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FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA

The Exploration of the Niger

By Lieut. Hourst

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WAR, REVOLUTION, AND PEACE

LIEUTENANT HOURST.

FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA

THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF LIEUT. HOURST

OF HIS

Exploration of the Niger

TRANSLATED BY

MRS. ARTHUR BELL (N. D'ANVERS)

AUTHOR OF 'THE ELEMENTARY HISTORY OF ART,' 'THE SCIENCE LADDERS,' ETC.

WITH 190 ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP

LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, LD.

1898

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FRENCH ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA

The Exploration of the Niger

able to maintain with the chiefs to a fiction, for acting on the advice of a certain Béchir Uld Mbirikat, a native of Twat, whom he had met at Timbuktu, he passed himself off as the nephew of Dr. Barth, the great German traveller, who had everywhere won the love and respect of the people with whom he was brought in contact. Assuming the name of Abdul Kerim, or the Servant of the Most High, the Frenchman solved all the difficulties which threatened to stop his progress by the simple assertion that he was the nephew of Abdul Kerim, as Barth was and still is called in the Sudan. "I was thus able," says Abdul Kerim, "to emerge safely from every situation, however embarrassing," explaining that the natives do not distinguish between different European nationalities, but simply class all together as "the whites."

Apart from this initial falsehood, of which the Lieutenant does not seem to be in the least ashamed, his dealings with the natives were marked by perfect straightforwardness; every promise, however trivial, made to one of them he faithfully performed, whilst from the officers under him and the coolies in his service he won the utmost devotion and love. He deserves indeed very great credit for the ever ready tact with which he turned aside rather than met the difficulties assailing him at every turn, and Dr. Barth would have had no cause to be ashamed of his relative if the young gentleman had indeed been his nephew.

Lieutenant Hourst's chapter on the much misjudged Tuaregs is especially interesting, and, most noteworthy fact, full of hope for the future. He attributes their many excellent qualities to their reverence for their women.

The husband of one wife only, the Tuareg warrior looks up to that wife with something of the chivalrous devotion of the knights of the Middle Ages, presenting in this respect a very marked contrast to his Mahommedan neighbours, of whom, by the way, the Frenchman has the lowest possible opinion; charging them with a total disregard of morality, beneath the cloak of an assumed religious zeal. On the so-called marabouts he is especially severe, giving many instances of the evil influence they exercise over the simple-minded natives.

It would be unfair to the author to spoil the interest of his narrative by any further revelations of its contents; suffice it to add, that in spite of his all too-evident bias against the English, he is unable to deny that he was kindly treated by the individual members of the Royal Niger Company, with whom he came in contact. His only wish, he naïvely remarks, is that some of the warm-hearted men who welcomed him back to civilization had belonged to his own nationality. There is something truly pathetic in the plea with which the courageous young explorer winds up his record of his year of arduous work, and yet more arduous waiting, hoping against hope for the instructions from home which never came. He knows, he says, that all the countries suitable for colonization—Australia was the last of them—are already occupied by "our rivals," but there is still room, he thinks, for French "colonies of exploration," where talented young men, unable to find a career in their native country, may usefully employ their energies in turning the natural wealth of French acquisitions to account. That is all he hopes for; but he cannot help adding a few touching

words of appeal to the French colonial authorities, asking them to cease from sending out expeditions only to abandon them to their fate, taking no notice of their requests for instructions or for help.

Reading between the lines of this record of a brave struggle against terrible odds, it is only too easy to realize that the policy of prevarication of the French Government in all matters colonial is a well-considered policy, as astute as it is unfair, alike to the gallant officers in command of abortive exploring expeditions as to the "rivals" so cordially disliked.

NANCY BELL.

Southbourne-on-Sea,
October 1898.

WASHERWOMEN OF SAY

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MARKET PLACE, ST LOUIS.

THE EXPLORATION OF THE NIGER

CHAPTER I

AN ABORTIVE START

DR. HENRY BARTH, the greatest traveller of modern times, our illustrious predecessor on the Niger, was a prisoner at Massenya. Loaded with chains, and in hourly expectation of death, he was still devoted to his work, and had the superb courage to write—"The best way of winning the blacks from their barbarism is to create centres on the great rivers. The civilizing influence will then spread naturally, following the water-highways."

In his generous dream, which might be his last, he consoled himself in thinking that soon the ideas of tolerance and progress would advance by the river-roads, by the "moving paths," as he called them, to the very heart of

the dark continent. Perhaps the shedding of his blood might then further the cause of that humanity of which he was the apostle.

More than any other, perhaps, the Niger district lends itself to this idea of Dr. Barth's. There it is, on the banks of the river, fertilized by timely inundations, that life appears to be concentrated. It is by following the streams and rivers, and crossing the lakes, that the forward march must proceed. The Niger, with its affluents and its lacustrine systems, still partially unknown, gives, even when only seen on the map, the impression of an organism complete in itself. As in the human body, the blood-vessels and the nerves carry the life and transmit the will of their owner, so does a mighty river with its infinite ramifications, seem to convey to the remote confines of a continent, commerce, civilization, and those ideas of tolerance and of progress which are the very life and soul of a country.

To utilize this gigantic artery—and this is a task which we Frenchmen have undertaken, for, at the demand of France, these countries have been characterized *as under French influence*—it was necessary first of all to know it.

It is to this task we have devoted ourselves, my companions and I. Providence has aided us, Providence has willed our success, in spite of difficulties of every kind. We had the great joy of returning with ranks unbroken, all safe and sound. Yet more rare, our journey did not cost a single human life, not even amongst those who were hostile to us and opposed our passage.

This I consider the greatest honour of the expedition of which I was in command.

Moreover, logic as well as humanity demanded that we should, in every case, as far as possible pursue a pacific policy.

What could men, whether negroes or others, think of the civilization we endeavour to introduce amongst them, if its first benefits are volleys of bullets, blood-shed—in a word, war?

The reader must not, however, misunderstand me. It has often been necessary, it will still long be necessary, even in conformity with our most honourable and elevated sentiments, to have recourse in certain cases to war, to enforce our ideas of justice. In the present state of barbarism of African races, especially where the false civilization of Islam has penetrated, the moral elevation of the lower classes is injurious to the material interests of directors, chiefs, sorcerers, or marabouts; and against them, of course, force must be used.

The motto chosen by the Royal Niger Company—was it in irony, or for the sake of rhythm?—"Pax, Jus, Ars," is certainly most beautiful, most complete, most suitable, for a people who dream of combining venal profits with humanitarian ameliorations in their colonization of native districts. This motto cannot, however, be acted upon without some trouble and conflict. Peace? How about the successful slave raids undertaken under the cloak of religion, on which the Samorys, the Amadus, the chief of Sokoto and their bands depend for their livelihood? Justice? Suppose the races oppressed because of their very gentleness, ground down because of their productiveness, refuse to obey their conquerors, Toucouleurs, Fulahs, or whoever they may be; will the captive find himself the equal of the master? Art? the Knowledge and the Toil which should win freedom? Grant them, and what will become of the sorcerers, and the starving marabouts with their impostures and their mummeries? There have been, there inevitably will be again, prolonged and obstinate resistance. That resistance must be overcome, and the

struggle must cost bloodshed, but that bloodshed will increase the future harvest.

It is altogether different, however, with an exploring expedition. Its mission is not to dictate, but to persuade —not to conquer, but to reconnoitre. This, however, scarcely lessened the difficulty of our task. In a new country, ignorance alone, rather than actual ill-will founded on serious reasons, is enough to make the natives hostile. They look upon the traveller as a malevolent intruder, a sorcerer, a devil. They want to hinder his progress, to make him turn back, and when they despair of doing that they try to pillage and to destroy him.

Weapons of precision, discipline, a single blow may perhaps sometimes break through the obstacle, and the traveller will pass on. But afterwards?

Afterwards, the road will be closed before him. One tribe after another will rise, and if the explorer has any armed followers, it will be with him as it was with Stanley in his blood-stained course, the path behind him will be marked by corpses.

Afterwards, moreover, the road behind him will also be barred—closed for long years to every pacific attempt. This sort of thing means, in fact, difficulties increased, sometimes indeed rendered positively insurmountable to those who would resume or complete the task begun.

True, I cannot claim to have left behind me tribes entirely devoted to us, or districts completely won over to our ideas, to which France has but to send her traders and her directors; but I think I can say that where our passage did nothing to ameliorate the situation, it at least made it no worse; and of this I am proud.

Briefly stated, what we did on our expedition was, to ascend the Senegal, reach the Niger at its highest navigable point, and go down it to the sea.

This was not a new idea. My friend Felix Dubois claims, not unjustly, that the same thing occurred to Colbert. For all that, however, scarcely a century ago no one knew the exact position either of the source or the mouth of the Niger; and those who were anxious to learn something about its geography, had only Herodotus, Ibn Batuta, and Leo Africanus to guide them.

But we must do justice to our rivals: the English were

NATIVES OF THE BANKS OF THE SENEGAL.

the first to attempt to realize the dream of Colbert. In 1797, the Scotchman Mungo Park reached the Upper Niger by way of Guinea. "Are there then no streams, no rivers, no anything in your country," a chief of Kasso said to him, "that you come at the peril of your life to see the Joliba?" (the Upper Niger). Park stopped at Silla, near our present settlement at Sansanding, and renewing his attempt a few years later, he met his death—how, no one knows exactly, somewhere near Bussa.

Although very celebrated in England, Mungo Park was quite unknown to the French, even in their colonies. I give the following well-known anecdote from memory. "In 1890 a highly educated person said to M. X——, a French colonial officer of high rank, 'There is a future before the Niger districts. See what Mungo Park says about them;' and he followed this up with a lot of quotations from Park's book. 'Oh, that is all very interesting,' said the other; 'if Mungo Park is in Paris, you had better take him to the Minister.' Then when the death of Park in 1805 was explained, M. X—— cried, thinking he had found an unanswerable argument, 'I bet your Park died of fever!'"

Perhaps after all he confused him with the *Parc Monceau*, the healthiness of which had lately been called in question.

Our journey was accomplished just one century after Mungo Park's first attempt. We started from about the same point, too, as did the great Scotch traveller, only from the Senegal instead of the Gambia, but our attempt was crowned by success.

Of course, it will be said, that we had fewer unknown districts to go through. Since 1805, Europeans have conquered half the continent of Africa. We stepped from a French colony into an English Protectorate. Moreover, earlier travellers than ourselves explored certain sections of our route, whilst Park had everywhere to work his way through virgin territory.

Perhaps, however, all these supposed advantages in our favour really only added to our difficulties.

Happening to find myself in Paris in October 1893, on the eve of my return to my Staff duties in the French Sudan, I one day met Colonel Monteil. "Go," he said to me, "and find Monsieur Delcassé" (then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies), "he has something to say to you."

The next day I presented myself at the *Pavillon de Flore.* "You are leaving for the Sudan," said Monsieur Delcassé; "what are you going to do there?" "It is not quite decided yet," I replied. "I heard some talk of a hydrographic exploration of the courses of the Bafing and the Bakhoy" (two streams which meet at Bafulabé, to form the Senegal). "You no doubt know more about it than I do." "Well!" he replied, "I would rather you went down the Niger, in accordance with the project Monteil spoke to me about, and which you, it seems, submitted to my predecessor."

"I should prefer it too," I said; "it is just what I have been asking for for the last five years."

"Well, then, that is settled; send me a report and an estimate of expenses."

Thus in two minutes the exploration of the Niger was decided upon.

It is, in fact, true (see Report of December 1888) that I suggested such an expedition five years ago; but it is really ten years since a similar plan was proposed by another, and that other my venerated chief, my friend, and my master in all things connected with the Sudan, Naval Lieutenant Davoust. He died in harness.

After the occupation of Bamaku, Naval Ensign Froger, a man of immense energy, endurance, and indomitable perseverance, whose name comes in whenever there is any talk of French work in the Sudan, took a French gunboat, piece by piece, to the Niger. God only knows at what cost. There he put her together, launched her, and since 1884 she has remained on the river. This gunboat, baptized the *Niger*, was commanded, on the retirement of Froger, by Davoust, who in accepting the appointment, hoped to take his vessel up to Timbuktu. As a logical consequence, of course, he asked permission to go down to the opening of

the navigable portion of the great river, or, if it were possible, to the sea itself, but the authorization was refused. He was stopped at Nuhu in Massina. Weakened by dysentery and fever, he was compelled, greatly against his will, to return to France, without having even reached Timbuktu.

That honour was reserved for his successor, Caron, who, with Sub-Lieutenant Lefort and Dr. Jouenne, reached Koriomé, the port of the mysterious town; but the intrigues of the Toucouleurs and the merchants of the north made the Tuaregs hostile. He was unable to enter the ancient capital of the Sahara, but he brought back with him a magnificent map on the scale of $\frac{1}{500}$ of the course of the river, such as had, perhaps, never before been made of any river of Africa. It proved beyond a doubt, that from Kulikoro to Timbuktu, that is to say, for a length of about 500 miles, the Niger is perfectly navigable, free from obstacles, everywhere accessible to small craft, and nearly always to steamers and barges of considerable draught.

Davoust returned to the charge in 1888, when he did me the honour of taking me as his second in command, and it was decided that we should go down the river, until the absolutely insuperable obstacles in our path barred our progress.

Alas! it was decreed that Davoust should never realize success.

What happened? Just as we were going to start came an order that we were to do nothing. We wintered at Manambugu, a terribly unhealthy spot, and there, with infinite trouble, we constructed a few wretched huts of straw and loam, to protect ourselves and our goods. Under such conditions, death soon wrought havoc in our ranks. We white men numbered eighteen when we started; less than a year later we were but five. The rest we had

buried along our path as we returned, or in our little cemetery at Manambugu.

Poor Davoust reached Kita but to die. The order forbidding us to start had been his death-blow. Until then he had, however, kept up only by force of his intense determination. It was but his hope of success which sustained him; he existed only for the sake of his great scheme. "Merely having *failed* to descend the Niger," he exclaimed to me one day, "made Mungo Park famous, but we, we *shall succeed*."

He could not bear to see all his long-cherished plans upset for no real reason, on the very eve of realization. It was too severe a blow for the little strength which remained to him. He nevertheless continued to help me in fitting out the *Mage*, a gunboat like the *Niger*, which we had brought from France; he even made some trial trips; but in the month of December he set off for home, to try and regain his strength in his native land, and buoyed up with the hope of being able to win over our colonial authorities to his views.

He never reached France; he rests at Kita. When we thought all was lost, and our mission hopelessly compromised, we gathered round his tomb. Perhaps it was our doing so which brought us good fortune at last.

How many, aye, some even greater men than he, have fallen thus! Alas! it has been with the dead bodies of our countrymen that the soil of the French Sudan, which we hope will some day yield so rich a harvest, has been fertilized! Dare we add, that those who went there in the hope of winning gold braid and crosses, got "crosses" indeed, but they consisted only of two bits of wood clumsily nailed together by some comrade, and set up in the corner of a field of millet, beneath the shade of some baobab tree; poor ephemeral crosses, soon eaten up by white ants,

incapable even of preserving the memory of the brave fellows buried beneath them.

But we must not bemoan too much the fate of these noble dead. We must honour them and follow their example.

Well then, Davoust being dead, without having accomplished his task, I vowed that a boat bearing his name should descend the river. This promise I made in 1888, but it was not until 1896 that I was able to redeem it. Now I have fulfilled my vow.

There is no doubt that it would have made all the difference in the political results of my mission, if it could have been undertaken eight or ten years earlier. For instance, in the negotiations which took place in 1890, and were so inauspicious for our influence on the Lower Niger, our plenipotentiaries would have been able to assert, that the rapids at Burrum existed only in the imagination of Sir Edward Malet, a fact not without its importance.

But we will not trouble ourselves with what the expedition ought to have done—we will merely record what it did do.

My project, adopted by M. Delcassé, was that of Davoust, slightly modified. Instead of employing gunboats drawing about three feet of water, I found it best to employ barges of very slight draught worked with oars. An attentive study of Dr. Barth's narrative reveals how very great were the difficulties of navigation, at least on those parts of the river he himself explored; for it must be remembered that he never spoke by hearsay. Of course a boat drawing a foot or so only of water would easily pass over rapids, where such vessels as the *Mage* and the *Niger* must inevitably come to grief.

Moreover, a steam-boat needs fuel, and that fuel would have to be wood. Then we must go and cut that wood, which would give the natives opportunities for hostility.

Moreover, the machinery might get out of order. Of course, rowing is slower than steaming, but it is much safer. Then, too, we had the current in our favour; we had but to let ourselves go and we should certainly arrive at some goal, if not at a good port. The stream would carry our barges down, with us on or under them, as Spartan mothers would have said.

Besides, there was something graceful about this mode of progression. To row down the Niger at the end of the nineteenth century, was not only amusing, but there was really something audacious about it, when it might have been done so differently, and, after all, I was right; for never could gunboats have passed where my plucky little boat, the *Davoust*, made her way.

This resolution come to, the next thing was to build the boat which was to be the inseparable companion of our journey. "As you make your bed you must lie upon it," I thought, and I gave my whole mind to the matter.

She must be strong but light, and easily taken to pieces; she must not exceed the minimum space needed to hold us all; she must be capable of carrying eight to ten tons, and she must not be difficult to steer.

During the year 1893, it happened that great progress had been made in the working of aluminium, and Monteil had actually ventured to employ that metal in the construction of a little boat intended for use on the Ubangi. It seemed, however, rather hazardous to follow his example, for, after all, what could be done with aluminium had not been actually put to the test, and our very lives depended almost entirely on the durability of our boat. Still, I had to take into account the fact that the craft would sometimes have to be carried overland, and then the lightness of the metal would be immensely in its favour.

In a word, I decided for aluminium. Truth to tell,

however, I confess I am not very proud of the decision I came to. The material was not hard enough; it was easily bent; it staved in at the slightest shock, and I often wished I had decided on a steel boat. At the same time, it should be admitted that its chief quality—that of lightness—was never really put to the test; for throughout the journey we never once had to take our craft to pieces, for the purpose of carrying it in sections, over otherwise insurmountable obstacles. As she was launched at Kolikoro, so she arrived at Wari. This was perhaps as well; for I really do not know whether the bolts once taken out of their strained sockets would ever have fitted properly again. To sum up, however, the *Davoust*, an aluminium boat, reached the mouth of the Niger, which was really all that was expected of her.

Now let me introduce my *Davoust* properly. She is not exactly a handsome craft. She looks more like a wooden shoe or a case of soap than anything; that is to say, the stern is square, whilst the bow runs up into a point. This pointed bow, I must remark *en passant*, will be very useful for jumping on shore from without wetting our feet.

She is about 98 feet long by 7½ feet wide, and only draws about a foot and a quarter of water, which does not prevent her from carrying nine tons. Two water-tight partitions divide her into three compartments, the central one of which forms the hold, where are stowed all our valuables, food, ammunition, and bales of goods. The hold is covered in with steel plates, which serve as a deck, and at the same time greatly add to the general strength of the craft.

The other two compartments, covered in by thin planking, serve as cabins. The planks, as will be readily understood, are but little protection against the heat of the sun and in storms; but, of course, it was impossible for me to add needlessly to the weight of the boat, merely for the sake of comfort. In the centre is placed a machine gun. In the

fore part of the steel deck will sit the oarsmen, or, to be strictly nautical, the rowers.

Three sails, two triangular and one square, will help us along when the wind is favourable. True, this rig-out of sails on a vessel the size of ours is not exactly what is generally seen in the Navy, but what does that matter in the wilds of Africa, with no companions and no engineers to make fun of my innovation? How well it will sound, too, will it not, when we reach their territories if the English telegraph to Europe, "A French three-master has descended the Niger from Timbuktu!"

All this finally settled, the next thing to do was to divide the boat into sections. The problem was, how to manage to do this so that these sections could be carried on the heads of our porters, no one of them weighing more than from about 55 to 66 lbs. This is really all we can expect of a black porter who was not brought up in the ship-building trade.

To begin with, I divide my boat longitudinally from bow to stern into two equal sections, which are afterwards sub-divided. These two sections are to be bolted on to a sheet of steel which will serve as a keel. The joints are of leather. The heaviest piece, that is to say, the stern, weighs some 81 lbs., but two porters can carry it together.

This flat-bottomed craft of ours will be steered by means of a long rudder, the wheel of which is placed at the threshold of my cabin, so that I shall have it close at hand. On my cabin roof is the steering compass, and the tent to protect us in the day, which tent is made of brown and red striped cloth with a scalloped edge. We fancy ourselves on the beach of Normandy when we are in it. The roof of my cabin will serve me as a table on which to work at my hydrographical observations.

The *Davoust* was just big enough to hold us all. She

could be handled easily enough; she contained only what was absolutely indispensable, and all I asked of her was that she should carry us safely to our goal.

It would not do for me to embark alone to descend the Niger. The next thing was, therefore, to choose my crew. Of all the lucky chances which marked the course of our trip, and contributed to its success, there was one for which I ought to have been more grateful to Providence than I was, and that was, that He gave me just the companions who went with me.

All who know from experience what the sun of Africa is, who are aware of the combined effects of illness and privations, such as the want of sufficient nourishment, of perpetual danger, of never-ceasing responsibility, who have themselves suffered from working with uncongenial companions, whose worst faults come out under the stress of suffering and fatigue, who know what the unsociability of the tropics often is, will realize the force of what I have said.

We started five companions, we returned five friends: that is the most astonishing part of what we did!

First of those who joined me, who shared all my hardships as well as my success, was Naval Ensign, now Lieutenant Baudry.

One of those who had laboured in the vineyard from the first, M. Baudry had begged me to take him with me, should the chance ever occur, long before my expedition was decided on. He happened to be in Paris at the time, for, like myself, he was about to start for the Sudan on Staff duty. He too had been bitten by the Colonial tarantula, causing a serious illness, only to be cured by an actual journey to the colonies. A few minutes after the decision of the Under Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs the matter was settled: he was to go with me.

NAVAL ENSIGN BAUDRY.
Second in command of the Hourst Expedition.

He has been my comrade in happy and in dreary hours. Together we suffered from the events which kept us imprisoned, so to speak, in the French Sudan for nearly two years before we could really make a start. He adopted my ideas, he made them his own, and set to work immediately to carry them into action. It is but just that I should speak of him first of all in these terms of praise, for always and everywhere I was secure of his help and co-operation.

We made up the rest of our party at St. Louis, for Baudry and I were at first the only two white men in the expedition. We had to choose eight Senegal coolies, one of whom was a non-commissioned officer lent to us by the naval authorities. I knew that I should be able to engage any number of brave and sturdy fellows, faithful to the death down there, and so it proved.

The grave question of the choice of a native interpreter still remained to be solved. I had my man in my mind, but I did not know whether I could secure him. I lost no time in asking the authorities at Senegal to place Mandao Osmane at my disposal.

I had known and learnt to value Mandao on the Niger flotilla; he and his family had already rendered more devoted services to France than I could count. Well-read, intelligent, very brave, very refined, and very proud, Mandao was the type of an educated negro. He would have been a valuable assistant and a trusted friend to us. I knew that it was his great ambition to be decorated like his father, who had been one of General Faidherbe's most valued auxiliaries. He was to die on the field of honour, killed during the Monteil expedition.

If some inquirer asks you, "What is the first thing to do to prepare for an exploring expedition to Central Africa?" answer without hesitation, "Buy some of the things which are being sold off in Paris." And this is why. The usual

currency on the Niger is the little cowry found on the coast of Mozambique. Five thousand represent about the value of a franc. As will at once be realized, this means a very great weight to lug about, as heavy, in fact, as the Spartan coinage, and besides, it is not known everywhere even in Nigritia. In many villages everything is sold by barter. "How much for that sheep?" you ask, and the answer is "Ten cubits" (about six yards) "of white stuff, or fifty gilt beads, so many looking-glasses, so many sheets of paper, or so many bars of salt," according to what the seller wants most.

One must provide oneself with the sort of things required.

Besides all this, presents are needed, and all sorts of unexpected articles come in usefully for them. Black-lead sold in tubes is used for blackening and increasing the brilliance of the eyes of Fulah coquettes; curtain-loops are transformed into shoulder ornaments or belts to hold the weapons of warriors; whilst the various dainty articles used in cotillons are much appreciated by native belles, who are also very fond of sticking tortoise-shell combs into their woolly locks. Take also some pipes, tobacco-pouches, fishing-tackle, needles, knives and scissors, a few burnouses made of bath-towels, china and glass buttons, coral, amber, cheap silks, tri-coloured sunshades, etc.

We had to give powerful chiefs such things as embroidered velvet saddles, weapons, costly garments, and valuable stuffs. Tastes change from one generation to another; the fashion is different in different villages; besides, we were expected, it was specified in our instructions, to open commercial relations with the natives for the travellers who should succeed us. So we were bound to have with us as great a variety of samples of our wares as possible.

Moreover, Tuaregs and negroes alike are only big

children. They fight just to amuse themselves when they happen to have a sword or a gun. They would play just as happily with a mechanical rabbit, a peg-top, or a doll which says "Papa." So we must take some toys with us, such as crawling lizards, jumping frogs, musical boxes, even a miniature organ which plays the *quadrille à chahut*,[1] as it consumes yards of perforated paper. And even now I have not enumerated all the things we took.

Face to face with this very incoherent programme, suppose for carrying it out you have two naval officers, one just come back from the Sudan, the other from China, and you say to them, giving them the necessary funds, "Now you go and settle things up." Well, you will soon see what they can do, but if they are up to their work they will go straight away and secure the help of Léon Bolard, a commercial agent who is a specialist in providing for exploring expeditions. And then these two will amuse themselves like a couple of fools for a month at least; that is what we did.

Long shall I remember these prowlings in furnishing shops, where the owners were not always very civil, for we turned their premises upside down sometimes for mere trifles. Some days we tramped for eighteen miles along the pavements of Paris, measured by the pedometer.

Our most amusing experiences were when we went in search of bargains at sales. Slightly soiled stuffs and remnants are first-rate treasure trove for explorers who are at all careful of the coffers of the State; but how one has to walk, and how one has to climb to fourth and fifth storeys to realize these economies! We once got about 1600 yards of velvet for nineteen sous, and we picked up knives with handles representing the Eiffel Tower, with others bearing political allusions to Panama, etc.

[1] A popular French dance.—*Trans.*

At the end of a month Baudry and I were quite knocked up. Bolard alone continued indefatigable. But we had bought twenty-seven thousand francs' worth of merchandise, which was all piled up in the basement of the *Pavillon de Flore*. Such an extraordinary heap it made; bales of calico on top of cavalry sabres, Pelion on Ossa.

We received several distinguished visitors there, too. M. Grodet, just appointed Governor of the French Sudan, came to see us, and was very amiable, seeming to take a great interest in what we were doing. *Quantum mutata* . . .

Next came the packing, which was anything but an easy task. An explorer ought to be also an experienced packer of the very first rank. No package must exceed 55 lbs. in weight. To begin with, all the luggage must be absolutely water-tight, easily handled, and of a regular geometrical shape, so as to be stowed away in our hold without much difficulty. Then the various articles making up each package must be so arranged as not to get damaged by rubbing against each other or shifting about. Lastly, and this was the greatest difficulty of all, the bales must be made up so that we could easily get out what we wanted without constantly opening them all. And what a responsibility the whole thing was!

Then we had certain things with us which were sure to strike the imagination of the natives, notably Baudry's bicycle, some Geissler's vacuum tubes, and an Edison phonograph—the cinematograph was not then invented. Our instrument was, in fact, one of the first which had been seen even in France. It would repeat the native songs, and I relied on it to interest the chiefs and the literati, for to amuse them would, I hoped, make them forget their hostile designs.

For weapons the Minister of War gave us ten Lebel

rifles of the 1893 pattern, ten revolvers of the very latest pattern, with ten thousand cartridges, which represented one thousand per man, more than enough in my opinion. Lastly, the naval authorities let us have a quick-firing Hotchkiss gun, with ammunition and all accessories.

On December 25 all was ready, except that the *Davoust* was not quite finished. On Christmas Day Baudry started for Bordeaux, with the larger portion of our stores, and on

THE PORT OF DAKAR.

January 5, I, in my turn, embarked on the steamship *Brazil* of the Messageries Maritimes, taking with me my boat in sections.

Dakar lies low at the extremity of the bay on which it is built, at the foot of the heights, which together form Cape Verd. It has inherited the commercial position of Fort Goree, and looks like an islet of verdure framed amongst sombre rocks and gleaming sands.

Alas! if Dakar were English, what a busy commercial

port it would be! Into what an impregnable citadel, what a well-stocked arsenal, our rivals would have converted it.

But Dakar is French, and although we cannot deny that it has made progress, there is no shutting our eyes to the fact that the progress is slow. Yet it would be simply impossible to find a better site on the western coast of Africa. It is a Cherbourg of the Atlantic. The roadstead is very safe, it can be entered at any time, the anchorage is excellent, the air comparatively healthy, and there is plenty of water.

And what a splendid position too from a military point of view!

When war is declared, and the Suez Canal is blocked, the old route to India and the far East will resume its former importance, and Dakar will become, as Napoleon said of Cherbourg, "a dagger in the heart of England." Well stored with coal, and provided with good docks and work-shops, etc., Dakar might in the next great war become a centre for the re-victualling of a whole fleet of rapid cruisers and torpedo boats, harassing the commerce of England. It will also be the entrenched camp or harbour of refuge in which our vessels will take shelter from superior forces. Let us hope that this vision will be realized. Meanwhile the rivalry between St. Louis, Dakar, and Rufisque is not very beneficial to any one of the three towns.

Dakar is of special importance to the Niger districts, and this is why I have dwelt a little on its present position and probable future. Some day no doubt it will become the port of export of the trade of the Sudan, which will, I think, become very considerable when Kayes is connected with St. Louis and Badombé with Kolikoro by the great French railway of West Africa.

Dakar interested me for yet another reason. It was there I set foot once more on African soil after an absence of two

long years. I flattered myself that now I should have to contend face to face with material difficulties only, before I realized my schemes ; so that when I saw all my bales and packages and the sections of the *Davoust*, with absolutely nothing missing, lying symmetrically arranged on the quay of the Dakar St. Louis railway, it was one of the happiest hours of my life. It has often been said that the most difficult part of an expedition is the start. Well, I thought I *had* started, and was now sure of success. Alas! what a humbling disillusioning was before me!

Thanks to the hearty co-operation of everybody, including the Governor, M. de Lamothe, and the Naval Commander, M. Du Rocher, Baudry had got everything ready for me.

There was, however, no time to be lost. An accident to her screw had delayed the *Brazil* three days, and we must start immediately for the Upper Niger, so we were off for St. Louis the very next morning. The sections of the *Davoust* were of an awkward shape, and being only hastily packed and tumbled on board anyhow at Bourdeaux, danced a regular saraband in the open wagons of the line, and I felt rather anxious about my poor vessel. But never mind, she would have plenty of bumping about later, and I wasn't going to make myself miserable about her on this auspicious day.

Just a couple of words about the Dakar St. Louis railway. The Cayor, as the country it traverses is called, is slightly undulating, badly watered, and dreary looking. The natives living in it were hard to subdue. In continual revolt, they more than once inflicted real disasters on the French by taking them by surprise. At Thies the whole garrison was massacred, at M' Pal a squadron of Spahis perished, for the Cayor had chiefs such as the Damels, Samba-Laobe and Lat-Dior, the last champions of resistance who became illustrious in the annals of Senegambia—real

heroes, who made us regret that it was impossible to win them over to our side.

The successive governors of Senegambia struggled in vain against the resistance of Cayor to their authority, and the constant insubordination of the natives. But what Faidherbe, Vinet-Laprade, and Brière de l'Isle, to name but the most celebrated, failed to achieve was accomplished peacefully by the railway in a very few

PART OF THE DAKAR ST. LOUIS LINE.

years. Nor is that all, for many tracts, previously barren and uncultivated, now yield large crops of the *Arachis hypogea*, or pea-nut, which are taken away by the trains in the trading season.

Does not this prove how true it is that peace and commerce advance side by side; that the best, indeed the only way to pacify a country, and to conciliate the inhabitants, is to give them prosperity by opening up outlets for their commerce?

Hurrah, then, for the Dakar St. Louis line! Three cheers for it, in spite of the delays and mistakes which were perhaps made when it was begun.

To say that it has every possible and desirable comfort would of course be false. In the hot season especially it is one long martyrdom to the traveller, a foretaste of hell, and the advice given to new-comers at Dakar still holds good—"Take ice, plenty of ice, with you, you will find it

RAILWAY BUFFET AT TIVIWANE

of double use, to freshen up your drinks by the way and to put in a handkerchief on your head under your helmet. With plenty of ice you may perhaps escape without getting fever or being suffocated."

The trip by this line, which no European would care to take for pleasure, is really to the negroes a treat, who go by the train as an amusement. The directors did not count upon receipts from the blacks when they started the line, especially after a train which ran off the metals smashed up

a whole carriage full of natives against a huge baobab tree. Of course, when that happened no one thought the negroes would patronize the railway again. But it turned out quite the contrary. From that day they came in crowds, but they had provided themselves with talismans!

The marabouts, who do a brisk business in charms, had simply added a new string to their bow, for they sold *gris-gris* against the dangers of the iron road!

THE QUAY AT ST. LOUIS.

This is the negro all over. If he has but confidence in his *gris-gris*, he will brave a thousand dangers. If he has but confidence in his chief, he will follow him without hesitation, and without faltering to the end of the world. Inspire him then with that confidence, and you will be able to do anything with him.

Baudry had come to meet me on the line, and with him was a negro wrapped up in a *tampasendbé*, or native shawl. This man was Mandao, the interpreter I had asked for.

He had decided to go with us without a moment's hesitation. This was yet another trump card for us, and all would now go well.

A STREET IN ST. LOUIS

We reached St. Louis at six o'clock in the evening on January 17. An officer on the Staff of the Governor was waiting for me. M. de Lamothe, who was, by the way, an old friend of mine, received me most graciously, and was ready to do everything in his power to help me.

The *Brière de l'Isle* of the Deves and Chaumet company was to start on the 19th for the upper river. She was, however, already overloaded. What should we do? Time was pressing!

On the morning of the 18th I engaged the coolies who were to follow us. Most of them were Sarracolais, whose tribe lives on the Senegal between Bakel and Kayes. From amongst a hundred candidates Baudry had already picked out twelve, and to these had been added a second master pilot belonging to the local station. All these were experienced campaigners, who had long been in the French service; they were sturdy, well-built fellows,

BOUBAKAR-SINGO.

eager for adventure. I had but to eliminate three, and to confirm Baudry's choice of the others, for we were limited to eight men, including their leader. After all, however, the coolies were dismissed by order of Governor Grodet before we actually started, so there is no need to introduce them more particularly. Boubakar-Singo, the second leader, who became pilot of the *Davoust*, alone deserves special mention. He was a splendid-looking Sarracolais, a first-

THE COOLIES ENGAGED AT ST. LOUIS.

rate sailor, who, when a storm came on, would jump into the water stark naked intoning all the prayers in his repertory.

Our coolies engaged, we had not only to equip, but to dress them. We set them to work at once, for we had already solved the difficulty of how best to transport our stores. The governor lent us a thirty-five ton iron lighter, into which we stowed away everything, and the *Brière de l'Isle* took her in tow.

It was not, however, without considerable trouble that we managed the stowing away of all our goods, but we succeeded somehow in being ready in good time. On the evening of the 19th the *Brière* weighed anchor, and we started for the upper river; our friends at St. Louis, the Government officials, the sailors, the tradespeople waving their hats and handkerchiefs in farewell, and shouting out "Good luck."

What a Noah's ark was this thirty-five ton barge of ours, and what a mixed cargo she carried, with our bales and her sails, not to speak of the passengers! coolies, stately Moors, sheep and women. With the sails of the *Davoust* we rigged up a kind of shed in the stern to protect all these people, who, with nothing to do all day, crept about on the sloping roof sunning themselves like lizards. We turned the two days during which we were towed along to account by going over our numerous bales yet once more. Strange to say, almost incredible indeed, nothing was missing. It was worth something to see Bilali Cumba, a herculean coolie, pick up the instruments, weighing in their galvanized case more than 240 lbs., as easily as a little milliner would lift a cardboard box.

It was Bilali who made me the following sensible answer the other day, when we had given out wooden spoons to the men for their own use. Of course, like all negroes, they ate with their fingers, making their porridge up into a ball, and rolling it till it was quite hard before putting it into their mouths. I was laughing at Bilali about this when he said, "Friend, tell me what is the good of your spoon?" then spreading out the palms of his toil-worn hands he added, "What is good to work with is good to eat with."

As Joan of Arc with her flag, he dedicated his hands to toil and honour too.

Our trip did not pass off without certain little accidents;

the constant splashing of the water loosened the joints of the barge, and we had to stick them together as best we could. However, we arrived on the 23rd at Walaldé, then the highest navigable point of the river. Probably it would be possible to go much further up, as far as Kaheide, in fact, at all times of the year, but it would have to be in boats with a different kind of keel to that now in use, and we have not got to that yet.

The *Brière de l'Isle* now left us to descend the river again.

THE 'BRIÈRE DE L'ISLE.

Henceforth we were to fly with our own wings. Painfully and slowly we made our way in our thirty-five ton barge, towed along by a rope from the bank, the river gradually widening out as we passed Kaheide, Matam, Saldé.

Then, alas! we got one piece of bad news after another.

At Saldé we heard of the death of Aube; at Bakel of the massacre of Colonel Bonnier and his column.

Too much fuss has been made about these glorious deaths, say many foolish critics. Over the ashes of soldiers killed in battle, there has been too much heated discussion. Well, at least, hyænas only do their terrible work at night!

As for me, I lost a chief whom I loved, and many old comrades with whom I had been under fire or in garrison. Hastily we pushed on for Bakel and Kayes, eager for further news, not only plunged in the deepest grief, but somewhat anxious about what was in store for ourselves.

On February 13 we arrived at Kayes. I went at

THE MARKET-PLACE AT ST LOUIS.

THE MARKET-PLACE AT ST. LOUIS.

once with Baudry and Mandao to the Governor, M. Grodet, who told me that he had received despatches authorizing him to *suspend* my expedition, and to employ us as he liked! Our party was at once broken up. Baudry was sent to make forced marches to the Niger to escort some convoys of provisions on their way to re-victual Timbuktu. I should be disposed of later, and, as a matter of fact, I was eventually sent to take command of the Niger flotilla.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KAYES.

I must quote the actual words of this despatch, so fatal to us, for not long since M. Grodet was defending himself from the charge of having been somehow the cause of the delay to our expedition of two whole years. The despatch was addressed—"*Colonies à Gouverneur, Sudan,*" and ran thus—"*Autorise surseoir Mission Hourst, et disposer de cet officier.*"[1]

As will be observed, the Governor of the Sudan was *authorized*, that is to say, he could do as suggested or not, to *suspend*, that is to say, to stop us, for the *limited* time which seemed desirable to him. But any further disputing about it would do no good now.

One remark, however, I must make: we were stationary for two years on the banks of the Niger above Timbuktu, doing no particular service to our country. Decœur, Baud, and others were marching on Say from Dahomey. Can one fail to see what immediate political and diplomatic

[1] The translator thinks it best to give the actual words of this celebrated despatch, which caused so much excitement at the time.

advantages would have accrued to France from a junction which would have united the hinterlands of the two colonies?

It is true that Decœur and Baud were not starting from the Sudan, but from Dahomey, where Governor Ballot was sending out exploring expeditions, not stopping them.

But I have done. It is worse than useless to dwell on the endless petty mortifications, annoyances, and disappointments we had to endure. Useless indeed to recall all our own bitter experiences, which could but damp the enthusiasm of future explorers as eager to advance as we were. We succeeded in spite of everything in making ourselves useful. Even whilst re-victualling Timbuktu, which was threatened with famine—here again the responsibility rested with very highly placed officials—I was able to survey the whole of the system of lakes extending on the west of the town.

The most important of these lakes, Faguibine, is a regular inland sea, with its islets, its promontories, and its storms. It is a vast basin nearly 68 miles long by 12 broad, with a depth, which we sounded, exceeding here and there 160 feet. It is fed by the Niger when that river is in flood. We made a peaceful raid on this fine sheet of water in the *Aube*, a boat I shall introduce to you later, whilst the terrible Ngouna chief of the hostile Kel Antassar tribe retreated from us along its banks. Here for the first time I came into actual contact with the Tuaregs.

Baudry meanwhile explored the Issa-Ber (already visited by Caron) in his barge, and proved the navigability of the river at high tide.

I feel full of respectful gratitude to the military authorities of Timbuktu, especially Colonels Joffre and Ebener, for the almost affectionate consideration with which they treated me, and for being willing to employ us, for giving

us something definite to do to relieve the monotony and *ennui* of our detention. This was really an immense consolation to us, the best that any officer can hope for.

In May 1895 I received orders to return to France. Baudry, who, I am happy to say, was worn out mentally rather than physically, had preceded me by two months. As already stated, our coolies had been disbanded—from motives of economy, said the order. Our stores, too, were dispersed. Our boat was still at Bafulabé, and, *mon Dieu*, in what a state! One might have sworn that its sections had been intentionally twisted out of shape with blows from a hammer. Our chronometers—little torpedo-boat watches, regular masterpieces of precise time-keeping, made by that true artist M. Thomas—were being used at Badumbé in the telegraph office. Our bales, of the charge of which I had never been relieved, had been sent to Mopti for the Destenave expedition, which had been allowed to start. My friends in France, to whom I had addressed despairing appeals, remained silent; even Baudry gave not a sign of life.

Everything seemed finally lost. My expedition had not been superseded, it had been dissolved, destroyed.

I confess that when I embarked once more in the winter to make my way, by slow stages, back to France, I did for the first time despair of my unlucky schemes, and as I dwelt upon them, I believed that they were at an end for ever.

I had at least the consolation, as Davoust had had before me, of having struggled to the last.

On July 20, when I was halting at Bafulabé, and gazing with inward rage though outward calm at the dented sections of my *Davoust*, a telegram was handed to me. It was from Colonel De Trentinian, who had—at last!—succeeded M. Grodet as Governor of the French Sudan.

It said, "The Colonial Minister resumes the original project of your expedition."

I have had a few minutes of wild joy and happiness in my life. But not even on the day when, after I had been struggling nearly a month against fearful odds in the revolted district of Diena, I saw the column of succour approaching; nor again, last December, when, as we embarked at Marseilles, I thought all our difficulties were surmounted and all our dangers were left behind, did I experience such an immense sense of relief and delight as now. I could keep my oath after all! and by successful action put to confusion those who, either because they were badly advised or unscrupulous, had thrown obstacles in our way.

This is what had happened.

In France they say the absent are always in the wrong, and our story goes to prove it. Of all those who, when I left, had protested their devotion, had congratulated me in advance, who had even warmly embraced me, scarcely any—I had almost said not one—had taken our part or pleaded for us. In France, scientific societies, geographical and others, spring up like mushrooms, and form little cliques, hating each other like poison, and losing no opportunities of abusing each other in their speeches and declamations at their various banquets. Without running any risk themselves, or making any special exertion, their big-wigs —I was nearly saying their shareholders—get a lot of notoriety and patting on the back, through the work of a few members who are toiling far away from home.

If you ask their help in your difficulties, or even their moral support, they take absolutely no notice of you; but later, when you return, and have extricated yourself from your troubles by your own unaided efforts, and if you are also very docile. they will make no end of noisy fuss over you.

I have often thought of these scientific swells when I have watched negro chiefs marching along followed by their satellites. They strut about, playing on the flute or the fiddle, beating their drums and shouting out compliments in a deafening manner. Every epithet seems suitable to their chief; he is their sun, their moon, and all the rest of it. "Thou art my father, thou art my mother, I am thy captive!" they shout.

But when adversity overtakes this flattered chief of theirs, when he is in trouble of any kind, gets the worst of it in some skirmish, for instance, what becomes of all the toad-eating satellites? They melt away, to go and offer their incense of flute and violin playing and bell-ringing to some more fortunate favourite of the hour.

Oh, these self-interested sycophants, how well I know them!

I have, however, a grateful pleasure in adding that there are exceptions to the rule. I will mention but one here. My dear and venerated friend, M. Gauthiot, chief secretary of the *Société de Géographie Commerciale*, was always ready to cheer us in our hours of discouragement, to aid us in our hopeful days; putting at our disposal all his influence, all his persuasive power, and exercising on our behalf the undoubted authority he possessed in all things geographical and colonial.

Directly he reached Paris Baudry went to seek him, not of course without some *arrière pensée*. "Well, how goes the mission?" he asked at once. "Done for, unless you can save us," was the reply. "I'll see about it," said M. Gauthiot at once.

Then he went to my old friend Marchand, who was expected to do such great things on the Congo. "And Hourst and the descent of the Niger?" "You see what has come of that," was the answer. "Well, perhaps something may yet be done."

Both did their utmost for us, but it was M. Gauthiot who took the last redoubt. The money question appeared to be the greatest difficulty, for they were trying to cut down the expenditure budget as much as possible. "*Monsieur le Ministre*," said my friend, "I have come with my hands full!" And five thousand francs were in fact voted for my exploring expedition by the *Comité de l'Afrique Française*.

In a word, the efforts of our new allies turned the scale in our favour.

At that time M. Chautemps was, fortunately for us, Colonial Minister, whilst M. Chaudie was Governor-General of French West Africa, and Colonel (now General) Archinard Director of Colonial Defence, and it was on these three that the final order depended. I need only add, that they, with M. Gauthiot, became the four sponsors of the re-organized expedition, and we are full of respectful gratitude to them all.

"All I had to do in the matter," said Baudry to me, "was simply to put in an appearance."

I alluded above to the question of funds. Well, the whole thing was re-arranged on a fresh footing, otherwise the conditions were less favourable than they had been two years before. Nothing had changed with regard to the Tuaregs, but news had come by way of the Sudan that Amadu Cheiku, the dethroned Sultan of Sego, was trying to re-establish an empire on the banks of the Niger. Then the Toutée expedition was already on its way; no news had been received from it, and it is often more difficult to be second than first in traversing a new district.

Colonel Archinard, therefore, wished to increase the strength of our expedition considerably. To begin with, we were to have three barges instead of one, and that meant twenty coolies instead of eight. Then Lieutenant Bluzet, who, though still of low rank in the service, was quite an old

and experienced officer of the French Sudan, was to take charge of the military training of our men. "Take a doctor too," said the Colonel, "he will make one more gun at least;" and I choose Dr. Taburet, who had been my medical adviser with the Niger flotilla, engaging his services by telegram.

All this of course added to the expense, and it was no easy matter to balance the accounts of so big an expedition with so very small a budget. However, we managed to do it somehow: Bluzet and Baudry made advances from their pay, and Bolard went on campaign once more with all his usual zeal and energy.

"You start four," said Marchand to Baudry, when he saw him off at the Orleans station, "only one will return!"

Thank God, however, we all came back!

Directly I received the telegram from Colonel de Trentinian I set to work without losing a moment. I had to collect all our scattered stores again at Bafulabé from here, there, and everywhere. The *Davoust* had to be got into working order, and the only way to do that was to put her together and launch her, there would then be no unnecessary delay when the time for starting came. I was aided in this by a quarter-master with a turn for mechanics, a man named Sauzereau, who had already rendered me great service when I had charge of the Niger flotilla. It was hard work, but we succeeded, and it was a happy day when we baptized our boat by her already chosen name of *Davoust* at the little station of Bafulabé. It was the first time she had been afloat since we tried her near the Pont Royal in Paris. A missionary from Dinguira had come over at considerable inconvenience on purpose to pronounce a benediction over her. Colonel de Trentinian was good enough to travel from Kayes to be present, and I can tell you my *Davoust* presented a very fine

appearance on the Bakhoy. I would rather see her there than on the Seine. Digui, who had been second master pilot on the Niger flotilla, and whom I had chosen as Captain in place of Bubakar, dismissed, was delighted with his boat.

When all was counted over, there were many missing loads. Fortunately Captain Destenaves had only brought a few of the valuable bales to Mossi, the rest were at Sego, but of the tins of preserves and other provisions nothing was left but one case of fine Cognac, which, taken in very small doses, was our greatest luxury. There was still a little left a year later when we were at Fort Archinard. See how temperate we were! Baudry's bicycle, which we had baptized Suzanne, I don't know why, was in a pitiable state when we found her again. But Sauzereau was a specialist in such cases, and she was soon rolling along the Badumbé road, to the great astonishment of the blacks.

I had now nothing more to do but to wait for Baudry at Kayes. I went down there, and one fine morning he flung himself into my arms with Bluzet and twenty coolies behind him. Of course with regard to the coolies I speak figuratively. With a view to economy these coolies had not been rigged out, and they really looked like a band of brigands. Still they impressed me very favourably. I knew several of them, who had already served under me. They were not, it is true, quite equal to those I had engaged at first, and been obliged to disband by order of the Governor, but they were not bad fellows, and they would get into good working order by the way.

All had gone well with Baudry and Bluzet; they had even found time on board the boat, which had brought them up from St. Louis, to make up some rhymes, and in the evening, after copious libations—I mean copious for

Africa—we had the honour of listening to a sonnet of which they were the joint authors. Here it is:

NIGHT ON THE RIVER.

Slow through the reaches of the oily stream,
Unshapely, huge, and heap'd with cumbrous freight,
The steamer drags along its ponderous weight,
And panting, breathes a cloud of eddying steam;

Upon the deck the wearied negroes dream,
In sleep's fine thraldom -humble, candid, great,—
While overhead the moon in regal state
Trails robes of gauze enmesh'd with astral gleam.

The misty night exhales a poisonous balm
From vague-spread margins, where the shadows lie,
Of softly-tufted bush and tropic palm;

Then from the silence, echoless, on high
Mounts through the torpor of the deadly calm,
To ethereal plains the siren's piercing cry.

ON THE SENEGAL.

EN ROUTE.

CHAPTER II

FROM KAYES TO TIMBUKTU

On October 10, 1895, we finally left Kayes. Our packages had been piled up the evening before in three railway wagons, and our party now took their places in the carriages. Baudry, Bluzet, and Sauzereau our engineer, who were to go up in the *Davoust*, remained, and the rest of my staff were the following: the second master pilot, Samba Amadi, generally called Digui, a man of colossal height and herculean strength, but more remarkable still for his zeal, his fidelity, and his nautical skill; the native interpreter Suleyman Gundiamu, who had been to Timbuktu with Caron as one of his coolies; the Arabic translator, Abdulaye Dem, a cunning and intelligent little Toucouleur, more cultivated than most of the negro marabouts; and twenty coolies, or native sailors.

We reached Bafolabé in the evening without incident. A ferry-boat took us across the Bafing, one of the two rivers which unite to form the Senegal. A road some two feet wide starts from the right bank of the Bafing, and follows the course of the other affluent, the Bakhoy, to the village of Djubeba, where we camped on the evening of the 13th.

Thus far our journey had been effected by the aid of

LEFEBVRE CARTS UNHARNESSED.

very civilized means of transport. On leaving Djubeba, however, our difficulties were to begin.

The carriage, or rather cart, which is used in the French Sudan for taking down provisions and other necessaries to our different stations on the Niger is of the kind known as the Lefebvre, about which there was so much talk during the Madagascar expedition. It consists of a big case of sheet iron mounted on a crank axle, and provided with two wheels. It is drawn by a mule.

Is it an ideal equipage? or is it as bad as it is painted? I do not venture to decide the question. The truth, perhaps, lies between the two extremes. On the one hand, these carts were always able to follow our troops in the Sudan; but on the other, their intrinsic weight might very well be lessened. The chief advantage of metal rather than of wooden carts, is that they are water-tight, and that when unloaded they can be floated across

LOADING OUR CONVOY.

streams or rivers, but as I have never seen a Lefebvre cart execute this manœuvre, I feel a little sceptical about it still.

When the packages to be carried are small, compact, and about the same size and shape, it is easy enough to stow them away, but this was by no means the case with ours, and our large packages would be fearfully difficult to arrange and balance in the heavy metal carts.

On the 14th the mules arrived, some of which were to

be harnessed to the carts, whilst others were to carry pack-saddles. The whole of that day and the next were occupied in the arranging and loading.

The sections of the *Davoust* could not, of course, have been carried in carts in any case. I had asked for seventy porters to take charge of them, and these porters arrived in the evening. There was nothing now to prevent our starting.

The route from the French Sudan, so often traversed to re-victual our stations, has been too many times described for me to pause to speak of the stages by which the traveller passes from the banks of the Senegal to those of the Niger. For us, the usual difficulties were increased by the variety of our means of transport, including as they did carts, mules with pack-saddles, and porters. Moreover, ours was the first convoy which had passed over the route since the winter, and the road had not yet been mended all the way. The first few days were very tiring, and men and animals were all alike done up when we reached our first halting-place a little after noon. But every one did his best, and became more skilful at managing, so that in three days after the start our black fellows were as well up to their work as we were ourselves.

This was our general mode of dividing the day. At two o'clock in the morning the blowing of a horn roused everybody; the drivers gave the animals their nose-bags containing a few handfuls of millet to keep up their strength on the road; Bluzet, to whose special care I had confided the porters, collected his people, whilst our cook quickly warmed for each of us a cup of coffee which had been prepared overnight. An hour later we were off, the porters leading the way, our path lighted by torches of twisted straw, the fitful gleam of which made our negroes look like a troop of devils come to hold their sabbat in Central Africa.

Bluzet rides at the head of the caravan, looking back every now and then, whilst two or three coolies run in the rear or on the flanks of our little column, like sheep dogs keeping a flock together. About a hundred yards behind

LIEUTENANT BLUZET.

the carts come jolting along on their rumbling iron wheels, whilst the pack animals bring up the rear.

For one moment we file silently through the hush and calm of the tropical night, only broken by the cry of some bird, or the tap-tap of the Sudan woodpecker. But presently we come to a big hole in the ground, there is a shout of "Attention—*Kini bulo!*" (to the right), and from one leader to another the cry *Kini bulo!* is repeated, and

averts a catastrophe by letting every one know how to avoid the obstacle. A great galloping now ensues to catch up the leading cart, and this time the difficult place is passed without accident; but often enough a wheel slips into the bog, and in spite of all the poor mule's tugging at her collar there it sticks. We all have to rush to the rescue, drivers and coolies literally put their shoulders to the wheel, and with shouts of encouragement and oaths they

CROSSING A MARIGOT.

finally extricate it. It is out again at last, and we resume our march.

Then we come perhaps to what is called a *marigot* in West Africa, that is to say, a little stream which is dried up part of the year, and is a characteristic feature of the country. Before the rainy season it has probably been bridged roughly over, and a few planks have been thrown down at its edge, but in the torrential downpours of rain of the winter the planks have sunk, and the bridge has

been partially destroyed. We have to call a halt; to cut wood and grass to mend the bridge, and carry stones and earth to make stepping-stones, etc., so that it is often an hour or two before we can get across.

But now the horizon begins to glow with warm colour. The sun is rising, and as it gradually appears, its rays, which are not yet powerful enough to scorch us, softened as they are by the mists of the early morning, give a fresh impulse

WE ALL HAVE TO RUSH TO THE RESCUE.

to the whole caravan. One of the drivers gives a loud cry, alike shrill and hoarse: it is the beginning of a native chant, in which the names of chiefs and heroes of the past, such as Sundiata, Sumanguru, Monson, and Bina Ali, occur again and again. The singer's comrades take up the refrain in muffled tones. Then another negro brings out of his goat-skin bag a flute made of a hollow bamboo stem, and for hours at a time keeps on emitting from it six notes, always the same. The porters also have their music, and

our *griot*[1] Wali leads them on a kind of primitive harp with cat-gut strings, made of a calabash and a bit of twisted wood, from which hang little plaques of tin, which tinkle when the instrument is played.

And so we leave the long miles behind us. Every other hour we let the men and beasts have ten minutes' rest, until the moment arrives when we catch sight amongst the trees

OUR TETHERED MULES.

of the pointed thatched roofs or the flat terraces of mud huts of the village at which we are to camp.

The mules are unharnessed or unsaddled, as the case may be, and tethered in a row by ropes fastened to one foot, whilst the carts are packed like artillery. Presently we shall take the animals to drink at a neighbouring stream, and then their food will be thrown down before them, and they will fling themselves upon it like gluttons,

[1] A *griot* is a superior negro, who acts as interpreter, etc.—*Trans.*

eating the grain at once, but chewing the straw for the rest of the day.

Just a glance now over the loads to see that all is right. Nothing is missing. That's a good job! Meanwhile our black cook has set up his saucepan on three stones, and a folding table has been opened beside some rapidly constructed grass huts which smell delicious. Breakfast over, we give ourselves up to the delights of a siesta.

In the afternoon we go and look at the animals, who refreshed by their rest, joyfully prick up their ears at our approach. They are good beasts, these mules, or Fali-Ba (big asses), as the negroes call them. They were torn from their native land, Algeria, huddled together between-decks on some crowded boat, where they suffered much from the motion, and were then taken to Kayes, where fresh martyrdom awaited them. Beneath the broiling sun to which they have never been accustomed, they have to drag their carts, as a convict does his chain. Instead of the barley and oats of their own land, they have to put up with hard and bitter millet, instead of scented hay they get the coarse rough grass of the Sudan. As long as they live—and that won't be more than five years at the most—they will have to plod along the same road again and again, and cross the same marigots, until the moment of release comes, when they will fall between their shafts, and their emaciated bodies will be thrown aside in the bush, there to feast the hyæna and the jackal, whose jarring laugh and shriek so often disturb the rest of the weary traveller.

Was it the heat of the African sun, I wonder, which converted some of the members of our expedition into poets, and led to such outpourings as I quote below? I cannot say, but these are the words written by one of our party to the *manes* of the Fali-Ba, who have fallen beneath the

burning sky of the Sudan. I pray critics to be merciful to these inter-tropical effusions.

THE TETHERED MULE.

With lean neck stretch'd toward the scatter'd grain,
He scents his provender with dainty air,
Casts one side glance at his companions there,
And beats with twitching ear a glad refrain.

Gone all remembrance of the anguish'd strain
'Neath kicks and blows, and 'neath the scorching glare
Of torrid skies above the hillside bare,
And of the toil that ever comes again.

His banquet ended, calmly he digests,
While o'er him sweeps a most divine repose:
Faintly in dreams his memory suggests

Long lost repasts, whereat his dark eye glows;
Thus, bathed in vague nostalgia, he rests,
While through the bush the sunset tremor flows.

At last the sun sets, the sentinels are chosen and posted for the night, and we gather once more round our little table for supper, chatting now about our plans for the future, now about the past, telling stories which ere long will become so familiar that we could all repeat them by heart and give them each a number of its own. Then one after the other we retire to our camp-beds to enjoy such repose as the horrible mosquitoes, which are so clever in finding the tiniest holes in the nets, will allow, till the morning *réveil* is sounded on the horn, and we begin another day, exactly like its predecessor.

Such was our life for twenty days, with slight variations, such as the crossing of rivers, the over-turning of carts through the breaking of axles or shafts, etc.

At Kita, however, a very unusual thing occurred: we were able to indulge in a bicycle race. Our own bicycle, which we had called Suzanne, met a rival. After all she was

not the first comer to the French Sudan, for a trader at Kita owned another. The match took place near the post-office, on a really excellent course, and Suzanne won, although she was not, like her antagonist, provided with pneumatic tyres. During the race we were entertained by

DOCTOR TABURET.

the playing of a band of little negroes under the care of the *Pères du Saint Esprit*. The boys, who were some of them scarcely as big as their instruments, gave us several charming selections from their repertory. Their conductor was Brother Marie Abel, who with his long beard towered above his troupe, and reminded me of pictures of the Heavenly Father surrounded by cherubs, only these cherubs had

passed under the blacking brush. You see we were not without amusements in the Sudan.

On November 8 we reached Bamako, and after a day's rest started for Kolikoro, which was the last stage of our journey by land, for we were now to become sailors.

On the eve of our arrival, as we were breakfasting at Tolimandio, who should suddenly appear but our good friend Dr. Taburet, hot, perspiring, and out of breath with the haste he had made to join us. I have already said that the two barges, the *Enseigne Aube* and the *Dantec*, belonging to the Niger flotilla, had been placed at my service. Taburet, who had received my telegram, had come from Jenné to Sego, and taken the boats to Kolikoro. Then, eager to be *en route*, he had gone up stream on the *Dantec* as far as Tolimandio in advance of us.

We plied each other with questions, of course. Taburet knew only one thing, and that was that he meant to accompany me on my expedition. I had to tell him all that had happened since our parting in June, and we made the last stage of our journey to Kolikoro riding side by side, and discussing every detail of our plans.

Kolikoro, or more correctly perhaps, Korokoro, which means the old rock, was well known to me. I had stopped there in 1889 with the Niger flotilla for nearly a year. It occupies an extremely important position, marking as it does the highest navigable point of the central stretch of the Niger. Of course it is possible to go, as Taburet had just done, as far as Tolimandio, or even to Manambugu, at very high tide, but on account of the numerous impediments in the bed of the stream, it is far better to stop at Kolikoro, which has, moreover, other advantages in its favour.

I was indeed glad when we came in sight of the curiously abrupt outlines of the hill overlooking the village. This hill is surmounted by a plateau on which we had camped

ARRIVAL AT KOLIKORO.

once before, and there is a legend connected with it and Kolikoro, relating to the exploits of Somangoro, and the long struggle which was at one time maintained between the Soninké of the Niger districts and the Malinké from Kita.

Sundiata was the seventh son of a hunter of Kita and a native woman of Toron. He was stunted and deformed from his birth, and could never go with his brothers to the chase, or bring home game for his mother. She was ashamed of him, and went so far as to curse the boy who did her so little credit. "Better death than dishonour," said Sundiata. "*Moun kafisa malo di toro*," so runs the refrain sung by the negroes. He fled to the woods, and there he met a sorceress, who by means of her charms converted the cripple into the strongest warrior of the district. He went back to his father, and pretending to be still infirm, he asked for a stick to lean upon. The hunter cut him a branch from a tree, but Sundiata broke it as if it were a straw; then his father gave him a small tree stem, next a gigantic trunk, and lastly a huge iron rod, which all the blacksmiths of the country had been at work on for a year, but the young fellow broke them all. In face of this evident miracle his father and brothers admitted his superior strength. His courage, his power, and the knowledge of magic which had been bequeathed to him by the sorceress, drew all the Malinké to Sundiata, and Samory himself, who is a Malinké, claims at this present day to be Sundiata returned to earth.

Somangoro, a mighty warrior, and, moreover, learned in witchcraft, reigned on the banks of the Niger. Certain terrible and mysterious nostrums rendered him invincible, and he could only be beaten by an enemy who should succeed in snatching from him the first mouthful of food he raised to his lips. Now Sundiata, who had made up his mind to

possess himself of the lands belonging to Somangoro, and knowing the magic power which protected his enemy, pretended to seek his friendship and alliance by offering to him his own sister Ma in marriage.

Somangoro had fallen in love with Ma, so he married her, and took her to his own land. He soon trusted his wife so entirely that he allowed her alone to prepare and serve his food.

BANKS OF THE RIVER AT KOUKORO.

Well, one day when the Soninké chief had drunk rather too much *dolo* or mead, Ma brought him his food, and having placed before him the calabash containing the *tau* (boiled millet or maize), just as he was raising the first handful to his mouth she sidled up to him as if about to caress him, and, by an apparently accidental movement, made him drop it.

"Leave that bit, dear friend," she said, "it is dirty!" and she flung it into a corner of the hut. Somangoro, intoxicated with love as well as with liquor, did not take any

notice of what the traitress had done. Then the cunning Ma, when her husband had left her, picked up the mouthful of *tau*, and sent it to her brother. Sundiata could now march against his rival.

This is what happened. The two armies met at Massala ; the Soninkés were beaten. Somangoro hung his weapons on a tree, which is still pointed out opposite the entrance to the village, and fled to Mount Kolikoro, where his rival changed him, his horse, and his favourite griot into stone.

But although he is petrified the Soninké chief retains his magic power, and the village is still under his protection. At the foot of the hill two sacred rocks receive the offerings of the negroes, consisting of ears of millet, chickens, and calabashes filled with *degue* (millet flour boiled and strained).

Somangoro is supposed, or rather was supposed, not to tolerate neighbours, so that when in 1885 a post-office was for the first time set up on the plateau of the hill, the chief of the village thought it his duty to warn the officer in charge that it would certainly fall down. And so it did, for it had been put up too hurriedly, and collapsed in a violent storm. In 1889 I, in my turn, tried to build nine earthen huts on the same spot to accommodate the staff of the Niger flotilla. Pressed for time, I began by putting up a wooden framework, and the roof was being put on simultaneously with the adding of the earthen walls. Of course I had supported the corners of my framework by pieces of wood, but my mason, finding himself in want of them, did not hesitate to remove them, and therefore, just what might have been expected happened—my house went down like a castle of cards, dragging the roof and the men at work on it with it. Fortunately no one was hurt. Naturally the influence of Somangoro was supposed to

have been at the bottom of the catastrophe, and I could not get any natives from the village to work for me on that spot again. I was very much vexed, but fortunately I suddenly remembered how a certain General of the first Republic managed to get the blood of Saint Januarius to liquefy when it rebelled against performing the miracle expected of it. I presented Somangoro with a white sheep, and at the same time told the sorcerer who superintends the rites of the hero's worship that he had a choice of a good present or a flogging, according to the answer his master should make to them through him. Under the circumstances, I added, Somangoro would surely do the best he could for the welfare of his faithful servant. The event was as I foresaw. The oracle, when consulted, declared that full permission was granted me to reside where I liked. Since then I have been supposed throughout Bambara to be on excellent terms with Somangoro.

Mount Kolikoro is a harbour of refuge for escaped slaves who have fled from the injustice and brutality of their masters, and declare themselves to be the captives of Somangoro. No one dares to touch them as long as they keep close to the rock, so they have built huts there and till the ground for food.

Another noteworthy fact with regard to this mountain is, that an oath taken by it whilst eating *degué* is inviolable. He who should perjure himself by a lie after that would be sure to lose his life. When I was in command there I often turned this belief to account, and got at the truth in matters far too complicated to be solved by the ordinary light of human reason.

I must also add that Somangoro is also the enemy of thieves. When anything has been stolen in the village of Kolikoro, a crier is heard going through the streets at night, calling upon the dead hero to cause the death of the

culprit if he does not return the fruit of his larceny. Generally the person robbed recovers his property. I do not know why, but this easy mode of invoking the power attributed amongst Catholics in Europe to Saint Anthony of Padua is called *Welle da*, which means literally to appeal to the door.

The first days of our stay at Kolikoro were occupied in unpacking and going over our stores. We landed our two

REPAIRING THE 'ALBE.'

wooden barges from the old flotilla, brought down by Taburet, to have the necessary repairs done. Alas! what a disagreeable surprise we had! It was not mere repairs they needed, but a complete overhauling. During the previous winter the wood of the outside had rotted, partly from being badly kept, and more than half the boarding had to be replaced with new. The only thing to do was to set to work vigorously to remedy the evil. Fortunately our friend

Osterman, who had already rendered us so many services, was now at Kolikoro superintending the building of canoes for the re-victualling of the river stations, and he was ready to help us again in every way. We succeeded in putting our three little barks in order, but we never made them as watertight as they were originally, and especially with the *Aube* the leakage was a constant source of anxiety to us all through our trip.

TIGHTENING THE BOLTS OF THE 'DAVOUST.'

Our engineer, Sauzereau, meanwhile was busy putting the *Davoust* together, an operation the difficulty of which was greatly increased by the fact that several of the sections had got bent and twisted, either on the road or during the time when she was left at Badumbé. In her case also we had to resort to various ingenious contrivances, supplementing the original metal with pieces of wood or iron rods. On November 19 we launched her, but the water rushed in in floods through the badly fitting joints, and our unfortunate vessel seemed more like a huge strainer than anything else. Well, we must tighten the bolts somehow! So in somewhat primitive costumes we armed

PROCESSION OF BOYS AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

ourselves with turn-screws, and with our feet in the water did our best. Taburet especially distinguished himself at this work, and was so full of zeal, that in his too eager efforts he even broke off some of the heads of the bolts. We were obliged to check our good doctor's ardour a little. At last, what with blows from our turn-screws, and the use of plenty of putty and a little tow, we succeeded in draining the boat.

We made two straw couches on the *Aube*, and—unheard-of luxury!—we covered over the plank ceilings of the *Davoust* with pretty yellow mats made in the country, the colours of which harmonized well with the light grey of the wood.

Whilst we were thus at work we were able to make our observations at our leisure on the life of the village. We happened to have arrived just at the time of an annual fête, which is the delight of all the natives of Bambara, except perhaps those on whose account it is held. I allude to the ceremony of Buluku, or circumcision, which is performed on male negroes at the age of twelve, whilst young girls of a similar age are subjected to an operation of a corresponding but more barbarous kind. Male and female blacksmiths, who, amongst all the Sudanese tribes, are a class apart, are the operators. The victims are taken outside the village to a wood considered sacred, and there they are compelled to dance and shout till they are exhausted with fatigue, and reduced with the further aid of copious draughts of *libo*, or millet beer, to a state of semi-insensibility. The operation of circumcision is then performed with a sharp little knife, on a mortar for grinding millet turned upside down. The poor children must not utter a cry or even moan, although, judging from the expression of their faces, they suffer a good deal. The young girls undergo a similar treatment, but whereas their brothers are

all right again two or three days afterwards, they are ill for more than a month. During the period of convalescence the children are not allowed to return to the huts of their parents. Under the care of the blacksmiths they are to be seen going round and round the villages in small parties

THE SACRED BAOBAB OF KOLIKORO.

singing, and during this march they are allowed to take anything they fancy without paying for it. All this time the girls are covered by big white veils, whilst the boys wear a cap of a peculiar shape; both sexes carry a musical instrument made of pieces of calabash, threaded on a thin branch of some tree, the clinking of which is heard a long way off.

At Kolikoro, the year after this ceremony, the girls who have been operated on give a fête called the *Wansofili*. In the centre of the village is a huge baobab tree many centuries old, which is held sacred by the natives, and is supposed to have the power of making women prolific. The girls alluded to above gather about this tree in groups and rub their stomachs against the trunk with a hope of thus ensuring offspring. The ceremony winds up with a debauch, during which scenes occur which have perhaps more to do with the perpetuation of the race of the Bambaras than even the venerated baobab. One evening when I had gone to witness a *Wansofili*, I was obliged to imitate the example of Jacob's son and to flee from the daughters of the village, lest my dignity as Commander of the expedition should be compromised. It was too hot for me to be wearing a mantle, otherwise I should certainly have left it behind me.

On the occasion of the Buluku a certain Kieka-Sanké came to give us a *tam-tam* of his own. Kieka-Sanké, I must explain, is a member of the Koridjuga tribe, a caste with its own special customs and its own dancers and singers, I might almost say composers.

Sanké was an old acquaintance of mine, and his mummeries had often amused me. Moreover, the information he had given me had often been most useful, for the right bank of the river was then still in the power of the Toucouleurs, and I had neighbours at Guni, and in Sanké's own village, on whom it was necessary to keep a vigilant watch.

Now Sanké's profession enabled him to go everywhere and to see everything without being suspected, so that he was often able to warn me in good time of what the Toucouleurs were thinking of doing. But those anxious days are over now, and he came to Kolikoro on this occasion merely to exercise his art. His greatest successes

have been achieved when he has been disguised as a woman, for he is wonderfully clever at imitating feminine ways. As he dances he strikes a calabash full of little flints, and composes songs on the spot which are full of caustic humour. One of his privileges, and he values it greatly, is that he can say anything to or of anybody without giving offence.

During my first stay at Kolikoro, Sanké was particularly

THE FLEET OF MY EXPEDITION.

fond of taking off the Mussulman Toucouleurs, and I remember one day how, *à propos* of their many prostrations and genuflexions, he said, "What pleasure can these fellows give to Allah by showing Him their backs three times a day!" My lady readers must pardon me; the Bambara language is in certain expressions no more refined than the Latin.

This time Sanké, after having as usual given us all the news, imitated the taking of a village. Wearing huge

plumes on his head, and riding astride on a stick with a horse's head, which represented his war steed, and a wooden gun in his hand, he was in his own person the besieger and the besieged. It was really interesting to see him imitate, with a skill many comedians might envy, the fierce gestures of a mounted warrior charging, the crafty bearing of the foot soldier hidden behind some cover waiting to rush out on the unsuspecting enemy, the fall of the wounded, the convulsions of the dying. The performance ended with a song in praise of the French in general and ourselves in particular. In these impromptu verses Sanké advised women to lay aside their spinning-wheels, for the white men would give them money and fine clothes for much less tiring work. I refrain from quoting more.

On December 12 we embarked our last load, and at half-past two we started.

On the 17th we anchored opposite Sego, where we were to receive from the Government stores the greater amount of the reserve provisions for three months which we had to take with us in some hundred and fifty cases. Bluzet raised his arms to Heaven in despair when he saw the huge piles. "We shall never get them into our hold!" he cried, "unless the axiom that the lesser cannot contain the greater is not true after all." He did not, however, realize what skilful stowage could do. Baudry disappeared at the bottom of the hold, and nothing more was seen of him that day. And what he did then as second in command he had to do again and again for a whole month, unpacking and repacking, hunting about amongst the confusion of packages and cases for the one containing what was wanted. I confess I often pitied him from the bottom of my heart, the more that the temperature beneath the metal roof of our hold was not one easily borne by a European.

At half-past two in the afternoon Captain Destenaves, at one time resident at Bandiagara, arrived from Massina, where he had been in command for more than a year.

Destenaves had led our expedition to Mossi and Dori. From the latter town, which is situated on the borders of the Tuareg districts, he had brought much interesting information, and he was also accompanied by an old man

DIGUI AND THE COOLIES OF THE 'JULES DAVOUST.'

named Abdul Dori, who declared himself ready to join our expedition.

Abdul was what is known in these parts as a *diavandu Fulah*, that is to say, a Fulah belonging to a family which resembles in certain respects the *griots* of whom I have had more than once occasion to speak. A *diavandu* attaches himself to the person of some chief, whom he serves as a confidential agent, courier, etc. He toadies his master to the top of his bent, and so makes a good thing out of

him, by hook or by crook. Even if he is not exactly a noble character, it is impossible to deny that the *diawandu* is often very full of intelligence and address. If Abdul had really resolved to join us he might have rendered us very great services, but, as will be seen, the sly fellow had his own particular schemes to further, and was perhaps even a spy in the pay of the Toucouleurs sent to watch and circumvent us.

Destenaves was, moreover, in a great state of indignation, for though his expedition had succeeded at Dori, it had come to grief at Mossi. He had even had to fire a few shots. He laid all the blame, not without reason, on the former Governor of the French Sudan. In fact, M. Grodet, instead of letting Destenaves go first to Bobo Diulasso, where he would have been sure of a good reception, made him adopt an unfortunate course. Unable, in face of his instructions from home, to stop the expedition altogether, as in our case, he ordered its leader to go towards the districts occupied by the Mossi, who were wholly unprepared to receive it.

We left Sego on the morning of the 18th, and arrived the same day at Sansanding, where my good friend Mademba was waiting for us.

Every traveller who has been to Mademba's, and has since written an account of his journey, has made a point, not without justice, of bearing grateful testimony to the merits of this noble fellow.

Mademba Seye is a native who was at one time in the employ of the French post and telegraph office. He especially distinguished himself during the construction of the line which, keeping alongside of the Senegal, crosses the Toucouleur districts of the Senegalese Foota. Just now the Toucouleurs were very much irritated against us, and full of arrogance because no punishment had been inflicted on

them for their daily misdeeds. They stopped barges coming up from St. Louis, they molested the traders and pillaged their merchandise, and the greatest skill, courage, and *savoir faire* were needed on the part of Mademba to conquer the difficulties besetting his path.

MADEMBA.

Later he did wonders in the Sudan, and his defence of the village of Guinina was a glorious feat of arms. He was victorious over the troops of Fabu, the brother of Samory, though he had no one with him but the few employés helping him to put down the line. Colonel Gallieni sent for him to be a kind of chief interpreter, and he held that position until, the Toucouleurs having been driven from

Sego and Nioro, the country just conquered by the French was properly organized.

A small kingdom, with Sansanding as capital, was placed under Mademba; he had in his service a certain number of *sofas*, or captive Amadu warriors, who had surrendered to the French and to the natives. Our postmaster-general soon became the *Fama Mademba*, the word *fama* signifying a chief or king among the natives of Bambara.

Mademba gathered a court about him, showing a very clear sense of the right policy to pursue. When with us his manners and tastes were quite civilized, but he knew that to get an influence over his new subjects he must adopt the customs of their chiefs. He began by building himself a palace, which consists of a vast rectangular enceinte, with a door embellished with rough ornaments in clay. In the first vestibule, or *bolo*, are the guards, or *dalasiguis*, armed with muskets. This porch gives access to a series of courts and other *bolos*, where of an evening bellow the cattle and bleat the sheep belonging to the chief. A last door, guarded or rather watched over by some fifteen children, gives access to the favourite apartment of the *Fama*. Why should children be employed? Because they are the only people who can be depended on to tell the truth, and if they notice anything unusual they are very sure, sooner or later, to tell what they have seen. For the same reason, perhaps, and also on æsthetic grounds, the *Fama* is waited on by women only, most of whom are the daughters of blacksmiths or griots, specially attached to the chief, their name, *Korosiguis*, meaning, "those who sit beside." Moreover, Mademba showed great acumen in his choice of servants, and I never saw so many pretty girls anywhere else in the Sudan.

Behind the royal apartments, and completely surrounding the vast enclosure, are the huts of Mademba's wives; but

there begins the private life of the chief, and I can't introduce you to that, for the simple reason that I have never seen anything of it myself.

Surrounded by his male and female griots, wearing a grand green *burnous*, on which gleamed the Cross of the Legion of Honour, the reward of his courage in the service of France, Mademba came to the banks of the river to welcome us. Shouts and acclamations of delight and sympathy with us greeted us as we landed, and if we had not known what all the fuss meant, we might have mistaken it for a declaration of war.

We went home with the *Fama*, and there, taking off his *burnous*, the black chief disappeared, to be replaced by our old friend Mademba, cultivated, refined, a charming talker, quite up-to-date in all that was going on in Europe, the man whom all Frenchmen who have been in the Sudan know and appreciate. He did the honours of an excellent, almost European meal, and we drank a glass of champagne together, in spite of his being a good Mussulman, for he has none of the stupid fanaticism of his fellow believers.

Just before we started I had made the following little speech to my coolies: "My friends, I know I am asking what will cost you a good deal of self-denial, but you must oblige me by not being too attentive to the women you meet until we have reached Timbuktu. You know that that sort of thing leads to disputes, sometimes even to regular quarrels, with the natives, and we shall have quite enough hostility to contend with without creating any ill-feeling ourselves. I warn you, moreover, that I shall give you no more pay after we leave Sansanding till we reach our goal. I will, however, give you two months' pay in advance at Sansanding, and you will have three days to spend it in. For a year therefore, and perhaps more, after you leave Sansanding, remember, you have done with women."

Truth to tell, I had learnt from experience that the ardent temperaments of negroes forming the escorts of expeditions really often jeopardized success, if their amours did not actually bring about failure. Of course I can't be sure that my orders, which I repeated later, were always

YAKARE.

strictly obeyed, but at all events I did a good deal to lessen the evil.

I gave my jolly fellows three days to enjoy themselves in, and they took me at my word. Until half-past one on the 22nd I saw next to nothing of them on board, and when the time for starting arrived I had to send to hunt up our little Abdulaye Dem, who had quite

forgotten how the time went in the society of a coal black Circe.

Meanwhile, we Europeans amused ourselves far more usefully in arranging for our further journey, and in trying the effect on the natives of our most attractive possessions, viz. the little organ, the bicycle, and the phonograph.

The organ had already done wonders, and as for our *Suzanne*, as we called our bicycle, she caused a perfect delirium of joy.

Mademba had an ancient-looking negress of Amadu, named Yakaré, in his suite. She was really only about forty years old, but she was considered one of the cleverest women in all Bambara.

There was a certain ring about her songs of war and love which would be appreciated even in Europe, and the following specimen, in which she glorifies Donga or the vulture, Monson, the greatest *fama* of Bambara, will serve to give an idea of the rhythm.

Braves! Heroes, who of you dares rail at Donga?
I tell you evil will come upon you if you mock at him.
Raillery of him was fatal to Diakuruna Tutun.
Samaniana Baci thought to play with Donga,
He fancied he could make merry with him;
But that did not please the vulture,
And he took Bamana Dankun
And cut off his head, yes, took his head from his shoulders.
Dankun had only said that the Bambaras
Could not pause in sacrifices already begun.[1]
I sing of Donga Jaribata,[2]
The vulture of four wings,

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[1] Bamana Dankun had replied to Monson who had called him, "I will come; when I have finished the sacrifices I am offering, I will come." Hence the anger of the *Fama*.

[2] I have failed to ascertain the meaning of the word *Jaribata*. The griots sometimes use words in their songs, which the present natives of Bambara do not themselves understand, and which may perhaps be survivals of a now extinct language.

A mighty bird, whose talons
Can tear up the soil of the earth ;
A bird who if he will
Can dig a well with his claws.

You can just imagine the sensation when, after the negress had finished her chant, the phonograph repeated it without anybody's help.

LARGE NIGER CANOES.

But all good things must come to an end, and to the great regret of my coolies, I gave the signal for departure on the 22nd.

Below Sansanding the Niger increases sensibly in depth. This fact explains alike the former and the future importance of the village as a commercial centre. The trade of the country is, in fact, conveyed up and down by water in big canoes some 60 feet long, capable of carrying twenty tons, and made of planks tied together. Holes are pierced

in these planks, through which ropes are passed made of the fibres, which are very strong, of the leaves of a kind of hibiscus. When Sansanding, Jenné, and Timbuktu were prosperous places, when the savage hordes of Toucouleurs had not yet spread death and desolation everywhere in the name of Islam, these heavy craft, sometimes drawing more than six feet, used to halt at Sansanding. For the traffic further up stream smaller boats were used, which plied to and fro nearly all the year round. A central mart was absolutely indispensable to the Sudan merchants, and Sansanding was fitted by nature to become that mart. I believe that in its most prosperous times it numbered from thirty to forty thousand inhabitants, though now these are reduced to some three or four thousand, in spite of the fresh impulse given by the more prosperous times of to-day, and the intelligence of the governor Mademba.

When the railway has been pushed from Kayes to Kolikoro, and when steamboats ply on the Niger, similar causes will of course produce similar results. Steamboats will not, however, be able to go beyond Sansanding all the year round, for no amount of improvement in their build can reduce their draught below one and a half or two feet. Above this point, however, the river is navigable for a longer or shorter time every year in such barges as are now in use. At the most, the traffic is only interrupted for about four months in the year. Sansanding will again become a central emporium and transhipping station; all its old importance will be restored to it.

I may add, that it has fortunately many other advantages, including good anchorage and landing places, where boats can be moored in shelter during the violent storms of Central Africa; the soil too is very dry, so that the place is healthier than many others in the Sudan, and the people are gentle, intelligent, and industrious.

Beyond Sansanding the course of the Niger changes considerably. Thus far the river flows between pretty straight uniform banks, but now the hills are lower, and behind them the country is perfectly flat, without so much as an undulation, so that they are completely flooded, often for an immense distance, when the water is high. Here and there villages rise from slight eminences, the clumps of hibiscus surrounding them rendering them visible from afar. Now too appears the sweet grass which the natives call *burgu*, a special characteristic of the riverside vegetation as far as Say. It is a kind of aquatic couch-grass nearly level with the soil when on the subsiding of the floods the ground becomes dry again. Directly the soil is once more inundated, however, the burgu sends out shoots with extraordinary rapidity, and they grow so fast that they soon reach the top of the water. The natives make a sweet beverage of the leaves of this grass, of too sickly a taste to be fancied by Europeans, but negroes are very fond of it. For our hydrographical surveys the burgu was a most invaluable help, growing as it does, as I have already remarked, wherever the solid ground reappears after the floods. If, therefore, we should be overtaken by a tornado on the open river, we can always take refuge from the waves by anchoring in the middle of the submerged tracts.

On January 1 we reached Gurao on Lake Debo, where I had recently resided for two years in charge of the Niger flotilla, consisting of the two gunboats *Niger* and *Mage*, and a few barges made of the wood of the country. Two of these barges, it will be remembered, were now part of our exploring expedition.

We paid a visit between whiles to the tomb of Sidi Hamet Beckay, in the village of Saredina. I shall often have occasion later to refer to this worthy, so I will content myself with adding but a few words about him here. It

was thanks to him that Barth was able to stop six months at Timbuktu, pursue his voyage in safety, and go down the river by Say to Sokoto, whence he had started eighteen months before. Thanks to him too, Barth was able to send details to Europe of the hitherto mysterious city of Timbuktu, which had previously been visited by no white men except René Caillé.

When El Hadj Omar and his fanatical hordes came to devastate Massina, Hamet Beckay did his utmost to stop the course of the Toucouleur conqueror, by urging on him his own interpretation of the Mussulman religion, which he also professed; an interpretation too noble and elevated to be adopted by any but a few votaries. It was all in vain; his remonstrances were unheeded by El Hadj. Beckay had to be content with organizing a stout resistance; he summoned to arms his faithful friends the Tuaregs and the Fulahs, his former adversaries. But, alas! he died at Saredina before he could accomplish anything. The story goes, that when in perfect health he was seized with a gloomy presentiment of his approaching end. He called his intimate friends together, telling them that he might perhaps soon be summoned to make a distant journey, and giving to them his turban and his sword, the former for his son Abiddin, the latter for his son-in-law, Beckay Uld Ama Lamine, which signified that he bequeathed his spiritual power to Abiddin and his temporal authority to Ama Lamine. Then he begged to be left alone to pray during the hour of the siesta. When his followers returned they found the great marabout, his chaplet, clasped in his hands, and his eyes closed in an attitude of ecstasy. After watching him for a short time they became alarmed at his immobility, they touched him to try and awake him. But his lifeless body fell to the ground, the spirit of Hamet Beckay had left its earthly tabernacle. Beckay Uld Ama

Lamine continued the struggle begun by his father-in-law, and to him and his faithful adherents is due the honour of having besieged and killed El Hadj Omar at Hamdallahi. The blood-stained course of the Toucouleurs was checked for the moment, and the Western Sudan was saved from falling into the hands of the ferocious warriors of El Hadj.

Saredina is about two and a half miles from the river, and to reach it we had to cross a partially inundated plain

THE TOMB OF HAMET BECKAY AT SAREDINA.

over-grown with grass, in which nested quantities of aquatic birds. Arrived at the village we asked to be directed to the tomb, and found it to consist of little more than a small earthen case upheld by wooden poles, for the mass of dried bricks which had originally formed the monument to Hamet Beckay had all but disappeared. The natives of the neighbourhood had shown little respect for the great chief's resting-place, and had used the materials of his tomb to weight their nets and make their agricultural

implements. In my report to the governor of the French Sudan I put in a plea for a grave more worthy of Hamet Beckay. I hope my suggestion will be attended to, for it would be not only fitting, but good policy to preserve the memory of a man whose character was the more estimable in that such tolerance as his is rare indeed amongst his fellow believers. Such an act of pious respect for a Mussulman on our part would greatly increase our

SARAFÉRÉ.

moral influence amongst the Mahommedans of the neighbourhood, especially amongst those of the interesting Kunta tribe to which Hamet Beckay belonged.

At Gurao we had to collect the ammunition for our guns and cannons, and also to pick up some of our actual weapons, notably a certain machine gun which had belonged to the Niger flotilla. The work involved in all this delayed us till the 3rd, but on the afternoon of that day we resumed our journey.

On the 7th we reached Saraféré, an important market-place near the junction of the Niger and the Kolikolo, which latter is an arm of the river, branching off from it a little above Lake Debo. Here old Abdul Dori, the guide we had engaged at Sego, brought us a young man named Habilulaye, who was a Kunta, and I seize the opportunity of his visit to say something about the tribe to which he belonged, as I shall often have to refer to it.

The Kuntas are of the Arab race, and are descended from the famous conqueror of North Africa, Sidi Okha, who was a native of Yemen. After winning over to the religion of Mahomet a considerable portion of North Africa, his dominion extending nearly to Tangiers, the victor was assassinated near Biskra, where his tomb is still to be seen.

His descendants spread in many directions, and the Kuntas took root at Tuat, where as venerated marabouts they exercised, indeed they still exercise, a very great influence.

During the first half of the present century, Timbuktu occupied a very difficult and most precarious position. About 1800 a Fulah marabout, named Othman dan Fodio, carved out for himself a regular empire between Lake Tchad and the Niger, and his example led to the revolt, and the generally successful revolt, of nearly all the Fulahs distributed throughout the river basin. At Massina, Amadu Lobbo Cissé, a chief—of Soninké birth, it is true, but who had long resided amongst the Fulahs—raised the standard of revolt in the name of Islam, and his attempt, after various vicissitudes, succeeded. He and his son founded later an empire, the influence of which, with Hamda-Allahi as its capital, soon extended on both banks of the Niger as far as Timbuktu. Arrived there, however, the Fulahs found themselves face to face with the Tuareg

tribes, who were very jealous of the maintenance of their independence. War of course soon broke out, and it lasted for half-a-century without any subjugation of the Tuaregs. It was not until later that the invasion of the Toucouleurs, led by El Hadj Omar, united the combatants against their common foe.

During this time of struggle and trouble Timbuktu, standing as it did between the two contending parties, passed first to one and then to the other, and pillaged by both sides, she rapidly declined in prosperity, and was in danger of complete ruin.

Under these trying circumstances, the merchants of the city, eager to obtain some sort of security for their lives, their goods, and their trade, sent to Tuat an earnest petition that some venerated Kunta marabout should come and live near Timbuktu, hoping that the respect felt for his piety might put a stop to the depredations of which their town was the victim.

Sidi Moktar responded to this appeal. He came, and took up his abode with his family and a few of his more distant relations near Timbuktu. Of these relations the most celebrated were his brothers Sidi Aluatta and Sidi Hamet Beckay with his nephew Amadi.

Barth has told us much about them all, but we have now specially to deal with Hamet Beckay, the doctor's chief protector.

Imbued through reading Barth's travels with a belief that the very fate of my expedition might depend on finding, as he did, some man universally loved and respected to take me and my followers under his protection, I earnestly hoped to find such a man amongst the Tuaregs, with whom I had become well acquainted during my two years' residence in the Sudan.

As will be borne out by my further narrative, these

Tuaregs seemed to me far less black than they were painted in Europe. At the same time, I recognized that certain peculiarities of their character might involve me in great difficulties. If they were not exactly instinctively ferocious, I knew that they were quick to take offence, defiant, full of dread of innovation, and ready to look on every stranger as a spy. To them a traveller is but the harbinger of some warlike expedition, which will wrest from them their greatest treasure, their independence.

But I had to get some one to go bail for me, some one to take me under his patronage and protection, and I had resolved, if it could possibly be done, to find that some one amongst the Kuntas. Surely, I thought, the traditions of tolerance of which Hamet Beckay had given such striking proof, must have been handed down to some of his descendants.

I did not, however, disguise from myself that in the very nature of things, since other marabouts had, since Beckay's death, come to preach a holy war, and to inculcate hatred of the infidel, that the Kuntas would necessarily be forced —if they did not wish to lose their prestige—to howl with the rest of the wolves. But I reflected there is still time to appeal to the example of their grandfather, and experience proved that I was right.

I put out all my eloquence and powers of persuasion to win over young Habibulaye, and I succeeded. From him I learned that the Kuntas were now divided into several groups. He and his brother Hamadi, the sons of Sidi Aluatti, the brother of Hamet Beckay, had, however, remained at Timbuktu when the French occupied that town, and had all espoused our cause.

Aluatti, the son of Amadi, was in authority on the southern side of the river, and he looked on our expedition with a favourable eye. Further on, Baye and Baba Hamet,

the sons of Hamet Beckay, would, I expected, be useful auxiliaries to us if only for the sake of their father's memory.

Habibulaye did not, it is true, conceal from me the fact that other Kuntas were bitterly hostile to us, notably a certain Abiddin, who generally resided at Tuat, and who meant to rouse the Hoggars against us. He had, in fact, twice gone quite close to Timbuktu to try and make the people rise against the French.

More confirmed than ever by all that I heard in my resolve, and having now got all the information I could out of Habibulaye, who was but a child, I made up my mind, as soon as I got to Timbuktu to take Hamadi into my confidence, and get him to give me recommendations to his relations.

A strong east wind, which lashed the river into waves and was dead against us, delayed us so much that we did not reach Kabara until the evening of January 11.

As is well known, Timbuktu is not actually on the river, but at low water is some eight or nine miles off. Djitafe is then the nearest point of approach for canoes, but when the river rises they go up a lateral arm, and come first to Koriomé and then to Day. At certain times a stream, the bed of which is said to have been hollowed out, or at least deepened by the hand of man, enables very small craft to get up to Kabara, whilst more rarely, that is to say, when the inundations are at their height, the various excavations behind the Kabara dune are successively filled up, and boats can reach the capital itself. As a general rule, however, merchandise is taken into Timbuktu on the backs of camels and asses, the route varying according to the state of the river.

The ancient capital of Nigritia, or the Sudan, as it was still called not long ago in geographical text-books, has lost

all its mystery since it passed into the hands of the French, and opinions are divided as to its present and future position. My friend Felix Dubois has described it, and it would be alike a waste of time and presumption on my part to attempt to supplement what he has said so well. I shall content myself with noting the reason of the former great commercial importance of Timbuktu ; relatively considered of course. "Timbuktu," says an Arab author, "is the point of meeting of the camel and the canoe." That fact alone would not, however, be enough to account for its prosperity ; many other places on the river fulfil this condition, as well if not better than Timbuktu, for, as we can ourselves testify, the canoe and the camel only meet there a few days in the year, and not always even as often as that.

In my opinion we have to seek the explanation elsewhere, and I think I have found it. Here it is : camels cannot with impunity approach rivers or other water-courses, for this reason. The banks are subject to constant inundations, and, especially in the Niger basin, quantities of succulent grass, containing a great deal of water, everywhere spring up, which, though the camel eats them gluttonously, are fatal to the "ship of the desert," used as it is to dry food.

Now by a strange freak of nature, the part of the desert, I will not say exactly the driest part, but certainly the portion containing neither streams nor permanent pools, that vast expanse improperly called the Sahara, stretches up to the very gates of Timbuktu, so that caravans can reach the city without any risk to the animals. In a word, may we not say that Timbuktu is not a port of the Niger in the Sahara, but a port of the Sahara near the Niger ?

As long as the trade of Timbuktu is carried on chiefly by caravans coming from the north, it will, in my opinion, retain its importance, but as soon as the Sudan railway is completed, merchandise will come by way of it and the

river, and the commerce of Timbuktu will be reduced to a trifling trade in salt, which is dug out in considerable quantities from the mines of Towdeyni, about twenty days' march on the north.

When we arrived, we could only bring our boats up to Kabera. The port was blocked with big canoes made of planks tied together in the manner already described,

A MOSQUE AT TIMBUKTU.

and a brisk trade in salt and grain was going on on the quays.

The next day I went to Timbuktu, and was received with open arms by the commandant, M. Rejou, who was in charge of the whole district.

I had one thing very much at heart, and I set to work to see about it at once. It was to persuade Father Hacquart, superior of *Pères blancs* mission at Timbuktu, to accompany us on our expedition.

When I said *persuade*, I did not perhaps use quite the

right word, for I did not for one moment doubt the readiness of the good father to go with us. The companion of Attanoux in his journey amongst the Tuaregs of the north, formerly *Commandant des Frères armés* of Mgr. Lavigerie, Father Hacquart could not fail to be won over by the idea of accomplishing a similar journey. But I knew him to be too devoted to his duty to hesitate an instant between a project, however attractive to his tastes and desires, and the interests of the mission, which had been under his direction at Timbuktu for more than a year, and to which his rare qualities had already given such life and success.

On the other hand, even from the point of view of the work to which Father Hacquart and his companions had devoted themselves, going down the Niger, opening relations with the natives on its banks, and obtaining all the information necessary for the work of their future evangelization, was really perhaps to bring about the good results hoped for years before they could otherwise have been achieved. The aim of Father Hacquart was really the same as ours, to see, to study on the spot, and to make friends, leaving to his superiors the task of deciding how his future campaign should be carried out.

As for me, nothing could be better for the success of my undertaking than the co-operation of Father Hacquart. Already familiar with the manners and customs of the Tuaregs, he would be a most valuable adviser; a distinguished Arabic scholar, he could in many cases converse without an interpreter with the natives, a matter of the greatest importance. He could, moreover, check the translations and reports of my Arab interpreter, Tierno Abdulaye Dem. Then his intelligence, the loftiness of his aims and views, the uprightness and energy of his character, were a sure guarantee that in him I should find a most valuable

FATHER HACQUART.

controller of my own acts and schemes, for of course I should ever be ready to listen to what he might suggest.

Father Hacquart turned out indeed to be all that I have just described. I often changed all my plans in accordance with his advice, and I never had cause to regret having done so. He must pardon me for giving expression here to all my gratitude, and for proclaiming it on every occasion as loud as I can, for it was in a very great measure to him I owed the remarkable fact, that my Niger expedition was accomplished in the midst of tribes so diverse and sometimes badly disposed towards the French—without the firing of a single shot.

As I hoped, Father Hacquart yielded to my persuasions, and we now numbered five Europeans.

On the other hand, our native escort was reduced. One of our coolies, Matar Samba, had been out of sorts ever since we left Sansanding. During the last few days he had become worse, and both Dr. Taburet and a medical man at Timbuktu were of opinion that he was suffering from tubercular disease, and would only hamper, not help me, in the further journey. I decided therefore to leave him at Timbuktu, and when I came back from Dakar on our return I had the pleasure of finding him much better, if not completely cured.

Aided by Father Hacquart, I at once opened relations with Hamadi, the Kunta of whom I have already spoken, and he promised to do all he could to persuade his relation Aluatta to go with us. It was significant that when I begged Hamadi to join us himself, he replied, "No; I might merely arouse opposition, and you might suffer through my being with you. I would rather write to Aluatta; he will be more likely to say yes then, for, like a dutiful relation, I shall only urge him to come and share the windfall of all your beautiful presents.

The next thing I did was to try and meet at Timbuktu with some natives who were on friendly relations with the Awellimiden, the important Tuareg tribe to which I shall so often have to refer later, but whether they spoke the truth or were deceiving me, one and all declared that they knew absolutely nothing about them.

To make up for this, however, a native of Tuat, a certain Bechir Uld Mbirikat, who had long lived at Timbuktu, and whom I had met before, gave me some letters for his cousin Mohammed, who was living amongst the Igwadaren Tuaregs, and for Sheriff Salla Uld Kara, chief of the village of Tosaye, who had once been the pupil of Hamet Beckay, and the friend of Barth.

Moreover, Bechir gave me a valuable bit of advice, which I immediately followed, without, however, fully realizing its importance at the time. This counsel, perhaps, contributed more than anything we did to the success of our expedition. "Tell them," said Bechir, "that you are the son of Abdul Kerim." Now Abdul Kerim was the Arab name assumed by Dr. Barth during his journey. This custom of taking an Arab name seemed almost comic, and reminded me of a little play I once saw acted at the Châtelet Theatre in Paris. I forget the name of it, but a traveller figured in it, who took his servant with him to the heart of Africa. The latter, who was passionately fond of travelling, and took an eager interest in all the doings and adventures of explorers, made but one request, and that was to be allowed to change his name of Joseph to that of Mohammed Ben Abdullah. "It was more euphonious," he said, and the audience roared with laughter.

Well, Joseph was quite right, and if Barth had not done as he did, the negroes and Tuaregs would never have remembered his European name, it would never have

become engraved on their memories, it would never have been transmitted to their descendants, and I should not have been able to solve all difficulties, however great, and emerge safely from every situation, however embarrassing, by the simple words "I am the son, or rather the nephew of Abdul Kerim."

It is impossible to admire too much the lofty, upright character of Barth, which so impressed all with whom he came in contact on his journey, that nearly half a century after his death the mere fact of his having traversed a district—poor as he was, and exposed to all manner of dangers, the friendship of Beckay his only safeguard—should be enough to open the way for a pretended relation of his.

How few travellers could boast of having done as much, even in modern times. Too many explorers have indeed, after forcing their way through a country against the will of the natives, left behind them a legacy of increased difficulty and danger to their successors.

I was very anxious to secure the services of a political agent with a thorough knowledge of the country, and the language of the Tuaregs. I wished to send him, if I could find him, in advance of our party to take letters to the chiefs, or to plead our cause with them.

Acting on the advice of Hamadi, I chose a certain Sidi Hamet, distantly connected with the Kuntas, and then employed in the Custom House at Timbuktu, under one Said, the interpreter of the Post-Office.

I must do this justice to Said, he yielded with anything but a good grace to the employment of his subordinate on our service, and did more to dissuade him than to further our wishes. We had to invoke the aid of Commandant Rejou, and later, at Tosaye, Sidi Hamet piteously entreated me to let him go back, and I expect Said's

objection to his joining us had something to do with his faltering. However, I forgive him with all my heart. Sidi Hamet was the interpreter's right hand, his chief source of information on every subject, and he found it hard work to fulfil his own duties, even those of an interpreter, without him.

On the 16th I went back to spend a day at Kabara, where I had invited all the notables of Timbuktu to come and listen to the wonders of the phonograph. It was an exhibition which long dwelt in the memory of those present. Amongst the most attentive listeners were the two sons of the chief of the Eastern Kuntas, who lives at Mabrok. I felt sure that the rumour of the extraordinary things I had done would precede me.

Commandant Rejou had already warned Sakhaui, or Sarrawi, chief of the Igwadaren Aussa, the first Tuareg tribe we should meet on our way down the river, of our approach. In the evening two envoys from this chief arrived with a missive, which it was almost impossible to decipher, but from which, in spite of its ludicrous phraseology, we managed to make out two things, one being that Sakhaui had no desire to see us, the other that he was very much afraid of us.

We did our best to reassure and impress the messengers, and finally succeeded in convincing them that we had no evil intentions with regard to the Igwadaren, and armed with a fresh document from us they set off to return to their chief.

Meanwhile Sidi Hamet, who had been well coached in what he was to say and do, had started on his way to Aluatta, to ask him to meet us at Kagha, a little village on the right bank about thirty-one miles from Timbuktu. For the first time I now announced my pretended relationship with Abdul Kerim, taking myself the Arab name of Abd el Kader, or the servant of the Most High.

This mission with the Kuntas accomplished, Sidi Hamet was to go to the Igwadaren of Sakhaui and wait for us.

Having settled everything to the best of our ability, visited the boats, and repaired any little damage which had been done by the way, we had now only to give ourselves up to the current of the river and to the will of God.

It was not without a certain emotion that, on Wednesday,

WE LEAVE KABARA.

January 22, we started from Kabara, seen off by all our brother officers of the garrison of Timbuktu, and escorted to our boats by a great crowd of natives, who, with more or less enthusiasm, invoked the protection of Allah on our behalf.

As long as our boats were in sight of the station we could see handkerchiefs and helmets waving to us in token of adieu, and when the flag of the fort disappeared from view our hearts felt somewhat oppressed, for we were

leaving all that in our exile from France represented our native country. Henceforth we five white men, with our twenty-eight black followers, were thrown on our own resources, and had to depend upon ourselves alone. How many of us would return? How many of us were destined to sleep our last sleep beneath the soil of Africa?

AT TIMBUKTU.

DROVE OF OXEN.

CHAPTER III

FROM TIMBUKTU TO TOSAYE

ON January 22 we made a very short stage, and moored about mid-day at Geigelia, a little village picturesquely perched on rising ground of a reddish hue, a little below the mouth of the stream, which, as I have said, gives access to Day and Kabara.

We determined to spend the afternoon in making things snug. Hitherto we had put off from day to day the task of arranging our cabins. Now our three little craft are all the world to us, the floating castles which must drift down with us to the sea, *Inch Allah!* (God willing), as the Mussulmans say. We must shake down in them as comfortably as possible.

I occupy the fore-cabin of the *Davoust*. On one side is my plank bed, with, for mattress, the wrappings of the

presents which we take out one by one as required, replenishing them from the bales in the hold.

On the other side is a big table, with packing cases serving as legs. Everywhere books and instruments, an iron chest containing the more valuable presents: caftans, velvet burnous, gold-embroidered turbans, etc.

On the mats which cover the partitions, I have fixed the photographs of a famous singer, purchased in the Rue de Rivoli, in a moment of musical enthusiasm. I found them by chance at the bottom of a trunk, into which they must have slipped when I was leaving France. These portraits, as will be seen, played a part in the politics of the Niger. Opposite them, an engraving of the President of the Republic, or rather, Sultan of France, as they call him here. Nor must the phonograph in its ingenious case be forgotten, with the voltaic piles, Geissler's tubes, little electric lamps, forming a fairy crown, which is lighted on pressing a button. Such articles as have hitherto figured in the baggage of none but the passengers of Jules Verne.

The after-cabin is Père Hacquart's sanctum, and also the arsenal. The Father rests peacefully on a couch of rice and biscuit tins, with the conventional bedding of package wrappings; on the partitions, the ceiling, everywhere, I have fixed guns for presentation, revolvers, etc., for exchange; a goodly number of cases of cartridges, moreover, give this retreat the appearance of an armoury. On the bridge, all round the machine-gun, are more cases, which serve as benches for the oarsmen.

Our hold is a masterpiece of packing, due to Baudry's ingenuity. I defy the most skilful to insert as much as a needle more. On board the *Aube*, the fore-cabin protects Baudry and Bluzet; there is not much elbow-room for two, in such a confined space. The hinder one is reserved for Taburet and his medicine chests.

The little barge *Dantec*, also provided with a shelter, will carry all surplus articles. At present, until it is used as an infirmary, which I trust may be as seldom as possible, it is the refuge of the destitute, where Suleyman, the interpreter, and the Arab translator, Tierno Abdulaye Dem, are quartered.

I may now describe more minutely our dusky auxiliaries. At first there were twenty coolies, reduced to nineteen by

THE 'AUBE,' AND HER CREW.

the defection of Matar Samba. Their head-man Digui, of whom I have spoken, will be judged by his deeds; there is no need now to mention all the blessings he deserves.

Suleyman Gundiamu and Tierno are the scholars of the party. Suleyman almost speaks French, although he says *la noce* for *un os*, *cherchicane* for *certificat*, and always translates *keffir* (Infidel) by Christian. As for Tierno, he is a sly, cunning dog, of whose fidelity I have often had my doubts: evidence is against me, however, and I must do

him the justice to say, that on all occasions he has sided with us against his co-religionists, his compatriots, and even his relations. Idle as a dormouse in everything but writing Arabic, but isn't that just what he is for? Altogether he is not a bad boy, and we should scarcely find a better fellow amongst his people.

Our carpenter, Abdulaye, is a big Wolof, strong as Hercules, intelligent, only idle by fits, and not very serious ones either.

"Abdulaye, something has gone wrong with your working hand!" This is how we call him to order; if the appeal is not attended to, a good blow follows as punishment; Abdulaye is aware of his guilt, sets to work again, and does the tasks of four.

Abdulaye is certainly not a marabout. He is even addicted to spirituous liquors, but he has not had many opportunities on the journey of indulging this taste; he was, however, overcome on our arrival at Dahomey. For six days we never set eyes on him, for he was never sober.

My first acquaintance with Abdulaye arose from his love of the bottle. In May 1894, when I took command of the flotilla, Abdulaye having found the door of the store-room open, gave way to his propensity, and I found him dead drunk beside a very respectable number of empty bottles. The awakening was anything but pleasant, and Abdulaye never forgets the capers he cut on that occasion. Such is our staff, or I should rather say, these are the native officers of our expedition. Besides this, each of us has his own servant. Mine is Mamé, an intelligent Saracolais, who speaks Songhay, the language of the blacks on the banks of the Niger from Jenné to below Say. He is a very faithful and devoted lad; the point about him is the excessive deliberation of every motion, which gives him something of the appearance of a chameleon. Lucky fault, or rather

precious gift, which all who have been served by Sudanese will appreciate. Thanks to it, Mamé has never broken anything of mine.

Baudry's servant's name is Mussa; his father is headman of Diamu, a village on the banks of the Senegal. He is the philosopher, the learned man of our military establishment. He reads and writes French pretty correctly, but his studies occupy some of the attention due to his master. If Baudry has employed his talents as a teacher to the full on a most willing pupil, in return his boots have seldom been blacked—or rather greased—in the course of the voyage.

Fate decreed that Bluzet should have as servant a son of the blacksmith of Mussa's father. Fily is his name, and by reason of his parentage he is the confidant and devoted slave of Mussa.

Provided he is treated firmly, Fily is an excellent servant, and a cook of the first order (for that country, be it understood), and the cakes we used to call his *nougats aux arachides*, have often been fully appreciated at our table.

Lastly, Father Hacquart and Taburet have two boys at their disposal, both answering to the name of Mamadu; to distinguish them one is called Father Mamadu, the other Doctor Mamadu.

Add to these a yellow dog, Meyer by name, why so called I cannot say, and the menagerie is complete.

We did possess two cats, one an excellent swimmer, in spite of all preconceived notions; but these little animals, who behaved themselves anything but decently on board, disappeared in the course of a very few days.

In spite of his denials, I have always suspected Bluzet, a sworn enemy of the feline race, of aiding and abetting their desertion, for they seemed to have a special grudge against him.

I have forgotten old Abdul Dori, but he did not make a long stay on board. I have already mentioned that I suspected him of evil designs in taking service with us. He got me to advance him a pretty round sum on the voyage to Massina, which he said he owed to one of his countrymen, and desired to repay before he entered upon a venture so full of danger. As soon as the sly rogue had gained his end, he changed his tactics. From Sego, according to him, the voyage would be comparatively easy. His debt paid, he attempted to terrify my coolies, telling them the most ridiculous tales about the ferocity of the Tuaregs, and giving the most discouraging account of the rapids, which in the end we unfortunately found partly true.

He soon discovered he was wasting his time. My men came of their own accord, and reported that Abdul was trying to dishearten them. I soon made him understand I would not stand that kind of thing. Seeing the failure of these manœuvres, and in no way anxious to remain with us, he shammed sickness, pretending to be attacked with dysentery. The doctor soon discovered the trick, and I told him that, ill or well, he would have to follow me.

His plan having miscarried, he set about making himself really ill, and lay down to sleep without any covering on the chilliest nights. At this game, if he did not procure the dysentery of his dreams, he at least contracted inflammation of both lungs, which developed the very day of our departure. He remained two days longer with us; then really seriously ill, he became delirious. Moved with pity, I decided to send him back to Timbuktu in a canoe hired at the village of Burrem. I don't know what became of him, but I advise those who may come across him hereafter, and are deceived by his honeyed words and ways, to beware of him. As far as we are concerned, I consider it a

blessing that his cowardice overcame the desire for doing evil. He might have proved a great source of danger, especially at Say, his native place, where he would have aided and abetted our enemies.

The first and most important object of the expedition was to trace as correctly as possible the course of the river which we had to follow. For this purpose I had observing instruments of very accurate construction made for each barge, which would afford us the means of making a triangulation of the river *en route*. Two barges were to coast along the banks, while the third kept in the deep channel.

We tried this plan on January 23, the first day on which we navigated an almost unknown region. It was soon found impracticable. By evening we had gone less than four and a half miles. At this rate, counting necessary stoppages, it would take a year to reach the mouth of the river. We therefore adopted the following plan: the *Davoust* followed the left bank; the *Aube* the right one while on surveying duty, the two barges frequently taking their places.

At the same time, Baudry on the *Dantec* tacked about in search of the deep channel, taking frequent soundings. Any inaccuracies were guarded against by taking the mean draught of the two larger vessels, and constantly determining the position by astronomical observations.

This system was invariably followed down to Ansongo, that is, for the whole navigable course of the Niger. Though we did not secure the accuracy of a regular survey, still to me it appeared quite enough; for the first vessels that might come after us, will possess an indication of the position of the deep channel relatively to the banks and their configuration, the distances from one point to another, the position of the villages, and the peculiarities of the soil, etc.

Below Ansongo, in the region of the rapids, Baudry and I had to abandon all survey work, and devote our attention exclusively to the boats. Bluzet completed the map, which is of no practical value, as it is impossible to determine any navigable channel, especially for steamers, in those dangerous rapids. The only object of its existence is to prove that a navigable channel does not exist. So that all that can be done is to choose the least undesirable means of access to the Western Sudan from among the many that have been proposed.

After passing the villages of Koa, Burrem and Bori, where the people came out in canoes with presents of goats, sheep, eggs and poultry, we arrived abreast of Kagha, about one o'clock on the 25th. The moment we reached the mouth of the creek which leads to it—for the village is not on the main stream, but a little inland—we were hailed from a canoe by a great giant with an intelligent face and woolly hair, forming a halo round his head, which was more picturesque than clean. He was a Kunta, knew French, had been in the villages of Mediné and Nioro, in the French Sudan, and even spoke a little Soninké, the maternal language of most of our coolies.

He acted as pilot for us, but, in spite of all his efforts, we could not get up to Kagha, for there was not sufficient depth of water; so we had to pitch our camp at the foot of a little hill covered with dwarf palms rather more than a mile from the nearest huts.

A deputation of the Kuntas of the village soon joined us, who told us that Sidi Hamet had arrived two days before with my letter for Aluatta; but the latter was from home, and no one knew exactly where to find him, nor if my missive had reached him.

In fact, fifteen days before, a band of Kel Gossi, a Tuareg tribe whose territory is about the centre of the bend of the

Niger, had carried off a hundred head of cattle belonging to the chief of the southern Kuntas; Aluatta had set off to overtake the raiders, and induce them in the name of Allah and Mahomet to restore their ill-gotten gains.

However extraordinary the following custom may appear, it is actually prevalent in the Tuareg districts. One tribe steals from a neighbour all or part of his herds; if the latter is not strong enough to recover by force that which he has been deprived of, he tries conciliation, and generally regains, if not all, at least a portion of his chattels. This invariably occurs when the injured party is a marabout, and be it remembered these raids do not involve war: the same Kel Gossi will be quite prepared to come the next day to ask Aluatta to implore for them the protection of Heaven, and to purchase talismans from him.

Whatever the result, this troublesome episode made me fear I should not see Aluatta. Unable to confer with him, I betook myself to his relations and endeavoured to secure their friendship, telling them the story of my connection with Barth, or Abdul Kerim.

This produced a marvellous change in their demeanour; reserved before, they became most cordial. To strengthen the effect still further I brought the phonograph into play. One of the head Kuntas sang an Arab song in his tent. It was really the battle hymn of Hamet Beckay, the friend of my "uncle," and it was really something to see the amazement of all when the instrument repeated the song. From that time we were the best of friends. All expressed their regret that I could not have a palaver with their chief. "Not wishing to deceive you," said they, "we will not promise a visit from Aluatta, but, if you like to wait, you shall see his brother, Abiddin, who at this moment is at Arhlal, about twelve miles away. We will send and fetch him at once."

The proposal pleased me too much to be refused, and the messengers departed.

Along with our friends the Kuntas, there came a little band of Tuareg Kel Temulai, who lived further down stream in the direction of Ganto, who were evidently sent to give information.

They were tall, strong fellows, spare and active. As this tribe has no camp on the banks of the river, I told them I should ascend the creek which leads to Ganto for the purpose of seeing them. In fact, I wished to ascertain their intentions. The Kel Temulai were one of the two tribes which divided the dominion of the region around Timbuktu; Kabara and the southern portion of the plain which surrounds the city belong to them. The French drove them from it, and they fell back towards the east, gathering round their chief Madunia, who lived near Ganto and was more than a hundred years old.

On the next day, the 26th, a despatch actually arrived, which the Commandant of Timbuktu had managed to send on to us by canoe. A fortnight later we were to receive yet another at Rhergo, and our delight may be imagined, for we had had no news from home for ten months.

In the afternoon Abiddin arrived. Tall, strong, and well-made, he looked anything but amiable, and was far from communicative. I confess his first appearance struck me as anything but pleasing. He was by no means anxious to get into our good graces, and replied very dryly to my protestations of friendship. We talked together for about an hour, but I failed altogether to mollify him, and I began to despair of bringing him round.

In the evening I found out something more about him, and the position he occupies in the country. He is older than Aluatta, but from his very boyhood he showed such

a warlike disposition, and one so very unlike the gentle nature which is naturally expected of a marabout, that his father named Aluatta his successor instead of him, refusing him the *baraka* or paternal blessing usually bestowed on the first-born. Does not this remind one of the story of Jacob and Esau?

However, Abiddin did not seem to mind the elevation of his brother to what should have been his own position as religious chief of the Kuntas, but devoted himself gladly to the direction of the warlike expeditions of his tribe.

He seems to excel as a leader, and the Kel Antassar, the tribe which longest resisted French influence in the districts round Timbuktu, knew something of his valour. At the head of a little body of men he surprised their camp at least a hundred times, and I now began to understand the real reason why Abiddin had treated me so coldly; he would have liked to have been allowed to take his part in the play now that, after what he thought our culpable inactivity of more than a year, we had again made up our minds to act. This would have given him a fine chance of revenging himself on his old enemy N'Guna, the chief of the Kel Antassar. It really was a pity that the authorities at Timbuktu had ignored the existence and the character of such a man. If only as guides, he and his Kuntas would have been admirable auxiliaries for us.

We concocted a diplomatic plan to win the confidence of Abiddin. When he came to see us the next morning I dwelt much upon my relation to Abdul Kerim, and I roused his curiosity by showing off the phonograph. Then when his manner became a little less churlish, I held my peace and let Father Hacquart have his turn. The father began by taking him roundly to task in Arabic for his want of politeness and amiability. He actually brought

Abiddin to acknowledge himself in the wrong, and ended by getting him to promise not only to help us himself, but to give us recommendations to his friends. In the evening he actually returned bringing us three letters, one for Salla Uld Kara, another for a certain sheriff named Hameit, whom we should meet beyond Al Walidj, and the third and most important for Madidu, chief of the Awellimiden Tuaregs.

This letter for Madidu simply delighted me. I was to some extent already acquainted with the various tribes we should have to deal with on our way down the river. The first were the Igwadaren, divided into two sections hostile to each other, under two chiefs, brothers, though enemies, named Sakhaui and Sakhib. Beyond them we should come to the Kel Es Suk, marabouts of the great Tuareg family, a small tribe of the Tademeket Kel Burrum, to whose chief, Yunes by name, Abiddin also gave us a letter; and beyond them, that is to say, after passing Tosaye, we should enter the territory of the great Awellimiden Confederation, but how far it extends I did not as yet know.

Abiddin, who had passed a month with the chief of the Awellimiden a year ago, could not say enough in his praise, whilst, on the other hand, he warned us very earnestly against the small tribes addicted to pilfering through whose districts we should have to pass to begin with. "Madidu," he said, "is a lion, the other chiefs are mere jackals!"

"Madidu," he added, "makes war, and of course the plunder he takes in war is a lawful prize, but he would scorn to pillage peaceful folk, such as the negro cultivators of the soil, or inoffensive merchants with no one to fight for them, in the reckless manner of the Kel Temulai or the Igwadaren. There is no one higher than Madidu unless it be God."

Of course I knew that Abiddin exaggerated, as all Orientals do, and that much of his enthusiasm for Madidu was only cupboard love, the result of the good cheer he had enjoyed in his camp. Still I gathered from what he said that his chief really was somebody worth reckoning with. Writing to the Lieutenant-Governor of the French Sudan by the returning canoe which had brought our despatches I said, "I am now pretty well convinced that if Madidu really wishes it we shall pass without hindrance, but that if he opposes us we shall have the greatest difficulty in going down the river." This was, however, but a *façon de parler*, for I was mentally resolved that, with or without Madidu's help and permission, we would go down the Niger, though if he did try to prevent us, we should most likely leave our bones in the river.

It will readily be understood how much this passage through the Awellimiden district occupied our thoughts. It was the chief subject of all our talks with Abiddin, and we had every reason to congratulate ourselves on having so far won him over. But we meant to do far more than that. He was altogether our friend now, and never left the boat except to eat. I reminded him of the former grandeur of his race, of Sidi Moktar and his brothers, who had acted as mediators between the tribes of the neighbourhood, and pointed out to him that it was the outburst of fanaticism, against which his grand-uncle had struggled so hard, which had led to the decrease of the influence of the Kuntas. We too, I told him, had to contend against those who propagated the doctrines declared by Hamet Beckay to be false and contrary to the true morality of Islam, and we had succeeded in what that great man wished to accomplish, for we had driven back the invading Toucouleurs.

If, I urged, we whites, who had considerable forces at our

disposal, made a firm alliance with the Kuntas, who would in their turn place at our service all their religious influence, their ancient power would be restored, they would be our trustworthy agents, working loyally for the pacification of the country, which would owe to them all the benefits of peace, for which they would never cease to be grateful.

On the other hand, I pointed out, that if we made an alliance with the Awellimidens, whose lands we did not in the least covet, all the small pilfering tribes, such as the Igwadaren and the Kel Temulai, would be compelled to cease their depredations, because all the merchants on the river would be under the protection of the French, or of their new friends. Placed as they would necessarily be between us and the Awellimiden, they could not without risk of destruction, or at least of severe reprisals, insult either of the two contracting parties.

Abiddin seemed much taken by my arguments, which appealed forcibly to his sympathies and intelligence. He was a decidedly clever fellow, and I struck whilst the iron was hot, by adding that it seemed to me that this proposal, if made to the Kunta chief, would solve the problem of the pacification, and add immensely to the value of the districts surrounding Timbuktu.

We should very soon relieve those under our protection from all fear of molestation by the Tuaregs, we should promote the creation of centres of commerce and outlets for trade, and moreover, we should greatly reduce our expenses at Timbuktu, for our gains would help us to pay and support the troops quartered in that town.

"It is evident," answered Abiddin, "that if you could come to terms with Madidu, and be really friends with him, it would be a very good thing for us all. We shall, however,

want somebody to act as go-between, but the question is, whom could we choose."

"*Houa!*" (thou), said Father Hacquart, suddenly striking into the conversation. Abiddin started; the idea that he might go himself had evidently not occurred to him. The father now put out all his eloquence to persuade him, and finally won his consent.

Abiddin spent the whole of the next day with us, and asked the doctor to give him some medical advice, for he suffered greatly from rheumatism and cystitis. I arranged with him that we should go to Rhergo, and there wait for news from him. If he should send us word to go on we should know that he had already passed us, and was *en route* for Madidu's camp.

On the 29th, despairing of seeing Aluatta, who was still negotiating with the Kel Gossi, we decided to leave Kagha, but we had scarcely left our moorings when we were met by such a violent wind that it was absolutely impossible to proceed, and we went to take refuge in an opening on the left bank. It was not until after a delay of two hours that we were at last able to go on and anchor opposite Milali. We were asleep, when our watch aroused us with the news that a canoe was approaching, the man in which was shouting out something at the top of his voice. It turned out to be a courier from Aluatta, who had at last received our despatch, and would come the next day to Kagha, where he begged us if possible to return.

Only too glad to hear from him at last, we went back the next day, and about four o'clock in the afternoon Aluatta came to see us with his retinue of followers. He was a handsome young fellow, with a very dark skin and a most intelligent face, a gentle but rather proud expression. He is supposed to have the gift of prophecy, and to be able to perform miracles. It is said that he

predicted the death of Tidiani, a former chief of the Massina, a year before it took place.

Everything having already been settled with Abiddin, Aluatta had only to ratify our agreement with his brother, and this he did readily. Of course we showed off our phonograph and bicycle to our visitor, and a telescope greatly aroused his admiration, because he was able to see

INTERVIEW WITH ALUATTA.

and recognize the people of Kagha through it. We spent the whole January 30 with Aluatta, and then, this time in earnest, we resumed our voyage.

We were dreadfully hindered by a strong contrary wind from the east, and it was not until February 3 that we arrived at Kunta, where we were to see the Kel Temulai.

At our approach the negroes of the village (the Tuaregs have their encampment on the opposite side of the river some little distance inland) at once begun carefully to sweep the bank where we should disembark, and very soon

our tent was up, our camp-stools were beneath its shelter, and our visitors the Kel Temulai arrived, including R'alif, the brother of R'abbas, chief of the tribe, with the two sons of the latter and a small retinue.

The palaver was carried on under difficulties for want of

A LITTLE SLAVE GIRL OF RHERGO.

some one understanding the Ta-Masheg or the Tuareg language, and we had to converse in Songhay, our servant Mamé acting as interpreter. This was the first time we had seen the Tuaregs in their own land, and we were all deeply interested in them. They are many of them very finely built fellows, and their features, all you can see of them, for the lower part of their faces is always obstinately

hidden by the *tagelmust* or veil, are of a purer Kel Temulai type than I have ever seen elsewhere. They all wear breeches coming down to the instep, and mantles, or as they call them *bubus*, of dark blue material. The more important members of the tribe have a kind of pocket of red flannel on their breasts. In the right hand they hold an

TUAREGS AND SHERIFFS AT RHERGO.

iron spear some six feet long, and on the left arm a dagger is kept in place by a bracelet without causing its owner the slightest inconvenience, so that it is always within easy reach of the hand, and can be used at a moment's notice. Lastly, a few of them also have a straight sword with a cross for a hilt, reminding us of those in use in the Middle Ages, and which is hung on the left side by a rope.

The palaver ended amicably enough, and presently other Tuaregs crossed the creek in canoes to swell the numbers of our visitors. We now made acquaintance with one of

their most characteristic and at the same time detestable peculiarities, namely, their incorrigible love of begging. I know well enough that the poor fellows have nothing to depend on but their flocks and the produce of their fields, which are cultivated for them by the negroes, who are paid by a certain royalty on the results. Our arrival, laden with

OUR PALAVER AT RHERGO

fine stuffs, wonderful glass beads, and all manner of gew-gaws, must of course be turned to account as much as possible. Naturally they exaggerated our resources, and the word *ikfai* (give me) became a refrain dinned into our ears every day for months. I must add, however, that no Tuareg ever in my hearing enforced his begging by a threat. I gave often and I gave much, for my firm belief is, that the one way for a traveller to succeed is to conciliate the natives and win the sympathy of the people through whose country he is passing. It is best for his own interests,

and also for those of future explorers, to be generous whenever it is possible, but he should never give against his will, or give anything but just what he himself chooses.

I often yielded to respectful and courteous importunity, but would never have done so in compliance with a demand, which would have made a free gift appear like a compulsory tribute.

Amongst our new friends was the son of Madunia, the centenarian chief to whom I have already alluded. He was only about twelve years old, an incidental proof of the vigorous constitution of the Tuaregs, or perhaps rather of the truth of the reply of a celebrated doctor to an inquirer—"Men sometimes have children at fifty, at sixty never, but at eighty always."

My little friend had a very pretty face but a very bad temper. I made him very angry by putting a five franc piece in a calabash full of water, which I defied him to pick out. He looked at me with a cunning expression and put out his hand, but directly he touched the water he gave a scream and fell backwards, holding his arm as if in pain. The fact was, I had put a bit of Ruhmkorff wire, of which I had a coil hidden in my tent, in the bowl. The poor boy was furious, and when the people standing about laughed at him, he wept with rage. I consoled him with a present, and in the end we parted the best of friends.

The next day before we started some more Tuaregs came to see us, and I must add to beg a little present. Two of them, with a confidence in us which quite touched us, went with us on the *Davoust*, and remained on board till twelve o'clock, proving how completely reassured they were as to our intentions. One was the son of R'abbas, the other his brother R'alif. The former was only about ten years old, and did not as yet wear the veil. Both were

ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE OF RHERGO.

very fine specimens of the physical beauty which, as I have already said, characterizes the Kel Temulai race.

On the 6th, still much bothered by the contrary wind, we reached Rhergo, a very large village, more ancient even, it is said, than Timbuktu, which rose in importance at the expense of its older rival. Recently, however, through the culpable policy which left the districts surrounding the French settlement unprotected, Rhergo has regained some of the trade of Timbuktu. A razzi or raid of Hoggars, the Tuaregs from the south who murdered Flatters, cut short the growing prosperity of the capital by almost completely ruining it. I was surprised to hear about the Hoggars so far from their usual haunts, but what I have just said is true enough, as will presently be proved.

We made all our arrangements for spending a few days at Rhergo, so as to give Abiddin time to communicate with us.

The next day the natives decided to open relations with us, and a deputation came to interview us the first thing in the morning. We saw them filing along the path leading from the village, which was almost three quarters of a mile off. Before actually entering our camp they halted, and each one of them made us a solemn salaam. Protestations of friendship, offers of services, expressions of devotion followed. Finally a paper was handed to us with very great ceremony, which turned out to be a protectorate treaty which had been concluded with Timbuktu.

There exists a perfect mania in Africa for so-called treaties, a mania which would be harmless enough if it did not give an altogether false idea of colonial questions to French people, who are ignorant of the true conditions of the countries to which they refer.

These treaties, in fact, very often prove bones of contention and litigation between different European powers, and

thus attain an importance which but for this would be altogether wanting. In the partition of Africa European governments began by imagining a kind of rule of the game, which consisted in giving to so-called treaties with native chiefs a certain fictitious value. We fell in with this idea, and it would be difficult now to go back to the old belief, that in a game of chance the ace is more powerful than the

TRADERS AT RHERGO.

king. To follow the fashion therefore when we appear on the boards before international conferences, we have to be provided with plenty of trumps, and to produce treaties with people, shady folk enough sometimes, whom we dub for the nonce kings or princes. Our treaties are as valid as those made by Germans, Spaniards, or Italians, and all of them added together, if truth and good faith were considered, would amount simply to zero, as I shall presently have occasion to prove.

But when there is no special reason for pretending to the contrary, what is the good of having such endless diplomatic rigmaroles and such long-winded treaties, of which one of the contracting parties does not understand a single solitary sentence?

Imagine then my astonishment at seeing on the commercial treaty between Rhergo and Timbuktu, that the

SO-CALLED SHERIFFS OF RHERGO.

former place was bound to pay an annual tribute to the French! Now if any one is in authority at Rhergo it is Sakhaui, chief of the Igwadaren, and not the French,—I speak now of course of when we were passing through on our voyage down the Niger,—so that this promised tribute, which was never paid, never even demanded, was certainly not calculated to add to French prestige in these parts.

The people of Rhergo, who were worse than cunning, pleased us but little. They called themselves sheriffs, or

descendants of Mahomet, but I think they would find it difficult to prove their parentage, for they have neither the beauty of feature nor the paleness of complexion characteristic of true Arabs.

In the evening Sidi Hamet returned to us from his visit to the Igwadaren. He had been pretty well received by them, but when he told them of our imminent approach

THE 'DAVOUST' AT ANCHOR OFF RHERGO

they took fright, and thinking that our party was a large and formidable one, they wanted to leave the banks of the river and take refuge in the interior.

Their women, however, cried shame on them, reproaching them for losing such a chance of presents; and to cut short all further discussion, they threatened that any man who was coward enough to flee from an imaginary danger would have to go without his wife.

The prospect of having their wives imitate the strike of

the women of Mycenæ, as described by Aristophanes, put a stop to the desire of the husbands to decamp, and Sidi Hamet wound up by telling me that all was now arranged for our friendly reception. Amongst the Igwadaren he had seen Mohamed Uld Mbirikat, the cousin of my friend Bechir, to whom I had a letter, and he brought back with him a rifle which had been taken from Colonel Bonnier, and had remained for some time in the possession of the chief of the Eastern Kel Antassar. On hearing of our arrival the chief, not liking to keep anything so compromising, had hastened to give the rifle to Mohamed.

The fact is, if we could only have gone immediately to Sakhaui we should no doubt have been well received; but unfortunately we had promised Abiddin to wait for him at Rhergo, and during the delay our enemies, especially the marabouts, had plenty of time to poison the minds of the natives against us.

On the 8th Taburet and Father Hacquart went to the village, where they met with a merchant of Timbuktu whose goods had been stolen by an Igwadaren named Ibnu, a relation of Sakhaui, who had probably been sent to Rhergo to spy on us. The merchant wanted to complain to us, but the chief of the village told him that if he did he would cut his throat when we were gone.

This chief being very infirm, I sent for his son and read him a good lecture. I also sent for Ibnu, who came at once, and protested his repentance for what he had done. I pretended to accept his excuses, and presently he reappeared dragging two goats behind him, which he offered to me. I accepted them, earnestly hoping that he had stolen them from the sheriffs of the village, who pleased me less and less. Then I in my turn gave him some presents, notably a garment for his wife.

The next day we had a visit from Alif, the brother of

Sakhaui, who offered us a fine bull. We killed it with a shot from a Lebel rifle, which alarmed the Tuaregs not a little. The next day, the 9th, back comes Ibnu with another goat, this time for sale. But the chief object of his visit is to ask for another length of stuff for the dress I had sent to his wife, who he explained was as big round as our tent, and the material I had given him would only

POLITICAL ANXIETIES.

dress one-half of her. From the Tuareg point of view she must have been a splendid woman, for amongst this tribe weight counts as beauty. The desired corpulence is obtained by eating quantities of a mixture of which curdled milk is the chief ingredient, in fact, they fatten themselves up much as the French do the geese which are to produce *paté de foie gras*.

Clouds were now beginning to gather on our political horizon. Our prolonged sojourn at Rhergo, where we

waited in vain for letters from Abiddin, must have seemed very strange to the Tuaregs, who can have had no inkling of the reason. Moreover, a courier had come down in a canoe from Timbuktu to see us, and though I sent him away immediately, I felt sure that he had been seen. Putting myself in the place of Sakhaui, and knowing the distrustful nature of the Tauregs, I was convinced that in his mind we were the advance guard of a more numerous party who were to come from Timbuktu, and of whom he stood in dread. The arrival of the courier would be enough to confirm his suspicions. It was very evident that we ought to start at once, if indeed there was still time for us to open really cordial relations with the Igwadaren. Between two aims of an importance so unequal I thought it would be wise to make a final choice. Now to us French the Igwadaren were really not worth much, and besides, had not they also a protectorate treaty with Timbuktu? whilst, as I have said before, the good-will of the Awellimiden would be of vital value to us, and I would not, if I could possibly avoid it, lose the advantages which Abiddin's visit to them might win for our expedition.

On the evening of the 10th, however, all my fine plans were completely upset. Sidi Hamet, who had been to the village, came back with a letter for me, which had been brought by a Tuareg and given to a slave belonging to one of the sheriffs. Strange postal arrangements indeed! Taken in connection with the news brought to us by Sidi Hamet, the letter was perfectly incomprehensible. In it Sakhaui begs me to return to Timbuktu, where he says I shall find all that I could hope to meet with further away; indeed, he pledges himself to secure my success. At the same time, if we choose to go on he will watch over us, but towards the end his letter becomes almost threatening, for

he says, "Take care, above all things beware of doing any harm to any of my people!"

The next day Sidi Hamet started with a letter, and he returned at midnight not alone, but accompanied by a big Igwadaren of manly bearing and intelligent countenance, who answered to the name of R'alli.

The letter from Sakhuai, he now explained to me, had been written for him, as, like all Tuaregs, he did not know how to write himself, by a marabout named Kel es Suk, and his meaning had been completely distorted. Sakhaui was perfectly well-disposed towards us, he was impatiently awaiting us, etc., etc.

Of course I only half believed what our friend R'alli said. Moreover, he added that the marabouts, especially one who was at Kabara before we arrived, were trying to get up an agitation against us. We had now been waiting in vain for more than a week for news of Abiddin, and I began to think we should never hear from him, so I decided to go to Sakhaui, who, as already stated, was then chief of the Igwadaren.

On the 14th we anchored close to a little tongue of land which separates a lagoon, forming an admirable port, from the river. We were told that the camp of Sakhaui was behind the dunes which we could see from our anchorage.

In the evening we were hailed from a canoe by an Arab of stunted growth, with masses of long matted hair and bright, intelligent eyes. He turned out to be the chief attendant of Mohamed Uld Mbirikat. His name was Tahar, and he had been a follower of the great Beckay, the friend of Barth.

He brought us bad news. Mohamed was ill with fever, but, he added, for all that he would probably join us the next day.

The next morning we went round the peninsula, entered the little lake called Zarhoi, and cast anchor opposite the spot we had just left. Faithful to his promise, Mohamed caught us up on our way there.

About ten o'clock the beach, which had been deserted on our arrival, became full of life and animation, for envoys arrived from Sakhaui, his brother, a dirty fellow, more ragged than any Tuareg I had yet seen, leading the way, with the chief of the Kel Owi, a tribe belonging to the little confederation which has taken the general name of the Igwadaren.

The palaver began at once: Sakhaui is ill, besides, there is no need for him to come himself, as his messengers are authorized to speak for him.

In fact, the reception was not exactly what Sidi Hamet and R'alli had led us to hope. However, Mohamed confirmed what our messenger had said, telling us that Sakhaui had sent for him a few days before to ask his advice, and he having assured the chief that he would run no danger by doing so, the great man had said he would receive us in person.

It was evident that since then the marabouts had accomplished their purpose, describing us as traitors, perhaps even magicians armed with terrible powers. In fact, according to their usual custom, they had done all they could to prevent Europeans from entering into confidential relations with the Tuaregs, for of course such relations would be fatal to their influence.

Sakhaui's absence put me out dreadfully. Not that I was particularly anxious to see him, for I had no proposals to make to him, he being under the direct control of the authorities at Timbuktu; but I feared, and that with very good reason, that if he, the first chief we passed on our way down the river, would not see us, his example would

be followed by all the other Tuareg leaders. It turned out just as I expected.

Mohamed went to Sakhaui's camp to try and persuade him to come to us, but it was all in vain. To make up for his absence, however, our friends of the morning came with others to beg for presents, and I treated them liberally, for this was my last trump card, and by playing it I hoped to induce their chief to see me.

We had other things to worry us. To begin with, the *Aube* leaked terribly. We had to take everything out of the hold, and we tried to stop up the fissures in her bottom, through which the water poured, with lumps of putty, but it was not much good, and throughout the whole of the rest of the voyage we were haunted with the fear of losing one of our vessels, or at least of having to leave her behind us.

Then one of my coolies, Semba-Sumaré, was very ill with pneumonia, and Dr. Taburet was afraid he would die. He was delirious, but fortunately quiet enough. Still he required careful watching, lest in an access of fever he should be guilty of some mad freak.

We remained where we were for the whole of the 16th, and our friend R'alli came on board to tell us, in his comically eloquent way, that Sakhaui really would come to see us. He was very uneasy about us, pulled this way and that, many of his advisers urging him not to visit us, but he, R'alli, would make him do so!

There might have been something in what R'alli said, and although I did not much believe in his influence over the chief, I gave him a nice present. It never does to be niggardly with these natives, one must advertise oneself well by generous gifts.

In the evening the number of visitors increased yet more, and we saw a good many people who were interesting to

us, because they or their relations had been mentioned by Dr. Barth, including the son of El Waghdu, who had been the German traveller's faithful friend on his journey, and Kongu, a little Tuareg who had been very fond of him, and who, in spite of certain sad presentiments he had had of a terrible fate, had survived until now, so many years after the death of the Doctor himself. Every one

SAKHAUI'S ENVOYS.

still talked of that doctor under the name of Abdul Kerim, every one still remembered him, and once more I must bear witness, as I shall have to do yet again and again, to the wonderful impression left behind him by the genial German.

Whilst we were chatting with our visitors some envoys from Sakhaui arrived, bringing back the presents I had given to R'alli in the morning. "He is a low impostor," the chief had told his messengers to tell me; "I am ashamed

of his behaviour, for he never ceases to talk, without rhyme or reason, and he promised to give us a cow as a present when every one knows he has not got one."

R'alli sent to ask if I would see him again, and when I replied that I would, he came and held forth for a long time. He began by declaring that he wished he were dead. He wanted to return the presents, extraordinary desire indeed in a Tuareg. As he went on the people standing by began to make hostile demonstrations, daggers were half drawn from their sheaths, and for a moment I feared that the whole thing was a farce got up with a view to pillaging us in the confusion of a pretended tumult. But I was wrong, and the weapons were sheathed again without having drawn any blood. The other Igwadaren were really jealous of R'alli, because they thought he had been better treated than themselves, and they were also perhaps indignant with him for the friendly feeling he had manifested for us. If R'alli really was a humbug, as I always fancied he was, yet he had been the first to approach us without any of that stupid suspicious defiance which so long prevented us from living on really good terms with the Tuaregs. All this I explained to the assembled crowds as best I could, winding up with, "If R'alli really is so little worthy of confidence, wasn't it too bad of Sakhaui to send him to us at Rhergo as his accredited messenger?"

Moreover, I declared that I meant to do as I choose with my own property, even if I gave it to a slave or a dog, so I ordered R'alli to take back his presents, which he was evidently glad enough to do, and all ended peaceably.

We also had a visit from Achur, the brother of Sakhaui, chief of the so-called imrads or serfs, and the son of the chief of the Eastern Kel Antassar, who, though he had not joined his relation N'Guna in his struggle against the French, had nevertheless withdrawn on our approach.

I had now lost all hope of seeing Sakhaui. Was he afraid of compromising himself with his people? I wondered. Had the marabouts incited him against us by rousing his fears of some hostile intentions on our part? The best plan, I thought, would be to give up urging him to visit us, and to go to his brother and enemy Sakhib, whose camp was opposite to his on the other side of the river.

Our passage through the country, if it did not do much good, could not do much harm either. So near to Timbuktu, with people all virtually under French protection, I should not venture to engage in any diplomatic or military enterprise on my own account, for of course to do so would be to encroach on the province of the supreme authority in the French Sudan. Is it too much to hope that our gentleness and our patience will make it easier later to establish really satisfactory relations with the Tuaregs? We shall have shown by our conduct that we are not the ferocious beasts our enemies chose to represent us to be. Moreover, some of the Tuaregs, no matter how few, will be grateful for the presents we have given them, and as those presents really were very handsome ones, I hope that the fame of our generosity will precede us, and incite the tribes through whose territories we have to pass to make friends with us.

To avoid having to give any more presents we got under sail early on the 17th, but the wind got up and compelled us to anchor amongst the grass at the entrance to the Zarhoi lagoon. We were scarcely gone before, as we had foreseen, the Igwadaren arrived in numbers at the scene of our recent encampment, and were greatly discomfited at finding that the goose which laid the golden eggs had flown away. But they soon spied us in our new anchorage, and hurried to hail us, entreating us again

with eager gestures and shouts to land. They wanted to re-open the profitable intercourse with us, but the comedy was played out now. At about eleven o'clock we were able to resume our voyage along the left bank, followed for some little distance by a regular cavalcade, amongst whom Sidi Hamet thought he recognized Sakhaui himself. We now crossed the river, and cast anchor near another

OUR COOLIES' CAMP AT ZARHOI.

tongue of land a little above Sakhib's camp at Kardieba, where Mohamed Uld Mbirikal was to rejoin us.

It soon became pretty evident that we should see no more of Sakhib than we had of Sakhaui. If he had wished ever so much to pay us a visit, his dignity would have compelled him to act exactly as his brother had done. His envoys, however, duly arrived, charged with friendly messages, and accompanied, or rather preceded, by Mohamed.

By right of birth Sakhib is the true chief of the Igwadaren. His brother turned against him, and seduced a part of the tribe from their allegiance, on account of a love affair which was related to me as follows: a belle of the neighbourhood had been the mistress of Sakhaui when still quite a young girl. Knowing nothing of this, Sakhib, enamoured of her charms, married her with an ingenuous haste by no means peculiar to Africa, and discovering too late that he had been forestalled, he repudiated her. This modern Helen then returned to form a new union with her former lover Sakhaui. *Inde iræ.*

The story may or may not be true, but my private opinion is that the real reason for the enmity between the brothers is to be sought in the Igwadaren character, which is also the cause of the state of perpetual anarchy in which the natives live, resulting in the absolute ruin of the Niger districts from Rhergo to Tosaye.

I shall have more to say later of the peculiarities of the Tuaregs, but I prefer to relate my experiences amongst them before I presume to pass judgment on them. I think very highly of them in many respects, but for all that I do not shut my eyes to their defects. In the interests of truth, however, I wish to remark here, that from the very first I saw reason to draw a broad line of demarcation between what I may call the large confederations, ruled by laws sanctioned by long tradition, and the small tribes altogether inferior to them in morality, which may be said to form a kind of scum on the borders of the more important societies.

There are, in fact, certain hordes of mere brigands, who obey no chief, and depend entirely for their livelihood on robbery and pillage, and there is also amongst the Tuaregs, with whom we have now especially to deal, one important tribe which has gradually, partly from the ambition to be

independent and to obey no laws but its own, and partly from contact with the foreigner, has lost all the virtues of the Tuaregs and retained all their defects.

The tribe to which I allude is that known as the Igwadaren, from which sprang the Ioraghen, who form so large an element in French Algeria, and for a long time they were the allies, or rather were subject to the Awellimiden. Just at the time of Barth's voyage they had tried to separate from the rest of their tribe, and relying upon the aid of the Fulahs, who had invaded Massina, to get the upper hand. From Barth's narrative we know that the great desire of his protector El Beckay was to prevent the division, and his greatest grief the fact that he failed to do so.

The Awellimiden repulsed the Fulahs, and since then the Igwadaren, traitors to their fellow-countrymen, have been looked upon by them as enemies whom they were justified in raiding whenever they got the chance, and really I cannot blame them, for it serves the Igwadaren right.

When for the second time El Hadj Omar and his Toucouleurs tried by force of arms to restore the supremacy of an intolerant and barbarous Islamism, El Beckay, as we have already said, rose up against him in the cause of tolerance and a more humane interpretation of the doctrines of Mahomet. The Awellimiden, with the Iregnaten of the right bank of the Niger, were his auxiliaries. The great leader, as we have seen, died before his work was done, but he had broken the shock of the storm. A last wave of the tempest of revolt which had arisen in the west surged up to the walls of Timbuktu, which had been reached by an army of Toucouleurs, but they were surprised and massacred near Gundam. Once more the Tuaregs were saved, and all the prudent measures of Tidiani, the politic successor of El Hadj, could not advance

the invasion by so much as a single step. It taxed to the uttermost all the resources of his astute and supple genius to maintain the territory already conquered in a state of servitude. It was reserved to the French to drive from it his cousin and successor Amadu.

In all the struggles which followed, however, and peace was not restored for thirty years, the Igwadaren always, if it were anyhow possible, sided with the foreigner against their fellow-countrymen.

The state of anarchy which began with the chiefs of course spread downwards amongst the mere warriors, and whilst amongst the larger confederations of tribes there are certain traditions checking the unrestrained use of brute force, there is nothing of the kind with the Igwadaren, with whom might is right. Sakhaui and Sakhib, brothers though they were, came to open blows. Each warrior of the tribe joined the leader he preferred, but this very fact reduced the power of both to next to nothing. The negro villages passed into the possession first of one side and then of the other, according to the varying fortunes of war, and the traders had their goods stolen with no hope of redress. The result in the ruin of the country was only too patent to every one's observation.

The arrival at Timbuktu of the French was a very lucky thing for the Igwadaren. As they could no longer count upon the support of the Toucouleurs, who were at logger-heads with us, they might easily have been reduced to servitude by the Awellimiden, and no doubt but for our presence they would in their turn have become, as had so many others, mere *imrads* or serfs.

Acting on the wise advice of Mohamed, Sakhaui sent some messengers to Timbuktu. He had signed, or was supposed to have signed—for no Tuareg can read or write Arabic—all the treaties he was asked to, and that all the

more readily that he did not understand a single word of their contents. Whilst expressing all the good feeling towards us of which he had just given our party such a striking proof, he sheltered himself under our moral protection against his powerful neighbours on the east. Having thus turned the presence of the French to the best possible advantage, and that really very cleverly, Sakhaui and his people were free to continue their evil doings unchecked, whilst Sakhib, at war with his brother, also knew as well as he did how to play his cards in the diplomatic game.

The one thing then which the Igwadaren dreaded was, that the French should make an alliance with the Awellimiden, for that would upset all their plans. Though they did not dare oppose our passage by force, they painted us in the very blackest colours to their nearest neighbours, and we had to thank them for the bad reception we got from their relations the Tademeket Kel Burrum at Tosaye, and also for the difficulties we had had to contend with at the beginning of our negotiations with the Awellimiden.

I was told that Sakhib was more just in his dealings and less of a robber than his brother, with whom he had hastened to patch up a temporary truce when he heard of our approach. Moreover, just then the Igwadaren Aussa under Sakhaui had no intention of fighting. There was a rumour that the Awellimiden were about to make a raid upon them, and from our boat we could see oxen, sheep, and women hurrying to the banks on the opposite side of the river, in the hope of finding a refuge on the islands dotting its course. I did not put much faith in the rumour myself. If, however, it be well founded, we shall no doubt be able to turn it to account.

The whole of the 19th was occupied in receiving visits from all the brothers, cousins, uncles, and big and little

nephews of the petty chief. At one time our camp really presented a most imposing and picturesque appearance. I had had a cord stretched all round it, and this cord formed a kind of moral protection—for of course it could easily have been passed—against the curiosity of our visitors, whilst at the same time it prevented our coolies

OUR BICYCLE SUZANNE AMONGST THE TUAREGS.

from mixing too freely and getting involved in quarrels with them.

Baudry mounted our bicycle Suzanne, and to the intense astonishment of the Tuaregs spun round the flat ground separating our camp from a low line of dunes. The iron horse, as she was dubbed, very soon became celebrated far and near, and crowds came daily to stare at her.

Our visitors were really many of them very fine-looking fellows in their long Tuareg *bubus* or mantles, with the red pocket on the breast. Their naturally picturesque

attitudes lent them a really regal appearance, and they might very well have passed for proud, highly-born nobles, when, leaning on their spears, they looked about them, their great black eyes gleaming from the voluminous folds of their veils. But when the distribution of presents began the glamour disappeared, the haughty noble was

OUR PALAVER AT SAKIHIB'S CAMP.

gone, to be replaced by a greedy, rapacious savage, until, his big pocket as full as it would hold, he resumed his disdainful attitude.

All this is really very excusable. Imagine the effect in any European country place, of the arrival of a wealthy nabob distributing diamonds and other precious stones wherever he goes. I wager that our own fellow-countrymen would not comport themselves in a more worthy way than did these Tuaregs, and it must be borne in mind that though our presents, such as pipes, small knives, bracelets

and rings, or white and coloured stuffs were of little intrinsic value, the natives set as much store by them as we should by jewels.

Numerous as was the crowd, however, Sakhib was conspicuous by his absence; neither did the women put in an appearance, a proof that the Tuaregs were not quite sure of our good intentions. Only one of the fair sex did we see, and she was a female blacksmith, who said she was ill, and wanted the doctor to prescribe for her. Taburet tried in vain to find out what was the matter with her, and my private opinion is that her illness was only an excuse, that her motives in visiting our camp were none of the best, and that she would be ready to accept our hospitality for a night in return for a good fee.

We, however, with thoroughly British bashfulness, resisted the blandishments of the siren, and when darkness fell all our visitors, who had been less extortionate in their demands than Sakhaui's people, decided to withdraw.

Mohamed Uld Mbirikat alone remained on the beach with us, and we talked together till far into the night. He really was a good fellow, and it was no fault of his that we had not succeeded in seeing Sakhib and Sakhaui, for he had put forth all his eloquence on our behalf. His interests, moreover, are closely bound up with those of the Igwadaren, amongst whom he lives without protection, buying grain of them to sell it again in Timbuktu, so that any help he gave us beyond a certain point would seriously compromise him. I gave him a valuable present, and he in his turn presented me with a stock of rice he owned at the village of Gungi on the islet of Autel Makhoren, where we should be the next day.

After a quiet night we resumed our voyage, but the never-ceasing enervating wind forced us to anchor soon, and we were presently joined by a canoe in which was an

unfortunate man in chains, a brother of Sakhib, who had been out of his mind for five years. He is quiet enough, they told me, when he is rendered powerless for harm by being bound, but directly he is released he becomes furious, and strikes and abuses every one about him. Taburet prescribed for him as best he could, shower-baths and strait waistcoats being out of the question in these parts. We

THE VILLAGE OF GUNGI.

passed the village of Agata, where lives Hameit, a sheriff to whom we had a letter from Abiddin, and where we saw some fifty canoes drawn up high and dry on the banks. In the evening we halted near a little village on an islet, the chief of which had had his arm broken by a blow from the spear of an Igwadaren, whom he had refused to allow to carry off his store of rice. There is no doubt that the natives on the right bank of the river behave better than those on the left, and—which it is rather difficult to under-

stand—it is the negroes, that is to say the Songhay, who, though more numerous and as well armed as their oppressors, allow themselves to be ill-treated in this way without making any attempt at defence. Their cowardice prevents me from feeling as much sympathy as I otherwise should for their miserable condition.

We started very early the next morning, but our guide got confused, and did not know the way to Gungi. Some men in a canoe, however, directed us, and we had to go up-stream again beyond Agata, and get into another arm which we had passed on the left. We then, though not without some difficulty, succeeded in reaching the village, passing several artificial dykes, beyond which stretched rice-fields now inundated. Gunga, a wretched little place, is peopled by slaves taken in war by the sheriffs of Agata. Mohamed's rice was handed over to us, but it was all still in the husk, and it would take us the whole of the next day to get it shelled.

During the night a Kel es Suk arrived, who, in a very important manner, informed me that he had very serious news to communicate. The whole of the tribes of the Sahara, he said, had combined against the French, and were advancing upon Timbuktu. Awellimiden, Hoggars and all the rest of them were up, and Madidu himself was at Bamba at the head of his column. This was really too big an invention, and the narrator overreached himself by going so far. Without losing my *sang-froid* for a moment, I thanked my informant, Father Hacquart acting as interpreter, for my visitor spoke Arabic well, and begged him to take my best compliments to Madidu. The old rogue then turned to the subject he really had most at heart, and tried to make me give him a garment of some kind as a present, but I was too deep for that, and sent him off empty-handed.

OUR PEOPLE SHELLING OUR RICE AT GUNGI.

Directly we stopped we were inundated by visitors, all nearly as worrying as the rain, which had been falling without ceasing since the evening before. To begin with, on the morning of the 22nd came messengers from Sakhaui to ask in his name for advice. The Commandant of Timbuktu had sent him a letter announcing the approaching arrival of Colonel de Trentinian, Governor of the French Sudan. The Commandant ordered Sakhaui to go to Timbuktu, and he was very much frightened. I did my best to reassure the messenger, but I am very certain that Sakhaui does not mean to budge. The message would, however, do us no end of harm, and from my journal that day I perceive that I felt very indignant at the policy pursued by our authorities in the Sudan. I find written there—"We really are an extraordinary people, we seem to expect that the Tuaregs will come and throw themselves into our arms of their own accord, without our having employed any conciliatory or coercive means to induce them to do so. But, good Heavens! if they could send us to the Devil, from whom their marabouts tell them we come, they would gladly do it. And really I don't blame them, for I see well enough what they have to lose by our presence in their land, though I don't quite see what they are to gain. Taking into account the apathy with which commercial questions are treated, I do not yet foresee the day when amends will be made for the imposts now levied by force, by the granting of new rights of way, and the supplying of new means of transport."

Nor have I seen reason since to change my opinion, for to talk of colonial questions in France is to preach in the desert. Nevertheless, I am firmly convinced that then as now I wrote only the exact literal truth.

It was now R'alli's turn again. We had not seen the fellow for some time, but I am willing to swear three times

by Allah, that since we treated him as we did at Zarhoi he had been our most faithful and devoted adherent. He would never let us go anywhere without preparing the way before us, so he had gone on in advance of our barges now, and spread our fame amongst the sheriffs and other idiots, who did not know us as he did, and who received his reports by beating the tabala or war-drum; or, to speak with more strict accuracy, he found the drum being beaten, and fearing

SHERIFF'S HOUSE AT GUNGI.

that the sound of that one instrument would lead to the beating of others, he confiscated it at once. Then he, R'alli, having inquired what all the noise meant, the owner of the drum replied that he was afraid the white men were coming to take away his goods, his oxen, his sheep, and so on. "Then," added R'alli, with an air of extreme amiability, "to show him he had nothing to fear, I took everything away from him." I began to shout at him—"And that is the way you make friends for us!" "To give everything back when

you have passed," he went on with a smile. If the story he told me is true, and I shouldn't like to swear that it was, I wouldn't mind taking my oath that the poor sheriff will not get all his property back. However, the unabashed R'alli continued, "You ought to dress me now as you do your other soldiers, for am not I now one of your troops?"

I observed that I had already given him stuff enough to clothe his whole family.

"But my bubu and breeches are dirty now!" he replied. "Well, go and wash them, you wretch!" was the angry rejoinder. "What!" he cried, "would you like a soldier under such a chief as you to demean himself by such work as that?"

Sheriff Hameit, to whom I had sent Abiddin's letter the evening before, answered us very impolitely, declaring that his religion forbade him to have anything to do with infidels.

I consoled myself for this fresh failure by having a chat with the little Kunta Tahar, Mohamed's companion, who had come on to Gungi to see that the rice was duly handed over to us.

He told me of the death in 1890 near Saredina of Abiddin, the son of Hamet Beckay, of whom he had been a faithful retainer when at Gardio near Lake Debo.

This Abiddin and his followers had come to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of the great marabout, and also to try to win recruits against the Toucouleurs of Massina, with whom Abiddin carried on the struggle begun by his father. Two columns had marched forth against them, one from Mopti, the other from Jenné, and surrounded them. Abiddin was wounded and taken prisoner, but his faithful Bambaras of Jenné, who had always followed his fortunes, rescued him from the hands of the enemy. But, alas! no

less than three bullets hit the doomed man after this first escape, killing him on the spot, and a great storm then arose which put an end to the battle, only a few of those engaged in it escaping to tell the tale.

The wind, which was very violent and dry, whirled up such quantities of sand that the corpse of Abiddin was buried beneath it, and no one was ever able to discover the

WEAVERS AT GUNGI

place where he lay, as if Nature herself wished to protect his body from desecration and insult.

Tornadoes play a great part in the histories of Kunta wars. Hamet Beckay is supposed to have had the power of calling them up when he liked, and to have by their means several times overwhelmed armies sent to attack him, but that of Saredina came too late to save his son.

Can it have been the story told to me by my friend the Kunta which caused a tremendous tornado to sweep down

upon us that very evening, with thunder and lightning and torrents of rain all complete, soaking everything and everybody on board?

Our rice shelled, put into bags, and stowed away in the hold, we went on and anchored the next morning opposite Baruba to breakfast there. The ancient town, the Kaaba of the Tuaregs, which was still standing in the time of Barth, has since been destroyed, but its site is marked by piles of rubbish such as are still characteristic of the environs of Timbuktu, and from their vast extent prove that it was a city of considerable importance.

The country round about is extremely picturesque. The descendants of those who dwelt in the old city have moved a little further down stream to a dune which is so completely surrounded with water during inundations as to form an island. They bury their dead beneath the shade of the thorny bush beyond their settlement. At Baruba we saw some date trees which had reverted to the wild state, and were very majestic looking. We visited the site of the old town, and then anchored opposite its successor. Now that the waters of the Niger were beginning to subside, and the island was becoming a peninsula only, the inhabitants were losing their sense of security, and talking of migrating to an islet in the river itself opposite their present home. A few huts had already been put up on it, making white spots amongst the dense green verdure.

There we received envoys from the chief named Abder Rhaman, who brought us a letter in which we were informed that the reason the writer did not come to see us was, that he was afraid we should not understand each other, and bad results might ensue.

Then came a band of Kel-Owi, serfs of the Igwadaren, bringing ten, twenty, or thirty sheep, which they informed

us they meant to give us. The number of animals seemed increasing at every moment, and I at once feared there was some sinister intention behind this unusual generosity. But no, I was wrong. They were really good fellows these Kel-Owi, though the merit of their munificence rather

FATHER HACQUART AND HIS LITTLE FRIEND.

melts away when you examine closely into motives. It was present for present, as of course they knew I should not take their beasts without giving them something in exchange. I had the greatest difficulty in making our visitors understand that our boats were not sheep-pens, and that all I could do was to choose out the five finest animals.

All the *imrads* or serfs with whom I came in contact seemed to me quiet, inoffensive folk, when one does not pick a quarrel with them, in which they differ entirely from the Tuaregs of Algeria. They are of much paler complexion than the nobles or Ihaggaren.

In spite of what Abder Rhaman said in his letter, he decided to come and see us. He was an Arma, or descendant of the old conquerors from Morocco, with a proud, dignified bearing, and seemed to be a good and energetic ruler.

We had a very friendly conversation with him, during which the halt and lame, with all the sick people of the village, came to ask for medical advice. The doctor really multiplied himself in an extraordinary way, working miracles of healing.

During the night of the 23rd to the 24th of May we were roused by a great commotion in the village, and prepared for every contingency, but in the morning Abder Rhaman came to explain the mystery, telling us that the Hoggars had made a raid on the Igwadaren settlements. Sakhaui had sent ten men to reconnoitre, one of whom was his brother. They had met the enemy, whose force was superior to theirs, and had had to beat a retreat, with two of their number wounded. Sakhaui's brother had had his horse killed under him.

On the rumour of the approach of the Hoggars, which had reached Baruba, during the night, the village was deserted, every one carrying off all the property he could, and the noise we had heard was that made by the canoes taking over the wretched goods and chattels of the poor people and the materials of their huts to the point called Ansel Makkoren. They had not dared to warn us for fear of being fired on by our sentry.

I greatly regret that I was not at Zarhoi when the news came of the arrival of the Hoggars. We might have given

Sakhaui timely aid in repulsing them, and thus have aided to avenge the murder of Flatters, whilst the danger he was in would very likely have driven the Igwadaren chief into our arms.

Later, however, I had the satisfaction of hearing that the column of Hoggars who had advanced towards Tim-

LITTLE NEGROES AT EGUEDECHE

buktu had been surprised and partly destroyed by the spahis of Captain Laperrine.

A short march in the afternoon brought us to Eguedeche, where we cast anchor opposite a little slave village on the very edge of the river. At first the negroes all ran away, and when we landed we found nothing but empty huts. Presently, however, a wail went up from amongst the fugitives, for Father Hacquart made a sudden dash at them, and emerged carrying a little boy of about a year old in

his arms, who screamed in terror, but was soon reassured by the caresses of the father, and began playing with his long beard.

The little fellow's parents were not far off, and they watched what was going on from behind some dwarf palms, where they had taken refuge with the rest of the villagers, and, their fears allayed, they now came out followed by their comrades.

The large village of Eguedeche is some little distance from the river, and is hidden behind a dune. The inhabitants, who are the masters of the slaves in the little village near which we had anchored, are Kuntas. They showed us the ruins of an earthen hut which had belonged to Sidi el Amin, one of Hamet Beckay's brothers. The chief of Eguedeche came to meet us in person, accompanied by one of his relations, who belonged to that part of the tribe which was under the rule of Baba Hamet, a son of El Beckay. I persuaded him to go back and tell his chief of our approach, that I was the nephew of Abdul Kerim, and anxious to see Baba Hamet and his brother Baye.

The news of the Hoggar raid was confirmed by the people here.

Though we were able to remain on pretty good terms with the inhabitants of the left bank of the Niger, we felt that an obstinate hostility to us was growing on the other side, and during the day of the 25th an adventure occurred which proved that we were right.

We had to halt about 8 o'clock. The *Aube* was already anchored at the base of a dune, and the *Davoust* was amongst the grass near a village, the inhabitants of which had come to barter their eggs and poultry for our glass beads. The wind had fallen, and I had already given the

signal to start, when from amongst a group of Tuaregs who had been posted on the dune watching our boats without approaching, a negro was sent to say they wished to speak to us.

In his hand the envoy held a red woollen coverlet which I had sent from Rhergo to Mohamed Uld Mbirikat, and which he told me had been taken from him partly by persuasion and partly by force by Abu, a brother of Sakhib.

This coverlet, the messenger explained, was sent to prove that he came from Abu, who exhorted us to keep away from the right bank of the river, to go down stream if we liked, but to refrain from landing.

The *Aube* had already started, and on account of the tiresome wind, which made us lose the best hours every day, we had very little time to push on, so I resisted my desire to remain where I was and see what Abu would do. I sent him an answer, however, to the effect that I was going on, not because he ordered me to, but because I wished to do so, as I had already made an arrangement with his elder brother. I added, I had nothing at all to do with Abu, and did not recognize him as having any authority whatever in the country.

In the evening we tried in vain to anchor near the village of Moyadikoira, the weeds quite prevented our getting in, and we had to content ourselves by stopping near a little island opposite to it. We tried without success to attract the natives. They came, it is true, in their canoes as far as the boundary of weeds and rushes, but they would not land on our island. I was very anxious, however, to find out what was in the wind among the Tuaregs, and also to buy some wood for burning. In these parts, where weeds and grass often make it impossible to land, the question of how to get fuel for cooking purposes is often a very serious one,

and we had to be very economical with what we did succeed in obtaining. It is not that there is not plenty of wood to be had, if there were not steam navigation would be indeed difficult here; but in order to procure it, it is necessary to go to the first line of dunes beyond the highest point of the great inundations. There are plenty of gum trees there, and all we have to do is to get the natives to cut them down, and carry the wood to the boats. It throws out a great heat when burning.

On the 26th a canoe passed us in which were some people from Bamba, who told us that the Tademeket Kel Burrum had met at Dongoe with the intention of attacking us.

On hearing these tidings Sidi Hamet burst into tears, and in the end he entreated me to let him leave us at Tosaye to go back to Timbuktu.

Since we had passed through the Igwadaren districts, the character of our guide had undergone a complete transformation, which was anything but an improvement. I knew he had had a letter from Timbuktu, but I did not know what was in it. I do know, however, that the silly fellow is a great fool, and very jealous about his wife. "She is such a beautiful woman," he informed us one day, "and so beautifully dressed. She carries the value of at least four bars of salt on her back." Is he afraid of the fate of the husband described by Molière? Is his fear real or feigned? Anyhow he is, or pretends to be, a constant prey to the greatest terrors. He who, till we reached Kardieba, was always so gay and so bold, ready to carry out every enterprise I entrusted to him, he, who had always expressed such immovable confidence in the success of all our schemes of alliance with the Awellimiden, could now only dwell on the melancholy fate which awaited him and

us: we should be murdered, he too of course, and he should never see his dear wife again who has the value of four bars of salt on her back, etc. I had tried by kindness and by scolding to restore his moral tone, but it was no good, and feeling how foolish it would be to place confidence in such a coward, who was quite ready to deceive us if he could thus prevent us from going further, I gave him the permission he asked for, seasoning my compliance, however, with a few pretty severe remarks. This quieted him for a bit, but he very soon recommenced his jeremiads on the dangers he would incur on his way back to Timbuktu. To cut the matter short, however, I at last forbid him ever to mention the matter to me.

There was, however, some truth in all that Sidi Hamet said. The natives we met grew more and more hostile. On the morning of the 27th we crossed the rocky pass known as Tinalschiden, and then Dongoe, where rumour said we were to be attacked. We were, in fact, followed on either bank by troops of mounted Tuaregs, some thirty altogether, I should say, but this was not a very formidable force, and after all they abstained from any hostile manifestation. The wind compelled us to halt for a few minutes opposite Dongoe on the left bank, and a horseman rode forward and hailed the *Davoust*. I exchanged greetings with him, a necessary prelude to every conversation, even if that conversation is to lead to a quarrel. I asked him to give me the news of the country, and he told me I should get them at Tosaye from Sala Uld Kara.

At about two o'clock we perceived in front of us two great masses of rock. These were the Baror and Chalor mentioned by Barth, which form land, or rather water-marks at the defile of Tosaye. A canoe at once put out from the left bank, in which was a relation of Sala, who

came to offer his services as guide. The numbers of the Tuaregs on the right bank now increased, and I wished to parley with them, but our pilot prevented it. A few strokes of the oar soon brought us opposite Sala's town, known as Sala Koira or Tosaye. We landed.

TAKING ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS.

TOSAYE, WITH THE BAROR AND CHABAR ROCKS.

CHAPTER IV

FROM TOSAYE TO FAFA

TOSAYE is a village of sheriffs. They are as pacific and timid a set of people as can possibly be imagined, but for all that, they gathered on the beach on our arrival in war-like array, trying to make up for the courage they lacked by being armed to the teeth. Each marabout was really a walking arsenal. This made us feel inclined to laugh; but what was a far more serious matter, was the fact that groups of Tuaregs, who seemed to be waiting for us, had gathered behind the village. Our guide, who had sprung ashore directly we landed, had disappeared, and no one seemed anxious to enter into conversation with us. I told Sidi Hamet to come down and take me to Chief Sala, or to one of his representatives; but our political agent at

first stoutly refused to do so. We had to drag him from the boat almost by force, and then he went up to one of the groups which appeared the least hostile, entered a hut, and kept us waiting outside for his return for half-an-hour.

He came at last, with a brother of Sala, bearing very bad news. Sala by an unlucky chance had gone on a journey, and the people of the village, fearing that we were going to fight with the Tuaregs, would be very glad if we did not land here at all. This was succeeded by a whole rigmarole of information—much of it contradictory, but all alarming. A great gathering of Awellimiden, Tademeket Kuntas, etc., was massed at the Tosaye defile to oppose our passage, etc. Sala himself was amongst the rest of our enemies.

What was to be done? We were in need of provisions, our reserve stores were beginning to give out, and I wanted to lay in a stock of grain, for who could tell what we might expect further down the river?

I also wanted guides. Ever since we had left Timbuktu the narrowness and difficulties of the Tosaye defile had been dinned into our ears. Even Dr. Barth is not very reassuring in what he says about it, for he asserts that a stone could be flung by a vigorous hand from one bank to the other, and speaks of the probable existence of very strong currents, perhaps even of rapids.

We were told that some twelve years ago an army of Toucouleurs had tried to descend the Niger in canoes. They were, however, completely annihilated at Tosaye, crushed beneath masses of rocks which the natives rolled down on them from the top of the cliffs. Of course I knew that allowance must be made for exaggeration, but for all that I feared that we should be at very great disadvantage in the narrow pass if we did have a conflict with

the natives. We must therefore put out all our diplomacy to avoid a struggle.

Without seeming to give any credence to the alarmist reports of Sidi Hamet, or to be in the least disconcerted by them, I entered into conversation with Sala's brother, and very soon managed to introduce the subject of Abdul Kerim.

I revealed my relationship to him, and as usual it produced the anticipated effect. Sala was not aware that I was the nephew of Barth ; he must at once be told. As a mark of gratitude and a token that I really was speaking the truth, I gave him the name of the cook of his former leader, El Beckay. Her name was Diko.

No doubt when Barth, with his usual German precision, registered the name of that humble but useful personage, the information did not seem likely to be of very great importance to future generations. He little knew the service he would render nearly half-a-century afterwards to his pretended nephew.

With such a proof as this who could fail to believe that I really was the nephew of my "uncle," especially as Diko was not yet dead, but was living at a camp in the interior? The result of my news was that Sala had not, after all, gone on a journey, and would perhaps visit us. His brother at once hastened to land to take the tidings to him, his whole manner and expression completely transformed.

He soon came back to report that Sala was not gone, but still in the village, and when his brother had told him who I was he had wept, for he saw in my arrival the fulfilment of a prophecy made by his leader.

The fact was, that when Barth, accompanied by El Beckay, arrived at Tosaye, the German explorer had no doubt been in more danger than at any other time during his adventurous expedition.

The Tademeket Kel Burrum had resolved on his death, and all the eloquence, all the religious influence of his protector could not soften their feelings of animosity towards him.

At this crisis, and seeing that a terrible outbreak of hatred and fanaticism was imminent, El Beckay, in the interests of his friend, came to a weighty resolution. He told the Tuaregs that neither they nor he were powerful enough to decide a matter so important as the fate of Barth, and that El Khotab, head of the great confederation of the Awellimiden, alone had the right to final judgment.

Leaving the banks of the river, El Beckay then went alone to El Khotab, and persuaded him to give a safe-conduct to Barth, whom he looked upon as his own *protégé*.

Barth never knew the danger he had run. In his book he merely mentions that El Beckay was away for four days to fetch fresh camels to take the place of their weary animals, which was of course a mere pretext on the part of his protector, and is a fresh proof of the delicate tact and consideration for the doctor shown by the great Kunta marabout.

Now it so happened, that whilst he was discussing the matter with the Tademeket, El Beckay was seized with one of his attacks of prophetic delirium, and prophesied that some day the son of Abdul Kerim would return with three boats.

We had three boats. I claimed, giving irrefragable proofs, to be the nephew of Barth; it was impossible to deny that the prophecy was fulfilled. We must add, to round off the story, that Madidu is the son of the very El Khotab who saved my "uncle."

Sala sent me word by his brother that he would not himself come on board for fear of doing me harm by

showing the friendship which really now united us; but anxious to be useful to us, he would go to Madidu, or at least write to him, and he hoped to have the same success as his master, El Beckay, had had before him. Meanwhile he would supply us with all we needed.

In fact, the next morning we were able to buy as much grain as we wanted, and Sala gave us his own son Ibrahim as a guide.

THE ROCK BAROR AT TOSAYE.

We started about one o'clock on Saturday, February 29, and passed between the Baror rock and the left bank. We very soon saw the Tuaregs already alluded to gathering on the right bank. They were of the Tademeket tribe, against whom Sala had warned us. They followed our boats, but as yet made no hostile demonstrations.

We arrived at the picturesque entrance to the defile without incident.

From the right bank juts out a line of rocks, partly

barring the passage. In the narrow opening, which is all that is left, the current is probably very strong when the water is low, but just now, when the river was at its highest, it was perfectly calm, and only moved very slowly round, its surface flecked with foam in the restricted space in which it is confined, the width of that space varying from 390 to 490 feet.

On either side rise red and black cliffs, which look as if they had been calcined, cut across here and there with veins of white quartz, giving to the scene a grand though somewhat melancholy character. Barth relates that according to the natives the skin of a young bull cut into strips and joined together would not be long enough to reach the bottom of the river at this spot. Business of a very different kind prevented us from verifying this belief.

Presently, exactly at the place specified by Barth as the narrowest part of the gorge, a group of horsemen detached themselves from the Tademeket, and one of them advanced towards the edge of the cliff holding up a letter for us to see.

Already the evening before we had talked over what it would be best to do under certain circumstances should they arise. I now had the *Davoust* steered close to the cliff so as to be able to receive the letter from the Tuareg, but the *Dantec* and the *Aube* remained, one on the right the other on the left, ready to rake the banks with a cross-fire if any hidden ambush should be discovered.

I took the letter, and Father Hacquart read it at once. It was a regular declaration of war, couched in very suitable language; diplomatists could have found no fault with it.

Yunes, chief of the Tademeket, saluted me a thousand times and wished me all prosperity. It would afford him the greatest pleasure to let us pass down the river and even

to help us to do so. Unfortunately, however, we followed different routes, and I was of a different religion to his. This being so, all I had to do was to return to Timbuktu, and if I did not he would be under the necessity of declaring war against me.

I answered that it took two to go to war, and my tastes, as well as the instructions I had received from my chief, were to avoid it at any price. I should therefore go quietly down the Niger as far as it was navigable. If, however, the river became so bad that the natives on the bank were able to prevent our further progress, they could attack us, and they would then see what my reply would be.

Whilst the Father and Tierno were reading the letter I had a good look at the herald who had brought it. After delivering it he had prudently taken refuge behind a piece of rock, but seeing that we took no notice of him he first peeped out with one eye, then with both eyes, and finally ventured into the open and thus addressed me—

"Is there any hope, after all, of my getting a pair of breeches?"

The question appeared to me infinitely naïve and appropriate, for the breeches he wore were in such rags that they were scarcely decent, and the holes, drawn together with coarse thread, were bursting out afresh. Still it was not exactly the moment for asking for a new pair.

The fellow was a very good example of a begging tramp. This fault of begging has, however, its advantages, and I felt pretty sure that if we had acceded to his request in the first instance, and given a few presents to the other Tademeket, we should easily have converted their hostility to friendship.

I did not attempt it because I wanted to reserve myself for the real Awellimiden, and I was, moreover, afraid if I once began giving that some mistake or petty quarrel

might make it more difficult than ever to establish good relations later.

My reply delivered, we resumed our voyage. Seeing us move off the Tuaregs uttered savage cries. We had now a perfectly clear course before us, not so much as a boulder impeding our passage over the black water, shut in between the lofty cliffs, on which the Tademeket very soon appeared. There were now at least a hundred horsemen and a number of runners on foot. They shouted and fumed, working themselves up into a fury as they struck their spears on their shields covered with white antelope skin. It was just such a scene as one pays to see at a circus, and, but for our fears for the future, we should have been delighted with it. Women and children too now joined the procession, watching us as we slowly sped on over the quiet waters of the pass.

Very soon the banks became lower, green meadows contrasted with the black rocks of Tosaye; and noticing a little islet called Adria, we anchored off it.

Our coolies now began to show signs of discontent. The shouts, the cries, and the menacing gestures of the Tuaregs had aroused their warlike instincts, and they conversed gloomily together. I put a stop to this at once, and broke up their discussion; but it wasn't only the negroes who gave me black looks, Bluzet and Taburet were also furious and full of bitterness at the way we had been treated. I confess I too began to feel put out, and I had to put great stress on myself, and call up all my reasoning powers, to keep my temper. Should I have been able to succeed if Father Hacquart had not been there? I would rather not answer that question.

Fortunately for us he kept his composure far better than we did. He pointed out that it would have shown no particular courage to reply with our guns to the insults of

THE TADEMEKET ON A DUNE ON THE BANKS OF THE NIGER.

natives armed only with spears, and he told me that when he was travelling with Attanoux amongst the Azgueurs they were received with similar hostility, but that a calm demeanour and the exercise of tact had made their enemies of one day the best friends of the next.

I harangued my people. Peace was restored, and that so completely that we were presently amusing ourselves with catching the goats grazing on the island and decking them out with collars of different-coloured velvets.

Some negroes, who lived in a village on a little island near ours, came to see us, bringing us some sheep. They did not seem at all excited about what was going on, and in truth were accustomed to the ways of the Tuaregs.

"They are dancers," one of them said to me, pointing to the Tademeket, who still continued to gesticulate at us.

The next day, March 1, we continued our journey, accompanied as before by Tademeket on the right bank. We passed the Burrum islands, where the river is very wide, and beyond which it flows between two lines of dunes forming its banks.

The scenery is perhaps finer here than anything else we have seen on the Niger. The mighty dunes look as if they had never been disturbed by man, for the wind at once obliterates all trace of the footsteps of passers by. There is a melancholy poetry about them, and their outlines are rather marked than disguised by the thin line of green bush at the edge of and in the water. How well I understand the effect produced on the traveller by the Sahara in spite of its apparent monotony. It exercises on those who gaze on it for long at a time something of the hypnotic attraction of the sea. I am not the only one who feels in this way about the dune of Africa, for Baudry one day read us the following sonnet he had composed on the subject :—

THE DUNE.

Vague summits on the dim, far distance rise ;
Then wâdys, mirage, and that northern pass
Where flocks in summer seek the mountain grass ;
Next, this long sand-hill that outstretchèd lies ;
Nought else ! Six æons long the solar dyes
Have steep'd the dune with ochreous gold and brass ;
Flash'd in the silica like broken glass,
And dried the courses dug by wrathful skies.
Yon camel's formless bulk against the blue
Seems parcel of the wild chaotic scene ;
With grounded lance and figure sharp in view,
His master stands, a statue—well-knit, lean—
Then striding slow athwart the tawny sand,
Sits motionless beside the river strand.

Every now and then our Tuareg companions reappeared from behind the yellow crest of sand, but their enthusiasm of the morning had considerably cooled down. Horses and men alike were tired, and the latter were dragging the former along by their heads, all presenting a most pitiable appearance. Thus escorted we arrived about five o'clock in the evening at the village of Bia on the left bank.

Ibrahim, the son of Sala, did not care to go any further. We persuaded an old Songhay who lived in the village to take his place. Strange to say, though the Tademeket continued their vociferations on the right bank, there was no sign of hostility from the left, which made me hopeful for the future. We saw natives on foot and on horseback pass, and they stared curiously at the boats, but showed neither fear nor anger.

Night fell, and we had sat down to supper, when all of a sudden there was a great noise like that of paddles beating the water, or horses swimming. To arms! was the cry, and the next moment all were at their posts. The people of the village of Bia shouted to us that it was only

the cattle of the Tuaregs crossing a little arm of the river; but unfortunately for their veracity, we saw the next morning that there was neither arm nor creek anywhere near. Whatever may have been the cause of the noise I am glad it disturbed us, for it proved to me that should an emergency arise our men would behave well and quietly.

A minute later a canoe from the right bank appeared, in which was a man who hailed us and offered us a sheep. He said he was a *gabibi*, or negro, and lived in a village some little distance in the interior. His pale complexion, however, led us to suppose that he really was a Tuareg who had come to spy on us. He had arrived when our coolies were all at their posts, and we hoped he would report what he had seen.

On March 2 our enemies the Tademeket had all disappeared, but their place was taken by another tribe, the Tenger Eguedeche, with whom were a few Kel es Suk. A religious war had no doubt been proclaimed in the country, and it was to an accompaniment of shouts of *La illa il Allah!* that we pushed on. Every now and then all our escort performed a solemn *salaam*, prostrating themselves on the ground. We began to be very wrath, and I should have given the order to fire on the least provocation. Once more, however, an unforeseen circumstance calmed down my rising martial ardour. We were no longer followed by men only, but by numbers of women and children. Amongst them was a little chap as round as a barrel, who kept picking up handfuls of dust and flinging them in our direction. He shall be the first victim I resolved, but let's have patience. A Kel es Suk, mounted on a big white camel, who headed the procession now, had never lost sight of us since we left Tosaye. He little knows to what a trifle he owes the preservation of his life.

Twenty times the muzzle of my rifle covered him, and twenty times I reflected that we were not running any immediate danger, and that there would be nothing particularly brave in drawing the trigger on an unlucky wretch, who was probably merely ignorant.

Thus attended we arrived in due course at the village of Ha, on a little tributary of the Niger. We cast anchor, and tried to open negotiations; but the inhabitants fled from us like a swarm of grasshoppers. They shouted at us to go away, and when we asked for the chief of the village, they replied that he was with the Tuaregs. We waited an hour, in vain. The village was now entirely deserted, and no chief appeared. To make up for this, we heard the *tabala* or war-drum being beaten on every side, and a compact mass, consisting of from 500 to 600 warriors, took up their position opposite our anchorage, shouting louder even than the day before.

We thought we really had better try a little intimidation, for since the morning they had kept telling us that our guns and cannon would not go off, for Allah had forbidden them to. To show them therefore what our weapons were really capable of, I decided to send a shell over their heads at random, and we heard it burst far away in the distance. The band at once dispersed like a flight of sparrows, but their first terror over, they formed up again, and advanced with a courage which I could not but admire. There was nothing left to do, if we wished to avoid a real conflict, but to set sail, so we went and cast anchor a couple of miles further on, opposite Mount Tondibi, or the Black Mountain, as it is called in Songhay, though why I cannot say, as it really is of a beautiful orange-red.

The next day was a repetition of what this had been. The Tenger Eguedeche followed us, howling. We anchored for breakfast off the right bank, and they withdrew to a

short distance, but continued to spy upon us, and yelled at us when we left.

At about two o'clock we suddenly saw coming along the bank from the opposite direction, a fine-looking, handsome Tuareg, riding a splendid black horse. His clean clothes and well-kept person showed that he was a chief. He advanced towards the crowd, who had halted when they caught sight of him, and said a few words, at which they all stopped shouting and squatted down. He then came towards us, made us what seemed a friendly sign with one hand, and leaning on his iron spear, the copper ornaments on which gleamed in the sunshine, he watched us pass by.

After this, not a word, not a cry was heard, and the right bank appeared perfectly deserted; only here and there behind some bush, the glitter of weapons revealed the presence of a concealed Tuareg sentinel watching our movements.

I learnt afterwards that the Tuareg on the fine horse was an envoy from Madidu, sent to the Tenger Eguedeche, to order them to cease from their hostile demonstrations. The Amenokal sent them word that he considered he was the only person who had a right to decide how strangers should be treated; and therefore, until he had made up his mind, no one was to show us either friendship or hatred.

We had some little difficulty in understanding our guide. The Songhay he spoke was so unlike that in use in Timbuktu. Towards evening he wanted us to go up a little creek on the left, at the end of which, with the aid of our glasses, we saw a number of camels grazing; but not knowing why so many animals were assembled here, for they are generally kept some little distance from the river, I thought it more prudent to anchor opposite the village of Forgo, on an island. We heard the *tabala* beating around us again. About eight o'clock a canoe approached,

in which was the brother of the chief of the village, who hailed us. I did not at all like his reserved manner. He kept on talking about the *tabala* of Madidu, which, he said, could be heard when it was beaten all over the country from Burrum to Ansongo. He promised us some presents from his brother, but, needless to say, we never saw them.

We started very early the next morning, winding our way amongst the numerous islands dotting the river.

Presently on our left we saw some beautiful trees with bushy foliage, and all of a sudden from their midst arose a greyish mass of the shape of a truncated pyramid. There was not the slightest doubt that it was the tomb of the founder of the Songhay dynasty, Mohamed Askia, and that we were close to Garo or Gao; Garo, the ancient capital of the Western Sudan; Garo, the most powerful city ever founded by negro civilization, the metropolis from which radiated the various routes bringing to the Niger the produce of the Tchad districts and of Egypt; Garo, which but two Europeans, Mungo Park and Dr. Barth, had ever seen.

Our emotion at this stage of our journey can be better understood than described. From what was once the mighty town of Garo the river mists of the morning rose up; from a dead city now, but one which it was perchance our mission to restore. A great people, whose heart this lost city may be said to have been, once lived and flourished here. The Askias had united under their banner all the African states from Lake Tchad to the Senegal, and from the desert to Say. The Songhay empire was then not only the most powerful in Africa, but of the whole contemporary world.

Felix Dubois, in his book called *Timbuktu the Mysterious*, gave an account, founded on the *Tarich es Sudan*, of the Songhay, which supplements well the information given to

Barth about the people who once dwelt in the great empire named after them.

To add to what these great authorities have said would be mere waste of time. I must remark here, however, that I was struck by the fact that lower down the Niger the Songhay have taken the name of Djerma, which is that of the district and its inhabitants where they now dwell. This name Djerma is also that of the North African oasis which was known to the ancients as Garama, or the land of the Garamantes. The resemblance between the two cannot fail to strike every one.

I wonder whether the two words Djerma and Garama have the same origin? and if the Garamantic race, or, as it is also sometimes called, the Sub-Ethiopian, may not have been the primitive source of all the negro tribes which now people the Western Sudan.

If it be so, the greater number of the ethnic revolutions which have convulsed the country have really after all been merely a struggle for ascendency between three races—the Negro, which I have just been discussing; the Berber, of which the Tuaregs are the purest representatives; and lastly, the so-called Fulah race, which came from the east, and may possibly be descended from the ancient Egyptians.

I give my idea for what it is worth, whilst waiting for a more exhaustive study to be made of local dialects or the discovery of ancient manuscripts which shall throw a clearer light on the subject.

The Songhay empire of Garo, which was at one time so splendid, had within itself the germs of its own decay, for its chiefs were Mussulmans. The polygamy permitted by Islam gives to each one of them in his numerous descendants a perfect legion of possible rivals ready to dethrone him and usurp his power. It is to this, and yet more to the hateful morality of the Mahommedans, always ready to

find an excuse for the most heinous crimes, that the Askias owe their rapid decline.

Other emotions, however, besides those connected with historical memories, agitated us when we came in sight of all that was left of Garo. It was there we were told that we should know what were to be our relations with the Awellimiden, and my own conviction still was—the event proved that I was right—that it would be easy enough for us to pass through their country with the consent of their chief Madidu, but terribly difficult to do so without it.

We wended our way carefully amongst the submerged islets here encumbering the course of the Niger, passing many big villages with thatched huts, and seeing through our binoculars large numbers of natives assembled here and there. The whole of the district bears the name of Gao, or Gao-gao, a corruption of the old Garo. We succeeded, not without difficulty, in approaching the central village, the mosque of which serves as a kind of landmark. But the bank was very low and partially inundated. It was really a rice plantation belonging to the inhabitants, and we soon came to a standstill.

The appearance of the village and its surroundings was far from reassuring. The negroes quickly vacated their huts, and some wading, others in canoes, hurried off with all their chief valuables, whilst beneath the trees and on the higher banks collected groups of Tuaregs, some on horse-back, others on foot, watching our movements in silent immobility. All were in full martial panoply, with spear, sword, and huge buckler. I made a white flag with a dinner napkin and hoisted it on a bamboo stem, which I stuck in the damp ground. We then waited results.

A long and anxious pause ensued. The blacks continued to fly, the Tuaregs appeared to be consulting together. At last two negroes came forward from the bank, and

waded through the mud, which was above their knees, towards us, but they halted at a respectful distance. They were evidently in a great state of alarm, and would only converse with us from afar off; if we attempted to approach them they decamped. It was a good half-hour before we were able to reassure them sufficiently for them to come close to us, and even then they still trembled.

The two messengers turned out to be Armas, relations of the chief of the village. Their first articulate words were a prayer that we would go to an island they pointed out to us rather more than a mile away, for they said they were afraid we should come to blows with the Tuaregs, and that their village would suffer.

We tried to reassure them, telling them we had not come to make war; quite the reverse, we wanted to make friends with the Tuaregs. To begin with, would they tell us where Madidu was? Madidu, was the reply, was not far off, though not actually in the village. And what, we went on, was the meaning of all this gathering of forces, as if they were threatened with war? It was to defend themselves, they said, against a raid of the Kel Air, which they had been told was about to take place. I avoided replying that the Kel Air were far away on the east and north, and that it seemed extraordinary that warriors should have gathered on the banks of the Niger to repulse them.

But to return to the question really at issue. I begged the envoys to announce to Madidu the arrival of the nephew of Abdul Kerim, whom his father had received and treated well some fifty years before; adding that we had not come to do any harm, in proof of which I urged that when the Tademeket and the Tenger Eguedeche had declared war against us we had not even answered their challenge.

My uncle, I went on, had given El Khotab a horse, I

PANORAMA OF GAO ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT GARO.

now brought the saddle for that horse to El Khotab's son. I then uncovered a splendid velvet saddle embroidered with gold, the handsomest present I had with me, for it seemed to me that if ever the moment arrived for placing it well, it was at this juncture. The Sultan of France, I explained, had sent me to the chief of the Awellimiden to discuss matters concerning them as well as the French, and I wished for an interview with him, or at least with his accredited representatives.

Our visitors then withdrew, and we waited four hours longer without news. At the end of that time the same negroes reappeared, to tell me that Madidu was then in the village with a large retinue (I greatly doubted the truth of this), and was at that moment consulting with his principal advisers. But, they added, to prove your good intentions towards the natives, go to the island. That will also show that you mean no harm. Madidu's envoys will come to you there.

I preferred yielding to this pressing invitation to go than acting in a high-handed manner. Moreover, I was not sorry to put a little distance between myself and the Tuaregs, for it was very evident that in any discussion about us nine out of ten would vote for attacking us, and in our island we should be perfectly safe from surprise. We should see what to-morrow brought forth.

We estimated the number of warriors now assembled on the bank at several thousand ; it was a very different matter from the gathering of the Tademeket and Tenger Eguedeche higher up stream.

We set sail, therefore, and when night fell we were camped in our new position. In memory of our old and valued friend Gauthiot, who, as I have related, had defended our expedition from all the detractors in France who would have jeopardized its success, I named after him this

little corner of earth in the river, our river, where our fate was really to be decided.

If I said that I slept peacefully and well that night I do not suppose any one would believe me.

To face tangible dangers in a struggle with nature or with one's fellow men, greater or less courage is required, but what we had to do now was to meet such hidden risks, as the miner who goes to his work, not knowing at what moment he may be suffocated, blown up, or crushed to

PALAVER AT GAO.

death. Even the miner, however, gets accustomed to the risk he runs, but what no one ever becomes used to is the long mental fatigue of the responsibility of knowing that one mischosen word, perhaps even one wrongly translated word, will be enough to doom to destruction all those who have joined their fortunes with yours with full confidence in you, for whom you are all and everything for the time being.

Father Hacquart slept no better than I did that anxious night. Would he have slept if I had let him retire to his couch? Who can tell? I needed his counsel and his

experience, so we neither of us closed an eye, for we discussed the situation, and what we should say, the next day, for the whole night.

The result of our conference was, that we resolved to do the best we could under whatever circumstances might arise, for to foresee them was impossible; in a word, as sailors say, "Trim our sails according to the weather."

The Father, moreover, took an optimist view of our position, partly because he is naturally of a hopeful disposition, and partly because, by a really singular chance, our experiences coincided in a remarkable way with his own two years before, when he was in the Sudan on a similar journey. To begin with, the time of year was the same, for it was on March 5 that he and Attanoux had arrived to confer with the Tuaregs, Azgueurs, etc.

All night the left bank of the river was illuminated with the watch-fires of the Tuareg camp, which resembled a great conflagration. We had not been wrong, a large, a very large force was assembled there.

In the morning my heart beat fast when I saw a canoe approaching, and I made out in it one of the negro messengers of the chief of the village, a Tuareg, and another native whose woolly crop of hair showed him to be a Moor or a Kunta.

The boat touched land, and the third person in it turned out to be really a Kunta, whilst the Tuareg was Madidu's blacksmith.

Why had this blacksmith come? Because in the Sudan the blacksmiths form a regular caste, which has attained very great influence over the negro chiefs, and the Tuaregs of the river districts followed the example of the negro potentates in listening to their counsels.

Not all the blacksmiths, it must be explained, follow their nominal trade. They are many of them the familiar

friends and advisers of the chiefs ; in fact, it is they who often wield the real authority, for, as often happens in Europe, the prime minister is more powerful than the king.

Ceremonial greetings having been exchanged we all sat down. My fingers were cold, my throat felt parched, but I managed by a strong effort at self-control to appear perfectly calm and indifferent.

I began the speech already resolved on. The Kunta knew Arabic, so that I was fortunate enough to be able to employ Father Hacquart as interpreter. He repeated in Ta-Masheg every word I addressed to the blacksmith.

"I greeted Madidu, the Commandant of Timbuktu greeted Madidu, and the Sultan of the French greeted Madidu. We were the white people who, two years before, had driven the Tenguereguif and the Kel Temulai from Timbuktu. We had already come twice in boats to cement our friendship with the people of the country, and to trade with them, without any idea of conquest. The Tuaregs had received us badly, insulted and provoked us ; we had attacked, beaten, and punished them. Allah had given us their city ; we were there, and there we meant to stay.

"But the Tuaregs of Timbuktu had nothing in common with the Awellimiden, they were indeed their enemies. Between Madidu and us there had never been war.

"Now that we were neighbours, the Sultan of the French thought it would be wrong for us to remain any longer unknown to each other.

"If we succeeded in making friends, nothing but good would result to both parties. They would come to Timbuktu to sell their oxen, their sheep, and their gum, receiving in exchange stuffs, beads, and all the goods the white men know how to make.

"To remain longer without making friends would be to

leave gunpowder close to a fire. The day would come, through no fault of theirs or ours, when some misunderstanding would lead to a scuffle first and then to war.

"Moreover, if we knew their power, they also ought to know ours. Evil might result to us, but worse would befall them.

"In any case it was more consistent with their dignity and self-respect, as well as with ours,—for were not we as well as they of noble race?—to know with whom they had to deal. The Sultan of the white men had chosen me because of my relationship with Abdul Kerim, who was the friend of the Kuntas and the Awellimiden. What must I tell that Sultan on behalf of Madidu? Was it to be peace or war?"

This speech was clear enough, and the reply was no less so.

"Madidu greets you. If you have come with pacific intentions, as you said yesterday to the men from Gao, he is your friend; he will give you guides to take you where you will, to Say or to Sokoto. If evil should overtake you it will be from heaven, Madidu answers for it none shall come from earth."

This beginning could not but please us.

We told the young Kunta, who acted as second envoy, that we were on good terms with his relations at Timbuktu and Kagha; and then we tried to amuse our visitors, bringing out our bicycle, phonograph, musical box, etc. All our attractions were paraded, in fact, and then, after consulting with Father Hacquart, I decided on a grand coup. Without asking for anything or adding another word, I bade the ambassador farewell, giving him the beautiful velvet saddle to take to Madidu.

The canoe shot back across the river. We saw a Tuareg advance from amongst a group of horsemen, mounted on a fine bay horse, and, strange to say, carrying a musket.

He came to meet the envoys as they landed; they handed the saddle to him, and when they caught sight of it, the Tuaregs behind him clashed their shields and uttered shrill cries.

The canoe returned immediately. The horseman we had just seen receive the saddle was Madidu himself; he thanked us a thousand times for our beautiful present, and even wished to come to us, but his brothers, fearing treachery or sorcery, had prevented him from doing so. Our generosity had hit the mark, and judging from the manner of the blacksmith, we could make a very shrewd guess at what were the feelings of his master.

It was the messenger's turn now, and I gave him a beautiful present of stuffs, beads, knives, and veils, with which he was delighted. There were, however, still two things that Madidu wanted, but if it was difficult to meet his wishes, he did not dare to insist too much, for we had already given him more than either he or his ancestors had ever received.

The first thing was ten silver pieces, not for himself, but for his wife. She had heard him speak of that white metal which could be worked like copper, and of which ornaments were made, but which was not really copper, and she did so long to see some for herself. This wish was easy enough to gratify, and to the ten five-franc pieces I added two gold rings.

As for the second wish of the Amenokal, I would give you a thousand guesses, and not one would be right. He wanted the portrait of the President of the Republic.

All German and English travellers make a point of giving a portrait of their sovereign to native chiefs. Thoughtless people may, perhaps, laugh at this, but for all that it is true that it always produces a considerable effect to show a photograph, a drawing, or, better still,

a chromo-lithograph, with the words—"This is our Sultan!"

Knowing this, we had brought with us, two years before, when we started on our expedition, a hundred coloured portraits of M. Carnot.

He was dead now; and all we had been able to get were a few engravings of President Felix Faure, such as you see at all the *mairies*, and in the captain's cabin in all the ships of the fleet.

Wherever we passed, the portrait of the Sultan of the French was the object of great curiosity. I had pinned it up in my cabin, and every one wanted to see it. It was a bust portrait, and the eye-glass hanging from a ribbon was shown in it. After looking at the likeness for some time in silence, the Tuaregs would begin asking me questions.

"Is he your father? Why has he three eyes?" This of course was suggested by the eye-glass.

I had hit upon a very simple way of answering both these questions at once. "Of course," I would reply, "he is my father; he is the father of us all, and he has three eyes; it is just because he has so many children that two eyes would not be enough to look at them all."

No one ever showed the slightest surprise or incredulity at this double explanation of mine, my reply seemed perfectly natural and satisfactory.

But to return to Madidu. He had heard his people talk about the portrait, and anxious to possess it, he sent to ask me for it. His wish was prompted by too good a feeling towards us for us to have the slightest reason for saying no, and this is how it comes about that the portrait of the President of the Republic at this moment adorns the tent of the Chief of the Awellimiden, and goes with him from the banks of the Niger to the plateau of Air.

After breakfast our Kunta came back once more.

Madidu had sent to ask when we wished to start, and hinted that the chief might perhaps visit us himself a little further down the river. In any case the Amenokal promised to send us a letter by some relation of his. He would let us have the various promises he had made to us in writing, and he now renewed them, assuring us of his friendship and his resolve to protect our fellow-countrymen and fellow-subjects.

Madidu was now anxious to be off, for the raids of the Kelgeres or Kel Air, of which we had heard so much, were all too real, for they had actually attacked the camp of the Kuntas, who were on friendly terms with the Awellimiden, and were under the command of Baye and Bebe Hamet, sons of El Beckay.

The chief, therefore, wished to settle everything with us in hot haste, so as to be free to go and meet his own enemies. He would, however, send messengers and letters all along the river instructing the chiefs, his vassals, to treat us well and supply us with guides and provisions; in fact, to help us in every possible way.

I should very much have liked to have a personal interview with the Amenokal, but I had good reason to know that it was by no means easy to get access to Tuareg chiefs. It was very evident too, in this particular case, that although Madidu, whose views were liberal and tolerant, and who, thanks to the traditions inherited from his father, had refused to listen to the advice of those hostile to us, there did exist a very strong party against us, and it was necessary to avoid putting weapons into the hands of our adversaries by giving them an excuse for treating us badly. To insist on prolonging our stay or on seeing the chief might have brought about the very result we feared. I therefore decided to start the next morning.

We sent our guides back after paying them well, and

they put off for shore in their canoes. During their passage the Tuareg column divided, one group going down to meet the guides when they landed. The latter feared that the warriors had come down to see whether we had not been too generous, and perhaps to make them divide their spoil with them, so rather than risk this they turned round and came back towards our camp.

At that moment a great noise arose on the right bank, caused by the clamour of a number of petty chiefs, who in their turn had ordered their blacksmiths to cross the arm of the river between us and the bank, and to come to greet us on their behalf. These visits were of course prompted by interested motives, in the hope of getting presents. Now this was just what Madidu had wished to avoid; he did not feel sure enough of every one to care that crowds should go to see us, and he ordered all the messengers to be driven away, which led to a good deal of recrimination, the echo of which had reached us.

Nevertheless, El Yacin, one of the most important of the tributary Amrars, had sent his adviser to us, who when the canoe which had brought him went off without him, settled himself down in a corner on board the *Davoust* without showing the slightest fear of us. He evidently meant to see, hear, and touch everything.

I have already said, that amongst the ornaments of my cabin were some photographs of a celebrated singer. These likenesses excited no less interest than did that of the President, which was hung opposite to them, especially as the costumes of Elsa, Brunhilda, Elizabeth or Salammbo, as the case might be, appeared to the Tuaregs the very acme of elegance, which shows of course that they were not wanting in a sense of the æsthetic.

Our blacksmith, after gazing at these likenesses for a long time, turned to me and said—

"Is she one of the women of your country?"

"Yes."

"Are they all as pretty as she is?"

"Of course they are."

"Then you must all be great fools to have left them to come here."

I tried to make him understand what would be the delights of our return home, how our chiefs would praise us, and our fellow citizens admire us, how the whole country would ring with our fame; but it was no good, he stuck to his original opinion.

To prove that we really meant to start the next day, we now began to furl our tents, and the bank opposite us gradually became deserted. When darkness fell we finally dismissed our guides.

Early on the morning of the 6th, guided by a pilot sent to us by the chief of Gao, we started for Bornu, where Madidu was then encamped, and arrived there about eleven o'clock.

The river was still easily navigable, although here and there the presence of eddies proved the existence of rocks, which no doubt crop up, and are dangerous at low water. To make up for a less impeded stream, the banks became more and more rugged and wild as we proceeded. Lofty black and red cliffs covered with gum trees and sycamores succeeded each other, and we found that Bornu had been very exactly described and drawn by Barth. We anchored at the base of a perpendicular rock some three hundred and twenty feet high. Our guide went to the village, of which we could see the huts about half-a-mile off, and soon came back bringing a substitute.

As for Madidu, it appeared that he had slept in his camp, but had left very early in the morning. We should perhaps meet him at Dergona, where we changed pilots.

After breakfast we started again. The left bank now became extremely picturesque, cliffs of red rock broken into fantastic forms resembling the ruins of castles occurring here and there, whilst far away on the right rose a line of rocky mountains. We had evidently now left the dunes behind us.

We passed the night near Dergona, of which we could see the fires, and early the next morning we arrived there.

BORNU

Not a sign of Madidu. He had gone to the interior, driven there by the raids of the Kel Air. When night fell we had reached Balia, the Tabaliat of Barth.

Near the landing-place there was a canoe laden with grain deserted by the owners, who had run away. Gradually reassured, however, they presently returned, and from them we obtained much interesting information about the state of the neighbouring districts of Say.

Near Sinder, they said, lived a number of thieving boat-

men belonging to the Kurteyes tribe, who had lately made a raid on Balia.

We should also meet Amadu Cheiku there, who owns several villages on the banks of the river, one of which is surrounded by a *tata*, or earthen wall. This Amadu Cheiku had persuaded a Fulah tribe called the Gaberos, who had formerly lived near Gao under the rule of the Awellimiden, to emigrate and join him.

BABA, WITH THE ROCKS ABOVE ANSONGO.

He had lately tried, but without success, to induce the people of Dergona to do the same.

The river-bed now became more and more rocky; we felt the eddies and rapids a good deal, although navigation could not yet be called difficult; and in due course we arrived opposite the promontory jutting out from the island of Ansongo.

Here, running from south-east to north-west, are four great blocks of flint of very picturesque appearance, which look like landmarks set up to mark a very remarkable

point of the river, and as a matter of fact it is below them that the difficulties begin which render this part of the Niger practically unnavigable.

On March 8 we anchored for breakfast opposite one of these masses of rock, off Beba; then following the arm of the river furthest to the left, we arrived about two o'clock at the village of Ansongo, inhabited by Kel es Suk. The chief of that tribe himself was there.

Close to our anchorage a line of rocks completely barred the arm of the river on which we were. Their summits were almost level with each other, and it would have been quite impossible for us to get over them. Baudry, however, went off exploring in a canoe, and discovered a very narrow winding channel on the left at the foot of the bank, through which it would be just possible for us to get out.

Meanwhile the Kel es Suk, and the negroes in their service, had assembled on the beach, and after giving them a few presents of little value, we entered into conversation with them. All seemed likely to go well. El Mekki, they said, would supply us with provisions and pilots, and no doubt would himself come and see us.

I was indeed glad to hear that. I had greatly dreaded a conflict with the Kel es Suk, for we knew their way of going to work. As long as we had had to do with individuals only, their hostility did not matter much; but now we had to deal with the chief of the whole tribe, and it was of the utmost importance to conciliate him.

As we shall see further on, the Kel es Suk are of the same race, springing from the same source as the Tuaregs.

Separated, however, from the original stock after the taking of Taddemekka by the Songhay of Gao, they had espoused the tenets of Islam at a happy moment, and were now the marabouts of the Tuaregs.

As a result they exercise a great moral influence, and I

should not hesitate to assert that El Mekki alone would be able to put a veto on the favourable or unfavourable resolutions of Madidu with regard to us. From which it will be seen clearly enough how very valuable the friendship of this El Mekki would be.

Before the evening mists arose we set sail to go through the pass, which we managed to do without accident, and anchored opposite the village to await the morning.

THE KEL ES SUK OF ANSONGO REFUSE TO SUPPLY US WITH GUIDES.

On the 9th we crossed over very early, but, alas! the day began badly. El Mekki did not come, but sent instead two messengers, who—I really don't know on what stupid pretext—told us it was impossible to supply us with guides. I protested in vain, invoking the name of Madidu.

Political reasons imperatively demanded that we should make a friend of El Mekki, but there was yet another more immediate motive for our desire, and that was, we were close to the rapids.

As I have already said, they begin at Ansongo. We did not yet know all the difficulties they would cause us; all we had to help us was what Barth had said about them, and we had never known him wrong, which was quite enough to prove how absolutely indispensable pilots would be, for at every turn we should have to choose the most practicable of the many arms of the river.

I called up all my powers of patience, and tried to discuss the matter quietly, but it was only labour lost. Indeed some negroes who had come down to the bank to speak to us were ordered back to the village by the Kel es Suk.

Now came a second deputation, this time an openly hostile one, of men with determined faces.

"What," they demanded, "were our intentions?"

"Peaceful and good," was our reply.

"What is your religion?" they went on.

"That of Issa," we answered; "whom your own prophet names as his forerunner. We are Kitabi, or people of the book. Your own religion enjoins you to treat us as friends, seeing that we entertain amicable feelings for you."

Tierno chimed in, arguing with his fellow marabouts to make them listen to reason, but with very little success.

"Anyhow," I said at last, "your fathers let a Christian pass through their country in peace, and indeed they even helped him. That Christian, my uncle, Abdul Kerim, was the friend and *protégé* of Sidi Hamet Beckay; do you think you can do better than your fathers, and the chief who was venerated throughout the whole of the Sudan?"

Surprise and hurried interrogations now ensued.

"What! are you the nephew of Abdul Kerim?"

I read Barth's book every day, so that it is rather difficult to put me out when his adventures are discussed.

Now it so happened that just before he reached Ansongo a little episode occurred to him which is well worth relating.

Without any disrespect to the memory of my "uncle"—my very worthy and excellent "uncle"—I suspect him of having been the hero of at least one idyl on the banks of the Niger, in which a young beauty of the Kel es Suk tribe also played her part.

Her name was Neschrun, and Barth, who generally dismisses the charms of the black or brown beauties he came across in his travels curtly enough, dwells on her graceful figure, her pleasing manners, her beautiful black eyes, and her hair parted on her brows, *à la Vierge.* He does not even neglect to tell us that she wore a garment alternately striped with black and red, which was most becoming.

The attraction was evidently mutual, for he adds that she one day said to him, half in fun—

"Will you marry me?"

What prevented the course of true love running smoothly was some question about camels.

"I expressed to her," says Barth, "all the regret I felt at being obliged to refuse, and whilst explaining how sensible I was of the honour she did me I told her my camels were too tired to carry her."

I have already referred to the standard of beauty amongst these people, and how they admire *embonpoint;* and I may here add that, when a woman has achieved the weight desired, she might very well claim to be admitted into the so-called "*Société des Cent Kilos.*" The name given to this special charm by the Tuaregs is *tebulloden*, and those who know anything of the onomatopœia theory will see in a minute how appropriate it is to a Tuareg Venus who is not content with being merely a Venus Callipyge.

Neschrun, no doubt, was rather of the *tebulloden* style of beauty, so that it is quite possible that the camels of the

German traveller were really not equal to carrying her weight.

Now was not this a good story to prove my identity in my parley with the messengers from El Mekki?

It actually turned out that Neschrun was the sister of El Mekki, and was still alive, so of course I made a great fuss about seeing her at once. Alas! she was far away in the interior, and it was no use hoping that she could come to me or that I could go to her, so I had to be content with sending her a present of a folding mirror with three glasses, trimmed with plush, which had cost about three shillings. See how generous I was!

The messengers went back to tell El Mekki all about it, and we at once became capital friends. Two slaves belonging to the chief of the Kel es Suk were given to us as guides, and we started again, but not before I had sent my affectionate greetings to the lady who might have been my aunt if she had not been so fat, or if Barth's camels had been better able to carry heavy loads.

My dear "uncle"! my brave "uncle"! my providential "uncle"! yet once again had you drawn a sharp thorn from the foot of your nephew when the happy thought occurred to you of relating your love affair with a daughter of the Kel es Suk.

The current was now very strong, running at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. We could not fail to see that we had drunk our best wine at the beginning of the feast, and that we must now husband our resources most carefully. In other words, we must steer with the greatest caution.

The fresh breeze from the south drove the *Aube* a little out of her course, and she struck on a bed of coarse gravel. She was, however, in very little danger, and we soon got her off again. But when out of the narrow channel she was flung violently on to a sharp rock, and there remained

DISTRIBUTION OF PRESENTS TO THE TUAREGS AT BURÉ.

stationary. The water was so deep just there that the coolies could not stand in it, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we rescued our consort this time. However, after swimming about her for an hour our efforts were at last rewarded by seeing her afloat again.

About 109 yards further down stream we doubled the point of the island of Ansongo.

The right arm of the river, which we could now see distinctly, was completely encumbered by rocks and rapids. Our barges could certainly not have got past them.

In front of us eddies and ripples showed that there were

THE 'DANTEC' EXPLORING THE PASS.

also rocks ahead of us. Our guides were brave fellows enough, but I did not believe they were much accustomed to the river, so I decided to make the two big boats anchor here. Baudry and I having removed the canvas sail which would have given purchase to the wind, and having pressed into the service every available oar, started to examine the channel, which, though very tortuous, turned out to be both wide and deep. We then returned on board, and without further incident we went on undaunted amongst the grass close to the left bank.

The *Aube* had leaked dreadfully since she struck, and four men with buckets could scarcely bale her out. Our

carpenter, Abdulaye, dived beneath her, and discovered that one of the planks of her bottom had got loose, but we managed to patch it up somehow.

To wind up this day, which had been so full of unpleasant excitement, a storm presently overtook us, during which we were soaked to the skin, whilst from the banks rose an odour of musk so strong as to be positively sickening.

Every now and then there were ripples close to the boat,

BURÉ.

caused by an alligator plunging into the water. It would not do to fall overboard just there.

A comparatively quiet reach brought us the next day to the northern point of the island of Buré, probably the Tiburanen of Barth, on the rugged rocks of which a village was picturesquely perched. Opposite to us on the left was a mound with slopes covered with tents, whilst on the summit was drawn up a squadron of Tuaregs ready to defend it, with foot soldiers in the front of the square and the cavalry in the centre. All remained motionless, watching the approach of our boats. We landed on the island, and the negroes, who at first seemed timid, came slowly towards

us. Then a canoe, in which were several Tuaregs, crossed the stream, whilst our guides with vehement gestures explained who we were, and what we wanted.

As soon as this was understood the battalion posted on the mound broke up in the twinkling of an eye, and canoes began to ply rapidly to and fro between the left bank of the river and the island, bringing over the Tuaregs, so that we were soon surrounded by a crowd of some three or four

CANOES AT BURÉ.

hundred men, some Ifoghas, others sheriffs. They had at first been afraid, they said, when they saw our boats, but now they were our best friends. We brought out our little presents, such as rings, bracelets, pipes, and knives, which evoked a perfect delirium of joy. In exchange we received eggs, butter, poultry, and some pretty little leather bags our visitors called *abelbodh*. We resumed our voyage by the left arm of the stream, which was narrow, and much encumbered with rocks. On the banks were numerous

flocks of sheep grazing on the grass and the succulent weeds.

The whole population followed us as before at Gao, shouting, but now the cries were friendly and pacific. Every time we halted to distribute presents the enthusiasm increased, men, women, and children — the last-named merry little creatures, with wide-awake expressions—flung themselves into the water to fight for a ring or a bit of glass.

FLOCKS AND HERDS AT BURÉ.

Every now and then an important chief would receive what we called a *complet*, the object of desire of every Tuareg—that is to say, a piece of Guinea or blue cotton cloth nine yards long—five to make the *bubu* or mantle, and four for the breeches. There is no doubt that our visit will long be remembered, and I hope that the first traveller to succeed us may have as much cause to thank Abd El Kader, as I called myself, as I had to bless the name of Abdul Kerim.

The island of Buré does not belong to the Tuaregs. Strange to say—for the fact is really unique on the Niger between Timbuktu and Sansan Hussa—a Songhay chief,

Idris by name, is the real owner. He pays no tribute to Madidu, and though the flocks and herds of the sheriffs and Ifoghas are now grazing on his land, it is only by his permission, and because their owners are in dread of a raid of Kel Avis.

We halted at the village of Idris, and he came to see us. We made a league of friendship with him, leaving in his hands a document which was a kind of protectorate treaty,

GUIDES GIVEN TO US BY IDRIS.

and a flag. He on his side lent us three of his subjects, one of them his own brother, to replace our Ansongo guides, who now returned to their village, having been well paid for their services.

These Songhay of Idris were splendid fellows, wearing veils, and carrying weapons similar to those of the Tuaregs; but their complexions were perfectly black, so that no one could mistake them for Arabs. They are, as a rule, very tall and of herculean strength.

It really was a pleasure to have to do once more with men of such a noble type as this, after being thrown for so long amongst the degraded negroes of the Niger districts; and it is easy to understand what this Songhay race must have been in the old days, when it dominated the Western Sudan under the Askia chiefs, and Gao was their capital.

In spite of all our efforts and all the skill of our guides we were not able to avoid running aground several times on the 11th, and our crafts again sustained a good deal of damage. We had hardly started before the *Aube* struck on a large flint shaped like the head of a man. There she stuck for three hours, with a current rushing by like that of the river of hell, and a reef on either side, on one of which it seemed as if she must be wrecked if we succeeded in getting her off.

Everybody rushed to the rescue. Our own men and our guides alike all flung themselves into the water, showing equal energy and devotion.

Every moment we expected to see the unlucky vessel part in two, the bow going one way and the stern another. At last, however, we did manage to fling a grappling-hook on to the left bank, and after many fruitless efforts, some of the men tugging at the part of the boat which had struck, whilst others hauled away from the stern at the grappling-hook, we succeeded in moving the vessel, which, taken in the rear by the current, was floated off. She joined the *Davoust* soon afterwards, but not without touching bottom again by the way.

We started once more about two o'clock, great blocks of flint everywhere impeding progress. But our guides assured us that this was nothing. "Wait," they said, "till you get to Labezenga, then you will see!" A charming prospect truly!

In the evening we reached Bentia, the Biting of Barth, where we halted for the night.

We pushed on early the next day to Fafa, arriving there about seven o'clock in the morning. Here the stream is divided into two arms by an island on which a village is hidden, with an approach presenting anything but a reassuring appearance. But we had other things to see to before exploring it.

Directly we anchored a Tuareg came to accost us. He turned out to be an envoy from Djamarata, the nephew of Madidu, who he said was at the village, specially accredited by that chief to complete the negotiations begun with us at Gao, and to give me the letter I had asked for.

The village of Fafa is occupied by Peuls or Fulahs, who, like all the rest of the sedentary races whom we met with who are face to face with the Tuaregs, were in a state of abject fear, wondering what would happen between the white visitors and the dreaded Arabs, both of superior race in the eyes of the negroes. Would they quarrel with each other? Would they come to blows? Not wishing to play the part of the iron between hammer and anvil, they were full of anxiety and trouble.

The old fellow who had come out as envoy climbed on to the *Davoust*. He did not wish me to land, Djamarata must come on board. As for him, he meant to stop where he was. Fortunately my Songhay from Idris were not quite such cowards, and they tried to reassure the poor old man, but when he still seemed terrified they gave him a good scolding. Djamarata was seated, meanwhile, some hundred yards from the river bank, surrounded by about a dozen Tuaregs. The brother of Idris finally took me by the arm, and we went together towards him. We saluted each other, we shook hands, neither of us looking in the least inclined to eat the other. But this peaceable greeting

did not reassure the silly old messenger, who, with a feeling which really did him honour, came and crouched almost between my legs to protect me.

Djamarata was a young man of about thirty years old, at least that was what I supposed from all I could see of his face, which was almost hidden by the *tagelmust* wrapped about the lower part. He was tall and of a commanding

PALAVER WITH DJAMARATA.

presence, whilst his great black eyes were lit up with intelligence. All Madidu's boys being still under age, he was his uncle's right hand, alike the confidant and the commander-in-chief of the Amenokal's army.

Our interview was very brief. I simply repeated what I had said at Gao, and Djamarata informed me that my statement tallied with what he had heard from the chief of the Awellimiden.

Now about the letter I had asked for. As he had not

a marabout in his suite who knew how to write Arabic, he proved his confidence in Tierno by letting him indite it without hesitation, and the latter set about it at once. Here is a literal translation of his production :

Letter from Madidu and his nephew Djamarata to the Sultan of the French.

"The object of this letter is to inform you that we have come to an understanding with Commandant Hourst, known under the name of Abd el Kader, on the following points :—between us and him there shall be only good and peace ; your traders shall come to us by land and by water, assured that no one in our country will molest them in any way. You will bring no trouble into our possessions, nor interfere with our civil and religious traditions. Be it also known unto you, that so soon as your envoys are returned, and you will have proved our truth, you will see us come and go alone and in parties by land and by water. This is the exact truth without reserve and without exaggeration. After you have given us the promises mentioned we shall be brothers ; greeting !"

Djamarata asked me in my turn to leave behind me a written statement of the verbal arrangement we had made. This seemed only fair, and here is my reply :

Letter from Commandant Hourst, surnamed Abd el Kader, to Madidu, Amenokal of the Awellimiden, and to Djamarata his nephew.

"This is to certify, that having been sent by the Sultan of the French to you to establish eternal peace between us, and to inaugurate commercial and friendly relations, and having received from him full powers to speak in his name,

I can assure you that our only desire is to act in the manner explained in your letter. We will not establish posts in your country, nor touch that which belongs to you, nor change your civil and religious traditions in any way.

"You can come to us in peace in numbers or alone, to trade or merely to visit us. Once in our territories, which are on the west of the dune of Ernessé, you will find nothing but good and peace.

"As for what you say on the subject of our religion, we are governed by the law of Sidna Issa (Jesus Christ); we know that there is but one God; we pray, we fast, we give alms. As a result we could not prevent these things amongst others without becoming unworthy of the protection of God.

"Know therefore that all this is the absolute and exact truth, that we are of noble race, that a lie is as much unknown amongst us as it is with you, who too are of noble race.

"Come to us, then, without fear either at Timbuktu or wherever we may be. The truth will then be proved."

We spent the rest of the day chatting with the Tuaregs and distributing presents. Meanwhile Baudry went with Digui to reconnoitre the river below Fafa.

For the second time a treaty, or rather a written agreement, had been made between a Tuareg confederation and the French. The first was that which followed or resulted from the grand journey of Duveyrier in Southern Algeria and amongst the Azgueur Tuaregs, after which a mission, including the Prince de Polignac, made a convention with them at Rhâdames.

For the second time those who made these arrangements, and who dealt directly face to face and voice to voice

with the Tuareg chiefs, assert that they found them loyal and to some extent even conciliatory.

In speaking of the Tuaregs in general, I shall express myself very plainly on the subject of these treaties. I now beg leave to break off the narrative of our voyage for a moment to try and make better known this interesting race, which has perhaps been unjustly calumniated.

TUAREGS

AN AMRI SHEPHERD.

CHAPTER V

THE TUAREGS

AFTER I got back to France I often came in contact with people who, as the expression goes, were interested in geographical and colonial questions, and sometimes I was subjected to a most extraordinary cross-examination. The following is a true account of a conversation I once had :—

"So you have really been amongst the Tuaregs? They are savages, are they not? Are they cannibals?"

I protested that even during the worst famines they had never tasted a scrap of the flesh of a fellow creature.

"But at least they are cruel? They thieve and plunder, do they not? They have neither religion nor laws?"

I really do not feel sure of having convinced a single person that even if the Tuaregs have their faults, that they are not wanting in good qualities, and that their social condition, different though it may be from ours, is nevertheless an established one, that it would be alike humane

and politic to turn to account the undoubtedly good qualities of the race, and to endeavour to develop those qualities. It would surely be better to extenuate their faults, and if possible correct them, than to propose—which, by the way, is of course impossible—the extermination *en masse* of a great branch of the human race, occupying a district peculiarly suitable to it, and where, as a matter of fact, the Tauregs alone can live.

So-called truisms and ready-made opinions are of course very convenient. By adopting them one is saved the trouble of thinking about, still more of going to see, a place for oneself. It is far less fatiguing, and within the power of everybody. It would certainly be perfectly safe to wager ten to one that the habit of taking things for granted is not likely to go out in France in a hurry, or indeed for that matter anywhere else.

Maybe I shall only in my turn be lifting up my voice in the desert. But I should like first to try and make those who are willing to eschew foregone conclusions better acquainted with the truth.

I will avoid exaggeration, and also too much generalization from isolated experiences. On the one hand, as I have already said, the Tuaregs have very serious faults—serious for us, because they are such as to make it difficult for them to accommodate themselves to European civilization, and as a result we in our turn find influencing them a very hard task.

Moreover, when I have proved that the Tuaregs have noble qualities, when I have shown them actuated by elevated motives, those who read what I say must beware of thinking that all members of the race are cut on the same pattern.

My idea is, that to begin with we have only to inquire whether in their natural condition the Tuaregs are or are

not inferior in morality to the other native races, such as the Ammanites of Cochin-China and the Kabyles of Algeria, with whom by hook or by crook the French have managed to find a *modus vivendi?*

To a question of that kind I can reply at once, "No, no, the Tuaregs are certainly not more barbarous than other native races!" and as proof I can quote our own journey. My readers will have seen how the Tuaregs behaved to us. I have described how they were won over from hostility to friendship; and the chapter succeeding this I shall tell how they protected—even saved us. And what happened to us might, it seems to me, very well happen to others.

Am I alone in my opinion? Did not Barth owe his very existence to the active protection of the Tademeket at Timbuktu and the Awellimiden at Tosaye?

Then, again, Duveyrier travelled for more than a year in the Tuareg districts, guided and protected by Ikhenuakhen, chief of the Azgueurs. Not only had he nothing to fear from them, but he was actually saved from insult even from the Senussis and the tribes which had risen against the French under the leadership of Mohammed ben Abdallah.

Our case was therefore no isolated one, and our experience would no doubt be repeated if it were decided to enter into more intimate relations with the Tuaregs. We should avoid the unreasonable fear of finding ourselves amongst traitors and assassins, but at the same time take such precautions as are needed in the Sudan, where there is at yet no police force.

There are indeed few if any races who can pride themselves on a more ancient lineage than the Tuaregs.

Speaking in their own dialect they say, "We are Imochar, Imuhar, Imazighen," all which words come from the same Tamschenk root—*ahar* meaning free, independent, he who can take, who can pillage. (We shall see later

what the Tuaregs mean by pillage.) In the Tamschenk dialect the word *ahar* also signifies lion.

If we go back to the days of antiquity, and read our Herodotus, we shall find that he speaks of the Mazique tribe as dwelling in Libya. There are Numidians of Jugurtha and of Maussinissa, and the last word is translated almost literally into the dialect now employed, *mess n'esen* meaning their master, or the master of the people, whilst the word Mazique is evidently the Greek form, from which is derived the present name of Imazighen.

If this etymological proof is not sufficient, there exists another, this one absolutely irrefragable, viz. the Tuareg writing.

Here, there, and everywhere in their country, now cut with a knife on the trunks of trees, now engraved on the rocks, we meet with inscriptions in peculiar characters known as the *tifinar;* and at this very day every Tuareg who has to wait, or who suffers from *ennui* for any reason, always wiles away the time, whether on the banks of the Niger, on the tablelands of Air, or on the summits of the volcanic Atakor n'Ahaggar, by writing according to the best of his skill his name and that of his sweetheart on a rock or on the trunk of some tree, now and then adding a sentence or two, or in rarer cases a complete poem.

Now the letters employed in these *tifinar*, ancient or modern, are the same, or very nearly the same, and are therefore identical with those used in the celebrated Tugga inscription, dating from the time when Carthage was still a thriving city.

Imochar, of which the singular form is Amacher, is the name by which the Tuaregs of the Niger districts generally speak of themselves. They are, say the Arabs, Tuaregs (singular Targui); Surgu, say the Songhay; Burdane, say the Fulahs.

Now not one of these various appellations comes from a root signifying anything evil, and a Tuareg would be sure to use one or the other according to the dialect he speaks in referring to his people. Some have pretended that Tuareg means abandoned by God, for Arabs are very fond of explaining everything by puns and plays upon words. Yet another Arab root from which the word

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might possibly be derived is one signifying nomads or wanderers.

Without attempting to throw fresh light, or perhaps to add further obscurity to the question, I may remark here, that a certain Berber tribe (we shall see that the Tuaregs are Berbers) calls itself Tarka, whilst a small section of the Awellimiden is known as Tarkai-Tamut, whilst the great Berber conqueror of Spain was named Tarik.

It seems most reasonable to suppose that the Arabs

gave to the whole race the name of one of its tribes, probably that with which they were brought into close contact. Does not the very name of Berber, characterizing the whole great race, including not only the Tuaregs, but the Kabyles, the Chambas, and others, itself come from that of but one fraction—the Berbers or Barbers of Morocco?

During the Roman decadence the Berbers, including the Tuaregs, joined the flocks of Saint Augustine and his successors as converts, very half-hearted ones probably, and then after a time of considerable obscurity in their history came the Mohammedan conquest. Rebellious at first, the Berbers ended by accepting the religion of Islam, without feeling any more enthusiasm for the new faith than they had done for the old. As for the Tuaregs, it is said it was not necessary to convert them more than fourteen times!

Now it was these tribes who so loathed a foreign yoke, and fled further and further into the desert before the invaders of their country, who were the forefathers of the present Imochars.

With regard to the Awellimiden, their very name indicates their origin; they are the descendants (*uld lemta*) of the Lemta or Lemtuma, a Sahara tribe which conquered and finally absorbed all its neighbours of the same stock.

All this may perhaps be called actual history. Now for some of the legends of which the Awellimiden Tuaregs are so fond. Great lovers of the marvellous, they account for their origin thus. I will translate as literally as possible what one of them actually told me:

"I say the ancestors of the Imochars were no other than genii.

"The women of a village called Alkori went one night to dance in the bush, and there they fell asleep.

"Presently they were surprised by some genii, who,

surrounding them before they were fully awake, embraced them.

"In the morning the women returned to the village.

"When a few moons had risen and died (that is to say, when a few months had passed), the men of the village saw that the women were about to become mothers.

"The chief of the village therefore cried, 'Seize them and put them to death!'

"But the cadi replied, 'No, let us wait until the children are born.'

"So they waited until nine moons had risen and died, when each woman gave birth to a boy.

"Some men said, 'Now let us kill the mothers and the children.'

"The cadi replied, 'No, let us wait till they are older, none but God can create a soul.'

"So they waited.

"The boys grew, and as time went on fought with the other children of the village; and they made for themselves weapons of iron, swords and daggers, such as had hitherto been unknown in the country.

"The chiefs then said, 'If we do not put them to death these boys will become our masters. Let us kill them at once, before they come to their full strength.'

"To which every one replied, 'Yes, yes! you are right!'

"They then sent a messenger to call the uncles of the young fellows, and said to them, 'What we wish is that you should kill your nephews, and if you do not we will kill you.'

"To this the uncles answered, 'We have no wish but to comply with your demand, but we do not know how to put to death our nearest relations. You take our weapons and do with them what you will.'

"'Very well,' said the chief. 'You had better leave the village now and return here to-morrow evening.'

"So they left; but one of them managed to warn his sister of what was in the wind, so that the sons of the genii knew what to expect.

"They therefore ran away, walking all night until the dawn, when they climbed a mountain.

"In the morning the chief of the village beat the war-drum, and the horses were saddled.

"The people followed the boys till they came to the mountain they had climbed, when they lost all traces of them.

"Meanwhile one of the children had said, 'Shall we have to fight here?'

"'Of course we shall,' replied another; and they were just about to defy the enemy with shouts, inviting them to the combat, when a second boy said, 'It would be better to go first to the village and fight those that are left behind there.'

"They therefore descended the mountain by the other slope, and returned to the village. When those who had remained there saw them coming they were afraid, and cried, 'Alas! here are the boys coming back again. They have evidently defeated the party we sent out against them.'

"One man went out to parley with the children. They took him prisoner, obtained from him all the information they wanted, and then they drew their swords and killed him.

"They next advanced upon the village, entered it, and even went up to the hut of the chief, who was a very old man. He got up and came to meet them. They shouted, 'Thou didst mean to kill us and our mothers with us, but now it is thou who art to die; thy children and thy

children's children, and all thy nephews are dead. It is all over.'

"They flung their spears at him, and one of them pierced his heart, coming out at the other side. Then the boys shouted, 'Death to thee, and to thy mother, thou son of a harlot!' Next they burnt the village, and killed all the women and children. Only one man escaped. He ran out to the army and told the troops all that had happened, asking them, 'Did you not meet the children?' 'No!' 'Did you not find any trace of them?' 'We did; but we lost their track!'

"'Well,' he went on; 'go to the village, there is not a man left alive, not even a woman, not even a child. All, all are slain!'

"They put spurs to their horses and galloped back; they reached the village. The children of the genii came out and began the battle. They fought from ten o'clock in the morning till sunset. The boys were victorious, slew all their enemies, and took possession of the war-drum.

"Of the sons of the genii sixty were dead, but sixty survived, and became the fathers of the Tuaregs."

In the fifteenth century they founded a great city, about 281 miles to the north of Gao, which they called Es Suk, or Tadamekka (now Tademeket), where they probably led a half-nomad, half-sedentary life, as do certain tribes or fractions of tribes at the present day at Rhat, Tintellust, and Sinder, or Gober. At the same period the Askia Empire of the Songhay negroes was at the zenith of its prosperity, with Gao, or Garo, as its capital.

An Askia went to attack Es-Suk, and destroyed it. Rather than submit to the yoke of the conqueror, the Tuaregs abandoned their capital, and fled to the Ahaggar heights or the plateaux of Air. According to a legend only one Es Suk escaped, a man named Mohamed ben

Eddain, who founded a new tribe, that of the present Kel es Suk, by giving his daughters in marriage to Arabs, sheriffs of the tribe of El Abaker, descendants of the Ansars, or first companions of the Prophet.

This was how it came about that the Kel es Suk supplied the so-called Tuareg marabouts, and explains the fact that these marabouts have abandoned many of the

A GROUP OF TUAREGS.

characteristic customs of the true Tuaregs in favour of the strict observance of the Mussulman law.

Then came the invasion from Morocco, when the Armas, or Romas, as the soldiers of the Sultan of Fez were called, thanks to their firearms, destroyed the armies and broke the power of the Songhay; but these Armas were not numerous enough to hold what they had taken, and in the course of a few generations they became merged in the negro race, and completely lost all their warlike qualities.

Protected against invasion by the arid and poverty-stricken nature of the districts they inhabit, the Tuaregs, on the other hand, inured to hardship, gradually became stronger, nobler, and more able to hold their own, developing all the virtues of the true warrior. They now in their turn conquered their old enemies the Songhay, who, though aided by the Armas, descended from the old invaders from Morocco, were powerless to resist them. The negroes were defeated and reduced to slavery. Since then the Tuaregs have been the dominant race on the banks of the Niger, from Timbuktu almost as far south as Say.

The history of the Tuaregs has been that of one long series of struggles between the various tribes, in which the Awellimiden finally gained the ascendency they still maintain. I have already related how they resisted the Fulah invasion, and later that of the Toucouleurs.

The taking of Timbuktu by the French resulted in the crushing of the semi-independent fraction of the Tuareg race known as the Tengueregui, or the Kel Temulai, and what I have said about the Igwadaren, will be remembered. As for the Awellimiden, their power remained undisturbed, and I do not think I am far wrong in saying, that should they be threatened they could put 20,000 men, one-quarter of them mounted, in the field at once.

When we remember the courage of the Tuaregs, and take into account the immense difficulty French troops would have to contend with in crossing the districts belonging to the enemy, it is impossible to help realizing that these warriors are far from being a negligible quantity, and that the conquest of their land would cost the invader dear.

And would it be to the interest of France to possess the districts now inhabited by the Tuaregs? To this query I reply emphatically and without hesitation, No!

There are in the Sudan two totally different kinds of territory, which I shall characterize as those fitted for the occupation of sedentary settlers, and those suitable only to nomadic tribes.

The former are the banks of streams and rivers, such as the French Sudan between Kayes and Bamako, with the whole reach of the Niger district up to Timbuktu. In these lands gutta-percha and cotton can be readily grown. They are inhabited by negroes, and it is indispensable if we are to trade in security that we should have a preponderate if not exclusive territorial influence.

In what I call the nomad lands, on the other hand, on the right of the Senegal, on the Niger beyond Timbuktu (if we except the actual banks of the river), we shall find that the chief articles of export are gum and the products of flocks of sheep, which are indeed the only things the nomad tribes have to offer to our traders.

It is absolutely useless to attempt to impose on these people a yoke against which they would never cease to rebel, and which, moreover, they would have the power as well as the will to throw off. It is much better to give them what are called *enclaves*, or reserves, such as the Americans assign to the Redskins. Of course we should always have to guard against pillaging raids from these enclaves ; but I am quite convinced, that when the Tuaregs once realize that their liberty and their customs will be respected, they will willingly accept the *modus vivendi* suggested, especially if they find that they can sell their produce to our traders to advantage, thus gaining means for the amelioration of their present condition.

How much better would it be then, instead of condemning the Tuareg race as a whole, because of certain preconceived prejudices, if we were to set to work to study them, to gauge their real moral worth, and to make the best

arrangement possible with them for the benefit of all concerned. Faults, many faults, of course they all have. They are proud, they are fierce, they rob, and they beg. One of their peculiarities makes it very difficult to deal with them—they are very ready to take offence. They are, moreover, in constant dread of being subjected to servitude, and fear invasion above all things. All this of course

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leads them to listen eagerly to the calumnies our enemies especially the marabouts, are always ready to circulate.

Side by side with all this, however, many noble virtues must also be placed to the credit of the Tuaregs Their courage is proverbial, the defence of a guest is with them as with the Arabs a positive religion, whilst their steadfastness of character is well known, and their powers of endurance are absolutely indispensable to their very existence. Lastly,—and here I know what I say is quite

contrary to the generally-received opinion,—the Tuareg is faithful to his promises and hates petty theft.

"Never promise more than half what you can perform," says a Tuareg proverb, and even in the opinion of their enemies this is no idle boast. Our own adventures are a striking proof of this.

As for what I have said about thieving, I can testify that all the time we were amongst the Tuaregs not the very smallest larceny was committed by them, although all manner of very tempting articles, such as various stuffs, beads, looking-glasses, knives, etc., were lying about in our boats, on deck, and in our cabins. Nothing could have been easier than for our Tuareg visitors to run off with a few odds and ends, and if I had seen any one take anything I should probably have said nothing, for fear of a dispute leading to a rupture.

At the sight of these riches of ours, which surpassed anything they had ever seen before, the eyes of our guests would gleam with desire for their possession, and they would ask for things, keep on begging for them without ceasing, but they would not take anything without leave. I often had hard work to resist their importunity, but, for all that, not one of them ever appropriated a single object however small.

I said, it is true, a few pages back that the Tuaregs were pillagers, and the reader may very well ask how they could be pillagers yet not thieves. We must, however, judge people by their own consciences, not by the ideas current amongst ourselves. Now to pillage and to thieve are two essentially different things amongst the Tuaregs.

All nomads are pillagers, and as a matter of fact war with them is generally simply a pillaging expedition. Migrations are constantly taking place as a very necessity of their mode of life, and as a result *casus belli* as constantly

arise. We must, however, even in such cases as these, do the Tuaregs the justice to add that they generally first make an appeal to diplomacy. In meetings known amongst them as *myiad*, the question at issue is discussed, chiefly by the most influential marabouts, and they have recourse to arms only if conciliation does not answer.

Even then it is all fair and open warfare. The warriors even challenge each other as in a tournament to single combat. There are *razzi* too, no doubt, when the Tuaregs make a descent on the enemy's camp and pillage it, carrying off the flocks and herds if possible, and by thus depriving them of the means of subsistence, compelling them to sue for peace.

There is little foundation for the charge brought against the Tuaregs of pillaging caravans, they respect them when the right of passage has been paid for. This payment is a very just one, guaranteeing the protection of the tribe against the gentlemen of the road, for in the Sudan, as in Italy, there are brigands, but they are not Tuaregs.

On the other hand, if traders, thinking themselves strong enough to force a passage, refuse to pay the tribute demanded, the caravan becomes the lawful prize of any one who chooses to attack it.

Is this very different to what happens amongst Europeans? Suppose, for instance, that we refuse to pay custom and *octroi* dues, the officials will seize the contraband goods without hesitation, and we shall have to pay the legal fine, or even, perhaps, go to prison, and who will think us unfairly treated? Although they have no officers in uniform in their service, the Tuaregs are quite within their rights in demanding payment for right of way. But pillage merchandise when that payment has been made they never do. Did they do so, all trade would be simply impossible in the Sudan, and when they are reproached on the subject

they reply—"*Our irezz aodem akus wa der'itett* (we do not break the bowl from which we eat)."

When he has to do with Christians, infidels, or, as he calls them, Kaffirs, the Tuareg is perhaps not quite so jealous of his promises and of keeping faith exactly; but this is really chiefly the fault of the marabouts, who tell them that they are not bound where infidels are concerned, and quote passages taken, or said to be taken, from the Koran to prove it.

Then, again, there is something spirited and noble about pillaging, for it often means to expose oneself to danger, and real courage is needed for that. It is not so very long since our ancestors went to do much the same thing in Sicily and in Palestine, and there was not much more excuse for them than for the Tuaregs.

Thieving and petty larceny are very different from pillaging, and of them the Tuareg has perhaps a greater horror than we Europeans.

A careful study of Tuareg society will reveal a very strong resemblance between it and that of Europe in the Middle Ages. Truth to tell, except that he has no strong isolated castles, a Tuareg surrounded by his tribe, or a fraction of that tribe, engaged in one long struggle to defend himself, or absorbed in attacking some chief, brutal and violent, but chivalrous, respecting the honour of women, and curbing his wild passions where they are concerned, his reverence for them inspiring his most courageous efforts, pillaging the traders who will not submit to the prescribed tribute, but protecting those who have paid their toll, has a soul not so very different, after all, from that of the Castellan de Coucy of the twelfth century, or of the heroes he celebrates in his poems.

As was the population in Europe in mediæval times, the Tuaregs are divided into two very distinct classes, the

Ihaggaren and the *imrads*, corresponding to the old feudal chiefs and vassals.

What originally caused this broad line of demarcation between the two? Many different things, no doubt. Certain conquered tribes became the *imrads* of those who had defeated them. Or again, some tribes may have submitted for the sake of being allowed to settle peacefully down on lands belonging to Ihaggaren. Whatever may have been the reason, however, as time went on the Ihaggaren[1] became the owners of flocks and herds, whilst the *imrads* never possessed any property of their own, but looked after that of their masters.

The former had to fight and to protect their *imrads*, ownership of property giving them the right to demand tribute; the latter could originally only hold their fiefs at the will of their suzerains, but after many generations had passed away their tenure became so established a thing that rent was all which could be demanded. At the present day it sometimes happens that the *imrads* are richer, better dressed, and even more influential than the Ihaggarens.

When a whole tribe is seriously threatened, and the nobles are not sufficiently strong to defend themselves, the tenants are armed just as they used to be in olden times in Europe, and these tenants fight marvellously well. At the same time, except in such emergencies, it is the business of the Ihaggarens to defend the *imrads*.

In the service of the *imrads* are a class of negro slaves known as the Belle or Bellates, who have as a rule been attached to the same family for many generations. The attachment these slaves have for their Tuareg masters is really wonderful, and a positive proof that they are well treated by them. In the struggle which took place round

[1] The singular of *Ihaggaren* is *Ahaggar*, and of *Imrad*, *Amrid*.

about Timbuktu between the French and the various tribes who resisted the foreign occupation, Bellates were often taken prisoners, but however kind our treatment of them, in spite of promises of complete liberty on the one condition that they would remain with us, we were not able to keep a single one. They all ran away to rejoin their old masters. In warlike expeditions they form a very useful supplement to the Tuareg infantry, and they are quite as brave as are the free soldiers.

One peculiar fact which speaks well for the Tuareg character is, that though these warriors own hereditary slaves they never sell or buy them. Before the French arrived at Timbuktu that town was the centre of the slave trade, whence captives were sent to Tripoli on the one hand and to Morocco on the other. The convoys with the melancholy processions of slaves were generally under the leadership of traders from Mosi, who brought the unhappy captives to the town and sold them to merchants from Morocco or Tuat.

We have already seen, and we shall have again occasion to remark, that the whole negro population of the Niger districts is in a similar state of servitude with regard to the Tuaregs, a fact which will explain how it is that no Songhay or Arma would dream of disputing the orders of the chiefs, or offering the very slightest resistance to their demands.

There would therefore be absolutely nothing to prevent a Tuareg who should chance to be in want of money or of clothes to go and seize one or more of the Gabibi, as the negroes of the villages are called, and sell him or them for slaves at Timbuktu. In fact, it would be quite as simple a matter as to choose an ox out of his own herds and send it to market. Yet never has a Tuareg been known to do such a thing. I have made sure of this by cross-questioning

many negroes, and their answers have always been the same.

At the very bottom rung of the social ladder we find the negroes of the riverside districts, the Songhay and the Armas. They cultivate millet, rice, and tobacco. When their masters are at daggers drawn with each other, as was the case when we were amongst the Igwadaren, they have a good deal to complain of, for they are, as it were, between two fires, and their position is anything but enviable. Amongst the Awellimiden, however, their condition seems to be much happier, and when they have once paid their dues they are left in peace, great chiefs such as Madidu protecting them against the exactions of the less powerful Tuaregs.

I confess I do not feel any very special pity for them. They are quite as numerous as the Tuaregs, quite as well armed, and all they need to recover their independence is a little courage. If, moreover, they cared to study the history of the past, they would not fail to remark that their Songhay ancestors brought their doom upon them when they destroyed Es Suk, and forced the Tuaregs to lead their present wandering life.

As for the project of pressing the negroes into the service for the suppression of the Tuaregs, it is but a Utopian idea, and that a very dangerous one, for the Songhay race is too debased by its three centuries of servitude to have any real stamina left.

I need scarcely point out the great mistake implied in the suggestion: We ought to favour the black at the expense of the Tuaregs, because the former are producers as tillers of the soil, and the latter are useless idlers, for the Tuareg is as hard a worker as the negro; he works in a different direction, that is all—breeding flocks and herds instead of growing cereals. When the means of transport

are sufficient for it to be easy to get to and from Timbuktu, it will be the Tuareg, whose camels will carry the gum harvest into the town, it will be he who will sell skins and wool; in fact, he will turn out to be the greater producer of the two races after all.

The Tuaregs have been accused of being cruel, but this is another grave error. They alone perhaps of all African races do not kill their prisoners after a battle. One must have been present at the taking of a village by negroes to realize the awful butchery with which the victory ends. Everybody not fit to be sold as a slave is put to the sword. The throats of the old men are cut, and little children too young to walk have their heads smashed against stones. Tuaregs, on the other hand, are quite incapable of such atrocities. When we passed Sinder, Boker Wandieïdu, chief of the Logamaten, had more than two hundred Toucouleur prisoners in his camp, who had been taken in war two years before, and he was feeding and looking after them all. After the fatal battle with the Tacubaos, in which Colonel Bonnier was killed, the two officers who alone escaped from the scene of the combat, Captains Regard and Nigotte, fled in different directions. Nigotte reached Timbuktu, and was saved, but Regard went westwards, and was taken prisoner by the negroes of the Dongoi villages, who took him to the Tenguereguif Tuaregs. In spite, however, of the fact that the excitement of the battle had scarcely subsided, these Tuaregs would not themselves slay the unfortunate Frenchman. "Do with him what you will," they said; and the negroes killed him.

Moreover, it has been said that the Tuaregs are fanatics, but I have never seen them prostrate themselves or fast. It is, however, unfortunately quite true that the marabouts exercise a great influence over them; but it is the kind of ascendency that clever people always obtain over big

children, such as the Tuaregs are, and such as sorcerers get over the superstitious. "You are Christians, and we ought not to have anything to do with infidels," Yunes said to us at Tosaye. A good excuse, and one that he could not help laughing at himself. Yunes, I am glad to say, never really followed the precepts of Islam any more than did any of his fellow-countrymen.

How does it come about that, left to themselves, with scarcely any contact with more advanced civilizations, constantly exposed to the malevolent influence of Mahommedanism, and by their very nature peculiarly susceptible to the temptations which appeal to the violently disposed, the Tuaregs have yet managed to keep their high moral character. Once more we find a parallel for their position in the Middle Ages. It is the reverence they feel for women, to whose gentler influence they yield, which has been their salvation. Just as the lady of the feudal chief, brutal and hot-tempered, coarse and savage though he often was, knew how to soothe his worst passions, and to inspire him with an ambition to excel in those noble tasks of which she herself was to be the reward, so does the Tuareg woman in her tent, chanting praises of the mighty deeds of the lord of her heart, rouse in that lord all chivalrous instincts, and inspire him with a love for all that is best and highest in life on earth.

The Tuareg—and here he differs essentially from all Mahommedans—takes only one wife, but she is literally his better half. Moreover, a woman is free to choose her own husband. During our stay at Say, we were told that Reichala, daughter of Madidu, was about to marry the son of El-Yacin, one of the chiefs of the most powerful tribe of the Confederation. I sent some presents on this joyful occasion. A month later an envoy from the chief of the Awellimiden told us that the young lady, in spite of all her

parents could do, had refused her *fiance*. Her will was respected, and even the Amenokal himself would not have forced her to comply.

Her future husband once chosen, a Tuareg girl has perfect liberty to see him when she likes, and will sometimes travel

A TUAREG WOMAN.

on her camel more than fifty miles to pay him a visit. The Tuaregs themselves say that no bad results ensue ; but there are three words for bastard in the Tamschek language, and if it be true that the abundance of expressions for a thing in any tongue proves the prevalence of that thing, we shall know what to think. However, when a Tuareg woman is married, however free and easy she may have been before-

hand, she is a model of discreet behaviour. The Tuaregs do not brook any tampering with their honour, and a deceived husband will never hesitate to wash out his shame in blood.

Still the Tuareg woman is allowed to have friends of the opposite sex, and, as in the days of the Troubadours, her praises are sung in many a charming rondeau. These male friends, who correspond to the Italian *cicisbeos*, draw their swords in honour of the fair lady of their choice, and shout her name as a war-cry as they fling themselves upon the foe in the clash of combat. The woman, in her turn, celebrates the exploits of her *cicisbeo* in verse, and she adorns his leather shield and the scabbard of his sword with the work of her hands. All, however, ends there, and we are irresistibly reminded of Petrarch's songs in honour of his Laura when she was a stout, middle-aged woman, the mother of seven children.

Alas! we must tell the whole truth, and this reference to Petrarch brings me back to my subject: Tuareg women in general. What a pity that after all I have said about their lofty spirit, their manners, and the good influence they exercise, I am obliged to own that I cannot admire their figure, which resembles that of a Durham cow ready for a prize show, or of a moulting goose more than anything else.

Their faces are pleasing, sometimes even very pretty. Delicate features, big eyes full of expression, and very long black hair parted in the middle and plaited together at the back of the head, give them a charming appearance, but they have absolutely no figures, they are just one mass of fat; their arms are like the jellies exposed for sale in pork-butchers' shops, and the less said about the rest of their bodies the better.

In striking contrast to their wives, Tuareg warriors are generally very lean, and their figures are well knit. Their

limbs are very finely moulded, and they walk with a slow dignity all their own, raising their feet rather high from the ground much as an ostrich does, a mode of progression which is probably the reason for their habit of leaning on their spears as they advance.

The most striking peculiarity of the Tuareg costume is the veil, called the *litham* in Arabic, and the tagelmust in Tamschek, which covers the face, leaving only the eyes visible. It consists of a band of stuff, generally black, which goes round the head like a turban to begin with, and then passes over the mouth and nose, coming round a third time across the forehead, and looking rather like a visor.

The tribe to which a Tuareg belongs is shown by his tagelmust. A well-bred Amacher never takes it off, not even to eat or sleep, and the negroes of the riverside have adopted the custom in imitation of their masters. Their veils are, however, generally white, as are also those of Tuaregs who are not rich enough to buy the lustrous black stuffs from Haussa, used by the well-to-do.

The veil seems to have been originally adopted as part of the Tuareg costume on hygienic grounds, for in the long wanderings of the tribes amongst the sand of the deserts it protects the respiratory organs. By degrees, however, this tagelmust grew to be considered a sign of the modesty of the wearer, and to show the face became a breach of etiquette.

Strange to say, the women do not hide their faces, a very noteworthy difference this between Mahommedans, whose females are always veiled, and Tuaregs, amongst whom it is the men who thus disguise their features. To make up for this, however, if a Tuareg woman wishes to show great respect to any one she is talking to, she covers her mouth with a piece of her robe.

The Tuaregs themselves tell the following legend—they have one for every occasion—to explain this peculiarity of their costume.

"In olden times women used to keep their faces veiled as do the Mahommedans, whilst men left their faces un-

A TUAREG IN HIS NATIONAL COSTUME.

covered; but one day the enemy surprised a camp of our ancestors. The attack was so sudden and so utterly unexpected that the Tuaregs were seized with panic and fled, leaving behind them their families and their property. They flung down their arms, making no effort to defend themselves, but trusting for escape entirely to the fleetness of their legs.

"The women, however, picked up the swords, the spears, and the daggers, with which they faced the enemy and drove them off.

"From that day, to show their admiration for the conduct of their wives, and their shame for their own cowardice, the men wore the veil and the women left their features exposed to view."

In addition to the veil the Tuaregs wear a tunic of lustrous black cotton, which falls nearly to the ankles, and in the front of which is a huge pocket.

The Tuareg who wishes to be very "chic," to use the last slang expression in vogue in France and England, has this pocket made of red material; but whatever the colour it is always of huge size. It is difficult to imagine what quantities of things that pocket will hold. In it a Tuareg can stow away yards upon yards of stuff, any amount of beads, whole coverlets, etc., etc.; and to see him dispose of everything in such a limited space, reminds one of the conjurors who put a cannon ball, a cage full of birds, and a bowl with gold fish all into a single nut.

Long wide trousers envelope the lower part of the body, and are drawn in at the waist with running strings, whilst sandals made of ox or antelope hide protect the feet from the burning heat of the sun-parched sand.

The costume is completed by quantities of little leather sachets, containing amulets, hung round the neck on thin cords. These amulets protect their wearer from all evil influences, and secure to him all the good things his heart desires.

The weapons of a Tuareg are all what the French call *armes blanches*, that is to say, swords, spears, daggers, etc., and it is rare indeed for any of them to own firearms. Even if they have them they will not use them unless they are positively driven to do so. They have a kind of super-

stitious dread, and at the same time a contempt for guns. "They are not weapons worthy of a man," say these Tuaregs, who admit that their women excel them in courage.

The national weapon *par excellence* is the so-called *tellak* or short dagger, the sheath of which is fastened to the left wrist with a leather armlet. The hilt of this *tellak* is of the shape of a cross, and the wearer is not at all inconvenienced by wearing it. He generally rests his hand on the hilt when he is not using the weapon. If he is threatened with any danger, the dagger is drawn from the sheath with the right hand in an instant.

The spear or lance is generally made entirely of iron, except for certain copper ornaments; a few, however, have wooden handles, though the actual weapon is of metal. The Ihaggaren alone have the right of wearing the iron spear, and the so-called *takuba* or sword worn at the side, suspended on a cotton or silk cord.

According to circumstances, the spear is used as a missile or as a lance. Mounted Tuaregs use it much as European lancers do, but when they are fighting on foot, they fling it with marvellous skill, and will rarely miss an enemy at a distance as great as fifty feet. The red and green leather shields of the Tuaregs are often decorated with considerable taste, and we must not forget to mention the *ahabeg*, which is alike a weapon and an ornament, consisting of a circlet of stone worn on the left arm a little above the wrist.

The horses of the Tuaregs are very ugly and small but strong. The saddles in use are of wood covered over with leather, and a thick coverlet of felt protects the hinder quarters of the steed. The bits are of very well forged iron, the bridle is of plaited leather; the stirrups of copper are very small, no bigger than a child's bracelet, and the horseman only rests his big toe in them.

But the animal which takes first rank, whether for riding or for carrying bales of merchandise, the equipment of camps, meat, milk, etc., is the camel.

The Tamschek language has many names for this useful animal, a different one being used for it according to its age and capacity. The camel used as a beast of burden is a strongly-built and heavy-looking animal, known as an *amnis*, whilst the *areggan* or saddle camel, used for riding, is much lighter, has slenderer limbs, and is far more spirited. For guiding the *amnis* or the *areggan* a bridle is used, passing through a ring which was fixed in the nose of the animal at a very early age.

The camel is the chief wealth of a Tuareg. "How many camels has your father?" I was asked, and it was very difficult to convince my questioner that this useful animal would be of no good to us in France.

The costume of Tuareg women is simpler than that of their husbands, and consists of a long piece of stuff, which is rolled round and round the body, a pair of cotton drawers, and a *fariuel*, or shawl, which they wear over their heads, and drape about their figures as gracefully as their extreme stoutness will admit.

Copper ornaments are much valued and are very rare. As a general rule the women and men both like any sort of trinket which can be hung round the neck; an old sardine tin is a very suitable present for an admirer to give to a Tuareg lady. A Tuareg's house is his tent. The very poor, however, live in straw huts called *ehan*.

The tent or *ehakit* is made of skins upheld by a central stake; the edges of the skins are very irregular, and are fastened with the aid of tags to pegs stuck in the ground.

During the night the tent is closed, and the owner is shut up within it, but in the daytime it is left open on the side opposite the sun; blinds made of very thin laths of wood,

kept together with strips of leather, plaited in and out, shield those in the tent from the heat and glare of the rays reflected from the burning sands.

An encampment of tents is called an *amezzar*, a group of camps, generally occupied by one tribe, is a *tausi*, and over such an agglomeration the chief or *amrar* has full authority.

TUAREGS.

The imrad camps are surrounded by palisades or *afaradj*, between which and the tents occupying the centre of the enclosure the flocks and herds are sheltered at night and protected from the lions, which still prowl in the vicinity.

The Ihaggaren seldom have their flocks and herds with them, but when they have, certain of the imrads under them live in the camp and look after the animals.

Within the tent the woman is mistress. It is her business to look after and order about the slaves. She milks the cows and she does the cooking. But amongst the more important tribes the house, or rather tent-keeping cares do not occupy the whole of the day, and the nights are so warm that all sensible Tuaregs sit up till midnight at least.

Well, how does the woman employ her spare time? She does her leather work very much as European ladies do their embroidery, or she sings to the accompaniment of an *amzad*, or violin with but one string. She even composes verses.

Yes, she makes verses! Will not this arouse the interest of all the blue-stockings of Europe? Surely when

their occupations are so much alike their sympathies will go out to their sisters in the distant desert.

I can even add that Tuareg verses will always scan, and that they all rhyme. Surely this is a good deal more than can be said of the effusions of most female scribblers!

The men too write poetry sometimes. I have not time or space to give specimens of the productions of these writers of the Niger districts; but I cannot refrain from quoting two examples given by Commandant Hanotaux in his Tamschek grammar, which were written by Tuaregs of the north.

The first is a madrigal, composed and transcribed in the album of a young lady of Algiers by Bedda of Ida. It must be observed that Bedda was the first Tuareg to visit Algeria.

I speak; and, Angelina, thine the name!
  Love in my heart for thee can never die.
What son of Adam may endure the flame
  That burns within that dark, alluring eye?
For love of thee, enslavèd by thy glance,
I e'en would journey forth afar to France!

Who holds thee, Angelina, in his arms,
  May dream secure, the fairest vision thou!
We thought no human limbs the lissom charm
  Of fleet gazelles could e'er surpass, but now,
Since we have seen thy perfect form and face,
We know that we were wrong; thou hast *all* grace!

If thou shouldst come to us, come to our land,
  Each man among us would go forth to thee
And sue thy favour; and should one demand
  What price I'd pay could I but purchase thee,
I ween, for such possession I would give, indeed,
Six thousand golden pieces, or my steed![1]

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[1] It will be understood that the translations in the English text of the free translations of the originals can only give an approximate idea of the poems quoted.—*Trans.*

Are not the sentiments expressed in this madrigal wonderfully gallant for a so-called savage?

The second piece of poetry is really a satire, the daughter of Abukias apostrophized in it having been compelled to repulse the too ardent advances of an admirer, who could not forgive her scorn.

Daughter of Aboukias! thou hast come,
And the sun was hot when thou didst say "good-day";
Time was, when but to hear thy words repeated
Filled me with mad desire to be with thee,
For thou wast in mine eyes a *houri*.
But now we know thy nature through and through.
Rash are thy words—reserve unknown to thee;
And in thy treachery thou wilt die.
Wert thou of noble race, how would thy good blood show?
By silence golden—not by reckless blame of other women,
For thou wouldst know thyself!
Yet one more word before I close,
A word which many others will confirm;
Aye, others married ere thy birth,
Whose steps have led them far away to lands unknown to thee,
And towns, whose very names thou hast not heard.
Young men there are, thou fain wouldst know,
Owners of herds and camels which will ne'er be thine,
To saddle in war or to milk when at peace.
But as for thy lover, the man thou didst scorn,
What matter to us though thou left him forlorn?

No translation could really give any idea of the vigorous ring of these verses in the original Tamschek. They are alike forcible and rhythmic without any of that undue use of gutturals for which the Tuaregs blame the Arabs, calling their language in derision the *Takhamkhamen*.

When Tuareg women receive, or, as we should say, are "at home to their friends," they recite such verses as those quoted above, or tell long stories which last for several meetings. The men gather about them wearing their best clothes, and vieing with each other in their efforts to appear to advantage. The worthy deeds of those who acquitted

themselves well in recent conflicts are recounted, whilst the cowards (who take care not to put in an appearance) are held up to public scorn. It will readily be understood that the Tuareg customs, which differ in so marked a degree from those of the Mahommedans, give a great influence to the female sex, and place a woman far above her admirers, who often sue in vain for notice from her.

As long as there is plenty of pasturage for the flocks and herds the days pass peacefully by, as we have described, in the Tuareg camp, but directly grass becomes scarce the tents must be struck, and the tribe moves on to better feeding-grounds.

When the word to break up the temporary home has been given all is bustle and animation, the *amezzar* resembling some great beehive. The camels which are to carry the loads are assembled, the tents go down as if by magic, some of the imrads rapidly roll them up, and pack them on the backs of the patient beasts, whilst others stow away the modest furniture and household utensils.

Meanwhile the young Ihaggaren have gone forward to choose the spot for the new camp. Presently they return, and place themselves at the head of the party, acting alike as guides and protectors to it.

Behind them come the women, chattering together in the quaint, cradle-like saddles they occupy on the fleeter camels, whilst the older men gather round the *amrar*, and march solemnly on with him.

Last of all, led by the slaves, come the pack-saddle animals, guarded by the warriors, who protect them from pillage, of which there is always more or less danger in the desert.

The site of the new encampment reached, tents and furniture are unladed, and all is arranged as it was before. The same kind of life as that already described begins

again, and goes on without interruption for weeks or even for months, according to the fertility of the district.

Of course all this refers only to times of peace, but amongst the Ihaggaren constantly, and amongst the imrads more rarely, but still pretty often, war, with its many complications, breaks out and upsets everything.

Amongst nomad tribes constant struggle with others is all but a necessity of existence. In certain dry seasons pasturage is alike meagre and innutritious, but the flocks and herds must have food, hence perpetual disputes and quarrels, in which the Amenokal, when there is one, often intervenes to prevent bloodshed if the would-be belligerents are of the same confederation.

If, however, there is no central authority to preserve order the quarrel spreads and becomes general. This was the original cause of the feud between the Awellimiden and the Hoggars of the north, as well as with the Kel Gheres on the west, a feud which has been going on uninterruptedly from time immemorial.

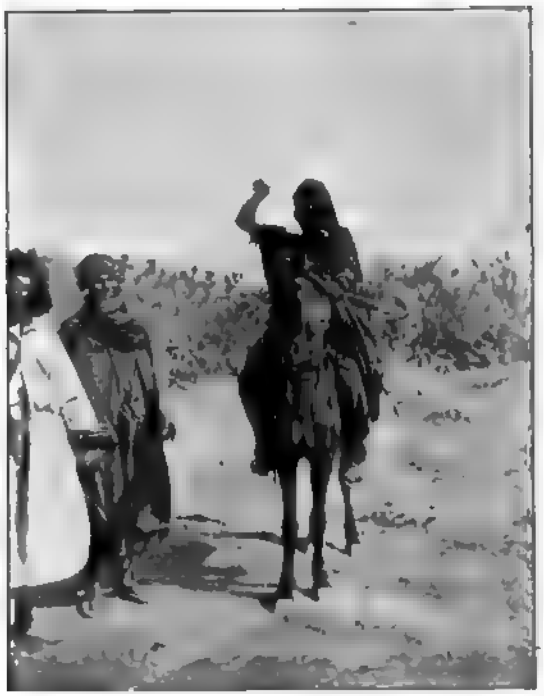
In time of war the *imrad* or worker suffers but little. Everything is, in fact, so settled by tradition amongst the Tuaregs that even a battle is more like a set of quadrilles than anything else.

To begin with, there is generally a palaver, and when all attempts to patch up the quarrel have failed resort is had to arms. The disputants separate, having fixed a time for their meeting, and on the day and at the place agreed upon the two armies or *attabu* are drawn up as in a mediæval tournament.

The forces advance in closely serried battalions. Sometimes the Tuareg fights on horseback, but as a rule he prefers to meet his foe on foot. The combatants hurl defiance at each other and rush shouting to the fray. Spears are flung at a distance of some fifty feet, but they

are pretty well always caught on the shields of those at whom they are hurled.

Meanwhile the confusion rapidly increases; the chiefs now begin to challenge each other to single combat, and it is no unusual thing for the two armies to cease hostilities



TUAREG HORSEMAN.

with one accord to watch the issue of the struggle between the leaders. Spears, no longer of any use, are flung aside, the dagger and sword taking their place, and gleaming in the sunshine as they are raised against the foe. Blood begins to flow copiously on either side. Here two warriors are holding each other at bay at arms length, each trying to pierce his adversary's heart with his sword; there two

others are locked in a murderous embrace, stabbing at each other with their daggers, or trying to crack each other's skulls with the stone amulet alluded to above.

At last one side wavers, inferior in strength or in numbers to the other. The warriors begin to flee, and the victors shout, "*Ia! ia! Our adellin rour' onen imzaden!*" ("Ah! ah! There will be no violins for you!") And this sarcasm, which means that their wives will be angry and scorn them, often so stings the fugitives that they rally and go back to the struggle, eager to win the praises of their women on their return to their tents.

In these battles life is taken without pity or remorse; but, as I have already said, when the victory is won the prisoners are spared. I have even been told by several very trustworthy authorities, that when peace is made on the request of one side or the other, the victors will entirely reclothe the prisoners taken before sending them home.

War, however, amongst the Tuaregs generally takes the form of raids, such as those in vogue with the Arabs.

Dangerous as are these raids, they offer the advantage of taking the enemy by surprise, and meeting him face to face instead of being attacked in the rear. Moreover, the profit if victorious is immediate, and the booty often considerable.

There is plenty of scope in them too for individual courage and for skill in stratagem, promptitude in attack, and for showing off what they greatly admire, the military virtues of endurance under privation, knowledge of the country to be traversed, and so on.

Here I must just add, by way of parenthesis, that one of the chief charges brought against the Tuaregs, that of being treacherous, is the result of this habit of theirs of falling unawares upon their foe. I really cannot blame them, however, for are not surprises and night attacks

amongst the tactics of European armies, and does any one dream of attaching dishonour to them?

Military regulations deal with them quite openly, only stipulating that they should not be attempted except with very well-disciplined troops, who are thoroughly in hand. All the more honour then to the Tuaregs that this is their usual way of going to work.

MOORS AND TUAREGS.

What I may call these hunting expeditions are greatly facilitated, if not altogether necessitated, by the very nature of a nomad life. The preparations are made with the greatest secrecy, and only the sturdiest walkers and the best horsemen are allowed to take part in them. The party, never very large, numbering at the most a hundred, if the way is long as it often is, starts preceded by guides, who lead the *razzia* by the least frequented route. The most important point to be kept in view is the position

of the various wells by the way, for on a knowledge of this essential detail success chiefly depends.

Gliding silently between the encampments of the enemy on the frontiers, the Tuaregs in which are always on the alert, for their exposed situation makes them watchful, the marauding expedition flings itself suddenly upon the *amezzar* or tribe chosen. The greatest skill is needed to take the enemy unawares, and sometimes all the precautions are in vain, for those attacked have had warning beforehand, but not in time to send couriers out to summon their friends to their aid.

The men then all take to flight, but the women remain, for though the men who resist are slain, no Tuareg would stain his hands with the blood of a defenceless woman; the flocks and herds with the camels are hastily hidden in the bush, but the assailants, or *imihagen* as they are called, know how to find and collect them.

The next thing to do is to carry off the booty before those pillaged or the *imihagen* come back to avenge themselves, for they meanwhile have not been inactive, but by means of messengers, or by fires lit on the tops of the dunes, have let their relations know of their need. A column is quickly formed, and starts in pursuit of the raiders.

It is their turn now to have to flee for their lives. The big camels used as beasts of burden and the flocks and herds hamper their march. If they do not get a good start they are often overtaken, and being far less numerous than those they have robbed they have to pay dearly for their audacity.

The pursuing column now shows considerable skill in getting ahead of the raiders, and awaiting them at some well or pond which they must pass, they there in their turn fall suddenly upon the enemy.

The marauders are by this time weary, whilst the robbed

are fresh and in first-rate positions. The robbers are dying of thirst; their enemies have drank their fill at their ease.

One such *razzia* succeeds another, until at last one party to the quarrel is worn out and sues for peace, a marabout acting as intermediary. Innumerable palavers now take place, the Tuareg warriors holding forth to the assembled crowds in long speeches, for they are as anxious to show off their eloquence as they are jealous of their reputation for military skill. A truce is finally patched up, and though it never lasts long it serves as an excuse for a feast, in which, by the way, the Tuaregs, who are naturally frugal and abstemious, rarely indulge.

Children are very kindly treated in Tuareg camps. Except to compel the girls to empty the bowls of the curdled milk, the drinking of which makes them fat, they are never beaten. As soon as they can stand alone the little boys are taught to fling the spear, small weapons suited to their size being specially made for them. The father looks after the martial education of his sons, whilst the mother teaches the girls to work leather, to sing, and to read the written characters I have already described. This is how it comes about that women can generally decipher inscriptions more readily than men.

A strange custom prevails with regard to inheritance, not only amongst the Tuaregs but in other African tribes, and that is, the nephew is the heir of the uncle, not the son of the father. The child of an *imrad* woman is a serf, and the son of a slave is a slave no matter whether the father is a free man or not. "It is the womb which gives to the child its complexion," say the Tuaregs. It is the law of Beni-Omia.

The great Awellimiden tribes, however, repudiate this custom, saying that it reflects unfairly upon the virtue of their women. "One is always sure to be the son of one's

mother," they say, "but not of one's father. That is why a race less noble than our own have adopted the custom of inheritance from uncle to nephew. They are sure that in the veins of the latter flows the blood of the former."

The rest of the Tuaregs, however, who have always been noted for their gallantry, date the origin of the so-called Beni-Omia law from Gheres, the father of the Kel Gheres.

Gheres, they say, had a wife named Fatimata Azzer'a, and a sister called Gherinecha. Each of them had a son; the child of the former was called Ituei, that of the latter, R'isa.

Now Gheres, feeling old age gaining on him, wished to prove his wife. He pretended he was ill, and went to consult an old sorcerer who dwelt in a hut on a lofty dune, from which he never came down into the plains. There was no well there, and the sorcerer had neither sheep nor oxen nor camels, none knew what he drank or what he ate.

On his return to his camp after his visit to the sorcerer, Gheres sent for his wife and said to her—"Woman, thou alone canst cure me. My days are numbered unless I can anoint my body with magic ointment made from the brains of a child. Give me thy son."

"My son is mine," replied Fatimata; "I have had the trouble of bearing and rearing him. It is true I love thee next to him, but even if thy life depend on it, I will not have him die."

The chief then sent for Gherinecha and made the same demand of her as he had of his wife.

"After thee, my brother," she said, "I love R'isa best. But if God inflicts on me the anguish of choosing between thee and him, I choose. Take thou the child, do as the sorcerer bids thee, and may Allah protect thee."

So Gheres hid his nephew in the bush, killed a kid, took its brains, rubbed his body with them and returned to his

camp, where he summoned his relations and subjects to appear before him. He then told the story of what he pretended had happened, and everybody admired the devotion of Gherinecha. Then he called for the child—who had been brought in unperceived under the cloak of a slave—and presented him to the assembled crowds, saying, "Behold my heir and my successor. As my sister loves me more than my wife does, it is but just that after my death my sister's son should inherit my wealth and my rights."

The Ben-Omia law has at least had the good result where it is enforced of preserving the purity of the Tuareg blood, for the son of a black slave woman would be and remain a slave all his life, no matter how great the power or how high the lineage of his father.

Amongst the Awellimiden, on the other hand, that is to say, amongst the three chief tribes, the Kel Kumeden, the Kel Ahara, and the Kel Tedjiuane, which dominate the rest of the Confederation, this system has not been observed, with the result that the complexions of the Awellimiden have been notably darkened by the admixture of negro blood.

The Tuaregs are extremely superstitious, and I have already alluded to the number of charms with which they deck themselves.

The Demons or *Alchinen* play a great part amongst them, and are looked upon as almost human. They are supposed to inhabit the mountains, camping on them, and living a life very much like that of the Tuareg tribes themselves. They have their own quarrels, their own wars, and they too make raids on each other. They are, however, endowed with the power of becoming invisible, and they come unseen to take and to drink the milk of the cows belonging to the Tuaregs. "Beware," say the Tuaregs,

"when you are out at night that you do not run against an *alchin* (the singular of *alchinen*). You will see nothing at the time, but the next morning when you wake you will find that your foot is sore and you cannot walk. You have trodden on the foot of a demon."

A YOUNG TUAREG.

In spite of the undoubted courage of the Tuaregs, they hate the idea of death. They do not say of any one who has died, "He is dead," but *Aba*, he has disappeared. It is a sign of very bad breeding to speak of a dead relative or even to pronounce his name. He must be alluded to only as *mandam*, or such an one. None but the descendants of an illustrious chief or the sons of an Amenokal tolerate any

allusion to their ancestors, in which case pride is stronger than superstition.

We came in contact on our journey with the two great Confederations of the Igwadaren and the Awellimiden; the former, as we have seen, are a prey to anarchy and they rob traders, but their importance is almost *nil*.

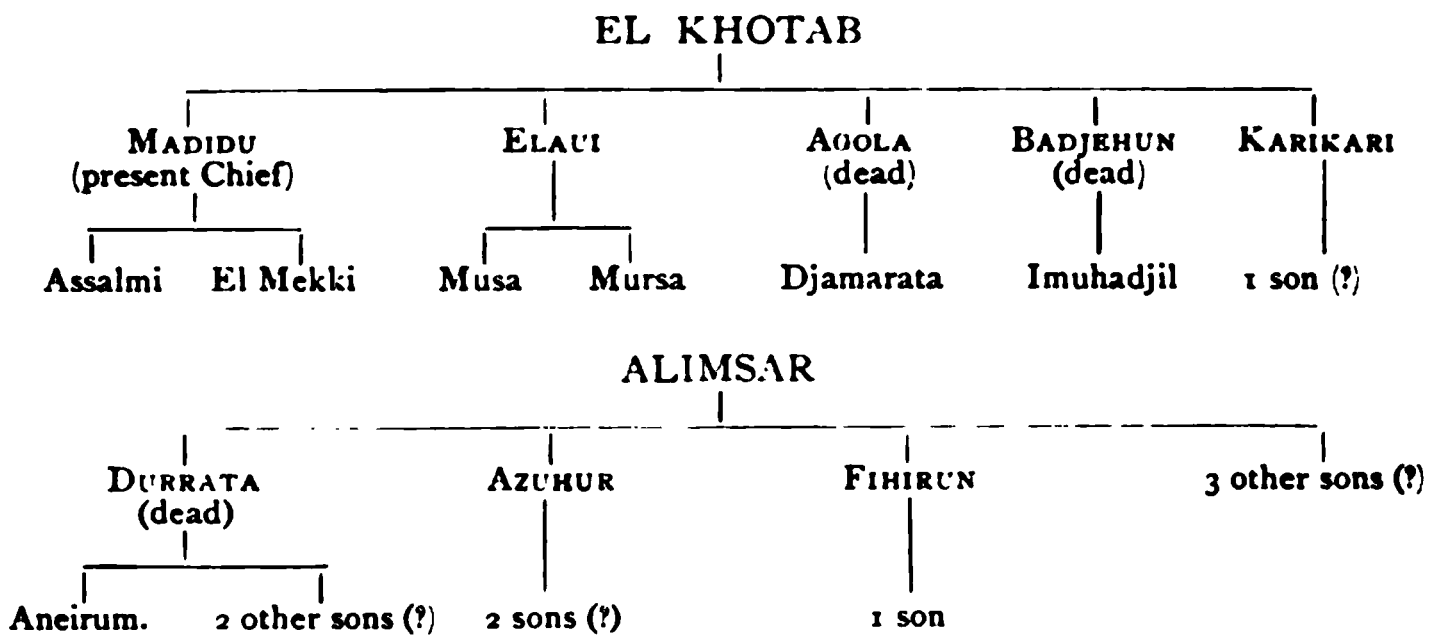
It is very different with the Awellimiden. I do not of course deny that certain tribes are dangerous to travellers; for frequent revolts against the central authority occur, and during our stay at Say the Cheibatan tried to shake off the suzerainty of the Amenokal, but they were cruelly punished by Madidu and his nephew Djamarata.

As a rule, however, the protection promised by a chief can be depended on, and for this reason the Awellimiden will certainly be the first Tuaregs whom we shall be able to induce to lead a more civilized life.

True Awellimiden, or direct descendants from Lemta, are few. They include at present three tribes, the Kel Kumeden, the Kel Ahara, and the Kel Tedjucane. The Amenokal or principal chief is always a member of the first-named, and inherits in the usual order of primogeniture in these districts, that is to say, the brothers reign in succession according to age, then the son of the eldest, and so on.

It is, however, open to the Confederation to depart from this rule, and the Amenokal is not regularly invested with authority until the consent of the assembled Ihaggaren has been given. But it is a very rare thing for an exception to be made, and the right of veto, though it has been used, is seldom exercised.

The predecessor of Madidu was Alimsar, who had succeeded his brother El Khotab, the protector of Barth. I transcribe below the genealogy of the descendants of El Khotab and Alimsar just as it was given to me.



Here too is a list of the tribes making up the Awellimiden Confederation, with the names of their present chiefs.

THE NOBLE OR IHAGGAREN TRIBES.

Kel Kumeden—Chief Madidu.
Kel Ahara—Chief El Yasan.
Kel Tedjiuane—Chief Arreian.
Iderragagen.
Tarkaitamut.
Tahabanat.
Ibehauen—Chief Sar'adu.
Ifoghas—Chief Waruziga.
Ihegaren—Chief El Auedech.
Kel Tekeniuen—Chief Burhan.
Kel Takabut—Chief Aluania.
Teradabeben—Chief Sidauat.
Tengueregueдeche — Chief Warigoru.
Tademeket—Chief Yunès.
Idalbabu—Chief Ihuar.
Ahianallan.

SERFS OR IMRADS.

Kel Gossi—Chief Ur illies.
Irreganaten—Chief Ur orda.
Iueraruarar'en—Chief Mahamud.
Imideddar'en—Chief Huberzan.
Ibongitan—Chief Allabi.
Tafagagat—Chief Karrabau.
Tar'ahil—Chief Ekerech.
Ikairiraen—Chief Ezemek.
Erkaten—Chief Elanusi.
Ikawellaten—Chief Ibunafan.
Ihaiauen—Chief Abba.
Kel R'ezafan—Chief Amachecha.

To these tribes making up the actual Confederation must be added the following, who were brought into it by force, and have long since submitted with a good grace to be under the protection of the Awellimiden :

WADALEN—Chief Niugi.
CHEIBATAN—Chief Rafiek.
LOGOMATEN—Chief Bokar Wandieïdu.
ERATAFAN—Chief Yoba.
IBENDASAN.
AHIANANURDE—Chief Amadida.
TABOTAN—Chief Muley.

Subject to each of these last-named tribes are *inirads*, but I only know the name of one of their tribes, that of the Ekono, vassals of the Wadalen.

In addition to their predatory excursions the Tuaregs on the right and left bank of the Niger make two annual migrations, the time of which is generally the same.

During the dry season, from December to May, the higher districts are sterile and dry, the ponds and wells empty of water. Then the Tuaregs move down to the river-banks and their flocks and herds graze on the coarse weeds which line them. To avoid the sickness amongst the camels which results from eating damp food, and to which I alluded in speaking of Timbuktu, they generally leave them a little further inland. It is at this time that the negroes pay their tribute of maize and tobacco, and it is also during this same season that warlike expeditions are generally undertaken.

For the rest of the year the rain pours down in torrents in the riverside districts, and although its fall is not so constant or so heavy in the higher lands, they too are fertilized by the filling up of the ponds and the wells, many of which even overflow.

Then the nomad tribes go back again to their old haunts, and settle down for the winter in their camps about the wâdies, resembling those of Algeria, which begin near Gao.

These wâdies are such very characteristic features of Central Africa, that a description of one of them may be useful. The word *wâdy* means the channel of a water-course which is dry except in the rainy season, but there is water in the upper portion of that of Gao in every season.

Its source is far away in the north, and it seems to be identical with the Igharghar of the south, alluded to by Duveyrier, the Astapus of the ancients, which comes down from the Atakor or Ahaggar.

This would confirm Barth's suggestion, that the marshy depressions which debouch on the Ngiti Sokoto do not extend beyond the district of Air.

My own opinion is that the Gao Wâdy, before it became choked up with sand, was a tributary of the Niger when the course of that river was far more rapid than it is now.

An examination of its banks does in fact lead to the conclusion, that nearly if not quite all along them a line of cliffs, eroded by the action of water, marks what was once the bed of part of the old Niger. In their annual migration the Awellimiden go up as far as the districts near Air, where they come in contact with their enemies the Kel Gheres. Probably competition for the ownership of the pasturages yielding food in the dry season, was the original cause of the feud between the two races, which dates from centuries ago.

The tribes from the left bank of the Niger also move into the kind of islet formed by the bend of the river, advancing to near Dori, where they find a series of ponds and lakes known as Oursi Beli, etc., an idea of which I have tried to give in the map accompanying this volume, but I do not know how far I have succeeded.

There are many very curious and interesting hydrographical problems connected with this bend of the Niger reserved for the future explorer to solve.

Well, what do my readers think of the Tuaregs after the picture I have endeavoured to give of them? I certainly have not represented them as saints, living in a kind of Utopia, where all is well, where the men have no vices and the women no faults.

You will perhaps, however, agree with me that they have very decided characters, and many fine qualities, if also many defects. Their intelligence is certainly great, making it well worth while to try and win them to a better mode of life, and one more conducive to the comfort of their neighbours.

I do not of course fail to recognize what hard work it is to row against the current or to contend against pre-conceived ideas. It is always difficult, and sometimes dangerous.

In 1859 a young Frenchman, not more than twenty years old at the most, disembarked at Constantine. He spent three years travelling about the Algerian Sahara, and under the powerful protection of the Emir Ikhenukhen, chief of the Azguers, he lived for more than a year amongst the Tuaregs.

After his return an expedition was sent out by the Governor of Algeria, and the treaty of Rhadamès was signed.

Then, in accordance with the traditional French policy in matters colonial, instead of profiting by the results already acquired, absolutely nothing further was done. Duveyrier described the Tuaregs as he had found them, just as I have tried to do; he spoke quite frankly of their faults as well as of their virtues, and insisted on the possibility of treating with them on favourable terms. He might well do so, for he had already succeeded in that direction himself.

When twenty years later Flatters was assassinated, Duveyrier was accused of mendacious optimism, and every one was ready to cast a stone at him.

As a matter of fact, however, Flatters was killed by the Hoggars, and Duveyrier had mentioned that they were living in a state of anarchy, which seemed likely to get worse and worse rather than to improve. Flatters insisted on going through their territory, although the Amrar had told him he could not protect him. Now Duveyrier had made a special point of never going into any district with-

out first securing an efficacious safe-conduct, yet in spite of all this he is made responsible for the disaster.

A fitting epilogue ensued, for Duveyrier, disquieted at the accusations brought against him, weakened by fever contracted in his journey, and cut to the heart by the ingratitude of his fellow-countrymen, committed suicide by shooting himself with his revolver, in the hope perchance of finding the justice denied him here in another world, if there be indeed such a thing as justice anywhere.

The English would have made him a peer, and put up statues in his honour; the ignorance of the French, I will not use a harsher word, drove him to commit suicide.

TUAREGS.

The example is certainly not encouraging to us later explorers.

I should have been more likely to win applause if I had pictured the Tuaregs as irreclaimable savages, relating a thousand entanglements with them, such as imaginary conflicts with their armed bands, where my own presence of mind and the courage of my party saved the expedition from massacre.

I have preferred in the interests of my country to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Even as I write these words, I hear of the death of two young officers and their men, who were killed near Timbuktu in a fight with a Hoggar razzi. The Hoggars again!

This does but confirm what I insisted on when I was at Timbuktu, that we shall never succeed in getting *en*

rapport with the nomad tribes except with the aid of those tribes themselves.

We must first subjugate certain tribes, and then form from amongst them auxiliary levies, or, as the natives call them, *maghzen*, which will aid us, at a minimum cost to ourselves, to establish French influence over the Tuaregs.

Amongst the tribes who would best lend themselves to this purpose, I place the Awellimiden in the very first rank, and they are the hereditary enemies of the Hoggars. Or perhaps I should rather have said, if we wish to bring about a complete pacification of the country, and at the same time win the friendship of the Awellimiden chief, we ought to strengthen his hands.

With this idea in my mind I make the following suggestions. We should arm the Awellimiden with a hundred or a couple of hundreds of percussion rifles, with very large nipples, which would only admit of the use of special caps turned out in French manufactories.

With one hundred such guns the Awellimiden would be invincible, and could soon butcher all their enemies, whether Kel Gheres or Hoggars.

The absolute necessity of having French percussion caps would place them entirely in our hands, and by doling out the ammunition needed little by little, we should force them to submit to and serve us. We should, moreover, have it in our power to break up their strength directly they showed any reluctance to fall in with our wishes.

In return for a service such as this supply of fire-arms, the Amenokal would protect our traders; he has already in fact promised to do so, not only by word of mouth but in writing.

These traders must, however, act with prudence and circumspection. I am quite convinced that I and my companions might fearlessly return to the Awellimiden because

they know us now. I have suggested to our Government that we should return, but I have not been more successful in that direction than I have in getting the rifles I asked for.

Strangers must not attempt with a light heart to penetrate into the Tuareg districts, without having secured the formal protection of the chief.

What would you have? When a Grand Duke announces his intention of visiting the wine-shops of the outlying boulevards, don't we always take care to send an *habitué* of those boulevards with him to look after him? A *Jaume* or a *Rossignol*[1] is always in attendance. And if a protector is useful in Paris, can we not well understand that one would be indispensable in the Sahara?

When Madidu has once said to a traveller "Yes, come," or "You can go," I am convinced that no danger would be run in the districts subject to him.

With the Awellimiden on our side we could conquer the Sahara, and the Tuaregs would help us to push on towards Lake Tchad, Air, Tunis and Algeria. He would find it to his own advantage to do so, and the conditions of his existence would be manifestly ameliorated.

Do you imagine that these Tuaregs are stupid enough to miss a chance of getting stuffs for clothes, coverlids, glass beads, and all the things they covet? If the men were sufficiently blind to their own interests, I'll warrant you their wives would not be.

The Tuareg race will be tamed at last, their faults, all the result of the fierce struggle for existence, will disappear, and modern civilization will have conquered a new district in Africa!

One afterthought does, however, occur to me. Will the change be a good thing for the Tuaregs themselves?

[1] These are the slang names for members of the secret police in France.—*Trans.*

When I think of their wandering life, free from all restraint, when I remember their courage, which to them is the highest of virtues, when I consider how truly equal all those worthy of equality are, I ask myself whether after all they are not happier than we Europeans?

Their life is a hard one, and their habits are frugal, but has not custom made this life natural to them, and are they really sensible of its privations?

Good fortune with them is the reward of the brave who know how to win the victory, and it is in *razzis* that the victory is gained. To spoil the vanquished is also to wash out the stain of an hereditary injury, for the vendetta is not confined to Italy, but often makes friendship impossible between certain tribes in Africa. The goods of him who perishes by the sword are the property of the wielder of that sword, and the death of the vanquished avenges some pillaged or massacred ancestor, as well as enriches the conqueror.

A rough rendering is given below of the *Song of R'Otman*, quoted by Duveyrier, who justly calls it the Tuareg *Marseillaise*, which is chanted in defiance of the Chambas by the Azgueurs, who are their hereditary enemies.

Death to thy mother! Ma'atalla the devil is in thee!
Call'st thou the Tuaregs traitors, the men of the plain?
Ha! but they know how to travel, to fight in the battle,
Sally at morn and return in the evening again!
Aye, and they know how to fall on the enemy sleeping—
Sleeping at ease in the tent with his flocks at his side,
Lapped in his fine woollen garments, his curtains and carpets
Spreading full length in the shade of the canopy wide.
What though with milk newly-drawn from the udders of camels,
What though with meat and with butter his paunch he has filled,
Straight as a nail to the ground pins the lance of the victor,
Out with a shriek and a yell flies the soul of the killed!
Sunk in despair lies the heart-broken wife of the victim,
Scattered and vanished their goods like as water o'erspilled!

Wild manners truly do these lines describe, but they also express proud and heroic sentiments. What will the Tuaregs gain by their transformation into civilized people?

In a few centuries, where the tents of the Amezzar are pitched there will be permanent towns. The descendants of the Ihaggaren of the present day will be citizens. There will be nothing about them to remind their contemporaries of the wild knights of the desert.

No more will they go to war; no more will they lead *razzis* to ravage the camps of their neighbours, for they will have given up pillage altogether; but perhaps in a bank, which will take the place of the tent of their Amenokal, they will try to float rotten companies, and mines which exist nowhere but in the imagination of their chiefs. What will they be then? Not pillagers but thieves!

Truth to tell, I think I prefer my marauders, who fall on their prey like the lion Ahar!

AN AFRICAN CAMEL.

AN ISOLATED TREE AT FAFA.

CHAPTER VI

FROM FAFA TO SAY

OUR dread of the passage of the river at Fafa may have seemed almost childish, and we have since had experience of many another like it, but for a first attempt it must be admitted it was rather a teaser.

Narrow and much encumbered, made more difficult by a violent current, such is the pass of Fafa.

We took as guide the son of the chief of the village, who was later to pay us a visit at Say. Thanks to him and with the help of his men we crossed the first rapids without too much difficulty; but, alas! the rope which was used to transmit to the rudder the movements of the helm broke just as we emerged from them. Had this happened thirty seconds sooner the *Davoust* could not have answered to her helm, and would have been flung upon the rocks. The damage repaired, we steered once more into the current, wending our way cautiously amongst the numerous islands, skirting the course of the reef, our good star bringing us

safely into a quiet reach extending as far as Wataguna, where we again came to flints lining the bed of the stream.

In the evening we reached Karu, the *Aube* having struck once by the way, but without sustaining much damage; still all these shocks did not add to her waterproof qualities, and as she shipped more and more water our anxiety and fatigue became greater and greater. We had constantly

FAFA.

to empty the hold, which did not conduce to the repose of the passengers, who were often woke up by the noise we made with our buckets.

Karu is a pretty little village with thatched huts, amongst which were many of the barns of a bee-hive shape used for storing millet alluded to by Barth. We had noticed a good number during the last few days. The inhabitants of this village are Rimaïbes or serfs of the Fulahs and Bellates or slaves of the Tuaregs.

The chief of the latter told us how glad he was to see some white men before he died. He added that he would like to give us some sheep, but he understood that we never ate anything except the flesh of black animals, and he had none of that colour.

I said that the colour of the wool did not trouble us at all; all we cared for was the quality of the flesh, and he went and fetched us a fine ram. It was the marabouts, who, to add to the probability of their report that we were sorcerers, had made this assertion about black animals. There is a custom in the Sudan that animals given as presents should be as white as possible, as a sign of peace between donor and receiver. We were now told that Bokar Wandieïdu, chief of the Logomaten, had assembled a column of troops and was about to attack us.

KARU WITH MILLET GRANARIES.

At Karu the mountains were pointed out to us which line the famous rapid of Labezenga, which we expected to reach the next day. A guide was given to us who was said to be wonderfully clever, but we saw no particular sign of his intelligence.

It was on March 14 that we first saw the terrible Labezenga rapid, and I am very sure that we shall none of us ever forget it.

Our guide began the day by performing a number of mummeries, the aim of which appears to have been to make various evil genii propitious to us. From a leather bag he took out a lot of flat and shaly flints which had

been picked up in the rapid. He wrapped each one of these flints in a separate piece of cloth, spat upon them, and arranged them here and there all over the boat.

The current rapidly swept us into a part of the river pretty free from obstruction, and every now and then I tried to distract our guide's attention from his spells and

THE LABEZENGA RAPIDS.

to get him to give me a little information, but he merely replied without looking at me that there was no danger, and that he would stop us at the right time.

Often from behind some little jutting out point which intercepted our view I heard a peculiar noise, a sort of dull but vague roar. The rate of the current too increased rapidly, and we rushed along at a rate of five miles an hour at the least. We listened eagerly, but all of a sudden we saw that the stream was barred from side to side, a

distance of something like a thousand yards, by a positive wall of rocks against which the water was dashing up in foam.

Our idiot of a guide looked up at last and saw the danger. He motioned to us to steer for the bank, but rushing along as we were with the tremendous current, to attempt to do so would have been merely to drift helplessly on to the line of rocks, so we continued to dash on with a speed which almost made me giddy, and presently, to my intense relief, I saw a place on the right where there was less foam. Yes, it was the pass, it was the gate of safety, we must make for it, but was there any hope of our reaching it?

Our coolies bent to their oars and rowed so hard that they were in danger of breaking them, whilst the sweat poured down their shining black skins. I had just time to hoist the signal "Do as we do!" which most fortunately Baudry and the captain of the *Dantec* understood. They were just behind us. Now up with the oars and trust to our luck! The speed increases yet more, the stream sweeps the boat towards the pass, where it flings itself into the lower reach: we feel ourselves falling, we shudder, we realize the fatal attraction drawing us in the direction of the whirlpool; then like an arrow we shoot safely through the opening. All is well with us at least. Our next anxiety is for our comrades; we look behind, and a cry of terror bursts from our lips. The *Dantec*, which is the next to attempt the pass, has stopped suddenly; her mast is swept asunder, and has been flung across the bow by the violence of the shock. All the men were thrown at the same moment to the bottom of the boat, for the unlucky barge, which had tried to pass about three feet on one side of the place where we had got safely through, had struck against a rock which was hidden

by the whirling foam. She received a tremendous blow, but fortunately did not sink.

But where was the *Aube?* That was our care now. She was approaching rapidly, borne on by the current, but the whole pass was blocked before her. She would crash into the *Dantec*, and both vessels must inevitably be wrecked.

But no! Clouds of spray dash up over bow and stern alike; Baudry has flung out the anchor and the grappling-iron: oh that they may grip properly!

Thank God! They have. The *Aube* stops short some three hundred yards at least from the *Dantec* at the brink of the rapid.

But what in the world is up now? The *Aube* is tilted at an angle of some 45 degrees! The force of the current is such that it has taken her in the rear and forced her into this extraordinary position, whilst the grappling-chains and those of the anchor are strained to the uttermost, producing the terrifying result described.

I now moored the *Davoust* to the bank, for we must try to save our other boats.

With regard to the *Dantec* it was a simple affair enough, for she is a wonderful little craft, answering readily to the helm, and so buoyant that we got off with no worse damage than the bursting asunder of a couple of planks of her bottom. I sent Digui to help the men on board of her, and she got safely through.

The rescue of the *Aube* was a more difficult matter, especially as her rudder had got broken in the struggle. The anchor was raised all right, but when it came to the grappling-iron we could not make it budge; it had probably got jammed between two rocks, and all our efforts to move it were in vain, indeed they only seemed to fix it more firmly.

Driven on by the wind and whirled round by the strong

eddies of the current, the unfortunate barge began to describe semicircles round her own grappling-iron. Of course when we once cut the chain there would be no time to steer her, and we must therefore manage to divide it exactly at the moment when she was opposite to the opening she had to pass through. One second too soon or too late and she would be lost.

I had climbed to the top of a little ridge, and with fast beating heart I watched Baudry making his dispositions for the manœuvre he had to attempt. A Tuareg chose this moment of awful suspense to tap me on the shoulder and greet me with the formal salutation, *Salam radicum mahindia*, and you can imagine how much notice I took of him.

Without being at all put out by my silence, however, he went on—

"I see that you are in trouble. I have watched all that has been going on from my camp behind the hills, and ever since early morning I have felt sure that you were all lost. But God has saved you and your people. I have forbidden my tribe to come and bother you, for you know that we always beg of every one. Well, I am going now, but if you have need of us, Tuaregs and negroes alike are ready to help you, you have only to send me a messenger. Our Amenokal has ordered us to meet your wishes."

As he finished his speech, I saw Digui deal a great blow to the chain of the grappling-iron. The *Aube* fell into the rapid, but she could not avoid the rock on which the *Dantec* had struck already. She strikes, and the whole of her starboard side is completely immersed. Is she staved in? No, her speed is such that she rushes on as if nothing had happened. She is saved. A moment later she is moored beside the *Davoust*.

"Not so much as a hole in her, Baudry!" I cried.

"No, I don't think there is," he replied, "but we had a narrow escape." We overhauled her, and there was not a leak anywhere. In fact, Baudry declared that her planks were really more watertight than ever.

Then my Tuareg, who had not gone away after all, but whom I had completely forgotten, spoke to me again: "*Enhi!*" he said, which means simply "look!" but his great wild black eyes shone with pleasure from out of his veil as if some piece of good luck had happened to himself.

Now are these Tuaregs brutes? are they men who can only be swayed by interested motives? What nonsense to say they are!

Where did the interested motives come in here? Would it not have been better for him if our boats had all been sucked down in the rapids? We ourselves and all our goods would then have been his lawful prey.

May Providence only grant that I never find any of my fellow-countrymen worse than the Tuaregs.

You may be sure the brave fellow got his parcel of goods and many other things as well. With his long swinging step he went off to his people again, shouting to us by way of adieu, "*Ikfak iallah el Kheir*" ("may God give thee all good things!")

This was, however, but the first of the Labezenga rapids, and that the easiest. We had scarcely gone a hundred yards further when we came to a regular cataract some two feet high, barring our passage. On one side rose lofty heights, on the left the stream was broken into several arms by islands. In fact, there did not seem to be any opening on either side, and we were all but in despair of getting through this time.

Baudry spent the whole afternoon with our guide from Karu, seeking a practicable pass, but everywhere the scene

before him was most forbidding, one cataract succeeding another and alternating with boiling whirlpools, whilst the current rushed on at a rate of seven or eight miles at the least. The river simply seems to writhe in its course, and here and there it dashes backwards and forwards from one side to the other of its bed as if in a state of frenzy. There must be a difference of something like seven feet in the height of the water.

The least impracticable place seemed to be on the left of our anchorage between two islands, but I never should have believed that any boat could pass through even that. We had, however, to make the venture, and any delay would only render it more difficult, for the water was falling rapidly.

THE 'AUBE' IN THE RAPIDS.

On the morning of Sunday the 15th Father Hacquart celebrated mass and we then prepared for the passage. The crew of our two big barges was not strong enough to navigate both at once, so we decided to send each vessel separately past the dangerous spots, supplementing one crew from the other, and later we always adopted this plan, which worked well on emergencies.

Digui was the only one of our captains who could manage such *tours de force*, for really there is no other word for the work he had to perform. Idris, the quartermaster of the *Aube*, rather loses his head amongst the rapids, and is absolutely no good as a leader. Of course all that can be done is to give a general indication of the course to be pursued, and when the manœuvre has once begun everything must be left to the intelligence of the

pilot, and Digui alone of all my men was really worthy to be trusted at the helm.

We fortified ourselves with a good cup of coffee, feeling that it might be our last, and the *Davoust* started, Baudry following us in a canoe.

The scene before us was very much what it had been the day before—a narrow pass, a diabolical current producing an impression of unfathomable depth, which made our hearts sink and our breath come in gasps. On either side the water whirled and surged and roared unceasingly as it dashed over the huge rocks. Suddenly there was a tremendous shock, and the boat seemed to slide away from under our feet. It was the *Davoust's* turn to-day. A hidden rock had battered a hole in her bow in my cabin. Through the gap, some 20 inches big, the water came in in floods, and in less than ten seconds it was a couple of feet deep.

But it was written in the book of fate that we were to go down to the sea in the *Davoust*, and in spite of all our misfortunes, in spite of everything being against us, in spite of reason, in spite of logic, something always turned up to save us even at what seemed the very last moment. The expected miracle always happened, and it is no exaggeration to say that we experienced dozens of such miracles.

We were going at such a rate when we struck the rock that for one instant the barge remained as it were suspended on it, but the next it was over it and in deep water again.

It so happened, as good luck would have it, that my servant Mamé was in my cabin when the boat struck, and the water rushed in at his very feet.

For the brave fellow to tear off his burnous, roll it into a ball and shove it into the gap in the planks was the work of a few seconds; that is to say, of just the time

during which the rock held us fixed, preventing us from settling down. We were saved once more. The miracle had been performed. Only do not fail to notice what a combination of circumstances was required to bring about the result: the immense speed with which we were going making us actually mount the rock, with the presence of Mamé in my cabin all ready to stop up the hole!

The *Dantec* passed through with us without difficulty, and it was now the turn of the *Aube*. Digui attempted a manœuvre with her of positively extraordinary audacity. Knowing all too well that the rock which had been nearly fatal to us could not possibly be evaded, he simply flung the boat upon the grass-covered bank, and she climbed up, driven on by the great speed of the current. Then he let her slide down again backwards, or, to use the strictly nautical term, to fall astern.

For all this, however, we every one of us had to pay toll in one way or another at this infernal Labezenga. The *Aube* grated on the point of a hidden rock just as she was about to join us again in quiet water.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon, and we had been eight hours getting over a little more than half a mile in a straight line. We were famished with hunger, and our craving for food became almost unbearable. I constituted myself cook, and drawing upon our reserves of tinned meats and preserved vegetables, which we all felt we were justified in doing under the circumstances, I seized what came first, and tumbled everything helter-skelter into a saucepan. We all devoured the result, which I called *tripes à la Labezenga*, without in the least knowing what we were eating. I will give the recipe to all who wish to emulate Vatel: *tripes à la mode de Caen*, truffles, esculent boletus, *haricots verts*, with plenty of pepper and spice, served hot. In N. Lat. 14° 57′ 30″, after just escap-

ing from drowning or from death in the jaws of a crocodile, nothing could be more delicious, but somehow I have never ventured to try my *olla podrida* again in France.

After a little rest, which was indeed well earned, Baudry went with Digui to the village of Labezenga to try and get guides. He came back in a state of terror at what he had seen.

For more than a month we had to lead a life such as I have just described. What I have said will give an idea of all we went through. I don't want to dwell too much on our sufferings now that they are over. Once embarked on such an enterprise as this there is nothing for it but to go straight ahead, and by degrees one gets accustomed to the danger to a certain extent. I swear, however, that not all the gold in the world would induce me to do again what we did on this trip under similar conditions. Ten times a day at least we had to face these awful rapids, to go through all the agony of suspense, succeeded by the awful sensation of passing over the obstacles before us, whilst the boat seemed to rush from beneath us and plunge into the foam, from which it seemed simply impossible that she should ever again emerge.

Or again some rock barred our passage, and only by force of moving were we able to make our way inch by inch against the current which threatened to sweep us away. Then, as we literally scraped the rock, we knew that two or three inches made all the difference between life and death! For there would have been no hope of escape if we were once upset in these awful rapids. Death would have been inevitable, for the best swimmer could not have made head against such currents as these, but would have been dashed to pieces by them against the rocks.

Or supposing that by a miracle he should escape death

by drowning or by being flung upon the rocks, a yet more awful danger awaited him after he had safely passed the rapids, for beneath all of them many terrible crocodiles lie concealed, on the watch for the luckless fish, which, rendered giddy by the whirling turmoil of water, simply swim into their jaws. Crocodiles, you must know, do not kill their prey as sharks do, and no death could be more terrible

THE 'AUBE' IN THE LAST LABEZENGA RAPID.

than that inflicted by these awful denizens of the Niger, for they plunge their victims under water and drown them. Imagine what it must be to feel oneself gripped by the huge teeth of a merciless brute and dragged along until death from suffocation ensues.

General Skobeleff said one day, "If any one says to you that he has never been afraid, spit in his face and tell him he is a liar!"

I don't in the least mind owning that we were afraid,

that we knew what fear was day by day for a whole month; fear in the day at the passage of every fresh obstacle, and yet greater fear in the night, for then nightmare exaggerated the horrors of the light, crocodiles and rapids haunting our sleep in dreams more awful even than the reality had been.

I challenge in advance the next person who goes down

LOOKING UP STREAM FROM KATUGU.

the Niger to say whether I have exaggerated anything in this account.

We had to push on, however, and the first thing to be done was to replace the burnous of Mamé, which still served as a plug in the hole in the *Davoust*, with something a little more suitable for the purpose. We had brought with us a piece of aluminium to meet just such an emergency as this, but we had neither the time nor the means to rivet it now. So we cut a piece of wood the right

size to serve provisionally, and fitted it into the hole, interposing a kind of mattress of tarred oakum, and making the whole thing taut with the aid of two strong bolts. Some putty made it more or less water-tight, and anyhow we could now keep our *Davoust* afloat.

The next day, the 16th, was as exciting as the 15th

THE CHIEF OF AYURU.

had been. Three very strong rapids succeeded each other, completing the awful pass of Labezenga. At each one the barges were halted above the fall, and a reconnaissance was made, then they passed over one by one, with the crew strengthened by every man who could be pressed into the service. Digui continued to show wonderful intrepidity, a quiet audacity and courage, and a readiness to grasp the bearings of every situation, which were beyond all praise. We can really say without exaggeration that

we owed not only the safety of our boats, but our very lives to him.

A little creek of almost calm water brought us to Katungu, where we were very well received by the inhabitants. Here we procured some fresh guides who were to take us to Ayuru.

Rapids! rapids! and yet more rapids! As we approached Ayuru the river became more and more terrible; we struck five or six times a day, again and again narrowly escaping the staving in of our boats. On the 18th, however, we safely reached Ayuru, a pretty little village of thatched huts on a rocky islet. My nerves had been overstrained, and in the evening when we were at dinner I fainted away. I did not come to again for two whole hours, and was very much surprised when I recovered consciousness to find myself lying on a mat wrapped up in coverlids, and being fanned by a coolie who was keeping watch over me.

From Ayuru I sent twenty rifles to Madidu, in token of my gratitude for the way in which his people had treated us.

We pushed on on the 19th for Kendadji, but navigation was, if possible, more difficult than ever. It became almost impossible to make our way amongst the countless islands impeding the stream and breaking it up into a confusing number of arms each with rapids of its own. These islets were all alike clothed with grand vegetation such as palms, sycamores, and other tropical trees.

The two large boats both struck on the same rock and the *Davoust* re-opened her old wound. How was it that in spite of this neither of our vessels sunk and our ranks remained unbroken? Only by a miracle! I have used that word before, I know, but really it is not too strong in this case either.

At last, however, after surmounting unheard-of difficulties,

getting through apparently impossible obstacles, and after Digui had executed many an admirable manœuvre, we arrived opposite Kendadji.

Alas! our troubles were not yet over. The river in front of us was surging terribly, the bed everywhere encumbered by large flints. Where could we pass?

Hitherto the natives, whether Tuaregs or negroes, had

AN ISLAND BETWEEN AYURU AND KENDADJI.

helped us to the best of their ability. The orders of Madidu had been strictly obeyed, and no obstacles whatever had been thrown in our way. But at Kendadji all was changed. Our guides from Katungu had gone to the village, having begged us to let them go and palaver before we appeared, and we were kept waiting all day for the envoy of the chief to listen to reason, only to be told at last that the people were afraid of us, for a relation of ours (Captain Toutée) had killed ever so many at Sinder the year before.

I did my best to reassure the messenger, and he promised that the chief himself should come to see us the next day. He did in fact do so, and at last let us have some guides.

Digui had gone to reconnoitre the rapids further down stream, and about noon he returned in a great state of agitation. "We must start at once," he said, "there was

A ROCKY HILL NEAR KENDADJI.

just enough water to float our boats now, but the river was sinking rapidly, and in an hour it would perhaps be too late."

What a passage it was! We pushed on, actually moored, so to speak, to an anchor and a grappling-iron, using first one and then the other, sometimes both according to circumstances. We kept on bumping against rocks, here, there, and everywhere, but fortunately we were going too fast to do the boats much harm. Then we had to fling ourselves into a perfect labyrinth of obstacles, striking against them

again and again, but fortunately without making any fresh holes in our much-tried barks. Still more rocks ahead! *Quousque tandem!*

At about eleven o'clock on the 22nd we reached Tumaré. The chief at first refused to give us guides, but a liberal present won him over.

Things seemed likely to be worse rather than better, for we had not gone more than four and a half miles during the whole of the 23rd. The river was now but a river in name; a mere maze of narrow channels between innumerable islets covered with fine trees and millet. The bed of these channels is encumbered with rocks, amongst which our barges had to follow a serpentine course for which they were little fitted. At two o'clock we reached the village of Desa, and the evening was wasted in a palaver without result. A feeling of sullen hostility against us was everywhere manifested, and the first question the natives asked was whether we were the same white men who had come the year before. At last, however, we succeeded in getting some guides who took us as far as Farca.

Our coolies told us that the crocodiles lay their eggs at this time of the year, when it always rains and blows hard. On this account we were obliged to remain anchored opposite Desa all the morning. We started at two o'clock in the afternoon. What a river we had to pass down! Before we arrived at the anchorage, where we remained for the night, we had to go through a pass not much more than five yards wide.

The people of Desa, we were told by the natives above Gao, are Kurteyes of a very fierce and inhospitable disposition, and, truth to tell, their first reception of us was anything but cordial. "What had we come to their village for?" they asked. "Why had we not stopped at a bigger

one?" By dint of the exercise of much patience, and the use of many soothing arguments, we gradually succeeded in appeasing them. They gave us an original version of the fight which had taken place with Captain Toutée the year before. It was not, according to them, with the Tuaregs that he had fought, but with the people of Sinder.

All the negroes of the riveraine districts of the Niger wear the same kind of costume, including the veil, and use the same kind of weapons as the Tuaregs, which explains the mistake. The Tuaregs had been awaiting the expedition at Satoni, intending to attack it, but it had made a *détour* and avoided them. The Wagobés of Sinder by order of Bokar Wandieïdu, and also because a sentinel had by accident killed a nephew of the chief of the village, attacked the canoes of the Toutée expedition, attributing what they thought was a retreat to fear. Fifty natives were killed, and the memory of their fate was still fresh.

About noon the next day we were opposite Satoni, and we anchored the same evening near the right bank, where we could make out some lofty dunes on which were perched three villages and a Tuareg encampment.

I had a presentiment that we had now reached a critical and most perilous moment of our expedition. All the defiance we had recently met with, and the unwillingness to help us was of bad augury, and we were, as a matter of fact, *entirely at the mercy of the natives.*

Higher up stream, when the Kel es Suk and the Tademeket wanted to bar the road against us, the river was free from obstacles, and they were quite unable to stop us. We could afford to laugh at their futile efforts. Below Ansongo, too, though the difficulties of navigation were considerable, we could to some extent count upon

the goodwill of the people, who would, if they were not particularly ready to serve us, at least remain neutral.

Now, alas! I felt that at any moment the smouldering powder might explode, for at our approach the women and children hid themselves. To get guides I had to use every possible means: caresses, presents, even threats, for without guides we should be utterly lost.

The stream here divides literally into thousands of channels; how then were we to choose the best one amongst perhaps ten opposite to us at a time? Then again, in some pass when we are being swept along in the one finally chosen as the best, the least hesitation, the smallest slip in steering, and our boat would be lost, staved in, utterly wrecked. Here and there, too, massive rocks rose on either side of us, so covered with dense vegetation that twenty men armed with bows and arrows or spears could easily have made an end of us.

A little after our arrival at Satoni we were hailed from a canoe containing the son of the chief of Farca, who could not refrain from showing his satisfaction when he found we were not the same white men as those who had come the year before. We had scarcely entered into conversation with him when three Tuaregs also arrived to interview us.

One was a relation of Bokar Wandieïdu, chief of the Logomaten, another his blacksmith, and the third a young man, the son of El Mekki, chief of the Kel es Suk of Ansongo.

The situation was becoming interesting. Our throats were parched with our anxiety. Would peace or war be the issue of the interview?

"Bokar sends you greeting," began his messenger, "and bids me inform you that at the news of your approach he collected a troop of his warriors; the Wagobés of Sinder,

the Kourteyes, the Fulahs, and the Toucouleurs of Amadu Cheiku, have held a palaver with him, and all of one accord agreed to unite their forces, and bar the road against you. Some Toucouleurs are now, in fact, with Bokar making final arrangements.

"Two days ago, however, the young man you see here came to us, sent by Madidu to order us not merely to do you no harm, but to aid you if need were. Fear nothing, therefore, no one can speak further after the Amenokal has spoken. If you flung a dagger up in the air, saying, 'That is for Madidu!' it would not touch the ground again until it reached his hands."

I had not then been mistaken; a formidable coalition had been formed against us, and had it taken action we should, I repeat once more, have been hopelessly lost. True to his word, worthy son of the noble race to which he belongs, chief of the most powerful of the confederations of Nigritia, the Amenokal had interposed his all-powerful influence on our behalf just at the right moment. I assert once more, and would have all my fellow-countrymen know it, that if we ever get home again, if we were the first to go down the Niger to the sea, and to trace the course of that mighty river, if we did not leave our skeletons to bleach upon its banks, it was due to the mighty chief of the Awellimiden, to Madidu Ag el Khotab, and to him alone.

I do not think I owe such a debt of gratitude as this to any man of my own race!

His task no sooner accomplished, however, our young friend, the son of El Mekki, became rather a bore, for he had taken it into his head to try and convert us to the religion of Islam. Truth to tell, the reasons he gave for this attempt at proselytism did more honour to his heart than to his head.

"We know each other now," he said, "and you are

just going away. We like you, and we think that you like us. We cannot hope ever to see you again in this life, do not deprive us of the chance of meeting you once more in another world.

"When we are all dead, we faithful followers of the true faith will go to enjoy everlasting happiness in Paradise. You, however, who are good fellows enough, will not be able to cross El Sirat, the bridge leading to the gardens of Paradise, but will have to go to Hell, where you will burn eternally, and we shall be able to do nothing for you but pity you.

"Well then," he went on, "do not remain in this evil case; stay amongst us for a time, and you shall be instructed in the essentials of our faith. We shall thus be enabled to hope to meet you again in eternity."

The most amusing part of it all was that Father Hacquart, whose Arab costume had especially attracted our young visitor, was the chief victim of the ardent proselytism of the earnest Tuareg believer.

For a missionary to be attacked in this way was really too comic, and the Father roared with laughter over the incident.

When night fell we had to separate, and our friend left us, quite melancholy at the failure of all his eloquence.

We arrived at Farca the next morning, the 26th, at about two o'clock.

The chief of the village, brother of the chief of Sinder, and father of the young man who had been killed by Captain Toutée's sentinel, with a number of other notables, came to see us.

They confirmed all we had already been told; it had really been with the people of Sinder, not with the Tuaregs, that the preceding expedition had come to blows.

Bokar had sent instructions to the Wagobés to treat

us well, and they themselves intended to act as our guides. They begged me, however, not to anchor at the village of Sinder, though I was particularly anxious to visit that important centre, which is the chief mart for the vast quantities of cereals cultivated in the neighbourhood.

Farca is an island completely covered with a tropical forest, and a similar mass of verdure is to be seen on another islet opposite to it. The village, which had been deserted after the fracas with Captain Toutée's people, was just beginning to be rebuilt.

This was the furthest point reached by the expedition which had preceded ours, and is situated in N. Lat. 14° 29′ and Long. 1° 22′ 55″, thirty kilometres from Sinder, and eight hundred and sixty from Timbuktu.[1]

The connection between the expeditions which had started from the coast of Guinea and those which had come from the French Sudan had at last been achieved, and the Niger had been navigated for its entire course by Frenchmen.

Below Farca, the stream becomes a little less difficult.

[1] I make a special point of the exact situation of Farca. Captain Toutée says in a note to his book on Dahomey, the Niger, and the Tuaregs, that he believed it to be much nearer Timbuktu, but he had not taken any astronomical observations, and he had made a mistake of a day in his journal. This rectification will appear somewhat tardy after the articles published on his return in the newspapers, and in the Bulletin of the *Comité de L'Afrique française*, which led to its being supposed that Farca is on the outskirts of the last French post in the Sudan. Had this been so, the results of our expedition would have been greatly minimized. *Suum cuique.*

On the subject of the recognition of the French protectorate by the people of Farca, there must have been, to say the least, a very great error of interpretation. Our readers have been able to discover for themselves that unfortunately French influence does not extend so far. Indeed, the hostile attitude of the people of Sinder, who are the relations and feudal superiors of those of Farca, and who attacked Captain Toutée, would have been enough to prove it without anything else.

We were followed the day after by a regular fleet of canoes. A nephew of the chief of Sinder, named Boso, accompanied us. I now felt that, at least until we came into actual contact with Amadu Cheiku, all danger from the hostility of the natives was at an end.

The islands dotting the river are inhabited by Kurteyes and Wagobés, and it is to the latter tribe that the inhabit-

FARCA.

ants of Sinder belong, not to the Songhay race. Their name clearly indicates that they are Soninkés, and therefore related to our Saracolais coolies. Saracolais, Marka, Dafins, etc., are really all mere local names of the Soninkés. It seems at first surprising that a race supposed to be native to the districts watered by the Senegal, should be found so far away from the basin of that river; but later still, nearer to Say, we came upon another tribe of the same origin, the Sillabés, on the subject of which there cannot

be the slightest doubt, for they have preserved the language of their ancestors.

A little above Sinder the bed of the river becomes again encumbered with rocks, making navigation difficult, at least in the channels our guides made us choose near the left bank.

My own private opinion is, however, that there was a better channel nearer the village which these guides managed for us to avoid.

On the evening of the 28th, we came abreast of the huts of Sinder, and a deputation from the village brought us some provisions. I expressed my intention of going to see the chief, but I was dissuaded from doing so on one pretext or another, and when I insisted I was told—"Well, come if you will, but if you want to please us, you will not come. We know now that you do not intend to do us any harm, but the last white man who passed this way killed a lot of people, and the grief of the mothers and wives of the dead will be renewed if they see you."

Whether this excuse was true or not, it seemed to me a very reasonable one. We had had such an exceedingly narrow escape of a conflict with the Tuaregs, that I was determined to be extremely prudent. I did not see Sinder after all, but I console myself with the thought that at least those who come after us will not suffer from the memory of anything we did, and will not, through our fault, incur any of the dangers we escaped.

Below Sinder the river again became such as to make us almost despair. After having painfully made our way for about a mile, we found some fresh guides waiting for us. Evidently the natives were eager to speed the parting guest! "I don't know however we shall get through," said Digui; but we did manage it once more, though the *Aube* scraped on a rock without doing herself much harm.

In the course of the whole day we only made about four and a half miles.

Monday the 30th was again a most exciting day. The *Aube* struck no less than three times, and the last accident in the Kokoro pass was a serious one. It really seemed as if our troubles would never end! The unfortunate barge had three planks of her bottom staved in, and the water rushed in as if she were made of wicker-work.

OUR SINDER GUIDES.

The scenery on the banks was grand; big villages alternating with great plantations of millet. All the islands have a coating of extremely fertile vegetable mould, unwholesome enough in itself, but which the natives have known how to turn to account.

At our anchorage we found our old friend the blacksmith of Bokar Wandieïdu, whose master himself it appears had wished to see us, and had waited for us until the day before. Amadu had made one last effort to turn

him against us, and had sent couriers to him to urge him to attack us, but Bokar had replied by quoting the orders of Madidu, saying that all he had to do was to obey them.

The morning of the 31st began by the *Aube* striking again, but after that the river became quite perfect. It had never been so good anywhere before, and nothing impeded its course but a few low rocks, which were just enough to relieve the monotony of the voyage.

This was not of course likely to last, and very soon impediments again became numerous. It was now the turn of the *Davoust* to fling herself upon a pointed rock, escaping by a hair's-breadth from serious damage. We passed the big villages, or rather the collections of villages known as Malo, containing perhaps as many as 10,000 inhabitants, and we halted for the night a little above Azemay, opposite to a difficult pass, which would have to be reconnoitred before we could attempt it. We had made 15½ miles!—a very good day!

At our anchorage we met a man named Osman, from Say, who had come, he told us, to see one of his relations, but being uneasy as to our intentions with regard to Amadu, he begged us to give him passage on board one of our boats.

The heat was now becoming most oppressive, and to remain stationary for a whole day looking at the white sheets of our hydrographical survey, not to speak of all the anxieties of our position, was really a very hard task. We consoled ourselves, however, by thinking of the rest we should get at Say. I did not, however, entirely share the confidence of my companions, especially of Dr. Taburet, who, always optimistic, indulged in visions of calabashes full of milk, piles of eggs and other luxuries, building culinary castles in the air. Hitherto, whenever we had hoped for a friendly reception we had always been

disappointed, and when we feared hostility from the natives, we had generally been kindly welcomed. The remembrance of Sinder proves that this was the case with others. Captain Toutée says that he was hailed as a liberator there, whilst we barely escaped ending our lives and expedition alike at that fatal spot.

On April 1 we reached Sansan-Haussa about two o'clock. It is a very large village, but we were disappointed in it, for we had expected to find it encircled by a *tata* or earthen wall, its name of Sansan meaning a fortified enceinte. Now there is an enceinte, it is true, but it is made of straw! all the houses are also constructed of straw. To make up for this, the granaries for storing the millet are really beautiful. We anchored opposite the market-place, where the market, it appeared, was to be held the very next day. The chief of the village came to see us. He was a Kurteye, and told us he would send a guide with us to the chief of his tribe at Sorbo, a little further down stream.

After a night during which, for a wonder, our rest was not disturbed by the noise of roaring rapids, we went over and anchored opposite the left bank near the village itself. We were quickly surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children, all alike showing a confidence in us to which we had long been unaccustomed. Those who were ill flocked to Taburet, and dealers in iron and ostrich feathers hastened to offer us their wares. The feathers we found to be relatively dear, a complete set being worth 250,000 cowries, or nearly three pounds sterling. A caravan, we were told, had lately arrived from Rhât, which had greatly raised the value. A little boy from Rhât, of about twelve years old, came to see us, and had a long chat with Father Hacquart. He had a *gris-gris* or charm made for us by a marabout belonging to his caravan, to protect us from the rapids we still had to encounter.

For the first time since we left Gao we met with the valuable kola nuts so much appreciated by the negroes, and I gave my people the greatest possible pleasure by distributing quantities of this delicacy amongst them. Each nut is worth some 150 cowries, or about three-halfpence.

Here, as the reader will have noticed, we begin to talk about cowries again. I have already said that these little

AT SANSAN-HAUSSA

univalve shells of the African coast are the usual currency from the source of the Niger to Timbuktu.

We went with Father Hacquart to return the visit the chief of the village had paid us the evening before. He did not seem to wish us to remain long in his country. He was afraid, he said. Why? we asked. It was evident that the Toucouleurs, of whom there were a good many in the village, had prejudiced him against us.

Two people came and asked us to give them a passage,

one a Fulah named Mamadu of Mumi in Massina, who had been here for nine years unable to get away. We were to have a good deal to do with him during our stay at Say.

The other was a Toucouleur named Suleyman, who spoke Wolof, and had followed Amadu Cheiku in his exodus from Nioro to Dunga. He was a poor deaf old man, but had a very intelligent face. He told us that the whole recompense Amadu had given him for his long and faithful service was to take away his gun, his only wealth, to give it to one of his sofas or captives taken in war. This last misfortune had disgusted Suleyman with the Holy War, in which he said more blows than pay were received, and he wanted to go back with us to his own land of Footah on the Senegal, the reigning chief of which was a relation of his.

He did not know what we had come here for. He did not know what route we meant to take on our way back, and surely nothing could have been a greater mark of confidence in us than this readiness of one of our worst enemies to trust himself to us.

At first I rather distrusted the man, who might be a spy, or worse, a traitor sent to try and seduce my men from their duty. However, whilst resolving to watch him closely, I decided to take him with us, but I gave him a good talking to to begin with, saying—"I don't know whether you are a liar or an honest fellow, but most of your relations are deceivers and humbugs, and it is no recommendation in my eyes that you belong to the Toucouleur race. However, I will not be unjust, for I may be mistaken about you. So you can come with us, and you will be treated as if you were one of my own men. If we have plenty you shall have your share, and if we run short of food you will have to tighten your waist-band like the rest of us. But deceive us once, only once,

and your head will not remain on your shoulders for a moment. You are warned, please yourself about going or stopping."

I must add here that Suleyman, the Toucouleur, or, as he was at once called amongst us, Suleyman Foutanké, was always true to us. I took him with me to Saint Louis, and he is now enjoying in his natal village a repose which must indeed be grateful to him after his thirty years' wanderings.

We started again at two o'clock in the afternoon, and in the evening we halted for the night not far from Sorbo, where we were to see the chief of the Kurteyes.

We went to see him the next day, and passed the morning at Sorba. We were very well received by Yusuf Osman. Don't tell him that I have revealed his name to the public, for amongst the Kurteyes it is very bad form to call any one by his name. I have noticed that there is a similar superstition in the Bambara districts of the Upper Niger.

Yusuf is a big, good-looking fellow of about forty years of age, who has recently succeeded his father as chief. When we arrived he was suffering from some affection of the eyes. Taburet prescribed for and cured him, thus contributing to establishing us in his good graces.

The former chief of Sorba had been a great friend of Amadu, and had given him canoes for crossing the river. If therefore the Toucouleurs had succeeded in establishing their authority in the districts torn from the Djermas of Karma and Dunga, it was in some measure due to him.

Yusuf, however, did not disguise that he was becoming rather uneasy about the future, and as far as was possible without compromising himself he had tried to be useful to us. If ever we succeed, as I hope we shall, in driving

Amadu from the neighbourhood of Say, we shall certainly find auxiliaries in the Kurteyes.

Yusuf gave us as a guide to take us to Say, a man named Hugo, chief of his own slaves, a capital fellow, and an excellent pilot. Needless to add that we all at once dubbed him Victor in honour of the great French author.

Relieved on the point about which I had been so anxious, the securing of a guide to take us to Say, we went down to the village of Kutukole, and anchored near it for the night, the river between it and Sarbo being quite easy to navigate.

On the 3rd we passed Karma, and were now amongst the Toucouleurs. On every side our approach was announced by the lighting of fires, and the beating of the *tabala* or war-drum. A group of horsemen followed us along the bank, watching us closely, but now the stream was quite quiet, only one more rapid, that of Bobo, had to be crossed, and that we left behind us the same evening. All we had to do was to steer carefully clear of the few rocks which still impeded the course of the river.

Bobo, opposite to which we passed the night, is, like Karma, under the direct authority of Ali Buri, that venerable Wolof chieftain, who, driven out of Cayor by the French, went to seek an asylum at Nioro near Amadu, whose fortunes he followed. Captain Toutée was mistaken in thinking that Ali Buri had been killed in the attack on his expedition at Kompa. He was still alive, unfortunately for us, and we were told was now in the Sorgoé district near the country of the Kel Gheres, where he busied himself in winning partisans for Amadu.

On the right bank opposite our anchorage, Bokar Wandieïdu had fought the year before with the Futankes, and had inflicted on them a serious defeat. More than

two hundred of Amadu's warriors are still prisoners in the hands of the Tuareg chief. Unfortunately, however, after the Sinder affair, the chief of Say succeeded in reconciling the enemies, and, as we have seen, the truce between them was brought about at the expense of the French.

The 5th of April was Easter Sunday, and Father Hacquart celebrated mass as we slipped easily down

THE BOBO RAPIDS.

stream through charming scenery, preceded by Hugo in his canoe acting as guide. We passed several big villages belonging to the chiefs under Amadu, and anchored opposite Saga.

To-morrow we should pass Dunga where Amadu himself lived, and I determined that our boats should look their best, so I had everything put ship-shape on board. Our masts, which had been lowered, as they gave too much purchase to the wind, were raised again, and from them

floated the tricolour flag of France. We were off again now in fine style.

Our friend Hugo, however, was no friend to demonstrations of any kind, and said to us, "What are you going to do on the left bank? Can't you follow me on the right where there is nothing to fear? It won't help your voyage much to be received with musket-shots, will it? Besides, if you don't follow me carefully, who will guide you amongst the rocks?"

He had told us the evening before that there were no rocks between Dunga and Say, so we let him go down his right bank all alone, whilst we filed past Dunga, about a hundred yards from the land.

A group of some twenty horsemen had been following us ever since the morning, and they halted at the landing-place of the village, unsaddled their steeds and let them drink. On a height on which the village is perched a square battalion of something like a thousand warriors was drawn up.

All remained perfectly still, and not a cry or threat broke the silence. We passed very slowly, our barges swept on by the current, whilst we on deck looked about us proudly. Our enemies on their side acquitted themselves bravely, and with considerable dignity, though it must be confessed they reminded us rather of china dogs glaring at each other.

When all is said and done, however, I think I may claim the credit of having fairly challenged the Toucouleurs, leaving them to take up my glove or to leave it alone as they chose. This may have seemed like bravado, and perhaps there was a little of that in my attitude, but as an old warrior of the Sudan myself, and a fellow-worker though a humble one of the Gallieni and the Archinards, I would rather have run any risk than

have had our historic enemies the Toucouleurs think I was afraid of them. The tone I took up too gave us an ascendency later which we sorely needed.

After going about twenty-two miles further down the river, we anchored near enough to Say to make out the trees surrounding it, and the next day we reached the town itself, which had for so long been the object of our desires.

Say is a comparatively big place, but not nearly as important as it is often made out to be. It is made up of straw huts with pointed roofs, and is surrounded by palisades also of straw. Only one house is built of mud, and that forms the entrance sacred to the chief.

The river flows on the east of the town, and on the west is a low-lying tract of what are meadows in the dry season, but mere swamps in the winter.

We anchored at once, but the stench from the rubbish on the banks of the river was so great that we soon moved to the southern extremity of the village, where the shore was cleaner.

Our passengers meanwhile had gone to announce our arrival, and old Abdu, who is in command of the prisoners of the chief of Say, soon came to see us. Baud and Vermesch had had some dealings with him, and had spoken well of him to us, while Monteil also alludes to him. He seemed a very worthy sort of fellow.

After the customary exchange of compliments, I asked to be permitted to pay a visit to his master, Amadu Saturu, generally known under the name of Modibo, or the savant, and Abdu went off to make my request known at once, but we waited and waited a very long time before any answer was vouchsafed.

We were simply consumed with impatience, and I augured ill from the delay. I remembered of course that

Modibo had signed treaty after treaty with Baud, Decœur, and Toutée, only I could not help also remembering how little a diplomatic document such as a so-called treaty really ever binds a negro, and that made me hesitate to trust him.

Most Mussulmans, at least most of the Mahommedan chiefs and marabouts, are liars and deceivers. They have a hundred ways, not to speak of mental reservation, of swearing by the Koran, without feeling themselves bound by their oath. If they respected a promise given as they ought to do, would their prophet have taught that four days' fasting expiated the violation of an oath?

If they cheat like this when they know what they are about, how are they likely to behave when everything is strange to them? and they attach no moral value to the terms of an agreement, especially of an agreement of many clauses such as is the fashion for the French to make with native chiefs.

To pass the time whilst waiting for the return of our messenger we chatted with a Kurteye marabout, who came to give us a greeting. He read Madidu's letter with some difficulty, but great interest. I asked him whether Modibo generally kept his visitors waiting like this, and he replied, "Yes, it makes him seem more important, but you will see him when it gets cooler."

So we waited with what patience we could, and at about five o'clock Amadu Saturu sent for me. Oh, what a series of preliminaries we still had to go through!

According to my usual custom I went to see the chief unarmed, accompanied only by Suleyman and Tierno Abdulaye.

First we had to wait in the ante-chamber—I mean the mud hut referred to above—the walls of which were pierced with niches making it look like a pigeon-cote.

At last his majesty condescended to admit us to his presence.

The king of Say could not be called handsome, sympathetic, or clean. He was a big, blear-eyed man, with a furtive expression, a regular typical fat negro. He was crouching rather than sitting on a bed of palm-leaves, wearing a native costume, the original colour of which it was impossible to tell, so coated was it with filth. He was sur-

VIEW OF SAY

rounded by some thirty armed men. On his left stood the chief of the captives, Abdu, with an old dried-up looking man, who I was told was the cadi of the village, and, to my great and disagreeable surprise, quite a large number of Toucouleurs. Suleyman and Abdulaye, who recognized what this meant, exchanged anxious glances with me. I now realized that my apprehensions had been well founded. Still I took my seat quietly, without betraying any emotion, on a wooden mortar, and begun my speech.

"The Sultan of the French greets you, the chief of the Sudan greets you, etc. We come from Timbuktu. We passed peacefully everywhere. We are now tired, the river is low, and in conformity with the conventions you have made with the French we have come to demand your hospitality that we may rest and repair the damage done to our boats by the rocks. We also want a courier to go and tell our relations at Bandiagara that we have arrived here safely. All we need to support us during our stay will be paid for at prices agreed on beforehand between us. Lastly, I wish to go and see Ibrahim Galadjo, your friend and ours."

"Impossible," replied Modibo. "Galadjo is not now at his capital, he is collecting a column; besides, you will not have time for the journey to him."

"Why not, pray?"

"Because you, like those who have preceded you, must not stop here more than four or five days longer. That is the custom of the country."

If I still cherished any illusions this speech finally dispersed them. The groups about the chief moreover left me in no doubt as to his sentiments, or as to whom we had to thank for those sentiments. The Toucouleurs grinned, and waved their muskets above their heads in a hostile manner. Abdu alone tried to speak on our behalf, but Modibo ordered him to be silent, and the cadi joined in the chorus against us. A griot then began a song, the few words of which I caught were certainly not in our praise. Everything seemed to be going wrong.

What was I to do? As I had said, we were all tired out, the river was half dried up, the boats were terribly knocked about. Still it was not altogether impossible to go, for after leading the life of the Wandering Jew for so long, a little more or less travelling could not matter much. We

might perhaps have managed to do another fifty miles or so, and try to find rest in a more hospitable district, where we could pass the rainy season not so very far from Bussa, which was to be our final goal.

One thing decided me to act as I did, and I can at least claim that I made up my mind quickly. I was determined to fulfil to the letter, with true military obedience, the last instructions I had received before starting. These were my instructions—

"Bamako de Saint-Louis, Number 5074. Received on November 23, at half-past four in the afternoon—*Will arrange for you to receive supplementary instructions at Say. In case unforeseen circumstances prevent those instructions being there before your arrival, wait for them.*"

This, as will be observed, is clear and precise enough. Of course such orders would not have been sent but for the ignorance in France of the state of things at Say. They would otherwise have been simply ridiculous. However, an order cannot be considered binding unless he who gives that order understands exactly what will be the position when he receives it, of the person to whom it is sent, and who is expected to execute it.

Still those instructions might arrive; rarely had such a thing happened in French colonial policy, but it was just possible that our presence at Say was part of a plan of operations at the mouth of the Niger or in Dahomey. I need hardly add that it turned out not to be so, but I was quite justified in my idea that it might have been, and in any case I had no right to conclude to the contrary.

So I decided in spite of everything and everybody to remain.

Oh, if we had but started a little earlier; if M. Grodet had not stopped us and kept us in the Sudan as he did! If we could but have joined the Decœur-Baud, or even the

Toutée expedition at Say, how different everything would have been!

If only the promised instructions had really been sent us, as they could have been, had any one wanted to send them! If only a small column either from Dahomey or from Bandiagara had, as it might so easily have been, commissioned to bring us those instructions, I am convinced that Amadu Saturu would at this moment be a fugitive like Amadu Cheiku, and that the Niger districts near Say would be purged from the presence of slave-dealers. For all these robbers of men, who are as cowardly as they are cruel and dishonest, would have fled at the first rumour of an advance of the French upon their haunts.

It ought to have been otherwise, that is all. It is not the time for recrimination, but I shall count myself fortunate if what happened to me serves as an example to others, and prevents the sending out of expeditions only to abandon them to their fate, without instructions, in the heart of Africa. For, as a rule, these expeditions seem to be completely forgotten until the news arrives that they have managed to get back to civilized districts after a struggle more glorious than fruitful of results, or that, as sometimes happens, all the white men have perished somewhere amongst the blacks.

To decide to remain at Say was, however, one thing, to be able to do so was another.

There were just twenty-nine of us, five white men and twenty-four black, with three children, the servants of Bluzet, Father Hacquart and Taburet, and the Toucouleur Suleyman, on whom, by the way, we did not feel we could altogether rely, a small party truly against the 500 warriors of Amadu and his Toucouleurs or Foutankés, as they are often called, not to speak of the people of Say and all who were more or less dependent on Modibo.

I sometimes play, as no doubt my readers do too, at the game called poker.

We all know that skill consists in making your adversary believe when you have a bad hand that you have a very good one. This is what is known as bluff. To make up for my purse having sometimes suffered in this American game, it put me up to a dodge or two in politics, notably on the present occasion.

So I played poker as energetically as I could.

If ever a man went to his dinner after listening to a lot of nonsense, it was Modibo on this 7th of April when I had my interview with him.

I said amongst other things—"I have lived amongst the negroes now for seven years; I know the river which flows past your village from the spot where it comes from the ground. I have been in many countries. I have known Amadu Cheiku, who is a great liar" (here the Toucouleurs

all nodded their heads in acquiescence), "and his son Madani, who is no better than he is.

"I must, however, confess that never, in the course of my experience, have I seen anything to equal what I see here to-day.

"Relations of ours have been here, some alone, others with soldiers, all of whom have loaded you with presents. You promised, nay more, you made alliance with us French, but now you break your word. Very well! My Sultan, who is a true Sultan and not a bad chief like you, who lolls about in a dirty hut on a moth-eaten coverlid, has done you too much honour. You are viler than the unclean animals whose flesh your prophet forbids you to eat. Now listen to me. My chief has ordered me to stop here, and here I shall stop, a day if I choose, a year if I choose, ten years if I choose. We are only thirty, and you are as numerous as the grains of sand of the desert; but try and drive us away if you can. I do not mean to begin making war, because my chief has forbidden me to do so; you will have to begin, and you will see what will happen. We have God on our side, who punishes perjurers. He is enough for me; I am not afraid of you. Adieu! We are going to seek a place for our camp where there are none but the beasts of the field, for in this country they are better than the men. Collect your column and come and drive us away!—that is to say, if you can!"

Suleyman was a first-rate interpreter when he had this sort of harangue to translate. The good fellow, who was of anything but a conciliatory disposition, would drop out all flattering expressions or cut them very short, but when he had such a task as I had set him just now, he went at it with hearty goodwill. He was more likely to add to than to omit anything I had said.

After this vehement address Modibo and his attendants

seemed quite dumfounded. What *grisgris*, what fetiches must these infidels, these accursed white men have, if they could dare to speak in such a bold fashion as this when they were alone in a strange country with not more than thirty muskets at the most.

It was very important not to give our unfriendly host time to recover from his stupor. We filed out therefore in truly British style, and I think we did well not to loiter. It was not without a certain satisfaction that after traversing the two or three hundred yards between us and the river I saw our flags floating above our boats.

Imagine, however, the feelings of my people when I burst in upon their preparations for a meal in the tents already pitched, with the order, "Pick all that up, and be on your guard, ready to be off at any moment."

Farewell to our good cheer, farewell to what we thought was to be a safe and comfortable camp. We had to place sentinels and be constantly on the alert. Our coolies, too, who had already made advances to some of the belles of Say, were bitterly disappointed, but we had no choice, and they had to fall in with our wishes or rather commands, that all intercourse with the natives should be broken off.

The next night we had to be all eyes and ears, and I at least did not sleep a wink, so absorbed was I in thinking what had better be done. I was determined to remain at Say at whatever cost, and it struck me that the best plan would be to lead a kind of aquatic life, enlarging the decks of our boats, so to speak, which really were rather too small for us and our goods. An island would be the thing for us. So we resolved that we would go and look for a suitable one the next day.

On the morning of the 8th, Abdu tried to bring about a reconciliation, but the poor devil only wasted his time and his breath. He was the only man at Say who in his heart

of hearts had the least real sympathy for us, and he gave ample proof of this, for he never took any part in the intrigues against us, which were the worry of our lives for five months and a half. We never saw him again; he never came to beg for a present like the false and covetous marabouts who form the sham court of his chief. In a word, the slave was superior to his master.

At noon on the 8th, mentally calling down on Say all the maledictions she deserved for disappointing all our hopes, I gave the word of command to weigh anchor, and once more we were being carried along by the waters of the Niger.

OUR GUIDES' CANOE

THE 'ALBE' AT FORT ARCHINARD.

CHAPTER VII

STAY AT SAY

WE soon came in sight, as we rounded a bend of the stream, of a thicket of trees on an island which seemed made on purpose for us.

We landed and pitched our tents.

The most important characteristic of an island is that it should be completely surrounded with water. Well, our island fulfilled this condition, for the time being at least. On the left, looking down stream we could see the principal arm of the Niger, the deepest part of the river, in which, however, the rocks of the bed were already beginning to emerge, whilst on the right was a narrower channel barred at the end by a rapid, beyond which the water disappeared entirely underground. Yet further away in the same direction we could see a little branch of the broken-up river with a very strong current hastening on its way to join the main stream, where I could not tell.

Our island was about 218 yards long by 328 broad. At one end, that looking up-stream, was a rocky bank, whilst the other, looking down-stream, consisted of low-lying alluvial soil, often of course submerged, dotted here, there, and everywhere with the mounds of the termites, and at this time of year completely deserted. A few fine and lofty tamarinds and other trees with large trunks but little foliage formed a regular wood, and afforded us a grateful shade; but the island as a whole, with its ant-hills, its twisted, tortuous, and leafless trunks, and its ground strewn with sharp and broken flints, presented a very wild and desolate appearance when we first landed.

Its situation, however, was really far from unpleasing, for on the deserted left bank the inundations are never very deep, and near to it rise wooded hills, with here and there perpendicular cliffs rising straight up from the river. Nearly opposite to us was one of these cliffs, white with guano or with lime, which looked to me very well suited for a permanent post. Being quite bare of vegetation, this cliff stands out against the verdure of the woods, and from the evening to the morning, from twilight to sunrise, great troops of big black monkeys assemble in it, and hold a regular palaver just as the negroes do. Often at night their cries quite alarm us, and keep the sentries constantly on the *qui vive*.

The whole of the riverside districts on the left bank, from Kibtachi to the Toucouleur villages up-stream, are completely deserted and of bad fame. Now and then we saw men armed with bows and arrows prowling about on a slave hunt, or deer came down to drink. The right bank is far less dreary. Opposite to us is Talibia, a little agricultural village, tributary to Say. We can make out the gables of the pointed huts surrounded by palisades and *sanies* or fences made of mats. When the millet is full grown these

pointed huts are quite hidden by it, and the scene is one of great beauty, giving an impression of considerable prosperity. Women come down to the beach to fetch water, and bathe in the arm of the stream. On market day at Say—that is to say, on Friday—there is great excitement at Talibia, men, women, and children trooping to market with their wares

VIEW OF OUR ISLAND AND OF THE SMALL ARM OF THE RIVER

as they do in France, carrying their butter, their mats—in a word, all the produce of the week's work on their heads.

Above Talibia and the confluence of the third arm of the river the wood becomes dense and impenetrable. A little path follows the river-bank through the tall grass, and during our long stay in the island it was the daily morning occupation to watch from the top of the island who should come along this path, for by it alone could king's ambassadors, marabouts, market-women or any one else approach us.

Our island was quite deserted by the natives, for though the people of Talibia grew millet on it before our arrival, they would never live on it, or even sleep on it for one night, for it had a very bad reputation, and was supposed to be haunted by devils, horrible devils, who took the form of big fantastic-looking monkeys, and after sunset climbed upon the ant-hills and held a fiendish sabbat.

Without calling in the aid of the supernatural to account for it, there is no doubt that people belated on the left bank were never seen again. Perhaps they are taken captive by the robber Djermankobes, or fall victims to lions or hyænas.

However that may be, the Talibia devils, as were those of Wuro and Geba later, were propitious to us. All these spirits, whether of Kolikoro, of Debo, or of Pontoise, are really cousins-german. Ours were the spirits of the Niger, and the negroes explained our immunity from their attacks by saying, "They can do nothing against an expedition, the leader of which is the friend of Somanguru, the great demon of Kolikoro, and who knows the river at its source, where it comes out of the earth, where no one else has ever seen it."

I imagine that since our departure the natives of Talibia have still avoided the island. Our residence on it was not enough to rehabilitate it, and probably now many rumours are current about the spirit which haunts the ruins of our camp.

It was really a great thing to be on an island. We were safe there from hyænas at least, and all we had to do was to put our camp in a state of defence against the Toucouleurs and their friends.

The first fortification we put up was a moral one, for we baptized our camp Fort Archinard, in token of our gratitude to the Colonel of that name, and it was worth many an

abattis. The name of Archinard was in fact a kind of double fetich, for it gave confidence to our own men, and it inspired the Toucouleurs with superstitious terror. In the French Sudan there is not a marabout, a soldier, or a *sofa* of Samory, not a *talibé* of Amadu, not a friend nor an enemy of the French who does not retain deeply graven upon his memory the name of Colonel Archinard, for the present General will always be the Colonel in Africa, the great Colonel whom, according to tradition, no village ever resisted for a whole day.

So we managed that the news of the baptism of our Camp should be spread far and near, and passed on from mouth to mouth till it reached the ear of Amadu himself. No doubt he had some bad dreams in consequence.

This moral defence, however, required to be supplemented by a material one. Two hundred and twenty by forty-three yards is not a very wide area for thirty-five people to live in, but it is far too big a space to have to defend efficiently.

We felt it would be prudent to restrict the camp, properly so called, to the northern point of the island, and taking six termitaries as points of support, we placed abattis between them. Everything was ready to our hands, branches, logs, brushwood, thorns, etc. We cut down the trees at the lower end of the island, which cleared our firing range, though it also rather spoiled the look of the landscape. We levelled the site of our camp, razed many of the ant-hills to the ground, and mounted our two guns, one pointing up-stream, on a huge trunk which seemed to have been placed where it was on purpose, which commanded the bank almost as far as Say itself, whilst the other was placed on a big trunk which we drove firmly into the ground, and would keep the people on the banks down-stream in awe. At each gun sentries were always on guard. Then the unfortunate *Aube* was unloaded, patched up

somehow, provided with sixteen oars, and armed with the machine-gun belonging to the *Davoust*, all ready to advance to the attack or the defence whether to Say or to Dunga.

In a word, the urgent preliminary work was rapidly accomplished in a very few days, and then in comparative security we began building what the natives call the *tata*, that is to say, an earthwork such as surrounds sedentary villages, or a fortified redoubt serving as the residence of a chief.

Even if you had not been brought up a mason, you would very soon become one in the Sudan; at least you will learn to build as the negroes do. There are neither stones, lime, nor sand, nothing but water and more or less argillaceous soil. With that you must make bricks, mortar, and the mixture for graining, if graining you mean to have. The clay is kneaded with the feet, and when it is ready, what are called *tufas* are made of it, that is to say, flat or cylindrical bricks, which the mason or *baré* places horizontally between two layers of mortar. The *baré* sits astride on the wall he is building and chants the same tune over and over again, whilst his assistants silently pass up the *tufas* to him. I have noticed that all over the world masons and tile-makers are as light-hearted as birds.

Our best mason in this case was a big Sarracolais named Samba Demba, who generally acted as groom to our bicycle Suzanne. When he was at work on the wall it grew apace, and we too grew gay as we saw it rise, for with it increased our sense of security.

When the building went on well, we felt that everything else would go well too.

Our *tata* was a triangular wall, each of the three sides being from about eleven to sixteen yards long. It was thick enough to protect us from treacherous shots from old-fashioned rifles, and indeed also from the quick-firing

weapons which the English had sold some time ago to our enemy Samory. At a height of about six feet and a half some forty loopholes were made, distributed about equally over the three sides of the triangle formed by our wall. Inside, the walls were supported by buttresses about three feet thick, which served alike as seats and places in which to store our ammunition. The building seemed likely to

FORT ARCHINARD.

last well unless it should be disintegrated and washed away in a tornado some day; breaches will of course be made in it, parts of it will fall, but I expect, for a long time hence, its ruins will bear witness to the stay here of the French expedition, and to our effective occupation of the site.

I forget what king of Sego it was who rendered his *tata* impregnable by making human corpses its foundation. In default of such a precaution as this, which we refrained from taking, a few determined men might at any moment

have carried Fort Archinard by assault, but they would have paid dearly for their success.

On the summit of an ant-hill, at the top of the longest bamboo stem we could find, we hoisted the French flag.

And in this remote island of Archinard, more than two hundred leagues from any other European, we with our coolies lived for five months, and made the French name, beneath the protection of the French flag, respected in spite of old Amadu, in spite of the chief of Say, and of all their intrigues against us; yes, in spite of all hostile coalitions, in spite of the dreary rainy season, and of the home sickness which consumed us,—in a word, in spite of everything.

The *tata* once constructed, we were now free to consider our comfort a little, as we had really nothing better to do. Bluzet, who had already acted as architect of the fort, undertook the building of our huts. We each had our own palace, but what a simple palace! A circular hollow rick of straw some 12 feet in diameter, upheld by a central stake, interlaced stalks forming the framework of the roof, whilst ropes were woven in and out of the straw, forming with it a kind of net-work pattern. One little window was contrived in each hut, a mere porthole just big enough to let in air and light but not rain, whilst a low doorway was made on the opposite side to that from which we might expect tornadoes.

Lastly, to protect us from stray bullets, a little earthen wall, some 19 inches high, was erected inside our huts, so that it just covered us when we were lying full length at night. We each did our best to make our own particular niche cosy and ship-shape; but in justice it must be said that Baudry and I were the most successful, for we achieved quite a brilliant result. Baudry's straw walls were a perfect museum of watches, instruments,

medicines, patterns, objects for exchange, and strangest of all—toads!

Father Hacquart's hut was very soberly decorated. Sacred images were nailed to the central stake, and in the little wall—I very nearly said in a corner—was a cornet-à-piston, which was later the joy of the chief of Bussa, but of which I own with the deepest regret we never heard a single note.

FORT ARCHINARD.

With Bluzet the keynote of the decorations was art. He had draperies of velvet, a little faded and frayed perhaps, at nine-pence or so a yard, with others of native manufacture. Dr. Taburet's speciality was medicine-bottles, with a horrible smell of iodoform, or, to be more accurate, of all the disinfectants known to science, and carefully protected in a tin case set on a what-not, a souvenir he never parted with, and often gazed upon, the portrait of the lady he was to marry on his return home.

Fili Kanté, a boy in the service of Bluzet, who was not only cook but blacksmith and clown to the expedition, concocted a cocked hat for each of our pointed huts, which after a few tornadoes had passed over them were worn, so to speak, over one ear!

The huts of the men were all very much alike, but two on the side of the longest wall were of course rather larger than the others, and of a rectangular shape. Lastly, we had a big watertight store made, in which we stowed away all our valuables. The canvas sail of the foremast of the *Aube* fastened to the ground served as a kind of shelter for the interpreters, merchants, supernumeraries, etc., and everything was covered over to the best of our ability with our tents, awnings, etc.

Well, we were under shelter now, and you know what kind of shelter, from the inclemency of the rainy season and the bullets of the Toucouleurs. We had still storms to expect, and against them we were less well provided. We had already encountered a few of them unprotected. We had had plenty of tents, of course, but we knew from experience, that when we saw the preliminary fantasia of the dried leaves on the left bank beginning, the best thing to do was to put on as quickly as possible all the waterproofs to be had, and go outside to meet the hurricane, turning our backs to it, and at the same time tightening the ropes of the tents. It was really the only way not to get it—I mean the tent, not the hurricane—on our shoulders!

It took us a good month of hard work without any rest to establish our camp. Every morning one party went to fetch straw, whilst the rest of us kept guard at home and worked at the *tata*. We were all glad enough when everything was done, but at the same time we were rather afraid of the *ennui* of inaction, as the following quotation from my notes will show—

"*May* 16.—The *tata* was finished this morning, the huts a dining-room, and a *gurbi* or servants' hall, a kitchen, and an oven of a sort. There is nothing left to do now, for Suzanne is the only member of our expedition still without a shelter. *Mon Dieu*, how dull it will be!"

OSMAN.

Truth to tell, we did have some dull days, and no mistake; but of course we should have had them in garrison or on board ship. Fortunately, however, to relieve the monotony of our stay, a regular world in miniature gathered about us, for we had eager visitors, courtiers, accredited traders, not to speak of other guests we might have had if we had chosen.

I must now introduce a few of these people. Two men played a very important part in our existence at Fort Archinard. These two were Osman and Pullo. The former was the man from Say, the Koyrabero who had been waiting for us before we reached Sansan-Haussa, no doubt to spy on us, and who had come down to Say with us on the *Davoust;* a vulgar fellow, without either dignity or intelligence, he played the ignoble rôle of go-between all the time we were in the neighbourhood. Of Songhay race, with a dash of the Fulah in his composition, he had the duplicity of the latter, whilst retaining all the stupidity of the former.

He was physically a handsome fellow, with fine features, as black as a crow, but he was getting old now, and was afflicted not only with tubercular disease, but also with a kind of leprosy, which did not prevent him from shaking hands with us three times a day.

He often came with a marabout named Ali, who was further gone in consumption than himself.

Pullo, or Pullo Sidibé, to give his full title, was a very different kind of man. Tall, thin, with a comparatively pale complexion, he wore a filthy *chechia* or native cap a little on one side. He had a way of moving his arms up and down like a semaphore, and really rather resembled a big scarecrow in rags. With a mysterious air, such as a Sibyl might wear, he was constantly taking one or another of us aside to some corner, or to an ant-hill or mound, far from indiscreet listeners, to impart in a solemn manner some utterly incredible false news of which we shall have an example to give presently. I must mention, too, the way in which he used to smile when we pointed out to him in a friendly way the mistakes he had made. "Ah," he would say to me laughing, "I shall never go back to my fields as long as you are here, I shall never

look after my flock again. You are my milch cow, you are my great *lugan*."

He was at no pains to disguise the true motives for his devotion, and we were at least able to hope to bind him to us by self-interest.

Osman and Pullo had certain qualities in common, for both were equally covetous of presents, and equally ready to tell lies with imperturbable seriousness; but whereas Pollo carried on his deceptions with the air of a grand seignior and the smile of a superior man, such as a Fulah might wear who had been brought in contact with the Tuaregs, Osman showed his avarice and venality without the slightest attempt at disguise.

The two enjoyed a monopoly of the news, generally false, as I have already said, brought to us from the Say market. They hit upon another dodge too, and a very lucrative one; this was to introduce to us envoys more or less genuine, and more or less interesting, from the chiefs of the outlying districts and villages. At first Pullo or Khalifa, as he was also called, worked at this trade alone, and it would be our first amusement in the morning to climb the ant-hill in front of the fort and look out for him. We generally saw him pretty soon, his approach heralded by a red spot on the horizon.

I read in my notes of May 16—"At about eight o'clock, far away on the borders of the wood in the direction of Say, we see approaching the thin figure of Pullo Sidibé, surmounted by his dirty fez, balanced in an uncertain kind of way upon his head. He is followed by a gentleman in a clean white *bubu*. 'Page, pretty page,' we cry, 'what news do you bring?'

With this extraordinary personage everything is possible. I expect some morning to hear him announce with the air of some herald of a great embassy, "Amadu Cheiku!

the Emir el Munemin, or perhaps even the Grand Turk, or her Majesty the Queen!"

All went well for some time with Pullo, but when Osman realized the rewards to be obtained by bringing news or envoys, he set up as a rival to our first friend. The envoys,

PULLO KHALIFA.

who were generally picked up in the Friday market at Say, now came in pairs, each with his own showman.

After this opposition was set up, a syndicate was of course sure to follow. I suspect, however, that if Osman sometimes got the chestnuts out of the fire, it was generally Khalifa who ate them.

I had to dwell rather fully on these two fellows, they

played such a very preponderant part in our lives, but there were others of secondary rank, so to speak, of whom I must say a few words.

To begin with, there was the acting chief of the opposite village named Mamadu, as at least half of his fellow-believers are. With a clear complexion and an intelligent expression, he was still a regular scamp, ready to lend himself to any treachery. In the Fulah language there is a word which means "give a little present so as to get a very big one." I am not sure whether there is any word corresponding to this in Songhay, but there is not the slightest doubt that the Koyraberos know how to practise the manœuvre suggested by the word, and Mamadu was an adept at it. On one occasion, however, his hopes of a present were disappointed, and he was guilty of a very great mistake. We simply had to turn him out of the camp, and from that moment he became all submission to us. Our coolies in their free-spoken way nicknamed him the blackguard Mamadu, and no doubt he had well merited the epithet by some dastardly deed they knew of.

A TYPICAL KOURTEYE.

Amongst our constant visitors was one quite small boy, the son of the famous Abd el Kader of Timbuktu, who had been the guest of the French Geographical Society there, a corresponding member of that of Paris, the great diplomatist who had been made a plenipotentiary in spite of himself, and who had acted as guide to my friend Caron in his grand journey. Abd el Kader, when driven from Timbuktu, wandered about in the districts near the

bend of the river. No doubt under pretence of making a pilgrimage to Mecca, he lived like a true marabout at the expense of the natives, seducing many women, and leaving many children behind him whose mothers he had deserted. It is said that he is now with Samory.

His little son to whom I referred above was called "the Arabu." He was very proud of his parentage, and looked upon his father as a saint. Though small for his age, he had a big head of the shape known as hydrocephalic, and was a very sensible, intelligent little fellow, with quite refined instincts. From our first arrival at Say he had bravely come to see us on our barges, and though he was trembling in all his limbs as he spoke, he explained his position clearly to us. We made a great fuss over him, giving him sugar to eat. The gamins of Say looked upon him as partly a white, and partly what they call a *tubabu*. Strange to say, when there was any difficulty with the market-women, who sometimes made a great noise, singing seditious songs and dancing to their accompaniment, shouting out praises of Aliburi or Amadu, it was always the little Arabu who was deputed to go and pacify them. As he expressed it, "the son of an ambassador, I too am an ambassador!"

ARABU.

This child grew quite fond of us. Being on his father's side of more or less Twat origin, he considered himself

a white man like ourselves, and of all our guests he was perhaps the only disinterested one, if we say nothing about the sugar.

Amongst the Koyraberos, it is the children, boys or girls, who are the most attractive. The little negroes are innocent enough up to twelve or thirteen years old, and are often very bright and intelligent. But when they reach the age at which they are considered men and women, the indulgence of their passions brutalizes the males, whilst the females are worn out by the number of children they all have. The fatalism of the Mahommedans gives them also something of the wan expression of oxen who expect they know not what. I believe the negro race might be very greatly improved by the careful selection of children before they are subjected to evil influences. A careful education of such selected boys and girls would, in the course of a few generations, result in the growing up of useful citizens and intelligent workers for the common good.

It may be that the decline in the intelligence of negroes is partly the result of the way the children are carried about in infancy by their mothers. They ride pig-a-back all day long, kept in place by a cotton band fastened above the breasts of the mother, who takes no notice of them even when they cry. The women do everything, wash, beat the linen, cook and pound the grain, with their children tied to them in this fashion. The head of the poor little one comes out above the bandage, and is shaken and flung backwards and forwards at every blow of the pestle. It really is very likely that this perpetual motion injures the brain of the growing child, and accounts for the degeneration of the race.

However that may be, the constant pressure on the breasts of the mother leads to their rapid disfigurement;

they look quite old before they have reached middle life. Every one knows that negresses often give the breast to their babies over their shoulders or even from under the arm-pit.

So far the French have taken no steps for the effective occupation of Say, and Amadu Cheiku has been undisputed master of the country ever since the breaking at Sinder of the power of Madidu over the Tuaregs. Dunga was the first place in which the Toucouleurs settled for any time. After their exodus many circumstances combined in favour of their chief. Driven from Sego, Nioro, and Massina by the French, as a punishment for his many crimes and treacheries, he took refuge at Duentza near Dori, but as, like a good marabout, he tried (from religious motives of course) to poison the chief and reign in his stead, he was expelled from the town and had once more to flee for his life. Many of his people deserted him and returned to Massina. Wandering as a fugitive from village to village he passed his days begging from hut to hut, trying in vain to win back the deserters.

The Toucouleurs found it difficult to get a living now, for no one would treat them as marabouts any longer. The Fulahs of Torodi refused to let them pass. Ibrahim Galadio, whose influence was preponderant throughout the country, was not favourable to the Toucouleurs, and they now took possession of Larba in independent Songhay, but the Logomaten, or the Tuaregs of Bokar Wandierdu, defeated them with much bloodshed and took three hundred of them prisoners.

The toils were closing in upon Amadu Cheiku, who, taught caution by experience, expected to find the French skirmishers at his heels before they were really there. Things did indeed look black for him, when a saviour suddenly arose in the person of the chief of Say, who had

won back Galadio and Amiru of Torodi to the cause of the true religion, and at the very time that he was signing a treaty with the French, gave passage to Amadu, against whom he had been pretending to need our help.

Amadu crossed the river, and was hospitably received by the people of Djerma, who gave him the village of Dungu for himself and his people.

Profiting by family quarrels, the wily chief soon became master, and presently took possession of the big village of Karma, and it was not until they were all taken prisoners, that the Djermankobes discovered that they had been warming and feeding a serpent.

Now Amadu is once more a great marabout in right of his inheritance from his father, El Hadj Omar. He is also a formidable military chief, able to put five hundred guns into the field, for he has that number of Toucouleur warriors under him. His word is paramount from Sinder to Kibtachi. Unfortunate circumstances, including the blood shed by the Christians, have won to his side the whole of the Mussulman population, and besides his five hundred guns, he can dispose of from ten to twenty thousand so-called archers or men armed with spears.

His aim, or rather that of his principal adviser, Aliburi, who is really the organizer of everything, seems to be to join hands on the one side with Samory, and on the other with the Sultan of Sokoto, from whom, however, he is divided by the Kebbi, Mauri, and Gober. Moreover, Samory has a brother who was the leader of the column which took to flight after the French success at Nioro. He will achieve his ends unless we can prevent it, for his confederation is strengthened by the fact that all are united in devotion to the Mussulman faith, whilst the various native tribes combined against him, though they are individually

braver and stronger, have nothing to bind them together or to lead them to act in concert.

If this union be brought about, the three great slave-dealers of Western Africa—Samory, Amadu, and the Emir el Munemin of Sokoto, will be combined against all comers, and we may expect to see the complete depopulation of the Niger districts above Say. Amadu has already begun his operations down-stream, where the banks are deserted, the villages in ruins, and, where once the Toucouleurs women came to draw water and to wash their clothes, grow quantities of wild flowers and creepers.

Let us hope, however, that the recent occupation of Fandu, and the French policy of establishing an effective protectorate over the negro races may produce a salutary effect.[1]

The only man in a position to make head against Amadu was Ibrahim Galadio, a stranger to the country, whose father had fled there, chased from Massina by the Fulahs of Amadu, the great founder of the ephemeral dynasty of Hamda-Allahi. Galadio has guns, Galadio has a *tata*, he is as strong as the Toucouleurs, and no one would be able to understand his rallying to the cause of Amadu Cheiku, and submitting to him, if it were not for the prestige still attached to the name of that chief's father, El Hadj Omar. Yet the former Sultan of Sego is, as every one knows, a Mussulman, with neither faith nor belief in any law, stained with numerous crimes, a traitor to his

[1] The occupation of Say is now an accomplished fact, and Amadu has fled in a north-westerly direction ; but the French must be more than ever careful to be on their guard against his forces, aided by those of the Emir of Sokoto. We must be especially on the watch against offensive action on the part of Samory, for does not a certain section of the English press talk of arming and rousing against us that monster in human form who under pretext of a holy war is responsible for the destruction of thousands of his fellow-creatures ?

father, cursed even by him, cruel to his women, the murderer of his brothers, avaricious in dealing with his *sofas*, and above all the founder of a heresy.

The Torodi are hand and glove with the Tuaregs, and the people of Say side with them, but the latter are not of much account as warriors. Say is really nothing more than a hot-house for breeding second-rate and intolerant

A FEMALE TUAREG BLACKSMITH IN THE SERVICE OF IBRAHIM GALADIO.

marabouts. No *tam-tams*, no games are allowed in it, and only on account of its past has it some little historic importance.

The Gaberos, the revolted vassals of the Awellimiden, are also on Amadu's side. They rallied round him voluntarily from the first, but one day when they were beating their *tabalas* or war-drums, an envoy from Dungu ran through the villages and staved in those drums, which amongst negroes is considered the greatest insult. With

him went a herald shouting—"Henceforth there is no *tabala* in the land, but that of Amadu Cheiku, the son of El Hadj Omar!"

At the invocation of that name so full of prestige, the Gaberos bowed their heads, and very soon afterwards they had to pay taxes like every one else.

The Sidibees soon joined them, for they and the Gaberos both belong to the Fulah race.

Other tribes such as the Sillabees, like the Wagobes of Sinder and the Sarracolais of the Senegal districts, had emigrated here, after intestine quarrels with the Djanaru of Nioro, whilst the Kurteyes, who are Fulahs of Massina, joined the Rimaibes or domestic slaves, and the Bozos or emigrants from Fituka, in the time of the Ardos of Massina under the last of the Askias.

This fact of their mixed origin will explain the courage of these warrior tribes, for the Fulahs of pure descent are by no means remarkable for bravery.

Even during our stay at Say, the Wagobés, the Kurteyes, and the Sillabees were certainly on Amadu's side, though their devotion was rather lukewarm. Perhaps if they had known that we meant to stay in the country, and had not been afraid of reprisals after we left, they would have declared themselves on our side; in a lukewarm way of course. It is in fact on these mixed tribes, which are neither entirely Songhay nor Fulah, though they are all Mussulmans, that we shall have to depend in our future occupation of the districts under notice.

In the present state of Say politics we must also take the Gurma, the Fandu, and the Mossi people into account. They are all heathens, but unfortunately the Mahommedan religion daily wins recruits amongst these people, who were once devoted to fetichism alone. True heathens, as heathens, are not worth much, for they are cruel, addicted to drink,

and credulous of the delusions their sorcerers teach them; but they are worth a great deal more than the Mussulmans, for fetichism may be improved upon and turned to account, but you can do nothing with a Mahommedan.

The policy which ought to be followed in the districts round Say is to oppose the marabout coalition which has rallied about Amadu, with the fetich-worshipping people of Gurma and the lukewarm Mussulmans of Dendi and Kebbi. They can be made a defence against the intrusion of fanaticism and intolerance.

Having now, as I hope, given something of an idea of our surroundings, let me relate how we passed the day at Fort Archinard.

At about half-past five in the morning, the one of us five whites who happened to be on duty, shouted the order as if we were on board ship, "Clear the decks!" There was rarely any delay in giving that order, for it ended the watch for the night, and when one has been walking the quarter-deck for some hours, one hastens to go and get a little sleep before daybreak, for in these stifling nights the only refreshing rest is that obtained in the early morning.

The coolies now lazily bestir themselves. Digui, who is the first to get up, makes them put away their bedding and take down the mosquito-nets, etc., shouting a kind of parody of orders on board ship, "Roll up your kits, roll up your kits!" for they all love to fancy themselves sailors, and are proud of the name.

Then when all are up and dressed, and everything is stowed away, all turn towards the rising sun to perform their devotions, for most of our men are Mussulmans. Some of them, who were but lukewarm believers when in their homes on the Senegal, become more and more devout the further they are from their country. Much of it is mere

show, of course. Others really have a kind of instinctive religion, a sort of superstitious terror of the unseen—what may be called the natural religion of fear. In every other respect however, they are brave enough: we have had plenty of proof of that.

I must add here, however, that I have remarked rather a singular fact, namely, that great religious zeal and endless prostrations, with much posing and genuflexion, generally coincide with fits of dishonesty, lying, and treacherous behaviour. One of our fellows, who had hitherto been honest enough, took simultaneously to prayer and pilfering our beads; and a man in whom I had before had great confidence strutted about wearing strings of stolen property on his neck and arms without any attempt at disguise. This put me on my guard. Of course he had every reason to ask pardon of God for his sins and to keep on muttering, "*Astafar wallaye, astafar wallaye!*—Pardon, pardon!" At the same time he had taken to filching goods in the market, an aggravating circumstance of this crime being that he was trusted to look after our purchases.

There were of course some really devout Mahommedans amongst our men. Samba Ahmady, our quarter-master, for instance, always performed his devotions in private, and was a model of probity. Digui too was a true believer, but perhaps I should say of him that he was a philosopher rather than a blinded Mahommedan. He knew how to return thanks to Allah without any ostentation when we had safely got through some difficulty or danger, and whilst admitting that there were such people as bad marabouts, he sometimes talked in a manner alike naïve, touching, and elevated, of the dealings of Providence with man, which is indeed rare, especially amongst illiterate negroes.

Then Ahmady Mody, another trustworthy fellow, had a theory of his own about salaams, and all that. I said to

him one day, "Why don't you perform your salaam when the others do?"

"Commandant," he replied, "I am too small; I will do it when I am married."

Well, the morning devotions over, we used to go to work, for there was always something to do; the boats needed repair, or we had to add to the *tata*, to unpack and repack the bales, send out parties to cut wood or straw, and last,

REPAIRING THE 'AUBE'

not least, to drill the men, and make them practice shooting at a target. We used to hear our carpenter Abdulaye singing as he conscientiously worked at oar-making, and his song did not vary by an iota all the time we were at Say. It was a very monotonous rhythm consisting of one word, *Sam-ba-la-a-bé-é-é-é-é-é-é-*. Samba Laobé, be it understood, was one of the heroes of the native resistance of the French in Cayor, and was killed in single combat with Sub-Lieutenant Chauvey of the Spahis in 1886. I don't think

Abdulaye knew more of the song about this Samba than the word forming part of his name, and though it was a seditious composition we could not be angry with him, as he evidently had not the least idea what it all meant.

Abdulaye, who was a big, well-built Wolof, had but one ambition during our stay at Fort Archinard, and that was to be allowed to go and smash in the jaw of his fellow-countryman Aliburi, a native of his own village. This Aliburi is a tool of Amadu, chief champion of the war to the death with the French, so Abdulaye wishes to kill him if his master is not to be got at. "Aliburi," he would say, "is a bad Wolof."

When the camp was cleaned and tidied up, the native traders, male and female, came with their wares, for we had started a market at Fort Archinard. When our occupation began, one of our chief fears was that we should suffer from famine through Amadu's declared hostility to us. True, there was a village opposite to our camp, and if the worst came to the worst, we could always make an armed requisition in Say itself. But I was very averse to any such measures. They would have been far too great a departure from the pacific tactics we had so far pursued, and which were enjoined by our instructions. I was anxious to preserve that attitude, and to carry out my instructions to the letter. The people at Say seemed at the first very unwilling to sell us anything. They, of course, ran considerable risk of being robbed on their way to us, indeed this really did happen more than once, and the chief of Say, though he did not forbid their coming to our camp, did not encourage it, so that those who did venture asked extortionate prices, thirty-five to forty cubits, or about twenty-one yards of stuff for a sheep, for instance; but we were able to buy good food for ourselves and our men, which was the most important thing after all.

The first thing in the morning we used to see the native traders squatting on the bank opposite Fort Archinard waiting for the little barge worked by a few men, to go over and fetch them. Most of these merchants I must add were women, and I really do think that before they left Say they must have passed an examination in ugliness, for I never saw such frights anywhere as our first lady visitors here.

OUR MARKET AT FORT ARCHINARD.

As time goes on I know many discover something like beauty in native women, and there are some who think them as good-looking as their sisters of pale complexions. Even those who do not exactly admire them are interested in them because they are types of a race, but for all that, negresses, like English women when they are ugly at all, are really revoltingly ugly.

Well, ugly or not, our market-women soon set out their wares on a kind of platform a little up-stream from the

camp. The *bugnul*, or negro trader, has his own particular mode of proceeding; he does not expect to be spoken to, everything is done by gesture. The *djula*, or merchant, crouches on the ground, with his wares spread out in front of him. The buyer passes along, looks at the wares, and offers his cowries or cloth in exchange. If the price is suitable the bargain is concluded, if not the *djula* shakes his

MARKET AT FORT ARCHINARD.

head, making a sign, signifying "No," and the would-be buyer goes away or squats down himself to await his time. Sometimes the price is lowered, or the purchaser adds a few cowries to his original offer. There is none of the noise usual in European markets, none of the flow of language so characteristic of them. Each party to a bargain tries to tire out the other, but neither of them wastes any words.

The first price asked by a negro is never the same as that

he means to take. A reduction of at least half, sometimes much more, is made.

Not knowing what attitude the Koyraberos might assume towards us in the future, our first care on our arrival at the site of Fort Archinard was to take advantage of their present good-will, and buy in a good store of cereals and animals.

We soon made up our minds what prices we would give, for the circumstances were exceptional, and we wanted rice or millet and sheep enough to last us for three months. That once accomplished, we could afford to think of economy and fix our own prices. The currency employed was white cloth, and my private opinion is that certain commercial arrangements were agreed upon amongst the notables of Say, showing no mean intelligence on their part. They meant to buy up all our merchandise, whether cloth, copper, or beads.

This is what actually happened; as we only gave one or two cubits of cloth for objects of little value, no real use could be made of them, so they were sold again to speculators, who bought them at a very low price from their needy owners, and then hid them away. Nothing more was seen of them during our stay, but when we were gone they meant to produce them, and ask extortionate prices for them.

Our average prices fluctuated in an extraordinary way. We presently superseded Suleyman, who was too much of a talker, and tried other men as buyers, but we really had not a single coolie who was a good *djula;* at last in despair Baudry was obliged to take the task upon himself, and every morning he went to market to lay in a supply of provisions, buying grain and sheep, milk and butter. He was probably the only buyer who took no perquisites for himself.

We got to know personally all the frightful negresses

who served us. We talked to them at first by signs, every one using a kind of language of his own. Father Hacquart became very popular amongst them, for he could speak the Arabic employed by the so-called marabouts, and haggle in Songhay with the Koyraberos, whether male or female. Some of the negresses hit upon a very clever dodge, for

A YOUNG GIRL OF SAY.

instead of selling, they gave. They brought presents to the Father, to the Commandant, and to the other officers, such various gifts as calabashes of honey, eggs, milk, poultry, etc., but the principle was always to give a little to receive much. Truth to tell, it is very difficult to refuse to fall in with the idea when the presents are offered in such an insinuating way.

By these means we started a fine poultry farm, and our chickens lived in the abattis of our enceinte. Their life was not altogether a happy one at Fort Archinard; they became too familiar, and, poor things, this cost them dear. Bluzet and I—this is a merciless age—used to shoot at them from a little bow with arrows made of bits of bamboo pointed with a pin, waging pitiless war on those who came to drink at our well, or who dared to go so far as to disturb us when we had gone to snatch a little rest and coolness in our huts.

We made rather an important discovery in connection with this shooting of our poultry. Osman had secretly smuggled some poisoned arrows into our camp, and we drove the point of one of them into the head of a hen which had already been wounded by Bluzet. The result was astonishing, for the next day the hen was cured of her first hurt, and able to run about as if nothing had happened.

This must not, however, lead any one to be careless about wounds from poisoned arrows: some are always mortal. The stuff with which they are smeared consists of wax and *kuna*, or extract of a common gum, forming a very strong poison which, however, quickly loses its efficacy. The best thing to do when struck by such an arrow is to burn the wound immediately, or to inject chloride of gold all round it under the skin. A simpler treatment still is just to fill the wound with gunpowder and set fire to it; but this is rather too Spartan a remedy for everybody.

Our market was the chief excitement of the morning, for in it we could study typical natives, and note the special peculiarities of each. The population of Say and the surrounding districts is very mixed, including Songhays, Fulahs, Haussas, Djermankobes, Macimankes, Mossi, Gurunsi,

Kurteyes, etc., each with cicatrized wounds of a different kind on their faces, as is the case with so many African tribes.

The market, too, is the best place for getting reliable news, and besides, the very attitude of the different traders towards each other is a revelation of the state of feeling in the country. If a great many assembled it was a sign that

TYPICAL NATIVES AT THE FORT ARCHINARD MARKET.

all was going on well for us, that the report of the French Expedition was spreading, and that Amadu Saturu was likely to come to his senses about us. If the attendance at the market fell off, however, it was a sign that hostile columns were being called together, why we could not tell, but probably to attack us ; or again some new check was to be put upon our buying or selling. Once indeed Amadu made a feeble effort to reduce us by famine, and our supply of sheep was stopped for a time. But a threat made to

Osman on purpose that he should repeat it, that we would go and fetch the sheep from Say for ourselves, was immediately successful, for the next day the best and cheapest animals we had yet procured were brought to us. We never ate better mutton before or since.

Whilst the market was going on, Taburet used to prescribe for many natives who came to consult him. But carelessness and ignorance work terrible havoc among the negroes everywhere. There would be plenty for a doctor to do who cared to study diseases now become rare in civilized countries. From amongst the patients who came to Taburet, a grand or rather terrible list of miraculous cures might have been drawn up. These patients included men and women suffering from tubercular and syphilitic diseases, which had been allowed to run their dread course unchecked by any remedies whatever; many too were blind or afflicted with goitre and elephantiasis, whilst there were numerous lepers. Few, however, were troubled with nervous complaints. It was indeed difficult to prescribe for such cases as came before the good doctor; indeed it would often have been quite impossible for his instructions to be carried out. Many poor cripples came from a long distance to consult the white doctor, expecting to be made whole immediately, when they were really incurable. Where, however, would have been the good of prescribing cleanliness, when one of their most used remedies is to smear any wound with mud and cow-dung mixed together, the eyes of ophthalmic patients even being treated with the horrible stuff? Where would be the good of ordering them nourishing food such as gravy beef, when they are too poor to get it? Good wine? Even if we could have supplied them with it, they would have flung it away with horror, for they are Mussulmans. Quinine then? Its bitterness would have made them suspect poison. They all came expecting

miracles, and all that could be done for them was to paint their sore places with iodine, and to give them various lotions and antiseptic dressings, or a solution of iodide of potassium, and so on, from the use of which they would, most of them, obtain no benefit at all.

Taburet was consulted about all sorts of things. For instance, a pretty Fulah woman from Saga with a pale complexion and engaging manners had got into trouble. She had overstepped the bounds of reserve prescribed in her tribe to young girls, and was soon to become a mother. Well, she came timidly to the doctor to ask for medicines for her case, and when it was explained to her that that case was incurable, for the French law forbids the destruction of life, she went away, only to return the next day with her mother. The latter explained that if she and her daughter returned to their village as things were, they would both be stoned to death, or at least, if their judges were merciful, be put in irons for the rest of their lives. The young girl was pretty, many men in her village had asked her in marriage, but she had refused them all. All her people were now eager to revenge themselves on her, and to apply in all their terrible rigour, the "just Mussulman laws." She had neither father, brother, nor any one to defend her. Her seducer had deserted her, and it is not customary amongst the Fulahs to make inquiries as to the father of illegitimate children.

The people of Say had recommended the mother in mockery to take her girl to the Christians, she was good for nothing else now, they said. If we could not cure her, there was nothing left for them to do but to hide themselves in the fetich-worshipping village of Gurma, where they would lead a miserable life, unnoticed and unknown.

The two poor women with tears in their eyes knelt to the doctor imploring his help, and crying *Safarikoy!*

Safarikoy! and I asked myself, what would be the duty of a doctor in this bigoted land if he had had the necessary instruments for meeting the unfortunate girl's wishes. Perhaps it was as well that in this case nothing could be done.

All the same this domestic drama was very heart-rending. I tried for a long time to console our visitors. The old woman stuck to her request for medicine, and promised to reward us with everything she could think of likely to please us. She even offered us her daughter, saying that she might remain with us, and could follow us wherever we went.

I told Digui to get rid of them as gently as possible, and gave them a good present to enable them to reach some heathen village where the people would have pity on them. They departed at last, the mother's tears soaking her tattered garments, the daughter following her, her little feet swollen with walking, and her head drooping in her despair.

À propos of this episode, Suleyman the interpreter held forth in the following strain—"From the earliest times prophets, marabouts, and the negro chiefs who founded the religious dynasty of the country, have been terribly severe on any lapse from morality amongst their women, but it is all humbug, for most of the marabouts are the fathers of illegitimate children.

"Amongst Amadu's people the man and woman who have sinned are deprived of all their property, but Abdul Bubakar goes still further, for he sacks the entire village to which a frail woman belongs, a capital way of getting slaves and everything else. In other districts the woman is put in irons, but the man goes free; but if the seducer comes forward and owns his crime, he can obtain remission of the punishment by payment of a large sum to the chief

of the village; generally, however, the unfortunate girl dies in her chains.

"Such are the manners and customs of the Mussulmans, and God alone knows what their women are really like.

"Samory used to kill both the guilty parties, but Tieba, his enemy and neighbour, professed an amiable kind of

WOMEN OF SAY.

philosophy on the subject of the weaker sex and the ways of women. When Samory was conquered by Tieba, the chief auxiliaries of the latter were the nomad Diulas who were strangers in the land. These Diulas had come to the district by way of Sikasso, where they had met with women of free and easy manners, and had been driven by the force of circumstances to remain amongst them, adopting their ways. Now it generally happens amongst the negroes, that those who have travelled much and seen

something of the world are not only brave but sensible and free from bigotry.

"Samory, who was so fond of cutting off heads in obedience to the injunctions of the Koran, had a wife named Sarankeni, who is still his favourite, and she was the one to lay her finger on the cause of his defeat, when he was still smarting from its effects. She saw that it was the women of easy morals who prevented the strangers who had aided Tieba from deserting him in his need. Samory was open to conviction, and since then"—according to Suleyman, though I think he exaggerated—"if one of the chief's people discovers that a woman or a daughter of his house has gone wrong, he gives a fee to the seducer, or at least offers him refreshments and speaks him fair, and this has now become the fashion throughout the districts reigned over by the great Fama. Sarankeni, the favourite, the giver of the advice which led to the change, is alone excepted from the new rule." Probably, as she is still young, she had a very different motive for her conduct than that generally accepted.

Whilst the market was going on, we used also to make a tour of inspection in our kitchen-garden. An officer of the garrison of Timbuktu had been good enough to give us some packets of the usual seeds, and under the skilled direction of the doctor we had had a plot of ground cleared, manured, and planted. To sow seed is one thing, however, to reap results is another, and in spite of the delicate attentions of Atchino, our man from Dahomey, our gardener for the nonce, who religiously watered the seeds every morning, and in spite of the visits we paid to our plantations at dawn and eventide, no great results ensued. Probably the sheep and goats, who were greedy creatures all of them, got the pick of everything, in spite of the thorn hedge we had put up round our garden.

All we got ourselves were a few big tomatoes, some cucumbers, some little pink radishes, and two or three salads. You can just imagine our delight when on one occasion Taburet triumphantly brought in three radishes apiece.

For all that, we can't be too grateful for our garden. If we did not get many vegetables, we always had the hope of getting some, and the pleasure of watching the growth of various weeds which we expected to turn out to be lettuces, beetroots, or cabbages, and we used to say joyfully, "When that is big enough to eat, or when this is ready," and so on. The hope of luxuries, when we are provided with all that is absolutely necessary, is always cheering.

Whilst we are on the subject of food, I may as well say a little about what we lived on during our stay at Fort Archinard. In spite of our long distance from home we must be strictly accurate, and I am almost ashamed to own that we were never reduced to having to eat our dogs. Nor was the reason for this the fact that we had no dogs with us to eat. Far from that; we had three dogs, one after the other, not to speak of the cats already referred to. Our three dogs were all, I don't know why, called Meyer. They were yellow, famished-looking beasts, who were native to the country, and rather savage. All came to a sad end and got lost, but I don't know exactly what became of them. Once more, however, I swear by Mahomet we did not eat one of them.

Although we ate no dogs we managed to subsist, for we were never without sheep or rice. The diet was not much to boast of, and we had to keep a whole flock in our island always, for there was very little pasturage on our small domain for some twenty or thirty animals. After a few days of such nourishment as they got, our sheep became anæmic, and their flesh turned a greenish colour. Still we

managed to eat it in semi-darkness. On the other hand, our rice was always good. That grown in the country is small, and of a slightly reddish colour. It swells less in cooking than the white rice of Cochin China or Pegu, but it has a nicer and a stronger taste. Taburet used to swear by all the heathen gods that he would never eat rice, yet very soon he could not do without it. Fili Kanté, already mentioned, turned out a first-rate cook, and he really did deserve praise for what he achieved, for we were none of us able to help him with advice. True, the Commandant had made everybody's mouth water by saying that he would take charge of the pot as soon as the expedition arrived at Say; but he never troubled his head about the matter again.

He did, however, sometimes preside at the cooking of *mechuis*, that is to say, of sheep roasted whole on the spit in the Arab style, and the *mechuis* of Fort Archinard were celebrated—on the island!

Rice and mutton were the staples of our meals. Every morning Fili Kanté used to come to the chief of the mess and say, as if he were announcing a new discovery—"I shall give you mutton and rice to-day, Lieutenant."—"And what else?" I would ask.—"An omelette."—"And after that?"—"A *nougat* and some cheese."

You read that word *nougat?* Well now, would you like to know what it was made of? Here is the recipe (not quite the same as that for Montélimar almond cake): Take some honey; make it boil; add to it some pea-nuts shelled and ground. Turn it all out on to a cold plate—the bottom of an empty tin will do if you have nothing else—and let it stand till cold.

It makes a capital dessert, I can tell you, especially when there is nothing better to be had.

You read, too, that we were to have cheese. We could

generally get as much milk as we liked, and it made a first-rate cheese the second day; quite delicious, I assure you. We generally had cheese for all our mid-day meals, and *nougat* at supper or dinner, whichever you like to call it.

Sometimes, too, we fished, but there was not very much to be got out of the Niger near Fort Archinard; now and then, however, we succeeded in making a good haul, enough for a meal, with the use of a petard of gun-cotton.

The fish we caught in the Niger were much the same as those found in the Senegal. The kind the natives call "captains" and *ntébés* are very delicate in flavour, and often of considerable size. We once caught a "captain" at Gurao on the Debo, weighing nearly 80 lbs. It took two men to carry it, and when it was hung from a pole it trailed on the ground. But we rarely had such luck as this at Fort Archinard.

Another kind of fish, called the *machoiran*, with very flat jaws, was to be found in the mud and ooze of the Niger, but beware of eating its flesh. If, it is said, you cut the fat off its tail (Heaven only knows if it has any), by mistake, at full moon, and then drink some fresh milk, and sleep out of doors for the rest of the night on a white coverlet, and then in the morning drink a basin of water, you will surely catch leprosy. I don't suppose the lepers of Say had really taken all these precautions to ensure having the disease.

I must add that there is one thing which all travellers in Africa will find very useful. I allude to the Prevet tablets of condensed food. We can justly testify to their efficacy, whether they are Julienne, carrots, Brussels sprouts, pears, or apples. They are light, easily carried, and easily divided. To have used them once is recommendation enough, but it is necessary to know how to prepare them,

and not to follow Baudry's example, who one day served us some Prevet spinach, which tasted for all the world like boiled hay. If ever you travel with him, don't make him chief of the commissariat.

In the morning we also worked at making our map, for we should certainly never have been able to finish it in Paris in the limited time we should be allowed for it.

FORT ARCHINARD.

We made a duplicate copy of the map, *grosso modo*, from Timbuktu to Say, to guard against the possible loss of one of the barges. Then came the time for taking our daily dose of twenty centigrammes of quinine dissolved in two centilitres of alcohol, which, truth to tell, was anything but pleasant to the taste. Even Abdulaye himself, who could swallow anything, made a wry face at this terrible mixture; but to help us to digest the everlasting mutton and rice boiled in water, and to keep down the

symptoms of fever which threatened us all, nothing could be better.

I cannot too often insist on the fact that it was, thanks to the daily dose of quinine regularly administered by order to every member of the expedition, that we owe our safe return in good health, and with appetites unimpaired.

We owe to it, too, the fact that in spite of many fevers in past days, we actually had gained, on our return to Paris, not only in weight, but in our power of enjoying a joke.

Last January, after my return to France, I had been giving an account at a public meeting of the results of my expedition, and my companions and I were going down the staircase of the Sorbonne, attended by a considerable crowd, when two gentlemen, radiant with health, evidently from the French colonies, and geographers, else why were they there? exchanged their impressions as they passed us. "Pooh," said one of them, shrugging his shoulders, "they have not even got dirty heads!"

After lunch we all went to take a little siesta, or at least to rest during the great heat of the day. The siesta, though so much in use in the tropics, is really a very bad habit, and many ailments of the stomach are caused by it. It is really better only to indulge in a noonday nap after exceptional fatigue; but of course it is a very different matter just to avoid active exercise immediately after a meal, and to read quietly without going to sleep. To wind up all this advice to future travellers in the Sudan, let me just add this one more word, "Do as I say rather than as I did."

Many of the coolies did not go to sleep in the resting hour, but chatted together about the news of the day, or gave each other a little elementary instruction, for negroes,

even when grown up, are very fond of teaching and of being taught. Their ambition, however, is generally limited to learning to write a letter to their friends or family. They take great delight in corresponding with the absent, and I have known young fellows in the Sudan who spend nearly all their salaries in sending telegraphic despatches to their friends. I knew others, amongst whom was Baudry's servant, who gave up most of their free time at Say to writing letters which never reached their destination, for a very good reason. They were all much in the style of the one quoted below—

"Dear Mr. Fili Kanté,—I write to inform you that the Niger Hydrographical Expedition has arrived at Fort Archinard, and that, thanks to God, all are well. When you write to me, send me news of my father and mother, and my friends at Diamu (the writer's native village). I shall be very pleased, too, if you will send the twelve samba (*sembé*) (coverlets), four horses, ten sheep, etc.

"With my best greetings, dear Mr. Fili Kanté.

"(Signed) MUSSA DIAKHITE
(in the service of Mr. Baudry.)"

Might you not fancy this letter, with all its decorative strokes, to be one from the soldier Dumanet to his parents? Nothing is wanted to complete the resemblance, not even the attempt to fleece his correspondent.

Besides these lovers of correspondence, there were others who were mad about arithmetic. Samba Demba, Suzanne's groom, already often mentioned, wanted to know enough arithmetic to matriculate. All through the hour of the siesta, and often also when he was at work, he was muttering the most absurd numbers over to himself; absurd for him, at least, for the negroes who do not live where

the cowry serves as currency, cannot conceive the idea of any number beyond a thousand. Samba Demba would read what he called his "matricula" of nine figures and more, to Father Hacquart, with the greatest complacency, whilst Ahmady-Mody, who had patched up the *Aube*, strove in vain to learn *b-a ba, b-e be*, or twice two are four, twice three are six, with his head bent over a big card. The marabout Tierno Abdulaye actually composed and sung Arabic verses. In the midst of it all the voice of Dr. Taburet would be heard from his tent hard by complaining that he could not sleep.

All these good fellows, with their eagerness to learn, had a child-like side to their characters. There is no doubt that they would very quickly learn to read, write, and cipher, as the advertisements of elementary schools express it—read without understanding too much, write without knowing what, and calculate without ever being able to apply their arithmetic. Anyhow, however, even this little knowledge will wean them from the pernicious influence of the marabouts.

After sunset the heat became more bearable, and the time for our evening bath arrived. At the northern extremity of our island were a number of pools amongst the rocks, varying in depth according to the tide. Here and there were regular cascades, and we could stand on the sand bottom and get a natural shower-bath. Some of us became perfectly enamoured of this style of bathing. Opinions differ in

OUR COOLIES AT THEIR TOILETTE.

Africa as to the healthiness of it, however. For my part, I know that bathing in the tepid water, warmed as it was by the heat of the sun, was very refreshing, and of course the cleaner we kept ourselves the better the pores of our skin acted. It may be that stopping long in the water every day was weakening, and some fevers may have been caused by it when it happened to be colder than usual. There are two opinions on this as on every subject, but where is the good of discussing them?—the best plan is to do what you like yourself.

In the river near Fort Archinard there were lots of common fish, which used to shoot down the cascades of an evening for the sake of the greater freshness and coolness of the water below. These fish would actually strike us now and then on the shoulders, making us start by the suddenness of the unexpected blows. It was still more unpleasant to know that other denizens of the river, the terrible crocodiles, though further off, were still there.

Oh, what numbers of the horrible great grey creatures we used to see floating down with the stream or lying about the banks! Some of them had taken up their abode quite near to us, along the side of our island, just where we used to do our fishing with the gun-cotton, but their being close to us did not prevent either the coolies, or for the matter of that the whites, from going into the river.

With sunset came the hour of supper or dinner, and what grand sky effects we used to see whilst we were at that meal in these winter quarters of ours! Our walls were flecked with every colour of the rainbow, whilst in the east, above the sombre wooded banks, would often rise red masses of curious-looking clouds, precursors of the approaching tornado. Sometimes the sun had not quite set before the lightning would begin to flash, and the thunder to roll incessantly, sounding like the roar of artillery in battle.

As we sat at table we would discuss the situation: what would the tornado do this time? Would our huts be able to bear up against it? Would much water come in? "Make haste, Fili, bring us that *nougat* before it rains!" said

A WOMAN OF SAY.

Bluzet. And were the barges securely moored? Had the sentry got his cloak? and so on.

Father Hacquart became as time went on, quite an expert meteorologist, and only once or twice made a mistake in his predictions about the weather.

The terrible arch of clouds peculiar to a tornado, meanwhile, goes up and up till it nearly reaches the zenith. Behind it in the east is a great glow of light, resembling the

reflection of a conflagration in the big plate-glass windows of some shop on the Paris boulevards seen through the rain.

We all disperse now, going to our huts to light our candles, whilst the rain pours down in torrents, and the leaves are torn from the trees and whirled round and round. The branches are creaking, the roofs are bending beneath the fury of the storm, the rain turns to hail, and through the great sabbat of the elements, the voices of the sentries are heard calling out from beneath the deluge pouring down upon them, "Is all well?" and the reply comes soon, "All is well."

Then when the worst seems to be over, we go to examine how much damage is done, and Father Hacquart comes out to have one more look at the weather. Presently we hear some one growling out that the rain has come through his roof like a thief in the night, or that it is pouring over his threshold. We all laugh together, for we are all in the same boat.

Fortunately the damage done is seldom greater than this, for the huts stand the strain well. We only once had to deplore a real misfortune, and that not a very serious one, only it made us fear that a worse might happen.

A pair of white and black storks had nested in the big tamarind tree which formed the eastern corner of the *tata* looking down-stream, and we considered this a good omen for us, a talisman ensuring to us the protection of Allah during our stay in the island. Storks, as is well known, are very peculiar birds, and acts of extraordinary intelligence are attributed to them, which would appear to prove that their lives are regulated by certain social laws. It was an amusement to us to watch them of an evening, and to note all the details of their family life; the first finding of a home, for instance, their courtship, their talks in the gloaming; when perched together on one branch they would seem to be looking at us, balancing themselves with their

heavy heads on one side, with the air of old men considering some new invention, or savants discussing abstract verities.

Our pair of storks, in spite of their calm and sedate appearance, must really have been only just beginning their joint *ménage*, and can have had no real experience of life.

A NATIVE WOMAN WITH GOITRE.

They evidently knew how to fish by instinct; but a sad catastrophe befell their home, which they had built on a big dead branch, for in a specially violent tornado the bough was torn off, nest and all, and flung upon the quick-firing gun pointing up-stream, knocking over Ibrahim Bubakar, who was on sentry duty, but who fortunately escaped with a fright and a few bruises on the legs. Alas! however, three

young storks, the children of the pair, were flung to the ground and killed. We picked them up dead the day after the tornado, and stuffed them.

Our men were in great despair. The charm which would have brought luck to our camp was broken; but the parent birds, in spite of the loss of their little ones, evidently determined to act as our talisman to the end of our stay, for they continued to fly round and round our tamarind, and to talk together of an evening, though sadly. It was not until a few days before we left that they flew away towards the north. Thanks to them, perhaps, we had a run of good luck to the last.

The tornado freshened the atmosphere very considerably, and the sudden change could only be fully realized by consulting the thermometer. In five minutes the glass would sometimes fall from forty-five to thirty degrees. A corresponding and sympathetic change would take place in the state of our nerves; we could sleep a little if only the mosquitoes would let us, but, alas! their droning never ceased. Oh, that horrible music, which went on for ever without mercy, causing us more anguish even than the bites, and against which no curtain could protect.

The frogs, too, added to the droning of the mosquitoes what we may call their peculiar Plain Songs or Gregorian chants. They were very tame, showing no fear of us, but took up their abode here, there, and everywhere: out in the open air, or in the huts, in our books, under our tins, and in our water-vessels, and their ceaseless singing in full solemn tones, echoed that of the distant choirs of their wilder brethren chattering together amongst the grass by the river-side. Although not composed on the spot, I cannot refrain from quoting the following sonnet, produced by a member of our expedition, and which forms a kind of sequel to the others I have transcribed above—

LOVE-SONG.

When evening falls upon the land asleep,
When mute the singers of the tropic plain,
When winds die down, and every bird's refrain
Or insect's cry is hush'd in silence deep ;
Then from the lotus beds triumphant leap
Frantic crescendoes of a rhythmic strain,
Wild cadences mount up, to sink again
Lamenting, as when mourners wail and weep ;—
Comes to the traveller upon the stream,
A Plain-Song Litany of high despair ;
The notes Gregorian fit into his dream
Of home and fatherland, remotely fair ;—
Whilst from the gleaming mud in Niger's course
Rises an amorous croak, now sweet, now hoarse.

In every country in the world fine weather comes after rain, and the tornado was succeeded on the Niger by a star-light night of a clearness and limpidity such as is never seen anywhere out of the tropics. The soft murmur of the Niger was borne to us upon the gentle night breeze, reminding us of the Fulah proverb—

"*Ulululu ko tiaygueul, so mayo hé'wi, déguiet*," which may be translated—

"Ulululu cries the brook, the big river is silent."

A true description indeed of what really often seemed to happen during our long imprisonment on our island, for we could hear the gurgling of the rapid further downstream, but the voice of the river was hushed.

Our nights passed quietly enough, watch being always kept by one white man, one black subordinate officer, and two coolies. From Timbuktu to Lokodja, that is to say, from January 21 to October 21, we five Europeans had taken the night-watch in turn. It must be admitted that at Fort Archinard it was sometimes rather difficult to remain awake, and to keep ourselves from yielding to our exhausting fatigue. We had to resort to various manœuvres, such

as pinching ourselves, bathing our feet, wrists, or head, and walking rapidly up and down. Sometimes, as one or another of us sat in Father Hacquart's folding-chair, looking out upon the moon-lit scene, there was something very charming about the silence and repose, and as we have already given several quotations of poetical effusions, I think I must add just one more on the night-watch, also composed by one of our party.

NIGHT-WATCH.

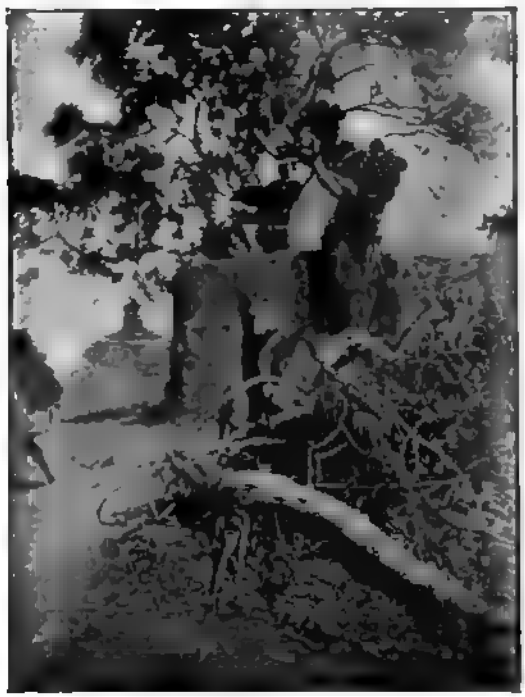
I loll and smoke, with mind a-blank ;—we sail
Together, all ye stars of motion slow !
Moon ! a poor trophy you may hang me now
Upon one horn—Moon ! like a fairy's nail
Curved, tilted, thin and delicately pale !
You, old Orion, may not lift your brow
To where on high the mystic symbols glow
Of Cross and Angel's Car that next I hail ;
Then Venus—Beauty bathed in lambent stream
Of astral milk, outpour'd long ages past
From time-worn breasts !—to these, in the first gleam
Of morning freshness, from the dreary waste,
Whilst as our bark adown the dim stream floats,
With rower's boat-song blends the frog's last notes.

Thus the days went on monotonously, so monotonously that we were often quite feverish with *ennui!* At the beginning, the building of the fort and settling down gave us a little variety, but of course that did not last.

Winter in the Sudan would really not be much worse than anywhere else if plenty of occupation and movement could be secured, with occasional change of air; but it becomes simply deadly dull when one is limited to a small space, compelled to inhale the same miasmic exhalations, and absorb the same kind of microbes every day and every night.

Yet this was exactly our position. We were a small party in the midst of a hostile population. Even if we had

ventured to leave our camp we should have had to divide, one-half of us remaining on guard; but neither division would have been strong enough in any emergency, for those who went could not spare any coolies as scouts, whilst those who remained would have no sentries. When we went to fetch



A TOWER OF FORT ARCHINARD.

wood, we did not go out of sight of our fort, which was left to the care of the halt and lame, so to speak: the interpreters and the scullions, and I was quite uneasy about them when I saw the men leave of a morning.

Our one safe road, the river, was blocked above and below the camp, for we had a rapid up-stream and a rapid down-stream, so that even quite small canoes could not pass.

There has been much talk of winter in the Arctic regions, and of course such a winter is always very severe, but the one we passed at Say was simply miserable. I really do think that the fact of all five of us Europeans having survived it, is a proof that we were endowed with a great amount of energy and vitality.

The temperature had much to do with our sufferings. It increased steadily until June, and then remained pretty stationary. The thermometer, which was set up beneath a little wooden shelter daily, reached extraordinary maxima. For one whole month the maximum fluctuated between forty and fifty degrees Centigrade, the atmosphere becoming heavier and more exhausting as the day wore on until sunset. During the night the maximum was generally a little over thirty degrees, and you must remember that I am speaking of the winter, when the air was pretty well saturated with moisture.

I have read in books of travel of countries where, to avoid succumbing from the heat, Europeans live in holes dug in the earth, and make negroes pour more or less fresh water on their heads from calabashes to keep them cool. We never got as far as that, but I do think that Say, at least in June and July, can compete in intensity of heat with any other place in the world.

In such an oven we quite lost our appetites!

Now ensued a time of terrible *ennui*. All our energy, all our gaiety, all our philosophy melted away before the awful prospect of living in this remote and hostile corner of the earth for five whole months; five months during which we knew we could not stir from the island; five months in which we must endure all the storms of heaven in our frail huts, and be exposed to the ceaseless plots against us of Amadu. The dreary, monotonous days in which nothing happened, did not even supply us with

topics of conversation, so we talked more and more of France, which of course only intensified our home-sickness. Taburet, who had a wonderful memory for dates, seemed to find every day of the month an anniversary of some event.

It became a more serious matter when our *ennui* resulted in constant attacks of fever, but fortunately these attacks, thanks to the daily dose of quinine, were never very serious, only their recurrence was weakening, the more so that they were accompanied by what we called the Sudanite fever, a kind of moral affection peculiar to African soil.

This Sudanite affection betrayed itself by different eccentricities in different people. It really is the effect of the great heat of the sun upon anæmic subjects, or upon those whose brains are not very strong. Sometimes, at about four o'clock in the morning, we used all of a sudden to hear a series of detonations inside the enceinte. "Holloa!" we would exclaim, "some one has got an attack of Sudanite fever, and is working it off by firing at bottles floating on the river." Or another of the party would seal himself up hermetically in his hut, blocking every hole or crack through which a ray of sunlight could penetrate. The whole of the interior would be hung with blue stuff, under the pretence that red or white light would give fever. Another case of Sudanite!

We could cite many more examples of the disease during our stay at Fort Archinard.

However different may be most of its symptoms, one is always the same—a patient afflicted with it contradicts everybody and shows an absolutely intolerant spirit.

Truth to tell, I must add, in common fairness, that we were all more or less affected by it. We might have managed to pull along peaceably in an ordinary station with occupations which separated us from each other sometimes, but in this island, this cage, for it was little

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION AT FORT ARCHINARD.

more, we were always rubbing shoulders, so to speak, and constant friction was inevitable. In fact, we ran our angles into our neighbours instead of rubbing those angles down. We were regularly prostrated with our inactive, almost idle life, and the true characters of each one came out without disguise.

At table every discussion led to a kind of squabble. Each of us stuck to his own opinion, even when the most astounding paradoxes had been enunciated. Sometimes, after a regular row, we all sat perfectly mute glaring at each other, and wondering what was to happen next.

At night, or in the hour of the siesta, I used to get out my flute—another form of the Sudanite fever—and play melodies from the *Or du Rhin* or *Tristan et Yseult*, but even music failed to calm the disputants. The tension was too great, and I was afraid that, even at this late period of our expedition, things would go wrong in consequence.

All of a sudden a happy idea occurred to me, a regular inspiration from Heaven, which every one fell in with at once.

This idea was simply that we should all work, and the result was the immediate restoration of order.

It was a simple task enough that we now set ourselves to do, just to make vocabularies of the various more or less barbarous idioms in use in the Niger districts. There were plenty to choose from, for there is more confusion of tongues, such as is described in the Bible, in these parts than anywhere else. There is a perfectly inexhaustible supply of peculiar phrases.

For instance, between Abo, in the highest part of the delta of the Niger, and the sea, as an officer of the Royal Niger Company told me, there are no less than seven dialects spoken, none of which have the very slightest affinity with each other. It would appear that one wave

of migration has succeeded another, as the breakers do on the beach, the natives composing the different parties of emigrants dying out, or leaving only a few survivors stranded like islets in a flood in the tropical forests, retaining their original customs and dialects, and continuing to offer sacrifices in the old way, uninfluenced by the other native populations.

It has been different further inland, for the last emigrants have been absorbed by the earlier settlers, rather than driven back, but at the same time their characteristics have not been merged in those of other tribes, so that we still find side by side totally different customs, and people speaking different dialects quite unlike each other, such as the Tuareg, Fulah, Songhay, Bambara, Bozo, Mossi, etc., almost equally distributed over extensive districts.

So we all set to work. Father Hacquart and I buckled to at the Tuareg language. Pullo Khalifa turned out to be an indifferent teacher, though he was full of good-will. He was never at a loss for the signification of a word, but his renderings were mostly merely approximate. I have already dwelt upon the peculiarities of the Tuareg language in a previous chapter, so I will only add here that we had two other instructors in it, another Fulah, a Mahommedan, who shilly-shallied a good deal in his interpretations, and a female blacksmith of Bokar Wandieïdiu, now attached to the service of Ibrahim Galadio, who lent her to us. The last-named was certainly the most interesting of our linguistic professors. She had a tremendous voice, and was as ugly as sin, but she gave herself many airs and graces. With the aid of these three and a few others we drew up quite an imposing comparative vocabulary of the Tuareg language.

Father Hacquart also devoted some time to the study of Songhay, which is spoken between Say and Timbuktu,

and also in other districts beyond those towns in the east and west, for we meet with it again at Jenné and at Aghades. Near Say, they call the Songhay language *djermanki*. Pretty well every one undertook to teach us Songhay ; it was a simple dialect enough, spoken through the nose, and it was likely to be very useful to us. The *Pères blancs* of Timbuktu give especial attention to its study.

Tierno Abdulaye Dem, a few coolies, old Suleyman, who had deserted Amadu, tired of wandering about after him, and had rejoined us to go back to his beloved Foota, used to assemble every day in Baudry's hut, which was transformed into a Fulah academy.

Most unexpected results ensued from these meetings. The Fulah language is a very charming one, and has been carefully studied by General Faidherbe and M. de Giraudon, but there is still a good deal to be learnt about it. It is very difficult to connect it with any other. It is the one language necessary for travelling or for trading between Saint Louis and Lake Tchad. There have been many theories on the subject of the Fulah migration, and a great deal of nonsense has been talked about it. Baudry, who studied the language with the greatest zeal, discovered some extraordinary grammatical rules in it and strange idioms, enough to frighten M. Brid'oison himself. No one could now utter two or three words at table without Baudry declaring how they could be translated into one Fulah expression. The following example will give an idea of how much could be expressed in a Fulah word. I must add, however, that Baudry and Tierno Abdulaye agree in saying it is very seldom used.

The word I allude to is *Nannantundiritde*, which signifies to pretend to go and ask mutually and reciprocally for news of each other.

Tierno Abdulaye, who was a Toucouleur from the Senegal districts, gave out that he could speak his maternal language or Fulah pretty perfectly. When, however, Baudry set to work to explain to him the formation of Fulah words which he claimed to have discovered, Tierno realized that after all he did not know much about it, so he tried to acquire grammatical Fulah, with the result that many of his fellow-countrymen could not understand what he said. They were completely confused by all these new rules, but Baudry was delighted at having won a disciple.

The people of Massina, or the districts near the great bend of the Niger, speak very quietly and in a low voice, as if they realized the beauty of their language, and do not trouble themselves very much about strict grammatical accuracy. The Fulah tongue, in fact, admits of an immense number of shades of expression, and though there is not perhaps exactly anything that can be called Fulah literature, except for a few songs which can only be obtained from the griots with the greatest difficulty, the language simply teems with proverbs. Here are a few examples, but of course, like all such sayings, they lose terribly in translation :—

"When you cannot suck the breasts of your mother, you must suck those of your grandmother."

"When a man has eaten his hatchet and his axe, he is not likely to sputter much over broiled pea-nuts."

"A stick may rot in the water, but that does not make it a crocodile."

"There is the skin of a sheep and the skin of a cow, but there is always a skin."

Thanks to Osman, Bluzet had unearthed a cobbler or *garanké*, a native of Mossi. He was a very worthy fellow, but, it seems to me, most of his fellow-countrymen are equally estimable. The Mossi, at least those we knew, were

all very easily intimidated, but honest and trustworthy. At first Bluzet had a good deal of trouble to get any information out of this Mossi, but when he gained a little confidence he got on apace, and used to indulge on occasion in long monologues, as when he treated us to the following little tale, which he related to us all in Mossi in Bluzet's hut.

"One day, a woman going along the road to Say, taking some milk to market, sat down at the foot of a tree and fell asleep.

"Presently three young men came up, and when they saw the woman one of them said to the others—

"'Follow me, and imitate everything I do.'

"They approached her cautiously, making a *détour* round the brushwood. 'Hu! hu!' cried the leader, when he got close to the sleeper, and the others shouted after him, 'Hu! hu!'

"The woman started up terrified, and ran away, leaving the calabash of milk on the ground.

"Then the eldest of the three young men said, 'This milk is mine because I am the eldest.' 'No,' said the second, 'it is mine because I thought of crying, Hu! hu!' 'No, no,' cried the third, 'I mean to drink it, for I am armed with a spear, and you have only sticks.'

"Just then a marabout passed by. 'Let him be the judge!' said the disputants, and they put their case before him.

"'I know of nothing in the Koran which applies to your difficulty,' said the holy man; 'but show me the milk.' He took the milk, he looked at it, he drank it. 'This is really good milk,' he added, 'but there is nothing about your case in the Koran that I know of.'"

With two other vocabularies of Gurma and Bozo expressions, less complete than those of the Songhay and

Fulah languages, we made up a total of more than ten thousand new words, to which we added many very interesting grammatical remarks.

This absorbing occupation, which fortunately became a positive monomania with some of us, contributed more than anything to our being able to survive the last month of our stay at Fort Archinard.

OUR QUICK-FIRING GUN.

NATIVES OF SAY.

CHAPTER VIII

MISTAKES AND FALSE NEWS

WE must now return to our arrival at Say. Although the days there were most of them monotonous enough, they brought their little ups and downs, and we received news now and then, of which, under the circumstances, we naturally sometimes exaggerated the importance. It would be wearisome for me as well as for the reader to give an account of what happened every day during our long winter at Fort Archinard. My notes were written under various difficulties and in very varying moods, reflecting alike my exaggerated low spirits when things went wrong, and my excess of delight when anything occurred to cheer me. Consecutive pages of my journal often contradicted each other, and any one reading them would imagine they were written by two different persons;

but this is always the way with travellers, and even Barth himself was not exempt from such fluctuations of mood.

My journal *in extenso* might serve as an illustration of the psychology of the lie as illustrated amongst the negroes and Mussulmans, but no other useful purpose, so I shall greatly condense it. The reader will still, I hope, get a very good idea of all we went through. If what I quote is rather incoherent, excuses must be made for me, for the news we got was often incoherent enough, and our life at the Fort was rather a puzzle too sometimes, with our alternations of hope and anxiety.

Friday, April 10.—We are getting on with our fort; our abattis are finished and ready for any attack. (This was written the day after our arrival, whilst our work was still in full swing.)

We put the *Aube* in dry dock to-day, and it took the united efforts of us all to haul her into position: non-commissioned officers, interpreters, servants, all had to work, and even we white men lent a hand. During the operation of turning her on to her side, the poor *Aube* might have tumbled to pieces, for all her planks were loose. But she held together yet once more, and, as you will see, we did not have to abandon her until the very end of our voyage.

A new recruit joined us to-day, my journal goes on, so with Suleyman Futanké we have two extra hands now. This was how he came to join us. During the siesta hour we heard a man shouting from the other side of the river, "Agony! agony!" and looking out we saw some one waving a white cloth. We sent the *Dantec* to fetch him, and when he arrived he kept shouting "Agony! agony!" in a joyful voice. He showed us his cap of European make, evidently expecting us to understand what he meant, but that did not explain the use of the word "agony" so often.

It was Tedian Diarra, a big Bambarra, who had acted as guide to General Dodds in the Dahomey campaign, who solved the mystery at last, and told us that the man had been a porter at Say to the Decœur expedition. He had been taken ill with an attack of some discharge from the joints, and had been left under the care of the chief of the village to be handed over to the first Frenchman who should happen to pass. The poor fellow, whose name was Atchino, —at least that is what we always called him,—was trying to explain to us that he came from the village of Agony on the Wemé. He had feared he should never see his native village again, with its bananas and oil palms; but as soon as he heard of our arrival at Say, he came to take refuge with us. Later I indemnified the man who had taken care of him for the expense he had been put to. We made this Atchino our gardener, and he turned out a very useful fellow, a decided acquisition to our small staff.

Monday, April 13.—We finished the repairs of the *Aube*. She still let the water in like a strainer, but, as we always said, we were used to that. This expression, "used to it," was perpetually employed by us all, and it enabled us to bear with philosophy all our troubles. It is, in fact, the expression which gilds the bitterest pills to be swallowed on an exploring expedition, and no one need dream of starting on such a trip as ours if they cannot adopt what we may call the philosophy of use and wont on every occasion. Have twenty-five of us got to pack into a boat about the size of my hand? What does it matter? go on board, you'll get used to it. Have we got to find place for provisions and things to exchange with the natives when there is no more room? Never mind, ship them all, we shall get used to them when we settle down. Are you in a hostile district? Do rumours of war, of approaching columns of thousands and thousands of

natives uniting to attack, trouble you? Never mind, they will turn out not to be so many after all; you are used to these rumours now. You have some dreadful rapids in front of you; you have got to pass them somehow. There are so many, you can't count them. Shall we draw back? Shall we allow them to check our onward march? No, no, we shall get used to them. If you take them one by one, you will find that each fresh one is not worse than the last, and that the hundredth is just like the first. You get quite used to them, at least if you do not lose your boats and your life too. Which would be the final getting used to things, the last settling down!

A *diavandu* and his sister one day presented themselves at the camp. These *diavandus*, who are the guides and confidants of the people, are everywhere met with amongst the Fulahs. I don't know what trade the sister followed, but this *diavandu* came to offer us his services. He offered to perform all the usual duties of his office on our behalf, and was ready either to sell us milk, or to act as a spy for us. He was a little fellow, of puny, sickly appearance. We made him drink some quinine dissolved in water, and our people told him that the bitter beverage contained all the talismans of the infernal regions. Certainly the witches in *Macbeth* never made a philtre nastier than our mixture.

Our *diavandu* swore by the Koran, without any mental reservations, that he would be faithful to us, and our spells and the *grisgris* we had given him would, he knew, kill him if he were false to us, or betrayed us in any way. Then we sent him to see what was going on in Amadu's camp. I do not know what eventually became of him, but perhaps if he was false to us the quinine killed him by auto-suggestion; perhaps he was simply suppressed by our enemies, or he may have died a natural death; anyhow we never saw either him or his sister again.

About the same time Pullo Khalifa appeared at Fort Archinard, sent, he said, by Ibrahim Galadio, the friend of Monteil. He began by asking us what we wanted, but it really was he who wanted to get something out of us. We gave him a fine red *chechia* to replace his own, which was very dirty and greasy. Later we gave him various

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other presents, but, strange to say, he always came to visit us in his shabbiest garments.

Thursday, April 23.—In the evening a sudden noise and confusion arose on shore at Talibia, and in our camp we heard dogs barking and women shrieking, whilst the glare of torches lit up the surrounding darkness. Gradually the tumult died away in the distance. Had the Toucouleurs been on the way to surprise us, but finding us prepared given up the idea for the time being? We shouted to Mahmadu Charogne, but no answer came. Mamé then

fired a fowling-piece into the air, but nothing came of it. All was silent again, but we passed the night in watching, for we knew that that very morning a man wearing a white *bubu* had tried to tamper with our coolies, and to frighten away the native traders. He had shouted from the left bank that Amadu had let loose the Silibés upon us, giving them permission to make war on us, and promising them the blessing of Allah if they beat us. No wonder such a coincidence as this put us on our guard.

The next morning Mahmadu explained the uproar of the preceding evening. It had been a question not of an attack on us, but of a wedding amongst the Koyraberos. He told us a marriage is never consummated until the bridegroom has literally torn away his bride from her people, and the rite of abduction, for a regular rite it is, is a very exciting ceremony. When the suitor comes to pay the dowry it is customary for him to give his *fiancée*, it is considered good form for the parents to shrug their shoulders, and pretend that the sum offered is not enough; millet is very dear just now, they say, and they cannot afford wedding festivities worthy of their daughter. They must keep her at home until after the harvest, and so on.

The young man goes home then with bowed head and a general air of depression. When he gets back to his own village he calls his relations and friends together, chooses out the best runners and those who can shout the loudest, and with them returns to seize the object of his choice. He finally succeeds in taking her away in the midst of screams, yells, and the sham curses of her relations, who are really full of joy at the marriage. The so-called ravishers of the dusky bride are pursued to the last tents of the village, and the ceremony concludes, as do all weddings amongst the negroes, with a feast such as that of Gamache immortalized in *Don Quixote*.

Soon after this exciting night our relations with Galadio began, and throughout the winter all our hopes were centred on this man. We counted on him to the very last moment as our best friend, and he really was more reasonable than most of those with whom we had to do during that dreary time. It must not, however, be forgotten that amongst Mussulmans, especially those of the Fulah

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race, wisdom means profound duplicity. The Fulahs actually have no word to express giving advice, only one which means "give bad advice," or "betray by counsel given." The idea is simple enough, and is the first which comes into their heads. So that if by any chance they want for once to translate our expression, "advise you for your own good," they have to go quite out of the way to make the meaning intelligible, and to use a borrowed word. This is really a reflection of the Fulah character.

Galadio was in this respect a thorough Fulah, although he had Bambarra blood in his veins. His mother was a Fulah, of the Culibaly tribe, and he deceived us perpetually with good words which meant nothing. Still I must do him the justice to add, that he was careful to save us from being involved in open war. Perhaps he saw how fatal that would be to his own influence, or he may have dreaded it as a calamity for the country he was now living in, or for the people over whom he had been set. Anyhow he managed to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds: in other words, to keep in with Amadu and us. He always gave us to understand, that if the worst came to the worst he would at least preserve a strict neutrality, and as a reward for this he got many very fine presents. He was treated almost as the equal of Madidu himself, and he too received from us a velvet saddle embroidered with gold. His messengers were provided with a pass by us, and were received with all due honour, for it was not until quite the end of our stay that the mystery was solved, and Galadio appeared in his true colours. Of his own free will he had concluded a regular treaty with me, a treaty drawn up quite formally in Arabic and French, and which he signed with his own name. He showed, moreover, a very eager wish to enter into relations with Bandiagara.

April 30.—Khalifa is certainly an extraordinary man. To-night he is to bring to us in a canoe, when the moon is set and all is silence, darkness, and mystery, no less a person than the brother of the chief of Say. We watch all night for the signal agreed upon of the approach of our guests: the lighting of a candle on the bank of the river, but nothing is to be seen. Was the whole thing simply a manœuvre on the part of Pullo to get possession of a box of matches and a candle? Perhaps so, for one of his chief delights when he is in any of our tents,—and he is very often

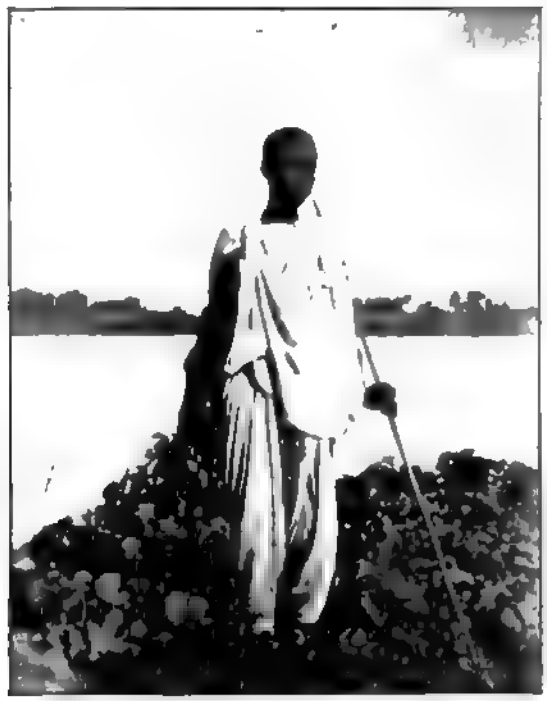
there,—is to strike matches one after the other. He is not the only one with this wasteful habit, Baudry is also afflicted with it, but fortunately we have a sufficient supply even for such vagaries as this, which really are very pardonable in the Sudan.

The next day Khalifa and the brother of the chief of Say actually arrived, after a good deal more fuss and mystery. Even poor little Arabu, who wanted to sleep in the camp, was sent away, weeping bitter tears at the thought that his white brothers did not want him. Very useless were all these precautions, for the brother of the chief of Say, though perhaps rather more polite, was not a bit more sincere than he. Our visitor explained that he had come to see us quite independently, and that his great wish was to make friends with us. What he really wanted, however, was a *bubu* and a copy of the Koran. As his friendship was of a very doubtful quality, we put off giving the present to another time, when he should have proved his sincerity by getting us a courier to go to Bandiagara. He went off promising to see about it.

We had "big brothers" and "little brothers" *ad infinitum*, but as there is no masculine or feminine in the Fulah language, the Sudanese when they try to speak French muddle up relationships in a most original manner, without any distinction of sex. Abdulaye said to us, with no idea that he was talking nonsense, "My grandfather, who was the wife of the king of Cayor;" and it is no rare thing for one of our men to bring a young girl to us in the hope of getting a present, who is really no relation to him at all, telling us, "Captain, here is my little brother; he has come to say good-morning to you."

In my journal I find the following note *à propos* of this confusion of relationships. The grandson of Galadio, who

came to see us, told us he had come to pay his respects to his grandfather, and I was that grandfather, because I was the big brother of his other grandfather. The muddle is simply hopeless, but with it all the natives never lose their heads, but keep in view the possible present all the time.



GALADIO'S GRANDSON.

Sunday, May 3.—The day before yesterday some strange news was brought us by a boy of about fifteen. He had been sent secretly to us by the Kurteye marabout we had seen when we were on our way to Say. A horrible plot was being concocted, he said, for Amadu, remembering the spells of his father, who had been a great magician at Hamda-Allâhi, had made an infallible charm against us. On some

copy-book paper, which had evidently been taken off our presents, he had written the most awful curses, imploring Allah seven times over to exterminate the Kaffirs, as he called us, and having washed the paper in water he made a goat drink the decoction thus produced. He then sent that goat to us, thinking we would buy it! But we were warned in time.

The awful *grisgris* did, in fact, arrive in camp yesterday in the form of a black goat. The poor creature did not look as if she were charged with venom. She was plump, not too old, and would make a first-rate stew.

All our men were, however, afraid to have anything to do with her, for in their eyes she was indeed a *grisgris* endowed with unholy powers by Amadu. The negroes are all superstitious, and their imagination often quite runs away with them. On the other hand, faith is sometimes wanting amongst the Mussulmans. Putting on an air of very great wisdom, therefore, we generously offered two cubits of stuff, worth about threepence-halfpenny, for the goat filled with spells against us, and when the trader who had brought her looked confused, yet almost willing to let us have her at that ridiculous price, we explained to him emphatically that our own *grisgris*, the *tubabu grisgris*, had revealed to us the black designs of Amadu, and we intended to have him and his goat taken back to the other side of the river, *manu militari*, I very nearly said kicked back.

The Kurteye marabout who had warned us, was evidently a friend, unless the whole story was made up to get a present from us. Every evening now regular tornados broke near Say. Up-stream and down-stream, at Djerma and at Gurma, torrents of rain fell constantly, and the lightning flashed from every point of the compass ; but, strange to relate, there was no rain at Say itself, and when there is no rain there is no harvest. The report was now spread that we

had called down on the village the curse of Allah. The other day Amadu Saturu had publicly recited the *Fatiha* in the Mosque in the hope of getting rain to fall, and we were told that in the meeting of the notables of the place, the Kurteye marabout had got up and asserted that Say was punished for having given a bad reception to a man sent from God, in other words, to the chief of our expedition, and because Amadu had broken his promise and all his solemn oaths.

Like my uncle Dr. Barth in Sarayamo, I now found myself looked upon as the bringer of storms. He had also been looked upon as a marabout saint, and the *Fatiha* had been recited to him in the hope that he would open the floodgates of heaven. We, Kaffirs though we were, would soon in our turn be entreated to remove our interdict on the rain so much needed.

May 7.—Tierno, after many a discussion, has at last succeeded in getting us a courier in the person of an ivory merchant from Hombori. He will take our letters for Bandiagara, an advanced French post of Massina. Aguibu, king of Massina, and under our protection, had sent an agent to Hombori, which is on the road there. Our man would go for 200 francs, 100 payable at Bandiagara and 100 on his return to us. All, therefore, was for some days excitement and bustle in our camp. Maps, reports, letters were being rapidly got ready, and nobody had a moment to spare. Our courier, who did not seem to feel quite sure of his safety, sent to ask whether during his absence his family could go to our friend Galadio, who would protect them. We said yes, of course.

He returned a month later, and said he had not been able to get to Bandiagara. The Habés, who had risen in revolt, had robbed him near the village of Dé. He had only escaped with the greatest difficulty under cover of a tornado,

leaving his packet of letters in the hands of our enemies. We think he romanced a good deal on the subject, and I fancy that a good search in Amadu Saturu's camp would probably result in the discovery of our packet intact, except for being perhaps gnawed by termites.

I had some little doubt on the subject, however, and it is thanks to that doubt that the courier still has his head on his shoulders. I never saw him again.

May 13.—Great news! We are told by Osman that there are some white men on the Dori side of the river, but no one knows exactly how many. Barges full of white men are floating down-stream; they are now off Ansongo. There is talk of three iron boats like ours; those in them are all for peace, nothing but peace.

May 16.—Who is our friend Pullo bringing us this morning? Who is that man with him who looks like a Tuareg, dressed in blue Guinea cloth, with a *grisgris* on his head and a spear and javelin in his hand?

He is a Fulah, the foster-brother of Madidu, with his pockets full of news. Twenty days ago he said he had left his "big brother" to come to Say and sell four oxen for some of the cloth of the district. One of these oxen had died, another had been stolen. What a good opportunity to ask us to give him a *bubu* to make up for his losses.

Madidu had not known that we were still at Say. Had he done so he would certainly have sent messengers, perhaps even have come himself. He or Djamarata would have visited us, for they had gone down the river as far as Ayoru to chastise Yoba for some want of respect to us, but I am sure I don't know what.

Our Fulah had heard a rumour of four white men having come to trade on the Niger. Madidu had sent two of his blacksmiths to prepare the way before them, and he had also by this time sent envoys to Timbuktu to confirm the

treaty we had made with him. He did not know what had become of that treaty, but anyhow he had returned with his pocket (Heaven only knows the capacity of that pocket) full of knick-knacks and more than one present for Madidu.

The news of the approach of the barges was confirmed during the following days, and in my notes I find the following reference to them :—

May 17.—A man from Auru who had come to Say told us that at Ansongo there were three hundred armed men and seven or eight whites who had come in peace, nothing but peace, and were coming down the river soon, at least as soon as there should be water enough; at present they were arrested by the shallows. The white men, according to our informer, were French like ourselves.

The armed men have now increased to five hundred, and the white officers to eight, who are waiting for the rising of the river. Really these rumours were beginning to make us anxious. The barges began to assume in our imaginations the appearance of properly manned vessels, and we wondered if there really was anything of importance in the wind. Perhaps a party had been sent out from Timbuktu for Say to make sure that we had plenty of provisions, perhaps even to found a permanent post at the latter place. It would be good policy, but bearing in mind the temper of the natives, the probability was that we should not know anything for certain till we actually saw the French flag at the bend of the river, unless of course Madidu should inform us officially beforehand.

Suppose, however, that a French party had followed us, would they be able to pass? It would indeed be a bold thing to attempt to pass the rapids as we had done, aided as we were by the natives, and with such a skilful captain as Digui, who was used to coolies and knew how to manage them.

May 17.—The river is still falling, and above our island a little sand-bank is now laid bare, where we were able to leave the *Davoust* for the repairs the damage done to her at Labezanga rendered necessary. Aided by Abdulaye, I undertook the task of patching her up, and found it a simple affair enough. Fortunately we had a sheet of aluminium in reserve, one only, it is true, but it was all we needed. We bent that sheet to the shape required, we bolted and riveted

THE 'DAVOUST' IN HER DRY DOCK.

it all in a few days, and until the water rose again the *Davoust* remained high and dry in her dock on the sand.

The sand-bank was very useful to our coolies for bathing from, and was also turned to account by the women who came to our market for doing their washing. The deck of the *Davoust* became the rendezvous of everybody, and no doubt some strange episodes took place on and in the stranded vessel. The flesh is weak, and it was perhaps as well that the chaplain of the mission and his aide-de-camp,

Baudry, who had charge of the police department, did not inquire too closely into what went on in the siesta hour.

May 18.—No storm at Fort Archinard, though it is pouring with rain all round. One would really suppose that we had a *grisgris* or a fetich which enabled us to control the elements.

Three men came from Galadio to ask us to send him the treaty already alluded to. We gave them two copies of it, one of which was to be returned to us after being signed by Ibrahim if he approved of it. This treaty was a league of friendship between the French and him, agreeing to give mutual aid and protection throughout the whole of the districts subject to him or to the French to all who came in peace, whether as travellers or traders, whether actually the subjects, or only aliens under the protection of either of the contracting parties. Under all circumstances, in fact, and by every means in their power, Galadio and the French agreed to assist each other. Both would do their very utmost to make the road between Uro Galadio and Massina safe. Lastly, Ibrahim promised to make no agreement with any other European without having first consulted the French resident at Bandiagara.

Later the duplicate of this convention came back to us signed in beautifully clear and firm Arabic writing, after having been read and discussed at a general meeting of native notables. This valuable treaty had not been obtained by lavish presents, for we had already begun to practise economy, in view of the probable heavy expenses of the return journey, and we had warned Ibrahim that he must not expect costly gifts.

The convention was simple, direct, and easy to be understood by all. It was in my opinion the most complete treaty which could possibly be drawn up in these parts, and after its signature we had a right to rely upon the

absolute good faith of the other party to the contract, and to consider him our friend and our ally. You will see presently how much it was worth, and judge from that of the value of all treaties with negro chiefs, especially of those left with them, the contents of which have never been explained.

Another great piece of news! A Messiah has risen up, by name Bokar Ahmidu Collado, who is winning converts on the Liptako to the west of our encampment, between Say and Bandiagara. He has already had considerable success, and has received investiture from Sokoto with a banner, giving him the right to make war on the French. He went to Amadu Cheiku to ask for reinforcements, but that chief only gave him his blessing in a very frigid manner, saying, "Believe me, the time will come, but it is not yet come, for driving the white men from the Sudan, the land of our fathers. There is a country in the East bounded by a big creek (the Tchad?), and they must spread there first. As for me, I know the French too well to care to rub shoulders with them."

Bokar Ahmidu Collado then went to Niugui, chief of the Cheibatan Tuaregs, and asked him to give him some men, but Niugui said to him, "Madidu will make war on me if I help against his friends the French." "You have no faith," answered the Messiah; "I will make you believe," and he gave him a consecrated drink. Then they say Niugui saw, in the air above him, crowds of combatants armed with rifles and swords, with many mounted men, all following the Messiah and the triumphant Crescent. He still hesitates, however, on account of his salutary fear of Madidu.

Bokar Ahmidu Collado comes from a village of Farimaké, near Tioko. One of Galadio's people from Wagniaka (Massina) knew him when he was quite young. "A poor fool that Collado," he said to us, "who has not even been

to Mecca, yet sets up for being a Messiah!" Moral: No man is a prophet in his own country.

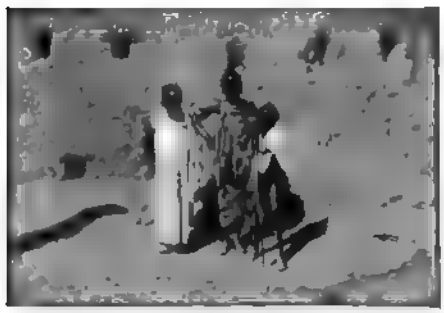
Something special seemed to be going on all through the latter part of May; all manner of news pouring in, some of it really seeming very likely to be true. The barges at Ansongo constantly increased in number. The Toucouleur chief Koly Mody was about to abandon the cause of Amadu. Diafara, a man from Kunari, which had remained true to Agibu, was on the west of our camp to levy tribute in Hombari, to found a post at Dori, or to lead a very strong force of French and their allies into the district of Mossi. The people of Bussuma had been defeated and driven away, they had taken refuge at Wagadugu, which last-named rumour seemed to us most likely to be true, for it behoved the French Sudan to avenge the injury inflicted on French troops the previous year by the so-called *Naba* of the *Nabas*. What, however, were we to think of all the contradictory rumours which sprung up like mushrooms and grew like snowballs, to melt away almost as quickly as they took shape?

May 20.—A new visitor to-day, original if nothing more. Like every one else, he has his budget of news, and told us about the French column which is to operate in Mossi. We are beginning to attach very little importance to all this gossip. Our guest is a heathen, or, as Suleyman translates it, a Christian, explaining that he must be a co-religionist of ours, in that he has customs peculiar to the Christians—drinks *dolo* and gets drunk on it, of which he is very proud. He therefore belongs to our family, and that is why he has come to see his big brother, the commandant!

He calls himself a sorcerer, and seems a little off his head. Anyhow he talks great nonsense. Whilst we were questioning him he kept fingering a little goat-skin bag,

out of which, when we were quite weary of his stupid replies, he drew a small phial full of oil of pimento, and a number of tiny little pots—the whole paraphernalia of magic, in fact. Having set out all these odds and ends on the ground, he proceeded to make some *grisgris* to protect the hut in which he was from bullets.

He began by smoothing the sand of the floor with his hand, to bring good-fortune, he said, and he then skilfully drew with his finger in the sand four parallel lines forming parallelograms. These he combined two by two, three by three, four by four, and so on, reciting invocations all the time. He then rubbed all the first designs out and began again with fresh invocations, making the lines sometimes vertical, sometimes of other shapes.



TYPICAL MARKET WOMEN.

With a very solemn face, as if he were celebrating mass, he now drew forth a little satchel of ancient paper, written all over in Arabic by some marabout, and muttered some words, evidently learnt by heart, for he certainly could not read. At last, with an expression as serious as that of the Sphinx of the desert, he announced: "Hitherto you have had none but enemies in the land, no one in the whole country is your friend. Beware of the marabouts! Beware, above all, of one particular marabout! There is a young man ill here (this was Bluzet, who was just then lying down with an attack of fever), but it will not be much. You must sacrifice a white chicken for his recovery; have it broiled, and give it to the poor: this will conciliate the favour

of the great prophet Nabi Mussa, or Moses. It will be best to give your charity to children. Then all the *grisgris* of the negroes and the marabouts will avail nothing against you. But beware, above all, on account of your men. If you cut away all the roots of a tree it falls. In the same way, if they take away your negroes, all will be over with you. Now I have come to give you a *grisgris* for them, which will protect them from all spells, and even from *corté's* and other evils. I can even give you a *corté* myself, which will kill a man if you only throw the tiniest bit of it in his face."

The *corté* is, in fact, the most terrible of all spells amongst the negroes. It is said to consist of a powder which slays from a distance. The natives say that if thrown from some miles off the man it touches dies, and the truth seems to be, that the sorcerers have the secret of a very subtle poison, which produces terrible disorders in those touched by it.

As a matter of course, we did not accept the offers of a *corté* or counter *corté* from Djula, but to give him an idea of the mischief we could do if we chose, I gave him a five-franc piece in a bowl of galvanized water, as I had the son of the chief of the Kel Temulai. I then told him to go to Mossi and have a look round there to see what would happen. He is a crazy old fellow enough, but I have been told that sorcerers have more influence over the Mossi and their *nabas*, as they call their chiefs, than those who are in the full possession of their senses. He was willing to go, and when the Tabaski was over he would come back *inch Allah*, with envoys from Bilinga or Wagadugu.

Now Bilinga is eleven days' march from Say, and eight days after he left us the old fellow came back pretending he had gone all the way. He had really never gone

beyond Say, and brought us all sorts of silly news only, so Digui took him by the shoulders and quite gently turned him out of the camp.

May 20.—As the so-called Tabaski fête approached, our visitors and the news they brought were greatly on the increase. Pullo, Osman, and the minor ambassadors vied with each other in the ingenuity of their inventions.

THE MARKET AT FORT ARCHINARD.

The fact was, they all wanted to have new *bubus* for the festive occasion, some money, some coppers to buy kola nuts, etc., not to speak of new bright-coloured undergarments for their wives. "What would the village people say, commandant," they would urge, "if I, who every one knows to be a friend of the French, should cut anything but a good figure?"

Some few, however, were actuated by something more than a wish for presents on their visits to us. They were

rather afraid of the column which was said to be operating in Mossi. Osman brought the chief trader of the market to us, a Wagobé, belonging therefore to the Sarracolais tribe, an intelligent man with a frank, open expression. His pretext for coming to see us was that he had a slave to sell, but he knew well enough that we never bought slaves. She had been brought from Samory's camp, where prices for such merchandise were very low, there being a perfect glut of slaves in the market, and at the same time a scarcity of grain. The young girl, who was in good health, with all her teeth intact, had been bought for the modest sum of 10,000 cowries, about 10 francs, or the value of two sheep, or of a sack of millet. According to her owner, prices were much higher at Say, where a first-class female slave, that is to say, a young virgin, would fetch 200,000 cowries, whilst a strong young man was worth 150,000. Less valuable captives were cheaper, and some of the fifth-class went for as little as 100,000 cowries. These are of course commercial quotations, but as a matter of fact now and then a few are sold for as low a sum as 25,000 cowries.

The chief of the market brought us kola nuts, honey, rice, and milk. He mourned over the evil days which had fallen on Say. "All our roads," he said, "are blocked on the north by the Tuaregs, on the west by the heathen Mossi, on the south by the Dendi, and on the east by the Kebbi and the Mauri. It is only rarely that a few caravans with a strong escort can get as far as Sansan Haussa, by way of Sergoe. A whole fleet of canoes, which went down to Yauri last year, had remained there for fear of the Dendikobés. The boatmen had founded a village there, and were now lost to Say. Then, besides that, things were not going as could be wished by those of the true faith. The Empire of Sokoto and its Emir were between

two fires, with Rabba on one side and the Serki Kebbi on the other."

When Osman, returning to the charge, spoke to us again about the column supposed to have gone to Mossi, I said to him—"You see, the Naba of Wagadugu gave the same kind of reception to the Frenchmen who went to visit him

A WOMAN OF SAY.

last year as Amadu Saturu has given to us at Say. So the chief of the whites has given orders that his village should be destroyed, and it will be your turn next year, I hope."

They then went away plunged in reflection.

Visitors are all the fashion just now. On Thursday, May 21, a young man came to our market wearing a

blue *bubu* trimmed with blue and red printed calico, such as is made at Rouen. We had long known the owner of this costume, and when we recognized him we were ready to fling ourselves into his arms.

He at least was a genuine person, the son of the chief of Fafa, who had been such a good guide to us when we were amongst the rapids, the son of that old Fulah who wished to interpose his own body between me and Djamarata to protect me from harm. He came from Djamarata now, and we had no reason to doubt his good faith at least. He came, he said, to inquire after the health of the commandant, and to ask what state our boats were in after passing over the terrible rocks, etc. Djamarata assured us of his friendship. True, when we first arrived in his country the Tuaregs had been on their guard, but now that they were convinced of our pacific intentions, and saw that we molested no one, the Awellimiden were quite on our side, and had full confidence in us.

When our friend left us his goat-skin bag was full of presents. Here at least was one native who deserved well of us, for he had made a twenty days' march to come and give us his master's compliments.

May 24, *Whitsunday.*—It appears that the Mossi column is making good progress, at least we gather that it is, from the improved bearing towards us of the natives, but lies and all manner of false reports are still the order of the day.

Yesterday the fête of the Tabaski, or the Feast of the Sheep, was celebrated, which is not, it appears, of Mahommedan origin. The village of Talibia sent envoys to make friends in our camp, and some wretched-looking natives danced a *tam-tam.* Others came to beg, and to all the poor creatures we gave something—a little salt, a mechanical toy, a cubit of cloth, or some other trifles. I also distributed a little money amongst our own men.

A regular descent was made on the camp by sellers of kola nuts, *grisgris*, etc. A number of women also came, amongst whom was a Toucouleur girl named Fanta. She said she had come to see if her brother was with us, but I suspect her motives were not quite so innocent as that. In the end, this girl became a dangerous enemy to us. After warning her off again and again, we at last had

ENVOYS FROM THE CHIEF OF KIBTACHI.

literally to drive her out of the camp. If we had not done so I expect she would have persuaded some of our men to desert, so great was her influence over them.

Fanta was really a very reckless person, and is supposed to have poisoned a man whom she had persuaded to treason, but who had failed to achieve the result she had hoped by that treason. The native chiefs know only too well how easy it is to seduce men from their allegiance

to travellers with the aid of some pretty fellow-country-woman of theirs, and it is necessary to be always on guard against this sort of thing.

In the present case the Tabaski fête passed over quietly enough. We regaled our visitors with a little apparently impromptu fusillade, which we had really agreed upon beforehand amongst ourselves, giving the Koyraberos from Talibia a demonstration of the penetrating force of our bullets on the branches of some trees. "*Bissimilaye! Bissimilaye!*" cried old Suleyman Foutanké, hardly able to believe his own eyes.

June.—No rain at Say yet! It really looks as if we had cast a spell upon the place, the more so that the want of rain was accompanied by a plague of locusts. We had invoked the aid of Moses against our enemies, and now, like him, I had brought upon the natives of the land of our exile clouds of locusts to devour all green things. The people were in despair. A drought and locusts together meant perhaps the complete destruction of the harvest. But there is always some good in everything, and the Koyraberos flung themselves, armed with sticks, into the thickest part of the swarms, beating down the insects, which were picked up by the children, and stowed away in their *bubus*. Fried and seasoned, the locusts made a very appetizing change of diet.

Our men from Senegal, however, made great fun of those who ate them; they were themselves much too civilized for such food as that. "The Koyraberos," Digui said to me, "are regular savages!" and it was worth something to hear the tone of contempt in which he gave utterance to this insulting remark.

The chief of Kibtachi, a big Haussa village down-stream, sent us various presents and made many promises to us. He also begged us most politely to visit him when we

passed later. "Why," he said, "did you not come to Kibtachi to begin with, instead of stopping with Saturu, who wishes you no good?" Talking of presents, Galadio, when he returned the signed treaty, sent a wonderful collection of gifts, including kola nuts, symbolic of friendship, with calabashes full of honey, and bags of baobab flour, the medicinal effect of the two being totally different, the honey acting as an emollient, the flour as an irritant.

The chiefs of the Sidibés, Kurteyes, Sillabés, etc., all vied with each other now in sending messengers to us to assure us of their friendship, and yet another notable, chief of the Torodi Fulahs, asked us to make just such a treaty with him as we had with his friend Galadio. "Galadio and I," he wrote to us, "are together like two teeth of the same comb!" A happy metaphor indeed, a regular literary gem!

Yes, indeed, they all belonged to the same comb, these native friends of ours, and as yet we did not suspect how very dirty that comb was.

Presently we heard of a split amongst the Toucouleurs, and that the Gaberos had had enough of Amadu. They sent, in fact, to beg me to intercede for them with my friend Madidu, and to get him to let them return to his country. There were more fresh quarrels too between the Toucouleurs and the Sidibés. Amadu had put a Hadji marabout of the Sidibé tribe in irons, and by way of reprisal the Sidibés had seized three Toucouleurs at Yuli, opposite Dunga. The hostile tribes were, in fact, snarling at each other from the two banks of the river, and showing their teeth rather like porcelain dogs, only in this case the dogs were jet black.

The Sidibés, according to Pullo Khalifa and the son of their chief, who came to us with him, were disposed to throw themselves upon our protection. If, they said,

Amadu had not set their Hadji free in three days, the Sidibé women with their flocks and herds would be placed under the protection of our guns!

Would this be the spark which would set fire to the gun-powder? Hurrah! If it were, our protectorate would

A COBBLER OF MOSSI.

become an effective one; we should have a fine *rôle* to play; that of intervening in favour of a native coalition against the parasitical Toucouleurs, the hereditary enemies of French influence in Africa.

All, then, was tending in the direction of our hopes. A good job too, for the river was falling, falling, falling. Our island was completely transformed, for a big isthmus

of sand and flints now united it to the right bank. Hundreds of determined men, or of men driven in from behind, might pour into the camp any night now, as into some popular fair.

Reassured though we were by what we heard of the political condition of the country, and by all these protestations of friendship, we yet awaited the 14th July with impatience, and we celebrated its passing as joyfully as possible when it came at last. No sooner was it over, however, when slowly and quietly, and at first very doubtfully, certain bad news filtered through, which gradually gained certainty.

For once, indeed, there was no doubt about the evil tidings, which were diametrically opposed to all that the politeness of the natives would have had us believe. The whole country, Toucouleurs, people of Say, of Kibtachi, and of Torodi, with the Sidibés, the Gaberos and others, had combined against us and were marching to attack us.

Naturally no one had thought fit to warn us. It was Osman, poor fellow, who, in spite of himself, put us on the scent, and gave us the alarm. He meant to play the part of an angel of light, but, as is often the case, his *rôle* was really quite the reverse.

One fine day he said to us point-blank, "There is no cause for anxiety now, you can sleep with both ears shut, for Amadu Saturu and Amadu Cheiku are both most favourably disposed towards you."

"Why do you tell us that, Osman?" I asked. "I feel sure you have some very good reason, but take care what you say. You are lying, I know. Amadu is really trying to pick a quarrel with us."

"*Bissimilaye!* not a bit of it," was the reply. "He is only getting his column together to move against Djermakoy."

I had never been told a word about that expedition, and the fact seemed strange, so I said—

"Osman! you are telling a lie. What column is going against Djermakoy?"

Then with much hesitation, and turning as pale as a negro can when he has got himself into a hobble, he began to tell us how all the people of Say, and the

FORT ARCHINARD.

Toucouleurs, in fact, all the natives, had united to march on Dentchendu, a big village of Djerma, the very centre of the Futanké agitation, but that before actually starting they were all coming to Say to receive the benediction of Saturu, who would recite the Fatiha to the glory of the Prophet on the tomb of his ancestor, Mohammed Djebbo, who had founded the town.

I understood at once, and really the plan to surprise us had not been at all badly thought out. "Well, Osman,"

I said, "you will warn Modido that if the Toucouleur column camps in or near his village, in which he declined to receive us, it will mean war with us." "Oh!" cried Osman in his dismay, "the whole column will not come, only the chiefs, with Ahmidu Ahmadu, the leader of the troops."

Then he tried to undo what he had done, and told quite a different story, saying he had been mistaken; Saturu would go and give the benediction to the column on the bank near Djerma.

We were warned now; a big column really was assembled. We made discreet inquiries on every side, and all the news we heard confirmed the fact. Pullo himself now ventured to be explicit, and told us to be on our guard.

The palm of deception and treason must be given in this case to a Fulah from Massina, called Ahmadu Mumi, but we were the ones to reap the benefit of his evil-doing. Born in the village of Mumi, near Mopti, on the Niger, all his people had been killed by the Toucouleurs when El Hadj Omar won his great victory. He himself had been taken prisoner, and dragged behind the horses of his captors to Say, where, bruised, bleeding, and in rags, he was sold. Of course, as a natural consequence, he hated the Toucouleurs with an intense and bitter hatred, but he was later bought by the chief of Say, who set him free. He became the confidant and friend of his liberator, so that, as he explained to us, he knew better than any one else what was going on, and was therefore better able to betray Saturu.

He did betray him too, for a high price, revealing to us all the preparations our enemies were making against us. Amadu, it appeared, aided by the chief of Say, had rallied every one all round to his standard, and to win over the lukewarm, vague hints were thrown out of going to get

slaves amongst the Djermas on the left and the Gurmas on the right bank of the river. All would meet at Say for the benediction, and then at the critical moment, Madidu, pretending to be suddenly supernaturally inspired, would exclaim—"Listen! what says the prophet? Leave the Gurmas and the Djermas alone. It is against the infidels, the Kaffirs of Talibia, that you must march. It is their destruction which will please God!" Then every one would be carried away by enthusiasm, and urging each other on, would rush in their fanatical zeal to the attack of our little island.

A MARKET WOMAN.

None but the chiefs knew of the plot, Ahmadu Mumi told us, but he had been so placed that he could tell what they were all thinking of. Double traitor that he was, he used to go backwards and forwards from Say to Dunga, and from Dunga to Fort Archinard, spying and taking bribes now from one side, now from the other. When with us he would say all he wanted was revenge on the Toucouleurs.

Well, we merely said "All right!" and set to work with feverish activity to double our abattis, which the tornados had somewhat damaged, and to build new loopholed redoubts round the camp. On July 14 we were all eagerly engaged in preparing for the defence of our fort, and I don't suppose any one gave a thought to the review at Longchamps, or to the public balls going on in Paris at this festive time. As in all crises and times of difficulties, our coolies rose to the occasion, and showed themselves more

full of zeal, better disciplined, more thoroughly in hand under their French officers than they had ever done before, so that when we saw the smoke from the camp of the allies rising up above Say, we were all perfectly ready for the attack.

Ready to make the besiegers pay dearly for their temerity at least, but it would not do to count upon all of us coming safe and sound out of the affair: the forces were too terribly unequal for that. Amadu had five hundred guns with him, and the Toucouleurs are brave, especially when their fanaticism has been aroused. A certain number of the captives taken by the Tuaregs had also come from Sorgoe to join hands with them. Aliburi, too, the hero of Cayor of Yuri memory, was there, and in a night attack all these auxiliaries would be very formidable adversaries to us. We wondered how many warriors there were altogether, including those armed with bows and arrows or spears only. It was very difficult to form an idea, for negroes never allow their numbers to be counted when they go to war. They think it brings bad luck. There was, however, no doubt that at this time Amadu could muster from ten to fifteen hundred combatants.

And to oppose to all this rabble, we were but forty-five, even if we counted in our scullions.

The worst of it was, a good many of our cartridges had got damaged, partly by the great heat and partly by the damp. The damage was such that at the first shot the weapon might become useless for the rest of the fight, a serious matter when we were so few.

It certainly seemed as if we were in for it at last!

Several nights passed by in suspense, and we all slept badly. On the north we could see the gleam of many moving torches in the forest, for from Talibia to Say signals were being made. Torches of straw were lit and

put out three by three, but what these signals portended we could not tell.

July 17.—It seems that the attack on our camp is now decided upon, for our spy tells us we shall be assailed from the right bank in the night when there is no moon. The Toucouleurs are camped at Tillé above Say. At the benediction to be given at three o'clock Amadu Saturu will stir up the people. We might expect the first alarm at about ten o'clock. Ahmadu Mumi spoke very positively, though he explained that he could not be absolutely certain, and anyhow not a woman had come to the market that morning. Osman, on the other hand, stoutly denied the report, but this only made us more sure of its truth, and we doubled our sentries in preparation for a night which might perhaps be our last.

A FULAH WOMAN.

We waited and waited, but nothing happened. We heard nothing that night, as on so many others, but the howling of the monkeys and the murmuring of the rapids down-stream.

Everything remained quiet the next day too, and gradually all the smoke faded away, whilst the light of the torches was extinguished. The women, who had deserted our market, returned as if there had never been any reason for their absence, and all went on as before. We knew now that the column was again dispersed, the warriors had drawn back at the very last moment, and had gone off in small parties to take slaves in Djerma, or to attack Dosso.

All the energy they had displayed with regard to us had been simply wasted.

It had been enough for us to assume a firm attitude, and for the natives to know that we had been warned. To maintain a firm attitude seems rather like a quotation from Tartarin de Tarascon, for we should have found it difficult enough to defend ourselves. How should I have been able to make good my threats that I would burn Say on the first alarm?

It seemed, however, that Saturu really was rather alarmed, lest harm should happen to his town. He would not let the column camped near it enter Say, and the Friday benediction was only after all pronounced on the chiefs. Their secret they knew had leaked out, they had seen us strengthen our defences, and they hesitated after all to attack us. The knowledge of the bloodshed which would inevitably ensue had greatly cooled the enthusiasm of all not quite mad with fanaticism, and many whose adherence had been counted on as certain had failed to put in an appearance. Then the rain had something to do with damping the ardour for war. The daily storms, which had come at last, completed the demoralization of the rabble. They had missed their aim, because we, who were that aim, had been on our guard, and some went off one way, others another, to hunt slaves instead of rushing upon our defences.

We had had a narrow escape, but it was a complete one, for the new moon was rising now, and the river was rapidly increasing in depth, adding each day to the efficiency as a defence of the ditch which divided us from the mainland and our enemies.

We were saved! but for a whole week we had been face to face with the melancholy prospect of ending our lives on this remote island, and often and often as we watched

we wondered whether, if we were massacred, we should be better or more quickly avenged than our predecessor Flatters had been.

We now understood all the false rumours which had been spread of French columns marching in the neighbourhood, and of all these columns were going to do. The reports were spread merely to induce us to leave our *tata*, where we were in comparative security, and which the Toucouleurs seemed to look upon as impregnable. Our enemies wanted to decoy us to go and meet our comrades, so that they might fall on us in the bush, where the odds would have been against us, and so destroy us altogether.

Then when they saw how we took the rumours, we heard they changed their tactics, and tried to throw us off our guard again by talking about making friends, signing treaties, and so on, meaning, if they could secure our confidence, to fall suddenly upon us *en masse*. The plan was ingenious certainly, but those who concocted it had reckoned without allowing for Osman's stupidity.

What became of the Toucouleur column after all? Not having dared through fear of our guns to march against us, it had turned its attention to Dentchendu, a big village on the left bank; but the chief hesitated too long in this case also, giving time for the inhabitants to receive warning, to put their village in a state of defence, and send all the useless mouths away.

Again the Toucouleurs were too late, and besides, as Osman, who still visited us in spite of all our rebuffs, told us, the poison of the Dentchendu arrows is very dangerous.

All these warriors are fond of fighting and going on slave raids, for the glory of the Prophet, but they take very good care of their own skins. We wondered if the Toucouleurs who remained faithful to Amadu would become cowards like his own people through contact with them. Our experiences

made us think that we were indeed far from the heroic days, when the Senegalese Foutankés, in the battle of Kale, charged a column on the march to rescue the wives of Ahmadu who had been taken prisoners, stopping suddenly beneath a hail of bullets from the French sharp-shooters to prostrate themselves, and make a propitiatory salaam.

Having through fear abandoned the idea of attacking us

LAUNCHING OF THE 'AUBE' AT SAY.

at Fort Archinard, the column wandered in the rain from village to village, and was received everywhere with apparent friendship by the terrified inhabitants, so that all the fire ended in smoke, though no one seemed to know exactly why.

The check the Toucouleurs had received made it possible for some of the chiefs to show us sympathy, whether feigned or real it was impossible to tell. Amongst these was Hamma Tansa, chief of the Sillabés, who was rather an original

character for a native. He was something of an epicure, what we should call a jolly good fellow, but charitable to others. He kept open house, or rather hut, and always had a lot of friends about him, whom he treated to everything. When he was informed that the meal was served, he used to jump up, flap his white *bubu* as he would wings, and shout, "Let's fall to!"

He was literary too, and the missives he sent us, written on little plaques of wood, were, in accordance with Arab usage, very polite, and sometimes even in verse. He said he meant to pay us a visit, was most anxious to do so in fact, but somehow he never fulfilled his promise: either he had not time, or he was afraid of Amadu, or something else.

One fine day our old friend Hugo appeared again, sent to us by the chief of the Kurteyes, and who, thanks to Taburet's skill, had now quite recovered from the affection of the eyes from which he had been suffering. He sent us a message to the effect that, as long as the river was low, he and his people were afraid of the Toucouleurs; "but wait," he added, "till it rises, for then the Kurteyes are the kings of the Niger; no one can get at us, and we shall be able to shake hands with you."

The most devoted and zealous of all our friends, however, was Galadio, and there was a perpetual going and coming between his village and our camp. Marabouts, griots, traders, etc., were constantly arriving, telling us, "I am from Galadio's village," and we received them, from motives of policy, with open arms, buying from them rather than from others, giving them presents, and plenty of kind words. They all sang the praises of their master, and he really did show himself to us in a very amiable light. He was perhaps if anything rather too gushing.

At my request he sent us the female blacksmith of

Bokar Wandieïdiu, to whom I have already alluded, to help us to complete our Tuareg vocabulary. She was accompanied by a marabout named Tayoro, a Fulah from Wagnaka in Massina, a very distinguished and refined-looking old man, with a white beard, who came from Konnari in the same district, and whose name was Modibo Konna.

TAYORO AND MODIBO KONNA.

He spoke *bozo*, or the dialect of the Niger fishermen near Mopti, and this enabled Baudry to draw up an elementary vocabulary of that language.

This lady blacksmith, with Tayoro and Modibo Konna, were our guests for some days, and we were really quite fascinated by their manners, and the way in which they behaved to us. We had certainly not been accustomed to meet with tact such as theirs amongst the natives, and they finally removed all my prejudices against their master

Galadio. So I sent to ask him whether, as he was too old to visit me, I should go to see him, for were we not friends like two fingers on one hand, or, to use the native simile, like two teeth of one comb? If he would see me, when should I come?

It would only take me three days to go, I reflected, and it was of importance for us to let the whole country see that Galadio was our friend, and that when we broke up our camp we should leave behind us an ally devoted to our interests, in fact so compromised that he must remain true to us. It would be very important to us to have such a helper when it came to the organization of the district, and he might be made its ruler as a protected native chief.

My messengers returned a few days later, bringing horses with them for me to make the journey, and assuring me that their master would be delighted to receive me.

While waiting for the envoys to come back, we worked very hard at our vocabularies. All went well with them, and we completed them in a few days. Between whiles Tayoro turned our knowledge of his dialect to account, by telling me the following charming story about the time of the Fulah reformation in Sokoto.

When the great reformer, Othman Fodio, who, by the way, was a noted robber and slave-hunter, preached the so-called reformation, that is to say, the revolt against the chief of the Haussa Fulahs, he was followed by a great many disciples, as of course all prophets are.

One evening when Othman was preaching and expounding the truth, his eyes suddenly fell upon a venerable-looking old man who was sobbing.

"Look!" cried the reformer, "look at that old man weeping; follow his example, for Allah has touched his heart."

Then the poor old fellow, the tears still rolling down his

cheeks, said in a choked and broken voice, "No, Modibo, no, you have read my heart wrongly; when I saw you holding forth so vehemently, and shaking your grey beard, you reminded me of my old goat which I left at home in

A YOUNG GIRL AT FORT ARCHINARD

my hut to follow you. That is what made me sob," and he went on weeping.

This anecdote, which loses much of its piquancy in translation, is very typical of the character of the nomad Fulahs, illustrating as it does their combined fanaticism and self-interest.

As I have said, we were all quite won over by the behaviour of Tayoro and Modibo Konna, when one fine

evening, after the lesson in Tuareg was over, Suleyman the interpreter came to seek me, and said point-blank: "Commandant, all these people are only making game of you. Tierno Abdulaye, the Arabic translator, who is a mischievous fellow, saw that old Modibo Konna is an old gossip who can't keep a secret, and as he wanted to know all about Galadio and the rest of them, he said to him, 'What, will you Modibos, good Mussulmans, true believers, take part against Amadu, against the son of El Hadji Omar?—and your chief Galadio, is he likely to take the side of the French? I, Tierno Abdulaye, am with them because I can't help myself, but my heart is with the Toucouleurs, my fellow-countrymen. If it came to a fight, I should be the first to desert. True Mussulmans could not really consort with Kaffirs!'

"'All in good time!' answered Modibo Konna. 'At least I shall find somebody to talk to, meanwhile. Do you really suppose that we were ever, in good faith, the allies of the commandant? Why, Galadio is Amadu's best friend; he it was who helped him to reach the left bank. Tayoro and I are only here as spies, to prevent the French from doing harm, such as attacking Dunga or Say. As soon as you arrived Ibrahim realized that it would be best to seem friendly with you. He even reproached Amadu Saturu for refusing your hospitality, because they would have been able to keep an eye on you better at Say. By adopting this attitude towards you, we have got presents, Kaffirs are always lawful prey, whilst the rest of the natives have got nothing. As for me, Modibo Konna, I was recalled from Dunga, where I was looking after Ibrahim's affairs and sent here. When I go back I shall return to Dunga to report all I have seen. Do you suppose for one moment that a marabout such as Ibrahim would ever be false to the true religion?'"

The whole secret of the plot against us was now revealed. Galadio, distrusting the old gossip, had merely sent Tayoro, the clever diplomatist, with him to see that he did not talk nonsense. For four whole months they had all been fooling us, with very considerable address, it must be admitted. However, the duplicity with which we had been treated all this time had one good result—we had had the pleasure of imagining that we had at least one good friend in the country on whom we could rely, and this thought had been good for the morale of our men, for it is not at all inspiriting to feel completely isolated in a strange land. Even if it is all a delusion, it is consoling to fancy oneself liked and respected.

The end of it all might however have been very different. Horses had been sent for me to go to Galadio's camp, and if I had started, accompanied by Father Hacquart and a few men, we might have been murdered by the way. Maybe Galadio would have been afraid of immediate reprisals; maybe he would have hesitated to commit a crime which would have compromised him for the future; or perhaps, even he was, after all, too good a fellow to injure those who were coming to him as guests.

This was the last scene of the comedy in which we took part at Fort Archinard. We had now to begin to think seriously of starting again, as we had already long before announced that we should go on September 15. We had bought our stores of grain, and our barges were once more in a state of repair. The information we had received about the river was to the effect that it was now navigable again. We were all busy repacking our stuffs and knick-knacks, and were eager to be off.

Taburet was simply boiling over with impatience, and was already inquiring what steamboat we could catch at

Dahomey, and wondering by what train he could go to Conquet. The rest of us, though we did not say so much about it, were just as anxious for the start, the more so that a kind of wave of fever was passing over our island, attacking the negroes, who had not always taken the preventive doses of quinine, more than us. Baudry, what with the repair of the barges, the buying up stores in the market, and the repacking, was quite worn out. It was really time we broke up our camp.

On September 15 everything on board was once more ship-shape. Digui had gone to reconnoitre our route the evening before, and had come back very late, looking anxious. "It is very bad," he said, "but we shall get past somehow." The coolies, weary as they all were, could not contain their joy at the idea of leaving the Fort, and poor old Suleyman Futanke, who was no doubt afraid of being given back to Amadu, or left behind as useless, made desperate efforts to learn to row. Happiest of all, perhaps, was Atchino, the man from Dahomey, who had spent the whole day before packing tomatoes for us to eat on the journey, and who was dreaming all the time of the bananas of his home.

In the morning, Abdulaye cut a great piece of bark out of a fig tree, and on the plain surface beneath, he engraved with a chisel the letters M. H. D. N. 1896. He then nailed firmly on to the same tree a plank, on which was written in large characters the name of FORT ARCHINARD, for the benefit of those who should come after us.

At the eastern corner of our *tata*, looking down-stream, we dug a deep hole, in which we buried all our old iron, with the nails and poles we no longer needed, and which would only have encumbered us. They may

perhaps be useful to others who may halt on our island. We levelled the soil above them and so left them. We were fortunate indeed that no other cemetery was needed at Fort Archinard, and were most grateful for the mercy of Heaven, which had preserved us all for so long.

We did not wish the natives who had treated us so badly to profit at all by our leavings, so we made a big bonfire of our tables, chairs, doors, etc., in fact of everything that would burn. The coolies and we whites all worked with a will at making the pile, and we set light to the whole at once—camp mattresses, abattis, etc. etc. —with torches of straw, and a grand blaze they made; the crackling of the dry wood and the occasional blowing up of the powder in the cartridges could be heard a long way off.

The coolies meanwhile, like so many black devils, danced round the fire beating their tam-tams, each performing the figures peculiar to his tribe, whilst Suleyman alone looked thoughtfully on, and we watched, not without a certain *serrement de cœur*, the burning of what had been Fort Archinard, that remote islet in the land of the negroes where for five long months we had lived, and hoped, now buoyed up with illusive joy, now depressed with the knowledge of how we had been deceived.

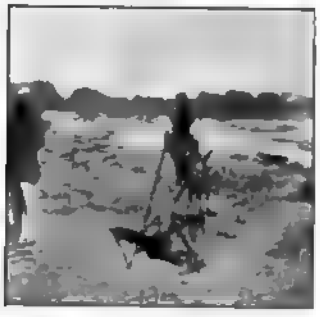
Somehow the heart gets attached to these lonely districts, where such thrilling emotions have been lived through, where real sufferings and privations have been endured. It is with them as with women, we often love best those who have given us the most pain.

Fort Archinard burnt gloriously. When the smoke became too dense and nearly choked us, we embarked

THE BURNING OF FORT ARCHINARD.

on our barges, which were already launched, and turned back just once more, like Lot's wife after leaving Sodom, to gaze at the conflagration.

We were off again with light hearts full of hope, to face new rapids!



A YOUNG KURTEYE

NATIVES OF MALALI.

CHAPTER IX

FROM SAY TO BUSSA

BELOW Fort Archinard the river divides into a number of arms; the islands formed by them as well as the banks of the river were deserted, but clothed with lofty trees, such as baobabs, palms, and other tropical growths.

Although the water was now pretty well at its maximum height, a good many scarcely-covered rocks impeded its bed, and rapids were numerous. Of little danger to us, for we had seen worse, and safely passed them, but bad enough to make navigation impossible to a steamer.

On September 16, at about seven o'clock in the morning, we passed a little encampment on the left bank, consisting of one hut, and some millet granaries. I imagine this to have been the landing-place for Kibtachi, for at half-past five in the afternoon we found we had made some forty-four miles since we started, so we must have passed the village without seeing it. I was sorry not to have been able to visit the mines of bracelets and rings, probably of cornelian, of which the natives had told me, but at the same time I

did not altogether regret having avoided coming into contact, just before entering Dendi, with tribes then at war with its people.

The next day, the 17th, the river still wound in much the same way as on the 16th; in fact, so serpentine was its course, that one of the coolies cried out he did not believe we were on the Niger still, but that we had lost our way. Numerous islands and dense vegetation, with very picturesque views here and there, were the order of the day. Great blocks of red sandstone rose in some places to a height of from about thirty to more than three hundred feet, and at every bend of the stream some new or strange view met our eyes.

We longed to land and seek repose beneath the thick dome of vegetation forming natural arbours, but there was one great drawback about them, the immense number of insects eager to suck our blood. At night the mosquitoes invaded us in vast hordes, and our poor coolies used to roll themselves up in everything they could lay hands on, at the risk of suffocation. As for us, we too suffered terribly, for though when we were asleep our mosquito nets did to some extent protect us, when we were on watch on deck we were nearly bled to death. In the day these pests left us pretty well unmolested, but their place was taken by other persecutors, rather like gadflies, which were able to pierce through our white clothes with a sting as sharp and nearly as long as a needle. I had suffered terribly once before from these horrible diptera when I was on the Tankisso; in fact they haunt the tropical vegetation of many an African river.

Since we started we had been each day threatened with a tornado, but the storm had not broken after all. On the 18th, however, we came in for the tail of one of these meteorological disturbances, and a pretty strong breeze

lasted until eleven o'clock so that we were not able to start before that time.

The appearance of the country now began to change. Yesterday I had been reminded by the rocky islets and the wooded banks, of the Niger near Bamako; to-day the stream flows sluggishly through a low plain covered with woods such as those of Massina between Mopti and Debo. A few rocks still occurred to keep up the character of the

ROCKY BANKS ABOVE KOMPA.

scenery, so to speak, and about three o'clock in the afternoon we were opposite the site of the village of Gumba, destroyed the year before by the Toucouleurs. We saw a canoe in which were some fishermen, so we hailed them and they approached us without fear. They were inhabitants of Kompa, they said, come here to fish, and were the first human beings we had seen since we left Say. We had passed not only Kibtachi but Bikini without meeting any one. The result of the constant terrorism caused by slave

raids, is that all the villagers remain quietly at home cultivating a few acres only, and living in perpetual fear of being carried away from their huts. They altogether neglect the natural riches of the soil formed by the frequent inundations, which leave new layers of vegetable mould. The baobabs and other wild trees alone profit by it, increasing and multiplying continually.

We soon became capital friends with the people of Kompa. They had heard of our stay at Say, and had impatiently awaited our arrival. Neither were they ignorant of the fact that we had driven the Foutankés from the western Sudan, and they hoped we meant to do the same in Dendi. "Look," one of the fishermen said to me. "A year ago the whole of this district was dotted with villages, now there is not one left but Kompa, for the Foutanis have destroyed everything."

The canoe now went to Kompa to announce our arrival, but one of the rowers remained with us to act as our guide. He answered to the name, a tragic one to us, of Labezenga. As we went along he gave me some interesting details about the brother of Serki Kebbi, who was now in Dendi, and had been at Kompa itself for the last few days. He had had a quarrel with his brother, and came to take up his abode on the banks of the Niger, but in spite of the strained relations between them, the two were not exactly at war, and in case of an emergency would act together against the common enemy.

At half-past five we came in sight of a few Fulah huts, which belonged to the abandoned village of Bubodji. The inhabitants had made common cause with Amadu and the people of Say, and gone to join them. The wood of these huts would do nicely to cook our dinner by, so I gave the order for mooring. We steered for the mouth of a little creek, where we could easily land. All of a

sudden, however, there was a shout of "Digui! what is that?—we are among the rocks!" In fact, all around us the water was ruffled with those peculiar ripples which I used to call moustaches, and which we knew all too well. A strong current was sweeping along, and we expected every moment that our boats would strike and be staved in. How was it that it did not happen? Digui's features

A FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE NIGER.

became of the ashy hue peculiar to negroes when they lose their natural colour; he, too, was evidently alarmed, but all of a sudden he burst out laughing. "Fish! Commandant," he cried, "fish! nothing but fish!" He was right, the ripples were caused by big fishes, a kind of pike, native to the Niger, swimming against the current after their prey. There were simply hundreds of them.

We tried to avenge ourselves for our fright by doing a little fishing with petards of gun-cotton, but it was no

good, the water was too deep, ninety or a hundred feet at least, and we had our trouble and wasted our gun-cotton for nothing.

At ten o'clock on the 19th we went up a little arm of the river, really merely an inundated channel, which brought us near the village of Kompa, and at one o'clock we received a visit from some envoys of the chief, who bid us welcome, and sent us three sheep. These men had not the crafty and false expressions of the people of Say, or of the Fulahs. They were fine-looking fellows, though rather wild, wearing turbans adorned with numerous *grisgris*, or a kind of cap, common on the Niger as far as Bussa, and rather like those worn by the eunuchs in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. I did not conceal from them that we had been badly received at Say, and told them that their enemies the Foutanis were also ours. That broke the ice very satisfactorily, and I arranged to go and see the chief in the afternoon.

I went with Bluzet about four o'clock. We crossed an inundated track, where we took a good many foot-baths in the bogs.

We found Kompa surrounded by a wall and a little moat, a kind of defence we met with in all the villages of these parts, as far as Burgu. Here, however, wall and moat alike were in a bad state of preservation. Two trees served as drawbridge. Inside the *enceinte* were numerous mud-huts with pointed thatched roofs, reminding us of the homes of the Malinkes at Kita. The chief received us in a big hut with three entrances forming the vestibule of his house.

He was a little old man, half-blind, but with an expression alike benevolent and cunning. All the time he was talking to us he was plaiting straw for mats, and so were the various notables surrounding him. All the men of the

country were constantly employed making these mats, and even go on working at them as they walk along, reminding us of the old women at home with their perpetual stocking-knitting. I reminded the chief of the danger his village was in from the Foutanis, and told him that Dendi, Kebbi, and Djerma ought to combine against the invaders; in fact, even pass from the defensive to the offensive. I

THE BANKS OF THE NIGER NEAR KOMPA.

also asked for guides to take me to the chief of Dendi, to whom I wished to say the same things, and to talk to on other matters, and I begged him to send us as many of his people as he could to be present at our palaver. I also wanted to see the brother of Serki Kebbi.

Everything I asked was promised at once, and we were just about to return to the boats when we were overtaken by the rain. I had had the presents for the chief and his people got ready beforehand, and they were now brought

to us. We were allowed to take refuge from the storm in the chief's private apartments, but they were very soon invaded by a crowd, the people vieing with each other in trying to find something to give us pleasure; one offering a chicken, another some eggs, and so on, every one bringing out some little present, evidently offered with the best intentions.

We, on our part, distributed our merchandise, from which, however, the old chief deducted a tithe. It was a most amusing scene, for he could hardly see in the semi-obscurity of the hut, and so every one tried to slip off with his portion without paying toll, but he took up his position at the door, and all who went out were searched in the style of the Belgian custom-house officers. Then the cunning old fellow, with many a grimace, persuaded the owners to give up part of their riches with an apparently good grace. Sometimes he gave back what he had taken, praising up the beauty and the value of the beads or stuffs he did not fancy, but taking care to hide behind him all he really wanted, nodding his head all the time to emphasize his pretended admiration of the things he let those he had despoiled retain.

We had on board with us a dog and a cat, which, after a long series of hostilities, had ended by becoming the best friends in the world. But when the cat had managed to run off with a bit of meat, it was worth something to see the advances made to him by his friend the dog, who was bent on taking it away. The cat would begin by putting his paw on the meat, looking angry and showing his claws. The dog would then assume a plaintive air, giving vent to low moans of assumed distress, and advancing gradually upon the cat, who was watching his every movement, would at last completely hypnotize him. This done, he would pounce with a yelp upon the coveted morsel

and dash off with it. He was just like the chief of Kompa.

The rain over, we returned on board, followed by an immense number of our new friends. The nephew of the chief of Tendu—who, I was told, was really paramount throughout Dendi—accompanied us, as well as the chief of the captives of the chief of Kompa. The last-named carried a gun, the only one in the village, of which he was very proud, but the hammer having long since been destroyed, the charge had to be set fire to with a wick. The owner of this gun pointed out the spot from which, aided by Ibrahim Galadio, the Toucouleurs had attacked Kompa. He also showed me a big shield of ox-hide, behind which the besieged had tried to take shelter, and which was riddled by the Toucouleur bullets. In spite, however, of the superiority of their weapons, the Foutanis had been driven back with great slaughter, a fact very creditable to the courage of the people of Dendi. It will, in my opinion, be with the aid of this race, little civilized, it is true, but not yet infected with the intolerance and fanaticism of the Mussulmans, that we shall be able to pacify the valley of the Niger by driving away the Toucouleurs first, as with the help of the Bambaras we have restored tranquillity in the French Sudan.

On the 20th we went on to Goruberi, where lives the brother of Serki Kebbi. We cast anchor some little distance from the village, at the entrance to a creek too narrow for our boats to go up, and the chief came to visit us.

He was a tall, strong-looking young fellow, and would have been handsome but for being disfigured, as is the horrible custom amongst the Haussas of Kebbi, with deep scars from the temples to the chin, long incisions having been made in his face with a sharp knife when he was a child.

I at once began to talk about the intentions of his brother, and to preach the crusade I never cease to urge against the Toucouleurs and the people of Sokoto. The answer in this case pleased me particularly. His brother, said the chief, was suspicious of him, charging him with an ambition that he did not entertain. They had been obliged to part, and he for his part had come to live at Gorubi. They were not, however, enemies, and if Serki were to send for him to-morrow, he should start at once to join him. He could promise me that he would repeat all I said to his brother.

We then talked about the Monteil expedition, and dwelt on the troubles its leader encountered at Argungu before he had succeeded in making a treaty with Kebbi. He was very well remembered, and Serki must have been the child whose terrible wound he had cured, and whose death afterwards had been falsely reported to him. Another untrue piece of news had been given to him at Burnu, for Agungu had not been taken, but had repulsed his enemies with very great loss to them. Namantugu Mame, the brother of Ibrahim, alluded to by Monteil in his narrative, was, however, killed in the fight. My visitor assured me once more that Kebbi considered himself the ally of the French, and would be very happy to see the fellow-countrymen of one who had left such pleasant memories behind him.

I must pause a moment here to dwell on this important fact, which justifies our resistance of English greed. No one could possibly deny that the French were guilty of a great piece of stupidity when they accepted the convention of 1890. Above their last factory on the Lower Niger the English had no better-founded pretensions than we to the protectorate of the natives peopling a problematical Hinterland. But however that may be, the thing is done now.

Yet once again our geographical incapacity, our interference in African affairs, has permitted our rivals to mock us with assertions which a little less ignorance on our part would have enabled us to refute.

Sir Edward Malet spoke of the Falls of Burrum; it would have been quite enough to open Barth's narrative to answer that these Falls were non-existent. Reading the narrative of the German traveller might also have taught us that when he passed through, *a descendant of the ancient chiefs of the country was maintaining an independent position in Argungu*, and the account of his perilous journey from Sokoto to the banks of the Niger would have shown how very precarious was the influence exercised by the Emir of Sokoto on the countries through which he passed. Since 1890, when the Anglo-Franco treaty was signed, that authority has continued to decrease. Kebbi, Mauri, Djerma, and Dendi would very soon have got the better of their oppressors if they had always worked together. However that may be, they have at least now regained independence, and we French are the only European people who have made any conventions with them. Strickly speaking, the treaty signed by Monteil with Kebbi would be enough.

It is therefore no longer at Say, as the English pretend, that the limit of French influence is reached. The line of demarcation, according to the spirit as well as the letter of the treaty of 1890, ought to leave us the four provinces I have just named. We are again about to abandon our rights won at the price of so much trouble and fatigue. Better still, are we going to leave Sokoto (strong through the weapons supplied by the English), after spreading fire and destruction everywhere, to reduce to captivity and slavery the peaceful but courageous swarms of population, capable as those populations are

of achieving prosperity under the paternal authority of the French, so different from the commercial control aimed at by our rivals?

Lord Salisbury, in the English Parliament, said scoffingly that they had left nothing for the Gallic cock to do but to scratch up the sand. Let us at least reclaim that sand, and if we can find a little corner of fertile land which the diplomacy of that time forgot to abandon, shall we let the diplomacy of to-day generously hand that also over to our neighbours? Or will our diplomatists, eager to avenge the insult put upon us, reply, "You deceived us by false affirmations, we were stupid enough to have confidence enough in your good faith without any preliminaries to assure us of it, we are willing to bear with the results of our own simplicity, but it has been a good lesson, and we forbid you to attempt to give us another like it"?

I remember an Arab saying, which well applies to the circumstances under discussion: "If my enemy deceives me once, may God curse him; if he deceives me twice, may God curse us both; but if he deceives me three times, may God curse me only."

After having chatted for a few hours with the notables of Goruberi, distributed some presents, and hoisted a flag, we went to pass the night opposite Karimama or Karma, a very strong and densely-populated village which is at war with the rest of Dendi. It was the people of this place, who, by calling in the Toucouleurs, had caused all the misery, which had lasted more than a year, to the natives of the banks of the Niger in Dendi. The brother of the chief of Tenda advised me to bombard Karma, and but for the pacific character of my expedition, which I was so extremely anxious to maintain, I would willingly have adopted his suggestion. I contented myself, however, with

having nothing to do with the renegades, and we passed the night opposite their village on the left bank.

A tornado delayed our start the next day for the little village which is the landing-place for Tenda. At ten o'clock, however, we anchored at the foot of a rock covered with luxuriant vegetation, which hung over the boats, forming a kind of canopy of verdure. This is one of the most picturesque parts of the whole course of the Niger,

OUR COOLIES WASHING THEIR CLOTHES.

and the magnificent trees are tenanted by hundreds of birds, whilst on the ground beneath are great flat spaces, very tempting to those who want a suitable place to encamp. In a moment the banks were alive with joyful activity, for our coolies hastened to land, and very soon the thin columns of smoke from our fires were rising up here and there, as preparations were made for cooking a meal. The men washed their clothes here amongst the rocks. A market, too, was soon in full swing, where

onions, potatoes, and *kous* (large edible roots), chickens and eggs, were sold to us by native women. Our guide and the nephew of the chief of Tenda meanwhile went to a big village further inland, and about two o'clock returned, accompanied by the son of its chief, who sent us word that he was too old to come and see us by the bad roads between his home and our camp, but his son would represent him, unless, indeed, we ourselves would visit him. We did not see why we should not, so I started with Taburet, Suleyman, Tierno, and Mamé.

The chief was quite right about the road. It certainly was not good, for it led us, to begin with, across an inundated plain, where we were up to our knees in water for about a mile. It was also oppressively hot, and the upper part of our bodies was as wet with perspiration as our legs were with the mud of the marsh. It was with a sigh of relief that we came to the rising ground where the road was better, except for the steep and rough bit strewn with sharp flints. We had this kind of thing for some four miles, and Taburet, who was toiling along beside me, became the colour of a ripe cherry. Was this colour a favourite one in these parts, I wondered? Anyhow our doctor made a deep impression on the heart of one of the beauties of Tenda, who had come to see us in our boats, and walked with us to the chief's village. It was a regular case of love at first sight, for she never took her eyes off Taburet, offering him flowers and pea-nuts, and moving the flints out of his way. It was a real idyll. I felt pretty sure of the doctor's power of resisting the blandishments of the syren, but still I thought it was as well to remind him of the negro eunuchs, who, if he did lapse from virtue, would be pretty sure to sew him up in an ox-hide, and fling him into what answered here to the Bosphorus. We arrived at Tenda laughing merrily,

in spite of the condition of our socks and boots, which, soaked through and swollen as they were with the water we had shipped *en route*, hurt our feet dreadfully.

We had already been told that this village was the capital of Dendi, but for all that its appearance greatly surprised us, for it is surrounded with a *tata* nearly seven feet high, and at its base is a moat no less than nine feet deep by four, twelve to fifteen feet wide. Throughout the Sudan I had never seen any fortification to equal it in the mass of material used. It is in an excellent state of preservation, and the crest of the wall is covered with sharp thorns, forming a regular *chevaux de frise*. It would be very difficult to take the place even with artillery. I was delighted to see so formidable a stronghold in these parts, and should the Toucouleurs who took Kompa try their skill on it, they will have their hands pretty full.

The whole population came out to meet us, and when we entered the village we found it had quite wide streets, which would have been clean but for the tornado of the morning, which had filled them with horrible mud. Splashed with dirt, like water-spaniels on their return from a shooting expedition in the marshes, we were introduced into an immense circular room, with a platform of earth at one end, forming the audience chamber of the chief. On the royal throne, or rather bench which represented it, was flung one of those horrible carpets such as are sold in bazaars, representing a fierce-looking tiger springing forward on a ground of a crude red colour, giving a note of civilization, if of rather a comic kind, to the whole apartment.

The chief now appeared, and turned out to be a very old but still vigorous man. Instead of a sceptre, he carried a cane encased in copper, and on the forefinger of the right hand he wore a ring, the stone of which

consisted of a silver disk nearly six inches in diameter, quite hiding his hand. He sat solemnly down upon the carpet with the tiger; and our beauty of the road, who, it turned out, was his own daughter, took her place beside him, never ceasing to cast languishing glances at Taburet throughout the interview. I now spread out the presents I had brought, and set going a little musical-box. The sound from the latter caused such an excitement that

THE MARIGOT OR CREEK OF TENDA.

the crowd outside managed to get into the audience hall, in spite of all the efforts of the guard, who plied their whips vigorously, even on the shoulders of the most beautiful of the besiegers. There was such a noise that I had to shout at the top of my voice in telling the chief our business; but it was all no use, I might as well have tried to play the flute beside a sledge-hammer in full swing.

The chief, perceiving that conversation was impossible, made me a sign to follow him, and we withdrew for our

palaver to a court-yard surrounded with walls, a kind of stable where his horse was tied up. He shut the door behind him, but in an instant the walls were scaled, and there was as much noise and confusion as there had been before.

The chief then led me to a kind of store-room with a very narrow door, through which only one person could pass at a time, and that almost crawling on hands and knees. We filed in much as Esquimaux do into their snow-huts, and this time we were really free from intruders.

Yes, from intruders! but we were not safe from suffocation. The moment we were in our retreat, such a mass of women pressed up to the door, forming a kind of plug of human flesh, that we found ourselves gasping for breath and turning purple. We literally had to force our way out with our fists to get fresh air, and to drag the poor chief, who was already nearly insensible, out after us. He now declared that it was quite impossible to have a quiet talk with me in his village, but that if I would put off my start, he would come and see me on board the next day.

Meanwhile two horses had been brought out for us; we now mounted them and started for our camp. Unfortunately Arab saddles are rather hard. Moreover, mine had stirrups suitable only for the bare feet of the natives, and much too small for my shoes, so that I had to ride in a very uncomfortable position. Then once Taburet's steed slipped into a hole, and the doctor took an involuntary bath, a complete one this time.

We still had twenty rifles and six pistols for presents to chiefs. Acting on my idea of trying to make Dendi rise as one man against the Toucouleurs, I resolved to give all these weapons to one person. The question was, who should that person be? I cross-examined our guide, the chief of the captives of Kompa, and by the exercise

of a really marvellous amount of diplomacy, I managed to get a very true notion of the exact political condition of Dendi, discovering that there were two capitals, that is to say, two villages big enough and densely enough populated to dominate all the others. These two were Tenda, which I had just seen, and Madecali lower down-stream on the right bank.

The more powerful and therefore the one to which the term "capital" could be more justly applied, was perhaps Madecali. For all that, however, I decided on choosing Tenda, which was more exposed to the depredations of the Toucouleurs than Madecali, the latter being in a more sheltered position, and moreover at war already with Burgu. So Tenda got the weapons, and we passed the evening in getting out the boxes of grape-shot for the machine-gun, which, when taken to pieces, provided us both with powder and bullets for our friends.

Faithful to his promise, the chief came to see us the next day. He came down the rocks overlooking our camp to the sound of his war-drums, made of calabashes with skin stretched across them. His suite consisted of some thirty mounted men, and about one hundred foot-soldiers. There was a certain barbaric splendour about the equipment of the former which was far from displeasing, and the saddle of the chief's son, covered with the skin of a panther, was really both handsome and curious.

I had had strong ropes fixed round the camp, and posted numerous sentinels to keep back the crowd. Thanks to these precautions, we were at last able to have a talk without being suffocated.

My aim here, as it had been at Kompa and Goruberi, was to bring about a friendly league between all the tribes which had anything to dread from the Toucouleurs, and

to induce those tribes to give up the defensive to assume the offensive. I concluded my speech by giving the chief the twenty rifles and the six pistols, with powder, bullets, and matchlock-flints, but I made one condition before parting with them, namely, that the weapons should never be separated; they were to arm the twenty-six bravest warriors of Dendi, who were to go to defend any village threatened by the common enemy. All I required was promised, the chief and notables alike declaring that they accepted my conditions. I don't know whether they will keep their word, anyhow I have done my best.

An envoy from Djermakoy now came to visit us. He had come, he told us, to buy a horse at Tenda to give to Serki Kebbi on behalf of his master, for in Africa if you want anything you must never go to ask it empty-handed. He was to try and persuade the chief of Argungu to help Djerma, especially Dentchendu, against the Toucouleurs. I gave him a black and white banner for Serki, with instructions to tell him to accede to the request of Djermakoy for the sake of the good relations he had formerly been on with Monteil, as well as in his own interests. He could not fail to understand that if the Toucouleurs got the better of Djerma, they would attack him at Kebbi directly afterwards.

Baudry tried to persuade me to leave him at Tenda. He was bent on preaching a crusade against the Toucouleurs, for we were all very bitter against that infamous tribe of robbers and traders in human flesh, who after laying waste the Sudan, had, under pretext of a holy war, brought desolation, famine, slavery, and death to the peaceful if somewhat degraded races of the Niger basin.

I myself shared the sentiments which actuated Baudry, and could I have been sure that when I got to the coast I should be allowed to return with a sufficient force to

back up our friends of Dendi effectually, I am not at all sure but that I should have granted his request.

Unfortunately, however, I knew only too well that in such cases as this, it is no good counting on anything, so I very reluctantly said no to my brave comrade.

If, however, we had not been obliged to stop at Say, because the authorities pretended they were going to send us instructions from France; if we had been allowed to winter in Dendi, I can confidently assert that the state of things there would have been completely changed. But it is too late now, and regrets are unavailing. All we can hope is that our example may be a lesson to travellers who come after us.

At ten o'clock we left our moorings at Tenda, and went to anchor opposite a little Fulah village, situated on an island a short distance above Gagno. We hoped to get some milk here, for we had had none for several days. At first the Fulahs ran away and hid themselves in the bush, to return timidly later. A few presents reassured them, and they became too friendly, begging with horrible persistency. Our hope of getting milk too was doomed to disappointment, for one small calabash of it, already turned sour, was all the natives would sell us.

A terrible tornado from the south-east, accompanied by heavy rain, overtook us that night. The bank scarcely protected us, and the surging water of the river made our boats roll in a very unpleasant, even dangerous, manner, for the prows of the barges were banged against the shore. Since we left Say the weather had been very unsettled, and the nearer we approached the equator the worse it got. Until we reached the coast we must expect rain every day now, and the state of exhaustion, even of sickness, of our men can be imagined, soaked to the skin every night as they were, in spite of the tarpaulins we stretched from one

deck to the other in the hope of sheltering them from the wet.

At eleven o'clock the next morning we arrived opposite Madecali, the second capital of Dendi, to which a little creek gives access, but some fifty-four yards up it our progress was arrested by shallows. Our guide went to the village, and soon returned with the news that the chief, Soulé by name, was coming. First came a canoe containing our envoy, then Soulé himself. A palaver of the usual kind ensued, but it did not seem likely to be as successful as usual in Dendi, for the attitude of the natives towards us was cold. There were some hundred warriors with Soulé all armed to the teeth, a proof that they did not feel very sure of our peaceable intentions. Truth to tell, there was nothing to be surprised at in the want of cordiality of the welcome we received. To take the bull by the horns, I myself confessed that I gave all the weapons I had left to the chief of Tenda, and explained the reasons for what I had done. Soulé replied that in so doing I had earned the gratitude of all Dendi, but for all that it was evident and very natural too, that he felt some little jealousy. Moreover, the people here did not hate the Toucouleurs, which was so much against us, for it was this hatred which had won us friendship at Tenda. As I have already said, Madecali had not suffered either directly or indirectly from their attacks, and it was with Burgu that its inhabitants were at war. Moreover, there was the memory of the Tombuttu affair, which took place a year before, and was thus related to me.

The people of Dendi had been very far from pleased at the Baud-Decœur expedition going to Say, and when our fellow-countrymen started to return to the coast, by way of the banks of the river, the general opinion was that they ought to be attacked. Fortunately the elders of the various

communities were too prudent to sanction this, and their counsels succeeded in curbing the impatience of the hot-headed, but at Tombutu the chief had just died, and the young warriors, deprived of his advice when it was most needed, did fall upon the French, getting the worst of it.

Though Madecali had really had nothing to do with the skirmish its people were afraid of our vengeance, or at least of a demand from us for compensation, and the first question Soulé put to me was, "Are you the same Frenchmen as came here last year?"

I had been promised a guide, but he did not appear, and our palaver grew more and more constrained. I had begun by a distribution of presents, and Soulé had already received a velvet burnous, a red *bubu*, and two pieces of Guinea cloth, to distribute among the notables of his village, but I now stopped my largesse, declaring that the other presents were at the bottom of the hold: we must be quiet if we were to get them out, and it was impossible to do so with such a crowd about us. They should be handed over, I added, to an accredited messenger from the chief, whom he would be good enough to send with the promised guide.

Tableau! Soulé, who from the specimens he had seen of them, knew that our goods were just what he wanted, was eager for more of them. He replied that he had no one he could send for the rest of the presents, to which I retaliated that I had said my last word.

To change the subject, the chief now asked me if I would not have my guns fired off in his honour, as I had in that of the chiefs of Kompa, Goruberi, and Tenda, so that his wives left behind in the village might hear them. I saw no reason why I should say no, so I had ten rounds fired from an 86-pounder at once, which the old fellow did not seem to like much. I followed this up with a round from

the machine gun, and he evidently wished himself anywhere else. I completed the sensation by showing off what I could do with my revolver, and this completely finished him off. It was too much for his courage; he named a man to act as guide at once, and made a rapid exit from the camp.

We also got rid of the crowd, but for five or six men, who, not being able to get a place in any canoes, waited in the hope that we would take them on with us.

As I had promised, so would I perform. I had my guide, and Soulé should have his presents. In his haste to be gone he had forgotten to allude to them again, for all that I gave the first messenger who had arrived, the *avant-courier* of his Majesty, a very fine present to take to his master, including a little musical-box, the effect of which was tremendous. I then showed off a larger one, the little organ, and the phonograph. The last-named produced a profound sensation, so that we ended by getting on to quite good terms with the natives of Madecali.

Our guide did not belong to the village. He was a Kurteye who had settled near Soulé fifteen years before. He told me that when first his fellow-countrymen came from the West, they had thought of stopping near Bussa, but that the natives already occupying the district had prevented them, so then they went up beyond Say, where at last they found a refuge.

"A year ago," he added, "Madecali had been at war with Gomba and also with Ilo, a big village with an important market, which we should come to lower down. Peace was however now restored, and at Ilo I should easily find guides to take me down to Bussa, the chief of which is a friend of Soulé's. Moreover, he would himself look out for pilots for me. So many words, so many lies, I soon discovered, but for the moment we took them all

for Gospel truth, and were delighted at the thought of no longer having the prospect of perpetual palavers in each village before we could get guides.

Our visitor also bragged a great deal about the people of Madecali, how they were not afraid of the Foutanis; in fact, they were not afraid of anybody except perhaps Alim Sar. I made him repeat the name, and found he meant the former Amenokal of the Awellimiden, and I noted the

GIRRIS.

fact as confirming my opinion of the importance of that confederation, that the name of the former chief was synonymous with power and strength. No one seemed to know that he was dead, and had been succeeded by Madidu.

All night we heard the tam-tam beating in the village, to celebrate our generosity, I expect; and early in the morning we started for Ilo, or rather for Girris, for Ilo is inland and Girris is its port.

We arrived there at ten o'clock. We did not know

which of the numerous channels to take, but a canoe came up in the nick of time to direct us, and we anchored close to the village.

There were a good many boats near us, larger and better than any we had hitherto seen. The whole population rushed out to the bank to receive us, and gave us a hearty welcome. It was here that the agent who collects custom dues for the chief of Girris came on board and greeted us on behalf of his master. I asked for a guide to be sent to us that evening, so that we might go on again early the next morning. The chief, however, begged us to wait, so that he might come and see us. We also received the so-called queens, who had their heads completely shaved, and their faces covered with scars, such as the women of the country consider ornamental. They were two wicked-looking little creatures, but they brought us native fruits, including those called papaws and *kus*.

Two more interesting visitors were Hadji Hamet and his brother; the former had acted as guide to Baud, who spoke very highly of his fidelity until the day when, hearing that his French friend was going to join Commandant Decœur, he disappeared without warning. He was probably compromised in the Timbuktu affair mentioned above.

Hadji Hamet and Father Hacquart discovered that they were old acquaintances, having both been at Tunis at the same time.

The life these Hadjis, or pretended Hadjis, lead is really a very strange one. They are Arabs, often, however, of mixed blood, who traverse vast distances in Africa, selling amulets and insinuating themselves into the favour of the chiefs, never leaving a village till some specially heinous offence has roused the wrath of the natives against them.

They succeed everywhere in virtue of their own superior intelligence and the superstitious dread they inspire, in

making a position for themselves, especially in heathen districts. It is necessary for travellers to be on their guard against them, the more so that as a rule they are very taking to Europeans, because of the sympathy they always express with their aims. In is, in fact, a pleasure to exchange ideas with them, and they converse in an intelligent manner, such as is quite impossible to negroes. They have also seen and heard so much in their travels that the information they are able to give is very valuable, but they are regular rascals for all that, ready to betray all who confide in them. In spite of all his protestations of friendship, I am convinced that Hadji Hamet had a good deal to do with the change of tone towards us which took place at Ilo a few days later, the results of which I shall relate below.

Here too we made the acquaintance of a certain Issa, who had acted as guide to Dr. Grunner and a German expedition as far as Gando the previous year.

Issa was a good, honest fellow, still young, with a frank, intelligent expression of countenance. At sunset I went with him to the village, which consisted chiefly of huts with walls of beaten earth and thatched roofs.

Issa's own home was almost European in size and style. It had a regular gabled roof, the first I had seen properly constructed, and there were four good rooms inside. In that which served as an entrance-hall, Issa showed me a folding-table and a canteen marked S, both presents from the German expedition.

The information he gave me without any pressing about that expedition was of the highest importance, for, according to him, all that Dr. Grunner went to Gando for was to ask the Emir to direct the merchants of caravans who left districts under his command to go to Togoland. It will readily be seen how very different the purely commercial

aim of this expedition was to that attributed to it, the establishment of a protectorate in Gando.

The people of Girris have polite and gentle manners. Neither the men, the women, nor the children showed any of the unreasonable terror of white men usual amongst negroes, and so painful to Europeans, accustomed to countries where there is nothing of the kind.

At daybreak the next morning the children of the place came with the little spades used in the district, to clear a great space of grass near to our anchorage, in preparation for the chief's visit to us. On our side we got ready for his reception by pitching the big tent and hoisting our flag beside it. I also made the coolies rig themselves out in their best clothes.

At eight o'clock a deafening noise announced the approach of the chief, and the procession very soon came in sight. It was headed by a number of children armed with bows and arrows, followed by mounted men with tambourines, which the riders struck perpetually with little bent rods.

At last came his Majesty himself, surrounded by a number of his wives, horrible-looking women, whose style I have already described, whilst beside him was his prime minister, if I may use such an expression, or, to give the Haussa term, his *ghaladima*, whose chief occupation in the palace was to shampoo his master's feet.

Behind came crowds of men putting out all the strength of their lungs as they blew large horns, not unlike those used in Europe by the drivers of stage coaches, making a perfectly deafening din. These horns or trumpets, which must have been much the same as those that brought down the walls of Jericho, had caused the awful noise we had been disturbed by in the early morning.

The orchestra was completed by a number of hetero-

geneous instruments, the description of which would require a whole chapter, and the row they made really included, I do believe, every possible sound which could be produced by beating, clapping, and squeezing.

The chief wore a *bubu* with silver stripes, of a pretty good material, a present, I was told, from the Germans. His breeches were made of strips of velvet of different colours; he had on the red boots I had sent to him the evening before, and round a somewhat greasy fez was twisted a coral-coloured silk turban. Lastly, a tricolour sash worn across the shoulders over the half-open *bubu* resembled the grand cordon of some order, or the scarf of a deputy, showing up well against the black skin of his Majesty's chest.

What an ugly, stunted, little fellow he was with it all! He reminded me of a monkey, or of some freak of nature such as is exhibited in circuses and at fairs. His intelligence too was probably on a par with theirs.

Fifty mounted men on fine horses with handsome saddles formed the chief's escort. When they arrived they all leaped with more or less agility to the ground. The chief took his place on the throne, that is to say, on Father Hacquart's folding-chair; his ghaladima crouched at his feet on one side, and Hadji Hamet on the other. We took up our position on benches opposite to our visitor, and the salutations began. With the combined aid of the Father and Hadji Hamet we exchanged many flowery compliments. We had not had a regular interpreter with us since we left Tenda, and now we conversed partly in Burgu and partly in Haussa, for the Fulah spoken by Suleyman and the Songhay of Mamé were rarely understood in these parts. I slipped in a request for a guide, and was told one would be with me that very evening. Noting the magnificence displayed by the chief of Ilo, I thought I had

better give him and his suite handsomer presents than those I had originally intended for him. I was extremely anxious to get a guide to take us to Bussa, for the river was now at its height, and there was not a moment to lose if we wished to pass the rapids under the most favourable conditions. Moreover, I had been told that the chiefs of Ilo and Bussa were relations, so that I hoped the pilots

GIRRIS CANOES.

given to me by the first would aid me in getting guides more easily from the latter.

Whilst I was holding forth to this effect a terrible noise began again, for at a sign from the chief the twelve trumpeters approached him, and with all their strength blew a tremendous blast almost into his ears, the instruments all but touching him. This, it appeared, was done to drive away evil spirits. The very angel of the last judgment would not be able to make himself heard if he en-

deavoured to sound his trump here. Adieu to all discussion now!

The old chimpanzee, for such he really seemed, did however manage, through the intermediary of Hadji Hamet, to let us know that he was thirsty. A glass of *eau sucrée* with an extra supply of sugar only drew from him a grimace of dissatisfaction. He wanted something very different, and Hadji Hamet put out all his eloquence to make Father Hacquart understand what sort of drink it was the chief was craving for. The Father did not at first understand, but presently clapping his hand on his forehead, he exclaimed, "He wants some champagne! Impossible! he cannot know what it is, but he is certainly asking for a drink that goes pop and fizzes. It is very evident that he does mean champagne!"

So we actually drank champagne in N. Lat. 11° 39′, with a negro potentate resembling a monkey. Fortunately for our credit we had brought with us, not as a beverage, but as a medicine, two cases of wine manufactured at Rheims. As none of us had had the bilious attacks which this wine was intended to correct, the cases were still pretty well intact. We reflected that we were now near our journey's end, and therefore decided to spare from our pharmacy a few bottles of the precious liquid, which we hoped would not be found inferior to that of our predecessors, whoever they might be, who had given his Majesty of Ilo a taste for the wine which goes pop!

The arrival of our flasks of champagne was the signal for a regular carousal. From every side large jars of millet beer were brought by the assembled crowds, and all present began plunging little calabashes, which served as drinking cups, into them. In half-an-hour the chief, his court, and all the men and women who had flocked together, even the children, were tipsy.

Needless to add that we had to put off all hope of making serious arrangements until later. When the time came to go, it was all his people could do to get the chief on to his steed. His suite were all probably as unsteady as himself. At last by hook or by crook our visitors decided to take their leave, and reeled away, many of the women often stumbling or falling, not making quite as much noise as on their arrival in the morning, for the trumpeters were now unable to blow a blast on their instruments.

We waited all the afternoon in vain for the arrival of the guide. At last, about half-past five, an envoy from the chief appeared. He informed us that it was five years since the latter had sent a present to his relation at Bussa. It would not therefore be fitting for him to have us guided into that relative's district without supporting the demand for our reception with the customary gift. He could not send that gift, so his guide was to take us to Gomba only.

Was I going to be cheated by the old rogue after all? Should we have to go on like this from village to village till we reached Bussa, to the detriment not only of our merchandise, which would quickly be exhausted at this rate, but to the great loss of time, which was even more valuable? If the river fell suddenly—and I know that changes of level are very sudden in these parts—we might be stopped and compelled to remain stationary again above Bussa.

I sent the messenger back in double quick time, charging him to tell his master I would have all or nothing. He must either keep the promise he had made in the morning, or I should do without him altogether and start at daybreak alone, trusting to the aid of the God who had brought us thus far and was not likely to abandon us by the way now.

Many of those standing by looked approval of the tone

I had adopted, including Issa, the Kurteye guide from Madecali, and the agent himself.

Then, seeing that half the people were intoxicated, not knowing what was at the bottom of the delays, with the very evident feeling against us, and to avoid all risk of a night attack, I had the barges moved some hundred yards off into the submerged grass, as I used to do in the old days amongst the Tuaregs. I ordered a strict watch to be kept, and we settled down to pass the night as best we could.

This simple manœuvre, which was carried out with very little noise, had the effect of filling the soddened brains of the natives with terror.

First came a messenger to tell me that the agent himself would act as guide to Bussa, then about midnight I was awoke by a great noise. What could it mean? It was the chief himself, who, in a great state of alarm, had hastened back from Ilo on purpose to see me. No doubt, when the vapours of the champagne had been dissipated, he had been told of my vexation, and trembling with fear lest my move should mean a declaration of war, he had hastened to me, this time without any attendants, to endeavour to pacify me. I sent Mamé, and the poor chief asked him to beg, pray, and entreat me on his behalf to remain until the middle of the next day. He would then be able to get together a present for his relation at Bussa. If only I would wait he would be profoundly and eternally grateful.

To add to the confusion and misery of the suppliant, the rain now began to pour down. I assured my visitor that it was quite usual for us to move, in case of storms, and that I had had the barges moved away from the banks lest the wind should drive them against them. In fact, I said we did this pretty well every night, but it was just all I could do to reassure the chief and his people. I could not help

thinking that the scene was very like what one sees in the lunatic asylum at Charenton, and instead of a naval officer, I ought to have chosen a doctor accustomed to treat the insane, as ambassador to Ilo. He would certainly have looked upon the chief as a dipsomaniac whose case was rather an uncommon one. I was the less interested, however, as it would be my turn to keep watch from two to five o'clock, and I wanted to go to my cabin and have a sleep, especially as the rain was heavy and cold, penetrating to the very bones. In the end it was settled that I was to have the guide the very first thing the next morning. Would the promise be kept this time?

No! not even now. It was evidently decreed that we were not to have a guide. In the morning a man appeared in a canoe who pretended that he was to go with us, and my hopes revived. But he had to wait for a companion who did not turn up, and presently he disappeared himself. At five o'clock, for the tenth and last time, I demanded the fulfilment of the promise made to me, our Kurteye going ashore with my message. "Listen to me," he said; "I am sick of talking to these drunkards, I declare I can do absolutely nothing with them; and I want you to let me go." I gave him leave, and we all set to work to drive the people of Girris off the boats, for they were doing a brisk trade in provisions, as if nothing unusual was going on and were in no hurry to go.

"Push off!" I cried at last, this time in earnest, and my only regret was that I had yielded the evening before. The first thing in the morning we resumed our voyage without a guide. What could be the reason for the way we were treated? Did the natives want to make us remain as long as possible for the sake of our presents, and of the purchases we made? Or was it the two Mussulmans, especially Hadji Hamet, who seems to have been guilty of double dealing with

the Decœur expedition, to whom we owed the change which had come over the sentiments of the natives towards us?

Later, I learnt that one of my predecessors had had a quarrel with the natives of Ilo, about an ox which had been promised to him, and which, like my guide, never turned up. Perhaps he had not been as patient as he might have been under the circumstances, if he had remembered the interests of those to come after him.

So we started after all without a pilot and passed many villages, the names of which I do not know. The inundated banks were flat and grass-grown, with clumps of trees here and there. We cast anchor in the evening off the left bank, opposite the Fulah village of Raha, a dependency of Gomba.

As we were at dinner we were hailed from a canoe by an old Fulah, answering to the name of Amadu, who offered us five chickens as a present. We circumvented him cleverly. He said he knew the river well down to Bussa, in fact as far as Iggu, where he had been. I proposed that he should act as our guide and introduce us to the chief of Bussa, who he said was a great friend of his. To my delight he actually agreed!

During the whole of the 28th we went rapidly down the wide river, here unencumbered with obstacles, as fast as ever we could row.

About nine o'clock we passed Gomba, inhabited by Fulahs, and the capital of the district. Our guide Amadu evidently thought we should stop there to see the chief, and showed great surprise at our pressing on without a halt. To his discreet suggestions I turned a deaf ear, and our interpreter seemed suddenly to have forgotten all the Fulah language he knew. In the end our guide resigned himself to the inevitable.

We had to make haste, for, reflecting on the causes of

the check we had received at Ilo, I was led to think that the English might have had something to do with it, or, at least, that people who had been amongst them—for the English themselves have no political influence in these parts—had had intelligence enough to understand and look after their interests. In the suite of the chief there

OUR GUIDE AMADU.

was a native of Bidda, who asked me to let him accompany me back to his native place, but he too disappeared. In any case, however, as Amadu told me, the news of our stay at Say had not yet reached Gomba, still less Bussa, we might still, by pushing on rapidly, circumvent the plans of those who were anxious to make mischief. Forward then as rapidly as possible!

We soon passed the mouth of the Ngubi-Sokoto, of

anything but imposing appearance, but, as we were told, navigable at high water for canoes until nearly up to the village from which it takes its name. In the evening we had made more than 32 miles, the longest distance achieved yet by the expedition in one day. We anchored a little beyond Lanfaku.

Here we were visited by two parties of fishermen, who came to us in canoes from the villages, such as are scattered about near all important Fulah centres of population. The young men had their heads shaved, but for a kind of tuft of hair left on the middle of the upper part of the head, which was really not at all unbecoming. Amadu told me that the Grunner expedition had been attacked on its return from Gando at the village of Gesero, which was at war with Gando. The inhabitants had tried to stop the guides of the Germans by firing at them. Grunner had therefore burnt their village.

At ten o'clock we were overtaken by a tornado. We were back again in the winter in fact, and every night there was a storm, or at least a downpour of rain.

On the 29th we continued our forced march, passing several fine villages surrounded by *tatas*. Kundji seemed a very big, strong place.

At about eleven o'clock we passed three rocks which probably form part of a bar across the river when the water is low, marking the beginning of the difficult and broken course below. At four o'clock we anchored opposite Tchakatchi, on an island at the foot of a group of magnificent baobabs. At the end of this island is a great mass of flint, and the banks were strewn with the big rocks of polished granite we knew so well. We were back again amongst the rapids, and had once more to encounter difficulties such as we had conquered at Ayoru and Kendadji. The whole village turned out to see us, and the chief

himself offered to act as pilot. I accepted his suggestion, for our old Amadu had rather exaggerated his hydrographical knowledge. The only garment of most of the men of the village was a little leather apron worn behind, but some few wore drawers made of blue Haussa cotton. The faces of the women were scarred in the same way as those of their sisters of Kebbi, and they wore as ornaments in the lobes of the ear, little pieces of white stick about a quarter of an inch in diameter by seven inches long.

At seven o'clock the next day we started, preceded by the chief of Tchakatchi, who steered a tiny little canoe with a paddle curiously shaped and carved. The river was very much what we had expected it would be the evening before, the rocks forming a regular archipelago of islets, whilst rapids were also numerous. Fortunately this state of things did not last long, and presently we came to an almost calm reach, which brought us to Gilua, the capital of Yauri, where we noted one very large hut, the residence of the chief of the village.

I was in despair at having to travel like a bale of goods, without being able to have any intercourse with the people whose country we were passing through. But what could we do? Since we left Say we had had no power to treat with the natives, our interpreters were scarcely any good, whilst before us we had two great obstacles, Bussa and the English.

According to the most recent information collected, it was at Gilua and not at Bussa that Mungo Park died. Here then we had reached the limit of the path he trod one hundred years ago, and I remembered what Davoust had said to me: "Mungo Park has become immortal through merely having tried to do what we shall now endeavour to accomplish."

I confess in all humility that since my return to France I have had to change my opinion on that point.

On the left and right of the river there were two mountains remarkable for their shape and their relative dimensions. I tried to find out their names, but was told that they had none in particular. To do honour to our comrades who had died under such melancholy circumstances, I baptized them Mount Davoust and Mount Delagarde, the latter having been the name of a naval officer who died without reaching the Niger.

I trust that these names will be considered of good omen by geographical critics in France, and that it will be admitted that I had every right to choose them. Have not the English named all the peaks of the chain on the banks of the river below Bussa after their great men? Mount Davoust will look quite as well in our atlases as Mount Wellington does in theirs.

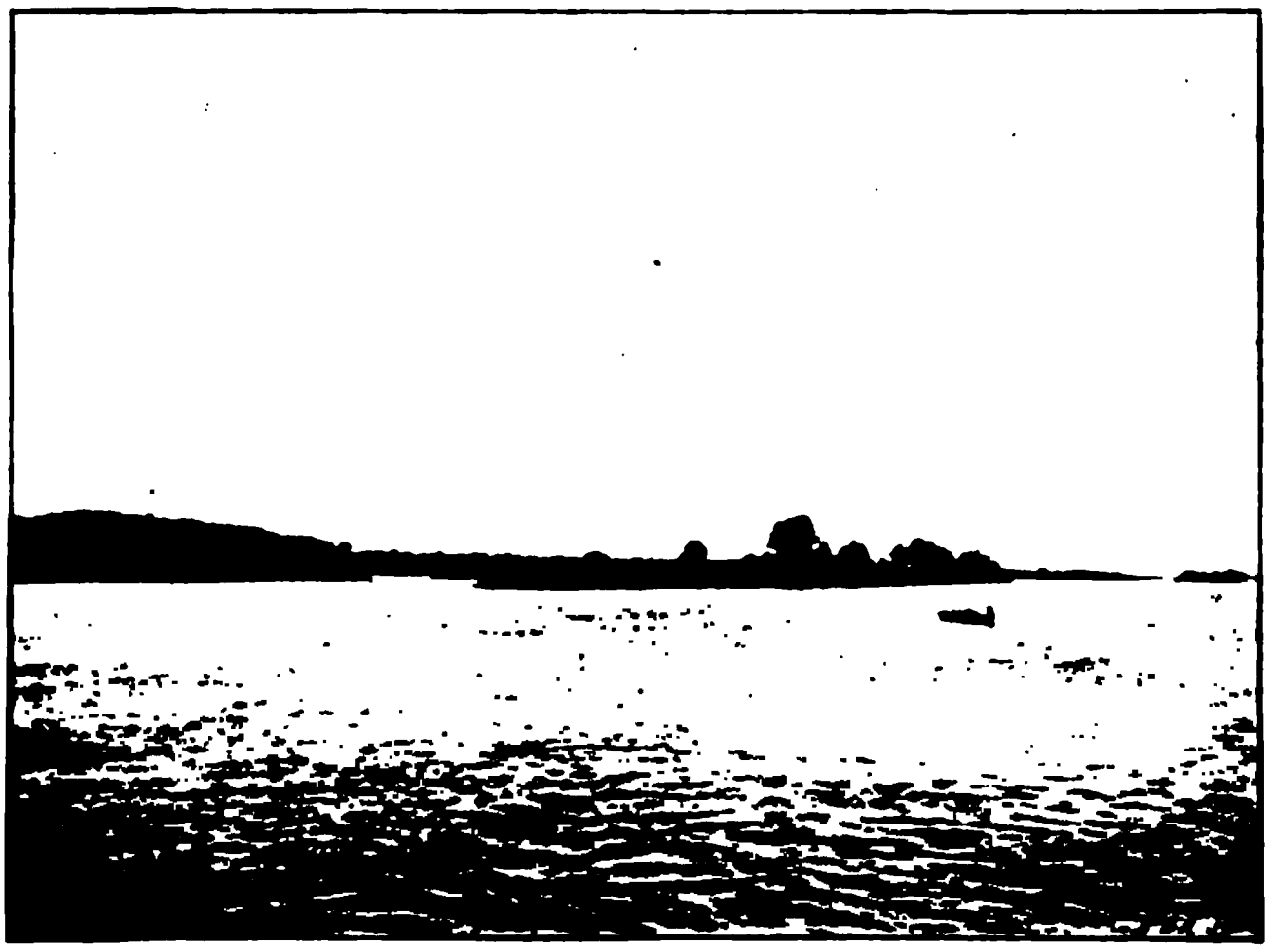
We pushed on on the right between the villages of Ikum and Rupia, and after passing a little rapid we anchored opposite a big tree, beneath which a market was being held—an important one I was told by the people of Rupia. The chief of Tchakatchi had told us that we should meet his brother there, who would pilot us further, but he had left that same morning. As usual the people began to shilly-shally with us, and some men from Igga, whom we identified by their white turbans embroidered with green, sold to them by the Royal Niger Company, interposed in the conversation, but not in our favour.

"Off again!" was the word; we would push on and still push on, alone and without a pilot or help of any kind, but we would not be trifled with.

The people of Rupia are many of them Kambaris, a tribe alluded to by Richard Lander. Their women when young go about quite naked, and have the head shaved, but for a

narrow tuft of hair left on the top. They have the peculiar custom of dyeing their legs up to above the knee with *rocou*, or red dye, which gives them the appearance at a distance of wearing nothing but light red stockings.

This was the first occasion on which I had seen people in a state of nudity in the Sudan, and this is the more remarkable as there are plenty of stuffs to be had cheap at Rupia.



DJIDJIMA.

Noticing my astonishment, one of the beauties of the place made the following naïve remark to me, which I thought was really rather sensible: "Why should we wear clothes? Are we so badly made that we need hide ourselves? All in good time, when we are old like our mothers, we will make up for the loss of our physical advantages by well-made clothes, but not till then."

Many are the women on this earth of ours who could not say as much!

A little mollified by what my young friend said, I still

felt perfectly furious at the sullen hostility and evident prejudice against us we now constantly met with, which delayed our journey in a manner so dangerous. Rightly or wrongly, I saw the hand of the English or of their agents in it all. Fortunately, however, the river is easy of navigation as far as Djidjima, a village picturesquely situated on an island, opposite to which we anchored at four o'clock.

In the evening we went to the village, and I asked for a guide for the next day, without much hope of getting one. I tried to win the people over to my side by distributing a great many little presents. We were invited to be present at a tam-tam, at which three dancers performed, wearing leggings from which were suspended little bits of iron resembling castanets, that made a deafening noise as they struck against each other. The dancers, moreover, were very clumsy in their attitudes.

No guide the next morning, but more men from Igga to stare at us. The accounts that Amadu gives us of the difficulties of navigation before us are heartrending, and as a matter of fact a little further down, the river began to divide again into a great many arms. We therefore anchored, and Digui went on in a canoe to reconnoitre.

Whilst he was away exploring we saw some eighty or a hundred canoes going up an arm on our right, the tam-tam beating ceaselessly. On inquiry we were told that it was only a water convoy on the way to Rupia, where a very big market was about to be held. All the way along the canoes stop to take up traders and their goods, very much as the small steamers do on the Seine, or the omnibuses in the streets of Paris. A canoe presently separated from the rest and came towards us, its occupants saying very amiably that seeing we had stopped, they had

come to ascertain whether we were in any difficulty, and to offer to guide us.

There is no doubt there is a good God for honest folk, I very nearly added, and against the English. Be it remarked, for the reader to draw his own moral, that everywhere the inhabitants of the little villages, in a word the poor, helped us. The perpetual difficulties we had to

THE NIGER BELOW RUPIA.

contend with in this part of our journey only arose in the big centres.

Delighted at this chance of going on, we started, our guides being anything but *de trop*, passing several dangerous rapids and arriving safely at Fogué, where the river became once more calm.

On October 2 we had a hard day, but it was the best before we got to Bussa. Near Waro we had twice to go on in single file. The force of the current was now immense,

seven miles an hour at least. Once more we felt as if we were dashing over cataracts, a painful sensation we were all too familiar with. Our guide had met a friend, who also to the best of his lights helped us to steer a right course. At half-past five we reached Bussa, and anchored opposite the landing-stage of the village. The river here divides into several arms, the town being on that farthest to the right, about a mile from the bank. A little village occupied by fishermen and traders was situated close to our camp. The water, which is of a black colour, seems very deep here, and the islands are covered with beautiful vegetation. The natives approached us without fear, and we at once began to barter with them in the usual manner, exchanging cloth, bracelets, rings and beads for provisions.

I sent Amadu to greet the chief of the village, promising him a good present if he succeeded in making that chief behave well to us.

I waited his return with impatience. There we were face to face with our last but perhaps the greatest difficulty of our voyage. A very considerable fuss is made about the cataracts or rather the rapids of Bussa. Providence had so far befriended us, and enabled us to reach this point without having lost one of our boats. Not a single man, white or black, belonging to the expedition had lost his life through what a year ago had been called our temerity. We had managed everywhere with greater or less difficulty to pass on in peace, leaving behind us none who had cause to hate us or to vow vengeance on us. Yet one last effort, and our aim would be achieved just as I had hoped to achieve it, exactly in accordance with our instructions, in spite of all the difficulties thrown in our way, not only by inanimate nature but by man. Just because this was to be our last struggle we dreaded it more than we had done

any other. I was therefore immensely relieved when I saw Amadu coming back accompanied by an emissary from the chief. According to him all would go well, all was arranged; the chief of Bussa would supply us with all we needed, and, greatly to the delight of our men, give us all the help required for passing the rapids safely. A good supply of the fruit called *kus* accompanied these cheering words. The chief would receive us the next day.

Whilst I was chatting with our guide and the natives who accompanied him, some girls were singing our praises and those of their master. According to their songs the people of Bussa are descended from the Persians, and they do in fact claim that they are the children of Kisira, who fought with Mahomet, and were driven away by him. Reference to history will show us that Kisira is only another name for Chosroes the Great, who was, as a matter of fact, the unfortunate adversary of the founder of Islam.

I state the fact for what it is worth, for the benefit of ethnologists.

A PALAVER.

THE SO-CALLED NIGRITIAN, THE OLD PONTOON OF YOLA.

CHAPTER X

FROM BUSSA TO THE SEA; CONCLUSION OF OUR VOYAGE

THE whole of the morning of the 3rd was occupied in receiving visits from people more or less nearly related to the chief, and in the afternoon I was informed that his Majesty himself would receive me.

We crossed a marsh between the village and the bank, and duly arrived at Bussa.

There is nothing very imposing about the town, and it has been recently much damaged by fire. We stopped at the door of a big round hut, some thirty-five to forty-five feet in diameter, which was really very well built. After a brief delay we were admitted.

The chief of Bussa was squatting on a bench of hardened earth, some twenty inches high, and wore a *bubu* of doubtful cleanliness, and a cap such as that worn by the eunuch in Molière's play to which I alluded in speaking of Dendi. The bench was covered with just such a red

carpet, with a lion rampant as I had seen at Tenda. The chief's spear was stuck in the ground beside him, and his sceptre consisted of a cane ornamented with copper and silver. A horribly ugly wife, with a face covered with scars, shared the royal bench, whilst the courtiers remained squatted on the sand during the interview. On entering the hut every one was expected to kneel, and on reaching

VIEW OF BUSSA.

the chief the visitor had again to prostrate himself and cast sand upon his own head.

A wooden bench was assigned to us to sit on, and I spread out the handsomest present I had brought with me.

Salutations were now exchanged. Thanks were given in the name of the Sultan of the French for the help given to Captain Toutée the year before by the Bussa canoes. I then slipped in a word about the facilities of transport I hoped for for myself.

The reply was evasive, and moreover the expression of the chief's face was anything but intelligent. We returned on board.

The next day our visitors became more and more numerous. Having shown off the phonograph to various persons, the rumour of that wonderful instrument reached

NATIVES OF BUSSA.

the ears of the chief himself, and he sent word to me that he too would like to hear it.

He was, however, unwilling to put himself to any inconvenience for the sake of it, and wished me to take it to him. Anywhere else but at Bussa I would have said he might go to the devil, for it would be a very delicate operation to take the phonograph to him, especially across the marsh. But I was determined to do all in my power to conciliate the chief, so as to have his aid when I crossed the rapids. Four of my strongest coolies were therefore

told off to carry the instrument, which fortunately arrived without sustaining any damage.

The scene when I showed off the powers of the phonograph was interesting, for while the attendants of the chief could not conceal their surprise, he himself maintained his dignity, and his set features expressed nothing but stupidity. He offered us a sheep, because he said, "Now that we have

CANOES AT BUSSA.

been well amused, we must eat well." Trying to turn his good humour to account, I reverted to the question I had at heart—the passage of the rapids. It appeared that my question on the subject had not been understood the evening before, at least so I was now given to understand. I repeated my request, taking care this time to make my meaning perfectly clear. I wanted Bussa canoes to take everything we had on board down below the rapids to the village of Auru, as they do the merchandise of the

village. We ourselves could then pass down quite easily in our lightened crafts with the guides I also asked for. I got a promise at last that all my wishes should be met.

On the 5th, however, there were still no canoes, but at four o'clock the chief sent for me and told me that the whole thing was arranged and settled. In fact, I heard

WOMEN OF BUSSA.

him give the orders to two negroes, who were, I was told, the chief canoe men. We agreed that I should pay two hundred thousand cowries. Thinking that everything was really settled this time, I gave the chief my own fowling-piece and a little pocket revolver.

During the day more big canoes, from about twenty-seven to thirty-three feet long, came alongside of our boats loaded with rice and the native produce called *karité*. The English at Seba I was told give two bags of salt for one of

rice, and the *karité* which comes from Rupia fetches a good price in the factories.

I must note here, *en passant*, how little we French know how to make the most of what we have in our colonies. This *karité*, for instance, which is a greasy substance extracted from the fruit of the *Bassia parkii*, is to be obtained in immense quantities in the French Sudan. It has been analyzed, and there has been a great deal of talk about it

WOMEN OF BUSSA.

in periodical literature, but not a pound of it has been exported.

I had mentally fixed the 7th as the date for our departure from Bussa, at whatever cost. We had now been there three days, and the English must have heard of our arrival. How would they behave towards us? I know that the Royal Niger Company is not particularly scrupulous as to the means it employs, and of this there are plenty of well-known instances: such as the torture of Mizon by Flint

at Akassa, after being wounded in a fight with the Patanis, who were perhaps incited against him; or in the case of the foundering of the *Ardent*, when her crew, deprived of fresh provisions, died off, the Company showing not a scrap

TRUMPETERS OF BUSSA.

of compassion for them, or at least not sending them any help.

From the English point of view, it would be a fairer way of making war to rouse the people of Bussa against us; but never mind, we have cannon, rifles, and thirty thousand cartridges, so that although the natives do own a certain number of quick-firing weapons, we should be the ones to get the best of it in a fight.

What I really dread more than the open hostility of the Company is a sham friendliness on their part. If they came to our aid, offering to help us, even in spite of ourselves, it would only be a bit of clever diplomacy on their part, really quite against our interests.

I knew that the English had a post at Leba, about forty-four miles down-stream, and if there happened to be men enough there, they might send a detachment up to us, to conquer difficulties they had themselves perhaps created, when they would loudly declare that they had saved our lives.

Should this take place, I feel pretty sure there are many in France who would be simple enough to be taken in ; such a thing has happened before now, and I bet you anything you like, the English will be warmly thanked. Remaining behind after we are gone too, they will reap all the moral effect of our arrival from the Upper Niger ; the natives distinguish very little between the different white nations, and it would be only too easy for the English to represent that we are fellow-countrymen of theirs who have established themselves higher up-stream.

If, therefore, we meant to succeed, and not to have our expedition fail at the very entrance of the long-hoped-for haven, we must push on as soon as possible, with or without the help of the natives. This was the resolution come to by us five in a little council of war we held together.

At four o'clock in the afternoon there was still no sign of a canoe. The moment of decision had come. We had quantities of things in our holds of little use or value, so I determined to lighten the boats as much as possible, partly to lessen their draught, and partly to make it easier to get at their bottoms to plug up any leak which should occur.

To begin with, there was all our ammunition, for except for a few, used to practise shooting and to kill crocodiles,

our store of thirty thousand cartridges was intact. I decided to sacrifice twenty-two thousand, and Digui, having found a place where the river was deep enough not to dry up in the summer, our canoe went backwards and forwards, and our men threw the cases into the river one by one. The natives of Bussa ran to the banks and looked on in stupefied astonishment; the copper cases gleaming in the sunshine excited their cupidity.

Next we drowned many of our other stores. Into the water with our bottles of oil and pots of pomade! Then into the fire with our celluloid bracelets, necklaces, and rings! The despair of the natives on the bank became deeper and deeper, reaching its height when, just to wind up with *éclat* and to increase their regrets rather than from necessity, we flung two or three dozen many-coloured umbrellas on to the blazing pile. This produced positive desolation amongst the spectators. All the better, it would teach them to behave properly to foreigners.

A Fulah, sent I was told by the Sultan of Gando, flung himself at my feet and entreated me to stop the destruction, assuring me that the chief of Bussa would do all we wished. I reminded him of a proverb current in his native place: "It is no good to put the fish back in the water after it is cooked." I had often been to that monarch's court, I added, and I had no time to begin all over again, probably in vain, the palavers of yesterday and the day before that. I had had enough of it now.

The river was falling too; we had noticed a decrease of some four inches in the depth of the water during the last twenty-four hours, and although all the natives agreed in declaring that it was only temporary, I was not going to run the risk of finding our passage blocked.

Amongst the crowd I noticed a *diavandu* from Igga, who was trying to incite the natives against us. There

were several of his fellow-countrymen there too, easily identified by their *bubus* with the green embroideries already referred to as sold by the Niger Company.

I was now assured that the chief had had his canoe men put in irons for disappointing us, but unfortunately a minute afterwards I recognized them in the crowd.

I copy the following sentence from my journal written on the spur of the moment—

WOMEN OF BUSSA.

"It is very evident that the English have not lost time since last year; they have not, it is true, as I feared they would, pushed their effective occupation up-stream, but have merely, so to speak, set going the cavalry of Saint George. Their plan is simply to delay us; yes, to delay us till it is impossible for our boats to pass the rapids. We should then be obliged to go by land through Burgu, which they know to be dangerous, and where they have no doubt sown obstacles for us—one well-aimed shot, one well-planted

poisoned arrow, and there would be an end of our expedition and its results. Otherwise there would be nothing left for us to do but to go down to Leba and ask the English to co-operate with us.

"This was the policy described by Agoult, but *Inch Allah!* our rivals will not have the latter satisfaction. Let us pass the rapids somehow or other, and I promise myself that I will describe the odiousness of such conduct even to, indeed especially to, the honest portion of the English nation. The first thing to be done is to pass the rapids."

Weary of the dispute, and seeing that I was quite decided not to return to the village, the messenger from the chief now left. Our old guide was in despair, for he had boasted so much to us of his influence over the chief of Bussa. "I must have become blind or stupid," he said, "for he cannot really have been telling lies all the time."

I tried to persuade Amadu to accompany us at least, but he confessed that though it was true he had passed the rapids, it was twenty years ago. Still he did not like to refuse straight out. He would land now, and then he would see.

Night had now fallen, and a quarter of an hour after our guide had left we heard loud cries and the noise of people running. We seized our weapons, but it was only old Amadu coming back out of breath. Four or five pieces of stuff which I had given him as payment had been stolen from him. Some men had fallen on him about half-way to the village.

Seeing that they meant to take his life, or at least to deprive him of liberty, he had drawn his sword (it was only a bit of iron from an old cask), resolved to defend himself to the last. The Bussa bravos, five against one poor old man, had at first run away, and Amadu had profited by their alarm to take to his own legs. Then they ran after

him again, but he managed to get safely back to us on board our boat without further adventures.

These silly natives had thus secured us a guide on whom I had certainly not counted, for Amadu would not leave our boats now. I asked him if he wanted to go down as far as Leba, to which he replied "*Dolé*," or needs must.

For the whole night I pondered on the situation, whilst a continual watch was kept on board. My first idea was to bombard the village of Bussa at daybreak, and thus give its people a severe lesson. There really had been a flagrant and successful attack made on the person of a member of my expedition.

Further reflection, however, brought me to a better mind, for, truth to tell, I did not know how matters stood with regard to the questions of delimitation between the French and the English. The latter claim Bussa in virtue of treaties made with the Royal Niger Company, but Commandant Toutée denies that these treaties are valid. Who is right? Who is wrong? I am sure I don't know. The chief of Bussa acted towards me as if he were quite independent, and perhaps he is the one to speak the truth after all.

If, however, the actual or implicit assertions of the English be true, it results that one of their *protégés* had committed an aggression on one of our party, the odium and responsibility of which rests with them. Either they have effective power and real influence at Bussa, which would make them accomplices, or they have not, and in the latter case their assertions are lies. The dilemma appears to me to be one difficult to elude, and I leave to French diplomatists the task of deducting from it the practical consequences.

I think I must have scented mischief when I refrained from accepting the chief's last invitation. That at least

was the opinion of our guide, for he is convinced that if he had not made his escape the evening before, his head would have been no longer on his shoulders.

I learnt later that when the attack took place on the director Fonssagrives at Yangbassu, the people of Bussa had sent reinforcements to the assailants. Once

AMONG THE RAPIDS.

more a mere chance had saved us from a great danger, and from falling into the trap set for us.

The 7th and 8th of this month will ever remain in our memories two of the most terrible of the whole journey. Just because we had in them to meet the last dangers of our eventful journey down the Niger, at least of those dangers for which Nature alone was responsible, the anxiety they caused seemed almost unbearable.

At first the river was easily navigable enough, but we soon came to the first rapid. This we crossed successfully,

however, the *Davoust* in one great rush, the *Aube* after being compelled to anchor just above it, till Digui returned for her with a reinforcement of rowers.

We anchored at Malali for breakfast, and Digui went to reconnoitre the rapid below that village. We were just finishing our meal when some messengers arrived from the chief of Bussa. Yet again we are to hear from him!

The messengers explained that although a nominal ruler, the chief had really less influence than any one in his village. He had done his very utmost to overcome the indifference of those about him to our wishes, but it had all been in vain. "We were relations!" he added, and he did not wish us to go away angry with him. To this I replied that one of our men had been molested and robbed, and I would not add a syllable to anything which was said until the objects stolen from him had been restored and the guilty men punished. The messengers swore that the chief knew nothing about the outrage, and, after all, this may have been true, for this poor down-trodden demi-god of a chief had none but venal courtiers about him, and unless we interfere to save it, Bussa is a prey marked down for the big teeth of perfidious Albion.

Digui returned wet through; he had tried to shoot the rapid, but the canoe was swamped, and he had only just time to save himself by running her into the bank. In fact, it was quite impossible to reconnoitre here as we had hitherto done. We had to make examining the river from the banks do. Such was the violence of the current, so narrow were the passes and so big the waves, that canoes could only pass the rapids by shooting through little channels quite impracticable to our barges.

A dreary prospect truly! But one way was open to us, and not even the natives knew anything about it. We walked along the bank, and an eager discussion took

place at each eddy we came to. Were there rocks beneath them or were they merely whirlpools? At last, thanks be to God, we came to the end of them.

We managed, after all, to pass them all in our boats, and they were indeed enough to terrify any one; but they were really more alarming than dangerous, for there was plenty of water above most of the rocks. In one pass, some 54 yards wide, shut in between two large reefs, a good half of the waters of the Niger flings itself over with a tremendous roar.

The immense velocity of the current is such that the water dashes up the banks like the waves of the sea, and there is one paradoxical thing about it: the level is at least three feet higher near the banks than in midstream, where a kind of trough is formed.

It is along this trough that we have to steer, and it is really very dreadful to see the large masses of water piled up on either side, looking as if they were ready to rush together and engulf us between them.

Digui made a very sensible speech to his crew.

"Attention," he cried, "no one is to look out of the boat; every one must put out all his strength; but I'll break the head of the first man who looks beyond the deck."

Then ensued thirty seconds of mortal agony; there was a kind of flash like lightning, and the current had seized the barge in its grip, hugging it tightly. The vessel seemed about to break beneath the masses of water flung back from the banks to the centre of the stream, but it was over; we had got safely through the pass.

I estimate the speed of the current at from twelve to fourteen miles, and if the boat had struck on an unnoticed rock as it rushed along, we knew that it must have been split open from stem to stern.

On the right of the pass is a group of little islands

where the current is broken up, and its strength lessened. It is amongst them that canoes are able to get through, turning the quieter water to account; but, as I said before, the passes there were too narrow for our boats.

We were soon flung on to a second rapid, less majestic and terrible in appearance, but perhaps more dangerous than the first. To pass it safely, we had to steer to the left to begin with, and then bear to the right as much as possible to avoid the waves driven back in that direction

THE RAPIDS BELOW BUSSA.

by a great rock over which the water fell like a huge moustache; only the utmost care and skill saved the boats from being flung upon a bank of sharp flints near the left bank. In fact, it was an even more delicate manœuvre to achieve than to describe!

Beyond this rapid the water was boiling and seething as in some huge caldron; whirlpools and waves met and clashed into each other, and even between the rapids, in comparatively calm water, there was such a swell on that the boats were lifted high up and rolled about as if at sea.

We anchored off Garafiri, whilst above and below us roared the rapids.

The next day, the 8th, we started early and passed without difficulty the Kandji rapid, which is comparatively easy. We breakfasted at Konotasi; at least, that is the way the natives seem to me to pronounce the name marked Kpatachi on maps.

Digui again went to reconnoitre, and came back with the gloomy face of old difficult days. The trading canoes which had left Bussa during our stay there had not yet gone, but were about to discharge their cargoes. They would take a little channel on the right, but it was too narrow for us. Moreover, there was not yet water enough even for native boats, and they would have to wait for an inundation. We must again follow the main stream, and we went along the banks to look for the pass.

Malali was nothing to what we had now to encounter, for the only pass was by an opening not as big as that of the sluice of a canal.

"Can we pass, Digui?" we asked.—"Yes, perhaps," he replied, "if it is the will of Allah!"

With this assurance we had to be content, and I gave the order "Forward!"

When my old guide saw us steering towards the left to take the course impracticable even to native canoes he was terrified. "*Laol alla! Laol alla!*" he cried, "there is no pass there!" I put my hand over his mouth to make him hold his tongue, and flinging himself upon the deck he hid his head in his cloak.

I got my camera ready for taking a photograph, but Digui said to me. "It is not worth while!"—"Why?" I asked.—"Because you will not be able to look. You will be afraid!"

Yet Digui had seen me look at places still less attractive than this pass, which was no pass.

I proved him wrong to some extent, for I did succeed in getting two photographs of the banks we were passing. I don't deny, however, that I felt a slight shudder pass over me, and I hope I am not more of a coward than any one else would have been under the circumstances.

AMONG THE RAPIDS.

This time we experienced a peculiar sensation such as we had never had before; when the boat passed over the whirlpools, everywhere intersecting each other, it seemed to be alternately sucked in and flung out again by the masses of water.

One instant of calm, then a second rapid, and we anchored in a little creek; Digui then went back to fetch the *Aube* and the *Dantec*, and we found ourselves all once more safely together.

We had still two more rapids to cross, the first easy, the second more difficult, on account of a very violent current flowing towards a channel on the left encumbered with flints.

According to the maps, we should now come to a stretch of calm water. I hoped to anchor above the Auru pass, which would be the last, and to attempt its passage the next day.

At Auru the Niger makes a bend to the right of ninety degrees, and the main channel is so terribly encumbered with rocks and impedimenta of all kinds, whilst the current is at the same time so fearfully strong, that it would not do to attempt to go down it in the night. However, there is an arm which cuts across the bend, and though still very difficult, makes it possible to shoot the rapid.

All of a sudden, as we were quietly going along, the river in front of us seemed to turn abruptly to the right.

I began to suspect that there was a mistake on the maps, and that we were much nearer to Auru than we had thought. Still I hesitated for a minute. However, there was a little channel on the right with a hill rising above it on which was perched a village. It *must* be Auru. Just then the main current, which grew rapidly stronger, seized us, and we were on the point of being swept down by it and swamped. "To the bank! To the bank, Digui!" I shouted; "quick, quick!"—"All right, all right," was the reply, and he tried to wring an explanation out of the guide, who could give none. Ten seconds wasted in discussion, and it would be too late. We *were* too late; we had passed the practicable channel.

"Anchor! anchor!" I shouted. Yes, the anchors hold, and for the moment we are saved!

On our starboard the banks consisted of half-submerged

flints, from which grew some small aquatic trees. It was this vegetation which had misled our guide, for when he was here twenty years before it did not exist.

We now had to make our way against the current to get back to the good channel. It was simply impossible to do so by rowing. The only thing to be done was to lengthen our ropes, and fastening them to trees, tow ourselves along, so to speak, from place to place. It took us about three hours and a half to do it.

Somehow or another, however, we did achieve the difficult task of getting safely into the right course again.

The *Dantec*, which had anchored behind the *Davoust*, had only a light load now, and I thought it would take less time for her to cross the river and go up along the left bank, where the current was less violent.

Unfortunately, however, the manœuvre was not executed as quickly as it should have been, for the *Dantec* drifted a good way in making the crossing, and it was just all she could do to get up-stream again.

We moored the two big boats to trees, and Digui went once more to reconnoitre. We now had to slip as best we could through the narrow channels between the rocks, before we attempted the shooting of the rapid itself.

We should have had time to pass before night, but I would not leave the *Dantec* behind, and I sent Digui in his canoe to her with extra rowers. We remained moored to our trees, and fortunately found near our stopping-place a little bit of nearly dry ground, where we were able to light a fire.

At first we could see the *Dantec* slowly making her way up-stream, then she became hidden by trees. Two whole hours of suspense passed by, and it was now quite dark. We shouted as loud as we could to make ourselves heard above the noise of the rapids, but no answer came for a

long time. All of a sudden we heard Digui's voice crying: "We are swamped!" A momentary lull in the roar of the water had enabled us to hear these far from reassuring words, but the rest died away in the darkness of the night. Was our barge then at the bottom of the river? What had become of our coolies? Were they drowned or clinging to some bushes on the bank? There was no way of helping them, for Digui had taken the canoe. It was a cruel moment for us all, and our anxiety was redoubled when we presently saw the canoe coming back with only three men in her.

But after all every one was safe and the barge uninjured. As she was going up-stream the *Dantec* had got her mast caught in a tree, and had been tilted over so that she filled with water; in fact was, as Digui had cried, swamped for the moment. Fortunately, however, some roots kept her up, and our coolies had managed to get rid of the water and float her again. She was not able to join us yet, but she was moored to some trees quite close to us.

That night was anything but pleasant to any of us. We were wet through, and anxiety about the morrow kept us awake. After a time the perpetual noise of the water surging about the rocks and round the trunks of the trees produces a peculiar effect on the mind, an effect alike strange and depressing, for one fancies one hears the moaning of the spirits of the water, which the natives believe haunt the river.

Our guide told us that the Auru rapids are inhabited by demons, whose voices are heard at night. They are said to have a passion for everything of a red colour, so that those who navigate the river have to hide anything of that hue, lest the demons should swamp their boats for the sake of getting possession of it.

I never saw the devils of Auru, but I can honestly say

that I heard them; in fact, that we all heard them. All through the night one or the other of us was constantly being woke up by peculiar noises, amongst which we certainly fancied we could distinguish voices.

In this frame of mind, and unable as we were to communicate with the *Dantec*, we kept thinking that some misfortune had befallen her, and that the strange voices were those of our coolies clinging perhaps to trees as they called for help, or consulting together what they could do to save themselves.

But day dawned at last, and we succeeded in towing back the *Dantec*, on which we found our men all well, though very cold and weary. We now held a consultation and decided that the *Davoust* should pass first and anchor opposite the point of the island between the two arms of the river. Digui and some coolies would then go back from there to help in bringing down the *Aube* and the *Dantec*.

We threaded our way carefully amongst the rocks to keep in the right channel, and then the *Dantec* simply fell into the rapids. There was less swell with fewer waves than there had been at Garafiri or at Konotasi, but I think there was also less depth of water. On the right and the left were countless rocks over which the river dashed foaming and seething. We found it impossible to anchor as we had intended off the end of the island, for the current swept us into the village of lower Auru on the right bank.

I therefore sent Digui back by land with some of the men. We waited for two hours without hearing anything. At last we saw one of the coolies running back to us, and he brought the bad news that in trying to cross the small arm of the river to take the second master pilot on board, the canoe had capsized, and the *Aube* had now no means of

communicating with the land. Baudry had sent to ask me to try and get a boat from the village. I went there, and with the aid of our guide Amadu I made my request. Very great unwillingness to grant it was at first shown, followed by a formal refusal on the ground that the villagers had been forbidden to help us. Who had forbidden it? I could not find out. I drew forth my revolver and held it to the chief's forehead. It was the first and last time I ever had recourse to such an argument as this, but it had the desired effect. A canoe was sent off from the village with two rowers, and I went along the bank to the place where the *Aube* was anchored.

When I got there, I found that the canoe was righted again. Our coolies had plunged into the very rapid itself, and clinging to submerged roots they had succeeded in passing ropes under her keel and floating her. The water where she had gone down was more than nine feet deep. Brave fellows, indeed, were these coolies of mine! They may have their faults; they are gluttons and liars; they are often lazy enough; but on any dangerous emergency these scions of the noble Sarracolais race rise to the occasion, and their devotion may be depended upon under whatever strain.

Baudry now informed me that the rudder of the *Dantec* was broken, so that it was impossible to steer her. "Take the crew off and abandon her? No! I hope to take her on by towing her!"

I watched everything made ready for the difficult manœuvre. The *Dantec* was towed along from tree to tree, to the very edge of the big rapid, whilst behind her came the canoe with a rope passed twice round a trunk, as her bow plunged into the foam. On the stern of the *Aube* stood Samba Demba, our best coolie, with a coiled rope in his arms, ready to fling it to the *Dantec* as she went over the rapid. One second's hesitation, and everything would

go wrong, and I was on the very point of shouting to Baudry to give up his plan, but it was really such a splendid piece of daring, such a thoroughly sailor-like thing to do, that I refrained. Yet once more, thank God, we succeeded, coming off with flying colours.

Slowly the *Aube* loosened her moorings, and the current at first took her gently down, then quicker and ever quicker she rushed along as she crossed the *Dantec*. Bravo! the rope, flung with unerring aim, fell right into her bow. "Let go all!" and the *Aube* and *Dantec* plunged into the rapid. Will they be able to shoot it in safety? The shouts of the excited coolies reach me above the roar of the water. The doctor and Bluzet have each taken an oar. For a moment I thought all the boats would be flung against the rocks on the left, which would have been their complete destruction; but the next I saw them gradually bearing to the right. At last they were through, all danger past!

The *Aube*, swept on by the current, could not stop near the *Davoust*, and there was yet another rapid, quite a small one, below the village. She passed it without difficulty, and went to anchor some hundred yards down-stream, where we hastened to join her.

We had done with the rapids now, and not one of us was missing, not one of our boats had been lost. We clasped each other's hands without a word.

But our excitement gradually subsided, and we shouted, "Filey, get us some breakfast; and mind you do your best!"

We started again about two o'clock, and half-an-hour later we were opposite Leba, where floats the white flag of the Royal Niger Company, with its ship and the circle cut across by three rays, bearing the motto, *Pax, Jus, Ars*. Here we had to meet our last danger. What would the English do? I awaited them with composure, for it is we

who have the whip hand now, and to begin by showing them that I was not going to submit to a compulsory halt, we passed on without stopping at Leba. There was a good deal of bustle at the station, however, and eleven riflemen came out and took up their position on the bank. Certainly there was effective occupation here, not a doubt of it; only every one will admit that no such effective occupation has taken place higher up-stream. My difficulties at Bussa may perhaps be renewed here, indeed increased. Lower Auru is about a mile and three-quarters from Leba. Either the English rule here or they do not; in the former case, it was they who had told the natives not to give us any help when two of our boats were in the greatest danger. In the second case, this effective occupation is very precarious and limited at the only point where there are any troops, and for the very best of reasons it does not extend to Bussa, which, from the European point of view, remains *rex nullius*.

A tornado compelled us to anchor about four o'clock near the left bank, and we kept as strict a watch as we had done in the Tuareg country. We took care to be on our guard against *a blow from the Tatanis*, such as had succeeded so well in the case of Mizon.

For the sake of those who have forgotten that incident I will add here that Mizon was attacked at the mouth of the Niger by Patanis, when he was entering it in his vessel, the *René Caillé*. When he complained, the Niger Company replied: "We were not aware that you were there." Those very Patanis, his enemies of the day before, brought him wood for burning, by order of the English agent.

At about eight o'clock on October 10 we passed Badjibo, or rather Guadjibo, where Captain Toutée had built Fort Arenberg. After he had evacuated it the English took possession of it, finding it in perfect repair. There is

no doubt that as the Company already had a station at Leba, above Guadjibo, the French occupation of the latter place was open to discussion.

I once started a conversation in a meeting at the Sorbonne, which at one moment seemed likely to become acrimonious, for I quoted a remark of Baron d'Haussy, Naval Minister in the time of Charles X., as a base of the policy to be followed in dealing with the English. It is well known that in a talk with the English ambassador, d'Haussy, irritated at the off-hand manner of the latter, said: "If you want a diplomatic answer, the President of the Council will give it to you; as for me, I say, setting aside official language, that *nous nous f . . . de vous*." [1]

The remark was certainly not couched in diplomatic terms, but it represented the only way to treat the English. When, however, we act upon the principle applied we must take every care to be well within our rights. If, through any imprudence at the beginning, you lay yourself open to have to withdraw a single step later, your rivals know how to turn it to account by making you go back ten.

The village of Guadjibo is situated on the left bank. Fort Arenberg, the name of which the Royal Niger Company has changed into Taubman-Goldie, is opposite to it on the right bank. A guard of riflemen came to do us the honours of the pass, and then a few minutes later two canoes put off from the bank to follow us, but we gained rapidly upon them.

Without having stopped at either of the first two English posts we reached Geba, having thus asserted our right to navigate the river without any compulsory halt or any interference on the part of the Company.

[1] Louis Blanc, 'Histoire de Dix Ans.' The sentence quoted is quite untranslatable, but "We don't care a rap for you," perhaps fairly represents it.—Trans.

As Geba is approached the scenery becomes more and more picturesque. Peaks hundreds of feet high dominate the almost precipitous verdure-clad hills, the bases of which are bathed by the river.

At last at four o'clock, suddenly rounding a headland, and steering from west to east, we found ourselves opposite a group of magnificent jagged rocks, whilst further on we

GEBA

could see the corrugated roofs and the piles of casks on the bank with the flag of the Royal Niger Company, belonging to the English station.

At Geba, as at Auru, the Niger is haunted by evil spirits, who are fond of red, so instead of advising us to follow the deep but narrow main channel between the lofty rocks, our guide wanted us to pass the rapid where the *Morning Star*, the boat of Richard Lander, the first explorer who had passed Bussa, had been wrecked.

To the great disappointment of our adviser, however, we insisted upon going between two large pillars of rock where there was no danger whatever. The rocks hid all the red on board our boats, except that in our flag.

Our boats came up one after the other, and anchored off the bank near the station of Geba.

A negro of Sierra Leone, a commercial agent, now came and placed himself at our disposal, pending the arrival of the Governor of the station, who, he informed us, had gone inland, and would not be back till near nightfall. Naturally I refused all offers of help until the Governor should return. An hour later we saw two canoes being paddled down-stream, and recognized them as those which had followed us since we left Guadjibo. In them were the Governor of the station, Captain Carrol, and some English soldiers in the service of the Company.

Having heard at Lakodja, the Governor told us, of our approaching arrival at Bussa, he had started at once with a strong escort, and by forced marches had gone up the banks of the river, knocking up two horses and getting fever, all for the sake of helping us in the name of the Company, and he had come back after all with an empty bag! At Leba he had heard of our passage, and had gone back, covering some seventy miles in twenty-four hours, to Fort Goldie, where he had waited for us to breakfast with him. Not having seen any whites there, however, he concluded we had passed, so that by chance, and chance is responsible for a good many things, it was I, who had come down from Timbuktu to his station, who welcomed him at his own post with the words, "How do you do?"

This was really one of the most amusing incidents of our journey. To a cynical observer the episode would have appeared truly unique.

The situation, amusing as it was, was however just a

little strained. I confess too that with the memory fresh in my mind of all the difficulties I had had at Bussa and at Ilo, and which might easily have led to the loss of our boats, I did nothing to relieve the tension between us.

"Before I talk about anything else," I said to Carrol, "I must tell you what happened at Bussa and at Auru, a few miles from your post at Leba. I will not accept the offers of service from the Company, nor from its agents, nor from its officers, until I know that you had nothing to do with those difficulties."

Quite upset by what I said, he gave me his word, the word of a soldier, that he knew absolutely nothing about them. The same assurance was given to me later by Major Festing, military Commandant, and by the civilians Messrs. Drew and Wallace.

The ice was now broken, and we were able *inter pocula* to allow ourselves the pleasure of chatting about European affairs with the Governor. He was the first European we had seen for a year. Ah, if only he had been a Frenchman!

Carrol was an Irishman, who spoke French well, and he lent us some English and French newspapers. He told us—without any details however—of the death of Mores, and of the massacre of a French expedition in the west on the Nikki side. We at once compared dates. This expedition consisted perhaps of our comrades sent to bring us the famous orders we had waited for at Say for five months. On hearing this sad news, I became eager to hasten our march to tell the people at Dahomey of the disturbed condition of the districts round Say. Later, Taburet was able to ascertain by carefully reading the English newspapers, that the expedition referred to was that led by Fonssagrives.

Captain Carrol, who was really a very good fellow and a

capital companion, put everything he possessed at our disposal, and that meant a very great deal to us, though really he did not own much, for though the Royal Niger Company houses its officers well, it treats them shabbily, and makes them pay dearly for the few comforts they have.

We responded to Carrol's hospitality by inviting him to dinner the next evening. Fortunately the chief of Ilo had not drunk all our champagne. We had plenty too of the wine we had brought as part of our rations, which in the course of all its travels had become very good claret, and with some mutton, for which of course we paid very dearly on principle, we managed to give our guests a very respectable meal. The English officers were a good deal surprised at finding us so well supplied with everything.

We were taking our coffee after dinner when we heard the whistle of one of the Company's steamers. They were expecting the *Sudan*, I was told, an old cargo-boat which was to take Mr. Drew, executive officer of the district of Geba, to Lakodja. It turned out, however, not to have been the *Sudan's* whistle, but that of a mere launch called the *Bargu*, which had disturbed us.

Carrol sent word to Major Festing, who was on board, by a canoe, and a few minutes afterwards the military Commandant appeared in immaculate linen clothes, the evening dress of the colonies. We drank a glass of champagne together, the officer, who seemed very worried, tossing it off rapidly. As Carrol had done, he declared he had had nothing whatever to do with the Bussa affair, and I readily believed him. I still, however, felt some distrust of the agents of the Company, and I thought it my duty to decline the offer of Major Festing to tow our boats with his *Bargu* as far as Lokodja. I thought I had better first have an explanation with the agents of the Company properly

so called. I was told that Mr. Wallace, the general agent, was expected soon, and as he was on his way up the river, we were sure to meet him.

Still this did not prevent our fraternizing with Carrol and Festing; they spoke French, and we could jabber English after a fashion, though Taburet was the only one who knew it pretty well. In the morning two other officers arrived, one to replace, at Leba, a lieutenant who had lately died, and the other on his way to Geba or Guadjibo. Both had recently been wounded with poisoned arrows in a fight with the natives. The officers of the Royal Niger Company evidently have rather a rough time of it.

Taburet went to see the sick at the station, where there were neither medicine nor other remedies to be had. Just as we were leaving we saw some negroes approaching, loaded with a supply of beer and whisky for us. This delicate attention from Festing and Carrol was the better appreciated as we had been entirely deprived of these luxuries ever since we had left Kayes.

As a return gift we left the little organ at Geba, which had been our great joy at Say. It now belongs to Carrol's successor, for we hear that the good Captain has returned safe and sound to his native country, rescued at last from the hands of the Royal Niger Company.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon of the 12th we left Geba, exchanging salutes with our flags with the station. Our old guide Amadu remained there, but Major Festing lent us a man in the service of the Company, who was, however, quite useless to us, as navigation here, difficult enough for large vessels, was perfectly easy for us now the water was so high. We had but to let ourselves go, and we went fast enough.

We reached Rabba, which seemed an unimportant factory, about five o'clock. This is the nearest point to Bidda,

the capital of Nupé, which we knew to be at open war with the Company.

There are no whites at the factory of Rabba, and we did not have any dealings with the Sierra Leonese who is in charge of it.

We had been anchored for an hour, when the steam launch *Bargu*, with Major Festing on board, joined us.

RABBA.

These launches, of which it is a pity there are not more on the Niger, are little steamers armed with a machine-gun. They carry an officer and some ten riflemen, who act as the river police only, and have nothing to do with transporting merchandise. Their office is by no means a sinecure.

The voyage began to tell very much on our men now. It was not only that they were very tired, but the rain was continuous all night, and sometimes also in the day, so

that we had to put up the tents on the decks. These tents, moreover, were no longer water-tight, and the sleeping-place in the damp boats was very small.

Our negroes generally managed to stow themselves away under shelter somehow, often one on top of the other, but I should have liked better weather for this last bit of the journey, so that they might have been able to get over all

IGGA.

they had gone through at Bussa. They made up for their discomfort at night by getting up late in the morning. All this, however, did not prevent us from making good headway without any over pressure, borne on as we were by the strong current. On the 13th we covered forty-five miles, going on until eight in the evening, just in time to anchor before we were overtaken by a tornado, and an awful one too. Fortunately we found shelter in a little gulf, and escaped with a good ducking.

On the 14th, judging by the rate at which we went, the current must have been yet stronger. We made some fifty miles, passed the night near Igga, and arrived there at eight o'clock in the morning on the 15th.

The country between Geba and Igga is uninteresting; no villages, or scarcely any, were passed, and there was no cultivation. The appearance of the banks is much what it is between Say and Bussa; a few *karités* occur here and there, that is all. We met a canoe now and then only. The oil-palms, which had begun to appear beyond Say, now became more numerous, but the country still appeared deserted.

In a large plain near Igga there is a factory kept by a white man. Just before we reached it we saw a big boat called the *Nigritian*, which was formerly the pontoon of Yola. The Royal Niger Company had just been driven from the Benuë and from the Adamawa; its trading agents had been recalled, together with the pontoon they had been *authorized* to use on the river. This must have been a very severe blow to the Company, for much of the ivory exported through their agents came from Adamawa and Muri.

The *Ribago*, a pretty little craft of from six to seven hundred tons, is moored at Igga. She is the best boat belonging to the Company. She brings down palm-oil in the nut before it is extracted, *karités* and other articles for export. The oil is of a very fine quality indeed. It will probably be the *Ribago* which will tow us down-stream if all is satisfactorily settled with the Company about Bussa and Auru.

The agent at Igga thought we should find Mr. Wallace at Lokodja. I was very anxious to see him, for it is with him I must get the misunderstanding, if misunderstanding there were, explained. His word alone would suffice to exonerate the Company from blame, and only if he could

give me that word, should I care to accept his good offices on my behalf.

After passing an hour at our anchorage at Igga, we started for Lokodja to look for Mr. Wallace, whom it was very difficult to catch. Fortunately for us, the current was still very strong, but navigation was very tiring, for with the banks inundated as they were, it was difficult to find the bottom amongst the tall grass. Late in the evening we at last anchored near the left bank, and landed to cook a hasty meal. Fili, one of the coolies who looked after the kitchen department, had cleared a corner of bushes and lit a fire when, all of a sudden, the men made a rush for the boats screaming *manians! manians!* They had been attacked by the black ants they call manians, the bite of which is very severe. No cooking for us to-night, no meal however simple! No sleep either for our poor men, for the rain began to pour down again. Worse still, the terrible manians began to climb on board by the anchor-chains, by the ropes of the grappling-hooks, by everything, in fact, which held us to the bank. They had come to storm the barges, and the ropes and chains became black with their swarms. The only way we were able to check this novel kind of invasion was by lowering the chains and ropes into the water.

This horribly comfortless night over, we started again with almost empty stomachs. The scenery was very picturesque, but although the water was high we felt the boats grate on the rocks lining the bed of the stream. Navigation must be generally far from easy here.

The vegetation now became denser, and the oil-palm of much more frequent occurrence. There were, however, few villages, and they became further apart, on the banks at least, as we advanced. At last in the evening our pilot told us we were approaching Lokodja. Picturesque hills,

from about six hundred to a thousand feet high, lined the right bank, whilst on the left we could see the mouth of the Benuë, now greatly increased in width by inundations.

About six o'clock we came in sight of the huts of the village, rising in tiers from the slopes of a hill, their zinc roofs shining amongst the verdure in the glow of the setting sun. We were at Lokodja, and as it was nearly night we anchored off the bank.

Here we found Mr. Drew, the executive officer of the Company for the Lokodja-Geba district, for whom we had waited in vain at Geba, and also another officer who spoke French.

We were received with all due etiquette and invited to dinner. We talked about the river; and Mr. Drew, who did not allow himself to show any surprise at our having passed safely down it, must really have been astonished. He told us he had himself achieved the arduous task of going over the rapids in a light canoe accompanied by one man only. He had intended to go down to Bussa by the channel used by the natives. He had even been capsized, and dragged down into the whirlpool. He owed his life entirely to his canoe-man, who had plunged after him and brought him up from the bottom. He still had the scar of a wound he had got from the sharp flints, amongst which he had been rolled over and over.

Major Festing, who came in to dessert, invited us to go to him the next day. We cut but sorry figures beside our hosts in their unimpeachable costumes, for our clothes were torn by our struggles in the bush, our gold lace was tarnished, our breeches were patched, our boots had been bought in the country, and our helmets were terribly battered about.

I do not know which agent of the Company it was who refused to receive the leader of a French expedition because

of his disreputable appearance, with untrimmed beard and clothes in rags. Times are greatly changed since then, or rather perhaps the instructions given have been modified.

The next day we had breakfast with Major Festing, and were most cordially received. Our host was then Commander-in-chief of the troops in the service of the Niger Company. Lokodja was his headquarters, and his soldiers, who were Haussas, were well lodged. Their cantonments are charming, and the Major's house had every English comfort that could possibly be expected. Big airy rooms adorned with weapons, looking-glasses and hunting pictures, etc., native mats on the ground, flowers growing in the copper pots manufactured in the country. Everything very simple and suitable. Music was going on whilst we were at breakfast, as if we were on board an admiral's flag-ship or at the Grand Hotel in Paris. Children played to us on the flute, regaling us with the familiar airs of the *café-concerts* of France. We had printed *menus*, dainty salt-cellars, caviare, whisky-and-soda, good stout, etc. Oh, what a delight it was to eat a well-served meal on a table-cloth decked with fresh flowers! If only we had had a few ladies in light summer costumes to share it with us, it would indeed have been complete.

Major Festing most courteously placed at our disposal as interpreter, a Haussa sergeant of his from the Senegal, who had been at one time in the service of Mizon, and also of De Brazza. He spoke a little French, and had been one of the last to leave the station of Yola. He told us of all his strange wanderings to and fro, and piloted us about the town when we went to make our purchases, for we did make some purchases at Lokodja. To begin with, we supplemented our stores of provisions, which was very necessary, if we wished suitably to return the hospitality

we received. We had, moreover, very little of the dinner service left which we had brought from France three years before. We had, it will be remembered, sent to the bottom of the river everything not absolutely indispensable, and we wanted some claret and champagne-glasses badly.

The natives of Lokodja were very civilized, using table napkins, basins, dishes with covers, china flower-pots, etc., sold to them by the Company, or rather bartered for native productions, for there is no money currency in the Niger districts. The wages of the troops, labour, and raw material are all paid for in merchandise, such as salt, stuffs or ware of different kinds. The Company seem to make considerable profit on these transactions. As for us, we were rich enough to be generous. Suleyman, our interpreter, received orders to buy everything offered at the price asked, for we should only have to throw the things which were too heavy to take on, into the water later. So we gave silk drawers for a dozen eggs, and long strings of pearls, false ones of course, for three bananas.

The generosity of Commandant Mattei, agent of the old French Niger Company, whom we so clumsily allowed an English Company to supplant, has become proverbial, and the natives often quote it apropos of the stinginess of the Niger Company. I am very sure that our stay at Lokodja did nothing to lessen the fame of French liberality. The natives of the banks of the Niger still bemoan the loss of French traders and the hauling down of the French flag.

Lokodja, which we were able to visit, is a fairly large village, very picturesquely situated on a mountain. It is cut across by ravines and shaded by banana and papaw-trees, with numerous oil-palms. There is a splendid view of the meeting of the Benuë and the Niger. The remains of the steam-boat *Sokkoto*, which was wrecked on a rock,

are still to be seen, and further down the river are other stranded boats.

We were told that Lokodja is the principal town of an extensive district numbering from twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants. The town properly so called, however, does not contain more than from four to five thousand at the very most. The market, which is very extensive, is much frequented, and is held in the afternoon. All manner of European articles are offered for sale in it. The only native industries are the beating of copper and the manufacture of rather peculiar drawers made of two pieces of stuff sewn together and adorned with a kind of open work. The blacksmiths, who are very skilful in a kind of *repoussé* work done with a pointed instrument on copper, make vases, cups, and ewers of it, which are really very original in design.

Most curious of all the specialities of Lokodja, however, are the games and the *tam-tams* held there. In the former, the performers are all young graceful girls who are perfectly nude. I have visited many towns of low morality. I know Naples, Port Said, and Colombo. I have seen the so-called flower-boats of China and the Japanese *yoshiwaras* in that Orient where everything is possible, but never did I witness anything to be compared with what goes on at Lokodja.

The chief of the village is the well-known Abegga, and the name calls up for us French all manner of memories. Abegga is really almost a relation of mine, for he is a freed man who was bought at Sokoto, and given his liberty by my Uncle Barth. Abegga followed his master to England first and then to Germany. Back again in Africa, he entered the service of Commandant Mattei as interpreter, and to-day he is king of Lokodja. Such are the chances of life!

We were received by him with effusion, for we awoke all his old memories. Taburet, who from his translations from

Barth's book knew more about Abegga than Abegga did himself, had a long talk with him in English. In the end we sent our royal friend, Baudry's hunting-piece as a present, by the hands of his envoy.

We expected every minute to hear of the arrival of Mr. Wallace, but he did not come. I could not remain at Lokodja for ever, so I took Mr. Drew's word for it that

MOUNT RENNEL ABOVE LOKODJA.

neither he nor the Company had had anything to do with our difficulties at Bussa and Auru, accepting the offer made to me with so much urgency that we should be towed down-stream by the *Ribago*, the steamboat we had met at Igga, and which had now come down again to Lokodja.

We were to start at two o'clock. After we had made our farewell visits I went to Mr. Drew and said, "I have decided to accept your offer of having us towed down-stream." Then I added rather awkwardly, "How much?"

"Five pounds for each white man, and one for each black, was the reply.

A good price truly just for towing us down-stream! It would come to 1450 francs altogether! I merely, however, said "Oh!" just to relieve my feelings.

Now was not this rather sharp practice on the part of the Company? After pressing me so much to accept a service, I had imagined that it was offered gratuitously as between one friendly government and another, and what had annoyed me was the thought of being under an obligation to the Royal Niger Company. But I was quite wrong; I was dealing with the traders of the Company only, and that put me at my ease.

They may have thought that having come so far I should not have money enough left to pay them, and that I should have to leave in their debt, but I simply said to Mr. Drew—

"All right; I will come back and settle with you in a minute."

A few moments later I arrived with my bag of crown-pieces. I had not, however, brought enough after all, for by some misunderstanding, no doubt, we really had to pay six pounds for each white man, and twenty-five shillings for each black, which mounted the sum-total up to 1800 francs. However, I was able to make up the difference at once all but two sous, I think, and those I sent by Digui.

No doubt Carrol foresaw all these mercenary dealings when we were at Geba, when he made such a fuss about paying Taburet for his attendance on the people who were ill at the station, and wanted to give me money for the miserable little musical-box which I had been so glad to leave with him as a token of my gratitude.

The Royal Niger Company had in fact treated our expedition as a party of traders, and I preferred that both for myself and for France. I do not therefore owe the

members of that Company any more gratitude than I should the conductor of an omnibus in Paris when I have paid him my six sous.

The loading of the *Ribago* went on slowly, but at five o'clock we started; the pipers of Major Festing came down to the quay and played the *Marseillaise*, whilst the guns of the station fired a salute as, towed by the *Ribago*, we left for Assaba.

Now for a couple of words about the Royal Niger Company. I will say nothing of the treaties or of the constitutive acts which preceded its formation, for I have not got to draw up an indictment against it. I will confine myself to quoting what Naval Lieutenant Agoult said on the subject—"The Company is but the screen behind which England hides herself."

To the great detriment of the shareholders, the Company tries to create an Empire, and in view of its acquisitions of territory, to make head against the revolts caused by its rapacity, it is obliged to maintain an army relatively large.

This necessity causes a mischievous friction between the military and civilian officers in the service of the Queen, they and the trading agents sometimes carrying their animosity to each other so far as to come to blows.

Then again the officers are anything but well treated by the Company. Like the agents, they are taxed and taxed again. Heaven only knows what an arduous profession theirs is. Carrol was always on the road, and Festing, when we saw him, was suffering horribly from a liver complaint. He had just returned from a twenty days' campaign against the villages in the bush on the left bank, and he was so tired he could not remain in the saddle. We were told of several officers having recently been killed by poisoned arrows, and of one who had died from eating poison in a village on the banks of the river.

Moreover, this armed force and all the courage and devotion of those who command it, fail to secure peace. Whilst we were on our voyage, the horsemen of Bidda had come down to pillage as far as the bank opposite Lokodja. It is only in the immediate neighbourhood of the stations that things are quiet. The steam-launches have to be constantly going up and down the arms of the river, especially in the delta, to keep the natives in awe with their riflemen and their machine-guns. It is rare for a boat to go down the river without being fired at. At Abo, lower down-stream, the people were astonished that we had been able to come so far without any fighting. It may have been the effect of the flag we carried, for the tricolour flag is still beloved and regretted in these parts for the sake of the memory of Commandant Mattei.

The Company does not hold the country beyond the banks of the river. Then, again, there are no means of communication between one place and another. Truly we French may be proud of our work in the French Sudan. We have done better than the English on the Upper Niger; our colonization is far superior to theirs. On the Lower Niger they have neither telegraph wires, for these go no further than Akassa and Brass, at the mouth of the river, no road at all to be compared with our line of revictualling posts, and of course, need we add? they have no railway!

It seems to me a fact that of all the Niger districts, the richest and the most favoured by Nature from every point of view are those we occupy in the French Sudan.

Assaba is the residence of the Agent-general of the Company, and there is a hospital there for the use of the employés. When the French mission of the *Pères du Saint Esprit* left Lokodja it established itself at Assaba.

A missionary was waiting for us when we landed, and I went at once to his house. The situation is beautiful enough, but what a hard life the Fathers lead! They are, I believe, rather harassed by the Company, as much because they are French as because they are Catholic, and as a result their tale of converts is not very long. Some Sisters of Charity work in connection with them, and make their way on foot from village to village in the interior, marching at night to avoid the heat of the sun, and visiting the Christian natives far away from the river.

A few hours' walk off, the Fathers told us, are some big, very big, villages, into which alone they are able to penetrate, not without considerable danger to life sometimes. Terrible scenes of human sacrifice and cannibalism have been witnessed by the devoted Sisters. Such atrocities would never be tolerated in the French Sudan.

But what does all that matter to the Company as long as it can buy its palm-oil at the market-price, a price fixed by force?

That evening we had to dine with us the only Father of the mission just then at Assaba, and two Sisters, one the Superior, Sister Damien, a pale-faced Italian, whose hands had become almost transparent, and whose features were wasted through successive attacks of fever. For all that she still eagerly pursued her vocation. I know nothing finer than the life led by these women at the extreme advance guard of civilization, exposed to the heat of the sun, to fever, to all manner of fatigue, to the indifference of the negroes, and sometimes, as if all that were not enough, to the malice of the whites.

I imagine that it was long since the Father and the Sisters had enjoyed themselves so much. Unfortunately a tornado burst upon us in the middle of dinner, and at eight o'clock we had to take refuge in Father Hacquart's rooms,

through the cracks in the roof of which, however, the rain poured in torrents.

We escorted our guests back to the mission house through the rain.

That same night the long-expected Mr. Wallace, Agent-general of the Company, arrived on the launch *Nupé*. I went to call on him the next day. After congratulating me on our successful journey, he renewed the assurances already made to me by Carrol, Festing, and Drew. I heard later that Mr. Flint, another important member of the Company, was also on board the *Nupé*. But he preferred to avoid us.

When we left we were able to rejoice the hearts of the missionaries of Assaba, with a few bales of stuffs and knick-knacks, with which they could reward their faithful natives. We wanted to stop at Onitcha, the cross of the mission of which we could already see, to give a greeting to the *Pères de Lyon* stationed there, but the captain of the *Ribago* told us he had been ordered not to go there, although Mr. Wallace had assured me to the contrary only a minute before.

Avoiding Onitcha, therefore, we went to anchor for a few moments, first at Illuchi, and then at Abo, where the *Ribago* was to leave us.

The Company, however, was determined to escort us to the very threshold of their territories. Those who know what it is to be suspected, will involuntarily compare this conduct to the way in which, in certain shops, customers are escorted to the door lest they should steal anything on their way out.

No doubt, without being exactly sharpers, we might have got a lot of information, and have made observations on many things if we had remained longer on the river. Would that have been altogether to the advantage of the

Company? D'Agoult says he saw the steamer laden with spirits going by, yet all the time, according to the Company, all its subjects, white or black, would, under its beneficial influence, become teetotalers or total abstainers.

It was politic too, perhaps, to hide from us the troubled state of the district all along the river, and the precarious position of the Company. Do its members know, I wonder, how happy these discontented regions once were under the French Company, and all that would result from the mere presence once again of the French flag?

As for me, however, I prefer to think simply that this obsequiousness of the Company towards us, this insistence on our accepting the offer of being towed down-stream, and paying for the service rendered, this eagerness to see us off, had but one aim, and that aim a humane one.

We were escorted to Wari to save us from another attack from the Patanis. Our departure was hastened because we were tired, worn out, eager to taste once more the joys of home and family life. All serious thinkers, whose opinion is of any weight, and who know anything about English ways, will agree with me, irony or no irony!

We dined at Abo, and when night had fallen, a launch arrived at our anchorage, which was to take charge of us. On board was a bright, jovial young officer, Lieutenant Aron by name, of Australian birth. Judging from what we saw of him, Australia must be to England what the south of France is to the French. Did he not tell us one day that the Company had a post at Kano, another at Kuka, and twelve big steamers on the river? But for these venial exaggerations he was a charming companion, what the English call a very good fellow, who made the hours we were in his company pass very pleasantly. We shall all, Lieutenant Aron included, long remember the dinner

we had together on the *Kano*, as the Ganagana pontoon is called, whilst a tornado was raging, and he sung at the top of his voice all the comic songs in the Anglo-Franco repertory, to the accompaniment of the flute and the harmonium, whilst quaffing the whisky and the claret we still had left.

As is well known, the Niger flings itself into the sea in an immense number of branches. Two of these branches, viz. that of Brass and of Forcados, are more practicable for navigation than any others. The first belongs to the Royal Niger Company, the second to the Niger Protectorate, a regular colony governed directly from England, and I was told that the competition in trade between the two was very keen.

I had long intended to go down to the sea, not by the Brass, but by the Forcados branch, which would enable me to get away from the Royal Niger Company sooner, and pass a few days in the English districts on the coast belonging to the Niger Protectorate.

I preferred to embark there than in a port belonging to the Company. The two Companies are, as already stated, more or less rivals, and those on the French despatch boat *Ardent* had cause to speak in terms of high praise of the way in which they were treated by the English of the Protectorate.

Lieutenant Aron accompanied us on the Forcados branch as far as Wari, where resides an English vice-consul. We were breakfasting on board the launch when we came in sight of the houses of Wari. Our three barges were roped together, and their three tricolour flags flying. The launch, however, could not hoist the British flag, its gear having somehow got damaged.

The *Dantec* now brought us up to the stockade, where we awaited the arrival of the officers of the Protectorate.

Then between ourselves and our guide began an animated and certainly very curious colloquy; astonishment on one side, vehement explanations on the other. What changes in the expressions of the faces of those engaged in the conversation! What shouts of laughter! What were they saying? This is what I thought I made out. Seeing our three barges each flying a tricolour flag, and the launch with no colours at all, the English of the Protectorate had thought we had retaliated on the Company by a skilful manœuvre for the bad turn they had done the French the year before. "The Company," they said, "had intended to confiscate our barges, but they being well manned and well armed, had instead captured the launch and taken her down under the French flag to Wari."

No, I cannot have understood the conversation, I must have dreamed it all! The English never could have believed us capable of such a thing, and would never have suggested it, even in their own language. And yet——!

Who was it told me that the Protectorate and the Company were enemies at heart, and that the English of Wari are always brooding on the damages paid to the Niger traders on account of a certain attack on the people of Brass from Akassa?

No doubt all these are merely such calumnies as are always circulating.

We shall, all five of us, always remember the welcome we received at Wari from the agents of the Protectorate, and this memory will be the more cherished because a few days after our return to France we heard the terrible news of the death of several of them, who, having gone on a mission to the interior almost unarmed, were massacred by the natives of Benin.

We had the best of receptions at Wari; the officers

even gave up their rooms and their very beds to us, knowing how greatly we should appreciate such comforts. We became much attached to our new friends.

At Wari I got rid of all the rest of my stores, which would have been an encumbrance to me on my return journey. There were plenty for the missionaries and for the servants at the Consulate. Suzanne, our bicycle, rejoiced the heart of a Sierra Leonese; the *Dantec*, with a few bottles of claret, delighted Lieutenant Aron; even the *Aube* we left as a token of our friendship with the agents at the Consulate. We were generous, no doubt, but unless we had sunk our barges when we got to the sea, what else could we have done with them?

As for the *Davoust*, it took us two days to empty, dismantle, and take her to pieces, after which she was embarked in sections on board the *Axim*, a Liverpool steamer, which took her back to Europe.

Sold as old metal, and what she fetched debited to the credit of the budget of our expedition, all that is left of the *Davoust* is now circulating in fairs or figuring in shop-windows, in the form of light match-boxes and other small articles such as are made of aluminium.

And this was the end of all the three sturdy barks: *Davoust*, *Aube*, and *Dantec*, which for twelve whole months were all the world to us!

The *Dantec* had often seemed likely never to get to the end of her journey; the *Aube* certainly ought not to have arrived, judging by the two or three occasions on which she had seemed done for; at the end of the voyage you could put your fingers through her rotten planking. If she had run aground but once more, or if she had got another blow in passing the last rapid, all would have been over with her worm-eaten keel, and also with her crew.

The *Davoust* too had received many wounds, and what was more serious still, oxidation was beginning to work havoc in her sections.

Ten times at least, face to face with some specially bad rapids, I had made up my mind to lose one of the three, if not all; but, as the English said, they were gallant ships. Bravely, in spite of rapids, whirlpools, and rocks, they had made for the appointed goal, the mouth of the river, bringing there without faltering the whole expedition: we white men, the coolies, all our goods, and the French flag!

No doubt it was Aube, Dantec, and Davoust, their sponsors, our comrades, who had died at the task of the conquest of the Niger, who had brought good luck to our three boats.

Thanks to them, I had kept my oath of 1888.

It was not therefore without emotion, without a sadness which may have been childish, but which many will understand, that we parted finally with the companions of so many dangers.

Have not boats souls? Sailors love them like old friends, like heirlooms. We must attach ourselves affectionately to something in this life, must we not?

The *Axim* took us to Forcados; the *Forcados* to Lago; the *Olinda*, chartered specially for us, to Porto Novo.

On November 1, at five o'clock in the morning, there was great excitement at the house of the officers of Porto Novo. Some people had suddenly arrived, and were banging against the shutters. The door was soon half-opened and a voice inquired, "Who are you?"—"Hourst!"—"Where do you come from?"—"Timbuktu"—and the next moment, without any further questioning, we all fell into each other's arms.

After all I experienced in Dahomey and in the Senegal, I will not dwell too much on the goodness the Governor-General, M. Chaudié, showed to us on our return, on the kindness he lavished upon every member of the expedition, or on the reception our friends of St. Louis gave us later, but I can never thank any of them enough.

We dismissed our coolies at St. Louis, thus effecting an immense economy. Abdulaye, the carpenter, at once changed his costume for that of a private citizen. A soft hat, a frock-coat, and a cane with a silver handle, converted the chrysalis into a butterfly; at the same time our old servant began to make up for his long months of sobriety and abstinence. It was, in fact, impossible to find him even to give him an extra tip.

The rest of our coolies dispersed about the town, holding receptions in all the public places of the Sarracolais quarter, telling their adventures with much declamation, and eliciting considerable applause.

The negroes also, it seems, have their mutual admiration for geographical societies!

Later all the brave fellows who had been devoted to us to the death, and some of whom we looked upon as real friends, dispersed themselves once more amongst the Galam villages dotted along the banks of the Senegal, and there at least I can confidently assert our mission, or rather, as Digui called it, the *Munition*, was and still is popular.

That is something, at all events.

On December 12, 1896, we landed from the steamer on the quay of Marseilles, where men were spitting just as they had been when I left Brest. Looking out of the window of my cab upon the deserted street, I saw a little Italian boy in the drizzling rain which was falling, holding in his arms a plaster statuette representing a nude woman with graceful,

supple limbs, probably meant for Diana resting on a crescent of the moon. She and her bearer looked cold and melancholy enough. This was my first sight of a really civilized human being after my three years' exile.

NATIVES OF AFRICA.

EPILOGUE

I HAVE now narrated all our adventures, and I leave my readers to judge of our work. I think it necessary still just to jot down here the practical conclusions I came to, which may be of use later in French colonial policy.

To begin with, let us consider how to turn the Niger to account as a highway for reaching the heart of the Western Sudan.

The French *Journal Officiel* of Western Africa has published a report written by Baudry on the possible importations and exportations, to which I have nothing to add. To every unprejudiced mind he has clearly proved that there is great wealth of natural produce to be found in these districts, such as india-rubber, gutta-percha, skins, wool, wax, *karité*, cotton, etc., which can easily be bought, and are, in fact, simply waiting to be developed.

Now which would be the best route to take these products to France? This is the point we have to elucidate to begin with.

We brought home our hydrographical map of the Niger, from Timbuktu to Bussa, on a scale of 16 miles to the inch, in fifty sheets. One glance at it will suffice to show that the river is not really practically navigable further than Ansongo: that is to say, 435 miles below the last French port in the Sudan.

Further down than Ansongo the river is simply one hopeless labyrinth of rocks, islands, reefs, and rapids; and

although at the time of our transit there seemed to be fewer obstacles between Say and Tchakatchi than elsewhere, it must be remembered that we passed when the water was at its maximum height. As for the Bussa rapids, they are simply impassable for laden boats.

"You passed all right, though!" some one said to me ; and so we did, but I think the *tour de force* by which, thanks to our lucky star, we achieved our passage under the greatest difficulties, would not be successful once in three times. We might, however, go down again once more, but to go up would be quite a different matter.

None but little boats, very lightly laden, or without any cargo, such as the canoes of the natives, can venture without foolhardiness into such passes as we came through.

This is certainly not the way in which a river can be remuneratively navigated. Even if an attempt were made to employ the primitive means alone likely to succeed, beasts of burden, such as camels, could compete on disastrous terms with the waterway.

To attempt therefore to turn the river to account in supplying the central districts with merchandise, or to bring down their products to the coast, would simply result in failure. To take merchandise up to Say by means of the lower branches of the river, is but a utopian dream, which would but result in disaster to those traders involved in the speculation.

Nature has, in fact, laid her interdict on the navigation of a great part of the course of the Niger ; but at least the 435 navigable miles above Ansongo, and between it and Timbuktu, added to the 622 between the latter town and Kolikoro, form what may be characterized as a safe mill-stream, *well within the French districts.* We have not as yet nearly realized all the resources of those districts.

How then shall we get to this mill-stream of ours, or, as

we may perhaps call it, this inland trading lake? A unique solution to the problem presents itself: we must finish the line of railway uniting Kayes to Kolikoro.

The first workers at the task of penetrating into Africa were right. The project of Mungo Park, and Faidherbe, taken up and continued by the Desbordes, the Gallieni, the Archinards, etc., should be continued, pushed on and completed without delay.

All has already been explored. We are no longer discussing a castle in the air, with no firm foundations. We know what that railway will cost, its whole course has been decided on and surveyed; only one thing is still needed, and that is money. It is for the French Government to ask for it, and for the French Parliament to grant it. Certain there be who deliberately oppose French colonial expansion; with them discussion is impossible. I do not try to convince them, for they are already proved to be in the wrong.

There are, however, others, noble and loyal Frenchmen, who stigmatize as sterile all the efforts we make beyond seas to add to the possessions of our native country. "What," they urge, "you talk of wholesale emigration, when the population of France is by no means increasing!"

This is, after all, only a specious argument. Who speaks of advising expatriation *en masse* to Frenchmen for the sake of peopling distant countries? All the colonies suitable for *peopling* have already been appropriated by our English rivals. Australia was the last of them.

With regard, however, to *colonies for exploration*, it is quite a different matter. And with the fullest conviction of my soul, I say France ought to acquire such colonies. Through them alone will she recover her commercial ascendency, which has been so seriously jeopardized; through them alone will her *social position become assured.*

Take, for instance, some child, the son of a workman or farmer: he goes to the school of his quarter or village. Intelligent and hardworking, he soon wins the affection of his teacher. "Work," says that teacher; "to every one the reward is sure, according to his merits. Think of Pasteur, the son of a workman, to whom all Europe renders homage."

Believing what he is told, the child works on. At first the State fulfils the promises made through the lips of the master. The teacher has spoken to the inspector of his

MEDAL OF THE FRENCH SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

protégé, the rector bestirs himself in the matter, the minister even intervenes, encouragement and money aid alike are lavished upon the young fellow. His zeal increases, he redoubles his application, he passes all the examinations and gets all the honours possible, till the University has no more to teach. Teacher, rector, minister, all justly pride themselves in having done their duty by him.

Then the son of the workman begins his life in the world.

Oh, how changed is everything to him now! Knowledge and industry are much, it is true, but there are still two

applicants for every post, for every social function, and it is always the weaker, the less skilful, or rather perhaps the less fortunate, who goes to the wall.

The State has no other situation to offer him, and there is a regular glut of brain-workers already in commerce and in manufacture. Still it is necessary to eat to live.

It is easy to say "go back to the workshop or the plough," but it is against human nature to do so; the cultivated brain, the matured intelligence, need the intellectual food to which they have become accustomed. The hands are too soft and delicate now for manual labour, nor are the muscles strong enough for it.

One more embittered, discontented, unfortunate man has been produced, that is all, and who knows but that to-morrow he may astonish the world by some attempted crime or act of folly, the result of his despair, perhaps even of actual hunger?

Am I making excuses for an anarchist? By no means. I have but proved the necessity of French colonial expansion in colonies of exploration.

If we wish to turn our distant possessions to account, the criminal of yesterday, the dangerous member of society, might go there, and in directing industrial or commercial enterprises find legitimate employment and a fair return for all his intelligent efforts and for the work and study of his youth.

There is plenty of labour to be obtained out there, for it is only the natives, of whatever tribe or colour, whose temperament is hostile to manual work.

More than that, these very natives who are now in a degraded state of barbarism, if taught by intelligent Europeans, would soon rise above their present condition to more of an equality with their instructors. Not only would the young man of whom I have been speaking live

a happy life; not only would he win riches for himself and add to the wealth of his native country, but he would also aid in bringing about what, in my opinion, is the noblest of all possible ambitions, the amelioration of the lot of his fellow-creatures, for to make them better and happier is to share in the work of God Himself.

So logical is this reasoning, that my only wonder is why those who have the good of humanity at heart have not thought of it before myself.

Is not our French Sudan just such a fertile colony as

MEDAL OF THE 'SOCIÉTÉ D'ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE.'

is well suited for playing a part in what I may call the future social policy of France? I can answer that question in a very few words.

I have visited the lower course of the river, with the districts under the control of the Royal Niger Company, and I can confidently assert that except for palm-oil, which is only to be obtained on the seaboard, none of the exports, gum, india-rubber, ivory, and above all, *karité*, are wanting in the French Sudan. In fact, we have all these things in greater quantities than the English, without counting the products peculiar to our districts, but unknown at the mouth of the river.

Let us then make that railway, and make it quickly. Do not let us waste any more time talking about it; do not let us turn aside for any other projects, and when some 373 miles of iron road unite some 622 miles of the navigable Senegal, with no less than 1056 miles of the Niger, all alike fit to be navigated by our boats, we shall have a second Algeria, larger and richer than the first. The mind can scarcely grasp the idea of the new source of fortune to be opened to France by a thing so simple as this, a thing in which the Belgians have been beforehand with us—the construction of a railway. Stanley was right when he said Africa would belong to the first who should lay down a line of railway through it.[1]

This will bring us to Ansongo. Are we to let it be the limit of our zone of trading operations? No, certainly not; and this brings me to a second result won by our expedition: the opening of relations with the Awellimiden.

I have constituted myself the defender of the Tuaregs. I have shown them to be less cruel, less traitorous, less hostile to progress than they are generally said to be. It is for the reader to judge whether the adventures I have related do or do not prove my impressions to have been correct.

One thing, however, I must stipulate, and that is: if we let months or years slip by without improving the relations opened with the Tuaregs of the Niger by further contact with them, we shall find them more difficult to deal with, more suspicious, altogether less accessible than we did during our stay in their country.

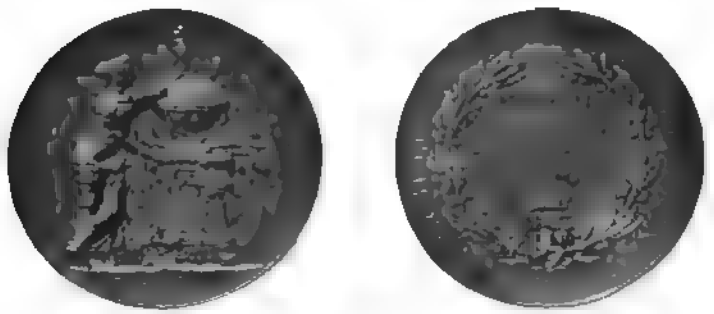
As I have already said, the Azgueurs were in our hands after the journey of Duveyrier. Ikhenukhen, their great

[1] I must add that of the 373 miles of railway that I ask for, 125 are already made, and are in full work, so that the worst difficulties are overcome.

chief, who was honoured and obeyed by them, was our friend. When the treaty of Rhâdames was made, we said to them, "We want to go to the Sudan by way of Aïr: you will guide us, you will protect our traders, you will hire your camels to us, and you will find it to your profit to do so."

A Tuareg proverb says, "You should never promise more than half what you mean to perform."

The Azgueurs of course expected our caravans to arrive, and they are still expecting them. Gradually, however, they are beginning to doubt us. "What," they are saying,



MEDAL OF THE LYONS GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

"did those Frenchmen, who seemed so anxious to trade in our country, come to do here?" When this question is put to a Tuareg, he will answer immediately, "They came to spy; they were the spies of a great army, which will come to take away our liberty and our independence."

In the English of Tripoli and their agent, the Kaimakhan of Rhâdames, they would have advisers, who would increase their suspicions of us. Little by little the sympathy the Tuaregs had felt for us would give way to dread of us. Ikhenukhen is dead now, the Sahara is closed to us, more completely closed than when Duveyrier visited it, or when Barth and Richardson crossed it.

If we are equally negligent with the Awellimiden, we shall obtain equally melancholy results.

If only an opposite policy could be pursued, how different everything would be!

Whilst waiting for that iron road, and alas! its completion is very far off! the only means of transit—bearing in mind the impossibility of navigating the second section of the river—is to employ the comparatively cheap and easily obtained ships of the desert, the ugly but useful camels.

Now the camels all belong to the Tuaregs, generally to their Imrad tribes.

Let us imagine that the railway is completed, that boats brought up in sections to Kolikoro have been put together there, and are going down the river as far as Gao, boats sufficiently well armed to make the French respected, and of sufficient tonnage to carry merchandise; we should at once have either at Gao or somewhere else in its neighbourhood, a centre, so to speak, of transit, to which the Tuaregs could bring their animals to be laden, and acting as convoys to our caravans, would be most useful auxiliaries to the French traders.

Do not let any one urge against this the pillaging instincts of the Tuaregs. To begin with, it is in our power, if necessary, to destroy, or at least to insist, upon the removal elsewhere, of the riveraine negro villages, an excellent way of keeping the natives in awe, for we should then have it in our power to avenge ourselves efficaciously on them in case of their hostility, for it is from these riveraine districts that they obtain the grain which is their only food.

I assert, however, that it would never be necessary to proceed to such extremities as that.

The Tuaregs are alike too intelligent and avaricious of gain to risk raids, the result of which would be uncertain,

when merely letting out their camels on hire would bring them in alike a greater and a surer profit.

By doing as I suggest, the old route from Gao to Lake Tchad, one of the most ancient in Northern Africa, could be reopened. This route, bearing as it does in the direction of Gober and Air, and skirting the Sahara, as it were in the rear, might in the end be made to connect the French Sudan with Algeria and Tunis.

To achieve this I repeat we must not give the marabouts, who are badly disposed towards the French, time to

MEDAL OF THE MARSEILLES GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

destroy our work before it is fairly begun; we must not by too long a delay, awake once more the suspicions of the Awellimiden, which are always easily aroused.

I do not pretend to say that any immediate profits would result from the course I advocate. Skins, wool, and gum are all too heavy to make it worth while to export them by difficult and costly modes of transport from Timbuktu to Kolikoro, and from Kolikoro to Diubeba, where ends at the present moment the railway from the Senegal to the Niger.

It is, however, absolutely necessary to pave the way for traffic even at the cost of a temporary loss, so that it may

be in full swing from the very day of the completion of the railway, when steamers will begin to ply on the navigable portion of the Niger.

On that day our hydrographical map, which is so far the chief result of our expedition, will find its use!

Was our stay at Say a profitable one? The future alone can decide.

I do think, however, that at least our gentle and benevolent behaviour to the peaceable natives, to the tillers of the soil, the Koyraberos, must, however obtuse their intelligence, have proved to them that these French infidels, these Kaffirs, as they called us, were not really exactly what their marabouts told them we were: ferocious beasts.

Moreover, our establishing ourselves in our island, and our stay at Fort Archinard, in spite of the prohibition of our enemy, Amadu Cheiku, under his very eyes, as it were, and in spite of all his satellites could do, all his vain intrigues against us, must surely have weakened his influence and his prestige.

We could not possibly have done more than we did with the very small force at our command, and in view of the instructions we had received to maintain the pacific character of our expedition, instructions, alas! which to the end remained incomplete, and were very different from what I had hoped they would be.

With regard to the Lower Niger it is best to be silent. There is far too much competition there with other European nations, and it would only lessen the effect of the results we had been able to obtain, whether those results were great or small, to publish what they were. It is for diplomacy to deal with them, bearing in mind that our rivals know on occasion how to act with what I may call quite a special bad geographical faith, which is not,

however, any longer effective, since we have now reconnoitred and examined the districts in dispute.

I may add that we also brought back with us a few collections, and what was, as it appears to me, a most important point, the results of as careful a study as possible of the different dialects spoken in the river districts.

There is nothing which gains the confidence of the natives more than to be able to speak, or even to jabber, their language. The effect on the Tuaregs especially is

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immense when they find that a European can say a few phrases in Tamschenk, and a very great stride has been made towards a good understanding when those sentences have been pronounced.

Whatever may be the results of our journey, I should be guilty of the grossest ingratitude if I concluded my account of our adventures in any other way than by thanking all the devoted companions who helped me to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Our negroes, those brave Senagalese, whom we have watched at their work so long, who were so devoted, so *French*, who so blindly followed the chief whose service

they had entered, had held their own lives cheap, and now shared with us the proud sense of duty accomplished.

Then above all, our thanks are due to my friends Baudry, Bluzet, Taburet, and Father Hacquart. We were going back now to civilized life, perhaps to disperse to the four corners of the earth, but a bond had been formed between us which nothing will ever break. As for me, that bond

NATIVES OF SANSAN HAUSSA.

was made up chiefly of loving gratitude, for to them is due the fact that I was able to keep my oath made when Davoust died, to serve my country and to increase the extent of the future possessions of France.

Thanks too must be given to those who aided me by their influence, their encouragement, and their contributions, no matter how small. As my readers have seen, the beginning of the hydrographical expedition I commanded was set about with many difficulties, and I

can honestly assert that I suffered far more personally just because of my zeal for the task I had undertaken; a task which when completed would extend the area of our colonial possessions and make them better known, which would add to the wealth and the power of my native country. Yes, I suffered more than if I had been a bad officer, caring little about his duty.

I wish I could say that at least all was changed on my return, but truth compels me to add that there were certain notable exceptions to the general sympathy with me, and the general kindness of the reception given to me.

GRAND MEDAL OF THE PARIS SOCIETY OF COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY

But never mind, the sense of having done one's duty is worth more than anything else.

It is to you, dear friends, dear companions on the Niger, that I add—"Let people say what they will; a hundred years hence many things and many men will be forgotten, but for all that, it will be as true then as it is now, that our hydrographical expedition was the first to descend the Niger, the first to explore its course from Kolikoro to the sea."

A French sailor, Francis Garnier by name, on his way to Tonquin, which he had to aid in conquering, and where

he was to end his days, wrote to his mother describing all the difficulties he would have to contend with, adding, "But I do not mind, mother dear. Forward, for the sake of old France!"

For ourselves, and for those who are to come after us in Africa or elsewhere, I too close my narrative with the same words. "Forward, for the sake of old France!"

THE

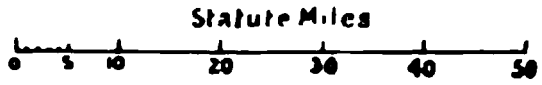
COURSE OF THE RIVER NIGER

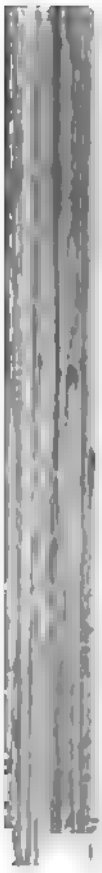
from TIMBUKTU to BUSSA.

Reduced from the Original
Surveys made by the HOURST Expedition.

(Scale 1:1,000,000.)
(16 Miles = 1 Inch)

Statute Miles





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