promptly bought it. The bird had been tightly tied up for some considerable while, and as a result it was all sore and chafed about the legs. Schomburgk therefore set him loose. And the bird showed its gratitude by immediately bolting. The result was that we had to organise a party to recapture him. It was by no means bad fun, however, and besides we were able to film an ostrich hunt on the veldt. Everybody nearly enjoyed it first rate, including, I verily believe, the ostrich. The one exception was our camera man, who soon ran himself out of breath, and was as limp as a wet rag by the time we had finished. Before this little episode he had been very keen on game pictures, but it was noticeable that afterwards he studiously avoided referring to them. However, he made a lovely film of this one, and we were highly pleased, naturally. 204

We were due to leave Mangu for good on February 1st, and the last few days were spent in packing up, sorting out our stores for the downward journey, and disposing of such as we no longer required. A lot of tinned stuff we gave away, and one of the horses that was ill Schomburgk presented to the white non-commissioned officer at the station. Our one hundred loads that we had started with had dwindled by now to about forty.

Suddenly Schomburgk announced a most terrible and alarming discovery. He had run out of cigarettes. A package supposed to contain a reserve supply was found on being opened to be filled with packets of tea, sugar, and other groceries. He flew to the telephone and sent an urgent message to Sokode for a fresh supply, to be despatched by special runner. Meanwhile he growled and grumbled like a bear with a sore head. Nor did matters improve greatly when the cigarettes at length arrived. The Sokode people had run out of the best Egyptians—his usual smoke—which retail out there at sixpence a dozen, so they had sent him a very inferior sort, known locally as "battle-axe brand," and costing about sevenpence for fifty. They have been christened "battle-axes," Schomburgk explained, in between two long strings of swear words, because two of them will knock you on the head and kill you. On the same principle the Western American cowboy dubs the vile spirit sold in the frontier cattle towns "forty-rod whisky." You walk forty rods after drinking a glass of it, then you drop down dead. I cannot, of course, speak as to the whisky; but the cigarettes fully deserved their evil name. Navvy shag was simply "not in it" with them. When Schomburgk started to smoke one, everybody ran away. I am told they are exported to Togo from England for native consumption. All I can say is, I pity the natives. 205

At last the day of parting came. I can hardly find words to express how sorry I felt to leave Mangu and our dear little home. Captain von Hirschfeld, who had shown us such splendid hospitality all through our stay there, rode three miles with us on the return journey. We are not travelling back along the same route we came up by, but are setting a course some distance to the westward of it, so as to break new ground. Our first camp had been fixed at a place called Unyogo, and as the distance was comparatively short, Schomburgk and I did not quit Mangu until three o'clock in the afternoon, having previously sent our carriers on ahead to pitch the tents, and get everything ready. Our boy we took with us on horseback to carry our water-bottles, but he didn't keep up with us, and somehow he managed to tumble off his horse. Naturally, the riderless animal promptly bolted back for its comfortable stable at Mangu, with the boy hot a-foot after it. As a result we had no water to drink during the stage, which was a very hot one, with no shade whatever and clouds of dust. I suffered considerably from thirst. So did Schomburgk, who, however, was able to console himself by smoking "battle-axes" and swearing at intervals, both palliatives denied to me. It was a glad moment for both of us when at length we caught sight of our green tents under the trees outside Unyogo. 206

Hodgson was already there, having gone on ahead on his bicycle. He was greatly excited, and would hardly give us time to get a drink of water, or a cup of tea, before plunging into a narrative of what he somewhat grandiloquently termed his "adventure." It appeared that he had been pedalling silently along on his bicycle, when a covey of grouse flew up almost from under his front wheel, and cannoned into one another in their fright and excitement with so great violence that six of them fell to the ground. Dismounting, he picked up five of the birds quite dead; the sixth was only stunned, and, recovering itself, fluttered off into the bush. The incident was certainly a remarkable one, almost incredible indeed, for grouse are notoriously hard birds to hit. But there they were, all five of them, mute witnesses to the truth of his story. None of them bore any shot, or other wound, to account for their deaths; and besides, Hodgson had no gun with him. We cooked them for supper, and very delicious they were. Afterwards, we sat outside our camp in the moonlight talking and laughing, and in high spirits at the thought of going home—all but Schomburgk, who declared that the trip was far too short a one. 207 "Some day," he remarked, "we will come out here again, film some more pictures, and return home the other way." "Other way?" I inquire dubiously. "Yes," he replied airily, "round by Timbuctu, and north across the Sahara. It will be grand fun, and we shall get some unique pictures." "Yes-s!" I reply feebly. And no more is said. But I think a lot.

That night a woman palaver started right outside my tent. I was awakened at dead of night by the cries of a female in distress—shouting, howling, and sobbing. Jumping up, and throwing on a wrap, I hurried outside, imagining that murder was being done at the very least. The noise was being made by the wife of one of our soldiers, who declared, on being questioned, that her husband had tried to kill her. Schomburgk, whom the noise had also awakened, and who now put in an appearance, promptly sent for the man, and cross-examined first him and then his wife. The true facts of the case were thus elicited. It turned out that the woman, having had a wordy quarrel with her husband—no blows were struck—had announced her intention of forthwith going back to Mangu. Her husband had, quite properly, prevented her from carrying out her intention. Whereupon she had rushed out of their hut, and over to our camp, where she had started howling and yelling, hoping

thereby to get her husband punished. Had Schomburgk been an inexperienced African traveller, unused to the little wiles of native women, she might possibly have succeeded in her design. But he was too old a bird to be caught that way. Instead of punishing the husband, who was obviously not to blame in the matter, he told him to take his wife back to their hut, and if she didn't behave herself, he had his (Schomburgk's) full permission to give her a hiding. I never saw a woman so completely taken aback as this one was when she heard the judgment delivered. Her jaw dropped, her look of hard defiance gave place to one of abject fear, and without a word she followed her lord and master to their joint domicile, where, for the rest of that night at all events, peace reigned once more.

Photo by *Miss M. Gehrts*

A Fine Head of Hair

A half-caste woman having her hair dressed. Girls of this class frequently possess most luxuriant tresses, of which they are inordinately proud.

Photo by *Miss M. Gehrts*

Native Hairdressing

Most tribes pay great attention to dressing the hair. The better-class native girls usually have theirs dressed twice a week, and the operation is a tedious and lengthy one, frequently lasting for two hours, or even longer.

Next morning at 3 A.M. we were off again, and rode the next stage, a short one, to Djereponi. Here there is a rest-house, one of the old square Sudan stations. It is quite an imposing-looking place, and beautifully clean. Two square huts for sleeping in form one side of a hollow square, the other three sides being formed by the huts intended to accommodate the native dependents of European travellers. In the middle is a mess hut for the rainy season. During the dry season in Togoland, of course, as elsewhere in Africa, one eats invariably out-of-doors, usually under a verandah, if there is one, if not, under the awning of one's tent, or beneath a tree. Here there was a very fine broad verandah, and the roof came down very low, giving plenty of shelter and shade, very pleasant. All the buildings, and even the hard beaten clay floors, were coated with fresh native whitewash. This gave the place a beautifully cool and clean appearance, but I found the glare, when the sun beat down upon it, 209
somewhat trying to the eyes. While we were resting here a soldier brought in five chameleons, which he sold to us for three-halfpence each. It was very interesting to watch them change their colour from grey to green, and back again to grey. They have large staring eyes, which they roll about in the most comical manner imaginable; and their slender tongues, when they protrude them to their full extent, are nearly as long as their bodies.

The next stage was to Nambiri, where also there is a very nice rest-house. The road was good, and we cantered or galloped nearly the whole distance. As a result we arrived at our destination a long way in advance of the carriers, who, after the sun rose, were unable to make very rapid progress. There being nothing to eat, I rolled myself in my horse rug, pillowed my head on my saddle, and fell fast asleep; when I awoke, some two hours later, there were still no signs of the carriers, and we were all three very hungry. Schomburgk sent the cook, who had come along with us on a bicycle, to forage round for eggs, and on his returning with a handkerchief full he boiled six of them hard and ate them without any bread or salt. Hodgson and I preferred to wait, saving up our appetites against what we knew was coming. Three hours after our first arrival in camp the first of the carriers came straggling in, looking very hot and exhausted. As luck would have it this advance guard was carrying the chop boxes, and we pounced upon them forthwith. We did not even wait for a wash, or 210
for our chairs and tables, which happened to be behind, but squatted down just as we were on the mud floor, and enjoyed our tinned stuff better than a meal at the Savoy. First we devoured three whole tins of sardines, then we ate an entire *pâté de foie gras*, followed by a miscellaneous assortment of cheese, crackers, and candied fruit. Schomburgk rather looked with disfavour on these extravagant delicacies, having been used to more frugal bush diet on his previous trips. But I considered that now we were homeward bound we could afford to use up our reserve of luxuries.

And, speaking of luxuries, it was here that our personal boys had the feed of their lives. It came about in this way. At different places along the road I had bought a number of chickens, mainly on the strength of the assertions of the sellers regarding their unrivalled powers as layers, and these we carried with us in a big native coop, releasing them at the end of each stage in order that they might give free play to their supposed egg-laying proclivities. I write "supposed" advisedly, for with the exception of one little bird, who did her duty regularly by laying one egg at practically every place we stayed at, hardly one single egg did the others produce between the lot of them. Until we got to Nambiri! Then they laid no fewer than five. This was all right—if they hadn't chosen to lay them in my bed. Moreover, I did not discover the whereabouts of the eggs until I went to lay down at night, and then only through making an improvised omelette of them. Being new laid, fortunately, 211
there was naturally no smell, but the mess was awful. I would not have believed that five small eggs—and African hens' eggs are exceedingly small—could have made one's bed in such a state, to say nothing of one's night attire. Next morning I gave away all my chickens—bar the regular-laying one—to our boys, who ate them that night for supper. I also told Schomburgk about my mishap, expecting him to condole with me. Instead he laughed himself nearly into a fit; and when he had somewhat recovered, he started telling me about a fox-terrier bitch he once owned, and who had deposited six "new-laid puppies" in his bed. "And when I started to get in between the sheets," he began; but I stopped my ears and ran away, refusing to hear any more. Men are so unsympathetic.

We are now in the heart of the Konkombwa country, and Schomburgk decided to stay over here for a couple of days in order to film these most interesting savages. Everywhere around us the country is most densely populated, little villages peeping through the trees wherever one turns one's gaze, and we expected that we should have no difficulty, therefore, in inducing sufficient numbers of natives to attend. But in the beginning there was a hitch. Schomburgk had sent round word for them to come up to the camp in the afternoon for a dance, and they duly turned up, but undecorated. This, of course, was not at all what we wanted, and 212
Schomburgk asked them why they had left off their head-dresses and other ornaments. They replied that it was because they were afraid that the white men would take them from them; but on receiving his personal assurance that nothing would be taken from them by force, but only on fair payment, and even then not unless they were perfectly willing to sell, they agreed to come the next day dressed in their best.

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CHAPTER XV

NAMBIRI TO TSCHOPOWA

The chief of Nambiri turned out to be a charming little old man; one of Nature's gentlemen. He wore a long grey beard, and not much else beside, but his manners were courtly and kindly, and he bore himself with a certain savage stateliness, tempered by a deference that had in it no trace of cringing or servility. Since parting with the old Uro of Bafilo, I have met no African potentate who has impressed me so favourably. Unlike so many village chiefs, he was not unduly intrusive. He waited until we had had a bath and a sleep, then came with his "presents." They were more than abundant, including, besides the usual chickens, eggs, &c., a young calf. Schomburgk at first refused to accept this, knowing that the return "present" expected would be of considerable value; but the old man begged so hard, saying that the first white woman to honour his town with a visit must be properly feasted, that at last he consented. We gave him in return a piece of silk cloth, and a number of brass and copper rods, with which he seemed to be highly delighted, and all the rest of the day he kept pottering round, trying in every way that lay in his power to make things comfortable for us.

That night the soldiers killed the calf, and I distributed the meat to our boys, keeping the best portions for ourselves. These I ordered to be roasted at once, a precaution only too necessary with meat in this climate, as otherwise it will go bad in a surprisingly short time. The boys are greatly delighted when this happens, because the native has no qualms whatever about eating tainted meat. They always pretend to be very sorry when they come up to me with the news, "Missy, um meat gone smell—um quite bad"; but it is easy to see by the irrepressible glitter in their eyes that they are secretly delighted. Consequently, they were rather crestfallen when I ordered that our share of the meal should all be roasted there and then. They considered that a good meat meal had, from their point of view, been practically stolen from them.

Photo by *Miss M. Gehrts*

YOUNG KONKOMBWA WARRIOR

Note the helmet-like shape of the hairdressing; the dependent horsehair switch, a highly-prized ornament; the iron bell-rattle carried in the hand; the bow, and sheaf of arrows all poisoned. The bead necklace supports a whistle by means of which the natives can signal messages from village to village, and even call one another by name, using a sort of Morse telegraphic code invented by themselves.

The Konkombwa villages round about here are the prettiest and neatest I have seen in Togo. They are quite small, consisting mostly of from five to ten huts, and each little community seems to be more or less self-

contained. The social system under which they live, in fact, may be best described as a blend of the communal and the patriarchal. It is very astonishing that these splendid savages, so warlike by training and instinct, and of so fine and stalwart an appearance, should have been, for as far back as their history or traditions extend, under the domination of the neighbouring Dagomba tribe. The only explanation I can think of is that the Dagomba have guns, and probably became possessed of them, moreover, and learnt their use, at a very early 215
date, whereas the Konkombwa are still in the bow-and-arrow stage of martial evolution. The Konkombwa women are by no means ill-looking; but they are short and squat, and their good appearance is considerably detracted from owing to their custom of cropping their hair quite close, the cuttings being used, I was told, by the young warriors to make up their own elaborate head-dresses. I wonder what a European girl would say, if she were required to sacrifice her tresses for the benefit of her brothers, her sweetheart, or her husband. I rather think she would indignantly refuse; but these dusky belles take it quite as a matter of course. It is the custom of the country, and here, as elsewhere, it appears to be a more or less settled conviction that whatever is, is right. As regards their behaviour, the Konkombwa women compare very favourably with any in Togoland. Not only are their manners modest and gentle, but they have a reputation for chastity—a rare virtue amongst African natives—which inquiry led me to believe is not undeserved. They all—barring the very young unmarried girls—wear a loin cloth, mostly of some white material, and which they take a pride in keeping exquisitely clean, and this, and the custom they have of wearing pretty little white "pearl" anklets, and similar, but broader, belts of "pearls" round their wrists, necks, and waists, gives them quite a picturesque and pleasing appearance.

My first favourable impression of these charming people, however, was destined to receive rather a set-back 216
during the course of the evening, although the incident that gave rise to it was an isolated one, and probably of quite infrequent occurrence; and in any case, of course, one has no right to generalise from a particular instance—a fault which, by the way, is far too common. We were sitting outside our hut in the cool of the evening, chatting together of home and future prospects; Hodgson, who plays the mandoline rather nicely, was strumming some old-time melody; the moon was shining as it only can shine in the tropics; and all nature seemed at peace; when there rose from the village near by a most terrific din. Women were screaming, men shouting, and children crying. Naturally we all jumped up, and ran over to see what was the matter. It proved to be a domestic row, and a pretty serious one at that. A huge native, apparently mad drunk, was beating his wife with a big, heavy stick, almost a club in fact, while a score or more of others stood round yelling to him to desist, but not caring apparently to take any active steps to compel him to do so. When we arrived upon the scene, the poor woman was lying huddled up on the ground, covered with blood, feebly moaning, and evidently too weak to even attempt to ward off the blows which her better half was still raining down upon her defenceless head. Schomburgk promptly bowled the brute over with a left-hander straight in the face. Then, having got possession of his big stick, he gave him a taste—several tastes, in fact—of his own medicine until he 217
howled for mercy. Meanwhile I had run back to our camp for lint and bandages, and proceeded to bind up the injured woman's hurts. I never in all my life saw such a sight as the poor woman presented. He had beaten her almost to a jelly, so that her features were well-nigh indistinguishable, and on the scalp were six or seven deep wounds, extending to the bone. Her body was simply drenched—I can use no other term—in blood. To my inexperienced eyes it seemed well-nigh impossible that she could ever recover; yet such are the recuperative powers possessed by these people, that when I inquired about her not long afterwards I was informed that she was going about her household duties as usual, her head swathed in bandages, and her face all puffed up and swollen, but otherwise seemingly little the worse for the terrible punishment she had undergone. I tried to get her to tell me, before quitting Nambiri, what was the origin of the affair, but beyond saying that it was "all her own fault," I could get no explanation from her. The other women were not so reticent, however, and from what they let drop I gathered that her husband had caught her philandering with a young buck belonging to a neighbouring village. So there you are! Conjugal chastity, or the insistence upon it, has as its necessary corollary conjugal jealousy, in Konkombwaland as elsewhere.

Next day the dancers turned up. There were about two hundred of them, picked young warriors from every 218
village within a big radius round about Nambiri; and very smart they looked, with their ebony skins set off by rows on rows of brass and copper anklets and wristlets, their quivers of poisoned arrows; and their cowrie-shell helmets, with long strings of similar shells dangling before and behind, and surmounted either by the small graceful puku horns, or occasionally by the yard-long horns of the roan antelope, worn in pairs. I had never beheld, or even conceived of, a more magnificent yet barbaric sight. Nearly every warrior carried a curious bell-like rattle, made of native iron, with which they kept up a continuous ding-dong "duotonous" tintinnabulation, each note separated by an octave, and continually repeated over and over again.

We took great pains over this film, for these Konkombwa people are exceedingly interesting from an ethnological point of view; they have hardly ever before been visited by private travellers, and most certainly have never before been photographed by a cinema camera. In the pictures we took, the tribesmen, fully arrayed in all their finery, are first seen in the act of parading for one of their big ceremonial dances. Then comes the salute, followed by the actual dance itself. The young braves rush into the circle, and perform various evolutions, the whole being instinct with life and movement. The only hitch in our arrangements, but that a sufficiently annoying one, was due to the Konkombwa women, who insisted on dancing in between with their 219
children, thereby, of course, spoiling the film, and necessitating its being done all over again. After the dances were over, a number of warriors were photographed separately, and close up to the camera; and in order to get good studies of facial expression, we told them to talk into the machine, saying that it would take down whatever message they gave it, and that it would afterwards be heard in Europe. The result of this little manœuvre fully came up to our expectations, each warrior as he advanced close up to the camera delivering his message to it with much energy and many gesticulations. Afterwards, I asked our interpreter what it was they had been saying. His reply was that most of the messages were of such a character that they would not bear being repeated!

After it was all over we distributed tobacco and kola nuts amongst the dancers, both of which were much appreciated, especially the nuts, which are esteemed a great delicacy by the natives, and are highly valued besides on account of their stimulating effects, and the curious property they possess of enabling a person to go without food or other refreshment for a considerable interval. These kola nuts are brought into the interior from

the coast belt by the Hausa traders. They have to be carried very carefully, and must also be kept constantly damp. Their value is from a halfpenny apiece upwards, being dearer the farther north one goes. Two or three kola nuts are usually—provided he can afford them—carried by a native when he goes out hunting, or is called upon to perform any other feat of physical endurance, and one nut will enable him easily to do without food or water for at least a day. Some of the older natives, who are also well to do, and the chiefs and mallams are very partial to the nuts, chewing them all day long, much as the American girls chew gum. The result is a staining of the inside of the mouth, lips, and teeth, a dirty reddish-brown, very repulsive to look upon. I once tasted a kola nut, but found it exceedingly bitter and unpalatable. 220

Very early on the morning after the dance we struck camp, and started on our next stage to a place called Tschopowa. We only wanted fifty carriers, but over two hundred turned up. Schomburgk naturally objected, but the old chief explained that we need only pay on the basis of the number of loads carried; the extra carriers were going on their own initiative, and for the fun of the thing. They regarded it, in fact, in the light of a pleasure excursion, and as they all helped with the loads, which were constantly being changed voluntarily from one to the other, we got over the ground in fine style, and at a great rate. At almost every village we passed going along, too, other natives joined in, singing, shouting, and capering, so that our caravan assumed in the end a most imposing, yet barbaric appearance. As I felt somewhat indisposed, I travelled all the way by hammock, and my boys swung me along in great spirits at a five-mile-an-hour gait. 221

The curiosity aroused by my advent in the villages along this usually little frequented route was very great; more so, in fact, than anywhere else in Togo. Everywhere crowds of natives lined the roads to see me pass, the women "ul-ul-ulling" a wild welcome, the men capering and singing. While at the more important places, regular demonstrations of welcome were organised, as though for royalty itself. Thus, at Tschopowa, at a distance of fully three miles from the village, there awaited us a great crowd of natives, all dressed in their best. Schomburgk happened to be riding some little distance ahead at the time, and when he appeared they seemed quite disappointed, and inquired as to the whereabouts of the "White Queen" of whom they had heard so much. He pointed over his shoulder as he cantered past, intimating that "Her Majesty" would be along presently, and the reception I got when I did ride up to where they were awaiting me was almost overpowering. At most of the other larger villages it was much the same. The road used to be lined three and four deep by hundreds on hundreds of Konkombwa men, women, and children, all in gala attire, and I had to tell my boys to throw up the curtains of the hammock, so that I could sit up and smile my acknowledgments right and left, just as royalty does when it appears on a festive occasion in the streets of, say, London or Berlin. It quite made me blush for myself—and I am not ordinarily over-shy—remembering how insignificant a personage I really was. Our operator, however, was troubled by no such scruples; but getting his camera in position, he usually managed to secure any number of good pictures of the curious, unusual scenes. At Tschopowa the whole affair culminated in a big dance, given in my honour. 222

It was at this dance that I made an interesting, and profitable discovery. Surmounting the headdress of one of the male dancers, I noticed a bunch of black, draggled looking objects, that closer inspection showed me to be feathers. They were, however, altogether different from any other feathers I had seen the natives wearing elsewhere, and a sudden, quick, glad suspicion flashed into my mind. I darted up to the native, and greatly to his surprise snatched the plume from his headdress. One glance sufficed. "Marabou!" I shouted to Schomburgk. "Marabou feathers at last!" Would the native sell? Of course he would, and glad to. A brass rod changed hands. So, too, did the feathers.

To heat some water was the work of a few minutes. Then I rinsed the bedraggled objects in soapsuds, dried them by waving them to and fro, and a little later they emerged the most beautiful objects conceivable, soft fleecy things of snowy whiteness and exquisite purity. Yes, there could be no doubt about it; they were marabou feathers, of perfect texture, and large size. I wear them in my hat now occasionally in London and elsewhere, to the envy and admiration of my women friends; those, at least, who are not members of the Wild Birds' Protection Association. 223

The feathers had been left hanging up in the smoky atmosphere of the native's hut, which accounted for their black and draggled appearance. But they had suffered no permanent deterioration, and after I had washed them, they were, as I have already intimated, as good as ever. That afternoon, without saying anything to Schomburgk, who had gone out shooting, I sent for the native from whom I had bought my treasures, and told him to let it be known in the village that I would give a brass rod for every similar feather brought in. Soon the camp was alive with Konkombwa bringing marabou plumes for sale. As fast as I secured them, I rinsed them out in a big bath of soapsuds, and set the boys to work drying them. When Schomburgk returned presently he was amazed to see rows on rows of ebon-black natives engaged in gravely waving to and fro a small forest of snow-white feathers. Even his personal boy had been impressed for service, and he was inclined to grumble a little thereat in consequence. But he quickly relented, when he realised the nature of the bargain I had made. We had, at the time, a considerable store of the rods left, which we wanted to get rid of. They were worth to us about sixpence apiece, while marabou feathers are scarcely to be had for money in Europe.

The rest-house at Tschopowa is of the old square Sudan pattern, like an East African "tembe." It is beautifully situated on a little rise, whence a fine view is obtainable for miles all around. This is in the dry season, after the crops have been harvested. In the rainy season, however, when the guinea corn stands some 15 or 20 feet high, and the country is mostly under water, it cannot be at all a desirable place to stay at. Near the rest-house was one of the biggest and finest baobab trees I saw in Togo. The trunk was, I suppose, fully 60 feet in circumference, and it was certainly many hundreds, and probably some thousands, of years old. The wood of the baobab tree is of no use commercially, being so spongy that a ·303 bullet will go clean through even the biggest of them; but the bark, which is fibrous, is sometimes stripped off by the natives, and used for making ropes, and a coarse kind of cloth. The leaves are dried, and made into a powder called "lalo," which is used by West Africans as a condiment. Only the female baobab tree bears the fruit, which is the size of a small football. Inside are a lot of kernels, enclosed in an acid pulp. This is said to be a fine cure for blackwater fever, and it makes a most refreshing drink, prepared with sugar, like lemonade. 224

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A Huge Communal Corn-Bin

Bins built after this fashion are peculiar to the Konkombwa people. The one shown in the illustration was photographed at a place called Tschopowa. It has a movable top, is as big as a good-sized hut, and when full will hold several tons of corn.

Here we had a bow-and-arrow competition, the natives shooting at marks for prizes, which caused a lot of interest and excitement. One warrior greatly amused us by putting in an appearance in a sort of George Robey hat, stuck full of feathers. No doubt he considered it the very latest thing in head-dresses. We stayed at Tschopowa two days, while Schomburgk and Hodgson went out to the Oti and filmed some pictures of 225
hippopotami. We also secured pictures of some enormous corn-bins of curious construction. They are round, as big as a good-sized house, and stand on three legs, with a covered-in top. When full some of them will hold several tons of corn. These bins, built after this fashion, are peculiar to the Konkombwa people.

In the evening we discovered that the baobab tree mentioned above was full of bats; thousands on thousands of them. Our horse boys from Sokode killed some scores of them with sticks, spitted them on small skewers, and roasted them, esteeming them apparently as a great delicacy. They brought me some on a stick, and laughed when I turned away shuddering. I am a great favourite, by the way, with our boys. When they transgress in any way, and Schomburgk, sitting in judgment, condemns them to be fined or otherwise punished, they always come and ask me to intercede with him for them. This I invariably do—unless it is a very flagrant case—and Schomburgk, glad of an excuse to let them off, will then remit the punishment, saying carelessly: "Oh, all right if Puss says so"; or, "Now mind and don't let it happen again, and remember you've got Puss to thank for this."

It was here that I saw one of the most beautiful white cocks I ever set eyes on, riding on a donkey-load of stuff belonging to a Hausa trader. I had seen similar cocks before in Mangu, and elsewhere, but never so fine a 226
one as this. These birds are carried all over Togoland by these peripatetic pedlars, in order that they may arouse their owners in good time in the morning by their crowing. They are, in fact, living alarum clocks, a lusty, loud crower being greatly valued.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE WOMEN MINERS OF BANJELI

From Nambiri as far as Kugnau, our next stage, there is no road, nor practically any trail; only an immense variety of native tracks, leading anywhere and everywhere. The country is so thickly populated, that to pick out the right route is very difficult, and well-nigh impossible without a guide. I went on ahead, with the guide, from Tschopowa; and Schomburgk, who was to follow on later, instructed him to "close the road." This means that whenever the guide came to a cross trail, or a fork in the road, he was to place a piece of stick across the wrong one, thereby "closing" it to the next traveller who came along, assuming him to be bound in our direction. This, however, the guide neglected to do in several instances, and as a result Schomburgk wandered off the right track and got lost.

We crossed the Oti twice during this stage. The first crossing was a somewhat difficult one. Not only were the banks covered in dense jungle, but the path dipped down a very steep angle for about fifty feet in sheer depth. I had to slide down assisted by my hammock boys, and we had to exercise considerable care in order to get the horses down, and safely across. I had a magnificent view of the river, which is here about three hundred 228
yards wide from bank to bank, but it being now towards the end of the dry season, the actual stream was greatly shrunken, revealing the presence of many islands, both up and down. These islands were covered with thick tropical vegetation, the haunt of innumerable birds. In the rainy season, all but a few of the higher and larger islands will have disappeared beneath the risen waters, which then fill the whole channel from bank to bank, and bank high.

The second crossing of the Oti was even more picturesque than the first. It is here much broader, the banks are lower, and there are many villages scattered about, from all of which came detachments of natives to swell the welcome given to the first white woman. In the end there must have been fully a thousand of them round my hammock, in front and behind, shouting, dancing, and singing. The din was terrific, the heat and dust awful. I felt I would have given almost anything if they would only go away, and leave me in peace; and yet it was, of course, impossible to get angry with them, or even be anything but polite to them, their good intentions were so obvious. Some time after our arrival Schomburgk turned up, hot, tired, and cross, and rated the guide soundly for not having closed the road. He had, it appeared, gone completely astray, and had been wandering about all over the place.

There is no rest-house at Kugnau, so we had to use our tents. But there was no shade, the trees just about 229
here being merely dwarf ones, and the daytime heat rendered sleep out of the question. Then at night came hordes of ferocious mosquitoes, some of which got under my mosquito-net, and well I knew it. It was the duty of Asmani, Schomburgk's personal boy, to attend to my bed. He was quite a youngster, a long lanky slab of a boy, with arms on him like a chimpanzee's; but he was so willing and good-tempered, that he was a great favourite with all of us. He could not be made to understand, however, the importance of tucking my mosquito-curtain in all round under the mattress, so as to prevent the ingress of the bloodthirsty little pests. I got so tired of talking to him about it, and so weary of sleepless nights, that at last I used to send him regularly to report himself to Schomburgk whenever I was bitten by mosquitoes. It was very comical to see him go up to make this report in the morning, his usually jolly, round face, long and woebegone. "Master," he would say, "two" (or three or four, &c., as the case might be) "mosquitoes in the 'little mother's' bed last night." "Ah!" Schomburgk would remark, with becoming gravity. "Then you must be punished." And he would give him two, three, or four light slaps on the face, one for each mosquito. They were just such smacks as one gives in play to a child, and of course did not hurt him physically in the least, but they hurt his dignity, for Asmani, in virtue of being Schomburgk's personal servant, was "head boy" of the caravan, and the other boys, whom he regarded as being more or less 230
under him, used to take a solid delight in crowding round and sniggering their approval whenever he rolled up for his "mosquito slaps."

I have said that Asmani was a willing boy. In fact, he was too willing. When one gave him an order, his eagerness to obey led him to rush off at top speed before he half understood what was required of him. The results, very often, were ludicrous in the extreme; and occasionally not a little annoying. Asmani got to be known, very early in the trip, as the "cockroach," on account of his erratic, rapid movements; and towards the end of our journey, whenever he was making ready to bolt eagerly off before he had properly comprehended our meaning, it only became necessary to cry out to him, while lifting a warning forefinger, "Whoa, Asmani; don't cockroach!" in order to arrest him. He was one of that type of servant—now, I am afraid, rare in effete Europe—who regards his employer's interests as his own. Consequently, he was not a great favourite with the other boys; who held, for the most part, views widely divergent from these. To Messa, our cook, more especially, he was the very reverse of a *persona grata*, for when Messa would come to tell me, say, that the tea was all gone, or that he required more sugar from store, Asmani, if he happened to be anywhere near, would be sure to give vent to an incredulous, long-drawn "Oh-h-h!" Whereupon Messa would glare at him, and presently there would ensue a rare hullabaloo from behind the cook-house; Asmani and Messa "having it out." 231

It was while we were resting here that an incident occurred which showed how easily an inexperienced European may be led astray in his dealings with the natives, and so cause trouble without being at all aware of it. It had reference to the Konkombwa cowrie-shell helmets, of which mention has already been made. These beautiful and unique objects always attract the immediate attention and admiration of European travellers, who naturally try to acquire one or more to take away with them. But the Konkombwa value them highly, and are usually, and for the most part, very unwilling to sell them, even though tempted by what is, for them, a very good price, either in coined money, or in brass or copper rods, which they greatly prefer.

I have heard it hinted that, in the old days, Europeans were not too careful of the rights of the natives in regard to their acquisition of these curios. Now, however, strict orders have been issued by the Duke of Mecklenburg that the Konkombwa are not to be unduly pressed to part with their helmets or other trappings.

They may be bought. But the sale must be a genuine one, a fair price must be paid, and above all, Europeans are warned to make certain, before purchasing, that the Konkombwa are willing to sell, and that no secret intimidation has been used to compel them to do so by the interpreters, soldiers, &c., attached to the caravan.

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THE "ROMAN FORT" AT IBUBU

This building, spite of its ancient-sounding name, is of quite modern construction. It was originally erected with a view to overawing the Konkombwa savages. Its interior is occupied by a multitude of neatly-built huts belonging to the garrison.

Now Schomburgk had already secured one of the helmets at Gerin-Kuka, but he was open to purchase others, and sent one of the soldiers of our escort into the village to say so. The man was strictly enjoined, however, to use no compulsion. If the Konkombwa wished to do business, well and good, but not otherwise. His part, in short, was simply to act as a go-between, to introduce a willing seller to a willing buyer. Well, the soldier went off on his errand, to return presently with several natives marching at his heels, carrying helmets, quivers, &c., about a dozen in all. "Are these for sale?" asked Schomburgk. "Yes, all the lot," replied the soldier. Schomburgk thought this suspicious, knowing how loath the Konkombwa are to part with these things, so he sent the soldier away, out of sight and hearing, while he cross-examined the natives. As a result it turned out that only one man wanted to sell a helmet, and two others bows and quivers, and a horse-hair switch. The others had been told that they had got to bring the things up to our camp for sale, and that if they did not do so they would be punished. Of course the unwilling ones were at once sent back to their village with their helmets, &c., while the soldier was given a severe lecture. In this connection Schomburgk told me of the following amusing incident. During his last trip in the Konkombwa country, he was travelling with the Duke of Mecklenburg. One man of the party, a newcomer in the district, bought two helmets, and showed them, with evident pride, to some members of the party. Said the Duke, using his usual formula in such circumstances: "I 233
suppose I may take it for granted that there was no intimidation." "Oh dear no," was the reply, "I just sent a soldier to the village to tell the Konkombwa I wanted a couple of their helmets, and he brought 'em to me." A roar of laughter greeted this naive admission, and even his Highness was unable to repress a smile.

At 5.30 A.M. the following morning (February 8th) we resumed our journey, and soon afterwards we crossed the Oti once more, and for the last time. Schomburgk seized the opportunity to go off with Hodgson and the camera to try and get some hippo pictures, but only two of the creatures were visible, so he did not trouble. Afterwards he caught up to me, just as my hammock broke down, letting me to the ground with a bump. While it was being repaired, we consumed an alfresco breakfast by the side of the road; very enjoyable. An hour or so later we arrived at Ibubu; the end of the stage.

There is a spacious old rest-house here, but to our surprise we found it very much dilapidated; almost in ruins, in fact. This is a very unusual thing as regards the Togo rest-houses, the only explanation I can think of being that this particular route is very infrequently used by white people. Ibubu is the site of an old fort, called by Europeans in Togo the "Roman Fort." I had heard it mentioned so often, that I expected to see a quite imposing-looking building, and was greatly disappointed at beholding nothing more startling or romantic than a 234
big mud wall, surrounding a huge conglomeration of native huts, set closer together than any I had ever observed previously. No doubt, however, it was once a place of considerable strength. It was built, I was told, by Dr. Kersting, to overawe the Konkombwa in the old days, when these savages, not having then sufficiently measured their strength with that of the white men, were inclined to be aggressive and troublesome. It is noticeable that the Konkombwa on this side of the Oti are much wilder and more truculent than are those on the other side, and still give the Government trouble from time to time, although there has been no actual fighting for the last few years.

We are now in the Sokode district, and the supplies of food are ridiculously small by comparison with what they were in the Mangu district. We put up the flap of our tent under a big tree, the upper branches of which were full of what I at first took to be some kind of fruit, but which turned out afterwards to be a large species of bat, a kind of flying-fox. We bought another ostrich here. He was a most comical sight, having been plucked before being offered to us for sale. I laughed till I cried, at the sight of him. He looked exactly like a gigantic replica of one of those wooden egg-shaped toy birds that are sold in the shops, with two sticks for legs. However, he turned out to be a very fine, and unusually big, bird. So, too, did the other one, that we bought in Mangu. Both ostriches are now in the Hamburg "Zoo," to which they were presented by Major Schomburgk, and 235
the director wrote, after our arrival in London, that everybody was amazed at their enormous size, and that it

was quite conceivable—although this is not yet scientifically proved—that they are a new species of giant ostrich. "In any case," he wrote, "they are quite out of the common."

The Ibubu people are very sullen; not a bit like those on the other side of the Oti. The women, as well as the men, eyed us askance; and the children edged away from us, and remained silent, when spoken to. This I took to be a bad sign, for these people are not "savages," in the sense that the far northern tribes are, and that they declined to make friends was, therefore, clearly due to the influence of their elders. Both Schomburgk and I—I flatter myself that I am getting quite experienced in the ways of natives by now—had a sort of feeling, a presentiment if you like, that all was not well; and so it turned out.

In the morning only twelve carriers turned up, whereas we wanted at least fifty, and the interpreter reported that the chief either could not, or would not, supply any more. Here was a pretty go. It is difficult for an outsider to realise how completely a caravan in the African hinterland is dependent on man transport. If we could not secure a sufficiency of carriers, it meant either one of two things, abandoning the bulk of our belongings—an unthinkable alternative—or doing "relay work" backwards and forwards between Ibubu and Banjeli, the next 236
stage, the latter as heartbreaking and tedious an operation as can well be conceived. Then, too, there was this further cause for anxiety; an official who was acting for the Commissioner at Sokode—who happened to be on leave at the time—had had bother with the natives at this very village, and serious trouble was only narrowly averted.

Schomburgk acted at once, and in a manner which—I hope he will pardon me for saying so—struck me at the time as being somewhat high-handed, although I have no doubt now, from what subsequently transpired, that it was the only way. He sent a peremptory demand for the chief to attend before him at once. Soon he appeared, escorted by our two soldiers. He was very cheeky, not to say overbearing. In effect he said that the twelve carriers he had sent were all that were at present available, and he "couldn't make carriers out of mealie cobs, could he?" However, after talking to him for five minutes or so in terms the reverse of polite, Schomburgk got a promise from him to let us have ten more.

The chief was a tall, big man, and Schomburgk is of quite medium size; consequently he had to bend his neck backwards at an angle, and look up at the huge Konkombwa towering above him like a rock, in order to address him. This, I think, made him even angrier than he otherwise would have been. A short man carrying on an altercation with a tall man is always at a disadvantage, be the taller black or white. Schomburgk called him 237
everything but a gentleman, "long slab of misery," being among the mildest term of abuse he applied to him, and when the interpreter interpreted the chief at first looked puzzled, then bowed and seemed quite pleased. Schomburgk couldn't make this out. He thought the chief was, speaking vulgarly, "trying to take a rise out of him," and it made him wilder than ever. Not until long afterwards did it transpire that the interpreter, fearing for his own skin, had interpreted all his abusive terms into eulogistic ones, "long slab of misery" becoming "tall and strong chief," and so on.

Well, the promised ten carriers turned up, making twenty-two in all, and Schomburgk sent me on with these, and one of the soldiers, he remaining behind with the interpreter and another soldier. After leaving Kugnau, the scenery changes. We are now quitting the Togoland Sudan, and going back to the more thickly-wooded part of the country. The scenery is magnificent. In the blue haze of the early morning one can see the purple mountains outstanding round Banjeli, whither we are now bound, and beyond, as far as Bassari, ridge upon ridge. Presently Hodgson passed me on his bicycle, and I was surprised at seeing him, as I supposed him to be staying behind helping Schomburgk. The latter told me afterwards that Hodgson had gone off, leaving him to deal with the bother alone, and he was very angry with him about it. In fact, he hardly spoke to him again all that day.

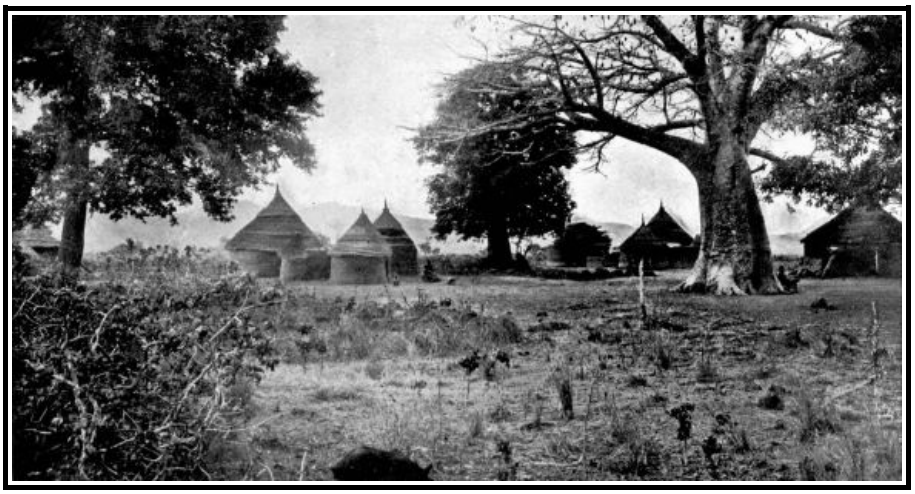
Presently we begin to go uphill by a tortuous rocky path, and after a while we came in sight of the village of 238
Banjeli, beautifully situated on the crest of a long rise, and backed by an imposing array of lofty, wooded mountains. I had heard a lot about this place, partly because it was the farthest point north that Schomburgk had got on his previous trip, and also on account of its being the principal seat of the famous iron industry, which affords occupation to large numbers of natives throughout this district. Already, on our way up, we had passed several of the curiously shaped furnaces, concerning which I shall have more to say later on. The rest-house here is in the form of a square of pretty round huts, from the windows of which one has at this season of the year a lovely view of the mountains, their slopes lightly shrouded in the haze of the harmattan, which, however, lies thick as a woollen blanket in the valleys between.

Hardly had I got settled in the rest-house, when Schomburgk turned up with a few carriers and some more loads, but not all. He told me that he had had a lot of bother with the Kugnau people. First he had gone to the village and collected a few women, telling the chief that as his men would not carry, the women must. They did not seem to mind greatly, and he promised them good pay, and put each woman by a load, arranging everything beautifully, as he thought. Then he turned for a moment to speak to the interpreter, and when he looked again, about half of them had vanished. "I could not believe my eyes," he said, "and had to rub them to make sure I 239
was not dreaming. I never saw any manœuvre executed so swiftly and silently in my life. One moment they were there, the next they were not. Talk about the disappearing trick! Why those women could give points to Maskelyne and Devant."

At last, it transpired, he succeeded in collecting a few more carriers, but still not enough for the loads. He had come on with these, leaving the interpreter and the soldier behind to get other carriers as best they could, and bring along the rest of the baggage. He also placed the chief under arrest, and told the soldier to bring him along with him, intending to hand him over to the authorities at Bassari, which station has jurisdiction over all this part of the Konkombwa country.

The last batch of carriers, with the rest of the loads, shepherded by the interpreter, turned up sooner than we had ventured to expect. With them was the soldier, in charge of the chief. The latter looked very crestfallen. All his cheeky, overbearing manner had gone, and he seemed to wish he had behaved himself properly in the beginning. Amongst the last arrived lot of carriers we found, to our surprise, ten women. This seemed to show that the chief really could not prevail upon the men of the village to carry, and made Schomburgk even more determined than ever to take him on to Bassari and have the whole matter threshed out there, since a chief who

cannot impose his authority on his people, when called upon to do so, is worse than useless from the Government's point of view. Schomburgk also announced that only those carriers who had come voluntarily in the morning would be paid for their work, the others would get nothing. He expected them to be disappointed and crestfallen on hearing this decision, but greatly to his disgust they did not seem to care in the least, laughing and joking amongst themselves about it, women as well as men, as though being docked of their wages was the greatest fun imaginable. Whether they really did not care, or whether they acted as they did in order to show their independence, I am unable to say. It is practically impossible to fathom the workings of the native mind in regard to a case like this. 240



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BANJELI, THE CENTRE OF THE NATIVE IRON INDUSTRY

The smelting of iron by these primitive peoples is entirely of native origin, and is, therefore, of considerable interest. The work is done under conditions approximating fairly closely to those prevalent in civilized countries, but the furnaces, etc., are, of course, of much ruder construction.

After we had been here a short while, a little native boy came into our camp bringing me as a present a very pretty little green and gold beetle. We gave him a pfenning (eight pfennings go to the penny) for it, and seeing I was pleased with it, Schomburgk said he would purchase at the same rate as many other similar beetles as he or the other children cared to bring in. It proved to be a rash promise. The wonderful news must have spread like wildfire amongst the village urchins, who must, moreover, have immediately set to work with feverish energy to secure a goodly store of beetles, for soon the camp was alive with grubby little boys and girls, some carrying no more than a single beetle, or two or three, others with both dirty little paws filled with the pretty delicate insects. It was one of the most comical sights I ever saw. There was Schomburgk dishing out pfennings 241 in exchange for beetles, and the more pfennings he distributed the more children came rolling up with their beetles. They pressed and clamoured round him like English children round a street hawker of toy paper windmills, so that eventually he had to take refuge on a chair in order to escape being mobbed by them, while I set to work to marshal them into a queue, which, as regards both its extent and the happy eagerness of its component parts, reminded me of that which assembles outside the Gaiety on the first night of the production of a new musical comedy.

Whilst we were resting that afternoon, our mail arrived from Bassari. It had come by post-runner to Bassari, whence it had been forwarded by special messenger to Banjeli. At once everybody was on the alert to secure his or her letters, and once secured we retired to a quiet corner to read them. We got two mails together—a month's letters and papers—on this occasion, so that we had plenty of reading matter to occupy ourselves with. Afterwards we came together again to compare notes, and tell each other tit-bits of personal news, talking and chatting until dinner-time, and afterwards far into the night. Amongst a bundle of papers sent out by my sister was a copy of the *Elegante Welt*, Germany's leading fashion paper, and, womanlike, I was immensely interested in seeing, out here in the wilds, what was being worn at home by the "smart set" in Berlin, London, and the 242 other European capitals.

So utterly sick and tired of fowls had a lengthy sojourn in the African wilds made me, that at Banjeli I decided to have for once a dinner of roast pork, and sent Messa into the village with strict injunctions to bring back a pig, no matter what the cost. He succeeded almost too well, returning in about half an hour at the head of a procession of natives, leading, driving, and carrying pigs of all sorts and sizes. In only one respect were they alike. They were the ugliest-looking lot of porkers I ever set eyes on; all black as to colour, and with long bristly hair, not at all like the rosy-snouted little piglets one sees in the German villages. However, I reflected that I was not buying a pig to look at, but to eat, so I picked out one I considered to be the best and fattest of the lot, paying for him what seemed to me the ridiculously small sum of four shillings. Then, spurred on by my success in the pig-killing line at Mangu, I superintended the similar necessary operations here, only to find, however, when my porcine purchase came to be cut up and dressed, that he was about as scraggy, scrawny, lean, and generally unprofitable a specimen of his species as one could possibly conceive of. What he had been fed on, Heaven only knows. Sawdust and wood shavings, I should imagine, from the taste of him. And this, I hasten to add, was not the fault of the cooking, for from almost the beginning of the trip I have made the 243 kitchen and its conduct my own special care.

Taught in the first instance by that old Togoland campaigner, Captain von Hirschfeld, I have, too, succeeded in perfecting a very excellent system of keeping our drinks cool, and our cheese and butter from running to oil.

It is worked this way. In Togoland we have what is called a "Hausa load." This is not a "load," as might be imagined, but a long, narrow basket made of split bamboos laid closely together lengthways, and bound together crossways with strips of bark. Into this long wicker trough I used to put the things I wanted kept cool, wrapped up and covered with sacks kept constantly wet. It was marvellous how beautifully they were preserved by this simple expedient. Even on the march, by detailing a boy to constantly sprinkle the sacks, I was able to keep the butter quite solid, the bottles of liquid comfortably cooled, and even perishable provisions, such as cooked meat for instance, fresh and sweet.

It was Anton, our pet monkey, by the way, who was the alleged cause—as a matter of fact he was quite innocent in the matter—of a grave dereliction of duty on the part of seven of our boys. The affair happened on the road to Ibubu, where the whole lot of them turned up very late; a long way, in fact, in rear of the carriers, who, of course, made ordinarily considerably slower progress with their heavy loads than did our personal servants, who carry no loads. They had, it transpired, met some friends on the road, who treated them to palm 244
wine and native beer; but their excuse was that Anton had scampered off into the bush, and refused to be caught for some time, thereby delaying them. Now this was an excuse that might easily have held water, for we knew, and our boys knew that we knew, that Anton was addicted to such tricks. But on this occasion their somewhat unsteady gait and the strong smell of alcohol that hung about them convicted them, and one by one they broke down under cross-examination, and confessed to the truth. Then came the question of their punishment.

Very early in our trip Schomburgk had told me that the best way to punish a lazy carrier was not by personal chastisement—for which they care little unless it be carried to such an extent as to be inhuman, which, of course, is not to be thought of—nor by fining them; but that if a carrier was really lazy, coming in a long while after the others, the best thing to do was to give him a load, and stand him with it on his head in the middle of the camp, making him stay there for as long a time as he had been behind his fellow-carriers. "Then," said Schomburgk, "the others will all make game of him, and he will have learnt a lesson he is not likely to forget."

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SECTION OF OLD NATIVE IRON FURNACE

The portrait is that of the Chief of Banjeli, the seat of the native iron industry of Togo. In these furnaces the iron ore, after being laboriously dug out of the mountain side by native slave women, is smelted, and afterwards made into axes, knives, spear and arrow-heads, hoes, and so forth.

Well, this plan had been carried out on several occasions with our carriers, and we found that it worked excellently. So Schomburgk decided to try its effect upon our boys, and that afternoon the seven "beauties" were lined up in the middle of the camp, each with a 60lb. load on his head. Also, as they had laid the blame on 245
the poor innocent monkey, he was fastened by a chain to the right leg of our "washerwoman"—he of the ginger-beer-bottle fists—who had been the last one to hold out in the lie about him. At first the culprits treated the whole affair as a huge joke, laughing and chattering amongst themselves. But little by little, as the afternoon wore away, their faces grew longer and longer; the laughter and chatter grew less, and finally died away

altogether; they started shifting their loads from the head, first to one shoulder, then to the other, until, eventually, after Schomburgk had gone out with the camera, a benighted appeal for mercy reached my ears. I was seated inside my tent at the time, and for a little while I pretended to take no notice. But the cries of "Little mother! Little mother! Have pity on your poor tired children!" redoubled in intensity, so as Schomburgk had told me, before quitting camp, to let them go when I thought fit, I gave them their "ticket of leave."

Prior to our arrival at Banjeli, Schomburgk had made arrangements with the chief there to film the iron industry, of which I wrote earlier in this chapter. He was a nice old man, and, having met Schomburgk on his previous visit, he had now promised in advance to have everything ready for us. This promise he faithfully kept, and to the letter, an attribute very rare in a native. Next morning we took the pictures. First of all we started off at 6 A.M. to the mountain where the iron ore is mined. We rode the first stage of the journey, accompanied by 246
our two ostriches, who seemed to imagine that we were going on trek again, and intended giving them the slip. It was very comical to watch them, especially after we dismounted, and started to climb the last part of the journey to the top of the hill where the mine is situated, about 1600 feet up. Eventually, however, we had to send them back, for fear they might injure themselves.

The ore is mined by women, strong, but dirty-looking, with more of the masculine element about them than the feminine. It was pitiful to see some of them, with babes at their breasts, digging out the ore with a curious kind of hoe-shaped tool. Besides being a hard occupation, it is also a dangerous one. Only a day or so before our visit one of the miners had been killed, owing to a shaft falling in. On inquiry, I learnt that the women were slaves. I was assured that it was only a mild form of slavery, a system of indentured labour, and that even if liberated they would not go away. Still, I didn't like the idea, and the sight impressed me the least favourably of anything that I had seen in Togoland.

The other operations that centred round the iron industry, however, interested me greatly. Here is a handicraft that is usually associated with a more or less advanced degree of civilisation—the bronze age everywhere preceded the iron age amongst primitive man—being carried on by nude, or nearly nude, savages, in a fashion which, although it has many points in common with our own methods of mining, smelting, and so 247
on, bears, nevertheless, unmistakable signs of being of purely indigenous origin.

Taking it altogether, I am inclined to think that this film, which was one of the last we took, was also one of the best, if not the very best, of the lot, and when I came to see it screened later on in London, I was amazed at its fidelity to life. First the women miners are seen getting the ore out of the mines, as narrated above. The next scene we filmed shows a long string of them carrying it in baskets on their heads down the mountain-side to the primitive native furnace, which the men load with wood, charcoal, and ore. We showed, too, the method of regulating the ventilation of the furnaces by means of holes round the bottoms, these being stopped by clay stoppers, very ingeniously constructed, and which can be inserted and withdrawn at pleasure by means of a wooden stick, embedded in the centre of the clay stopper when it is first made. These furnaces, after being lighted, burn for three days, when the pig-iron is taken out and carried to the market at Bassari, where it is bought by the native blacksmiths. These craftsmen, working with a round boulder for a sledge-hammer, and curious hand-worked bellows, somewhat resembling bag-pipes in appearance, forge the iron into axes, knives, spear and arrow heads, hoes, and so forth, not forgetting the curious iron rattles mentioned in a previous chapter, and which form a valued part and parcel of every Konkombwa warrior's equipment. Speaking in regard 248
to these industrial films in general, a certain eminent scientist who presided at a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, remarked that he did not think that at the present time any very great good was accomplished by getting to the north or south pole, because both these very interesting spots would be there five thousand years hence; but the men who went out into the wild places of the earth in order to try and obtain records of the out-dying customs of native tribes in these remote regions, deserved the greatest praise. Even an ordinary written record (he continued) is of acknowledged value. What, then, must be the value of living pictures, such as these, showing every stage in processes of primitive native industries which, from the nature of things, must, in the not far distant future, become superseded, and so lost to us forever. Similar views, I may add, were expressed in letters written to Major Schomburgk after having viewed the films, by Mr. Atho Joyce, of the British Museum, and by Sir Harry Johnston, the famous explorer.

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CHAPTER XVII

IN A MOUNTAIN COUNTRY

I forgot to say that owing to the forethought of the chief of Banjeli, in making all arrangements beforehand for us to film the iron industry there, we were enabled to get away one day earlier than we anticipated. According to the itinerary which we had drawn up, we should have left there on February the 12th, whereas we got away early on the morning of the 11th.

Up to now, from at all events as far north as Nambiri, my journey had been one long triumphal progress, of a kind somewhat different from anything of the kind I had experienced previously. All through the thickly populated Konkombwa country, the roads—they are mere native trails—are punctuated throughout their entire length with little villages, strung out like beads on a string with intervals between them, and from the very first one past a station there used to issue in my direction crowds of women and children to welcome me. On meeting me, they would separate on either side to let me pass, ul-ul-ulling and waving their hands, then close in behind me, and follow me through their own village, and on to the next, a mile or so distant, where the welcome would be repeated by the women and children living at that place, the others returning to their homes; and so 250
on to the end, the result being that I used to have a continuous bodyguard, perpetually renewed, all the way from one station to the other.

Now all this came to an end. We are entering a wilder and more mountainous country, where villages are few and far between, and the inhabitants correspondingly sparse. From Banjeli to Bassari, for instance, a distance of twenty-two miles, we did not pass a single settlement that could properly be called a village. The road is a narrow winding native path, just wide enough to allow of two people riding abreast. Nothing more pleasant and exhilarating can be conceived than to ride thus in the cool of the African morn along a road where every turn reveals new beauties. It was nowhere level, but all up hill and down dale, some of the steep ascents making us rather pity Hodgson, who had gone on ahead, as usual, on his beloved "bike." Presently we reached the Katscha River, which flows hereabouts at the bottom of a deep gully, cut by the raging torrents that, during the rainy season, hurl themselves down from the adjacent mountains. It is crossed by a native wooden bridge, which, however, looked so frail and insecure, and was moreover in so wretched a state of repair, that we preferred to go through the river, now nearly dry.

The descent to the river bed was as nearly perpendicular as a steeply sloping bank can be; nevertheless, our horses slithered down without mishap, as only African ponies can. By the way, when I first came to Togoland, I 251
rather fancied myself as a fearless and accomplished horsewoman. But I very quickly discovered that a morning canter in the "Row," or even a stiff cross-country gallop to hounds, constituted but a poor preparation for African bush-riding. Practically I had to begin and learn equitation all over again. But I proved an apt pupil—or at least so I was informed—and now even a deep and steep gully like this possesses for me no terror, whatever it might have done at the beginning of the trip.

The usual riverine belt of vegetation that is a feature of all the Togoland streams had broadened, in the case of the Katscha, into a beautiful shady forest, and here it had been our intention to halt and partake of an open-air breakfast, but we had made such good time on this, the early stage of our journey, that we decided to put on a few more miles. Nearing Bassari, we came to a big native town, called Beapabe, which reminded me very much of Bafilo, on account of the number of houses, and the many fine baobab trees scattered about. Here we struck the northern end of a fine, well-kept Government road, which has been built out from Bassari, and which will ultimately extend upward as far as Mangu, following approximately the route along which we have come. We did not keep to this road, however, but left it to our left, and rode through the native market-place, to emerge presently into a perfectly straight and most beautifully kept avenue of mango trees. These grew so thickly overhead as to form a complete arched roof of solid greenery, altogether shutting out the burning rays of 252
the sun; the only disadvantage being that the fruit sometimes hung so low down that, in riding along, it was liable, unless one was very careful, to catch one in the face, with results the reverse of pleasant. Following this avenue for about half a mile we arrived at Bassari.

The station is built very much on the lines of an old Norman castle, with a castellated tower, and a broad raised verandah fronting a level, well-kept parade ground shaded by fine trees, the whole backed by forest-clad mountains. Here we were welcomed by Mr. Muckè, the Sub-District Commissioner, one of the oldest officials of Togoland, and one of Dr. Kersting's most able assistants. He has been in the Government service ever since 1898, and has taken part in practically every piece of Togo history that has been made during the intervening years.

Schomburgk knew him through meeting him here during his previous trip, and the worthy gentleman's only regret was that we had been unable to be with him for the Christmas festivities, of which he gave us a glowing description. We soon convinced him, however, that we could not possibly have managed it; and he then led us, talking all the while, to where he had prepared for us a most substantial and appetising breakfast, to which, needless to say, we did full justice. He had also very kindly got ready for us, and placed at our disposal, the "Massow House," so called, I was informed, after a certain Lieutenant Massow, a pioneer of empire who died in 253
northern Togo in the early days, while engaged in opening up that part of the territory. It is a square house, standing ninety feet above the station, with baobab and other trees all round it, affording a welcome shade. The view from it is one of the finest I had yet seen in Togoland, with picturesque wooded mountains in front and rear, and all around. Here we stayed five days, and were very comfortable; what made it seem more than ordinarily homelike, being the fact that it was provided with windows. This may not sound much to untravelled Europeans, but it was the first windowed house I had slept in since leaving Lome, six months previously, for although at Mangu Captain von Hirschfeld's house had windows, ours had none.

There were, however, some slight drawbacks to residence here. One was that there were no stables for our horses, these being down at the station. We therefore had to tether them under some of the biggest of the trees,

for we were afraid that our horse boys would not look after them properly, or at least not to our liking, once they were freed from our constant personal supervision. Another drawback was the scarcity of water. We had to buy every single drop we used, paying at the rate of a halfpenny a calabash for it, from the natives, who brought it on their heads all the way from the Kamaa River, a good two hours distant. It was not good water either, being brown and nasty looking; but it had to serve us for all purposes until Mr. Muckè detailed some prisoners 254
to fetch us water for our personal use from a spring situated some distance up in the mountains that towered at the back of our house. We still, however, had to purchase water for our horses, and for washing purposes, &c. This came rather expensive at a halfpenny a small calabash full, for we had seven horses, and they needed, of course, to be watered regularly twice a day. However, there was no help for it, and Mr. Muckè did his best to atone for the dearth of water by sending us daily plentiful supplies of the most delicious, thirst-quenching fruits —limes, oranges, paw-paws, bananas, &c.—and beautiful flowers from his own garden.

We went out riding a good deal during our stay at Bassari. All round the station—another legacy from Dr. Kersting's days—there are beautiful tree plantations, similar to those at Mangu, and these are kept in apple-pie order by Mr. Muckè, who is as proud of Bassari almost as Bassari is of him. In the evening, after dinner, he used to hold us spellbound by the hour together, telling us stories of the olden days, when all the country round about was unsafe, and almost unknown, and when warfare with the wild natives was practically endemic. Muckè and Bassari! Bassari and Muckè! The two terms are identical—interchangeable. He has been christened the "King of Bassari," and with reason, for he rules his sub-district with a rod of iron, and yet with a fine sense of justice that makes the natives respect, and at the same time fear, him. Schomburgk, who has the greatest 255
respect and liking for him, remarked one day that he was of the class that helps build up colonial empires without talking about it, and I fancy that that very aptly describes him. If he has a fault it is that he is rather too fond of his Bassari. A story is told of him, which may or may not be true, but which at all events fits him to a nicety. It concerns a visit he paid to Germany's capital during one of his infrequent leaves of absence. He was asked what he thought of it. "Ah—Berlin!" he is reported to have remarked, drawing out his words in his slow, thoughtful, methodical way. "Well—yes! Berlin is all very well, of course. But"—with a sudden brightening of the eyes and a quick acceleration of speech—"give me Bassari." The yarn is not new of course; it is merely one of the many variants of *Punch's* old-time joke anent the Peeblesshire Scotsman who declared, after his first trip to France, that Paris was "a graun' city, mon, but gie me Peebles for playsur." But, as I have already intimated, it exactly hits off Muckè, and Muckè's attitude towards that little unregarded strip of West African soil whereon he reigns an uncrowned monarch. A curious attribute of Muckè's is that, although the soul of hospitality, his fondness for a practical joke will sometimes go to the length of permitting a white stranger to pass his domicile; and this, in a land where peripatetic white men are as rare as butterflies on an iceberg—a more apt simile would be ice in Hades—is a sufficiently strange trait to merit mention, the more especially as it was the cause of 256
Hodgson going without his breakfast for ten minutes longer than he otherwise need have done. And for Hodgson to go without his breakfast for even five minutes beyond the appointed time, was an eventuality that Hodgson did not greatly appreciate. I need not say more.

Well, Hodgson had gone on ahead of us from Banjeli, as I have already said, on his "bike," and when he cycled level with Muckè's house he just gave it a sidelong, passing glance, and went on, never dreaming but that if it were the residence of a fellow white man he would step outside and give him a hail. Muckè, however, did nothing of the kind, but sat tight, and when his boy rushed in crying, "Master! Master! There's a white man gone past!" Muckè simply replied, "Is there? Well, don't bother about that; he'll come back again." And he did, after having over-shot his destination some little distance; whereupon Muckè remarked, "You must be fond of cycling, but come inside now and have some breakfast." Two more facts about Mr. Muckè. He owns the finest and handsomest horse I saw in all my journeyings through Togoland. It is a perfectly black stallion of Arab breed, and came from the far interior of the French Sudan, whence it was brought by a Hausa trader, a journey of many months' duration. Such horses are difficult to acquire, and Schomburgk badly wanted to buy this one on his first trip, but Muckè would not sell. Another great pet of Muckè's—he simply idolises his horse—is a tame 257
bush buck, which he keeps in a wire enclosure outside his house.

Bassari is the principal market for the raw iron, which is mined and smelted at Banjeli. Here it comes to be made up into the finished articles, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and our reason for staying here so long was that we wanted to film these finishing processes, the native smiths at work, and so on. When we were not taking pictures, we put in our time exploring the surrounding country, which is exceedingly picturesque and pretty, and also densely populated. The climate, too, is healthier and less enervating than most other parts of Togo; the great drawback being the terrific thunderstorms and the heavy moist heat of the rainy season.

We also paid a few visits to local notables, chief amongst whom is the Mallam Mohammed. Everybody in Bassari, and for miles around, knows the Mallam, who is a sort of local Pooh-Bah. For one thing, he is the richest native in these parts. For another, his interests are practically unlimited, so that he has a finger in every local pie. He is, for instance, a great dealer in horses, trading as far north as the French Sudan, and with Dahomey on the one side, and the Gold Coast Colony on the other. He also occupies the important and responsible post—as regards a big place like Bassari—of *sery-chi-songu*, or head-keeper of the native rest-house and compound, known together as the songu, and this carries with it the further responsible—and lucrative— position of tax-collector to the Government. Besides all these things he is head schoolmaster at an open-air 258
school for natives which he has established, and where the little children, sitting cross-legged on mats under a shady tree, are taught the Mohammedan religion, and to read and write. He is very proud of this unique school, and with reason, for the scholars seemed to me to be a wonderfully intelligent lot of laddies. I was especially struck with their painstaking writing of the neat and pretty Arabic characters, which is done on soft slabs of wood, with a pointed stick and native made ink. It was really astonishing to see the beautiful results they obtain with these primitive writing materials.

Of course he invited us to his house, where I was introduced, collectively and separately, to his eight wives. These ladies possess a certain degree of culture, and most of them are good-looking; one, a Fulani girl of light, almost white complexion, being really pretty. The chief wife showed me, with evident pride, all their household treasures, their European crockery, brass dishes and cooking utensils, and so forth. I was greatly struck by the

contrast these afforded to much of the native furnishings. For instance, her bed was made of mud, baked hard, a mere raised platform, similar to that used by the Sumbu women for grinding corn on, and on top of this was a mattress and rug of native manufacture, surmounted by a European mosquito-curtain, of which she was 259
exceedingly proud. There were numbers of children about the place, some quite pretty, and ranging in hue from jet black to light chocolate colour.

Afterwards all the eight paid me a return visit at our house. I had invited them to afternoon tea, but found out on their arrival that they did not drink tea, preferring cocoa, which, to suit their palates, I had to make inordinately sweet. They put in an appearance arrayed in their smartest lavelaps, each one heavily be-jewelled, and with faces rouged and powdered, and eyes and lashes and eyebrows painted black, after the fashion of a stage actress's make-up. They chewed kola-nuts incessantly, and their nails were dyed red with henna. But what struck me most about my visitors was the inordinate quantities of scent they used. What particular kind of scent it was, I do not know. I have never smelt anything exactly like it before or since. But I do know that it was so heavy and overpowering that I felt a difficulty in breathing the same atmosphere. The slightest movements of their wraps sent invisible clouds of it wafting and rolling about the room, and when once five of them stirred suddenly and quickly in unison, they set going an aromatic hurricane that made me gasp, and cough, and choke. However, the wild bees, who swarmed in countless numbers in the big baobab trees near our house, seemed to like it, for they buzzed round my visitors in clouds incommoding them so greatly that, after two or three 260
ineffectual attempts to drive them off, they had to sit, during the remainder of their stay, with their heads and shoulders shrouded in their lavelaps.

After they had been with me for some time an infant started to cry lustily, to my great surprise, for I had seen no signs of a baby up till then, nor had any mention been made of one. I suppose I looked the astonishment I felt, for they all began to laugh, and the chief wife rose, unrolled her outer lavelap, and after a further unwrapping of shawls, produced a fine, healthy child of six weeks, or thereabouts, from a sort of sling in which she had been carrying it between her shoulders at the back. She then handed it to another of the wives, who suckled it, so I suppose she was the mother. Then, when it had had its fill, it was passed on to yet a third woman —not the chief wife—who wrapped it up as before, and slung it behind her back under her lavelap.

Photo by *Miss M. Gehrts*

A Couple of Young "Supers"

A Study in White and Black

Scene from a native drama being acted for the cinema.

In order to amuse and entertain them, I showed them my European clothes and jewellery. The former interested them greatly, but my rings and bracelets did not appear to impress them. They seemed to consider them too small and trivial to be of any particular value. They themselves wore numbers of very large and heavy silver bangles and finger and thumb rings, together with massive gold brooches of native workmanship and design. That evening, on their return, they sent me food of their own cooking. It was, however, so terribly 261
peppered that a single spoonful brought the tears to my eyes and nearly choked me; so I gave it to my boys, who devoured it greedily, smacking their lips over it with many grunts and gurgles of ecstatic approval.

During our stay at Bassari, Herr von Parpart, District Commissioner of Sokode, arrived with his escort. They

had ridden the whole distance from Sokode to Bassari, about forty miles, in the one day, a truly wonderful performance considering the roads they had to traverse, of which more anon. As a result of their journey, Parpart was somewhat tired, so I did not see him that night, and the following morning very early he was up and away to Banjeli before I rose. I was rather disappointed at being unable to make his acquaintance, but as it turned out, it was only a pleasure deferred, for we were destined to see a good deal of him later on during our stay at Sokode.

It was at Bassari one evening, on returning from our ride, that I first heard close up, and was able to observe, the curious death wailing and other ceremonious celebrations precedent to a native funeral, concerning which I shall have more to say presently. I had frequently, when on my travels, heard these same weird sounds afar off, but on this occasion I was brought into actual contact with them, and the result was an almost painful shock to my nervous system. The wailing and lamentation emanated from the compound occupied by the native soldiers attached to the station, and, on inquiring, I found that they were mourning for a little child who had died that day, a baby of about two weeks.

CHAPTER XVIII

A WOMAN "PALAVER"

I have entitled the following chapter "A Woman Palaver," and this it is—no more. Men may skip it, if they like. Women, I venture to think, will find it interesting. In what I have set down there is, I suppose, little that is of real ethnographical or anthropological value. Nevertheless, the facts were obtained at first hand, and are the result of many long and confidential talks with the women of many diverse native tribes, and of my own observations and deductions, taken and recorded on the spot. The latter portion of the chapter, dealing with caravan life and cookery from a white woman's point of view, I have been led to insert in the hope, which I believe to be well founded, that it may serve a useful purpose in the case of any other woman who may in future visit the West African hinterland under circumstances similar to those in which I found myself.

Marriage, and its natural corollary, the bearing and rearing of children, constitute the main features in a native woman's life; indeed, marriage may be said to be the pivotal point, as it were; round which all else revolves. Broadly speaking, it is, as amongst most primitive peoples, a matter of barter, of sale and exchange. 264
Girls are marketable commodities, just as are cattle, or goats, or fowls, and are, in fact, interchangeable, a wife being bought by so many of one or the other, or by so much salt, or coined money, as the case may be.

Frequently, instead of buying a wife outright, the prospective husband will work for her, exchanging in fact his labour against her value with his prospective father-in-law. In this way a man can obtain a wife, or wives, without any capital outlay whatever, and for this reason the plan is much favoured by the younger and more impecunious natives. Those who are older and better off naturally prefer to pay cash on the nail, or its equivalent.

Girls are frequently bought by far-seeing natives as soon as they are born, and are then considered as betrothed from birth. The price of such is naturally much less than when they are adult, or approaching adolescence, for obviously the child may die before attaining to marriageable age. A girl so betrothed is supposed to keep herself chaste; but an unbetrothed girl is free by native law to indulge her sexual appetite as she pleases. If a child is born out of wedlock, however, it is not necessarily considered to belong to the mother. On the contrary, the reputed father has the first claim to it by tribal law; but he must claim it directly it is born, and if the girl disputes his claim, he must make it good by evidence that will satisfy the chief, or the village elders, as the case may be. If he fails, then the child is retained by the mother, and goes with her to the man 265
who eventually marries her, and who becomes a father to it. As a rule, the fact of a woman having previously given birth to one or more children, is no bar to matrimony. Indeed, the native husband seems rather to prefer it so, for reasons into which I need not enter.

Marriage customs vary widely amongst the different tribes. The semi-wild Tschokossi people of the far north, for instance, seem to have, so far as I could discover, no wedding ceremonies whatever of a fixed settled character, although the occasion is always made one of feasting and rejoicing. The Tschaudjo, on the other hand, who profess Mohammedanism and are by comparison civilised, possess a very elaborate series of marriage rites, which is strictly adhered to. Those precedent to the actual ceremony, however, are secret, and strangers are jealously excluded from any participation in them, nor may they be present even as spectators.

One such wedding took place while I was at Paratau, but although I tried to gain permission to see the thing from start to finish, I was unable to. I gathered, however, that the principal feature of the initial proceedings, so far as the bride was concerned, consisted in a sort of very rough washing and massaging of her whole body, lasting throughout the entire night immediately preceding the actual day of the wedding. This operation took place in a hut set apart for the purpose, the poor bride being rubbed and scrubbed vigorously by relays of 266
village women armed with pieces of porous stone, like pumice, and rough wooden brushes or scrapers, shaped like hair-brushes, but minus the bristles. The ordeal, which lasted practically from dusk till dawn, must have been a pretty unpleasant one, judging from the shrieks and yells that came from the interior of the hut where it was being carried out. At the same time other women were engaged in buffeting and harrying the bridegroom; although the treatment meted out to him, I was informed, was nothing like so violent or painful as that which the bride had to endure.

However, the latter looked, I am bound to say, none the worse when, next day, dressed all in white from head to foot, she took her place with her prospective husband in the bridal procession. Both were mounted on fine horses—the Tschaudjo, as I have already explained, are splendid horsemen—and were escorted by multitudes of people, shouting and firing guns, to the mosque, where the actual ceremony was performed in accordance with the Mohammedan law. The day's proceedings culminated in a feast, after which husband and wife were escorted to their hut by practically all the married women in the neighbourhood, who remained outside all through the night, yelling at the top of their voices, singing, capering, and beating drums.

Every native wife, it may be mentioned, is entitled by tribal law to her own separate hut, no matter how 267
many other wives her husband may possess, and she can also lay claim to an equal share of his society and attentions, the rule being for him to stay with each of his women for five days and nights together in regular rotation. Thus, in the case of a well-to-do native possessing eight wives, a favourite number amongst those who can afford it, it takes him exactly forty days to "go the rounds," so to speak. As I have already intimated, native women do not resent polygamy in the least; and on the whole they seem happy and contented. They take, too, considerable pride in their personal appearance; and they are, speaking generally, far cleaner in their personal habits than are the men. This is largely due, no doubt, to the fact that they bathe two or even three times a day, when going down to the river for water. The men usually bathe once a day, in the evening, and then it is invariably a warm bath, the water for which is carried and heated for them by the women. This, however, does not apply to some of the remote pagan tribes, whose habits are filthy. Practically all the women I came across spend a lot of time and trouble over dressing their hair, with the exception of the Konkombwa, who, as already related, crop their wool quite close. They are also very fond of cleaning their teeth, using little pointed sticks of

soft wood, which they are everlastingly twiddling in their mouths with their fingers as they go to and fro for the morning and evening water. Soap they manufacture themselves in little black balls about the bigness of a golf ball, and very good soap it is, giving a soft and abundant lather. 268

The savage woman looks forward to the ordeal of childbirth with none of those fears and misgivings that so frequently beset her civilised sister. To her, indeed, it can scarcely be counted an ordeal. She is, as a rule, a perfectly healthy female animal, and her strong, supple body has never been compressed by corsets, or had its natural growth and development hindered by tight-fitting skirts, heavy "tailor-made" costumes, and other similar sartorial abominations. Every woman, too, has received during her early girlhood, and quite as a matter of course, a training in midwifery; but of this I shall have more to say presently.

Assuming the birth to take place at home, and in her own village, which, however, by no means always happens, she is taken in hand by her female friends and relations when the critical moment arrives, and as a general rule all is over in two hours or thereabouts, and the mother is frequently up and about again an hour or so later. They are as a rule, skilful and careful midwives, with two exceptions. The umbilical cord is nearly always severed in an exceedingly primitive, not to say rough and ready, fashion, leaving a disfiguring protuberance, which in after life, amongst peoples who almost invariably go nude, or nearly so, is unpleasantly noticeable. The other exception has to do with the observance of a proper degree of cleanliness on the part of the mother, and those attendant on her, which is largely lacking. On the other hand, the new-born baby is 269 always well looked after, being given a warm bath directly after it first enters the world, and otherwise carefully tended.

When, as not infrequently happens, the birth takes place while the woman is on a journey, or at work in the fields, the mother does not allow the incident to unduly distress her. She is quite capable of looking after herself in her "trouble," and does so, much as do the wild bush animals amongst whom she lives, and from whom she has learnt and adopted many practices. In such an eventuality she simply rests for an hour or two, or perhaps three at the outside, then wraps the baby in her lavelap, bunches it in a heap behind her back between the shoulders, and goes on with her work or resumes her journey, as though nothing untoward had happened. Nor does she appear to suffer any after ill-effects; although that is not to say that they do not result. And this is where white women in Africa might do a lot of good on lines similar to those achieved by the Zenana missions in India; teaching the native mothers, that is to say, the importance of personal hygiene at this critical time, of obstetric cleanliness; and likewise impressing upon native husbands—this is vital—the necessity of permitting women with new-born babies to be released for a time from their hard domestic duties.

The native mother suckles her child for from three to four years, during which time she separates herself 270 entirely from her husband, who has, almost perforce, to take to himself another wife, assuming him to be still a monogamist. One reason for this custom, no doubt, is that the ordinary native food is not sufficiently sustaining for a very young child, or rather it cannot assimilate enough of it, because its little stomach is not big enough to hold a sufficient quantity. The poor little mite does its best, and is assisted thereto by its mother, who practises regularly upon it a system of forcible feeding of so drastic and unpleasant a nature as would, I should imagine, quickly break down the resolution of even the most stubborn of suffragettes.

The thick millet gruel, or thin porridge, called *fu-fu*, which is the staple diet of the Togoland negro, is simply poured and crammed down its little throat whenever feeding-time comes round, giving rise to the peculiar pot-bellied appearance so noticeable in all native children. One result of this lengthy suckling, coupled with an insufficiency of any other sort of nourishing food, is a very high rate of infantile mortality. The mother gets careless as time goes on, does not properly attend to the cleanliness of her nipples, is guilty herself of all sorts of imprudences of diet, with the result that the youngster sickens and dies.

The negro baby at birth is not black. It is either white, or of a very light yellowish colour; but this gradually darkens, until by the time it is a month old, it has assumed a chocolate tint, which afterwards deepens rapidly to the ordinary jet-black of the full-blooded negro. Another peculiarity I noticed, in the new-born native baby, is its 271 long, straight hair. This, however, rapidly falls out, to be replaced in due course by the well-known thick woolly thatch that does duty for hair on the cranium of the African adult native.

African children learn to walk at a later age than do European children. This is probably due to the fact that they have, comparatively speaking, very little practice. As soon as the youngster is born it is taken to the local ju-ju man, who bestows upon it, for a consideration, certain charms, or fetishes—a small piece of bone, a fragment of wood, or a bit of glass, say. These are carefully placed in the middle of different-sized strings of beads, which are then made into bracelets for its wrists, into anklets for its legs, and into a waist-belt. So long as it wears these, which it does constantly, it is supposed to be secure from the influence of the evil eye. But in order to make assurance doubly sure, the mother rarely lets the little one out of her sight. She carries it about with her constantly on her back, shrouded in her lavelap, from the folds of which, in the case of a very young child, not even the head protrudes. This method of carrying the child is rendered easier, owing to the fact that all native women wear round their waists big bead belts, drawn quite tight with a view to making their hips look larger and more prominent; a greatly admired feature. Into these belts the lower edge of the head lavelap is tucked, affording a comfortable support to baby.

As soon as it does begin to toddle, however, it is, assuming it to be a girl, given a tiny calabash, and taught 272 to balance it, filled with water, upon its little head. From now on it becomes a useful unit in the tribal, or village, organisation. It accompanies its mother regularly to the river when she goes with the other women to get water; is taught to sweep out the hut with a little broom, to prepare *fu-fu*, is taken into the forest and instructed what herbs and wild vegetables are good for food, and which must be avoided. In short, the child is trained in the ordinary domestic and other duties that fall to the lot of the average native woman.

At about the age of ten or twelve, assuming her parents are able to afford the expense, the little girl undergoes an extraordinary ordeal, generally referred to euphemistically as being "sent into the bush." This means that she quits her home and her parents, and is placed in charge of a fetish woman, who leads her away to a hut, or rather a collection of huts, in the forest, far from the habitations of men. Here is a very important personage, a "mammy," generally referred to as the "Women's Queen," and under her care and tuition, and that

of her assistant fetish women, the little girl remains for a period varying from two to five or six months, or even longer.

During this period she receives instruction in the art and practice of midwifery, and has to undergo the painful, and to our minds revolting, operation of introcision, corresponding to the rite of circumcision, to which her brothers, if she has any, are called upon to submit themselves at about the same age. This much is known; 273
but what other practices are carried on in these women's fetish groves cannot be told. No man may approach anywhere near any of them under penalty of instant death, and the women's lips are sealed regarding them. Even to their husbands, it is said, they dare not speak concerning them, nor to any uninitiated women. I made several attempts to get them to tell me personally something concerning the matter, but without result. At Atakpame I made the acquaintance of one of these "women's queens," a charming old pagan, rejoicing in the very Christianlike name of Maria. She bore herself with the dignity of the abbess of a cloister, as indeed in a sense she was, and she had the smallest and most beautifully formed hands, wrists, and ankles I ever beheld in a negress. She was most affable and courteous, and I tried hard to get her to tell me something of herself and her work. Beyond, however, telling me that her high office was hereditary, her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother having held it before her, and that she "taught the girls for their good," she would vouchsafe me no information whatever.

One thing, however, is certain; the woman who, either owing to the poverty of her parents or from any cause, has not been "sent into the bush" as a girl, is looked down upon as an inferior by all the other women of her tribe. So much is this so, that women of twenty, or even thirty years of age, who have been long married, 274
and perhaps borne two or three children, are not infrequently handed over to the fetish women by their husbands, who themselves pay the initiation fees, in order that the stigma may be removed from them.

The status of married women amongst the West African native tribes varies widely. Among the pagan Tschokossi of the extreme north, the wife is a chattel and a beast of burden, and her condition is very little, if any, better than that of a domestic slave. The Tschaudjo woman, on the other hand, is a household queen, lording it over everybody, including her husband, who must yield implicit obedience to her lightest whim. In between these two extremes come the great mass of the native women, who are drudges certainly, but willing drudges, and with their rights and privileges well defined and carefully guarded by tribal law and custom. Probably they are neither better nor worse off, according to their lights, than the majority of working wives elsewhere. Certainly, they appear to be happy and contented; conjugal quarrels are comparatively rare; and poverty, as we understand the term in Europe, is practically unknown. The worst off are the widows, who are usually looked down upon and disregarded, although there are plentiful exceptions to this general rule. In the old days the wives of a chief, or other big man, were buried with him; their legs and arms being first broken with a heavy club, after which they were thrown, still breathing, into the open grave. But these barbarous 275
practices have now been, to all intents and purposes, done away with; and now the widow simply shaves her head, and wears a white bandage round her forehead, as signs of mourning. On the man's grave are placed broken guns, bows, arrows, and so forth; on the woman's are calabashes and cooking-pots, also broken, and in each case there are supplies of food to enable the dead person to subsist during his or her long journey to the supposedly far-away land of shades.

The cultivating, gathering, and preparation of food constitutes the most important part of the native wife's duties, as it does, I suppose, amongst all primitive peoples. Native cooking may be almost entirely summed up in one word—porridge. This, however, is not made altogether of meal or flour, but is mixed with herbs and wild vegetables, and is invariably so highly seasoned with native pepper, derived from the wild pepper plant, as to be uneatable by Europeans.

For this reason, if for no other, one is obliged to carefully superintend one's own cooking when on trek. The ordinary native cook *will* put pepper into all dishes, if he is not carefully watched, and he uses the pepper-pot with no sparing hand. The matter of superintendence and oversight of the culinary department fell to my lot all the time we were on our travels. All our provisions were carried with us up country from Atakpame in old kerosene tins, which a native artisan had previously fitted with hinged lids and locks and keys. These tins, 276
carefully cleansed from all smell or taint of oil, constitute the very best receptacles possible for the conveyance of perishable commodities, as they are white-ant proof and weather-proof.

Each box, as I have previously explained, held a little of everything, and I entered in my store book before starting the contents of each. In this way it was easy at any time to get at any particular article, and I was able to check any tendency to extravagance on the part of our cook; a most necessary precaution when dealing with natives.

Cooking in the bush, I need hardly say, is a very different thing from cooking at home. Largely it is carried out in the open; or at best in a small low hut, with little or no ventilation, and of course minus a chimney. In this latter case, as there is, of course, no outlet for the smoke, the mistress—in this case myself—usually finds it impossible to remain in her "kitchen" for more than a minute or so at a time, and the superintendence of the preparation of a meal resolves itself into a succession of dashes in and out—mostly out—and a continuous rubbing and wiping of smarting eyeballs.

One thing I never dared trust to the cook, and that was the boiling of the water; not only that used for drinking, but also that for washing up in, and for our personal ablutions. It all had to be boiled for a full ten minutes by my watch, and always under my personal supervision. This was done outside the hut on a special stove, but the operation was only carried out systematically and regularly by means of constant pertinacity and 277
insistence on my part, to which Messa, our cook, was wont continuously to oppose as great a measure of passive resistance as he dared. The one objection to boiled water is that, to quote Artemus Ward's dictum anent "biled crow," it "ain't nice." Its taste is about as insipid as it is possible to conceive, and a prolonged course of it as a beverage is unthinkable. Consequently we drank tea when on trek almost entirely; either hot or cold, and flavoured with limes.

Barring his rooted objection to boiling water, and his undue predilection for the pepper-pot, traits which, I am given to understand, he shared with all native servants, Messa was a good cook. He could dish up a fowl so

that it looked and tasted like anything but a fowl; an invaluable attribute in a cook in a country where a surfeit of fowls, as fowls, is so quickly and invariably produced. He used to buy for a penny a bone as big as a small log of wood from the villagers, split it open, and serve us delicious marrow on toast. His soups, made out of the most unpromising materials—he used to give us one kind the basis of which was burnt monkey-nuts that was a gastronomic dream—were simply delicious.

His great fault was that he would use tinned stuff whenever possible, even when other fresh food of the same kind was available. For instance, we had amongst other canned vegetables several tins of spinach, of which we were all very fond. Only when it was all gone did I discover that spinach of a most delicious quality—far better than the tinned—grew wild in the bush all along our line of route. 278

The greatest luxury in the vegetable line up in the bush is the ordinary potato, which cannot be got to grow anywhere in Togo. We had brought one load, 60 lb., up country with us; and when we wanted to give anybody an extra special treat, we would cook them a few potatoes. I remember on one occasion, on our way up, asking our good friend Mr. Kuepers, the schoolmaster at Sokode, to breakfast with us at Paratau, where we were living, the distance between the two places being about three miles. He demurred somewhat, seeking excuses, for to come meant an early rise and an early ride. But when I told him that we had got eggs and bacon, and European fresh potatoes, he agreed to come like a shot. Our great ambition was to take some of the potatoes on to Mangu, and we did succeed, by exercising considerable self-denial, in saving about 15 lb. Then, to our grief and consternation, they began suddenly to go bad. Each morning Messa would sort them carefully out, laying them to dry in the sun, and bringing the black ones to me, saying, with a sorrowful face: "Little mother, four more—or six or seven as the case might be—potatoes gone bad." Eventually, by bestowing upon those remaining as much devoted care and attention as a fond mother does to her new-born babe, or a dog fancier on a litter of pedigree puppies, we got enough good ones into Mangu to give each European there three for his Christmas dinner. Yams, which are the native equivalent to our potatoes, I did not like at all at first; but in the 279
end, mashed and served with butter, I grew to find them at least palatable. Our tinned butter, by the way, became after a while of the consistency of oil, from the constant jolting on the carrier's heads, and could only be used for cooking. The tinned bacon was the best of the canned provisions, keeping good and sweet to the last. It was, however, very expensive, costing 4*s.* 8*d.* a pound tin. Native eggs were everywhere plentiful and cheap, costing about a shilling the hundred. They are small, but nice tasting. Fruit, too, was plentiful, especially bananas, of which Messa used to make all sorts of tasty dishes. But when I wanted to give the men a real treat, I used to prepare for them a special Hamburg dish, consisting of dried apples and plums, boiled with bacon and little suet dumplings.

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CHAPTER XIX

BACK IN SOKODE

The first stage of our journey to Malfakasa, the half-way house, so to speak, between Bassari and Sokode, led us down to the Kamaa River along a beautiful, well-kept road, planted on either side with mango trees. The Kamaa in the dry season is, like most West African rivers, practically without water; but during the rainy season it is frequently quite unfordable, and many a poor native, I was informed, has lost his life in its treacherous whirlpools, while attempting a crossing that looks perhaps easy, but is in reality excessively dangerous.

A Native Village in Northern Togo

This village, though built in the Konkombwa style, is inhabited by people of the Tschokossi tribe. The guinea corn stalks are left standing round the place as a form of protection used in the old days against the poisoned arrows of their enemies.

To us, of course, the crossing presented no difficulty. The road on the far side of the river, too, though rocky, is fairly good, undulating up and down, and twining in and out amongst an open bush country until the foot of the Malfakasa Mountain is reached. Then commences a fearful climb of about two hours' duration. For the greater part of the way riding was out of the question. We had to lead our horses, clambering painfully up slippery slopes, dragging them after us, often threading our way between huge boulders where there was 281
hardly room for them to pass. Arrived at the top of the shoulder of the mountain, we had to go along the ridge for about half an hour, then followed an exceedingly steep, well-nigh perpendicular descent of about two hundred feet, to the almost dry boulder-strewn bed of a small stream; and out of which a corresponding though not so steep rise led up to a little plateau where the rest-house is situated.

From here a lovely view is obtained over the whole surrounding country, reminding me somewhat of that seen from our old house at Aledjo. The round huts, too, were very clean and comfortable; but, owing to lack of room on the tiny plateau, they are situated rather too close to the native compound and songu, whence the smell of cooking, and other even more potent odours, was wafted in a manner more pronounced than pleasant. I noticed this the more on account of a splitting headache from which I suffered, due no doubt to the heat and the hardships of the ascent. I was, too, exceedingly tired; so for the last time I rolled myself in my horse-rug, with my saddle for a pillow, and despite the pain from my throbbing temples, was soon lost in blissful unconsciousness.

I awoke feeling almost my old self, and able to properly appreciate the magnificent scenery that surrounded us on all sides. One needs to spend, as I had done, two or three months traversing the brown sun-baked veldt of the northern Togoland Sudan, in order to fully enjoy the sight of these verdure-clad mountains. Here one 282
seemed alone with Nature, and with Nature's God. There was no village near, only a few resident negroes to look after the rest-house for European travellers, and its native equivalent, the songu. To right and left, in front and behind, wherever the eye ranged, it rested on a wilderness of wild mountain country, peak on peak jumbled together in chaotic, yet magnificent confusion. To the north was the outstanding mass of Tabalo Mountain, where is situated a curious village, called by the natives Uro-Ganede-Bo, which means "The-Place-where-the-Crown-Prince-is-educated." Here, in the olden days of Togo native history, the eldest son of the reigning Uro, or king, of Paratau, lived alone with his tutors, who instructed him in the arts of war and of peace, and in the duties appertaining to a native ruler. The place, I was informed, is practically impregnable to attack from a native army, no matter how large, and even a European force would find it a hard nut to crack. Here, in this mountain fortress, the young prince remained closely secluded until he came of age, and even afterwards he was only permitted to pay an occasional brief, flying visit to Paratau, never permanently leaving his rocky retreat until such time as his father, the old Uro, died, and he was called down with much ceremony, and the beating of many drums, to reign in his stead.

We are now looking forward eagerly to a return to civilisation. At Sokode, our next stage, we are in touch with the telegraph once more, and there are rumours that a big motor car has been put upon the road since we have been away, and is available for the journey down to the rail-head at Atakpame. It is time we emerged from the wilderness, for our stock of provisions is beginning to give out. Here at Malfakasa we opened our last tin of condensed milk. The last of our coffee and butter we used before reaching Bassari. Our table salt gave out long previously, and we have had to make shift with the coarse native article, carefully sifted.

The country round here is the home of a curious little bush fowl, which looks exactly like an English bantam. We used to see them running alongside the road on our way up, and when I first caught sight of one I called out to Schomburgk: "Hullo! We must be nearing a village. Here's a chicken straying about the track." Later on I learnt that they were wild birds, and indigenous to the mountain regions of West Africa.

Malfakasa means "Long Gun"; malfa—gun, and kasa—long; and the story goes that it derived its name from a famous outlaw who, many years ago, used to sit up here with a gun and rob the caravans, and levy blackmail on such solitary travellers as desired to pass. Of course I cannot vouch for the truth of this yarn, which is in the nature of a native tradition, but it seems to me that it is very likely to be true. Anyhow, it is difficult to conceive a better place for a robber stronghold than this rocky, isolated peak, with its steep, tortuous, boulder-strewn approaches.

After resting the usual part of a day and a night at Malfakasa, we set out for Sokode very early the next morning, the conversation during the first part of the journey turning almost entirely on whether we should be able to secure the motor car of which we had heard, to take us down to Atakpame. If this is available, and native rumours crystallize as to its existence, at all events, the nearer we get to Sokode, then we shall be able to accomplish in one day what otherwise will take us seven. Moreover, just south of Sokode one enters the tsetse-fly belt, which extends downwards as far as a point above twenty-five miles north of Lome; so if we cannot get the car, we must either travel by hammock and bicycle, or else ride our horses down after dark, as these animals cannot, of course, be taken through a fly-infested area in the daytime.

The view on the road leading down from Malfakasa is fully as beautiful and picturesque as that leading up to it from the north. On quitting the plateau, one sees far away to the north-east the Sudu Mountains, and in between the great level Tim plain. This plain, or steppe, got its name in rather a curious way. Mostly the various districts, or areas of country, in West Africa take their names from the tribes inhabiting them. Thus, one speaks of the Konkombwa country, the Gourma country, and so on. Now the Tim plain is inhabited by our old friends the Tschaudjo, who, as I have previously explained, came riding on horses from the north, conquering or driving out the aborigines before them, and harrying the country with fire and sword. The invaders were called by the original inhabitants of the soil Kotokoli, which means "warriors" or "robbers," the two terms being interchangeable, and, amongst primitive peoples, frequently identical; and the strange, barbaric "lingo" they spoke—strange and barbaric that is to say to the peaceful aborigines—was dubbed by them "tim." When they took possession of the plain, and settled there, the neighbouring tribes no longer cared, perhaps no longer dared, to call them by the opprobrious name of Kotokoli (robbers), and so they used to refer to them as the folk who spoke "tim," and in time this became a general term for the country inhabited by them. It is perhaps the only instance in West Africa of a land being named after a language, and not after a people.

After a not unpleasant and interesting twenty-mile ride, we at length reached Sokode, where the District Commissioner, Herr von Parpart, being still absent, we made a bee-line for the post office. Here we found a huge mail awaiting us, and many cablegrams. We soon set the wires humming in return; in fact, we indulged in a regular telegraphic orgie: after which we went over to the house of our old friend Mr. Kuepers, the Government schoolmaster at the station, from whom we received a most hearty and hospitable welcome. We also heard from him full particulars concerning the motor car, about the very existence of which up till now we had been more or less doubtful. It was, he told us, a big and powerful automobile, capable not only of carrying our entire party, but also of transporting our personal luggage, leaving only the heavy baggage to be carried by man transport. It had been put on the road by the Togo Company, and was now at Atakpame, whence it could be summoned by telegraph, the cost of hiring it for the journey being ninepence per mile.

This, of course, was splendid news, and put us all in the best of spirits, which were further enhanced by the receipt of a second communication from the Moving Picture Sales Agency in London, saying that all the rest of the films to hand had turned out well, and were of the highest possible quality. That night we stayed at the rest-house near the station, and sat up late talking of home and friends. The one drop of bitterness in our overflowing cup of happiness was the knowledge that we should now have to part from our horses, to whom we had become very much attached. Next day, however, we received a wire from the Hon. W. H. Grey, whom we had met on the steamer on the outward voyage, offering to take over all our animals, and to transport them to Accra, where they would be well cared for and looked after. This, again, was very acceptable news, for it would have caused us infinite pain and regret to have had to sell the faithful animals, that had carried us safely for so many hundreds of miles, back to the natives, to be ill-treated as only a native can ill-treat a horse, and to be tortured by the horrible bits they habitually use. Nevertheless, when they left that night for the coast, after a final caress and a feed of sugar, we all felt a bit down-hearted. I know I felt it like parting from old friends. Schomburgk had detailed a soldier to accompany them on the downward journey, and had given him the strictest and most minute instructions as to each day's itinerary. He was also warned on no account to permit them to travel before nightfall, after which the dreaded tsetse-fly sleeps. This is, of course, the insect that is responsible for the fatal sleeping-sickness in man. We, however, saw no cases of this terrible disease while we were in Togo, although it is known to exist there and according to some accounts is spreading. As regards domestic animals—horses, oxen, and so forth—they can be moved safely through the worst fly-belts if proper care be taken. They must be shut up in a hut during the daytime, and for preference in a hut situated in or near a village, since the tsetse invariably shuns the habitations of man, preferring to live out its life in the low, unhealthy localities it most frequents, near to water, stagnant if possible, and with plenty of thick tropical undergrowth wherein it can breed and take refuge from its many enemies.

We stayed five days in Sokode, paying visits, resting from the fatigue of our long journey, and generally enjoying ourselves. Amongst other notable people we called upon, was the Mallam of Dedaure. "Mallam," I

perhaps ought to explain, meant originally a priest or teacher, but the term is now applied loosely in West Africa to any native who, owing to his wealth or learning, has raised himself far above the common herd. This particular Mallam struck me as being absolutely the finest-looking native I had seen during our trip. Tall, beautifully proportioned, with clear-cut aquiline features, a small well-kept beard, and always exquisitely dressed, he would have been a striking figure anywhere, let alone out here in the heart of the African bush. Schomburgk said he was the best specimen of a native he had come across anywhere in Africa, and I can quite believe him. I imagine, though, that he is by no means a full-blooded Togo native, but has Arab blood in his veins, and probably a goodly proportion of it. He was a well-educated man, and before we left he wrote on a board in exquisite Arabic characters what he assured me was a eulogistic account, and personal description, of my humble self.

What impressed me most during my stay in Sokode, however, was the splendidly-appointed Government school, of which Mr. Kuepers is the principal. He is assisted by several native teachers, and it is really 289
wonderful to see the way in which the scholars—all boys—from the bush villages hereabouts assimilate the knowledge that is put before them. Mr. Kuepers assured me that they make far apter and better pupils than do European children of a similar age. Their minds seem to be more quick and ready to receive outside impressions. It is like writing with a new pen on a perfectly blank sheet of paper, or sowing seed in virgin soil. And this rapid progress they make is the more remarkable, in view of the fact that these little African kiddies, when they begin to attend school, have first to be taught the German language, or at least enough of it to enable them to understand their lessons, to grasp the purport of the questions asked, and to frame their answers. Unfortunately, however, this quickness of perception, and the desire to learn, does not last beyond a certain age. Directly the boy begins to blossom into a man, which in this climate and amongst the black races is somewhere between the thirteenth and the fourteenth year, he comes to a dead stop as it were. Restless and uneasy, he cannot be brought to fix his mind upon his tasks, and seizes the first opportunity to return to his native village, where, it is to be feared, he quickly forgets most, if not all, of what he has learnt. There are exceptions, of course, but this is the general rule. In the pregnant words of one of the native teachers, spoken with no touch of lightness, but solemnly and even sadly: "When the young native Afrikander begins to think 290
about women, he thinks no longer any more about lessons."

On one of my visits to the school, I was asked to put some questions to the children, and I asked a small boy of eight or thereabouts, "What is a mouse?" His answer, transcribed word for word from my note-book, was as follows: "A mouse is a small animal, with four legs, two eyes, and a thin long tail; on its back are brown hairs, and it has white hairs under its stomach." The description is incomplete, but I doubt if one English or German child out of a hundred, of a like age, could have given offhand as good a one. I also asked a class generally the old, old "catch" question in mental arithmetic of our childhood's days: "If a herring and a half cost three-halfpence, what is the price of eleven herrings?" I had previously announced that I would give a penny to every child who answered it correctly, and that I would allow them three minutes by my watch to think it out. It was most interesting to watch their thoughtful, intent little black faces, as they wrestled inwardly with the puzzling problem. When time was called, hardly a child but gave some sort of an answer, many being obviously mere guess-work; but two of the scholars earned their pennies, and more than earned them, for not only were their answers correct, but they explained to me how they arrived at them.

KONKOMBWA AT ARCHERY PRACTICE

These people are still in the bow-and-arrow stage of martial evolution; nor are the bows they use remarkable for power or strength of construction. Their arrows, however, are invariably poisoned, and the slightest scratch from one means death.

The children are very prettily mannered. If one meets a group of them on the road, they will line up, stand 291
rigidly to attention, and give one a smiling "Good morning." If, as frequently happens, one comes across them seated by a stream, and repeating their lessons together in the sort of a sing-song chorus they greatly affect, the same thing happens. Of course, however, these children are picked children. Only a certain number are taken from each village, and not above a certain number in all. At present the sum total for whom accommodation is available is about one hundred; but new school buildings are being erected; then the classes will be very largely augmented. The children are taken entire charge of by the Government during the time they are at school. A small daily sum is allowed each child for food and lodging, this being handed over *pro rata* to certain approved native women living in the village, who undertake in return to board and sleep so many of them. Each child is also given by the Government a little blue smock, and books, slates, pencils, and so forth are of course provided free.

On the evening before the day we had fixed for our departure, Herr von Parpart asked us to dinner. This gentleman, by the way, was not at Sokode when we were here on our upward journey. If he had been, we certainly should not have stayed at Paratau. He is a most courteous, considerate man, who radiates energy, kindness, and good-nature; altogether a splendid example of the best type of German official. At the dinner-
party were a Mr. and Mrs. Dehn, who were going up to Bassari to relieve Mr. Muckè, who was going home on 292
leave. It follows, therefore, that she will be the second white woman in Togoland north of Sokode.

Prior to going in to dinner, we were seated outside the house on a little hillock, the top of which had been artificially flattened, chatting together and enjoying the cool evening air. It was a dark night, with very little moonlight. Suddenly, from a grove behind us, came the sound of children's voices singing an old German part-song. It was a choir of Mr. Kuepers' little scholars, and the musical treat had been arranged by him in our honour. I never heard anything more beautiful; or, under the circumstances, more affecting. Song after song of our childhood's days the young choristers reeled forth. Mrs. Dehn, who had only recently come out, started to use her handkerchief; and I think I should shortly have followed suit, had not our host come up at the crucial moment and led me into dinner.

The meal was a grand success, reminding me of the one Baron Codelli had treated us to on our arrival at Kamina from the coast six months previously. There was the same beautifully arranged table, the same sheen of damask and glitter of silver, the same noiseless, trained service, the same carefully chosen and perfectly cooked food. Everybody was in the highest spirits, and I enjoyed myself immensely. We sat late, and should have sat
later at our host's urgent invitation, only that the motor-car had arrived that day from Atakpame, and we were 293
due to start early in the morning. It seemed strange, by the way, to find my hammock—thoughtfully provided by my kind host—waiting at the door to take me home, in the same way as the electric brougham belonging to the house waits at home to whisk away the late-departing guest.

We had told our boys to call us at 5 A.M., but I confess that, for my part, it required no small effort of will to

induce me to rise and dress. Out in the bush one is not used to dissipation. I wished now that I had refused that last half glass of champagne, or had dispensed with the liqueur. I will say no more.

Outside, the cold morning air acted as a tonic. There was the big car, panting to be off. It held seven people comfortably, and our ten boxes. Soon we were speeding along our homeward road, and my spirits rose with each succeeding mile. It was grand to fly along down the route up which we had toiled so slowly, to cover in an hour a stage that had taken us a whole day to traverse on cycles or by hammock. At Djabotaure, however, there came a sudden halt. Our left-hand hind wheel tyre burst with a loud report, and my heart sank within me at the prospect of being stranded here in this desolate spot, two days—by carriers—from Sokode and five from Atakpame. Luckily we carried a spare tyre, but it was a non-skidder, and from now on our driver had to be very careful.

The road in the Sokode district was perfect, that in the Atakpame district was not quite so good; and we 294
were all more or less anxious, for we carried no more spare tyres, and another breakdown would have meant several days' delay. The bridges of planks, covered in some instances with clay, were negotiated in fear and trembling, for they had, of course, not been constructed for heavy motor traffic, and our big car, with its load, weighed a good bit over a ton. The natives we met seemed greatly interested in the new machine, which had not yet lost its novelty for them, and stood gaping after it much as the rustics used to do in Europe, I am told, when motor-cars first began to be used there. One big negro varied the ordinary proceeding by standing facing the car in the middle of the road, and backed as we approached, at the same time edging sideways. As a result he tumbled over backwards into a ditch, and the last I saw of him, as we sped by, was a pair of big flat feet projecting upwards, and waving wildly from the side of the road.

We overtook our horses at a village en route, and paused to see that our instructions were being properly carried out. At Blita, too, we stopped for breakfast, selecting this particular rest-house because it is the only one between Sokode and Atakpame that boasts a table. Here we used up absolutely the last of our provisions, and I remember thinking to myself that if a breakdown were to occur now, we should not only be subject to an 295
irritating and vexatious delay, but that we should probably go hungry into the bargain. However, nothing happened; mechanism and tyres both held; and shortly after noon we rolled into Atakpame, and thence to Kamina.

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CHAPTER XX

KAMINA—LOME—HOME

We were expected in Kamina by our old friend Baron Codelli von Fahnenfeld, and by the baroness, his wife, a young woman of about my own age, whom he had recently brought out from Europe, a new-wed bride, to share his home and fortunes in this out-of-the-way corner of the German colonial empire.

All the week long I had been looking forward to this meeting with the wife of one of my best friends, and picturing it in the rosiest colours. We should have so much to say to each other, I said to myself, for I had been so long cut off from all association with my own sex—the meeting with Mrs. Dehn at Sokode being only a casual one—that I was simply dying for a good long chat about—well, about the things women love to talk of. Yet now, when the hour had come for our mutual introduction, I felt a strange kind of bashfulness creep over me. I had been so long in the bush, practically cut off from civilised society. True, I had met a few men. But then men friends and acquaintances are so different from women friends and acquaintances. They are less critical; more apt to take one at one's own valuation.

Shall I like her? What is she like? Shall we get on together? The questions one woman always asks herself of 297
another woman whom she hopes to favourably impress, surged uppermost. But my doubts and fears were quickly dispelled. A tall, graceful girl, golden-haired and blue-eyed, advanced towards me with hands outstretched in warm welcome. Soon we were deep in an earnest, animated conversation; she asking all sorts of questions about the "back of the beyond" of the country that was now her home; I anxious to hear the latest "gup" of Berlin, of Paris, of Vienna. But there was one piece of information that I wanted to acquire, now and at once, that to me was all-important, and at the risk of being thought ill-mannered, I blurted out the personal query: "My boxes? My treasured boxes? What had become of them?"

It will be remembered that a wire had been forwarded to us by post-runner from Mangu, telling us of their destruction by a fire that had burned down Baron von Codelli's house at Kamina while he was away in Europe. Since then we had received several more or less contradictory reports from his employés. Some personal luggage had been rescued from the flames, we were told at one time; at another, the rumour reached us that everything that was on the premises when the fire broke out had gone up in smoke. Now, to my unbounded relief and delight, I learnt that all the boxes containing my personal belongings were safe; only a few parcels containing hats, lingerie, and comparatively valueless articles of personal apparel, had been burned. 298

I owed their safety, it transpired, to the efforts of my black boy, Kabrischika, who had been with me during our stay at Kamina on the upward journey, and who had become very much attached to me. It appeared that a big grass fire was burning near Kamina, and that a sudden change in the strength and direction of the wind had sent it, roaring and raging, straight for Codelli's house, which was of wood, thatched with many thicknesses of straw for coolness. The house was unoccupied, of course, and, it being the end of the dry season, about as inflammable as a box of matches. Kabrischika, quick to realise the danger, had dashed through the flames and smoke and lugged my boxes out of danger. He knew them, it seemed, because they were new; my name, which was stamped in big letters upon each one of them, meaning nothing to him.

We spent ten days in Kamina, recuperating, and filming the big wireless station which Codelli is building there, and about which I wrote in an earlier chapter. I was amazed at the progress which had been made during our six months' absence. Kamina itself had changed utterly; had grown tremendously. Everywhere were substantial stone houses; mostly finished and ready for occupation, some few in course of erection. The great steel towers, and the immense power-station, were finished, contrasting curiously with the little wattle and straw huts that had lodged the hundreds of workmen, whose labours were now nearing completion. When the 299
dynamos and turbines are installed, which they will be by the time this book is in print, Kamina will be able to talk direct with Berlin, 3450 miles distant. Even during my stay there, although messages could not yet be transmitted, they could be received, and each morning on our breakfast-table there lay a little type-written broadsheet, our morning paper as it were, summarising for us the news that had come through to the station overnight. In this way we knew what was happening in Europe, almost as quickly as if we had been living in, say, London, or Paris, or Berlin.

I need hardly say, however, that it is not for such comparatively trivial purposes as these that this powerful installation has been erected in the heart of the wilderness. The wireless station at Kamina is intended to be the chief receiving and distributing centre for the whole of Africa; so far, that is to say, as Germany is concerned. It will communicate with the similar but smaller wireless station in the Cameroons, and also with that at Windhuk in German South-West Africa, as well as with Tabora in German East Africa. Furthermore, it will in course of time constitute one of the principal links in the chain of wireless stations with which Germany, like Britain, is seeking to girdle the globe; connecting her East and West African possessions with German New Guinea, with Samoa, and with the German protectorate of Kiao-Chau, in the Chinese province of Shantung, which she holds 300
from China on a ninety-nine years' lease since January 1898.

A little railway connects Codelli's house with the northern part of Kamina, where the receiving station is, and we used frequently to remark, after dinner: "Now let us go up and listen to what they have got to say in Berlin." It was, to me at all events, very weird and wonderful to be able to place the receiver to my ears, and listen to sounds having their origin at a point between three or four thousand miles away. No words, of course, were audible, only the short and long sounds of the Morse code; but I soon learnt enough to be able to understand the purport, at all events, of what was coming through. The signals sound very much like musical notes—a series of notes all of the same tone and pitch—played on an ordinary whistle. This particular brand of wireless is called in German the *telefunken*, meaning "sounding spark"; and this exactly describes it. Sounding sparks! That is what you are listening to.

The temporary receiving station, by the way, is the same building that served me for a house during our stay

in Kamina on the upward journey, six months previously. It gave me quite a shock on my first visit to it this time, to find the little home I had decorated and fitted up so comfortably—we rigged up our studio here, you will remember—now all bare and desolate, and filled with complicated wireless instruments. Presently, I got another kind of shock, an unpleasant one. I remarked to Codelli how dusty everything was, and he replied quite gravely 301
that that was so, it wanted a woman's deft hand; and, handing me a cloth, he asked me if I would be so good as to wipe things over a bit with it, while he adjusted the instruments. At the same time he pointed to two little metal points, saying that it was important that every speck of dust should be removed from these if the working was to be satisfactory. In my innocence I did my best to carry out his instructions, with the result that I suffered a mild sort of electrocution. It was merely a practical joke of Codelli's, and not enough electricity passed through me to hurt me, but it gave me a rare start nevertheless.

I was, as I have already said, greatly interested in this wonderful wireless installation; but I fear that I was also fully as much interested—trivial though the confession must sound—in a new nickel-plated collapsible dressing-table that the Baroness Codelli had brought with her from Berlin. It was the first time for six months that I had been able to see myself full length in a large mirror, and only a woman can realise what this means to a woman. When I was first left alone with it, I scrutinised myself closely and anxiously, turning this way and that, peering close and drawing back. On the whole the inspection was eminently satisfactory. My figure was fuller, rounder, and harder, my face also had filled out; otherwise, I was surprised to find how slight a difference half a year's roughing it in the wilds had made in my personal appearance. Why, I have frequently been more sunburnt after a week at the seaside, than I was by this long trek through tropical Togoland. One 302
reason for this was the care one always takes to shade one's face from the sun's rays while on the march; not, however, in order to preserve one's complexion, but with a view to avoiding sunstroke. During the first part of my journey, I always wore, when in the saddle, or out-of-doors even temporarily, a big slouch hat of the cowboy type, but afterwards I discarded this for the pith helmet, than which no more effectual safeguard against heat apoplexy has yet been devised.

While their new stone house was in course of erection, the Baron and Baroness Codelli had taken possession temporarily of the "Stranger's House," a building set apart for the use of stray visitors to the place who may be in want of accommodation, corresponding, in point of fact, to the rest-houses of the up-country stations, but somewhat more solidly constructed, and having a cement floor. There were, however, two rooms completed in their new stone house, and these Codelli very kindly placed at our disposal. But I, with the lately awakened instinct of the bush woman, preferred to camp out in a small grass-and-wattle hut, with only a mat curtain between myself and the outer air.

This was all very well for a couple of days. But the rainy season was now near at hand, and on the third day one of those tornadoes, which always precede the great rains, came on to blow. The wind set in motion great clouds of dust, which filled my frail dwelling, and after a short, sharp struggle between pride and inclination, 303
the latter won, and I took refuge behind stone walls. A day or two later great black clouds came rolling up, threatening to break in one of those terrific tropical thunderstorms of which I had heard such lurid accounts. Still, however, the rain held off; indeed, I was assured, that Kamina had been exceptionally fortunate in respect to its freedom from these storms since the wireless station had been erected, the theory being that the nine great steel towers in some way repelled the electric fluid. Whether this theory has any scientific foundation in fact, I am, of course, unable to say, but everybody seemed agreed that though all round the station might be black, the sky overhead of Kamina was for the most part clear.

At length the time came to say good-bye. Our heavy baggage had arrived from Sokode, and all was ready to entrain. Our horses, none the worse for their journey through the fly belt, had already been sent by rail to Lome, there to await shipment to Accra. The two ostriches had been sent on by road, in charge of their boys. There remained only our pet monkey, Anton, and him I presented to the Baroness Codelli. This time we took care to lay in a proper stock of provisions for the train journey, so that it was at least endurable, if not enjoyable; and the rain coming down just when it was beginning to get uncomfortably hot, still further helped to mitigate the discomfort of what is at best a somewhat tedious and trying trip.

At Lome we were to film the opening scene of our drama, *The White Goddess of the Wangora*. We had 304
already filmed all the other parts, but the reader will of course understand that in cinema work the scenes are not photographed consecutively; at least not necessarily so. In this first scene, it will be remembered, I am supposed to be cast up by the sea from a wreck as a baby and found by some black savages, and the problem was whereabouts along the Togo coast were we to get a white child of the proper age. It was the problem that had been haunting us at the back of our minds ever since the beginning of the trip. Now it had got to be solved somehow or other.

Various suggestions were brought forward, and gravely discussed. Could we use a doll; and if so, could a sufficiently large and lifelike doll be had in Lome? Would it be possible to paint a black baby white without injury to the infant? Meanwhile Alfred, our interpreter, had spread the news of what was wanted throughout Lome, and soon babies of all sorts and sizes, accompanied of course by their mothers, began to roll up. None of them, however, suited our requirements. Some were too big; all were too black: nor were we able to find any mother who could be induced to regard the whitewashing scheme in a sufficiently favourable light to lend her own offspring for the experiment. They all knew somebody else who had a baby they would no doubt be willing to lend for the purpose, but when it came to the point the "somebody else" invariably declined most emphatically to do anything of the kind. It really looked at one time as if we should have to film the scene at 305
some English seaside resort, with a squad of burnt-cork beach "niggers" as supers, an obviously most unsatisfactory alternative. Just, however, as we were beginning to despair, a coast girl turned up with a half-caste, khaki-coloured infant, of about the right age; and which Hodgson opined might be made, by the liberal use of a powder puff, to come out white on the film.

But when the scheme was explained to the mother, I could see that her enthusiasm for it waned rapidly. The baby was to be hidden in a box close to the edge of the surf. Yes-s-s! That was all very well. But suppose one big wave come roll up, sweep baby away? What then? Oh! No! No! No! And she clasped the little chocolate-coloured coon to her bosom. There was a lot more palaver, but at length she gave a reluctant consent. She was

to be paid a sovereign for the loan of the infant, and the clothes we provided, and which cost another ten shillings, were to be hers to keep when all was over. Moreover, while the scene was being filmed, she was to stand on one side of the camera, and I on the other, so that we could both rush into the sea together to the rescue in case of anything untoward happening. As a matter of fact nothing did happen. The scene was filmed on the beach outside Lome, a time being chosen when there was nobody about. We were, however, honoured by the presence of the Governor, H.H. the Duke of Mecklenburg, who expressed himself as being both surprised and pleased at the way we had drilled our black supers to act their parts. 306

Our time passed very pleasantly in Lome. We had horses lent us by a friend of ours, Lieutenant Manns, and used to go for rides round the neighbourhood. The sea, too, was a source of never-ending pleasure and delight to me, since first I caught a whiff of it towards the end of our railway journey from Atakpame. We used to take walks along the beach by moonlight, and Lome, beneath its silvery enchantment, seemed to me an altogether ideal place of residence. In the daytime, when the sun beat down upon it, and all was glare and dust, I held quite the reverse opinion.

Herr Vollbehr, the famous Munich portrait painter, happened to be in Lome while we were there, and he expressed a wish to paint me in the native dress I wore whilst playing in the *White Goddess* drama. So I gave him some sittings in the gardens of the Duke of Mecklenburg's palace, and I am told that the picture turned out very well, and has been much admired at Munich, where it is now on exhibition. The Governor's palace, by the way, is quite the finest building in Lome, as indeed is only right. It is four-square, built round a central courtyard, and must have cost no end of money. It is quite new, like all the other buildings in Lome, for not so very many years ago—some seventeen or eighteen, I believe—this town had no existence, at all events as the capital of Togoland, which was then fixed at a place called Little Popo, at the eastern extremity of the Togo seaboard. 307

The great drawback to Lome as a port is the heavy surf which breaks almost incessantly on the low sandy beach, as indeed it does all along the West African coast. Different methods of minimising the inconvenience caused by this hindrance have been adopted at different places. At Accra they have built a breakwater, which has cost a small fortune, and is not, I hear, a great success. At Lome they have gone the other way to work, and have erected a pier, or bridge, right out into the sea, a third of a mile long, and connected with a massive wharf, or quay, at the seaward end. This simplifies greatly the problem of landing, although it has its drawbacks. One is that there are now no surf boats there, or very few at all events, and the natives, I am told, are forgetting how to handle them, even if any were available. So when, some years back, the bridge which connects the wharf with the shore was destroyed by a tidal wave, supposed to be due to some great submarine volcanic upheaval, Lome was almost entirely isolated from the outside world for a while. However, with commendable energy, the authorities there soon set to work to rebuild their bridge; but because they could not build it over the old foundations, it now takes a curved course, which gives it a somewhat curious, lopsided appearance.

For the rest there is not much to say about Lome. It is a clean and neat little place, like most of our German colonial towns, with well-laidout streets shaded by palm and other trees, and bordered by pretty little bungalows, or, in some cases, more substantially built stone houses, set in well-kept tropical gardens. The native population of Lome, however, did not impress me favourably. The up-country native is a gentleman; the coast native is, too often, a caricature of the street "corner boy" of London or Berlin. Far be it from me, a mere girl, and a stranger and a sojourner in the colony at that, to set myself up as a judge in such matters; but it seems to me that the negro is not fitted for education, in the sense that we in Europe generally understand that much-abused word. Certain it is that no white man I ever came across, who knew his Africa, would hire as a "boy" one of the mission-school type of negro; he would infinitely prefer the wildest bush native from the remotest part of the hinterland. 308

At last the morning of the 13th of March dawned, the day on which we were to say good-bye to Africa. Frankly I felt sorry. I had come here six months previously, timid, and not a little apprehensive. There had been times since, up in the lonely bush, when, weary with travel and weakened with fever, I would have given anything to have gone to sleep and waked in Europe. But not now. All these feelings were over and done with, and in their place was a consuming regret for the things I was leaving behind, that were passing out of my life; the long lone trail leading onward, and ever onward, through lands new and strange; the black peoples of the far interior unspoilt by civilisation, an interesting study always; the stillness of the tropic night, the stir of the tropic dawn. 309

We had previously paid off our boys, of course, but all those that were in Lome at the time came down to the pier head to see us off. They were sorry to part with us. One could see it in their black faces, for the negro is nothing but a big child, and his features reflect every passing mood. "You will come back, little mother," they called out in unison, as the screw began to revolve. "Yes," I answered gravely, "I will come back." And I meant what I said. Shall I ever be in a position to redeem my promise, I wonder? Well! well! Time will show!

One thing rather pleased me. None of our boys were left stranded; they all got jobs. Alfred, our interpreter, and Asmani, Schomburgk's personal servant, took service with Baron Codelli at Kamina. Messa, the cook, got employment in the Duke of Mecklenburg's kitchen. Indeed, no boy who has been for any length of time with Europeans, and has a good character, need be long out of employment in Togo. A character, however, is an essential thing; and curiously enough they all seemed to prefer my written recommendation to Schomburgk's. I suppose it was because they had other characters from European men, and wanted to add to their collection one from a European woman, in case others of my sex wanted their services later. Schomburgk, however, said that a woman's recommendation always goes further than a man's, because prospective employers argue in this way: "Oh! so this boy has served under a woman, has he? Well, I'll engage him, because a boy who can stick a woman, can stick anybody—even me." Of course, this was said by way of a joke; but like a good many words spoken in jest, there is a certain amount of truth underlying these. Anyway, I believe it to be a fact that West African personal boys, kitchen boys, and so on, do not care over much to take service with a woman. 310

The ship that bore us back to England was named the *Eleonore Woermamm*. She was a good staunch boat, and very seaworthy and steady, like all those belonging to this fine line; but as we were steaming against "the

trades," we had a rather rough passage to Las Palmas. There was a pleasant break here, and I went ashore to the "Stranger's Club," where I played roulette for the first time. I knew nothing whatever of the game, and threw down a coin at haphazard, and with the usual luck of the novice I won again and again. In ten minutes I was the richer by £7, and was already beginning to have visions of a golden fortune ahead, when the screeching of the ship's siren called me hurriedly aboard.

The rest of the voyage was uneventful up to the last day. Then, when we were nearing Southampton, we had the very narrowest escape—so I was assured—of going to the bottom. We were seated at dinner, all in the highest spirits at the successful termination of our trip, when the steamer suddenly sounded three sharp, angry blasts, then started to heel over to starboard, sending all the plates and dishes with their contents flying into 311
our laps. Another steamer, it appeared, had come right across our bows, and only the presence of mind of the officer on the bridge of the *Eleonore Woermamm* in putting the wheel hard a-port, and so causing our ship to describe a circle to starboard, had averted what would otherwise almost certainly have been a very terrible disaster.

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Transcribers' Notes

Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained; inconsistent hyphenation retained when there was no predominant usage.

Original book spelled "Ramadan" as "Ramadam" three times, and as "Ramadan" once; none changed.

In the Foreword, "Woermamm" is a misspelling for "Woermann".

Page 88: "eerie" may be a misprint for "eyrie".

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