

establishing a faulty precedent. From the decisions of the minor chiefs there was a right of appeal to the head of the tribe.

The law held every one accused of crime guilty, unless he could prove himself innocent. It made the head of a family responsible for the conduct of all its branches, the kraal collectively in the same manner for each resident in it, and the clan for each of its subdivisions. Thus if the skin of a stolen ox was found in a kraal, or if the footmarks of the animal were traced to it, the whole of the residents were liable to be fined. There was no such thing as a man's professing ignorance of his neighbour's doings: the law required him to know all about them, or it made him suffer for neglecting a duty which it held he owed to the community. Every individual was not only in theory but in practice a policeman.

A lawsuit among these people was commonly attended by all the men of the kraal where it took place. Nothing was more congenial than to sit and listen to the efforts of the querists to elicit the truth, or for the ablest among them to assist in the investigation. The trial took place in the open air. The person charged with crime or the defendant in a civil suit underwent a rigorous examination, and anything like warning him against criminating himself was held to be perversion of justice.

The accuser or plaintiff or a friend prosecuted, and a friend of the individual on trial conducted the defence; the councillors, who acted as assessors, put any questions they chose; and the mass of spectators observed the utmost silence and decorum. At the con-



clusion of the trial, the councillors expressed their opinions, and the chief then pronounced judgment.

There were only two modes of punishment, fines and death, except in cases where an individual was charged with having dealt in witchcraft, when torture, often of a horrible kind, was practised. In this class of trials every one was actuated by fear, and was in a state of strong excitement, so that the formalities required on other occasions were dispensed with. The whole clan was assembled and seated in a circle, the witchfinder, who was fantastically painted and attired, went through certain incantations; and when all were worked into a state of frenzy he pointed to some individual as the one who had by bewitchment caused death or sickness among the people, murrain among cattle, blight in crops, or some other disaster. The result to the person so pointed out was confiscation of property and torture, often causing death. The number of persons who perished on charges of dealing in witchcraft was very great. The victims were usually old women, men of property, persons of eccentric habits, or individuals obnoxious to the chief. Any person in advance of his fellows was specially liable to suspicion.

No one except the chief was exempt, however, from being charged with dealing in witchcraft. The cruelties practised upon the unfortunate individuals believed to be guilty were often horrible, but a single instance, which occurred in July 1892, will be sufficient to exemplify them. A wife of the Pondo chief Sigcawu being ill, a witchfinder was directed to point out the person who caused the malady. He declared that Mamatiwane, sister of the Pandomisi chief Umhlonhlo



and widow of Sigcawu's father, was the guilty person, and that she had a lizard and a mole as her servants in the evil work. By order of Sigcawu, a number of young men then seized Mamatiwane, stripped her naked, fastened her wrists and ankles to pegs driven in the ground, and covered her with ants irritated by pouring water over them. She suffered this torture for a long time without confessing, so they loosed her, saying that her medicines were too strong for the ants. They then lashed her arms to a pole placed along her shoulders, and taking her by the feet and the ends of the pole, they held her over a fire. Under this torture she confessed that she was guilty, but as she could not produce the lizard and the mole, she was roasted again three times within two days. No European could have survived such a burning; but she was ultimately rescued by an agent of the Cape government, and recovered. This woman had taken care of Sigcawu after the death of his own mother, yet on the mere word of a witchfinder she was thus horribly tortured. And instances of this kind were common occurrences in the olden times.

The Bantu were seen in the most favourable light at the ordinary lawsuits before the chiefs and councillors, and in the most unfavourable light at trials for the discovery of wizards and witches. In the one case men were found conducting themselves with the strictest gravity and propriety, in the other case the same people were seen as a panic-stricken horde, deaf to all reason, and ready to perform most atrocious acts of cruelty, even upon persons who just previously were their companions.



The sentences pronounced in ordinary cases were often such as would have seemed unjust to Europeans, but that was because our standard of comparative crime is not the same as theirs, and because with us there is supposed to be no difference of punishment according to the rank of the criminal. With them the ruling families in all their branches had the privilege of doing many things with impunity that commoners were severely punished for. Bribery was not unknown, but in courts as open as theirs, and where there was the utmost freedom of enquiry, it could not be practised to any great extent. When a case was talked out, every one present was usually acquainted with its minutest details.

The religion of the Bantu was based upon the supposition of the existence of spirits that could interfere with the affairs of this world. These spirits were those of their ancestors and their deceased chiefs, the greatest of whom had control over lightning. When the spirits became hungry they sent a plague or disaster until sacrifices were offered and their hunger was appeased. The head of a family of commoners on such an occasion killed an animal, and all ate of the meat, as the hungry spirit was supposed to be satisfied with the smell. In case of the chief or the community at large being affected, the sacrifice was performed with much ceremony by the tribal priest, an individual of great influence, who had as another duty to prepare charms or administer medicine that would make the warriors who conducted themselves properly invulnerable in battle.

An instance may be given to illustrate the operation



of this religion. Upon the death of Gwanya, a chief of great celebrity in the Pandomisi tribe, he was buried in a deep pool of the Tina river. The body was fastened to a log of wood, which was sunk in the water and then covered with stones. The sixth in the direct line of descent from this chief, Umhlonhlo by name, to save himself from destruction by an enemy became a British subject at his own request, but in October 1880 treacherously murdered three English officials, and went into rebellion, which resulted in his being obliged afterwards to take shelter in Basutoland. In 1891 one of Umhlonhlo's sons ventured into the district where his father had lived, and there committed an assault, for which he was arrested and sent before a colonial court to be tried. It was a time of intense heat and severe drought, which the tribe declared were caused by the spirit of Gwanya, who in this manner was expressing displeasure at the treatment accorded to his descendant. As a peace-offering therefore, cattle were killed on the banks of the pool containing his grave, and the flesh was thrown into the water, together with new dishes full of beer. The prisoner was sentenced to pay a fine, which was at once collected by the people for him. A few days later rain fell in copious showers, which of course confirmed the belief of the tribe that what was right had been done, and that the spirit of Gwanya was appeased.

When a person was killed by lightning no lamentation was made, as it would have been considered rebellion to mourn for one whom the great chief had sent for. The Bantu had no idea of reward or punishment in a world to come for acts committed in this life, and no



one troubled himself with thinking of his own immortality.

Deep in their minds was the germ of a belief in the transmigration of souls. A species of snake was regarded with great reverence, because they supposed that the spirits of their ancestors sometimes visited them in that form. A man would leave his hut in possession of such a snake if it entered, and every one would shudder at the thought of hurting it. This belief was more highly developed among the coast tribes than among those of the interior, but traces of it were to be found everywhere among the Bantu.

When common people died, their corpses were dragged a short distance from the kraal, and there left to be devoured by beasts of prey; but chiefs and great men were interred with much ceremony. Usually a grave was dug, in which the body was placed in a sitting posture, and by it were deposited the weapons of war and ornaments used in life. When the grave was closed, such expressions as these were used: "Remember us from the place where you are; you have gone to a high abode; cause us to prosper."

The tribe adjoining the Hottentot border on the south-east had a dim belief in the existence of a powerful being, whom they termed Qamata, and to whom they sometimes prayed, though they never offered sacrifices to him. In a time of great danger one of them would exclaim: "O Qamata, help me," and when the danger was over he would attribute his deliverance to the same being. But of Qamata nothing more was known than that he was high and mighty, and that though at times he helped individuals, in general he did



not interfere with the destinies of men. They were not given to enquiry or speculation upon matters of this kind. Recent investigations have shown that the belief in Qamata did not extend far among the Bantu tribes, and it is now supposed to have been acquired from the Hottentots. Not that the Hottentots venerated a deity under that name, but that a knowledge of some other object of worship than their own ancestral shades having been obtained through Hottentot females whom they took to themselves, this name was given to the unknown divinity.

Nearer than the spirits of deceased chiefs or of their own ancestors was a whole host of hobgoblins, water-sprites, and malevolent demons, who met the Bantu turn which way they would. There was no beautiful fairyland for them, for all the beings who haunted the mountains, the plains, and the rivers were ministers of evil. The most feared of these was a bird that made love to women and incited those who returned its affection to cause the death of those who did not, and a little mischievous imp who was also amorously inclined. Many instances could be gathered from the records of magistrates' courts in recent years of demented women having admitted their acquaintance with these fabulous creatures, as well as of whole communities living in terror of them.

No days or seasons were considered more sacred than others, though there were times marked by particular events when it was considered unlucky to undertake any enterprise, and even movements in war were delayed on such occasions. Each ruling family had its own priest. When a community was broken in war and



compelled to become a vassal clan of some other tribe, it retained its priest until by time or circumstances a thorough incorporation took place. That was a process, however, not usually completed until several generations had passed away. As a factor in the government of a Bantu tribe, religion, in consequence of these circumstances, was more powerful than in any European state. The fear of offending the spirits of the deceased chiefs, and so bringing evil upon themselves, kept the clans loyal to their head. He was the representative, the descendant in the great line, of those whose wrath they appeased by sacrifices. A tribe all of whose clans were governed by offshoots of the family of the paramount chief was thus immensely stronger in war than one of equal size made up of clans thrown together by chance. In the one case the religious head was the same as the political, in the other they were separated.

The belief in witchcraft was deep-seated and universal. The theory was that certain evil-disposed persons obtained power from the demons to bewitch others, and so to cause sickness, death, or disaster of some kind. They were believed often to use snakes, baboons, and other animals as their messengers. They could only be discovered by individuals who went through a very severe novitiate, and to whom the necessary knowledge was imparted by people who lived under water. Undoubtedly some of the witchfinders were impostors; but many of them were really monomaniacs, and had the firmest conviction in their ability to do what they professed.

Occasionally a person believed that he had received revelations from the spirit world. If his statements



were credited, his power at once became equal to that of the highest chief, and his commands were implicitly obeyed. Crafty chiefs sometimes made use of such deranged beings for the purpose of exciting the people to war, or of inducing them to approve of measures which would otherwise have been unpopular.

There were individuals who professed to be able to make rain. There were also persons who were skilful in the use of herbs as remedies for diseases, and who were well acquainted with different kinds of poison. It often happened that the three offices of witchfinder, rainmaker, and herbalist were combined in the same person, but this was not always the case, and the occupations were distinct. When practising, these individuals attired themselves fantastically, being painted with various colours, and having the tails of wild animals suspended around them.

Charms were largely depended upon to preserve the wearers against accident or to produce good luck. They were merely bits of wood or bone, which were hung about the neck, and were regarded just as lucky pennies and fortunate days are by some silly Europeans. But the belief was firm in charms and medicines which gave to an assagai the property of hitting the mark, to an individual the property of winning favour, and such like. The issue of warlike operations was divined by revolting cruelties practised on animals. The tribes of the interior were more superstitious than those of the coast, as they were guided in half their actions by the position in which some pieces of bone of the character of dice fell when they were cast on the ground.

Some events, which to us appear natural, were regarded



by them very differently. A girl, for instance, would fancy that the spirit of a stream was calling her away from her companions, would plunge into the water, and be in danger of drowning. An alarm would be raised, when the people who were attracted by the noise, instead of making an effort to save her, would rush away frantically in search of cattle, which they would drive hastily into the river, hoping that the spirit would be satisfied with an ox and release the girl. Cases similar to this still occur frequently, even among those who have been in contact with civilisation for many years. A man, before crossing a river, would pick up a stone and throw it upon a heap to propitiate the spirit of the stream.

The Bantu knew of no other periods in reckoning time than the day and the lunar month, and could describe events only as happening before or after some remarkable occurrence, such as the death of a chief, a season of famine, or an unusually heavy flood. The rising of the Pleiades shortly after sunset was regarded as indicating the planting season. To this constellation, as well as to several of the prominent stars and planets, they gave expressive names. They formed no theories concerning the nature of the heavenly bodies and their motions, and were not given to thinking of such things. In later times, if questioned by a European, they might venture to remark that the sky was smoke which had risen from fires, but in such cases it would be evident that the effort to find a solution to a query of this kind was new to them.

They had no knowledge of letters or of any signs by which ideas could be expressed. There were old men



who professed to be acquainted with the deeds of the past, and who imparted their knowledge to the young, but their accounts of distant times seldom corresponded in details. They touched very lightly upon defeats sustained by their own tribe, but dilated upon all its victories. Thus their narratives often conveyed incorrect impressions, and little was beyond question except the genealogies of the great chiefs, which were carefully preserved for ten or twelve generations.

Their folklore was neither of a moral character, nor did it convey any useful lessons. The actors in it were animals which spoke as human beings, persons who were bewitched and compelled to appear as beasts, individuals with magical powers, fantastic creatures, imps, cannibals, young chiefs, girls, etc., etc. There was nothing that partook of the nature of true poetry or that led to elevation of thought in any of these stories. To European minds there is very little that is even amusing in them, but they gave a large amount of pleasure to those among whom they passed current. Many of the proverbs in common use, on the contrary, conveyed excellent lessons of prudence and wisdom.

When about fifteen or sixteen years of age boys were circumcised. The rite was purely civil. By it a youth was enabled to emerge from the society of women and children, and was admitted to the privileges of manhood. Its performance was attended with many ceremonies, some of a harmless, others to European ideas of a criminal nature. At a certain period in every year, unless it was a time of calamity or the chief had a son not yet ready, all the youths of a clan who were old enough were circumcised. Thereafter for a couple



of months or longer they lived by themselves, and were distinguished by wearing a peculiar head-dress and a girdle of long grass about the loins, besides having their bodies covered with white clay. During this period they had license to steal freely from their relatives, provided they could do so without being caught in the act. After returning to their homes, they were brought before the old men of the tribe, who lectured them upon the duties and responsibilities which they had taken upon themselves. Presents of cattle and weapons were afterwards made by their friends to give them a start in life, and they could then indulge in immorality without let or hindrance from their elders.

In case a scion of the ruling house was growing up, the performance of the rite of circumcision was generally allowed to stand over for a year or two, so that he might have a large number of companions. These were all supposed to be bound to him by a very strong tie. In after years they were to be his councillors and attendants, and in case of danger were to form his bodyguard. In modern times no instance has been known of any one who was circumcised at the same time as a chief afterwards proving unfaithful to him, but numerous instances have come under the notice of Europeans where such persons have sacrificed their lives for him.

With some—if not all—of the interior tribes at the time of circumcision the youths were formed into guilds with passwords. The members of these guilds were bound never to give evidence against each other. The rites of initiation were kept as secret as possible, but certain horrible customs connected with them



were known. One of these was the infusion of courage, intelligence, and other qualities. Whenever an enemy who had acted bravely was killed, his liver, which was considered the seat of intelligence, the skin of his forehead, which was considered the seat of perseverance, and other members, each of which was supposed to be the seat of some desirable quality, were cut from his body and baked to cinders. The ashes were preserved in the horn of a bull, and during the circumcision ceremonies were mixed with other ingredients into a kind of paste and administered by the tribal priest to the youths, the idea being that the qualities which they represented were communicated to those who swallowed them. This custom, together with that of using other parts of the remains of their enemies for bewitching purposes, led them to mutilate the bodies of all who fell into their hands in war, a practice which infuriated those whose friends were thus treated, and often provoked retaliation of a terrible kind.

Females who arrived at the age of puberty were introduced into the state of womanhood by peculiar ceremonies, which tended to extinguish virtuous feelings within them. Originally, however, among the coast tribes the very worst of the observances on these occasions was a test of discipline. The object of the education of the males was to make them capable of self-restraint. They were required to control themselves so that no trace of their emotions should appear on their faces, they were not to wince when undergoing the most severe punishment. In olden times a further test was applied, which has now degenerated into the



most abominable licentiousness. It will be sufficient to say that the young women who attended the revels on these occasions were allowed to select temporary companions of the other sex, and if they declined to do so, the chief distributed them at his pleasure. As the first edition of this chapter was being prepared, a chief, who was regarded as being more advanced towards civilisation than most of his people, came into legal collision with the European authorities for distributing a large number of girls in this manner in a district within the Cape Colony.

But degrading as this rite was among the coast tribes, among some of those of the interior it was even more vile. All that the most depraved imagination could devise to rouse the lowest passions of the young females was practised. A description is impossible.

The Bantu were polygamists, and women occupied a lower position than men in their society. Marriage was an arrangement, without any religious ceremony, by which in return for a girl cattle were transferred to her relatives by the husband or his friends. It did not make of a woman a slave who could be sold from hand to hand, nor did it give her husband power to maim her. In its best aspect this method of marriage was a protection to a woman against ill usage. If her husband maimed her, or treated her with undue severity, she could return to her father or guardian, who was allowed in such cases to retain both the woman and the cattle. In its worst aspect it permitted a parent or guardian to give a girl in marriage to the man who offered most for her, without the slightest reference to her inclina-



tions. A woman was a drudge, upon whom the cultivation of the ground and other severe labour fell, she could inherit nothing, and she was liable to castigation from her husband, without protection from the law. Wealth was estimated by the number of wives and cattle that a man possessed, and the one was always made use of to increase the other. The husband was head or lord of the establishment, and the wives were required to provide all the food except meat and milk. Each had a hut of her own, which she and her children occupied, and the husband used his caprice as to which of them he associated with at any time.

Yet the women were quite as cheerful as the men, and knew as well as Europeans how to make their influence felt. In times of peace, after working in her garden a great part of the day, towards evening a woman collected a bundle of sticks, and with it on her head and a child on her back, trudged homeward. Having made a fire, she then proceeded to grind some soaked millet upon a quern, humming a monotonous tune as she worked the stone. When sufficient was ground, it was made into a roll, and placed in the hot ashes to bake. Meantime curdled milk was drawn by the head of the household from the skin bags in which it was kept, and the bags were refilled with milk just taken from the cows. The men made a hearty meal of the milk and the bread, with sometimes the flesh of game and different vegetable products, and after they had finished the women and children partook of what was left. Then the men gathered round the fire and chatted together, and the young



people sat and listened to the stories told by some old woman till the time for sleep arrived. Different games were also played occasionally, but as the only artificial light was that of burning wood, they were usually carried on in the daytime.

Chastity in married life was exceedingly rare among the coast tribes. By custom every wife of a polygamist had a lover, and no woman sank in the esteem of her companions on this becoming publicly known. The law allowed the husband a fine from the male offender, and permitted him to chastise the woman, provided he did not maim her; but in the opinion of the females the offence was venial and was not attended with disgrace. Favoured guests had female companions—who were, however, generally widows—allotted to them. Still, chastity had a value in the estimation of the men, as was proved by the care with which the harems of a few of the most powerful chiefs were guarded. It might be thought that the framework of society would fall to pieces if domestic life were more immoral than this, but in point of fact a kraal on the coast was a scene of purity when compared with one in some parts of the interior.

There it was a common occurrence for a chief to secure the services and adherence of a young man by the loan of one of his inferior wives either temporarily or permanently. In either case the children belonged to the chief, who was regarded by the law as their father. Another revolting custom among them was that of polyandrous marriages. A man who had not the requisite number of cattle to procure a wife, and whose father was too poor to help him, obtained



assistance from a wealthy individual on condition of having joint marital rights.

In some of the tribes women used for many purposes different words from those used by every one around them. This arose from a custom which prohibited females from pronouncing the names of any of their husband's male relatives in the ascending line, or any words whatever in which the principal syllables of such names occurred. The violation of this custom was considered as showing a want of proper respect for connections by marriage. Women avoided meeting their husband's male relatives in the ascending line, whenever it was possible to do so, and never sat down in their presence.

The Bantu were agriculturists. A species of millet, now called by the European colonists kaffir-corn, was the grain exclusively grown. They raised large quantities of this, which they used either boiled or bruised into a paste from which bread was made. They were acquainted with the art of brewing, and in good seasons turned much of their millet into beer. Among the coast tribes a supply of grain sufficient to last until the next season was preserved from the attacks of weevil by burying it in air-tight pits excavated beneath the cattle-folds. When kept for a long time in these granaries, the grain lost the power of germinating, and acquired a rank taste and smell, but it was in that condition none the less agreeable to the Bantu palate. The interior tribes preserved their grain either in earthenware crocks or in enormous baskets, which were perfectly watertight, and which could be exposed to the air without damage to their contents. Pumpkins,



a species of gourd, a cane containing saccharine matter in large quantities, and a sort of ground nut were the other products of their gardens.

As food they had also milk and occasionally flesh. Milk was kept in skin bags, where it fermented and acquired a sharp acid taste. As it was drawn off, new milk was added, for it was only in the fermented state that it was used. The art of making butter and cheese was unknown. Two meals were eaten every day: a slight breakfast in the morning, and a substantial repast at sunset. Anyone passing by at that time, friend or stranger, provided only that he was not inferior in rank, sat down without invitation or ceremony, and shared in the meal. So great was the hospitality of the people to equals and superiors that food could almost have been termed common property. Boys before being circumcised were permitted to eat any kind of meat, even wild cats and other carnivora, but after that ceremony was performed the flesh of all unclean animals was rejected. In the south-east they did not use fish as food, though with some of the tribes elsewhere it was an ordinary article of diet.

The Bantu had an admirable system of land tenure. The chief apportioned to each head of a family sufficient ground for a garden according to his needs, and it remained in that individual's possession as long as it was cultivated. He could even remove for years, with the consent of the chief, and resume occupation upon his return. He could not lend, much less alienate it. But if he ceased to make use of it, or went away for a long time without the chief's permission, he lost his right. Under the same conditions he had possession of



the ground upon which his huts stood, and of a yard about them. All other ground was common pasture, but the chief had power to direct that portions of it should be used in particular seasons only. No taxes of any kind were paid for land, air, or water.

Kraals were usually built in situations commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, and always on ground with good natural drainage. The brow of a hill, with a clear flowing stream at its base and fertile garden ground beyond, was the site most favoured. Sanitary arrangements, even of the simplest kind, were unknown and uncared for, as the sense of smell was much duller with these people than with Europeans, and an impure atmosphere did not affect their health. Their superstition too required them to remove their residences whenever a man of importance died, so that kraals seldom remained many years on the same site.

The huts of the tribes along the coast were shaped like beehives, and were formed of strong frames, thatched with reeds or grass. They were proof against rain or wind. The largest were about twenty-five feet in diameter, and seven or eight feet in height at the centre. They were entered by a low, narrow aperture, which was the only opening in the structure. A hard and smooth floor was made of antheaps, moistened with water and then kneaded with a round stone. When this had set, it was painted with a mixture of cowdung and water, which was the material used ever afterwards for keeping it in good order. In the centre of the floor a fireplace was made, by raising a band an inch or two in height and three or four feet in diameter, and slightly



hollowing the enclosed space. Many women bestowed a great deal of attention upon their fire-circles, often enclosing them with three bands, a large one in the centre and a smaller one on each side of it, differently coloured, and resembling a coil of large rope lying between concentric coils of less thickness. Against the wall of the hut were ranged various utensils in common use, the space around the fire-circle being reserved for sleeping on. Here in the evening mats were spread, upon which the inmates lay down to rest, each one's feet being towards the centre. Above their heads the roof was glossy with soot, and vermin swarmed on every side. It was only in cold or stormy weather that huts were occupied during the day, for the people spent the greater portion of their waking hours in the open air.

The habitations of the people of the interior were much better than those of the people of the coast. With them the hut had perpendicular walls, and consisted of a central circular room, with three or four small apartments outside, each being a segment of a circle. It was surrounded with an enclosed courtyard, but was destitute of chimney or window. On the coast no effort was made to secure privacy.

Horned cattle constituted the principal wealth of the Bantu, and formed a convenient medium of exchange throughout the country. Great care was taken of them, and much skill was exhibited in their training. They were taught to obey signals, as, for instance, to run home upon a certain call or whistle being given. Every man of note had his racing oxen, and prided himself upon their good qualities as much as an English



squire did upon his blood horses. Ox racing was connected with all kinds of festivities. The care of cattle was considered the most honourable employment, and fell entirely to the men. They milked the cows, took charge of the dairy, and would not permit a woman so much as to touch a milksack. The other domestic animals were goats, large tailed sheep in the north, dogs, and barnyard poultry.

The descent of property was regulated in the same manner as the succession to the chieftainship. But the distribution of wealth was more equal than in any European society, for each married man had a plot of garden ground, and younger brothers had a recognised claim upon the heirs of their father for assistance in setting them up in life.

The Bantu of the south-eastern coast belt were warlike in disposition and brave in the field. Their weapons of offence were wooden clubs with heavy heads and assagais or javelins, and they carried shields made of ox-hide, which varied in size and pattern among the tribes. The assagai was a slender wooden shaft or rod, with a long, thin, iron head, having both edges sharp, attached to it. Poising this first in his uplifted hand, and imparting to it a quivering motion, the warrior hurled it forth with great force and accuracy of aim. The club was used at close quarters, and could also be thrown to a considerable distance. Boys were trained from an early age to the use of both these weapons.

The dress of these people was composed of skins of animals formed into a square mantle the size of a large blanket, which they wrapped about their persons. The skin of the leopard was reserved for



chiefs and their principal councillors, but any other could be used by common people. Married women wore a leather petticoat at all times. In warm weather men and little children usually went quite naked. They were fond of decorating their persons with ornaments, such as necklaces of shells and teeth of animals, arm-rings of copper and ivory, head plumes, etc. They rubbed themselves from head to foot with fat and red clay, which made them look like polished bronze. Their clothing was greased and coloured in the same manner.

Their manufactures were not of a very high order. Foremost among them must be reckoned metallic wares, which included implements of war and husbandry and ornaments for the person. In many parts of the country iron ore was abundant, and this they smelted in a simple manner. Forming a furnace of clay or a boulder with a hollow surface, out of which a groove was made to allow the liquid metal to escape, and into which a hole was pierced for the purpose of introducing a current of air, they piled up a heap of charcoal and virgin ore, which they afterwards covered in such a way as to prevent the escape of heat. The bellows by which air was introduced were made of skins, the mouthpiece being the horn of a large antelope. The molten iron, escaping from the crude yet effective furnace, ran into clay moulds prepared to receive it, which were as nearly as possible of the same dimensions as the implements they wished to make. These were never of great size, the largest being the picks or heavy hoes required for gardening.

The smith, using a boulder for an anvil and a



hammer of stone, next proceeded to shape the lump of metal into an assagai head, an axe, a pick, or whatever was wanted. The occupation of the worker in iron was hereditary in certain families, and was carried on with a good deal of mystery, the common belief being that it was necessary to employ charms unknown to those not initiated. But the arts of the founder and the blacksmith had not advanced beyond the elementary stage. Instead of an opening for inserting a handle in the hoe, it terminated in a spike which was driven into a hole burnt through the knob of a heavy shaft of wood. The assagai was everywhere in use, and in addition the interior tribes made crescent-shaped battle-axes, which were fastened to handles in the same manner as the hoes. On these implements of war they bestowed all their skill, and really produced neatly finished articles. They worked the metal cold, and were unable to weld two pieces together.

In the manufacture of wooden articles, such as spoons, bowls, fighting-sticks, head-rests, etc., they were tolerably expert. Each article was made of a single block of wood, requiring much time and patience to complete it, and upon it was frequently carved some simple pattern.

Skins for clothing were prepared by rubbing them for a length of time with grease, by which means they were made nearly as soft and pliable as cloth. The interior tribes excelled in the art of dressing skins, and were able to make beautiful fur robes, which they stitched with sinews by the help of an awl.



In their department the women were equally skilful. Earthenware vessels containing from half a pint to fifty gallons were constructed by them, some of which were almost as perfect in form as if they had been turned on a wheel. Though they were frequently not more than an eighth of an inch in thickness, they were so finely tempered that the most intense heat did not damage them. These vessels were used for beer-pots, grain-jars, and cooking utensils.

Baskets for holding corn, rush mats, and grass bags were made by the women. The bags were so carefully and strongly woven that they were used to hold water or any other liquid.

Of the use of stone for building purposes, the coast tribes knew nothing, and the interior tribes very little. None of them ever dressed a block, but the cattle-folds, which along the coast were constructed of branches of trees, in parts of the interior were made of round stones roughly laid together to form a wall. The quern, or handmill for grinding corn, which was in common use, consisted of untrimmed stones, one flat or hollow and the other round or oval.

When not engaged in the trifling industries that have been mentioned, the men were habitual idlers. A great portion of their time was passed in visiting and gossip, of which they were exceedingly fond. They spent days together engaged in small talk, and were perfect masters of that kind of argument which consists in parrying a question by putting another. Though not pilferers, they were inveterate cattle thieves. According to their ideas, cattle stealing



except from people of their own clan was not so much a crime as a civil offence, and no disgrace was attached to it, though if it was proved against a man the law compelled him to make ample restitution. But anyone detected in the act of lifting cattle might be killed with impunity by the owner, and a chief could punish with death any of his subjects whose conduct as a robber from other clans had a tendency to involve his own people in war.

The interior tribes were the more advanced in skill in such handicrafts as were common to them all. Their government also was less despotic, for matters of public importance were commonly submitted to a general assembly of the leading men. The males aided the females in agriculture, though the hardest and most constant labour was by them also left to the women. But with these exceptions, all comparisons between the tribes must be favourable to those of the coast. The Bantu of the interior were smaller in stature and less handsome in appearance than the splendidly formed men who lived on the terraces facing the sea. In all that is comprised in the word manliness they were vastly lower.

Truth is not a virtue of barbarian life. In general if a man could extricate himself from a difficulty, escape punishment, or gain any other advantage by telling a falsehood, and did not do so, he was regarded as a fool. Many of the chiefs of the coast tribes, however, prided themselves on adhering faithfully to their promises; but the word of an interior chief was seldom worth anything.

The deceptive power of all these people was great.



But there was one member which the coast native could not entirely control, and while with a countenance otherwise devoid of expression he related the grossest falsehood or the most tragic event, his lively eye often betrayed the passions he was feeling. When falsehood was brought home to him unanswerably, he cast his glances to the ground or around him, but did not meet the eye of the man he had been attempting to deceive. The native of the interior, on the contrary, had no conception whatever of shame attached to falsehood, and his comparatively listless eye was seldom allowed to betray him.

The native of the coast was brave in the field: his inland kinsman was in general an arrant coward. The one was modest when speaking of his exploits, the other was an intolerable boaster. The difference between them in this respect was very great, and was shown in many ways, but a single illustration from an occurrence of the present generation will give an idea of it. Faku, son of Gungushe, chief of the Pondos, by no means the best specimen of a coast native, once wished to show his regard for a white man who was residing with him. He collected a large herd of cattle, which he presented with this expression: "You have no food to eat, and we desire to show our good will towards you, take this basket of corn from the children of Gungushe." An inland chief about the same time presented a half-starved old goat to his guest, with the expression "Behold an ox!"

There was a very important difference in their marriage customs. A man of the coast tribes would



not marry a girl whose relationship by blood to himself could be traced, no matter how distantly connected they might be. So scrupulous was he in this respect that he would not even marry a girl who belonged to another tribe, if she had the same family name as himself, though the relationship could not be traced. He regarded himself as the protector of those females whom we would term his cousins and second cousins, but for whom he had only the same name as for the daughters of his own parents, the endearing name of sister. In his opinion union with one of them would have been incestuous, something horrible, something unutterably disgraceful. The native of the interior almost as a rule married the daughter of his father's brother, in order, as he said, to keep property from being lost to his family. This custom more than anything else created a disgust and contempt for them by the people of the coast, who termed such intermarriages the union of dogs, and attributed to them the insanity and idiocy which were prevalent among the inland tribes.

Among the coast tribes the institution of slavery did not exist, but there could be no more heartless slave-owners in the world than some of the people of the interior. Their bondsmen were the descendants of those who had been scattered by war, and who had lost everything but life. Of all human beings probably they were the most miserable.

This was the condition of the Bantu at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Europeans became acquainted with a section of the race, and it is the condition of the great majority of them to-day, except



where their customs have been modified by the authority of white people. The opinion of those who have most to do with them now—four hundred years after their first contact with Caucasian civilisation—is that an occasional individual is capable of rising to a high standard, but that the great mass shows little aptitude for European culture. In mission schools children of early age are found to keep pace with those of white parents. In some respects, indeed, they are the higher of the two. Deprived of all extraneous aid, a Bantu child is able to devise means for supporting life at a much earlier age than a European child. But while the European youth is still developing his powers, the Bantu youth in most instances is found unable to make further progress. His intellect has become sluggish, and he exhibits a decided repugnance, if not an incapacity, to learn anything more. The growth of his mind, which at first promised so much, has ceased just at that stage when the mind of the European begins to display the greatest vigour.

Numerous individuals, however, have emerged from the mass, and have shown abilities of no mean order. A score of ministers of religion might now be named equal to the average European in the kind of intellect required in their calling. Masters of primary schools, clerks, and interpreters, fairly well qualified for their duties, are by no means rare. One individual of this race has translated Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* into the dialect of the Xosa tribe, and the translation is as faithful and expressive as any that have been made in the languages of Europe. Plaintive tunes, such as the converts at mission stations love to sing, have been



composed by another for a considerable number of hymns and songs in the same dialect. Still another edits a newspaper, and shows that he has an intelligent grasp of political questions.

As mechanics they do not succeed so well, though an individual here and there shows an aptitude for working with iron. No one among them has invented or improved a useful implement since white men first became acquainted with them. And the strong desire of much the greater number is to live as closely like their ancestors as the altered circumstances of the country will permit, to make use of a few of the white man's simplest conveniences and of his protection against their enemies, but to avoid his habits and shut out his ideas. Compared with Europeans, their adults are commonly children in imagination and in simplicity of belief, though not unfrequently one may have the mental faculties of a full-grown man.



CHAPTER III.

ASIATIC SETTLEMENTS AND PORTUGUESE  
CONQUESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.



### CHAPTER III.—*Contents.*

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## CHAPTER III.

### ASIATIC SETTLEMENTS AND PORTUGUESE CONQUESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

AT some unknown period in the past people more civilised than the Bantu, but still very far from reaching the level of modern Europeans, made their appearance on the central tableland of Africa south of the Zambesi. They were almost certainly Asiatics, and they must have come down in vessels to some part of the coast, and then gone inland, for no traces of them have been found in the north. They constructed buildings of dressed stone without cement or mortar, some of considerable size, the ruins of which remain to the present day, and they were gold miners on a very extensive scale. They carved rude figures of birds and other animals in a soapstone which when quarried was almost as soft as moistened clay, but which hardened upon exposure to the air. Their abandoned mines—often of considerable size—are found throughout a vast extent of territory, so that they must not only have been numerous, but must have occupied the country a very long time. Their civilisation was not of a high order, however, as their buildings, though circular in form, were not perfectly round, nor were any of the walls absolutely perpendicular. They knew how to cut



stone, to sink deep pits, to run underground galleries and remove gold-bearing quartz, but they were not sufficiently refined to appreciate mathematical correctness of form.

In all probability these people mixed their blood with that of the African natives, and lost their separate existence in course of time by the amalgamation becoming complete. Written records and tradition alike are silent concerning them.

About the middle of the eighth century of our era an Arab tribe that had been defeated in a civil war fled southward and settled on the coast below the gulf of Aden. Their race was at that time in its highest vigour, and the fugitives, whose leader claimed to be a direct descendant of Mohamed, were full of energy and enterprise. They opened up a trade with all the countries bordering on the Arabian sea and Persian gulf, and within a couple of centuries extended their settlements down the African coast as far as Sofala. Each of these settlements was governed by a sheikh or chief of its own, but on the mainland the native tribes were not as a rule interfered with. The strangers appeared as traders, and only needed sufficient ground to live upon, which the Bantu made no objection to their taking. Thereafter each party was subject to its own rulers and its own laws, just as two native clans would be whose kraals were intermingled. On the islands, however, the Arabs became supreme.

They built mosques and stone houses with flat roofs, planted groves of palm trees, and made large and beautiful gardens. They introduced the cultivation of rice and various kinds of fruit unknown before in



Africa. Because the Bantu did not profess the Mohamedan faith, they termed those people Kaffirs, that is Infidels, an epithet which was adopted in later years by Europeans, and is still in use.

Soon after their settlement on the African coast they began to deteriorate in blood, through taking native women into their harems, and, although they were constantly receiving accessions of strength from the lands bordering on the Red sea, as time went on their decline became ever more rapid. At the commencement of the sixteenth century many of those who called themselves Arabs were undistinguishable in colour and in features from the ordinary Bantu, and a pure Asiatic who was not a recent immigrant was rarely met with except in the islands. The majority were of every shade between black and light brown. It followed, too, that while those in whom the Asiatic blood was predominant were strict Mohamedans, the others were almost indifferent in matters concerning religion.

They still lived, however, chiefly from commerce. Taking advantage of the monsoons, they sailed to and fro between Africa and India in their clumsy vessels, and visited all the ports on the northern coast. Their trade indeed was small compared with that which passed from India either up the Persian gulf and thence by caravans to the shore of the Mediterranean, or up the Red sea and then overland to Cairo, where the produce of the East was obtained by the Venetians to be distributed throughout Europe; but it was regularly carried on, and was not subject to much fluctuation. There was thus a well-established route across the Arabian sea before a European ship was seen in its waters.



In the early years of the fifteenth century the Christian nations were little acquainted with distant countries, America and Australia were entirely unknown, Eastern Asia was very imperfectly laid down on the maps, and the greater part of Africa had never been explored. This continent might have terminated north of the equator, for anything that the most learned men in Europe knew to the contrary. The Portuguese were at this time the most adventurous seamen of the world, and they were the first to attempt to discover an ocean highway round Africa to the East. Under direction of a justly celebrated prince of their royal family, Henrique by name—known to us as Henry the Navigator—fleets were fitted out which gradually crept down the western coast until the shores of Senegambia were reached. In 1434 Cape Bojador was passed for the first time, in 1441 Cape Blanco was seen by Europeans, and in 1445 Cape Verde was rounded by Diniz Dias.

Then, until after the death of Prince Henrique—13th of November 1460—discovery practically ceased. The lucrative slave trade occupied the minds of the sea captains, and ships freighted with negroes taken captive in raids, or purchased from conquering chiefs, frequently entered the harbours of Portugal. The commerce in human flesh was regarded as highly meritorious, because it brought heathens to a knowledge of Christianity. But never has a mistake or a crime led to more disastrous results, for to the introduction of negroes as labourers in the southern provinces of Portugal the decline of the kingdom in power and importance is mainly due.

The exploring expeditions which Prince Henrique never ceased to encourage, but which the greed of those



who were in his service had turned into slave hunting voyages, were resumed after his death. In 1461 the coast of the present republic of Liberia was reached, and in 1471 the equator was crossed. King João II, who ascended the throne in 1481, was as resolute as his grand-uncle the Navigator in endeavouring to discover an ocean road to India. In 1484 he sent out a fleet under Diogo Cam, which reached the mouth of the Congo, and in the following year the same officer made a greater advance than any previous explorer could boast of, for he pushed on southward as far as Cape Cross, where the marble pillar which he set up to mark the extent of his voyage remained standing more than four hundred years.

In August 1486 two vessels of fifty tons each and a storeship still smaller, fitted out by the king's order, sailed from Portugal towards the south. The chief in authority was named Bartholomeu Dias, João Infante was captain of the second vessel, and Pedro Dias, a brother of the commander, was captain of the storeship. The last, which was unfit for a long voyage, was left with nine men to take care of her at a place on the western coast not far from the equator. The other two kept on their course, and passed the farthest point reached by Diogo Cam. Sailing along a barren shore covered the greater part of the time with a thick haze, Dias came to an inlet or small gulf with a group of islets at its entrance. There he cast anchor, and for the first time Christian men trod the soil of Africa south of the tropic.

The inlet was the one known ever since as Angra Pequena or Little Bay. A more desolate country than



that on which the weary seamen landed could hardly be, and there was no sign of human life as far as they wandered. Refreshment there was none, except the eggs and flesh of sea-fowl that made their nests on the islets. It was no place in which to tarry long. Before he left, Dias set up a marble cross some six or seven feet in height, as a token that he had taken possession of the country for his king. For more than three hundred years that cross stood there above the dreary waste, just as the brave Portuguese explorer planted it. The place where it stood so long is called Pedestal Point.

From Angra Pequena Dias tried to keep the land in sight as he sailed southward, but for the first five days the wind was contrary, which caused him to tack about without making much headway. Owing to this circumstance he named an opening in the coast, Angra das Voltas. There is no gulf in the position indicated, but the latitude given ( $29^{\circ}$  S.) is not to be depended upon, and the expedition may have been far from the point at the mouth of the Orange river called by modern geographers Cape Voltas, in remembrance of that event.

The wind now veered round and the sea became rough, so that Dias stood away from the land under shortened sail, and when after thirteen days the breeze moderated and he steered eastward, the coast was not to be found. Then he turned to the north and reached a bay which he named Angra dos Vaqueiros, owing to the numerous herds of cattle which he saw grazing on its shores. The position of this bay cannot be fixed with certainty, and it may have been any of the curves in the coast between Cape Agulhas and the Knysna. The natives gazed with astonishment upon the strange



apparition coming over the sea, and then fled inland with their cattle. It was not found possible to have any intercourse with the wild people.

Sailing eastward again, Dias reached an islet upon which he erected another cross, and where he obtained a supply of fresh water. The islet is in Algoa Bay as now termed—the Bahia da Lagoa of the Portuguese after the middle of the sixteenth century,—and still bears in the French form of St Croix the name Ilheo da Santa Cruz, which he gave it. By some of his people, however, it was called Penedo das Fontes—the Rock of the Fountains—because two springs of water were found on it, and by this name it is often mentioned in ancient books. It may serve to show how defective the instrument for determining latitudes was in those days to state that while the position of this islet was placed by Dias in  $33\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$  S., by a later navigator it was stated to be in  $32\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ . Here the seamen protested against going farther. They complained that their supply of food was running short, and the storeship was far behind, so that there was danger of perishing from hunger. They thought they had surely done sufficient in one voyage, for they were fourteen hundred miles beyond the terminus of the preceding expedition, and none had ever taken such tidings to Portugal as they would carry back. Further, from the trending of the coast it was evident there must be some great headland behind them, and therefore they were of opinion it would be better to turn about and look for it.

Dias, after hearing these statements, took the principal officers and seamen on shore, where they joined in the rites of religion, after which he asked their advice



as to what was the best course to pursue for the service of the king. They replied with one voice, to return home, whereupon he caused them to sign a document to that effect. He then begged of them to continue only two or three days' sail farther, and promised that if they should find nothing within that time to encourage them to proceed on an easterly course, he would put about. The crews consented, but in the time agreed upon they advanced only to the mouth of a river to which the commander gave the name Infante, owing to João Infante, captain of the *S. Panteleão*, being the first to leap ashore. The river was probably either the Kowie or the Fish, as known to us. Its mouth was stated to be twenty-five leagues from Penedo das Fontes, and to be in latitude  $32\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$  S., which would have required a course almost due north from the islet, instead of a little to the northward of east.

But now, notwithstanding their error as to their correct position, there should have been no doubt in any mind that they had reached the end of the southern seaboard, which in a distance of five hundred miles does not vary ninety miles in latitude. The coast before them trended away to the north-east in a bold, clear line, free of the haze that almost always hung over the western shore. And down it, only a short distance from the land, flowed a swift ocean current many degrees warmer than the water on either side, and revealing itself even to a careless eye by its deeper blue. That current could only come from a heated sea in the north, and so they might have known that the eastern side of Africa had surely been reached.



Whether the explorers observed these signs the Portuguese writers who recorded their deeds do not inform us, but from the river Infante the expedition turned back. At Santa Cruz Dias landed again, and bade farewell to the cross which he had set up there with as much sorrow as if he were parting with a son banished for life. In returning, the great headland was discovered, to which the commander gave the name Cabo Tormentoso — the Stormy Cape — afterwards changed by the king to Cabo de Boa Esperança — Cape of Good Hope — owing to the fair prospect which he could now entertain of India being at last reached by this route. After nine months' absence the store-ship was rejoined, when only three men were found on board of her, and of these, one died of joy upon seeing his countrymen again. The other six had been murdered by negroes with whom they were trading.

During the remainder of the reign of João no ships were sent out to follow up the discovery of the southern point of the continent, but a court attendant named Pedro de Covilhão was directed to proceed overland to India by the way of Egypt, and endeavour to learn something about the countries bordering on the Arabian sea. He was conversant with the Arabic language, and was able to travel over a vast extent of territory with which his countrymen were previously unacquainted. Covilhão visited Calicut, Cannanor, and Goa on the Malabar coast, from Goa he crossed over to Sofala, and touched at Mozambique, Kilwa, Mombasa, and Melinda on the way to Aden. Then, after sending information of his discoveries to Portugal, he proceeded



to Abyssinia, and died there many years later.<sup>1</sup> There now remained untraversed little more than a thousand miles between the farthest point of Dias and the most southern point of Covilhão, and it was almost certain that there was an uninterrupted ocean way between the two.

King João died in 1495, and was succeeded by his cousin Manuel, duke of Beja, who possessed a full measure of that fondness for prosecuting maritime discoveries which for three-quarters of a century had distinguished the princes of Portugal.

Soon after the accession of Manuel the subject of making another attempt to reach India by sea was mooted at court, but met with strong opposition. There were those who urged that too much public treasure had already been thrown away in fitting out discovery ships, that no adequate return had yet been made, and that even if a route to India should be opened, it would only bring powerful rivals into the field to dispute or at least to share its possession. Those of the nobles, however, who were anxious to please the king favoured the design, and at length it was resolved to send out another expedition.

For this purpose four vessels, the largest of which was about one hundred and twenty-five tons burden, were made ready, Bartholomeu Dias giving all the assistance which his experience enabled him to afford. Vasco

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<sup>1</sup> In an account of Covilhão's journeys written after his death by his confessor, it is stated that he went from Goa to Ormuz and thence to Toro and Cairo, but farther on it is affirmed that he had also been in Sofala. It is not easy to reconcile this route with that given by the early Portuguese historians, but all agree that he visited Sofala and transmitted a report to the king before he went to Abyssinia.



da Gama, a man of proved ability, was placed in chief command. Under him in the *S. Gabriel* were Pedro d'Alanquer, who had been with the preceding expedition, and as journalist Diogo Dias, a brother of Bartholomeu; in the *S. Rafael*, Paulo da Gama; in the *Berrio*, Nicolao Coelho; and in the storeship Gonçalo Nunes. The crews comprised one hundred and seventy men, all told. The king showed a very warm interest in the undertaking, and when the preparations for sea were completed, he bade farewell to the principal officers with unusual ceremony and marks of regard.

On the 8th of July 1497, not quite five years after Columbus sailed from Palos to discover a new continent in the west, Vasco da Gama put to sea from the Tagus. In his company was a fleet bound to the coast of Guinea, in which Bartholomeu Dias was a captain. After fifteen days they reached St Jago, where they procured some refreshment. Dias then pursued his course to S. Jorge da Mina, and Da Gama sailed southward until he reached a curve in the African coast about one hundred and twenty English miles north of the Cape of Good Hope, to which he gave the name St Helena Bay. Here he landed to seek water and measure the altitude of the sun at noon, in order to ascertain the latitude. In those days the instrument for measuring vertical angles could not be used at sea, as it required to be mounted on a tripod.

While Da Gama was busy measuring the sun's altitude, two natives were observed, who appeared to be gathering herbs, and as he was desirous of learning something about the country, he caused them to be quietly surrounded, when one was made captive. His



language was unintelligible, and as he was greatly terrified, two boys, one of whom was a negro, were brought from the ships and placed in his company. These offered him food, and shortly succeeded in removing his fear. Da Gama understood from signs which he made that there was a kraal of his people at the foot of a mountain at no great distance. Some trinkets were given to him, and he was then allowed to return to his friends, signs being made that he should bring them to receive like presents.

Next day about forty natives with their families made their appearance. They were well received, and when they left, a soldier named Fernão Veloso accompanied them, with a view of obtaining a better knowledge of the country. The crews of the vessels were then employed in collecting fuel, and in catching crayfish, which were found in great abundance. Some fish were also secured with the hook, and a whale was harpooned, which in its struggles nearly caused the loss of a boat's crew.

Veloso kept with the natives till they reached their first resting place, when, being disgusted with some food which they offered him, and probably concluding that they were cannibals, he suddenly began to retrace his steps. The natives hereupon returned with him, and he, not knowing whether their intentions were friendly or hostile, but fearing the latter, made all possible speed towards the beach, at the same time calling loudly for help.

The Portuguese had gone on board, when Veloso was seen coming hastily over a hill, whereupon some men went ashore to bring him off, Da Gama accompanying



them. Springing from the boat to the relief of their countryman, whom they believed to be in danger, the Europeans attacked the natives, and a skirmish took place in which Da Gama and three others were wounded with assagais.<sup>1</sup> The commander then embarked with his men, and directed the ships' artillery against the savages on shore.

Such was the first intercourse between Europeans and Hottentots.

On the 17th of November 1497 Da Gama set sail from St Helena Bay, and three days later doubled the Cape of Good Hope without difficulty. Turning eastward, he anchored next within a bend of the coast which he named Agoada de S. Braz, the present Mossel Bay. There he found a great number of natives similar in appearance to those he had first seen, but who showed so little symptom of alarm that they crowded on the beach and scrambled for anything that was thrown to them. From these people some sheep were obtained in barter, the trade being carried on by means of signs, but they would not part with any horned cattle. The Portuguese listened with pleasure to the tunes which they played with reeds, and took as much notice as was possible of their manner of living. At this place the voyagers remained three days, and then, having taken on board the fresh meat obtained, they again set sail.

A storm on the 6th of December greatly terrified

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<sup>1</sup> This word, now commonly used by all Europeans in South Africa, has been adopted from the Portuguese. Latin *hasta*, Portuguese *azagaya*, a javelin or dart. Those used by the Hottentots in this encounter were pointed with horn.



the seamen, but did no damage to the ships. Keeping within sight of the shore, the striking contrast between the tree-clad mountains and grassy hills on the eastern side and the sterile wastes on the western side of the continent must have been noticed by all on board. To the beautiful land that they passed by on the 25th Da Gama gave the name Natal, in memory of the day when Christian men first saw it.

On the 6th of January 1498 the fleet reached the mouth of a river to which the name Rio dos Reys, or River of the Kings, was given, the day being the festival of the wise men or kings of the Roman calendar. It is uncertain what river this was, for the early Portuguese maps are very incorrect and the description of it in the narratives of the voyage is vague, but most probably it was the Limpopo. Here the Portuguese landed, and found a friendly people, who brought copper, ivory, and provisions for sale. From the Hottentots previously met they differed greatly in appearance and in speech. One Martim Affonso visited a kraal, and was very well treated by the residents. About two hundred men, dressed in skin mantles, returned with him, and shortly afterwards their chief followed to see the ships and the strangers. During the five days that the expedition remained at this place, nothing occurred to disturb the friendly intercourse between the Portuguese and the Bantu.

Sailing again, Da Gama next put into a river which he named Rio dos Bons Sinaes, or River of the Good Tokens, because he found there clothing of Indian manufacture, vessels with mat sails, and a man who could converse in broken Arabic. Both banks of the



river were thickly peopled, and among the inhabitants were many who appeared to have Arab blood in them. The river is the one now called the Kilimané or Quilimane, which bounds the delta of the Zambesi on the north. The people acted in a friendly manner towards the Portuguese. One of the ships, which was somewhat damaged, was here repaired, but the crews suffered much from sickness, and many cases ended fatally. Da Gama had with him ten men sentenced to death in Portugal, but whose lives had been spared on condition that they could be set ashore anywhere, and when the fleet sailed two of them were left behind to learn something of the country and its people.

On the 1st of March the fleet reached Mozambique, where were found trading vessels and a town of Arabs and blacks governed by an Arab named Zakoeja. At first the Portuguese were well received, and one of them, who could speak Arabic, gathered a great deal of information concerning the Indian trade, of Sofala away to the south, and of the gold that was to be obtained in commerce there. Without any difficulty Da Gama engaged two pilots to take him to Calicut. But when the Arabs became acquainted with the fact that the strangers were Christians and the hereditary enemies of their race, all friendliness disappeared. The pilots, who were on board, made their escape, quarrels arose, some skirmishing took place, and though a nominal peace was made with Zakoeja, a bitter feeling remained. An Arab who wished to go to Mecca, however, went on board, and under his guidance on the 7th of April the fleet sailed.

The next place visited was Mombasa, an important



town containing some good stone houses. There the crews were refreshed, and peace was maintained, though the strangers were regarded with jealousy. Hostages were offered by Da Gama as assurances of his friendship, and under this pretence two of the convicts were delivered to the authorities of the place.

The day after leaving Mombasa an Arab vessel was captured, out of which some men were taken, who piloted the fleet to Melinda. There everything went on well, vessels with Nestorian Christians on board were found, and an Indian pilot was engaged.

It is not necessary to follow Da Gama to Calicut, nor to relate what transpired at that place. When returning to Portugal he touched at Magadoxo, and as the Arabs there showed themselves hostile, he bombarded the town and destroyed the shipping. At Melinda he was well received, as before. His brother's ship, the *S. Rafael*, was here condemned as unseaworthy, and was destroyed, her crew being divided between the others. Taking on board an envoy from the ruler of Melinda to the king of Portugal, Da Gama sailed again, and touching at Mozambique and Agoada de S. Braz on the passage, without anything of importance occurring, he reached Lisbon in August 1499. Of the hundred and seventy men who left that port with him, only fifty-five saw their homes again.

The ocean highway to the rich lands of the East had now at last been traversed from end to end, and great was the satisfaction of King Manuel, his courtiers, and his people. It was indeed something to rejoice over, though at this distance of time the exploit of Da Gama does not seem more meritorious than that of Dias.



The earlier navigator had uncertainty always before him, yet he traced fully fourteen hundred miles of previously unknown coast, and he doubled the southern cape. From his farthest point to the Kilimané river, Da Gama sailed over twelve hundred miles of unexplored sea, but he could be tolerably certain that there were no impediments in his way, he was going towards a land that was known, and he had more and larger ships. From the Kilimané his voyage was as easy and as free from uncertainty as if he had been in the Mediterranean. But he reached the object sought for so long, and so he became a hero in the eyes of his countrymen. Honours were heaped upon him, and his name was made to occupy a large and proud place in the history of Portugal, while Dias was left almost unnoticed and entirely unrewarded.

Preparations were commenced almost at once for sending out another fleet, and in March of the year 1500 thirteen ships sailed under Pedro Alvares Cabral as captain-general. In one of them was Nicolao Coelho, who had been with Da Gama, and in another was Bartholomeu Dias, who was instructed by the king to make an inspection of Sofala. The sailors and soldiers were twelve hundred in number, and there were no fewer than seventeen ecclesiastics on board, eight of whom were Franciscan monks who were to remain in India and endeavour to make converts to Christianity.

After discovering the coast of Brazil and encountering a great storm in which four ships were lost—one being that of which Bartholomeu Dias was captain,—Cabral doubled the Cape, and did not anchor until he reached Mozambique. Before his arrival there he cap-



tured an Arab vessel from Sofala with a quantity of gold on board, but upon learning that his prize belonged to a near relative of the ruler of Melinda, he released her, in consideration of the friendship shown by that individual to Da Gama.

At Mozambique Cabral was well treated, and there he obtained a pilot who took the fleet to Kilwa, or Quiloa as the Portuguese wrote the word. This town was the oldest Arab settlement on that part of the coast, and was then governed by a man named Ibrahim, whose ancestors had acquired great wealth by trading for gold at Sofala. On this account he was regarded as the first in rank and most powerful of all the potentates for a considerable distance north and south, the sheikh of Mozambique, with others, being among his dependents.

Ibrahim received the Portuguese in friendship, and supplied them with provisions; but when after a time Cabral requested him to adopt the Christian faith and to give up a portion of the gold trade at Sofala, his conduct changed. He collected his forces, fortified his town, and showed such a feeling of hostility that he was regarded thereafter as an enemy. Cabral, however, did not attack him, and left without any blood being shed.

The fleet next touched at Melinda, where the Portuguese were very well received. The Arab chiefs on the coast were frequently at war with each other, and there was a strong feeling of jealousy among them, otherwise the strangers could not have accomplished what they did. The ruler of Melinda at this time was at war with the sheikh of Mombasa, and was anxious



to secure the alliance of the Christians against men of his own faith. A declaration of close friendship was made between them, but no actual aid was given by Cabral. Two convicts were set ashore here, with instructions to try to find their way to Prester John—a mythical personage who had long been sought for,—and large rewards were promised to them if they succeeded. Two Indian pilots were then engaged, and the fleet sailed for Calicut.

When returning from India Cabral touched at Mozambique to refit his ships, and from that place sent one of his captains named Sancho de Toar in a small vessel to execute the task that the king had confided to Bartholomeu Dias. De Toar explored the coast to Sofala, and then kept on his course to Lisbon, where he arrived about the same time as the captain-general.

In 1501 a fleet of four ships, under command of João da Nova, sailed from Portugal to India, but nothing of any importance connected with South Africa occurred in this voyage, except that when returning home Da Nova discovered the island of St Helena.

Vasco da Gama sailed from Portugal on the 30th of January 1502 on his second voyage, with twenty ships. When off Cabo das Correntes one of these, which was commanded by Antonio do Campo, got separated from the others, and in a disabled condition drifted southwestward until she was able to put into a deep and capacious bay. Three large rivers flowing from different directions,—known now as the Maputa, the Espirito Santo, and the Maniça,—discharge their waters in this inlet, and as it was incorrectly understood that the central one of these, or rather the central of the tribu-



taries now called the Tembe, the Umbelosi, and the Matola, which have as their estuary the Espirito Santo, had its source in a great lake far in the interior, the Umbelosi and Espirito Santo were named Rio da Lagoa and the bay was termed Bahia da Lagoa, or Alagoa as the word was often written in the olden times when it had the same meaning that lago (lake) has now. After being treated in a friendly manner by the natives, Do Campo kidnapped several men and took them away with him. He was detained so long on this part of the coast that by the time he reached Melinda the north-east monsoon was setting in,—it often commences there as early as the middle of September and continues until the middle of April,—so that he could not proceed to India, and was obliged to remain for the season at that friendly port.

When Da Gama reached the latitude of Sofala off the East African coast he sent the greater part of his fleet to Mozambique to refit and to put together a caravel which was brought in pieces from Portugal, and with four of the smallest ships he proceeded himself to visit the port of gold.<sup>1</sup> He was aware, from the descriptions

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<sup>1</sup> This is the principal occasion on which I have related anything concerning the early voyages to the East that is not corroborated by Barros. The particulars of the visit of Da Gama to Sofala and the loss of one of his vessels on the bar are drawn from Osorius. Barros merely states that Da Gama with four small vessels went there by order of the king, and that he purchased some gold from the Mohamedan residents. His account is very brief; “*Na qual té o parcel de Sofala teve alguns temporaes, que lhe desapparelháram algumas náos; e chegado áquelle parcel na paragem della, mandou a Vicente Sodré seu tio que se fosse a Moçambique com totalas ndos grossas, em quanto elle hia dar huma vista a Sofala com quatro navios*”



of Pedro de Covilhão and Sancho de Toar, of the shoals that extend along this coast for many miles out to sea, and which, on account of the shallowness of the water on them at low tides, make navigation dangerous for any but small vessels. He knew also that the town was situated on the northern bank of a river, not far from its mouth; but beyond that his only information was what had been gathered from Arabs at Mozambique and elsewhere.

He found the entrance to the estuary more than half a league wide, but across it was a shifting bar of sand, and inside were so many shoals that a vessel under sail was always in danger. The land to a great distance was low and swampy, and the banks of the estuary were fringed with belts of mangrove.

Farther in the interior the stream was of no great size, but it was always bringing down material to add to the deposits of sand and mud above the bar. Such was the port of Sofala, famous throughout the eastern world for the gold which passed through it, but a hotbed of fever and dysentery. Its sole redeeming feature was a high rise of tide, often nearly twenty feet at full moon, so that when the wind was fair it was accessible for any vessels then used in the Indian sea.

The Arabs who occupied the town gave the strangers a friendly reception, for they were behind no people in hospitality, provided their rights and their customs were respected. The information that was needed concerning the trade was obtained, and everything went

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*pequenos, por lho ElRey mandar em seu Regimento. Na qual ida elle Almirante não fez mais que algum resgate de ouro com os Mouros, que estavam no povoação."*



well, except that when leaving one of the vessels ran aground on the bar and was so much damaged that it became necessary to abandon her.

After a brief stay at Mozambique, Da Gama continued his voyage. On the 12th of July 1502 he anchored in the grand harbour between the mainland and the island on which Kilwa was built, and demanded from Ibrahim submission to the crown of Portugal and a hostage of rank as security for good faith, on account of the enmity displayed towards Cabral. His force was too great to be resisted, so the Arab professed to submit, and sent one Mohamed Enkoni on board as a hostage. This man was the second highest in rank in the place, but it was soon discovered that Ibrahim was jealous of him and would have been pleased if the Portuguese had put him to death. He was therefore released when the first instalment of the tribute, which was fixed at a certain sum yearly, was paid. In this manner the Portuguese dominion on the eastern coast of Africa began.

The force which the Christians brought into the Indian sea appears so small as to be altogether inadequate for the destruction of the Arab power; but the men were accustomed to war, their arms were superior to those of their opponents, and they were full of religious zeal, believing that the Almighty was with them in warfare against infidels. Deeds that to us look like piracy and murder were to them heroic and glorious acts. Thus when Da Gama after leaving the African coast met a great ship owned by the sultan of Egypt with pilgrims on board, he regarded it as praiseworthy not only to plunder the vessel, but



to put to death every man on board, over three hundred in number.

The Arabs, too, were divided into little parties always quarrelling with each other, most of them were of mixed blood and without much enterprise, and their ships were not armed for battle. A Portuguese vessel could discharge cannon at them, and was herself perfectly safe if she could keep their boats from boarding her. They left the coast of India richly laden, and with no other instrument than a compass crossed over before the monsoon, offering prizes which the adventurous Portuguese regarded as rewards given by the Most High.

In 1503 three fleets, each of three ships, were sent out, respectively under Francisco d'Albuquerque, Affonso d'Albuquerque, and Antonio de Saldanha. The last named was instructed to cruise for some time off the entrance to the Red sea, and destroy all the Arab commerce that he could before proceeding to India. When near the Cape of Good Hope Saldanha's ship got separated from the other two, and as the commander did not know where he was, he entered a deep bay and cast anchor. Before him rose a great mass of rock, nearly three thousand six hundred feet in height, with its top making a level line more than a mile and a half in length on the sky. This grand mountain was flanked at either end with less lofty peaks, supported by buttresses projecting towards the shore. The recess was a capacious valley, down the centre of which flowed a stream of clear sweet water.

The valley seemed to be without people, but after a while some Hottentots made their appearance, from



whom a cow and two sheep were purchased. The natives were suspicious of the strangers, however, for on another occasion some two hundred of them suddenly attacked a party of Portuguese who had gone on shore, and Saldanha himself received a slight wound. Before this affray the commander, who was in the full vigour of early life and filled with that love of adventure which distinguished his countrymen in those days of their glory, had climbed to the top of the great flat rock, to which he gave the name Table Mountain, the ravine in its face pointing out the place of ascent then, as it does to-day. From its summit he could see the Cape of Good Hope, and so, having found out where he was, he pursued his voyage with the first fair wind. The bay in which he anchored was thenceforth called after him Agoada de Saldanha—the Watering Place of Saldanha—until a century later it received its present name of Table Bay.

The commander was still behind when a ship of his fleet, under the captain Ruy Lourenço Ravasco, an utterly fearless adventurer, reached the latitude of Zanzibar, and in a cruise off that island captured and destroyed a great number of Arab vessels. Ravasco even ventured to attack the coast, and won a battle in which among others the heir to the government of the island was killed. The ruler then begged for peace, and agreed to pay tribute yearly to the king of Portugal. Ravasco next relieved the friendly town of Melinda from a Mombasan army which was besieging it, and afterwards attacked Brava and compelled it to become tributary to Portugal.

While his captain was performing these exploits,



Saldanha himself was not idle. He too destroyed a great quantity of Arab shipping, but he made peace with Mombasa without subverting the independence of its ruler. He then proceeded to India.

A fleet of thirteen ships was sent out in 1504 under command of Lopo Soares d'Albergaria. The only event of any importance connecting this fleet with South Africa was that one of the ships, commanded by Pedro de Mendoza, when returning home ran ashore at night some distance west of the Watering Place of S. Braz, and was lost. The wreck was seen the following day by the people of another vessel, but no help could be given, and the crew were left to perish.

In 1505 a fleet of twenty-two ships was sent out under Francisco d'Almeida, who had the title and authority of viceroy of India. D'Almeida anchored before Kilwa, and sent a friendly message to Ibrahim as a vassal of Portugal. But the Arab ruler, who was in arrear with his tribute, declined to meet the viceroy, and the evidences of his hostility were so plain that preparations were made to take possession of the town by force. Upon the Portuguese landing, however, the place was found almost abandoned, for Ibrahim with the most devoted of his people had fled to the mainland, and had taken the greater part of their treasure with them. But slight resistance therefore was made, and the town was occupied with no loss on the part of the invaders. Mohamed Ankoni was appointed governor by D'Almeida, and it was arranged that he should rule his people in his own way, without interference as long as he acted in a friendly and loyal manner and paid the tribute punctually. A fort was built—the



first occupied by the Portuguese on the East African coast,—and as soon as it was completed D'Almeida sailed, leaving Pedro Ferreira Fogaza with a garrison of one hundred and fifty men and two small vessels of war behind.

The viceroy next appeared before Mombasa, 13th of August 1505. The ruler of that place was summoned to declare himself a vassal of Portugal, but instead of doing so, he prepared for defence, and set the Christians at defiance. Thereupon a strong force was landed, and after a desperate resistance by the Arabs, who contested every inch of ground and hurled weapons upon the invaders from their flat-roofed houses until the last one was stormed, the town was taken. Fifteen hundred of its defenders perished. Mombasa was plundered and given to the flames, but as no force was left to occupy it, the Arabs resumed possession of the ruins as soon as the Christians retired.

Then, after calling at Melinda and greeting its friendly ruler, the viceroy proceeded to India.

Rumours concerning the gold of Sofala were at this time fascinating the minds of men in Portugal. Those rumours greatly exaggerated the quantity of the precious metal actually obtainable, and in them all the difficulties of acquiring it were lost sight of. It was believed that nothing needed to be done except to replace the Arabs with Christian traders, when enormous wealth would flow into the national treasury.

Accordingly a fleet of six ships was fitted out to take possession of Sofala and to establish a fort and factory there. This fleet, in which the first European occupiers of any part of Africa south of the Zambesi



embarked, was under command of Pedro da Nhaya, and sailed from Lisbon on the 18th of May 1505. On the passage out the ships got scattered, and two of them, commanded by Francisco da Nhaya and Manuel Fernandes, reached their destination some time before the others, so they anchored off the port and waited for their companions.

One of the missing ships, of which João de Queiros was master, put into Delagoa Bay in distress. De Queiros with twenty of his officers and men landed on an island to endeavour to obtain some provisions, and as the natives immediately fled, they followed, making signs of peace. But they had not proceeded far when the natives turned and attacked them, and only four or five badly wounded men managed to escape. Thus was avenged the treacherous act of Antonio do Campo three years before. The ship was left without officers capable of directing her, but fortunately one of her consorts put into the bay and supplied that want.

Before reaching Sofala these vessels picked up a boat containing five half-famished men, who had a tale of terrible suffering to tell. They were part of the crew of a ship that had been lost at Cape St Sebastian, and their boat had been built of materials saved from the wreck. As many men as she could contain had then embarked in her in hope of reaching Kilwa, and the others—sixty in number—had at the same time left the scene of the disaster to try to march overland to some port in the north. Of those in the boat all had perished but themselves.

At length the four laggards of Da Nhaya's fleet reached Sofala, and the commander made his final



arrangements. Leaving the two largest ships outside on the 4th of September 1505 with the others he crossed the bar into the inner harbour, and with a strong body of men landed at some distance from the Arab town. This consisted of a large building containing many spacious chambers occupied by the ruler of the place, several small flat-roofed houses, and about a thousand beehive-shaped huts close behind. The sheikh was a venerable-looking Arab, of brown complexion, over seventy years of age, and quite blind. His name was Yusuf.

The people of Sofala had heard of the occurrences at Kilwa and Mombasa, and were divided in opinion as to how they should act. Mengo Musaf, a son-in-law of Yusuf, was at the head of a party that wanted to resist the Christians by force, but another party was filled with fear, and the old chief thought it wiser to rely upon the climate rather than upon arms.

The Portuguese were therefore received in an apparently friendly manner by Yusuf, who was reclining on a couch in a room hung with silk tapestry. Most of the so-called Arabs who clustered round were dark-skinned men, naked to the waist, with calico girdles and silk or calico turbans, and were armed with ivory-handled sabres; but a few of higher rank were lighter in colour, and were better clothed. Da Nhaya spoke to the chief of the advantages to be gained by the establishment of a Portuguese trading station, and by his coming under the protection of the king of Portugal, taking care to draw his attention to the fact that his town had often been pillaged by Bantu clans in the neighbourhood. Yusuf professed to agree with what



was said, and gave his consent to the erection of a factory. He stated that he was a friend of Europeans, and as a proof twenty Portuguese whom he had rescued from starvation were brought forward by his order and restored to the society of their countrymen. They were the survivors of the sixty who had left the wrecked ship at Cape St Sebastian, and who had gone through almost incredible suffering in their overland journey.

Da Nhaya immediately engaged a number of Bantu who were at Sofala, and on the 21st set about building a fort on a sand-flat on the northern bank of the river near its mouth. A moat was dug, and the earth taken out was formed into a wall, which was supported by stakes and beams of mangrove wood. A tower at each corner completed the defensive works. Inside a store and dwelling-houses were built, and the merchandise, munitions of war, and necessary provisions were then landed. When all was completed, which was within three months after his arrival, Da Nhaya sent the three largest ships to India, and kept the three smallest to cruise along the coast and support the garrison.

There was living at Sofala at this time a man named Yakote, an Abyssinian by birth, who had been made a captive when he was only ten years of age, and who had embraced the Mohamedan faith from necessity rather than choice. He was now possessed of much influence, and was regarded with jealousy by Mengo Musaf, Yusuf's son-in-law. Early in January 1506 he informed Da Nhaya that the Arabs had come to a determination to wait no longer for fever to do its work, but to drive away the Christians at once; and as