spring of Egyptian, the case of Etruscan, which has no offspring, or of the Basque, if that were to be lost, is no fit parallel.

The want of materials accessible to common critics, is that which creates an uneasy suspicion that all is not sound in these remarkable investigations. Add to this, that no new light is shed on history proportional to the pretensions. We do not forget (and we invite Sir Cornwall to reflect on it), that the Persian inscription at Behistun at once developed the fact that Darius, son of Hystaspes, had to re-conquer the Empire for the Persians. Mr. Grote, deviating from all previous historians, had already pronounced that this was the true interpretation of Herodotus; that the Medes had revolted against the Persian dynasty, and the whole Empire was in confusion. In profound ignorance that Mr. Grote maintained this, or that it could be made out from Herodotus, Rawlinson brought out from Darius's own avowal the same fact in a still stronger form. So much we say that we may not appear totally to disparage the historical value of these monuments. Yet, in fidelity to truth, we must add a few words, which we fear will be very exasperating to orientalists, who would read history from courtly records and royal pictures. Let us throw a peep of our mind on a highly intelligent gentleman, who many years ago was British Ambassador at the Court of Teheran: for he it was that first made us incredulous. He stated that every year the Court historian solemnly read out to the king and to the assembled divan, a record of the events of the past year, which always consisted in a glorification of the sovereign and of his prosperity. If we can trust our memory of a distant conversation, he said that the events of the Pre-Roman war figured as Persian successes. But of one thing we are sure, and assert it positively: He attested to us that the free gifts sent by the King of England to the King of Persia in the way of compliment, were all recorded by the historian as tribute; so that if a future historian had no other knowledge of the history than these documents might give, he would suppose the Empire of Persia in the nineteenth century to have included the distant island of Britain. What reason have we to suppose the sculptor so picturing a Court historian in ancient Assyria or Egypt to have been a whit more truthful than those of modern Persia? Bunsen and Niebuhr, as profoundly as Sir G. C. Lewis, believe the early military history of Rome to be a tissue of falsehood. Was oriental royalty surrounded by an atmosphere more favourable to truth than Italian aristocracy?

We cannot read Sir H. Rawlinson's translation of the deeds of a certain Assyrian King (he will forgive our not remembering a name the pronunciation of which has been several times largely changed) without intense distrust; distrust, not of the interpreter, but of the record itself. Evidently it was the duty of the recorder, year by year, to say something to the king's glory. The monotony of his work betrays its origin, when every year he crosses the river and conquers a new people. As for pictures, we should as soon believe that a king was three times the height of common men, because he is so painted, as believe in his conquests over red-haired Scythians and vast negro nations, because a picture represents a troop of them brought to him in chains, or a string of animals unhorsing in the spoil of Africa. Caligula is not the sole Emperor who has celebrated imaginary triumphs. We need to see the disasters of an empire carved in stone by order of its king before we accept such monuments as a faithful source of knowledge concerning its foreign relations.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1863.

MY WANDERINGS IN WEST AFRICA.

A VISIT TO THE REKNOWNED CITIES OF WARI AND BENIN.

BY AN F.R.G.S.

PART I.—THE REKNOWNED CITY OF WARI.

On the 1st August, 1862—a Friday—be it duly noticed—H.M.S. Bloodhound, Lieut.-Commander Stokes, found herself steering out of the harbour of Fernando Po, Gulf of Guinea, West Coast of Africa.

The then aspect of the Madeira of the Rights, as some one inaptly calls it, was unusually wild and strange. The sun sank like a red-hot ball streaked with long bars of dark vapour, and as its orb disappeared behind the molten fire of the occidental wave, a red and lurid light overspread the sky, extending to the zenith, as though a universal conflagration were beginning in the west. Lines of black massive cloud variegated the surface of the nearer sea, whilst the foiled bluffs and bays lay black as Erebus; and on a floor of burnt metal the ships hung like black silhouettes, with reflections as dark, floating double, ship and shadow, both in mourning.

A tornado seemed rising in the N.E., the island's stormy direction. Presently, however, the moon appeared, and dispersed the fires, leaving, however, deep heavy mists settled upon the horizon; whilst the air felt intolerably sickly and sultry. In times of pestilence men mind it a very awe to such weird meteorology. The first death by yellow fever had occurred at Fernando Po on the 4th May. At the end of July, sixty young and picked men had perished out of a maximum of three hundred Spaniards—twenty per cent. already, and by no means ceasing. H.M.'s consul, who was a fellow-passenger, compared the spectacle with one which he had witnessed during the cholera year at Kurchach, in Scinde, when a single dilapidated corps lost some five hundred of its number in six weeks. Worse still, let me repeat, the day was a Friday—as will be seen, it made its influence felt.

There happened nothing tellable during the cruise of two hundred and seventy miles separating the Bloodhound from the Benin river, her destination. It was a succession of squalls, that compelled us to put up the dead-lights—ghostly name!—whilst the rain called aloud for closed skylights, and the cross sea catching the old ship under the decks. Spouses, raised her off her side as she rushed and staggered along. The only passe-temps of the voyage was a battle between a thresher and a black fish, or small whale: they certainly did act Mears, Sayers and Heeman right well. Thresher looked like the single revolving spoke of a tremendous wheel, and the blows which he dealt were audible for a mile. The black fish, equally dexterous, lay 'tied into' him with a huge forked tail, resembling a fan for machinery, and churned up the seas around. It was truly a pretty bit of 'fancy.' We failed, however, in finding whether the thresher was aided, as whalers be-
My Wanderings in West Africa. (February, 1863.)

Crossing the Bar.

On the 3rd of August we were ordered to anchor at anchor ten miles distant from the Benin river, or Great River Formoso.

The stream had a name in the old days of travel. The Rio Formoso was discovered, like the Kongo, in 1593, and first visited in the middle of the sixteenth century: the earliest mission was during the latter third of the seventeenth. In 1744, it was inspected by Ambrose Maria Francis Joseph Palsen de Beaulieu, who, after a residence of fifteen months, under the strictest rules by the governor and council, whose name will long be associated with discovery on this coast, ascended it in an elegant bark, and on his return to the island of Africa, the Salem trader said—a dull grey day, over-tinted above, and brown below, with a low long line which we knew to be mangrove, separating unlovely sea and dreary sky. It was broken by the river mouth, a wide gap bearing from the road N. E. 1/2 E. The southern side was the usual dull thin land streak. The northern bank was somewhat higher, a tongue with a bluff point and tall trees rising, as they usually do, from a sandbank regular as a Dutch dyke, broken up by wind and wave, and broken by swamp

and lagoon. In the roads, the barque Earl of Derby, conspicuous by mast awning and want of paint; and a dark green Medea, with her iron-tipped bowsprit, was the best element. At 11 A.M., about half an hour before high tide, and at least two hours too late, we proceeded to anchor in a bar, on which, by the bye, the water has not yet been properly laid down. The current immediately began to set north. The area of the charts are everywhere flying southwards, but on this coast the only safe rule is, that wherever you want the stream to carry you, you must set in the current, and the tide will carry you away. We set in the 'clean contrary way.' So we put the Bloodhound's head E. and by E. 1/2 E., and dash right for the gap. Presently two trees forming a nick show dimly off the north-west spit, and three whitewashed factories gradually disclose themselves. This, according to the learned, proves that under the influence of the tide we have fallen too far southward, and consequently that we shall carry less water than perhaps we may want. The deepest line, it is said, is obtained by 'opening out' the three factory—Messrs. Stewart and Douglas—clear of the north-west point, and then to run in north-east, allowing for tide and current. On this point, however, opinions differ; many are in favour of opening all three houses.

The gap now lay three or four miles, the heavy breakers clothed the dreaded north and south banks with sheets of foam. During the bad weather of the rain, the roads are a maze of bays; the bar breaks right across, and the entrance, which has never more than thirteen feet of water at the springs, becomes impassable. We found it tolerably quiescent, though at times a long-line towing sea, coming, wall-like, under the quarter, with a rise of ten to twelve feet, and breaking against the paddles, showed that the lion was not yet asleep. It lies at least fifteen miles north of the mouth of Fishownton Creek, which leads, after seven days of lazy work, to Lagos. The creek is at least fifteen miles long to Lagos, and the village of the ruffian Akala, and
the line is hardly open to boats. A few slaves were the only tenants of the noble tenements, their masters having thought better to take themselves off where no cruiser could catch them. The scenes seen were a wild-looking race, black, muscular, scantly clad, and with little lumps of wool protruding from their heads, sometimes like ragged balls of worsted, sometimes like bear’s ears and thrum mops, sometimes like a sainly glory. They are lined for worthy descendents of the ‘robbers or pirates of Usia,’ of whom Boosman writes, in 1702, ‘They are very poor, and only on robbery, they sail alike to all parts of this river, and seize all that lights in their way, whether men, beasts, or goods; all which they sell to the first that come hither for victuals, with which they are not at all provided.’

The factories then engaged our attention. Of course they are excruciatingly situated for health and safety. Built in the old time when a ship of 400 tons was collected in their week, they now remain because no one will take the trouble to shift them. I had read in Dr. W. F. Daniell’s ‘Sketches of the Nautical Topography, &c., of the Gulf of Guinea’ that these ‘edifices are commodiously built of wood, somewhat after the Spanish style, and that they contain a number of apartments in a middle story, elevated above the adjoining swamps.’ I was not surprised to see wreathed barracks, principally of mast and broken-down boardings, some of them inundated after heavy rains. Whilst people prefer these places to the stilt, they must expect an occasional visitation from the natives, to say nothing of fever and dysentery.

On the right of the river, looking upwards, lay ‘Horsfall House,’ the site a sandy islet barely above high water, and recommended only by a narrow bank on the nearer shore. A three-masted schooner, without attempt at a tacking, the Pride of Canada, was anchored off this place. The factory had been threatened with attack on the 21st of June by a body of about 1000 men of the Princess Dolo, a native chief, who swindled, in fact, by presenting undue cheques. On the mainland below the islet, among the trees between the positions of Obobi, or Dobby Town, of Obino, or Dono, of Chokwo, the property of the chief Chokwo, was Bororo, a French fort and factory, named in 1788 by Captain Landolphy on the spacious d’Owyers: it lasted till 1792, and died of the French Revolution. The present factory, named Obobi, was burned down by Mr. Boscroft. The people not expecting such vigour fired upon his flag in a boat that summoned them on board. ‘Drat the fellows’—his only pet expression—said the old gentleman, twisting his long grizzly beard, after which he let fly, killed one hundred and fifty, and then landing drove the dusky negroes from their goods and chattels to the bush. Since that day they are careful to have ‘small countries,’ i.e., suburban stores are placed; and the rapid growth of philanthropy has ordered whites more to knock down negro towns.

On the proper right of the river we first see Messa’s factory, with flag and guns; behind it is the second creek, called Wako and Jakwa (Wacow and Jacqua in old charts), which runs into the bush and leads to some extensive settlements. Beyond this, at a nearly regular intervals of half a mile, and separated by a shore of sand, mud, and dwarf mangrove, lie the tall factories of Dr. Henry and Messers. Stewart and Douglas, with schooners and other craft alongside. They are tall white buildings, dignified; if one may say of mat and board—deep verandahs and low outhouses for casks and stores. Interspersed, there is a village of Jhal Town and Odepa Town nestled in the thick mangrove. The former belonged to a well-known slave-trader long since deceased. He left a large property which was dissipated by his Grace son’s sons.

There was, however, a redeeming point in the view. Amidst all the squab and wretchedness, the majestic ‘River Beautiful’ poured its tribute to the ocean through its headlands, and blue bluffs, which offered the noblest perspective. The breadth, nearly one mile and a half at the mouth, decreased to two and more; whilst even at the farthest visible point, where it turns to the north-west, it is but little less than fifty yards. The tranquil expanse was varied when we first saw it by a number of floating islands, or rather grass fields, which formed lines, and slowly but surely charged us. It is a curious and picturesque sight to see them drift up and down with the current;—they are not, however, unknown to us; we had studied them near Lagos. Most frequent during the rains, they are the splendid freshets that sweep away the reedy tracts that outline the river’s higher banks, at a distance they suggest the floating gardens of Analogue. Some are of considerable magnitude; a moderate size would be 100 feet long by 20 broad and 2 fathoms deep, forming a total of 10,000 cubic feet, so thick and matted that even an anchor cannot sink through. They are thickly populated with saplings, bird, a large brown crane, paces about them in search of the serpents that may be seen cutting the waters en route to a safer locality. The small grass-green frog croaks through the day and night, whilst the culex sings his hideous song, and the sandflies float over the green expanse like motes in a sunbeam. These islands, as they bear down, require a careful lookout. Once alight—nay, carry the tallest ship from her mawings, and they might take a fancy to enter her across the bar. Some sailors prefer to lay out a large keg anchor, and to swing the craft; others allow ‘lots’ of cable, and give her a sheer. At certain times of the year, however, especially August, the chances are that a vessel at anchor in the Benin river will drift twice a week, giving uncalled-for trouble to all on board.

After two hours’ steaming, the Bloodhound came to an anchor. The good old ship is well known in this river. During her first visit, in 1857, she was rash; her boats proceeded to attack one ‘Smart,’ a black fellow living up the Orogui Creek. Above Yaboe Town. Mr. Smart justified his name; two Bloodhounds were killed, and seven were wounded.

On the present occasion her very mild rascality was caused by a peculiar boldness of native villany. In the latter part of 1861, some Krubos belonging to Messrs. Harrison’s factory were attacked by the Fishtown people; one was murdered and three were driven from their boat, which was plundered. The Bloodhound had been dispatched from Lagos to investigate the subject, but ‘murder and piracy’ being peculiarly prevalent in West Africa, no other steps were ever dreamed of. The natives naturally resolved again to taste the dear delights of slaughter and plunder. After some petty troubles, a Jakri man having been killed by Krubos whilst attempting to steal a canoe—to the West African the canoe is like the mare to the Arab—the chief Akawo collected his war vessels, filled two of them with about 200 armed slaves, and about eight a.m. on the 24th May openly attacked Dr. Henry’s factory. It is almost unnecessary to say that the owner was absent; he had crossed the bar to meet the mail steamer. The ruffles, entering the house, maltreated and wounded two of the servants, and threatening Mrs. Henry with disgrace and death forced her to fly through swamp and marsh to a neighbouring factory, where it is said her reception was the reverse of hospitable. They ended by plundering all they could lay hands on. The unfortunate young Englishwoman fell ill with fever brought on by fright and excitement, lingered on without...
rallying, and died of nervous depression on the 11th of June. Mr. H. had expected, the husband was eager to punish the wife's murderers. He visited in person Fernando Po, the most enterprising of the small English officials, and on application easily persuaded H. M.'s consul to fall foul of 'etiquette' as to undertake in a place beyond his jurisdiction the task of redress for, if not of actual punishment of, the outrage. The consul wrote an energetic protest to the King, and Commander Stokes, whose feelings on the subject were equally excited, sent the appearance of the Bloodhound in the Benin waters.

On the afternoon of our entrance a meeting of the agents and traders was called, and the Chief Idyare—popularly known as Governor Jerry—was requested, after 'doing service,' to come on board with the head men of the river, a cane and a written promise of safe conduct to and from the ship being forwarded to him. He returned with the submissive answer, promising to come himself, but protestating that he could not answer for others.

But the King and had received from Mr. Beecroft in 1851 a silver-headed stick, which constituted him the head of a lower river, and in return he had signed on board, as H. M. 's ship Jacob a treaty promising protection to British life and property: In 1853-56 he was removed by Mr. Consul Campbell in favour of one Abromoni; the change, however, appears not to have been for the better, so that the governorship returned to its original

Governor Jerry is now a very old man, and—age is seldom powerful among barbarians—opinions as to his ability of defending strangers differ. This leads me to consider the politics of the river, which are very purely African. The lower course of the Benin river owes a manner of allegiance to the King of Great Benin City; that is to say, they pay him the customs of the olden time; when he is weak, they laugh at his beard. Under present circumstances, they have established a kind of independence, and the population, headed by the different families, both of them originally, have established themselves, like the maritime tribes of Africa generally, a nation of carriers, brokers, and middlemen. In their press times, they insist upon trust—a system of credit bearing in Africa the same relationship to legitimate and ready money transactions as bill-discounting does to banking in England. Unprincipled whites have encouraged a system which, with great risks, offers a prospect of immense profits. The natives, who look only to the present hour, are contented to be measured by the method, and have repeatedly threatened to attack those who refuse such gambling, rendering trust impossible. Elusa, son of Rejo or Rejugg, king of Warri and of Lower Benin—which has been settled from Warri—died in June, and in his place his brother, Ajoe, was elected. The numerous slaves of the former rose up in arms, left Warri town, and migrated to the Bateri (Batue') Creek, where they founded settlements and traded with Europeans. Ajoejup left also sons and slaves, amongst the former is the village Akahwa, now the head of that part of the house. He is consequently a grandson to old Elusa, and his aunt is the Princess Dolo, of Obobi, whose son Choname, in 1851, founded the famous factory. For this outrage the offenders were fined eighty-two trade punctures of palm oil; they signed away to be in prison there, naturally, matters, and the three principal surviving sons of old Elusa are in order of age, Chonawana, Erri, and Endawiri. Elusa is an inveterate drunkard, and the two others lack the ineptive faculty, and are compelled by want of unregulately to leave their claims in abeyance, and to live in the royal quarters near Warri.

Jerry House, now represented by Idyare the governor, is connected with Elusa's; the grandfather was a slave to the king of Benin. The father was one Wako, whose name ('Wacow') appears in our old charts. Jerry lives at Jakwa, a town lying about two miles up the Jakwa creek, behind Messe Harrison's factory; it is an extensive settlement, containing some one thousand souls. He does not keep slaves, as he says, but has a number of slave girls, Dr. Danielli estimates the population at 'near two thousand,' and calls it the 'largest town in the country,' which is an error. His eldest brother is a very old and unimportant chief, named Jibouwu, who on occasion uses the diplomatic excuse, and is always 'too sick.' The only one of the family that ventures near us, was his, a somewhat remarkable man, aged about fifty-five, and never quite sober. The tall old negro has a gruff and abrupt manner, which accords with his rough and independent sentiments. When he called upon us his rugged coal-black face and grizzly shock of hair was surrounded by a fillet of small red beads, leopards' teeth and claws, and his big curly frame was clad in a suit of cloth coat, and lined, gold-laced, and many-capped, such as 'parochilas' were once wont to wear. He ever applied to his cloth, whose onanism was permitted to endure.

The other native traders in the Benin river are mere brokers, who fetch produce from the upper country, and sell it to Europeans. In this maritime tract there is absolutely no cultivation, the people are wholly dependent upon imports. At all times their boys or slaves are of wretched form; expectation from Cuba would be hailed as a blessing by the poor devils, if they could throw off the idea that they are exported to become butchers' slaves. They must work under the lash from four F.M. to three A.M., upon four hours of boiled rice. Two such meals will probably be allowed them whilst living one hundred miles. They are mere atomies. They will ride the mails which the ship's pigs refuse, and, remember, this is in times of plenty. More than half starved, they are always the first to make disturbance when their miserable pittance is curtailed. 'Stopping trade,' therefore, is clearly ahoof upon the river. But as many of the wealthy traders are hoarders, the length of stoppage may vary from three to nine months.

To the reader it may appear strange that amidst this wealth of princes—they pullulate here as in the trans-Blunere regions— occupying the present state of society, whose onanism should be permitted to endure.

But we are in Africa, where all reason is inverted. Each white

* An old Anglo-African term for saluting. The extraordinary Captain Phil. Beaven gives, in his African Memoir, probably foot not been written. 'Saluting is called in this part of Africa 'doing service,' when a slave has given me this present, he said he should now do me service; and seven very handsome slaves were immediately discharged from the ship before touch.'

My Wanderings in West Africa. [February, 1863.]

The African Forest.

friend and family, seem to diffuse an ugliness over every African river, however fair. More especially the feeling is uppermost when, instead of smooth, pellucid mists glazing the landscape, a drizzling rain, broken only by a grey fog, deforms the water; and on land, instead of waving branches,

The very trees so thick and tall
Cast gloom, not shade around.

Then, the stream is dark as a suicide's river, and the mangroves wave like leafless plumes, and, as the long-creeping clouds close in upon the voyager, he experiences a sense of depression which nothing can remove.

As we advanced the broad Bateri narrowed from one thousand to one hundred and fifty yards; the river, however, was still long. After about seven miles, not including the two across the Benin river, we exchanged our line for the short and known as Alagwa Tiptap or Little Alagwa, a very narrow and winding creek. The object of this cut is to avoid the low banks on N.E. and S.E. and west, which would be necessary if following the Bateri into the Escravos. And now, before it is dark, I would draw a short sketch of the red mangrove—the white is a tree growing high and dry—as it appears at full tide in the Delta of the Niger.

These forests of the sea at once resolve themselves into two different appearances. One is tall, dark, reeded, and snuggling to the feet, and rising from the soft mud, which is visible only when the water is out. The boughs have often a graceful bend, dipping towards the stream before they rise perpendicularly. The trunks are mere uprights, then bending forward to the wave, when their white boles are conspicuous from afar, in large growths there are many fallen trees, and in few parts of the Niger's Delta have I passed along a causeway without finding the mangrove suckers cut. I met them, not on the course of the stream run transverse walls of this tall, dense vegetation, where they are least to be expected; their growth is probably caused by depressions in the level of the bank, causing an increase of humidity. The other mangrove tract is low and bushy, and scrubby, and its light green contrasts with the spinach blood of the tall plants. Occasionally this is the work of man, when after the wood has been cleared away a new growth has been permitted to appear. In many places, however, I have satisfied myself that the phenomenon is natural, and attribute it to the comparative elevation, which, by supporting the vegetation. When the bank rises a foot or two above the highest level of the flood, the eye delights to see other and more favoured growths—palms whose nuts no hand ever gathered; the majestic cotton-wood, with its towering white columns gleaming through the depths of green; the graceful feathery tararum veiling the sky with its emerald-coloured gauges; and the profusion of variety that distinguishes the tropical jungle from the temperate forest.

There is little to divert the animal creation in these bushes, and of the mangrove flies the less said the better; they are never wanted, and they are ready at all times to bite from you a large steak. A few brown cranes build in low trees huge nests, looking like wood drifed there during the last inundation, and often side by side with them are deformed black swellings from the trunks—the nests of a wicked black-bird. A fishhawk here and there sits sentinel upon some taller mangrove, but he never affords a shot. Even the white and black kingfisher—the beautiful painted variety was only once seen—skims the waves at an unapproachable distance. The parrots winnow the air, screaming between us and the clouds; the swift wood-pigeon swerves when he sees a human being, but as usual they are soon in the curlew with its wild cry of alarm rises as if flushed and fired at every day. Crocodiles abound; but as usual they are secured, even after being killed. When young they prefer to bask
upon some horizontal tree-trunk. When they give up childish habits they sprawl upon the mud. In either position, even after a mortal shot, they will by some peculiar action of the muscles reach the water, and, dying, sink to the bottom. Of these we heard of the exceptionally large and fine crocodile that had just eaten an old woman; such might have been the case, but that crocodile is found in every river on the coast. Fish is ever abundant where such fish-eaters are not too numerous; the mouth of every creek shows a weir or a crane.

In the Benin river there is a regular season for a small fry, probably of an African herring, which is here as well known as the whitebait of Greenwich. In the months of August and September, when the rains are heaviest, old wives may be seen fishing with bamboo baskets. The fry is sun-dried or smoked, packed in punnets, and sent up the country to fetch a profit of 200 per cent. This tropical whitebait is described as being too rich and oily for English tastes.

The day was far from pleasant; now cold and rainy, then recking and still. Residents divide the Niger year into three distinct seasons—the rainy, the smoky, and the dry. As usual near the tropics, there appears to be a great contrast, and the stranger will do well to remember that he is in the zone of perpetual rain. The wet season or winter in this part of the world begins in mid-May, and lasts with an occasional break, till the end of September, ending like the Elefants of Western India, with violent storms. Tornadoes then follow, accompanied by light breezes. In early December are the heaviest fogs, which continue till March. This is the dry season, which is again succeeded by outbreaks of electricity. The rainy season is over the southern western; but, as on other parts of the coast, the nimbal mass often works round to the opposite quarter. On the other hand, tornadoes come from the north-east.

Narrower and narrower grew the creek as we advanced; it soon diminished from fifty to fifteen yards, or the size of an average English river. There were many islands, with tall trees, which are never removed when they fall, and in parts we passed through a tunnel of aerial rootwork and pendent branches. As the work progressed, we substituted paddles for oars, and we hurried forward, for it was waxing dark. The sides opened out, and banks appeared on each side, palm and pantedans contended for room with the mangrove, and ere it was too obscure for vision, we passed through the scrub-fringed mouth which connects the Alagwa Tiya with the Escaros river.

Opposite us twinkled the lights of Ejobon, but it was not our destination. Having resumed our oars, we struck across the 'Slave's' river.' A bold expanse of water, but not, of the European taste. On return we mastered the principal features, and we observed the course of the Escaros, correlated by Ejobon, running down between N.N.W. E. and N.E. E. It is the nearest southeastern neighbour to the Benin, from whose mouth it is separated by about fifteen miles. Below Ejobon it makes a bend to the west, and after anamosting with the Broder falls into the sea. Local tradition declares it to have twenty-one feet of water over the bar. The pilots give 'twelve and perhaps less,' and the charts show in one place one and a quarter fathoms, besides frightening the mariner with a 'breaks heavily.' As the water was flowing powerfully, we crossed from west to east of the channel of the Escaros, which might here be a mile and a half broad. Our roosting-place lay to the proper left of the river at the bend where it joins the Broder, and as the shades multiplied a twinkling light or two beckoned us from the obelisk, we had a refreshing shower, more persistent than the diurnal. Dr. Henry went aboard to make arrangements for our landing; otherwise a volley of broken metal might have been Africa's reception to the stranger who 'drops in for a quiet evening.'

Having dived behind a bath on account of the number of triangular dorsal fins that appear above water, we proceeded to breakfast, and were served by Olumajá, an aged chief, eldest son and heir of King Kratem. Habited in a tight-fitting dressing-gown of red and white bed-ticking, he brought an excuse from his father, who, age and infirmities not permitting him to call upon us, had sent as credentials a paper of recognition, signed by Mr. Beecroft in 1857. We also received an invitation to the Head Quarter village, and were told that a present of sheep awaited us there. Kratem is all-powerful among the Ejobon, popularity, strength, and munificence, a large and influential tribe. This people inhabit the banks of the Escaros, Broder, Foros, and Dodo river, extending in the N.N.W. to the N. N. of Benin. I have seen many of them in the Bouni. They are fewer in number than the Ibo, but they have the reputation of being good fighters. They are almost always at war with the Jakri men, because, like these, they trade for oil to the 'Sobo country,' the wide lands north and north-east of Wari.‡ Hence probably their ill name and their quarrels with Europeans, who have usually been under charge of their enemies.

Mr. Hutchinson calls them cannibals, and accuses them of eating

† In Mr. Beecroft's paper on the Delta of the Niger (Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, ii, p. 181), we are told that the Sobo country—in the accompanying map it is written Soabo Plains—is the name given to the district watered by the southernmost stream of the Benin River by the natives of Wari River, which represent it as forming part of the Kingdom of Benin. I rather believe that the word applies to the greatest part of the country between Abo on the Niger, the Wari River, and the southern branch of the Benin, which bounds it on the north, not on the join.
‡ Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethipriam, p. 61.
Kruboys, upon the authority of Dr. Henry, which Dr. Henry distinctly denies. On the charts we find that the natives are 'troublesome and turbulent, savage and treacherous.'

As the old king had ever been friendly to Europeans, it was requested to take him in and to renew his 'book.' At 10:30 A.M. we embarked, and turned the boat's head down river. The first discovery was the reverse of pleasant and sent us supplies had not been disembarked at night, consequently the Kruken had stolen half our liquor, and as all had landed in the plunder—such is their custom—the offenders could not be detected. After ten minutes pulling we struck inland, where an earthen pot and a white cloth gave signs of Juju—these things might be mistaken by a novice for 'road-posts'—and we entered a crook, or rather a gut, leading to the King's Town. The course was exceedingly tortuous, often surfacing an angle of sixty or more degrees, whilst paddles were few and steering impossible. At last two men were ordered overboard to push the thing ahead. The region of the creek was of a dark vinous hue, the banks were slimy mud, in which the pole sank three feet, and a hurdle of mangrove sprouts formed an intermittent barrier, the water varied a surface not unlike that of a dirt-pit. A scrubby jungle fringed the bank, and the horizon was shrouded in a curtain of tall cotton-trees, which effectually excluded the sun. The only inhabitants of the place were the peculiar 'mud fish,' half piscine, half lacertine, and dwarf crabs with claws of the brightest ultramarine. After half an hour's hard work, occasionally grumbling and scraping over submerged trees, an opening appeared, and a coco-nut tree prepared us to sight the mat roofs of the settlement. Such are the sites which the old kidnapping days have caused the people of the Niger to prefer. Arrows and ammunition being plentiful there, they cannot be attacked without loss of life. A few trees, thrown across the channel would stop boats and give opportunities for easy shooting. The safest way is to assault on foot with mud-pattens, when they can be used. In some places, however, the creeks are neck-deep and the mire impassable.

We landed in the usual way, carried by the Kruken like babes, a style of debarkation which always affords work to the risible faculties of the natives. At a place upper Uperajah, a crowd of both sexes and all ages gathered about us, perfectly civil, but halfAstipied by superstition and curiosity. Many of them, the Kruken, now looked upon a white man for the first time. After escaping the sloughs of the entrance, we formed up, and attended by armed Kruken, were escorted by a dignitary in chimney-pot hat and brass-buttoned broadcloth coat, to a palaver-house at the other end of the settlement. During the walk the boat struck us with admiration; they are plump, and sound the height, the 'lady Devons,' and the 'rent-paying Herefords' of these lands. One fine bull would have been admired among the Natives tribes as a mark of the men's wealth, and he wandered about with the same dignity. It is evident that the delta of the Niger produces a species quite fatal to cattle at Fernando Po. The place of our reception was by no means huge; a small, dark room, with bamboo seats, and facing the entrance a deep alcove with matted earth-bench—the only furnitures were the huge fan, a large circle of ox-hide, black and white preferred, with the skin on, attached to a wooden handle, which hisects it as to form the flags, and sometimes prettily ornamented with red silk and worsted. We afterwards saw these articles everywhere at Benin city, but the owners refused to sell them.

Taking our places in the alcove, the seat of dignity, we inspected the crowd which, as we expected, was composed of the Negroes, women, and children. The Esos are nearly all freemen, and therefore they greatly resemble one another. The tribe-mark in both sexes is a line extending from the scalp down the forehead to the tip of the nose, made with a razor or a sharp knife, and blackened with charcoal and gunpowder. It is opened and re-opened till a long thin slit is formed, and as it were, draws up the skin at the bridge of the nose, and gives a peculiar expression to the countenance. The people of Benin have a similar mark, but it is not raised, and it often ceases at the eyebrows. Men and women have on each cheek three short parallel cuts, sometimes straight, sometimes crescent-shaped. Another favourite decorum is three broad stripes of scar, like the effects of burning, down the front of the body from the chest to the lower stomach. Lastly, the skin is adorned with 'beauty-berries,' buttons of raised flesh that much resemble exanthema. The style of hair-dressing is very wild. Some wear threemops, others long and crooked horns of plated hair, others knobs of wool irregularly disposed on their heads. The most popular, and by far the handsomest, are the ladies; some, however, are fair and reddish, a thing everywhere to be observed among Nigere tribes. Among the Nigere women of the lower town, the men are savage and staring, the women are not uniformly pleasant; the eyes especially being large and dark, and fringed with long upper curling lashes which this tribe does not remove. The dress of the men is of the material of the usual loin-cloth; their wives add to it an upper veil, which is thrown loosely round the shoulders. The most picturesque part of the world is coral; not in beads, but in long pieces like bits of 'churchwarden's stem.' A string of this article is a regal present. The darker the colour and the larger the piece, the better, and a good bunch will fetch a puncheon or two of palm oil. Other ornaments are, big pewter bracelets, or brass, after the Benin fashion, huge rings of rudely cut ivory round the wrists and fingers, large and thin ropes of braided seed-bead, especially blue; various large porcelain beads, small-brassed brass chains round the ankles, and strings of the Indian cowries. Chil-
ward, where a point which we called Mangrove Bluff rises about five miles above Uperia. Having now left the Escravos flowing westwards, and not having reached the Forcados or ‘slavery slaves,’ the next debouchure, we found ourselves in a kind of neutral water. According to the older books, El Broder or Brodero, generally pronounced Brodie, is the native name of the Escravos river. But the word is palpably not African, and is here applied by the traders to that broad band of lagune-like water which, as will be seen, connects the Escravos ultimately with the Ramos and the Wari rivers. It gathers, as it were, the waters from the several outlets that have received European names. The sea was nowhere sighted, the streams being everywhere land-locked, and the want of slope causes them to wind pain-fully to the voyager who knows that here the current once be within gunshot, and of two or three miles distant from his destination.

After passing Mangrove Bluff, we went on right to the right bank of the Escravos river flowing to the south. The mouth is known by the comparatively high ground on the east. At the distance of three miles from the entrance, according to bygone travellers, is the Palma island and town; here the Portuguese had a fort, a chapel, and several factories, which were abandoned on account of the salinity of the spot. It provokes our curiosity to know how these voyagers of the olden time, in their wretched barks, desponded by meals, raised the great masts of their vessels and dared not proceed.

We now turned to the north-east, and passed a place where in Ship xvii. ‘Jocke’s Wharf’ is placed. Formerly there was a town here, now it is reduced to three or four huts of people who dry fish. The site is favourable for a village; a high clay ridge is the oil-trade, which are in constant exercise. On the other hand, after a few days’ work together, beef and rum, as might be expected, tell their tale. Under various pretenses we halted every half hour, and many and loud were the complaints against the man for top;* and our hospitable guide. The latter had begun by informing us that from the Bot Creek to the factory it was two miles; presently it became six; and when we had passed the kind of neutral main, said more and even more. The object was to prevent our being lawless, and anchoring in the creek. But the tide now running out like a sluice, gave us hard work. We rowed ten yards and we fell back four. The Krumen clamored for supper, but as there was none for us it would not have been civil in them to satisfy their hunger.

The night waxed painfully dark: we could not distinguish the features of the upper river, which will therefore be touched upon when we return. At 11 P.M., we heard shots a-head; they proceeded on our right the line of ships, diligently to throw away gunpowder in salutes. A long part of the mouth is placed abreast of a tall lone shed—Mossy Harrison’s factory, which rejoices in the name of ‘Swamp Gate.’ The agent, Mr. McMath, was only saluted with the loudest of bell-boys. All, however, was dreary and gloomy till a single taper glimmered through a mist just descending into rain. A dreadfully bare tree to see how we cross the stream to the mouth of a narrow creek; and presently, to our delight, we saw a blazing fire, and a tall house behind it. Laying upon a square platform of tree-trunks fitted like a log-cabin in the Far West—this abdominal, if filled with stones, would answer well as a river pier—we toiled up the ladder-like steps of the tene-ment. Our premises, however, are within hearing. The site is a clear one; the mangroves upon the right bank of a muddy creek; and nothing can equal the dulness of the

*Man for top is good Anglo-African for Lord of Heaven.
the view. The ground is virgin and highly fertile; a black mud, which shines the darkest soils of Guzerat, and the retreating waters expose beds of mire which, with a little working, might be made to produce anything. The African plum and the papaw seem to grow wild. The tobacco fields rise without a foot of land, in which three feet above the surface. Large leaves, and a mild and mellow flavor. Dr. Henry has cultivated five acres of rice, a fine white grain, quite unlike the coarse red African. His practice has not been followed. The place is surrounded by trees, and growth would produce a hundred and twenty puncheons of rum (a hundred and twenty gallons each), and thirty-five over proof; such, at least, is the quantity of rice produced, which will not sell for less than "salaries." The normal industry of the place is palm-oil, being shipped directly to the country to the east and north. The native sieve and laboriously stamp the nut in canoes, and the men who make a little cold water, ladle out the oil. They have learned to prepare nut-oil, by breaking the stone, pounding the kernel, and drawing off the product, which is white as lard. The 'black oil' of Yoruba, I should warn the reader, is in substance the same; but in this case the kernel is hard, and the proceeds are allowed to drip into a hole below, rather cold, who must break the hard nuts by hand. The work, however, is laborious, as it is laborious, or in some cases, the people appear very well to be a great success. This branch of trade was first started about twenty-five years ago by Mr. Ralph Dawson, a West African merchant, who, naturally enough, was led into it; in more modern times, Mr. Robert Heell, of Sanso, instead, is the one making the possibility of so making money. At present 500—

600 tons each worth £1 or £1 5s. are annually sent to Liverpool. Not including four in the shell, the kernel has thirty-three per cent, of fatty matters, in fact, proportionately more than the pericarp and the residue, when chemists shall have taught us how to make it, will be worth £4 per ton. Nine tons of stones give two tons of kernels, and two tons of kernels give one ton of oil; it is not, therefore, worth while to import them unhusked. Mat-bags are better than boxes for exporting the produce, as the air passes through them, preventing spoiling by the natives.

The Sabbath evening concluded with a loud salvoes of six-pounders. A war had been threatened between Amhara and a younger brother of Shena. These discharges announced that the palaver had met with a decided answer. Such salvoes are about as interesting as the war of certain Mexican and Johnstones; but the scenes are more exciting and picturesque, of which the war in China than in the Land of Cakes. The peace will probably be a death-blow to sundry poor devils of slaves. The ferocious custom of eating men on occasions of war, to bury the victors up to the neck in earth, and after Sudanian fashion, to let them starve when the medium of food and water placed within reach is exhausted.

The Sabbath night was not rendered pleasant by the bass croaking of huge bull-frogs that formed an antichorus to the rattle of the small green tenor, Riana Fippen.

Monday was a somewhat more satisfactory day. A breakfast of palm-oil and bread, which was eaten with the most relish, and the soup was lighted by the "Wari lawyer" Yacare, who, like his elder brother, had promised a visit to 10 A.M. Noon, however, and mid-afternoon had sped, and no prince came. They were said to be sleeping their siesta; a lid to the brickwork, after meals, which may include a bottle of rum, fall into a kind of lethargy. This shows only those parts of the Niger Delta. Several canoes were drawn and half-drawn up the mud-bank, and the villagers, dressed in their brightest costumes, huddled together staring at us. After forty minutes' paddling, we arrived at the main creek, which we were to pass after mowing with another from above, makes a small island, and turning from north to south, to a small branch which lies by the east, we sighted the town of Wari.

Wari—also called Warri, Warri, Wawri, Owere, Awari, Owere, and was known to have been a very wealthy city. The town, once the capital of a powerful kingdom, has ever claimed independence. Bosman relates: "Upon one of these branches (of the Benin river) the Portuguese have a lodge and a church at the town of Awerri, which is governed by its particular and independent king, who does not treat the king of Great Benin otherwise than as his neighbor and ally. So in the present day the King of Benin has repeatedly summoned the princes of Warri to pay visits to his capital; and if they have not been able to visit him, he has been able to visit them. The position is an island, 32 miles in circumference, and it lies upon the southeastern side of a crook marked by fifty yards. The foundation is a clay bank raised a few feet from the water. Books inform us that in former times the island was well cultivated and had a market. But the appearance of an extensive park, to Captain Adams it appeared as if it had dropped down from the clouds, for all the surrounding shores consist of an impenetrable forest rising out of a swamp. During the days of the late king the bush and grass, were carefully cleared away; at present all is foul and neglected. Again, we read that the town consists of about half a mile of parterre, with no such separation; the frontage is long and straggling, and the houses like that of the various parts divided from each other about half a mile of parterre, with no such separation; the frontage is long and straggling, and the houses like that of the various parts divided from each other about half a mile of parterre, with no such separation; the frontage is long and straggling, and the houses like that of the various parts divided from each other about half a mile of parterre, with no such separation; the frontage is long and straggling, and the houses like that of the various parts divided from each other about half a mile of parterre, with no such separation; the frontage is long and straggling, and the houses like that of the various parts divided from each other.
After delivering some details touching the stoppage of trade, and lamenting its necessity, the Consul proposed a walk to see the remains of the Portuguese mission which Ebeba after some demur consented to show.

According to Father Jeronimo Morella da Sorerento, in his Voyage to Congo and several other countries, chiefly in Southern Africa, two Capuchin missionaries—Fathers Bonaventura da Firenze and Angelo Maria d’Ajaecio—sailed from the Island of St. Thomas. They entered the Forrocoos River, and settling at Wari, which they call the kingdom of Oueni, converted many of the natives. In a future page I shall recount more of their adventures. No local tradition touching this mission remains; it certainly disappeared before 1845, as there are traders in the Benin River dating from that time. The last slaves were exported in 1838. The town, however, still exists. The presence of old iron caronades half embedded in the ground. According to an old report, the Capuchin mission was extensive. Some few years ago there were remnants of three or four religious houses, and two large cemeteries. Captain Adams, who visited the town of Wari early in the present century, found several remains of the Catholic religion and remains of religious edifices.

The path led south through scattered compounds into fields of grass, where dry sheets of black mire rendered walking a toil. Some bitter-orange trees and a few limes were the only signs of

* The good father was a Capuchin and apostolic missionary in the year 1628. His work, which is minute and valuable, was first made English from the Italian in Churchill’s collection, vol. i. p. 531. I borrow from Piner’s general collection, &c., vol. 16.

† They were not, as the Directory says (p. 490), the ‘first persons that attempted to bring Christianity into equatorial Africa.’ Father Morella da Sorerento, St. Thomas; Father Francis da Montaleone, superior in the kingdom of Wari; and also that a new mission had been established at Benin. The date is in the first sight of the king, in May, 1863, whereas it is clear from Morella (p. 392), who was on the coast in 1862, that they were there before he was. ‘Until our coming into this part of Benin,’ says the letter, ‘there had been a very curious story. The natives had not seen any of the face of any other man. Every time any ship came in order to trade in their harbours, the natives would think the season if they had any capuchins on board.’

 Europeans having been there. Like the Egos, the people of Wari will not cultivate anything; they depend entirely upon their neighbours. The subsist in a reddish grey clay, fired for pottery. In more than one place we saw a klin—an open space shown only by heaps of ashes and embers half covered in the open air. Such work can hardly produce a good article; the earthen pots, even after burning, looked half raw, and I doubt not had little coherence. Yet the trade is extensive, and dates from many years; old travellers mention it as the special industry of Wari. After a few minutes we reached the ruins of a house belonging to one Okodoko, an influential trader, who, after making himself particularly obnoxious to Europeans, has settled in the Bateri Creek. From that point we visited several houses that belonged to the late king Bla and his sons; our leader was Dr. Henry, who remembered Wari in its former glory; then turning westwards, were led by Ebeba to a place where once ‘tick he hand,’ and a pantomime showed that the slave trade was still flourishing. He was manifestly ‘exercised’ by our curiosity, and as usual his inquisitiveness took a bad turn. These natives of the Niger delta are at once the most suspicious, unconfiding, and treacherous race in West Africa; they cannot look any man in the eye, and say, ‘in sane fear of its consequences.

At length, when giving up the search in despair, I caught sight of a tall crucifix close to Ebeba’s house. It still bore a crown of thorns, in bronze, nailed to the centre, where the Slave traders meet the body, and a rude M of the same material was fastened to the lower upright. It had, however, no date. Singularly wild and strange this emblem arose from a thicket of grass surrounded by dense jungle, with a typical dead tree in front. Native huts were here and there peeping over the bush, and hard by stood the usual Juju house, a dwarfed of tattered matting, garnished with an apron of tarnished white calico—suggestive signs of the difficulties with which the Cross has to contend in these lands where nature runs riot, and where all is rank as the spirit of man—difficulties against which it has fought a good fight, but hitherto with signal failure!

‘A large wooden cross,’ says Captain Adams, ‘had withstood the tooth of time, and was remaining in a very perfect state, in one of the angles formed by two roads intersecting each other.’ To this ‘vestiges of the building and ancient relics may still be seen; but the cross, when I visited the spot, had wholly disappeared. The reader will observe that we saw just the contrary.’

Hard by the crucifix was a mound of solid earth, whose tread told us that it was a place of sepulture. But of these reverend men, these Nigerian martyrs, it may be truly said, ‘Time hath corrupted their epitaphs and buried their very tomstones.’ Not a sign of them could be seen on the banks of the river and weathered skull. Yet they have had their reward. They laboured through life at a labour of pleasing God to end in eternal repose. And the good which they did live after them. At Wari we saw none of the abominations which afterwards met our eyes in the city of Benin.

I conclude this part of the subject with a pleasant story from Father Morolla.

The vice superior Father Angelo Maria d’Ajaecio, of the province of Corsica, together with Father Bonaventura da Firenze, having but just set footing in the kingdom of Oueni, they were very courteously received by that king. This prince was better bred than ordinary, having been brought up among the Portuguese, whose language he was an almost master of, and besides, write and read, a qualification unusual among these Ethiopian princes. Almost at the very door of the castle, the king suddenly broke out into these words: ‘If your Majesty does desire to have me to continue within your dominions, you must lay your injunctions on your subjects that they embrace the holy state of matrimony, according to our rites and cere-
having first taken leave of her relations, set out with some few Portuguese, and the missioner, for the aforesaid kingdom. Being just enterprising, she cared not to comply with his request; but as for himself, he could never consent to it, unless he were made to wear a White, as some of his predecessors had been. But what White would care to marry with a Black, even though he were a crownedhead, especially among the Portuguese who naturally despise them? Nevertheless, the plainness of her beauty, her trust in God's providence to promote his own glory, gave no repulse to the obstinate monarch, but seemed to approve of all he said. To bring this good work to effect, he immediately departed, taking his way towards the island of St. Thomas, situate under the equatorial line, and reckoned one of the nine countries conquered by the Portuguese in Africa. There he made it his business to inquire after a White woman that would marry a Black that was a crownedhead, and whither he was informed that there was one in that island, though of mean condition, whose poverty and meanesses were nevertheless enabled by the fervent devotion of her neighbours and a comely personage. Notwithstanding he was told that this woman was proper for the purpose, yet he did not the courage to speak to her uncle about her, under whose care and protection she was; but contriving how to bring about his design, with a lively faith in God, one day while he was saying mass, he turned himself about to the aforesaid personage, conjuring him, in the presence of all the people, in the man, and for the service of the most high God, not to deny him one request, which was, that he would let his niece marry the king of Oueni, which would greatly centre in his heart, if not totally effect the conversion of that kingdom. At the hearing of this, that good man being unwilling to be influenced by the pious missionary reasons, could not prevent weeping, and bowing down his head as a token of his consent.

The young lady not long afterwards, 

whereupon one of those that had accompanied the Queen to Oueni, said to him, 'Tell me, my lord, of what you do, lest, apprehending these apostolical missioners, you create a difference between the crown of Portugal and the See of Rome. We are much obliged to these holy men for raising our countrymen to a Christian state. The Governor would not meddle with these holy men, but ordered them to be sent to Loanda, where there were likewise great complaints made against them by the aforesaid priest and his adherents. Hence they sent to the tribunal at Lisbon, where being declared innocent, in that they had sufficient authority from the crown for what they had acted, their accusers were cited to appear to make good, if they could, their allegations; which not being able to do, the chief alminister, the ecclesiastical, led to Brazil, and the others to other places for protection. 

Father Bonaventura da Freira, on account of his great indispositions, returned to Italy; but Father Angelo Maria directed the course a new towards the island of St. Thomas, where, having performed the part of a good missionary and a good Christian, teaching by his exemplary life what his tongue omitted, he returned after some time to Lisbon, and died there.

Having finished our pilgrimage, we rejoiced therewith, which occasioned us to inquire why we 'look dem Nick.' We represented that white men like black men visit the graves of their ancestors, and he was composed to rest contented with the explanation. After reaching the village and assuring the people once more that they were not palaver, i.e., no quarrel, with Wari, we shook hands with sire and 'son,' bade good-bye, and mounted on our horse.

Scarcely were the oars out before a large canoe, manned by a score of pullaboys, came charging up the creek. It proved to be the vehicle of Chamwana, who, having now finished his slumber, bethought himself of his visit. Leaving word that he might follow us to the factory, we rowed down with the tide, and after fifty minutes reached our temporary home, a world turning dark and we hungry. 

The younger brother, Nyaure, presently appeared in his equipage and the palaver came up. I will not describe it; in fact it is indescribable. The immense liberality displayed by the expectant negro, who loves to ventinate his eloquence, and his vicious tactfulness when expected to speak, the rude stupidity of some remarks and the excessive acuteness of others, the artful special pleading and the ingenuous admissions of a leader, the ambiguous comparison of himself with the white man, and the confession of an unlimited inferiority when he gains by it, the extra cunning which always overreaches itself, and the sound good sense, and, finally, the locks, the bay-talk, the remarks of attendants and the hard drinking—Nyaure never dropped his calabash tube of palm-wine—these contracts and conditions form a picture that must be seen to be understood. The palaver, however, ended at 9 P.M., the elder brother remaining to interfere in Bemin affairs, and the younger, who throughout had proved his right to the title of Wari lawyer, being declared expert and impudent than Mr. Bo* III, Q.C., and undertook the attempt under protest of being a small boy. 

After a late dinner, thoroughly tired of 'talking talk,' we retired to rest, declining to drink any more, that is, to drink no more, or to drink, i.e., no quarrel, with Wari, we shook hands with sire and 'son,' bade good-bye, and mounted on our horse.

The other hand they are no less free with the other members of the family, sisters and daughters, and they appear to take offences if these ornaments of the house are not duly admired. We were often signalled to by the men of the villages, who nodded significantly to dark apparitions and a world turning dark and we hungry.

The next day—Tuesday, the 14th August—was fixed upon for our
departed the Consul had said 9 A.M. and he intended adhering to it. Exactly at ten minutes after that time we entered the gig, and presently issued out into the Warri River. We halted a few minutes with Dr. Math of Swamp Camp, and fortified ourselves with bitter ale against the day that threatened to be extremely fiery and watery. At 10.30 A.M. we took leave of our hospitable entertainers, who insisted on sending us a viaticum of two dozen of beer, and we set out upon our return voyage.

We had missed the tide by about two hours, and suffered accordingly. At first it was slack, then it came up against us; during the whole time we had hardly any of it in our favour. The light of day, however, enabled us to observe objects which lay hid during the darkness of our ascent. Nearly opposite Swamp Camp is the creek leading to Nsuaire's village, an unpromising allit which a stranger would probably overlook. Below that we passed some superior sites for houses and settlements, where the raised clay banks supported the palm and the bombax. About nine miles down the Warri River led us to a fork where the broadening stream parts to the north-west and south-east. The former was our line. The latter, which is about half a mile wide, is named Kpa. According to some, it joins the Ramos River; others declare that after three days it strikes the Sun or Niger above the Akassa Creek. Passing that month, we were once more in the stream called by traders the Broder, and found the water dead against us, on the same principle that it was for us in the Warri River. Before leaving the Broder for Henry Creek we halted to admire the fine clump of forest that leads to the entrance—a mound of vegetation capped with huge cones of green, like a classical churchyard yews in one, tall graceful cottonwoods, begin with finias sized like goodly trees, and various palms, all upstruggling exfoliate to catch a sight of the glorious sun.

It was nearly 1 P.M. before we entered the Boat Creek, and here we halted for a time to collect some 'sauce-wood,' which was afterwards sent to England for analysis. Poison orders by custom in these regions; but the tailor visited the City of Great Benin, where and where the Fetish is strong enough to act upon such matters. Two kinds of bark are used, that of the young and that of the old tree, the latter not being so strong. Each is beaten up with water, which is strained off after standing half an hour; at the end of that time a quid of the fibre and a paste of the bark is administered to the accused. If he return it he is innocent, if not it is condemned; guilt thus depends not upon the brains of a jury, but upon strength of stomach pure and simple. The idea here, as in other parts of Africa, is, that the drug acts as an intelligent agent, which searches out and finds man's mortal sin. It is remarked that towards the end, when poor men die; moreover, that when a man has vomited, the priest administers a restorative drink, called church wine.

The tide continued to rise early on the morrow and to make Benin before the night fell. Again a disappointment. Wednesday was a frightful specimen of Nigerian weather—a form of dysentery which even England cannot often show. Sultry, steaming, pouring a rain as thick as a Scotch mist, the elements fought spitefully against us. Headlands and distant hills stood out, making six miles seem two; now the palpable became obscure and the dim invisible. We resigned ourselves to our lot, and the boats were drawn with mats and rain awnings, ate an excellent breakfast of yam and fowl soup, 'liqueored up,' and awaited a break. Olie Kromen, who could not visit us, sent a bullock, a goat, and several baskets of the local potato. These dares were brought by a man with two long blue bottle-coats, neck and spray, and a paper-coloured umbrella—that being the whole toilette. It is a constant mortification in these lands, the hideousness of one's so-called lower creatures. They must also deformity by their barbarous habitations, after the cast of Europe: Royal Maries' swell-towhats, bedecked with white and gold of many-coloured embroidered coats, and with golden bands. What a contrast to the picturesque and beautiful costumes of Asia—the turban, the haki, and the hennah!

The day continued to be most tantalizing, with heavy showers and the rainbows in the clouds. We got on board our departure from nine A.M. till three P.M. At exactly a quarter of an hour after the latter we found ourselves rushing through wind and water high to the bluff Mangrove Point bearing N.N.E. from Opera, and forming the western buttress of the Escravo, where it bends to the westward, before falling into the sea. We reached the mouth of Alighwia Tyé, the short cut, at 5 P.M. and easily found it by the low mangroves on its right bank which remove all the waves against us, it was now with us—the result of an outpouring of the upper waters which were still uninfuenced by the flow; soon, however, the current turned against us to some effect. The direct distance—fifteen miles—was nearly doubled by the windings, and the way seemed to us very terrible, because at almost every turn clear fringes of mangrove on the banks deluded us by a glimpse of sky into expecting an end. Then darkness fell upon us like a thunder-cloud, and the rain-awning, which we resolved to turn over the deck, caused us anxious thoughts. The angularity of the bed was excessive, 90° being a common case, and the shadows Communian, with the sickly gloam which usually appears upon the surface of still waters. It was 10 P.M. before we emerged from this tumultuous work of mangroves into the broad Bateri; and 11.30 P.M. had sped before we gratefully found ourselves on board H.M.S. ship 'Bloodhound.'
We feed upon poisons, and are nevertheless surprised at the increase of strange and dire diseases in the land! We are clad in shamb goods, for pure silk and wool are almost numbered with the past; and cotton reigns paramount instead. Therefore, as 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good, it is to be hoped that if American squabblers produce a scarcity in the cotton market, those persons who are able and willing to pay high prices may have a chance of obtaining genuine articles for their money. We are thus made to purchase various shams volantes volantes, but where the volens prevails afterwards in the making up, and shams ornaments are superadded, I denounce the guilty parties without mercy. I even believe that to a certain extent our very manners are shams, particularly when we come in contact with our superiors in the social scale, and attempt to cut a dash in the eyes of our less favoured every-day companions. Also when we are most studiously polite in our behaviour to each, I greatly fear that sham is too often lurking in the background; but who would have the moral courage to confess the sad fact? Yet if there were a little more simplicity and honesty, right feeling and thinking, in the world, how much more happily affairs in general would progress!

One thing, however, is certain, and it is, that I have written with an honest purpose, in the endeavour to expose shams, and induce others to avoid them as I do myself. Who, then, will say that this paper does not contain truth?

E. C. G.

FRASER'S MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1863.

MY WANDERINGS IN WEST AFRICA.

A VISIT TO THE RENOWNED CITIES OF WARI AND BENIN.

BY AN F.R.G.S.

Part II.—The renowned City of Benin.

On Friday, the 15th of August, I accompanied the consul and Dr. Henry on a return visit to the chief Ifiy, who alone had had the courage to call upon the white man. After an early breakfast we set out at 8 A.M., and with a flowing tide roved merrily up the river some three or four miles. We then turned into a mangrove-wood which opens on the right bank: it is nameless, the situation being marked only by scrub and girdled trees charred and half consumed by fire. There is nothing peculiar in the scenery. The usual panoramas of bristling mangroves, muddy water, mire banks, and ferocious flies. A few hundred yards of pulsing and potting through this natural sewer led us to the wharf, which the travelled Mr. Joe, who acts 'mouf' or interpreter, to the chief, facetiously compared with the miles of docks that form the pride of Liverpool. The landing-place is at the head of the creek, which dries up at low tides; the mud is knee deep; and the debarkation is defended by a few rusty old carronades, whose muzzles are protected with a tin plate acting as a apron.

The jolly old party came out to meet us, gourd in hand. He was striving with his morning drink of palm-wine. The life of 'native gentlemen' in these rivers consists of rising with the sun, drinking, snuffing, and smoking till the ro o'clock breakfast, a heavy siesta, and an honest debauch for the rest of the day, interrupted only by supper about sunset. The whites imitate them to a certain extent. In the early morning a tabacho por la mañana, with bits to keep out fever, is necessary; at breakfast, pale-ale or claret must support exhausted nature; twelve o'clock is 'made' somewhat earlier than usual—say 10 A.M.—on account of the cold with which thin drinks affect the stomach; and from that time the 'monkey' is 'sucked' till bed hour. But in one point the savage has the pull of the civilized; he has an abundance of wives, and thus he needs neither to labour nor to want.

Ifiy, who was, as usual, half tipsy, acknowledged the honour of a call by loud laughs of pleasure, and led his guests to his own house, a mass of huts in nowise superior to the other 'tatterdemalions' in the village. Dwarf settlements were placed in the shade, and on the roughest of naked tables were marshalled jugs of water, bottles of trade brandy and gin, palm-wine in calabashes, and similar 'mats.' There was but little palaver. The cunning senior threw out a variety of suggestions, humbly submitting that the Bloodhound might leave the river, and just restore a little confidence to the people; that the consul would perhaps meet Governor Jerry at some factory on neutral ground, and much of the same kind, which...
My Wanderings in West Africa.

March, 1863.]

Up the River to Benin.

1863.] has often been visited by white men since the days of Messrs. Moffat and Smith.* In 1838, the older travellers, Bosman and Adams, always speak highly of the courtesy and kindliness of the native chiefs. They have been treated with great respect by the chiefs, and have always been treated kindly by the people. The last trader who made the journey was ordered to be treated with kindness. When they reached the river, they were treated with civility.

Two months ago it was a flourishing commercial village, which gave its name to the water, and the chief Alaba was a busy and merry host. Iyala. Alaba collected some six months, and attacked the native village one by the moonlight, killing them. The plan was defeated by a woman, who happened to be in the bush. Oh! Iyala as first armed his men with sticks and cutlasses only. But when the assailants fired a volley of twenty-five muskets, killing one man and wounding several, he used his gun and killed the blacks with his rifle.

A few yards, rich in such memories, led us up the water, and presently we arrived at a clear spot, upon which appeared two huts. One was a mere shed intended for the men on guard. The other was a matting square of white matting, and a tarred and feathered roof. The rooms were decorated with mats and grass, and the walls were covered with palm-leaves. The roof was supported by poles, and the floor was made of earth. The doors were made of the same material, and the windows were of palm-leaves. The interior was furnished with mats and grass, and the walls were covered with palm-leaves. The roof was supported by poles, and the floor was made of earth. The doors were made of the same material, and the windows were of palm-leaves.

After sketching the melancholy scene, the consul and Dr. Henry bade adieu to it, and returned home.

It had been resolved upon to attempt a diversion by visiting the King of Great Benin, whose palace is a powerful fortress. The whole river obeys him—found that it did obey his father—in fear and trembling. There was some little delay caused by the apprehension of Europeans.

Benin city on both hands, but all of them similar to the Bateri on the left, and Tebun on the right of the stream. Before noon they were opposite the Archipelago, called Lagos on our charts, probably because it is the direct road to Lagos. Its entrance is denoted by a furthermost bluff point on the right side of the river seen from the entrance; the breadth of the mouth is about six hundred yards, and there are two little islands, or cays, standing sentinel before it.

On our right hand, after the Bateri, we passed three cays leading into the Escravos river. At noon we turned from our easterly course—it varied from 60° to 80°, and stood northward into the Gwato Creek, which is also guarded by a little cay. The distance from Lemo is about 14.50 miles, and allowing 5.50 miles from the mouth of the Benin river to the factory, the forking takes place at a distance of twenty miles. On the other side, about a half higher up, lies New Town, Young Town, or Egro, and its creek, which communicates with the waters of the Wotua, and eventually with the Nun, or Niger. Through this New Town, or Wari, branch, Mr. Beeston, in 1840, succeeded in reaching the Niger, or at a point of bifurcation with its Nun branch, a short way below the town of Abo. Higher up again, but on the same plain, in Rejo, more classically written Reggio, from the name of old Elijah's father.

From the Gwato creek the main river turned a little south of due east (100° magnetic); its course,
My Wanderings in West Africa.

In April, 1840, Mr. Beecroft, on the command of Mr. Jameson's schooner, the *Ethiop*, ascended the Fornos—erroneously called in his paper the Fornoso—the village company consisting of fifteen Europeans, including officers, medical men, an engineer, and seamen, with a full complement of Krumen and interpreters, among whom was Mina, who had accompanied Captain Clapperton and Lander.

For about forty miles from the sea, including windings, he found the Fornos, a fine bold river, with six to ten fathoms water.

At this point a division took place, both branches proving to be highly tortuous, and much narrower than the main trunk of the river, but having a depth of not less than three fathoms, so far as the steamer was able to ascend them. Mr. Beecroft computed to be from forty to fifty miles on the one (i.e., the northern branch), and from sixty to seventy miles on the other with the windings. His further progress was obstructed at these respective points, not from want of water, for that continued as deep as before, but from the impenetrable forests of large aquatic plants (and grass, according to the natives), which choked up the streams in both branches, so as to render a further passage impracticable, except by cutting a way through them, which could only be accomplished by considerable labour, and with great loss of time. This he did not feel justified in making, more especially as the extreme limpidness of the water of both streams, when compared with that of the Niger, which Mr. Beecroft had navigated some years before, gave a sufficient proof that the former is an entirely separate river, taking its rise probably in the high lands (the maps call them 'Kong mountains') north-west of the city of Mr. Jameson.

We found the Gwato creek a river with a rapid outfall and a course varying from 10° to 11°, i.e., about 1.1°, and a rapid fall. We had again started at the wrong time; with the tide, seven or eight hours are sufficient, but against the ebb it is long and hard work. At 2 P.M., we climbed upon a network of mangrove, and made a hearty tiffin; the water was there perfectly sweet, and hence the white residents upon the Lower Niger procure their supplies when there is no rain. It was pitch dark before we reached Fere Island, a little lump so called from the Spanish and Portuguese navigators in the olden time. At this place the main trunk of the branch coming from the south-east and the other from the north-east. The latter branch, with the disadvantage of the former pursued it till it narrowed to a shallow ditch. At 3:30 A.M. we halted at its head, and sent up a messenger to the chief of Gwato for lights and guides. It was a fine night; impatience soon got the better of us; we sprang from the steamer, and, assisted by our men, waded through the line of mud and water that represented the road. After a few hundred yards through a 'tiger-infested' jungle, we climbed up a severe and slippery clay bank, and despite the impetuous hour, marshed straight into the chief's house. It was broad daylight, 5 A.M., before we all turned in. Our trip had lasted us nineteen hours, during which we had accomplished about forty-five miles.

After a short rest, undisturbed by mosquitoes, which in the Benin river assail one by day, we arose and attacked the host to find hams and porridge for our trip to the city. We were lodged in a place of consequence, as the thick walls and the relics at the house proved, and our entertainer was no less than brother to the last, and uncle to the present king of Benin. His name is Kunini, and he is known to Europeans as the Parson of Gwato, an old title, hereditary, and connected with the local religion. He has not the best of names. Many years ago a poisoning palaver drove him from his native country to Lagos. There also, after learning a number of slave dealers' dodges, he got into a scrap, and was obliged to return home about 1830. At present he lives in a little house, and can hardly show at the capital. Before 11 A.M. he was exceedingly drunk that a soul would not obey him; he was hurried off to the inner rooms, and was laid, Noah like, upon a mat to sleep off his liquor. Under this undisguised mockery of the town, the chief exclaimed, and sketched and visited its curiosities, taking care to desparch three messengers announcing our intentions to the king, and requesting him to dispense with the usual ceremonious delays.

Gwato—so pronounced by the natives—is called by the older travellers Agato or Agaton, by the more modern Gato or Gatto. The settlement, which is the great port of Benin city, is at the head of the creek of the same name. It lies about thirty miles in direct distance N.N.E. from the mouth of the Benin, and nineteen miles, not including windings, S.S.W. of the metropolis. The position is, ground elevated about one hundred and fifty feet above the level of the creek; it is bounded on the north by a dry valley, where a few plantations of excellent koko (C. esculenta) on all sides a dense bush, capped with gigantic trees, invests the settlement; the soil is sandy, and in places red, but exceedingly fertile where covered with humus. It would grow excellent cotton if laboured; but how, I cannot tell. The attempt was made by a merchant some years ago; he paid his head-man four pawns from north to south (-shilling), keeping them three days, and then he had no choice but to leave his under-headman, and two (sixpence) to his labourers, per week. Yet the saviour and arrogance of the people made the speculation worthless. When I last left England there was some talk of a Niger company, whose object would be the growth of cotton in the great delta. Such a speculation would be a great success, provided that foreign labour is purchased with native workmen it must fail.

But though the admirable fertility of the country is a compeer of, or rival to Bengal, this field of enterprise will not equal India; it labours under the territory to England. Not the England of 1653—when Cromwell geared kings know that they had a crack in their necks; —with her energy of character and scope for talent, but the England of 1866—foul blown upon his name that originated the policy—non-interference, placid, serene, duty-shaking, and therefore thoroughly dissatisfied, grumbling about the expenditure of a third-rate with the influence of a third-rate power, and irritated at having to maintain so long the ignoble position of defence. The Anglo-Saxon, however, is always in extremes. In the days of Queen Anne he fought for the Atlantic treaty and the carrying trade. At the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle he was ready to fight for nigger emancipation.

in our charts Arubo, above sixty miles from the river's mouth, and says there are two, yet farther, ships may conveniently come. The *Diamond*, however, gives three

The word is used advisedly. A merchant in the Benin river positively assured me that he had lately bought a striped skin fresh from the bush. This could not have been a leopard; but—if it be lard pour le cru.
ception. In 1900 he will probably fly to reduce a regulated slave trade, under the title of emancipation.

Once a place of considerable interest and studied with factories and business houses, Gwato now contains from twenty to thirty habitations, mostly ruins, but sometimes showing traces of former splendour. Streets are, of course, unknown; the tenements are either built in clumps or separated by tram tracks. The best buildings have walls of deep red clay, ribbed horizontally, so as to resemble brick, and a little smearing makes them look neat and new; the commoner sort are merely of courses successively dried, as universal in Yoruba. All are capped with tall pentehouses of matting, with a steep slope to throw off the heavy rains, and, as tornadoes are violent, the timber-work of the interior is uncommonly strong and massive. The outside gate of the 'Parson's' house is decorated with a human skull, transfixed with an iron, and a monkey's head, side by side, on an earthen bench at the doorway. The walls are adorned with figures of clay in mezze-relievo, daubed black, yellow, and red, and representing giant warriors with uplifted battle-axes. There is a curious likeness between these efforts of infant art and the Nineveh bulls, which is probably a coincidence. But the following peculiarity can hardly be attributed to accident. Architecture, according to Mr. Fawcett (Handbook, iii.), is 'correct a test of race as language, and one far more easily applied and understood.' It is impossible not to think that Yoruba in ancient times derived its architecture from the Romans, whose conquests in Northern Africa were as extensive as in the North of Europe. We find in every house a perfect Tuscan atrim, with the
cavendish, or gangway, running round the rectangular atrim, the tank or piscina, which catches the rain and dripping falling through the impluvium or central opening in the roof. At the atrim is a tetrastyle, in which pillars at the four corners of the impluvium support the girders or main beams of the roof. As at Abeokuta, the latter is thickly thatched, and falls in at a steep angle. I can understand the use of the atrim in beautiful Italy, where it tempers the warm rays of the sun by cool shade, and softens the summer glare into mellow light. But in these lands of violent rains, fierce tornadoes, harrassants, and smokes, it is impossible to understand the feelings and motives of the builders, unless, indeed, they derived the idea of their hypostyle apartments from the ancient conquerors of Morocco and the Atlas.

The larger houses have many of these curious courts, of which the third usually has a room, which serves as a reception room. On the outside there are raised earth benches for those who would enjoy the air. The rooms are adorned with figures of clay in windowless, all of them have at least one above, and similar seats are disposed round the impluvium. The latter has half hidden one of the corners, through which the superabundant humidity passes off. In the centre is some fetish, either a cone of clay, one foot high, with a central aperture set with cowries, or a pot of water half buried in the ground.

The Benin are evidently a most religious race: there is not a single room in the house, even the courts and lowest offices, in which altars and implements of worship do not appear. The religion I at once recognised: to be the intricate and mysterious mythology of Yoruba. It has, however, some modifications; for instance, Shango, the god of thunder and lightning, is like Shiva, in olden India, here worshipped. The domestic altar is 'rigged up' in various ways; too various, actually, for concise description. The central, provided with all the heterogeneous mixture of fetish idols; waterpots, pipkins of spirits, candles, chalk-sticks, ivories, elaborately and beautifully carved as the Chinese, men's heads coarsely imitated in wood and metal, and much of the rest, and large red clay pipes of Benin make, with stems six feet long. Internally these accoutrements are usually aloes, musty smoke, and a little smearing. Their contents are similar to the former, but more elaborate: there are wooden birds, life-sized, but curiously and wonderfully made, with tails probably intended to resemble elephant tusks, and large, black sticks surmounted by a carved hand and out-pointing index; whilst a little below, a wooden clapper converts the open-worked hollow into a rude and noiseless bell.

After a delicious bath in a clear spring of fresh water, below and to the east of the town—in which, by the way, the consol temporarily lost his seal ring—we repaired to the lion of the place, Belzoni's grave. The great discoverer, it will be remembered, left Europe in 1823, determined to explore Timbuktu, an exploit which the unfortunate Caillié, four years afterwards, succeeded in performing, but not in satisfying the 'home geographer.' Foiled at Tan- guer, the alloy of the Jews and Arabs for Cape Coast Castle, and thence proceeded to the Bight of Benin, whence he thought—sagaciously enough—to find a caravan road to the Kwarra. After picking up a homeward-bred sailor, a Kalunga negro who had taken leave of H.M.S. Owen Glendower, he engaged him as his companion to Hausa. Leaving his friend, Mr. Hodgson, on board the brig Springer, in the Bight of Benin, he landed at Gwato, and marched to the metropolis, and kindly received by the old king, Odlilis, father of the reigning monarch. Everything looked well, when the bad water of the city, taken from holes and foul wells, brought on a dysentery. Despairing of a cure at Benin, Belzoni left it and returned to Gwato, where he lodged in the governor's house a few yards from his grave. The chief's name was Ogea; he was a tall man, of yellow complexion, and disagreeable look; he died about 1850. Belzoni departed life on the 26th November, some say the 3rd December, 1823; and the local legend is that he was poisoned by the governor, who afterwards tried the same trick on a European trader and failed.* Many of the oldest in Benin city still remember the traveller, and talk of his huge bald head, his immense stature, six feet six inches, and his giant strength. What lends colour to the charge is the disappearance of Belzoni's books and papers. The latter, according to the Parson who spoke, however, as one drunk—were handed over by the governor to the head Fiaor, broker or confidential trader of the king of Benin; and since the death of the original possessor descended to his son, who is believed to retain them. Mr. Snape, late agent to Morrow at Hornfall—not to mention other traders—made a liberal offer for these documents, but to no purpose, and the consol resolved to try again. Stays leaves have, according to all Europeans in the town, been seen in the hands of the townspeople, leading to the conclusion that there are more behind; but after a lapse of forty years, the collection has, in all probability, been dispersed, and has perished. Nor, if found, could aught of interest touching Nigerian Africa be

* The name is told of the poor hoy, Thomas Park, a midshipman on board H.M.S. Sliple, who landed at Accra with three years' leave, to search for his father in the African interior. He is said to have been poisoned for ascending a fetish tree; but he probably killed himself at the age of nineteen by over-eating, dressing and living like a native, to harden his constitution.
expected in these days from Belzoni's early studies.

The grave was pointed out to us by Governor of the southern Governor's house to the south-east of the town, under a fine spreading tree, which bears a poison apple, and whose branches, when broken, are said to have a pungent odor. A little plantation of koko clothes, the sides of the mound from which the tree springs, and a few cottage stands between it and the bush. It is a pretty and romantic spot, but there is no sign of a tomb; we gathered flowers, some blossoms from there, and sent them home.

Messrs. Moffat and Smith found the spot marked by a wooden tablet fast going to decay — it was probably that originally placed there. Dr. Daniell described the grave as an elevated mound of earth overgrown with weeds, with the fragments of a decayed wooden cross. The traveler's last home is now a tabula rasa, awaiting the plod of some European passing by.

A well-bearded masque, brought up by the funny Captain Z., caused great alarm amongst the people of Gwato, especially the women. I regret to say they are a soul plain, and their head-dresses rather tame. The great novelty is the habit of shaving a hand's-breadth from the forehead to the crown, leaving bear's ears on the sides of the cranium, or wool, collected in straggling and irregular lumps. A better style is to tie the hair, which will often reach the shoulders, in a knot à Diane, with beads, gold ornaments, and bits of coral interwoven; it would be tasteful but for the venerable-looking shaven scalp above. Some have false elf locks streaming down their faces, others artificial tresses extending to mid-leg, ribbon shaped, and so grossly that they appear to be hair — both these confine belong to the Fetish women, or chiefs. A few wear flat pieces of hair along the sides of the head: they look like black cakes, with excess of oil and fat, and cannot imagine how they are ever to be undone; it beats plica polonica. The tattoo is a broad line of scars extending over the breast and stomach, and the dress consists only of a pagne, or waist-cloth. The men are rather a fine race, tall and muscular; very powerful. They seem to suffer from some cutaneous diseases, horrible ulcers, and other eruptions, probably the effect of hot humid air, bad water, and scant provision. Among them was a disfiguring uhlino, call Roache, and claiming, I believe, a European origin. Always drunk and fighting, he ended by being so offensive that he was thrown into the compund.

The old Parson let loose in our honor a wretched-looking boy, who crouched in a dark corner of the atrium, weighed down with handcuffs, irons, collar, and chains. He had attempted to kidnap a slave girl from his master, and had been taken "red-headed."

The day was mainly passed in flogging the Krubos. On these jaunts, when men are mixed, the thieving is disgraceful. I have never yet drunk my last bottle of cognac. One fellow was known as 'the missionary,' because he had 'read book' at Sierra Leone, and had finished himself in villainy under Dr. L. He enhanced his ugliness his worst specimen of the converted African that I ever saw. He always, when 'palaver came up,' began by swearing in the Lord's name that he was innocent, and when tried for punishment he solemnly warned the Consul that those who follow innocent man went to — Hades. Convicted of stealing cloth and soap from another 'boy,' he received a dozen with an exceptional cat; but nothing would change him. He confessed to the theft, and presently pleaded for leniency, pæthetically asking his commander what that person's feelings would be if the cloth and soap turned unpunished. His legs were doubled up as if he were a Tasmeh-pa,' and his arms are supported 'country fashion,' by two smaller figures, but intended as in the Laocoon, for 'boys.' His consort is in like position; she and her handmaids have 'glorious bosoms,' if volume be the beauty. The other objects are plates of thin iron perforated, and shaped like a large fish-slice, with a shank and a terminating ring — mysterious articles used for 'making play' at festivals. Besides these were manacles, walecanares, wooden pots like old leather jackets, but adorned with metal, pipes apparently copied from the chibhuque, three wooden ivory, sundry bells, square and round, wooden and metal, and similar offrandes. There were newly made gifts, white chalk and freshly gathered kola nuts. The latter grow wild in all this country; but natives are apt to confound the Anglo-African word with Ikoko, the large white edible maggot, which, like the pangoon, affects the bamboo palm.

We then wandered about the place, noting the sites of factories in happier days, and scolded the Gwato people for killing the beavers that brought them golden eggs.

All appeared very penitent until, as will be seen, the very first opportunity. As several of the stages women were picking cotton; the seed was black, and the staple, though neglected, tolerable.

After a walk along the Gerege road, we returned to the old Parson, and found him once more uselessly drunk. After dinner we attempted vainly to muster the porters and review the hammers for the morrow. So we retired to rest not over-dazzled with our prospects as to an early start.

The night was truly beautiful: above, a pearly sky, with moon surrounded by opalescent halo; below, tall white — boled trees shrouded with a transparent blue mist, which lent to their majestic an air of dimness and mystery.

The old Parson wound about the house like one ghost-haunted

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* This purely self-defensive rite, common throughout Western Africa, is often confused with magic: wine and food is offered to the ghosts of faders, brothers and the Hindus call them. The latter, however, are always placed in the bush.

† "Cotton is indigenous in Benin, and is spun there and woven into cloth by women." —Messrs. Moffat and Smith.
to midnight, seeking liquor; towards the small hours, he probed his last recourse to his own cellar.

The next morning—Monday, 18th August—justified our doubts. We were aware of dawn—in fact earlier; but when we wanted to set out, nothing was ready, not a single hammock. The Governor, Mungwe, was present and bustling, but in this half-republican race temporal rulers have little authority. The principal working man was 'George,' a stout, light-hearted, and good-looking young fellow, son to the old Parson, and thoroughly of the blood royal; he followed us to Benin city, and we observed that in the palace he was treated by the king somewhat better than the interpreters. The other auxiliary was a yellow man named Sëwéyé, a noted soundrel; his position in the empire was, to use the old jargon still prevalent, that of a 'father-boy,' &c., &c., an embryo messenger, linguist, and story-teller.

We began serious work at sunrise, expecting to be on the road at seven A.M. Eight, however, was the earliest, and it was within ten minutes of nine before we managed to leave Gwato. The start was effected with extreme difficulty by forcibly leading the idlers and driving them out of the compound. At each moment they stopped dead, swearing that we had not washed their mouths—viz., with rum—which, if done, would inevitably have ended work for that morning. Hammocks not forthcoming for love, money, or liquor, we fastened with 'tie-tie'—strips of ilans, serving for cord—over our overalls and waterproofs to rude poles, whose only preparation was a nail that prevented the lashings from slipping. More at ease, this is the work of the 'hammals,' who carefully kept step, shaking the vehicle as if preparing to toss the occupant in a blanket. I never noted mud-marks within the walls of Benin, when self-respect demanded the sacrifice. These rustic hammals, however, did not fail to steal from my coat a dogey knife, with which, for the donor's sake, I was most unwilling to part, and no amount of bastinado sufficed at the moment to recover it.

The party, including four whites, and Selim, the consul's steward, numbered fifty-one souls; of these eleven were Krumen and the other thirty-five indigens. Sëwéyé the 'father-boy' brought, besides slave boys, a little daughter and two wives; these ladies began by decorating their foreheads and breasts with chalk picked from the roadside Fetish-house, and made into a paste with water in the palm. It is a prophylactic against all sorts of enemies; he told us of the enemy, and I observed that they renewed it during the return march.

The route led first in a south-east direction, then it bent eastward, and lastly, north-eastward, its permanent line. The country was a dense jungle. We had heard of fine avenues and a broad road fit for four-wheeled carriages. We passed an occasional tunnel in the bush, and a route, or rather rut, which might accommodate a quartette of wheelbarrows and nothing more. The land was sandy and coarse, but highly productive, and doubtless there is good shooting, leopard and deer, in the thickets. A truly African sight presently greeted us—a corpse lying upon the path, with head partially peeled, sprawled out to us in our own corruption. Hardly a soul, or rather a body—for it is hard to believe that these fellows have souls—stirred out of the path; most of them merely stepped over the remains. Benin has a very strong Fetish, and of that we were soon convinced. Almost every turn of the road showed some sign—a suspended calico cloth, a pot of water, or a heap of chalk sticks placed under what the Scotch call a "fausse house," or what the Australians call a "breakwind," i.e. a punt roof, looking like a falling flap of a large bird-trap.

After about forty minutes' sharp walking, during which we passed sundry plantations and clearings, an opening in the bush appeared to the right, and we were presently met by a grand terrasse by a little crowd of villagers, who sang a kind of Io psalm or hymn in honour of our arrival, and greeted us with a roll of drums and pestiliently polite; his importunities presently became so unendurable that he was civilly knocked down with his water-pot, which broke. The people on the road now began to wear the belutto, a regular Highland kilt of black or grey, or native material. The poor have no other garment; those aspiring to swaddled twist around it all manner of clothing. In manner of clothes from the works of the enemy, and I observed that they renewed it during the return march.

At noon we halted for half an hour near a village called Gwaháme. There was a terrible fetor in the forest, the result of decomposed vegetation, leopards, and black ants, which on the line of march would fly at us like Lilliputian bull-dogs. The path was partly covered with fallen trees, around which we were required to climb; and although the shade was generally thick in places, the sun shone fiercely upon our perspiring brows. At 1 o'clock we reached the half-way house—a bulge in the path surrounded by polework, and near to a settlement called Ounne. Here we were joined by one George Brown, a full-blooded negro, who calls himself a 'king's messenger.' The title here is not exactly what it is in Europe; the messenger is a kind of trader, who is sometimes, like the bawling-bear in ancient Turkey, used for punishment purposes. We afterwards saw George Brown in the King's presence; but he was clearly a cur of low degree.

He had probably heard of our arrival, and had come out in hope of rum. The ignoble old fellow, whose watery eyes and hand announced his pre-delinquencies, was unblankly drunk and pestiliently polite; his importunities presently became so unendurable that he was civilly knocked down with his water-pot, which broke. The people on the road now began to wear the belutto, a regular Highland kilt of black or grey, or native material. The poor have no other garment; those aspiring to swaddled twist around it all manner of clothing. In manner of clothes from the works of the enemy, and I observed that they renewed it during the return march.

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and two legs, with the turns and windings of the road making a long line, found it impossible to advance. The tunnels in the forest looked pitch-dark, and the occasional fires, like far-off torches, served only to make the darkness visible in the transpenetrable gloom, as Richard Bentley haith it. At 6.10 P.M. we were compelled to halt under a torn mat-shed in a large clearing, where we were told water was procurable. For a time we sat under the wall-less roof upon old tree trunks, riddled by white ants, and through this density, we were unable to make the fellows fetch firewood. These people are not a marching race; and as the journey to town is generally made in a day, they ignore all the arts of travel. At last the commander, quite exulté, arose and used his staff to such purpose that soon a fire was lighted in the clearing, illuminating the blackness of the forest, and diffusing around us a glow like crimson paper on which the amateur of bivouac loves. The water, however, was long in coming. According to our promising guide, we had to travel some distance before finding it; the village was deserted, and the yellow hue of the thick liquid argued that it had been drawn from a clay-pit. At half past the bottles were exhausted before they reached us; each relay returned with more and more delay; and at last the stuff became execrable, viscid as treacle, and black with mud. This contretemps sent us to roost supperless—and with a miserable condition after a nine hours' journey, during which we must have covered eighteen miles. Although these circumstances were none of the sweetest, and the fearful clamours of the wailing natives added not a little to the desolation, no one would answer but the whip. 'Tis a good instrument, a short handle of blackened leather, with several broad blades at one end, and at the other a kind of chair, rings of iron and brass shaped like little handcuffs or soldier's I's, which I believe to be the original wish, which, with a certain degree of climactic, a drizzling rain came on, making the face of earth greasy and

slippery as a London pavement after a frost. At times, rays of light through the trees that hedged us in droveto the guides, named our way, and we proceeded with the fire-sticks. Palm oil torches were not procurable, bamboo splinters blaze themselves out in a few minutes—briefer, we should have been in 'a fix.'

On the next morning—Tuesday, the 19th August—the road was long before the dawn; the fire had been allowed to die out, and the sensation of cold was unmistakable. Having at length got water from Igo, we made a brew of tea, and drank it like Russians, till we perished. Our men chewed boiled corn-cobs, which seemed to exercise the same influence upon them. The hammocks were then re-formed, our skulking porters having thrown away our pole, and a blanket having given way under Captain Z's weight. He was suffering from a sprained ankle, and tenant Stokes complained of stiffness: natural enough after a march of eighteen miles, as toilsome as thirty in England. In the morning we left the camp with the usual noise and confusion, flatcuffing and flogging, shouting and refusing to work. The surface of the country was a second long wave of ground very similar to that which we had traversed on the former day. It was entirely alluvial, stones nowhere appearing, and the path was more muddy and less sandy than near Gwato. Instead, however, of open country, fields, woods, and villages, to say nothing of an improved road, we plunged into a far denser bush, and our route became a single deep cut like a cart-wheel rut in a gully, that recalled to mind the hollow ways of Southern Europe. Nothing could be done, and the strongest joints of a tree once fallen is never removed in these lands; and in many places giant trunks block the path. We were forced to scramble on all-fours up and down steep banks of red clay—a heavy work, which told upon us greatly. By noon the temperature of the country perfectly equalled.

* A distance of 68 miles from Dr. Henry's factory, or 72.50 from the mouth of the Benin river. Messrs. Moffatt and Smith reckon the distance between Gwato and Benin to be about 50 miles in a north-easterly direction. The Directory places the latter N. of the former, but which I do not wish, which told upon us greatly. Therefore the path was composed of country perfectly level. Bosman's authorities deceived him by stating that the city is situated about ten miles landwards in from the village of Agaton.
My Wanderings in West Africa. [March,

were clustered. Our own people were also present, George the Parson’s son, Sâwê the ‘father-boy,’ and George the King’s messenger.

For a few minutes we were sent for into another atrium, where the Great Captain was ready to receive us. He was standing in the upper alx sequence two attendants, one supporting his coral and iron bracelet arms, which hung down loosely away from his sides. The general effect of this attitude upon a new comer is that of a fainting man being caught in the act of falling down. In this case it was exaggerated by the mawkiwh and mahndim look of the warrior, who was at least half sea over. In front of him was a crowd of attendants, who made way for us as we approached hat in hand. Perhaps the latter act of civility was an error; the consul, however, who intended to appear in an official capacity, was anxious for us to render due honor to all the high dignitaries. We drew near the Captain, who, contrary to custom, shook hands with us, and in his own way, expressed the facetious observation, which drew forth shouts of laughter. After which we returned to our former seats in the other apartment.

Presently the Captain of War, supported by his two arm-bearers, followed us, and took his seat by our side. We now remarked his dress and figure. His forehead was adorned with a broad stripe of chalk from the hair to the nose-tip, and this was drawn a thin line of gray dotted blood from a goat freshly sacrificed; a similar thin streak ran along the big toe of his right foot. He had evidently just been ‘blooded,’ as stag-hunters say. His poll was shaven, whereas those around him wore their wool combed upwards and a little off the brow, not unlike the erected crest of a cockatoo. His back-hair was allowed to grow, and fastened at the place where women usually wear a comb with long hair, and birds’ quills of small size. His face was ‘clean shaven’ except under the chin, where there grew a few dwarf curls, like capers. His arms, which were soft and smooth, rejoiced in long lines of coral and polished iron rings, and his dress was a large petticoat-like thing, the head, bust, and feet being entirely nude. His figure was that of a tall, well-proportioned man, perhaps thirty-two years old, of olive color: his features were sub-negro, and he had the fine long eyes general in this part of Africa.

After the Captain sat down the ceremonies began. He keeps up an abundance of state; all knelt who approached him, and made low conges when addressed by him. A small rough stick in his left hand was repeatedly struck upon the ground, and whilst he marshalled his dependants and expelled intruders. When we had an interpreter, he had been seated close to the left upon a kind of settee with lock and padlock, a plate of food was brought to the consul, who, according to custom, peeled one of the former with his nails, and splitting it into four pieces, handed it to all present. This rite is equivalent to eating bread and salt in Arabia. A square of cocoa-nut was then placed in each man’s hand, and we were obliged to sip a glass of tomato, or palm-wine: it was too strong for our taste, and, indeed, nowhere at Benin did we find it equal to that of Gwato. Whilst this was going on the Captain of War addressed us, and, indeed, nowhere at Benin did we find it equal to that of Gwato. Whilst this was going on the Captain of War addressed us, and whilst we were being served, ‘what I wish to say to you, which we punctually acknowledged, and, after often repeating Oyibo, “white man,” in his jollity he pulled the coarsest larrum, and disdained any compliment which was at once returned in kind. There was a general look about him which told of liquor far stronger than ‘Pardon wine.’

* The cocoa nut usually divides into four cloves; sometimes it is found with five or six; these, however, are mostly used for fetish purposes.

† The language of Benin is said to be intelligible at Abokuta and the Ebias generally; it must, then, belong to the Aku or Yoruba family.

show his geography, he inquired about the war at Liverpool; to prove his superiority, he asked the consul what tracts he came to; a question of which the ‘King Mouf’ speedily and roughly disposed; and he informed us that he had washed our feet, a hint that he intended to make us wash his throat. We escaped as soon as possible, despite an urgent invitation to ‘shop,’ and took leave with little ceremony and with quantity as possible; so the Captain of War was going on. He was seized a chain and seals which one of the ‘gentlemen-in-the-cause’ had imprudently exhibited and seemed inclined to break it. This little freak nearly led to a scene.

Quitting the house we retraced our steps, and found the impedimenta halted under a tree where some fine cattle, black and white, were enjoying the shade. Led by a guide, we pursued our way down what had apparently been an avenue or street. It was a broad line of trees with a high hedge and thick grass, bisected by a narrow path leading to the south-east, where the market and the king’s villages were situated. We now met our eyes, a specimen of what we might expect at Benin. In the herd, unerringly to the right of the path, appeared the figure of a man bare to the waist, with arms extended, and wrists fastened to a framework of peeled sticks planted behind him. For a moment we thought the wretch might be alive, a few steps convinced us of our mistake. He had been crucified after the African fashion, seated on a rough wooden stool, with a white calico cloth veiling the lower limbs, and between the ankles was uniform image of yellow clay, rope of ‘tie-tie’ fast bound round the neck to a stake behind, had been the immediate cause of death; the features still expressed strangulation, and the deed had been so recent that though the flies were there, the turkey buzzards had not yet found the eyes. The blackness of the skin and the general appearance proved that the sufferer was a slave. No emotion whatever, except holding the nose, was shown by the crowds of men and women that passed by, nor was there any sign of astonishment when I returned to sketch the horrid scene.

Afterthoughts convinced the party that the poor wretch had been sacrificed on hearing of the white man’s arrival at Gwato. It is some comfort to think that the murder was committed with as much care as possible. The news of this murder for the other world is always tied with a bottle of rum before the fatal cord is made. In one point, indeed, the Benin ladies are superior to their neighbours. Twin births are esteemed good omens, and the mother is the recipient of royal bounty, like the progenitrix of triplets and quartets in England. In Benin’s day, when the king was informed of the auspicious event, he caused public joy to be expressed with all sorts of their music. On the other hand, African customs within a few miles at War, and on the lower parts of the river, both children and the mother, unless she is the child of her husband, are barbarously sacrificed. Beyond this, nothing can be said in favor of Benin; the place has a fame of black man’s stinks of death. Without any preoccupations for Exeter Hall policy, and far from owning that evangelization has succeeded, or ever will succeed, in this part of Africa, I could not but compare the difference between Abokuta, where there are missionary establishments, and Benin, which for years has remained a fallow field. In the former, human sacrifices still flourish, but they are exceptional, they are done at random, and they do not offend public decency by exposing the remnants of mortality. In the latter—but the sequel shall speak for itself.

The rest of the walk was hardly more pleasant. As we advanced the avenue shrunk to a narrow lane, and in its deep shade we saw green and mildewed animals lying about like pebbles. We thence

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emerged upon a broad open space, which we afterwards called the Field of Death. It was, indeed, a Golyaths, an Acedrama. Amongst the foul turkeys basking in the sun, and the cattle grazing upon the growth of a soil watered with human blood, many a ghastly white object met the sight, loathsomely remains of neglected humanity, the victims of customs and similar atrocities. Our first idea was that we were led into the city by this road that an impression might be produced upon us. After wards it became apparent that all the highways conducting to the palace are similarly furnished. In Africa the divinity that doth hedge in a king, is a demon in a chamber of horrors.

After half a mile, old Okella, the guide and entertainer allotted to us by the Captain of War, turned from the Field of Death down a lane leading to the south-west, and introduced us to our quarters in the Ilembopwa district of the city. He is a freeman of the town, and a man of consequence, as is proved by his wearing anklets as well as necklace of coral; the latter may be compared with the insignia, the C.B., the former with those of the G.C.B. They are always the gift of the king, who keeps them in his possession, and punishes any counterfeiting with death. According to Bosman, a man losing his coral collar, loses his life. The house, however, was by no means in first-rate order. It was the usual Yoruba abode, a large walled compound, with a single great gate, and the interior was a labyrinth of alleys, passages, courts, apartments, hypostyle offices, and windowless store-closets, the latter always leading out of the sitting-room. The atrium prepared for us had been freshly smeared. Like all others it had its household gods, three rude wooden images of turkeys with drooping wings, disposed in triangle, supported by two short truncates, and placed in a black and white striped case in the northern wall, with a raised step below it. I can say little in its favour as regards comfort. There were three doors, which rendered it a meeting-place of moving multitudes, till we barricaded two of them. There was no look-out except through those entrances, at brick walls two feet distant uncommonly dull on a fine day! And when it rained, the cold torrents pouring through the compluvium, made it feel damper and look drearier still. After a single night there, my thoughts reverted almost with pleasure to an English fireside.

Whilst we were breakfasting, at the hungry hour of 10 A.M., a messenger from the king volunteered the information that we should ‘get mouf,’ i.e., have audience, to-day between three and four P.M. The condescension not a little consoled us; all trade travellers visiting the place—no official had yet seen it—are kept waiting for a day or more. The Captain of War at once sent us eight dishes of beef, fowls, boiled yams, and palm-oil chop. His attendant hinted intelligibly enough that he wanted rum, cloth, and books. The two former he obtained; of the latter he was disappointed; the inkstand had been left at Gwato, and where could such a thing be found amongst those ποργματα και αναλογιαντες βασιλειας?

Patiently we waited till 1 P.M., when the captain Fiador or broker,*

whose name is Bâde, a thin old man of peculiar greeyness, came in state, sat upon the above mat with us, and baring with great ceremony the top of a cane—it was apparently a cut decanter-stopper—gave service, and declared that the king was ready to see us. The royal presents were brought forth; the Consul's consisted of:

- Ten pieces silk (nine bandasenas, and one embroidered) = £10;
- Ten pieces Madras = £2.10.6.
- Ten gallons (two jars) rum = £12 2s.6d.; besides presents to the Captain of War, the Fiadors and messengers, £6 8s.; or a total of £22 2s. 6d. Doctor Henry had also bought £13 worth of silk and Madras; and a further sum of £8 in cloth, rum, gin, tobacco, knives, locks, caps, and beads, as minor presents to the householders and others. Thus three days at Benin, and the honour of a reception, are worth £33—a trifle dearer (pace Sir R. — P.)—than a dinner at Moscow in the coronation time.

At 4.30 P.M. the Consul and the commander, after a public leveé in the literal sense of the word, issued forth in full toilette, the first uniforms ever aired at the city of Great Benin. The beggars crowded out of their houses, declaring that they and their fathers' eyes had not been seen such a sight before, and that it must be a 'war-palaver;' an opinion in which perhaps they were not joined by their betters, who had been 'pumping' Dr. Henry the whole morning. After a certain delay, during which the cunning old Fiador managed to lay hands upon the presents intended for the king, and five pieces of Madras for himself, the party was formed; and followed by two Government krumen, armed with cutlasses, we proceeded towards the palace.

* Meares, Moyst and Smith misspell the word 'Phadour' (or traders). They enumerate five classes next to the king: 1st, Captain of War; 2nd, the Grandes or Homongradas (Portuguese homens grandes, great men); 3rd, the 'Phadours,' and two others of inferior rank. Bosman gives 1st, the three great lords (homongrada); 2nd, the Aras de Reis, or street kings, superintend, viceroys, and governors of provinces; 3rd, the Fiadors (security men or brokers), who rank with the merce-award-us or merchants, the Fadours and interceders, and the Veilles or elders; 4th, the commonly, and 5th, the slaves. I could hear only of the 'Homongradas,' or ministers, the Fadours, or brokers and tenders—of whom there are four chiefs—the messengers, the father
joined to the mainland by a stone bridge. The country is now partially opened to foreign traders, evidently much against the wishes of the majority of the nation. That hatred of strangers and Christianity is still intense among the Japanese, is sufficiently proved by the letters of those who have had the best opportunities of studying their character and idiosyncrasies. They have evinced on more than one occasion a suspicious readiness to make minute meat of foreigners. Whether the trade with Japan and its collateral advantages will ever be sufficiently important to justify the expenses incurred for the support of European missions in that isolated region, is at present an unsolved problem. In all cases, so far as this country is concerned, let us hope that Exeter-ball will not rashly commit itself to any scheme for evangelizing the Japanese. We must not indiscriminately lay our sacred fingers on their idols, brutal and degrading as their idolatry may be. Let us gather experience from this instructive chapter of our history, and let the better part of our religion be, like the better part of our courage—discretion. We are undisguisedly

forcing ourselves upon them, and our presence is as unwelcome to them as is the intrusive presence of a handsome professional dinner-party at the dinner-table of a wealthy patrocinium blessed with beautiful daughters. Let us not force our opinions, our notions, and our diversity of religious creeds upon them too. If we want their vegetable wax or their silk, let us pay for it honestly, and in such a way as they require. They have done without our wares so long that they do not need them now, excellent as our machinery, hardware, and calicoes may be. If the Pope thinks proper to canonize their martys more than two centuries and a half after their ashes have been spread to the winds, let him indulge his freak. We of course know very well what that means, so does the King of Italy. Pious follies are excusable in senility, and rather commend themselves to our pity than to our scorn. But let us take care not to supply the Japanese with the materials for making new martyrs. Men of war and Armstrong cannon may be powerful in their history, but they cannot restore the life taken by the sword of a fanatic or by the treachery of an idolater.

*A curious instance of the obstinate hatred of the Japanese towards Christianity occurred a short time ago at Nagasaki. The Dutch government had, at the request of the Japanese government, sent over a small steam machine, which had been made by the engineers, D. Christie and Sna, who had, according to custom, cast the name of their firm on some conspicuous part of the machine. When the Japanese officials read this they slyly concluded that the words had some reference to Christ the son of David, and that the machine was intended to make the Japanese Christians by steam-power! At first they positively refused to admit the obnoxious article; and even when the matter was explained, they did not see at all as their reason requiring it. The same officials seized a copy of Longfellow's poems, on the plea that Evangelical had been written by one of the Evangelists, whose works it was not permitted to introduce into Japan! All Bibles and religious books on board of vessels arriving at a Japanese port must be put in a case, called the Bible-case, which is carefully sealed up and preserved under lock and key by the officials, until the vessel is ready to leave; it is then returned to the captain. This absurd regulation is now, however, little more than a formality, as the Bible-case generally contains merely a few stones packed in muslin.

FRASER’S MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1863.

MY WANDERINGS IN WEST AFRICA.

A VISIT TO THE RENOWNED CITIES OF WARI AND BENIN.

BY A F.R.G.S.

PART II. CONTINUED.—THE RENOWNED CITY OF BENIN.

The King’s Court, or quarter, is called Obwe; it is a large village, or rather town, separated from the neighbouring settlements by streets broader than Parisian squares, and appropriated to the royal family, great men, courtiers, and slaves. This part of the city is supposed to contain not less than fifteen thousand souls. It is in a most ruinous condition, and very little is to be recognised in old Rossman’s description. An account of our several visits to it will perhaps give the reader a clearer idea of its features than a general sketch.

Leaving the Idemopwa quarter, where we lodged, our guide led us along the Field of Death to a small market-place which at this hour had begun, in Indian phrase, to ‘cool.’ A ten minutes’ walk took us to the outermost gateway of the palace; it was guarded by a fetish altar on the left hand, and in front stood a suspicious lump of trees, which at once suggested to me an Oro grove.* Having passed through the tumble-down gateway, we saw before us a spacious square, surrounded by broken brickwork and adorned with native trees. On one of these, which had apparently been lightning blasted, flights of turkey buzzards drew our attention to the form of a fine young woman, seated, and lashed hand and foot to a scaffold of rough branches, which raised her ten or twelve yards from the ground. The birds had been busy with her eyes, part of the bosom had been eaten away, and the skin was beginning to whiten—a ghastly sight. In the centre of the precincts was a brass Neptune, planted upon a tall column; it was intended as the reflector of a palm oil lamp, a trick which the natives probably learned from the Portuguese. At the further end of Palace-yard was a large shed, containing the usual number of fine large carved ivories, planted leaning against the wall.

We were halted at the entrance by the old Fador, who, wadding in his huge muslin crinoline, started off, as he declared, to announce us. It is certain that he never went near the palace; equally certain that, after about fifteen minutes, he came back with a message that, ‘King make devil!’ that is to say, customs for his father, and that the bloody rite would not end till after dark.

Concerning these customs! Father Merolla tells a characteristic story. Father Francois da Romano and Father Philipp de Figueira, both being on a mission in Benin, a kingdom lying on the back coasts of Africa, and towards Guinea, being very near

* For Oro himself, the Oro Grove and the horrid purposes to which it is put, I must refer the reader to any work on the mythology of Yoruba.

† Father Merolla calls these funeral rites by the Konguese word ‘Tamb!’

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the equinoctial line," they endeavoured to disturb a certain abominable and sacrilegious custom, conscripted to be performed every year to the devil, for the benefit, as they alleged, of their dead ancestors:—

This sacrifice sometimes consisted of about one hundred men, but at present there were only five to die; yet these all of the better sort. These missionaries, under the conduct of a certain negro their friend, came to the third inclosure, capable of holding hundred hundreds of people; here they got a great multitude gathered together, dancing and singing to divers instruments of their music, they clapped themselves down in a private place, the better to observe what they were going to do. This place happened to be that where they kept the knives designed to perform so inhuman an action. Not being able to conceal themselves long, they were quickly discovered by these wicked butchers, who, coming towards them hazing with great indignation, they soon drove the poor fathers out of the place they had so taken possession of. Father Francis hereupon was so little dismayed that, crowding before the rest, and the thickest of the negroes, he was not afraid to reprove their king of unheard-of cruelty. Some courtiers hearing this, immediately flew upon him, and beating and using him very unmercifully, tore him out of the crowd; when closing one eye, they set upon him, and performed their inhuman sacrifice. Afterwards they gave these fathers to understand that it was the king's pleasure that they should forthwith depart his country. Which command they not being very ready to comply with, the next morning they set upon them again, with intention to have killed them; which they nevertheless did not do, by reason they understood that some of the courtiers there present, that the king would have them brought alive before him. Going therefore conveniently to the palace, they were not withstanding admitted to no other audience but stripes and reproaches in plenty; and afterwards told, in revelling terms, that it was the king's express order that they should forthwith be gone out of his dominions. Notwithstanding these insolent negros flew upon them like so many hounds, and hurried them away to a miserable prison. Here they remained no less than three months, being buffeted, scolded, and scorned at all the time. At last, not contented with this ill usage, they sold them for slaves to the Hollanders; who, taking more pity upon them than these infidels had done, set them ashore not long afterwards, safe and sound, in the Prince's Island. Hence they went to the Sacred College to inform them of what had happened to them; but were answered, that the Church had already martyrs enough, and but two missionaries in that kingdom, and therefore they should not for the future expose themselves so much in its service, but proceed wisely among these new converts.

A message was returned saying that officials are not traders; that the party had visited Benin, not by the king's orders, but to 'look him face; that our stay was to be short; and that if not properly received we should return at once. I am not confident that the king never even heard that we wished to see him. Another messenger started with great presents, and was soon become the centre of attraction to a crowd of men, who removed the women and children as fast as they appeared. A chair was brought only a pair of dwarf benches; and even a glass of water was not to be procured for the commander.

We waited with patience the arrival and departure of a dozen messengers, dummies all, and concluded ourselves with the reflection that the delay at St. James's is much greater, and the crush incomparably worse. Siwaiye and George MacParson stood by us, whilst the elder George had been knocked down—pretending to bustle towards the palace, to determine him to be a thorough humbug. Presently the sun did 'go for bush,' and rain, which had fallen heavily during the day, was falling. Finally came what might have been a bond fide message, that the king never saw strangers at night.

Very unwilling to retire to old Okala's house, undrested, and inquired about 'chop.' None had been sent from the palace. Such conduct was quite opposed to our expectations. Presently, with profuse bows, entered the old Flábor, who politely pushed forward to occupy, as before, the seat of honour. The wrathful consul, ("Irribarre's captives," as M. Antoine Masson politely termed him), made him squat at the bottom of the room, and with the loudest possible voice enumerated our many grievances and wrongs. The courtly senior, with raised eyebrows and shoulders, lavished obsequies and apologies, swearing that on the morrow all would be well. He waited long, and he begged hard, very hard, for rum, but the consul—durus in rubris illum, &c.—as often refused and demand him forth into the rain likeless.

Before resting, we may offer some details concerning the ancient kingdom of Benin, or, as the people call it, 'Ibini, or 'Binim. It has of course no written history; old tradition, however, represents it as having occupied a country from the little town of the civilizer of Yoruba. In the sixteenth century, it obtained in Europe the name of Great Benin, and an exaggerated opinion of its extent and wealth seems then to have prevailed. The Kings of Benin, in Egmon's time, considered themselves superior to all others in Guinea; yet Wari was, as it is now, virtually independent of them, and depending on its intestine feuds, the city appears to have been in as ruined a state in 1700 as in 1786. Captain Adams, who visited the country before 1800, describes it to be of considerable extent, and places it principally to the north, and north-west of the chief river. It has never obtained celebrity in England, although on the 27th of May, 1829, Mr. Cuskey Hutchinson justly calls it the 'unknown kingdom.' In its palmy days it is believed to have been bounded on the east by the Ikara (Niger) and Ibos (Niger) by the land about Porto Novo, and southward by the sea—its limit to the north does not appear. Two of its colonies are Badugry and Lagos, and are called by the natives Aoni, or the offspring of Ini—Benin. At present, circumstances, which will afterwards be explained, have lowered its power to a minimum. All its traffic now passes through the Ijobu, popularly called Jaabo, country, to the British port of Lagos. It is a hopeless task to restore commerce to Benin. This people, who have no use for gold, are engaged in the slave trade, have declined in civilization. They make their own cottons, and are independent of Manchester; and the trade they breed their own rice and salt for nothing. I have heard of six shillings per pound being asked for ivory—grand food, in consequence of the discovery of coffee in the Delta of the Niger! Moreover, travellers will no longer find Benin a fair starting-place: here they would be plundered on the way to the coast, and the negroes have taken to thieving and robbing at their stores—I cannot imagine this greedy people allowing a jar of rum to pass—whereas explorers might leave Abokeda without the loss of a coveree.

The night passed quietly enough. Okala had sent all but his old slaves out of the house; and at Benin, there is a law that only the king must supply matrimony. He really provided the thing desired by his king, whom he reckoned by 'fellies,' and he charges a right royal price. We were several times
started by the 'Voies of Oro,' buzzing about the town, and in the morning it became manifest that the 'spirit' had been parambulating the place to some purpose. This explained to me the saying of the lower river, that Benin has a strong fetish. There the religion is merely external, the national faith and practice are according to the system of Yoruba—they claim to be its origin and head quarters—which rivals in complexity those of Greece and Rome.

On Wednesday, the 26th of August, we arose betimes, hoping for the best, but suffering for the worst, and sallied out to sketch. There is peculiar scenery in this city; and the aspect of some of the hamlets, especially in early morning, is pleasant and picturesque. After walking along the Field of Death, we met Mr. Henry, who pointed out, close to the King's Palace, the spot where another death had taken place. We walked there, and found a pile of earth, where a stark naked upon its back; a few people were standing by looking with the utmost insouciance at a horrid spectacle. The friends of the king had broken his skull at mid-skin with awful violence, a deep gash was under the ramus of the left jaw; and in the hot clear morning air the features had already become swollen and shapeless. This was a gratuitous barbarity. The African, less cruel because less intelligent than the European, the Asiatic, and the American, rarely sacrifices men without stipulating them with drink or drugs. Oro, however, had manifestly slaughtered the poor devil in cold blood. Like the other savages, the exact cause of this massacre was black skin and negro features, with some contrast to the upper orders as the brouched peasant of Western Ireland to the English mariner. The friends of the king are careful to avoid themselves; moreover, the king would not permit them to death, except for some flagrant violation of the law. Resuming our walk, we passed through the town in a northern direction. Like Aboeokun, it is divided by tracts of bush and wide avenues into a number of distinct

settlements, each bearing its own name. The quarters have regular streets and lanes, and in many places the ground before the walls was carefully swept and cleaned. Such was the case of the residence of the old king; and it was kept like that of Mohammed Ali, which was annihilated the night that Egypt took Cairo, and converted Cairo into the cleanest city of the East. When a road passed between two houses, both households were expected to keep it in order. Unhappily, the king had not obeyed his subjects to fill up the foul pits from which building clay is taken; still the founts of fever and dysentery. Few of the houses showed signs of fresh plastering; most of them were cracked and roughened by weather. The immense number of ruins were referred by our guides, George and Sáwibe, to the absence of 10,000 soldiers at a war which has lasted since 1854.

Chemin faisant, we were much struck by the beauty of the women, who have now the reputation of being the prettiest on this coast, surpassing even the Mpongwe or Gabons. The wives of the free men had light olive-coloured skins, tolerably regular features, with splendid eyes, and in some cases tall graceful figures and well-developed shoulders, a formation never seen amongst the Guinean or Gullah nigger. The peculiarity of the shaved head gradually wore off: it seemed at last like a large forehead leading to the jetty black hair, which was collected into one or more bunches at the occiput. In all cases the bosom was bare. The dress was a pagne or loin-cloth. The favourite ornaments were some threecore iron rings, some of them wires, others of heavier make, round the left wrist: on the right was a twist of brass or broad arabsque Benin bracelet; whilst under the knee a garter of small Indian coveries set off the leg. The general mark was a tattoo of white about half an inch long, and placed close together upon both cheeks about half way between the eye and the corner of the mouth. These ladies appeared in nowise bégues: white men may, I should say, command a sumptuously dressed Benin lady.

Presently we reached the market in the Igozi quarter, with which we were disappointed; it was little larger than the small gathering under a tree in front of the palace. The people talk of one very large bazaar in the Askala quarter, distant about two hours' march: probably the depressed state of the capital would prevent its maintaining such establishments as the chief cities of Yoruba can show. There was nothing peculiar in the scene—a knot of men and women sitting and standing in the hot sun bargaining and chaffering over the common produce, beans and maize, okos and plantains, dried fishy and shrimps, salt, red pepper, and similar provisions, and the country currency, the ayala, or the fabric of Yoruba. Of these small places there are as many as Benin at Athiara.

From the market the guides told us we could not reach the outskirts of the town before breakfast—say two hours or six miles; a similar distance to the southward would give a breadth of twelve miles, and from north to south it is about half that length. To the west and north there is open grassy ground, the rolling prairies of Yoruba. This stretch is probably the best excellence of the cattle and the presence of horses, which cannot exist in a country where mangrove flies and Tsetse abound. We did not, however, see a single horse; all were absent at the wars. They are described as a good but small breed, about fourteen hands high, something between the pony of Lagos and the large war charger of Yoruba. What disappointed me still more was, that we did not meet any Moslem; yet they are said to be numerous here. It is impossible to estimate the population of the scattered settlements dignified by the name of Great Benin City. The old travelers never conjecture beyond the King's quarter.

On our return Sáwibe kicked up a something which suspiciously resembled a man's eye. A deep splotch of blood had further of an explained matters; it was nothing so harmless as "purring," to use a Lancashire word. I read a silly yellow-cover novel, in which a villager seeing some dead body upon his path, 'with an exclamation of terror,' took his tools and fled back to rouse his neighbours with his tale of horror.' What would that villager have done with himself during a day's promenade at Benin? And more victims were hourly expected. The voice of Oro was explained to us as an effect of the king's decree during the customs or mourning for his father he forbade, under pain of death, any one to leave the house after ten p.m. An equally fatid subject is Glere son Gize, the present King of Dahomy. Shortly after offering up many a victim to the manes of his sire, the country which ravaged the Gold Coast on the 10th July, 1856, reached his capital. 'Ho!' said the monarch, 'do you hear the voice of my own crying for more death? He cannot rest in his grave, he must have blood; his grave must be watered with more blood!' And he dutifully put to death every captive chief upon whom he could lay his hands. I am very sorry; but an account

* The following is the present tariff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250 cowries</td>
<td>1 pown, i.e. 3d. to 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>1 cloth, i.e. $1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1 bag.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1840, the pown was worth from 25 to 32. The word is probably a corruption of the old French "pagn", a loin-cloth. Cowries are, it is evident, dearer here than in Yoruba, where 20,000 form the bag.

The corner that the Tsetse is a native of the whole of intertropical Africa, and not confined, as older travellers thought, to the south of the great triangle.
of this part of Africa does read much like the Neuesgat Calendar. 'In the midst of life we are in death,' is a toadily well-known saying; I may reverse it here: 'In the midst of death we are in life.' 'Quidnunc?—quien sabe?'

Returning for breakfast, we found that no food awaited us—a great neglect. The consul had sent early in the morning a present to the captain of war by the hands of a black man, a white not being permitted to visit until after 'getting mount,' or having audience of the king. Also it appears that until the visitor's respectability is thus ascertained, he can have no practice at the markets, or rather that any one selling anything to him would be slain. We were urged to go out and shoot one of the black cattle—forty-two were counted in one place—that browsed upon the luxuriant verdure of the field of death; they are said to be royal property, and all declared that the king would not be offended. However, we hesitated for fear of an inopportune palaver. In this case, we were surprised, indeed, that we met with no interruption during our morning stroll. In Santi and Dahomy we should have been deputed to suffer our first audience with the king.

Very impatient we waxed after early morning, when a summons was expected and was not received. The sleeping hours—eleven A.M. to one P.M.—had sped, and already we saw before us a wasted day, when the entrance of the palace called upon us. He was a little bearded old man clad in a tremendous petticoat and he assumed considerable dignity, speaking of the head Fidaro as of a very common person. The abominable institution is rare in Africa, and when found is borrowed from Asia. At Benin the habit of excluding the king's women has probably introduced the chaperons of the harem. The consul now resolved to try a little bluster. With much noise and display the boxes were carried out and placed before the house, and whilst the Krubos were warned to hold themselves in readiness. The old eunuch, who had, as the Chinese say of opium-eaters, the figure of a paddy bird and the face of a pigeon, skipped about excitedly, rubbing his hands by way of salutation, and in a bird-like voice chirped 'Tutu! Tutu!—remain, remain!' Having begun by intimating that his attendants were starved, the party was not surprised presently to see an old goat marched in with all solemnity, carrying a huge yams and a calabash of palm oil. And to give the Beninese their due, from this time provisions were liberally supplied. I was hardly say in sufficient quantities, for the hungriness of the men, especially those from Gwato, surpassed anything we had ever seen. Four of these lank-bellied fellows would squat down opposite a basketful of fruits and a huge basin of palm-oil stew, and clear it in a minute, leaving no spot but a drop or two upon the floor, boiling their heads down in dashequin passed beedis, licking the hands with which they wiped out the sauce! It was impossible to keep aught edible intact; unconscious eyes yams, meat, and brandy were stolen, and so nathless stolen that we could hardly believe in their disappearance. As for the adults kept all to themselves. The small boy Rapidly, a slave to Sawai, who had attached himself to us, was hardly allowed a morsel, his master snatching it from his hands until we taught him better manners. These little wretches can never, however, be rewarded; whatever of dress or diet is given to them will at once be appropriated by the proprietor, or he falling, by any one senior and stronger.

When the eunuch pointed triumphantly to this liberal present, the consul declared that he would not taste the king's food until after audience. In dire distress the messengers ran away so unconscionably he could never return to his master, and another messenger was sent with a peremptory message to the palace. Still the day wore on. At three P.M. the Consul again started up, and after much deprecation proposed a final alternative, either that the party should set out that night or that he should accompany Dr. Henry to the presence. The presentation was to take place at once, and a body of women with a number of ivories showing very curious and interesting work. At the bottom of the encinte and facing the saucer was a little grass-grown rice, the men's grass, wide and deep well into which the custom's victims are thrown. The people called this the king's fetish court, and it is in order by the piety of his son. The next square was subverted by a huge shed, open in front, and supported by eight Telamonian rude figures of war-men, one of them falling from under its load. We read in Bosman.

A third gallery [I would amend this to 'court'] offers itself to view, differing from the former only in that the planks upon which it rests are human figures, but so wretchedly carved that it is hardly possible to distinguish whether they are most like men or beasts; notwithstanding which my guides were able to distinguish into merchant, soldiers, wild beast hunters, &c.

From the court of the Telamonian a small wooden door opened upon a lane, and across this was an atrium of peculiarly ruinous appearance. Thence we entered another room, which we took to be a vestibule, till Dr. Henry informed us that it was the presence-chamber. I had read of fine tapestries and rich carpets, and had not yet realized the ruin of the kingdom. The atrium was crowded with the ignoble, who ranged themselves, tightly packed, round three of the sides, leaving the lower end clear for us. Here was a rude earthen bench facing a similar one at the upper end, upon which was a small wooden settle serving for a throne. Rather a contrast to things a century and a half ago when the King of Great Benin 'sat on an ivory couch under a canopy of Indian silk.' A mat was spread for our feet, and we rested whilst awaiting the monarch. Meanwhile a heavy shower of rain burst over
the palace, delaying the impluvium and threatening to delay proceedings. These African potentates will not move except in Queen’s weather.’

At the end of a long half hour a door to the right at the top of the room opened, and in crowded some thirty fellows of stately port proportions and huge forms, entirely exposed. It was a truly savage sight and novel, unknown to any of the courtiers of Germany. These men are called the King’s cutlass boys, and they wear no dress till their master deigns to ‘dash’ them a cloth. Every man’s infant in the kingdom is still presented to the king, and belongs to him of right; hence all the youths in the land are called the king’s boys, or slaves. The naked mob took its place on the right hand of the throne, crowding into the corner, and the man nearest the royal seat carried upright in both hands a huge handleless flail of native make, fashioned like an exaggeration of the old Turkish war. The rest were wholly unarmed, nor did we see a single weapon either in the court or in the palace.

The cutlass boys were followed by half a dozen ‘homogrames,’ whose numbers gradually increased to ten. They ranged themselves in line along the raised step, perpendicular to the left of the throne. All were old men with senile figures, offensively thin or hideously pot-bellied. They were naked to the waist, and wore immense white muslin or saffron phalanges, or petticoats, extending to the swell of the leg, and plumped out to a balloon shape by kilts calking crimson. Each had his anklets and collar of coral, a very quaint decoration, composed of pieces about one inch long, and so tightly strung that it forms a stiff circle about a foot in diameter. Lastly came the

1865.

Interview with the King.

[April, 1865.]

king, supported by two men, who led him to the wooden stool on which a mat had been placed, disposed his loin-cloth, and held both his arms.

Jambárá, whose regal name is Atolo, and whose title is Obba, or king, is a stout young man, about thirty-five years of age. His complexion is dark and his features uncommonly intelligent, and the expression of his countenance is mild and courteous. Upon examining this and the subsequent audience he smiled graciously upon his visitors, and our impression was that he is the best-looking governor we have ever seen. His dress was highly becoming—coral bracelets adorned his wrists, and his paige, which, loosely gathered round the waist, covered his naked feet, was a red silk with broad stripes of yellow—the Devil’s livery, we call it; but it is far more suited to the dark skin than are our dingy browns and blacks.

Obba of Benin is fetish, and the object of adoration to his subjects; hence the matter writers assert that ‘he occupies here a higher post than the Roman Pontiff in Catholic Church, and is considered not only as the vicegerent of Deity, but as a deity himself, claiming the obedience and adoration of his subjects.’ This is partly true, but they forget that the personal character of the deity in question mostly decides his position as a man.

Jambárá is the second son of Oddí, or Oddál, the king of Benin in Belzoni’s time, who was described by Mace, Moffatt and Smith as ‘a robust old man, who affected much dignity, and would not allow them to approach near his person.’ His eldest brother is Bawakí, whose birth not having been reported in due time by his mother, the caedé became, according to the law of the land, the senior.† When the old king died there was, of course, a fight. The chief minister and assistants preferred the milder and more easily managed man. Jambárá therefore changed his name to Atolo, that of his father’s property, and became Obba. Bawakí, whose temper is despotical, resisted for a time, but was presently expelled the country. He then fled towards the Niger and settled at Isáfí, a city said to be seven days’ march from Benin and three from Igara. Since 1854 the brothers have been constantly at war. Many of the Benin people, it is said, are now flying to the ‘Frenzied,’ who, if the Ministers did not fear for their heads, would soon make himself Obba.

We stood up and unhatted whilst a messenger bade us go forward and make service. The consul objected to walking through the muddy and watery impluvium, and after some time obtained a partial clearing—the vulgar, which was excluded during Dr. Henry’s audience, was now permitted to remain. The consul, however, was obliged to run along the left side of the room. As we approached the place where the naked cutlass boys crowded, there were some murmurs, signs to stand back, and even to kneel. The officers passed on to the step in front of the throne. Again voices were heard. The consul, however, placed himself in front of his Majesty, and after a low bow, introduced the commander and his other companions. The king acknowledged the compliment with a nod and a smile.

The attendants proceeded to spread a mat on the step below and to the right of the throne; the consul, however, objected to sit with the leather boots in the dirty piscina, and the visitors were allowed to return to their original bench, which was now wet with the water tricklings of the roof. Then the palaver commenced.

It was carried on by two interpreters, Siwáyá of Gwato and Owaní of Cemetery. George, the old Parson’s son, remaining by our side. The two former, when they addressed the king, knelt—not prostrated themselves—upon the

* Bosman describes it as a sort of pale red Calota earth or stone, very well glazed, and very like speckled red marble. Captain Adams describes the presents to the king as ‘rocks of coral.’ In these days the favourite material is red coral brought from the Mediterranean.

† In England, an ‘amnesty office’ prefers considering the date of christening to the date of birth; in Africa the age date from the day when the king acknowledges the child. Both are equally absurd.
generally go over the bar in schooners, and finish their correspondence on board the mail steamers. The king then dropped a hint about parambulating the town and visiting his ‘homogras,’ which we were pray-er enough for our plan. The large jars of rum were emptied into bottles, which were stowed away, and the nakedness of the land was ostentatiously exposed to them. By such Machiavellism we expected to effect an escape on the next day: as long as a tott remained in the locker the cunning vassals would have delayd us. There is a curse upon rum in these regions; no man who values his comfort will travel with a single jar of it.

Thursday, the 21st August, opened with a dull morning. Capt. Z. was striking at 4 A.M., grumbling as only an old Scotchman or a hungry hyena can growl, and wanting to be off. Nothing appeared less likely. The vassals were parceled through the villages, sleeping; they would have seen him die miserably before they would have shaken a leg. The King of England was not seen, and when they came, they demanded an inextricable amount of ‘chop’ in addition to the rations which they had received from the king. This extortion being refused, they disappeared, but they afterwards followed the party, which was by convulsion excited itself en route at 8 A.M.

We waited patiently at home during the morning, whilst Dr. Henry bore his best. He set out at 7 A.M. to go the rounds of the homogras, which took him three mortal hours, wandering through the great extent of the royal village. He describes the houses of the chiefs as far superior to the palace, being large, spacious, finely glazed, and perfectly clean; the altars inlaid with cowries and porcelain plasters, and filled with a relic from the former and ivory, and fine mats spread out in the alcoves. He breakfasted in a desultory way, in one house eating fowls, in another goat, in a third with a wild pig. Kola nuts were brought to him in wooden boxes, eighteen inches in diameter, six bread and three dozen prettily worked and stuffed, and inlaid with brass.

As may be imagined, our impatience was increased by this long delay; already 1 p.m. had sped, and we were resolved to make Gwato before noon on the morrow. Again the obliging Dr. Henry volunteered to visit the palace, and to send word when his Majesty could see us. It was already 2 p.m. when the messenger pulled out our ordinary dress, and after threading the ruins as before, we entered the tattooed hall. The Obia did not keep us long waiting. He was clad to-day in a handsome pagne of silver-spangled brocade, and his aspect was even more smiling and pleasant than on the yester, especially when we told him that having called in uniform for ‘king palaver,’ we had arrived in plain clothes, for ‘friend palaver.’ After bowing to him from the impluvium, which was now dry, we took up our position upon the bench on the right of the throne. The interview was not long. The conversation consisted chiefly in requests on his Majesty’s part, that we might depart and receive our return presents; on our side, in apologies for the shortness of the visit, and in expressions of regret that more could not be contrived by convulsion. The visit did not last another time. When the audience was over, and the Obia was supported out of the room, we were invited to go through the inevitable kolas, cocoa, and tobacco.

To these were added, on this occasion, two or three tolerable Holands, which the commander, an ‘old soldier,’ did not fail to collar and carry off.

At 3:20 P.M. we effected our escape from the palace, and at 3:15, by almost superhuman efforts, we managed to issue from old Okali’s house, which was filled with that rush and hurry of leaving the land seemed to make our black friends crazy; and as food was arriving in plenty—we carried some with us, and ate it on the outskirts of the town—the confusion and noise was fearful. We had already lost a knife, a ring, sundry bottles of liquor and quinces, and tins of sardines; our mess had been taken by the local traders, but were really stowed away in the Pasun’s store-room. I determined the Beninese to be, with the sole exception of the Mpongwe or Gabons, the most pilfering race that I had visited on this west coast of Africa.

The loading caused the usual trouble: all who could, slank off, and the weakest were the only heavy carriers. A large quantity of palm wine had been going about the house, so the caravan was, as the Scottish Shakespeare says, if not ‘fou,’ at least ‘gayle’ still. As we issued from the Pasun, the black discharged the smoke of rain, which eased off our departure by clearing away the crowd. Henri and I, as at Warti, Amoua, and other times, the forenoon were the drowsing months; during the whole time we have not had twenty-four hours of fine weather. Walking down the Field of Death, Selim collected half a dozen skulls, and passing a bit of ‘tie-tie’ through foramen magnum and orbit, made a chaplet fit for the goddess Bhawani. Imprudently enough, he carried them uncovered: the result was that after they were packed in a cloth no one would receive him of his burden. These things are theft; but the people made no objection to our removing them. When they asked us, as it startled, what ‘dat man’ wanted with human calvaria, I merely replied that the poor fellow, who could get no sustenance from yams, wished to grind these bones and make his bread. We would willingly have carried the crucified party; but as this was his third day, he was quite unapproachable.

* The cranias were forwarded to Dr. J. B. Davis; who pronounced them on inspection to be the remains of young women between the ages of 15 and 40. This naturally leads to a suspicion that the softer sex is more liable to sacrifice in Benin—which I believe not to be the case.
When passing the quarters of the captain of war, he sent for us, but we continued our march, regretting want of time. Then we plunged into a thicket, and found the path truly infamous. The late heavy rains had filled the rut with water, the lowlands were all flooded, and long tracts of mud lined the hedges; our progress was mostly in the form of the Colossus of Rhodes, astraddle, with feet upon the two banks, and sometimes the position was like flying squirrels, all sprawling. Though the shower ceased, the jungle supplied us with a second coolness whenever a branch of wind passed over it. Not a hammock was ready: had it been no, there was no one to carry it, all the porters being drunk and disorderly. Our progress was necessarily slow. It was 5:30 P.M. before we passed our former nighting place, now a little pond. In another half-hour the shades of Africa began to clothe the ground. We had provide ourselves with a country lamp and a calabash of oil; a wick was easily made out of a shirt-skirt, but fire was a difficulty. The first box of wax matches utterly failed—these girlemacks should be abolished by the traveller in favour of the old phosphorus box with sulphuric fluids. We then attempted a short progress;—impossible! The eyes of a lynx could not have distinguished the path from the sides; the way was larded by trees-trunks, and their roots seemed placed there to break one's legs. We sent forward a native to fetch fire, knowing, however, that he would probably take refuge in some snug cottage, and leave us, at any rate for some hours, to 'bunk out.' Already I began to mature plans for an ugly night, when, as the danger of a wet bivouac appeared imminent, a box of dry matches was found, the lamp was lit, the line advanced—like Nature, however, not making 'saltus'—and at 7:30 P.M. we found ourselves at the village of Igo quatre pour peur.

We were right hospitably received at the house of the local person, the small boy named, who has been mentioned above. He came before us, with a cutting-bear's of his own age, completely nude, as the custom is, and bearing with a stolid matter-of-course air, a falchion at least as long and nearly as broad as himself. The ecclesiastic's mother was regally escaping a visit to welcome us with many handshakings and cries of Addo—! do—! do! She was not young; her age, in fact, corresponded with the English thirty-six or forty, that fatal epoch when the candle of love burns up transcendently, before settling down into lasting sufficiency. She had manifestly been a belle in her day, as those shark's-teeth showed; her arm, a little shaved off the pole, was suspended behind into a hunteess's knot, which was divided into four large bunches, with three smaller along each side of the head, from the occiput to the temples. These knots were defined by beads of brass and coral, and a long metal scale-scratcher, like the bodkin of a Treateverina, bisected the back-hair. This fascinating person put us into the reception-room, where a small fire was burning in the alcove, and she occupied with us the matted earthenware, wholly uncumbered by those changes of raiment which a long and damp march necessitate. As the evening advanced, and a little rum appeared on the topic, the local citadels had merged into the imagination; we could hardly repeat her last proposals—

havex, divere nobis.

At 6:30 P.M. on the 22nd August—another blessed Friday!—we left Igo. The march began with a general disappearance of the hamboneen by a back-door: a reversed course was the only remedy for this proceeding. At 9 A.M. we reached the half-way house, or rather half-way hole, in the jungle; there we sat down to breakfast and rest, as it was evident that we must walk the whole way. There was, however, an improvement in the weather. As we crossed the second wave of ground, it became dry and sandy; there were no ruts, and the rain of yesterday appeared except in the immediate neighbourhood of Gwato. On the route, Alado, a rascally boy, who had already been suspected of over-familiarity with

our yams and bandy, was caught by Selina with one of the consul's Crimean shirts fastened in a bundle to his back. The fellow was frightened out of his wits, and took to his heels, without escaping a visit to welcome us with many handshakings and cries of Addo—! do—! do! She was not young; her age, in fact, corresponded with the English thirty-six or forty, that fatal epoch when the candle of love burns up transcendently, before settling down into lasting sufficiency. She had manifestly been a belle in her day, as those shark's-teeth showed; her arm, a little shaved off the pole, was suspended behind into a hunteess's knot, which was divided into four large bunches, with three smaller along each side of the head, from the occiput to the temples. These knots were defined by beads of brass and coral, and a long metal scale-scratcher, like the bodkin of a Treateverina, bisected the back-hair. This fascinating person put us into the reception-room, where a small fire was burning in the alcove, and she occupied with us the matted earthenware, wholly uncumbered by those changes of raiment which a long and damp march necessitate. As the evening advanced, and a little rum appeared on the topic, the local citadels had merged into the imagination; we could hardly repeat her last proposals—

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six miles of ground, and to have returned with a week's

Bad news—all along of that Friday—waited us at the mouth
of the Benin river. The cutter was despatched to Lagos on the 6th of August, with reports and letters for the homeward mail, had capitulated in a heavy gale. Mr. Bugg, an intelligent West Indian negro, had been left by the Krumen, who disliked his strict discipline, to crown. And the five follows composing the crew had been seized by the "Usa pirates," the villainous Jakri men of the coast, about fifteen miles north of the river, and were held for ransom. The moderate sum demanded was sixty pieces of cloth—£12 per head.

The Bloodhound had now remained anchored in the Benin river twenty-four days—from the 4th to the 17th of August—and her presence had effected nothing. The natives seemed to care little for the suspension of trade: it became patent that they did not understand the order better than we could. Indeed, all came to the conclusion that, unless some blow fell upon the monopoly of the river—such as temporarily removing the ships and factories—were struck, the outrages of these barbarians would remain unpunished, and might be expected to be renewed at the first opportunity.

No one, however, had authority to enforce so strong though necessary a measure. After awaiting the arrival of the mail, which brought with it the news, the command and commander determined to visit Lagos, and to bring the circumstances of the case under the notice of his Excellency the Governor. We crossed the bar on the 27th August, and on the next day found ourselves rolling in the roads of the youngest British colonies.

Before taking leave of the subject of Benin and its river, I would say a few words touching its climate and soil.

With respect to the climate, which has a very bad name, second only to that of the Benin river, it appears to me in no degree worse than its neighbours. But Europeans do not allow themselves fair play in these lands: one would wonder if a man have of keeping his health if he chose to dwell in a poor cottage in some small village of Devonshire, or taking exercise, and never changing scene, but sitting at home eating and drinking, smoking and sleeping, without any other excitement than the arrival of a letter-bag once a month? This again supposes that he indulges in no excesses; and the extraordinary quantities of his remaining sate in body and mind would be vastly diminished if he went to bed mellow upon poor liquor every night, and arose every morning with 'hot coppers' from sundry 'cabbage-leaves.' But however sober he may be, an utter want of change, exercise, and amusement, must in a year or two do their work upon him. I presume that in the days of the Druid, England, covered with bush and swam, was called by many a legenary the 'Roman's grave.' And I have little doubt that,

As regards trade:—I am obviously difficult to explain unanimity of action, where, for instance, a Yorkshirman, an Irishman, and a Scotchman—perhaps two or three, Sierra Leone follows, or half castes—are all running a race for the almighty dollar. The smallest divisions, with which classes of men, the market-place rows of human heads, fresh and gory, were ranged, and the whole place was saturated with the odour of blood; it was evidently belonging to some Jamaican prisoners who had been killed during the night, after being tortured in the most inhuman manner.

Until July 10, Mr. Euschat was entered to remain quiet in his house, and not to go out after sundown.

The Negro at Home.

with the ground, transfer Europeans and their Krumen to bulks, and then bid the native and the fever 'come on.'

And the elephant Mountain, Batanga, of the Xilouns Ethiopida.

NOTE.

The public having long since forgotten the late Lieutenant Forbes's Dahomy and the Dohomians, has been again startled by the following account of Dahomian atrocities:

The Church Missionary Society have received from the governor of Lagos a report by Commander Perry, R.N., of Her Majesty's ship Griffin, at Little Popo, containing the substance of a statement made to him there on the 5th of August by Mr. Euschat, a Dutch merchant of property, who had just returned to Popo from a forced visit to Dahomy. The narrative is in the form of a diary, of which the following is an extract:

July 5.—He [Mr. Euschat] was brought to the market-place, where he could have told many people the blood shed before. He first saw the body of Mr. William Delhany (a Sierra Leone man), his head and chest cut off and thrown into the shagg. The body was crucified against a large tree, one nail through the forehead, one through the heart, and one through each hand and foot; the left arm was bent, and a large cotton umbrella in the grasp. He was then taken to the market, where the king was seated on a raised platform, from which he was talking to the people much 'war pulater,' and promising them an attack upon Abbeokuta in November. Cowries, cloth, and rum were then distributed among the crowd, in which classes of men, the market-place rows of human heads, fresh and gory, were ranged, and the whole place was saturated with the odour of blood. There were evidently belonging to some Jamaican prisoners who had been killed during the night, after being tortured in the most inhuman manner.

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July 10.—The ground shock violently

—evidently, from the date, the effect of the earthquake felt at Accra, Mr. Euschat was at once brought to the market-place, where he found the king again seated on the raised platform, surrounded by his attendants. The king told him that the ground shaking was his father's spirit, complaining that 'customs were not better than ever.' Three Ishagns were then brought before the king, and told them to go and tell his father that customs should be better than ever.' Each chief was then given a bottle of rum and a head of cows, and then despatched. Twenty-four men were then brought out, bound in baskets, with their heads just showing out, and placed on the platform in the form of a king; they were then thrown down to the people, who were dancing, singing, and rolling below. As each man was thrown down, he was seized and beheaded, the heads being piled in one heap and the bodies in another. Every man who caught a victim and cut off the head, received one head of cowries (about 2s.). After all were killed, Mr. Euschat was conducted home.

July 12.—Taken to another part of the town, where exactly similar horrors were being perpetrated.

July 12.—All the platforms were taken down, and the programme appeared to be firing guns, singing, and dancing all day. There were no more parades for ten days, but it is supposed many took place during the nights.

July 13.—Taken to see the 'grand customs' at the palace of the late king, at the gate of which two platforms had been erected; on each platform sixteen men, and four horses were placed; inside the house was placed another platform, on which were placed sixteen women, four horses, and one alligator. The men and women was Sierra Leone people captured and hostages; and dressed in English clothes, each group of sixteen men seated or rather bound in chairs placed round a table, on which were placed foot. The king then ascended the platform, where he adhered the Dahomian fetish, and seemed to make obeisance to the present king in whose right arms were then bosed to drink the king's health. After the king's health was drunk, the effects of the ceremony were paraded and worshipped by the people as they passed; a grand review of the troops then commenced, and as each marched past the king Paramount, and then made the
My Wanderings in West Africa. [April, 1863.]

LATE LAURELS.

CHAPTER I.

FORESHADOWING.

Two children in two neighbouring villages
Playing and pranks along the healthy lea.

UNDEWOOD Manor-house was regarded, not without reason, by the young people of the neighbourhood in the light of a realized paradise. Boys liked it because ponies bounded in the paddocks, pointers and terriers about the yards and lodges, and all sorts of good things upon the garden walls. Girls liked it for its rambling passages, the mysterious splendour of its rooms, its quaint pictures, its cabinets of picturesque curiosities, the peacock which strutted on the terrace, and the conservatory, where Mrs. Evelyn and an old Scotch gardener contrived between them to make summer seem eternal. Boys and girls alike instinctively appreciated the hearty welcome, and the effortless hospitality, which awaited them on the part of the square and his lady. Many a little creature, secure of sympathy and consolation, intrusted her first trouble to Mrs. Evelyn’s ear, or committed some too tardacious request to her advocacy and protection. Many were the fortunate lads who imperilled their own existence by futile attempts upon that of the Underwood rabbits; who invaded the stables, disturbed the peaceable doves, devastated the peach orchard, and, in fact, did all those pleasant things which gild the fancy of imaginative youth, but are for the most part objected to by country gentlemen, and the subordinate array of country gentlemen’s officials. The Underwood grooms and keepers, however, were infected by their master’s benevolence, and regarded all juvenile delinquencies indulgently, as a venial and interesting characteristic of the time of life. Old Marston, the absolute despot of the woods, all whose ideas seemed concentrated in a malignant detestation of hawks and weasels, had yet a tender side for aspiring sportsmen, and had submitted more than once with笑脸 resignations to being ‘peppered’ by beginners, whose zeal got the better of their judgment; ‘I told you so, Jim,’ he once observed to one of the beaters, who joined him at the corner of the platform. ‘Master Charles has been pouring it into me most awful.’ A special providence, however, preserved him and his leathern gauntlets from annihilation, and Marston survived to reap a golden harvest, from a list of crack shots who had received their initial instructions at his hands.

Thus, between master and servants, Underwood was a cheerful place; yet its cheerfulness resulted more from determined good nature, than from the absence of materials for melancholy. A sort of fatalism had seemed of late years to hang over the manor-house; the generation of Evelynes, which would naturally have been just now at its prime, was already extinct, and a party of grandchildren supplied the place and enjoyed the privileges of the missing sons and daughters. Time after time had the Spirit visited the little Underwood chancel, as chief mourner for children, whose vital energies had seemed to fail them, just when strength should have been greatest, and the prospect of danger looked the most remote.

One daughter, whose memory seemed now to her parents an almost unearthly dream of tender loveliness, had scarcely left the schoolroom, when she sank into a decline. Charles, the eldest son, frightened, while in his honeymoon, by some unaccountable symptom of increasing foolishness, had carried off his bride to Italy, and endeavoured, under a sunny sky, to stave off the fate which he felt creeping pitilessly upon him. He soon knew it to be vain, and turned homeward to die. For a while his widow lingered on at Underwood, waiting for the signal of death which should set her free from the terrors of the world and the past; but at length, after a siege of weeks, she yielded, and with a sigh of relief ended her life.