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ON THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF AKKRAH AND ADAMPÉ, GOLD COAST, WESTERN AFRICA.

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Among the aboriginal tribes that people the shores of Western Africa are several, which, from their geographical position, customs, diversity of language, and other national peculiarities, merit a more extensive research and consideration into their primitive origin than others. The veil of obscurity which, however, impends over the remote migrations and the distribution of the African races in general, rendered more impenetrable by the absence of any historic evidence or traditional data, constitutes a barrier that effectually precludes any minute inquiry into their progressive development and descent. In none, perhaps, of the scattered tribes, of which we possess a greater or less amount of knowledge connected with their more modern history, do these remarks more distinctly refer than to that community of negroes, which, peopling an eastern portion of the Gold Coast, have hitherto been comprehended under the ordinary designation of "The Akkrahs."

Some discrepancy of opinion formerly prevailed regarding the extent and limits of the territory to which their title could be strictly asserted; but, deferring all discussion upon this subject, it may be sufficient to state that the maritime belt of land at present occupied by the natives of Akkrah is of very circumscribed magnitude, since it only extends from the river Sakkoom, eastward to the small town of Tashia, a distance barely equal to fifteen miles. Inland its territorial boundaries are restricted within a much narrower compass. A brief allusion may be made to the various nations to



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whose close proximity this limitation can be ascribed, due allowance being granted for the provisional status which the events of a comparatively recent date have conferred upon them.

From the Sakkoom to the westward its confines are formed by the numerous Fanté provinces, united to which, on the north, are the two tributary kingdoms of Akim and Aquāpim, with the more distant Ashanté towns; while to the east and north-east, the Adampé, Aquambu, and Krépé races predominate, incorporated with other kindred tribes, which conjoined seaward with the Adampé settlements of Prampram, Ningo, and Adda, constitute not only a terminal barrier, but the connecting link that allies them to the great Popo populations more to leeward.

The aboriginal term employed to denote this insignificant tract of coast is *Ghán* or *Ghà*, a syllable extremely difficult to pronounce from its semiguttural intonation. By the Fanté and other Inta nations, it has been denominated *Inkran* or *Inkara*, a title that has possibly originated from the many termite hills that abound throughout the adjacent districts, and which in their language signifies an ant, although it might equally have been applied either in a just appreciation of its industrial resources and numerical inferiority, or as a derisive expression, to ridicule the moderate pretensions of its inhabitants. It may be satisfactory to remark that the name it now bears, and by which it has hitherto been known to Europeans from the earliest periods, has been derived from this source. The chief towns are three in number, viz., N'GLISH, Kinka, and Ossu; but the nomenclature under which they are more readily recognised, is that bestowed by the various European powers to whose authority they were amenable, and hence the distinctive appellations of English, Dutch, and Danish Akkrah. The largest in size, and the most ancient in date, is Kinka, or Dutch Akkrah, which, according to general tradition, was built long prior to the others, and on this account, therefore, not only assumes the precedency over the whole as the metropolis, but formerly exerted a certain amount of supremacy over those political or other native disputes which, from this exalted position, were exclusively referred to their arbitration and decision. The British fort situated in the first of these towns, lies seven miles to the eastward of the Rio Sakkoom, and has been placed by nautical writers in lat. $5^{\circ} 31' 53''$ N., and long. $0^{\circ} 11' 30''$ W.

The country in the immediate neighbourhood of these towns presents a pleasing and diversified aspect. Stretching far and wide a succession of long and verdant uplands gradually emerge from the coast, which, as they ascend inland, become broken into a variety of gentle undulations and continuous slopes, adorned by a woodland scenery extremely beautiful and picturesque. Advancing still deeper into the interior, these in turn partake of a more mingled character, and are ultimately blended with the elevated mounts and prominent

highlands visible in the distance. In these localities the soil is exceedingly rich and fertile, the native plantations or farms producing, almost without the aid of human labour, that abundance of food which so bountifully supplies the necessities of all ranks of life.

In the lowland regions adjoining the ocean, the land is partially divested of those primeval forests and luxuriant underwood observed in other parts of the coast, and somewhat resembles one of those irregular prairies of Southern Africa, which, clothed with lank grass and a few flowers, are dotted at intervals by isolated thickets and occasional clump of trees.

Any dispassionate observer who has acquired but a superficial stock of information connected with the various inland kingdoms of this vast continent, cannot fail of discerning the abnormal changes and varying mutations which the moral and physical characteristics of their populations constantly undergo. Many which, from some peculiar combination of causes, have been more exposed than others to the afflicting concourse of wars, pestilences, and other depopulating calamities, in progress of time evince their decadence by a gradual decline or total loss of those inherent principles that constituted the basis of their power, while others, from the same controlling elements, become suddenly prostrated, and reduced almost to the verge of extinction. Retaining to the last their peculiar traces of difference, they succumb to the most warlike of their aggressors, until at length the predominant masses of their opponents so far absorb the scattered fragments, that all vestiges of their previous existence disappear. Thus, by such ceaseless and indirect agencies, nations after nations rise, flourish, and decay, and are eventually blotted out from the page of history. The races, however, inhabiting the sea-girt lowlands of Western Africa, have apparently suffered less from these systems of extirpation, when contrasted with others; for, located at a remote distance from the sphere of any internal convulsions, and enjoying but a moderate extent of frontier, with fewer adverse neighbours, they, of course, are less liable to the incidental operation of these causes. Although unable at first to stem the resistless influx of immigration, or the invasion of more potent tribes, which might partly subjugate and dispossess them of their territories, yet, the occurrence of these events at present, so far as can be ascertained, have seldom been of that permanent or effective duration as to entirely obliterate their nationality. Hence, we shall discover, dispersed in various localities, encompassed by the barriers of more populous kingdoms, the isolated vestiges of races, which, from dim and obscure sources, and through a succession of ages, have retained, in almost primitive integrity, their laws, usages, and institutions. Rational inferences, confirmed by the results of experience, have long since tended to point out the fact, that where the inhabitants of any petty country, from their close propinquity to some of the more powerful nations surrounding them, have maintained an inti-

mate intercourse for any protracted period, they have become more or less tinctured with the prevalent customs and manners of the latter, either in consequence of their supposed utility, or from other views equally in unison with their social interests. But that these disjected communities should in general be enabled to resist the effects of such influential impressions, and after the lapse of centuries be capable of conserving, from the innovations of time and hostility of rivals, those essential peculiarities of structure and derivation, which sever them from others in their near vicinage, furnishes a remarkable subject for reflection, and must always excite deep interest and sympathy for those mysterious laws of humanity, that still exert, in unimpaired energy, a silent, yet vital, authority over the future destiny and distribution of the negro races.

Making due allowance for the modifications which have necessarily occurred from events associated with European domination, and also from those that prominently figure as the sequence of certain controlling elements introduced into their moral and political codes, within the date of the last three centuries, these preliminary observations might be rendered applicable to the present status and condition of this remnant of a people who now claim our deep and merited consideration.

PART I.—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

Previously to the consideration of the moral and physical outlines of these people, and other historical subjects connected with their aboriginal development, it may perhaps be deemed more appropriate to enter into a brief descriptive detail of the various customs and institutions peculiar to these tribes, which may be conveniently arranged under the succeeding heads of—dress, cleanliness, births and nomenclature, marriages, deaths and funeral ceremonies, division of time, inheritances, and their laws, currency, architecture, and erection of towns, markets, and harvest, festivals, &c.

Dress, &c.—The dress of the natives does not materially deviate from that uniformity of style, which may be said to be characteristic of the cognate tribes of the Gold Coast, unless it is in some of those anomalous variations, that are to be observed among the females of certain localities, where they have probably been tolerated from politic or conscientious motives. That of the men is composed of two coverings, the first of which is an inner fold of cloth, tightly investing the loins and passing from between the nates forward, to the front of the pubes, where it is secured, after enclosing in a kind of suspensory bag, the organs of generation. The second consists of an external or proper garment, merely comprehending a few yards of chintz, tom coffee, or ramal, which, loosely wrapped round the middle, conceals the preceding one, its extremities being

inversely folded within each other, or permitted to dangle from the arms, over which they are thrown on account of the greater length accorded to individuals of an elevated rank. On extraordinary occasions, and august festivals, silken and other costly fabrics usurp their place.

The costume of the women nearly resembles that of the opposite sex, only it is adjusted with more of elaborate neatness, and in that becoming mode which betokens some pretensions to taste. They also exhibit several distinctive peculiarities exclusively confined to their own and the Fanté community of nations, and not to be discovered in the other kingdoms of intertropical Africa. Encircling the waist, immediately above the hips; a cincture formed of two strings of large cylindrical beads known by the name of *Hennā*, is permanently worn by all classes, commonly in conjunction with a massive girdle of a smaller variety, partly coloured and of a globular figure (*Poumpon*). Mulatto females, the wives of caboceers and other opulent personages, substitute in lieu of the latter a series of silver links or chains, to denote their higher degree of gentility. A third sort of bead not so frequently seen, but more worthy of attention from the antiquity of its origin, and the universal repute in which it was held long prior to the adoption of the articles in modern use, is the one termed *Fúfúah*. Constructed out of the smooth surfaces of bivalvular shells, in a circular form of attenuated dimensions, and with flattened sides that admit of their easy perforation through the centre, for the vegetable fibres on which they are densely strung, they furnish an interesting example of primitive art in connection with other instances of native ingenuity, that observation has recorded in these countries. They are now chiefly procured from the Adampé and Kreepé traders, who in days antecedent to those of European supervention, reaped a much more lucrative harvest than they do at present. They appear to be identical both in substance and design, with a similar species of ornament in common wear among the Boobies of Fernando Po, which however differ from them in their ruder manufacture and irregular circumference. Notwithstanding their depreciation in public esteem, they are still expressly valued for peculiar objects. Women after death, are seldom interred until bedecked with a zone of these shells, in order to ensure the recognition of their friends and ancestors in the next world, who are supposed not to be acquainted with the adjuncts of a later introduction.

A remarkable appendage which usually excites the surprise of the European on his first sojourn, is a protruding pad or cushion of compressed cloth, placed posteriorly within the curvature of the loins, and entitled in vulgar *parlance* a kankie, from its similarity towards one in shape, but better understood by its local designation of *atuffo*. The purport of this strange appliance would seem to be rather problematical, from the inference produced by a confliction of sentiments on the subject. For some remark that it can only be

fixed in this position with the obvious intent of supporting the offspring carried by the mothers behind, after the prevalent habit, while others affirm that it is more with the view of facilitating a convenient arrangement of their dress. So far as the evidence is attainable, the popular interpretation is in favour of its appropriation to those significant purposes which render an analogous appendage essential to the contour of the fashionable dames in Europe. Its assumption was originally restricted to those who had attained the age of puberty, but innovations of a licentious growth have greatly interfered with this limitation. The custom, however, is more systematically enforced in Prampram, Ningo, and the circumjacent territory, where girls habitually wander forth, in this scanty garb, the only one they are licensed to assume, until the expiration of their prescriptive probation. This garb is simply confined to a narrow strip of ramal passed beneath the pubes behind, and kept in its situation by the above-mentioned cincture, which leaves both of its ends in pendant freedom. To this circumstance is attributed the deductive term of *Attuffoy-yo*, by which they are distinguished. Previously to their assumption of a more matronly attire, they are obliged to submit to certain expurgatory rites instituted by the fetish, and as they receive the parting benediction of the priest, listen at the same time to the impressive admonitions he offers respecting the duties of a married life, into whose mysteries they are on the threshold of initiation.

Like those of the men, the garments of the females are divisible into an intermediate fold, and one or more outer coverings of the same materials but of better texture, which are retained in their position by the aid of a silk or cotton handkerchief bound round the middle. Both sexes are extremely partial to the use of the beads, and omit no opportunity of displaying them to advantage in the decoration of their persons. Every year witnesses fresh acquisitions to their private stock from the influx of novelties brought by the shipping, which alone, as mercantile imports, are eagerly coveted, and fetch a steady sale among the multitudinous tribes of the interior. They are distributed into bracelets and armlets that compass the wrist and upper arm, into circlets that inclose the ankle and leg below the knee, and into necklaces, in whose varied selection are blended all the hues of the rainbow. Another kind of necklace equally in vogue, is constructed from some testaceous product in an oblong or rhomboidal form, alternating with round black seeds, and is particularly patronised by the fetish men and their families, who, in these matters, arrogate to themselves the functions of conservators for all articles that are of aboriginal foundation. Hence they are deemed sacred, and bear the name of *Afflé* or *Affélé*.

Upon her marriage, the female, arrayed in the most attractive finery, and adorned with a variety of golden ornaments borrowed for the occasion, is paraded through various quarters of the town, accom-

panied by a troop of young friends and relatives, who chant in festive chorus the celebration of this auspicious event. On such occurrences, it is customary for the husband to be specially provided with gifts of connubial import, viz., metallic bracelet, a bunch of keys, and a symbolic device, all worked in silver, the last two being suspended on the girdle by the side of the bride. This device is denominated *Hennoné*, and comprehends on a diminutive scale, the representation of divers swords and dirks, with a shield, their usual war equipment, an elephant's tooth, and an ideal semblance of two cowries, one attached to each end, and the others depending from the central portion of a cylindrical bar or rod. It is not easy to ascertain whether this emblem was originally intended to convey a typical illustration of war and commerce, and the benefits that would result from the combination of both, or as a figurative intimation of the good fortune destined for the offspring to come forth, whether as opulent merchants, capable of disseminating their wares at thrice-told profits, or as renowned warriors, well qualified to wield the sword in defence of their country.

The dress of the Mulatto community is fashioned in accordance to the European mode, and is mostly made by native tailors, or transmitted from Europe at their own request. That of the women, on the contrary, partakes more of the country character, and with the exception of a cotton chemisette compactly fitted to the body and united down the front by stellate clasps of gold, there is no perceptible difference from those of the ordinary population, unless, indeed, it is in the finer quality and richer assortment of apparel and trinkets. At periods they occasionally conform to the style of the white ladies, but this, however, is less frequently than might be expected.

The manner in which the hair is trimmed, also furnishes another proof of an hereditary conservancy, though shared in common with many of the Inta races. It is drawn obliquely upwards into a conical mass, by the approximation of its extremities on the summit of the head, where they are tied together and inverted. It is arranged with methodical care and nicety, and when shaved or wholly cut off, is always indicative of affliction and misfortune, and thought to be one of the most degrading penalties that can befall any delinquent. Its denudation has evidently been viewed in a similar light by the Semitic nations, and has been alluded to in several of the Sacred Writings.* Generally, however, a silk or cotton kerchief is folded tightly round the head, and completely covers the greater part of it.

Cleanliness, &c.—In none of the regions of the coast are the precepts of cleanliness more strenuously advocated than by the population of Akkrah. The scarcity of fresh water, however, from the brief duration of the rainy season, and the absence of any conti-

* *Vide* Job i. 20; Deut. xxi. 13, &c.

guous stream or river, somewhat precludes their more regular observance on the part of the poorer inhabitants. To obviate, as far as possible, the inconveniences arising from these drawbacks, large ponds were scooped out on the outskirts of the town for the collection of the rain, and capacious tanks were built of solid masonry, and arched over under ground, for a similar object, within the precincts of the principal mansions, or hewn out of the rocks on which the European factories and forts were erected. By such contrivances a sufficient quantity was obtained to meet their domestic wants during the continuance of the dry months. They who were destitute of these resources were compelled to bring water either from country wells, or from a tributary branch of the Sakkoom, several miles distant. Morning and evening the women bathe themselves, either within their houses or in spots set apart for their convenience; while the men resort towards the close of the day to the afore-mentioned reservoir, or are reduced to the alternative of washing in seawater, which, in fact, is the common practice among the labourers and slaves. *Sow*, a Fanté term for the dried ligneous fibres of some root prepared for these ablutions, is constantly used in conjunction with English or native soap, and, by its harsh friction, conduces greatly to soften and remove the excrementitious depositions on the skin. The cutaneous surface is subsequently anointed with palm oil, lard, or shea-butter, brought from the interior, and known by its familiar appellation of *Unku* or Ashanté grease, triturated with the fragrant powder of a bark called *Teufan*, and other aromatic perfumes, including those purchased from the merchants. Pomatum, chalk, limes, and other available accessories essential to the toilet of the native beauty, also lend their aid to increase the lustre of her charms, and towards the embellishment of her person, whose natural fascinations no efforts are spared to heighten. To secure the adulation of her lovers, and the supremacy over other rivals, is always the first consideration in African coteries, since it not only administers to the gratification of their self-esteem, but the amelioration or advancement of their existing condition.

Births.—The birth of any child, whether male or female, is not considered an event of such importance as to demand the institution of any religious or other rites. The offspring, like the Fanté and Mandingo tribes, receives its name on the eighth day, and a family custom is specially ordained for the purpose. On such occasions the infant is exhibited to its relatives and other connections which have congregated beneath the roof of the parents to offer their congratulations for its safe delivery, and to partake of the welcome hospitality of the house, which has been duly provided with rum and other intoxicating liquors, of which copious draughts are quaffed. On the other hand, each guest who attends the meeting usually contributes a few cowries towards defraying the expense of the ceremonial, while others, in addition, bestow a few articles of dress or some appropriate

gift for the child itself. Thus, amidst a scene of homely festivity, it acquires its first dedication to humanity, and after this public acknowledgment of its rights of citizenship, is launched into the world within whose narrow vortex of toil and trouble it has to encounter the doom that inevitably attends upon all the chequered ordeals of life. Among the great and wealthy this custom is accompanied with protracted rejoicings and demonstrations of a careless liberality. In the selection of the name to be given they are mostly guided by certain ancient formulæ, which, having been faithfully adhered to by their progenitors, has descended to them as hereditary heir-looms from an almost primeval age. Identical with similar rites so commonly practised by the Inta races, they perhaps are coeval in date, and have collaterally descended from one radiating source, and, if not, the most probable explanation would be, that the Akkrahs procured them from the former, and engrafted such a portion upon their own social codes at some subsequent period, as would serve to supply any apparent deficiencies that might have then existed. Their titles are taken from the day of the week on which the infant is born, and are said to be mere modifications of the country terms by which they are known to the Fantés. Each day, therefore, has its own especial name attached to it, and in accordance with the sex of the progeny, whether male or female, is the derivation allotted. These distinctive appellations may thus be enumerated:—

<i>Day.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Sunday . . .	Quasshé	Akoshuah
Monday . . .	Kudjo	Ajuah
Tuesday . . .	Quanbbenah	Abranwah
Wednesday . . .	Quakku	Akkuah
Thursday . . .	Quahu	Abbah
Friday . . .	Kuffië	Affeah
Saturday . . .	Quahmé	Amah

To these also may be appended another series of names used in the Akkrah and Adampé towns, solely derived from the number of the offspring brought forth, and varied individually with reference to their sex. By this peculiar system of nomenclature, each child, as it may be boy or girl, occupies an allotted station conformable to its age on the scale of family precedence, fulfilling to a great extent the fundamental principles of primogeniture by the authoritative sanction of a title. The subjoined list includes the whole:—

<i>Male.</i>		<i>Female.</i>	
1 Tetté	7 Ashon	1 Deddä	7 Ashon
2 Tettä	8 Bontuwä	2 Kokkor	8 Bontuwä
3 Mensah	9 Akkron	3 Mansah	9 Akkron
4 Annah	10 Badù	4 Marnang	10 Badù
5 Annum	11 Oduko	5 Marnu	11 Oduko
6 ?	12 Odunyon	6 ?	12 Odunyon

As an illustration of the above, let us suppose that the accouchement of the woman should transpire on a Friday for example, either of her first or third son, as the case should happen, the designations they would then claim would be *Kuffië-tetté* and *Kuffië-mensah*; or if, under similar circumstances, she should give birth to daughters, they would become entitled to the respective cognomens of *Affeah-deddā* and *Affeah-mansah*. With the local authorities a wide diversity of opinion abounds, regarding the sixth place in the preceding numeration, the majority stating that, from some inexplicable cause, the vacancy which may at present be said to exist, has never been properly filled up, and that the words "*Shan* and *Shanshan*," which some aver *are* the legitimate terms, are not of native appliance but of foreign introduction, while their opponents argue stoutly to the contrary. To avoid the various arguments brought forward by both factions, I have provisionally omitted the "debateable points," and have placed them as they now stand, since the mass of evidence fully preponderates in favour of their non-retention. It is somewhat singular that the few primary names should so closely correspond with the Fulahné numerals *Tettā* (2), and *Didde* (3).

Females during the term of their gestation are accustomed to resort to some popular fetish-house, for the purpose of bathing in the consecrated waters vended by the priests, that by so doing, they may be enabled to crave for their unborn babes the guardianship of its unearthly divinity, and also to guarantee their safe delivery from the perils and disasters of parturition. After the happy fulfilment of this event, the parents, in grateful thanksgiving for the boon, bestow upon the infant a modified variation of that title by which the fetish has been generally denominated. From this source proceeds the third class or sacred appellations, a class to be found more or less prevalent throughout the kingdoms and districts where superstition and mystery hold their reign.

By the male populations of Akkrah and Adampé circumcision is constantly followed, but not at such an early age as by the Mohammedan nations more inland, the consummation being deferred until the boy has attained to the maturer growth of eight or ten years. This operation, comprehended under the native definition of *Kotéah*, is invariably performed by the country doctors, or rather exclusive practitioners of this surgical acquirement, who gather together in their houses as many tyros as is possible, the whole of whom, within a brief space of time, bear convincing proofs of their operative skill and dexterity. The season of the year deemed most propitious for the completion of these rites, is from the middle of December to the termination of January, when the dry Harmattan winds which then set in exert an almost specific influence towards the promotion of their successful cure. The process is very simple, the prepuce previous to its division being encircled by a ligature that protects the subjacent structures. The wound is afterwards dressed with

raw cotton steeped in oil, and defended anteriorly by a grass or wicker-mat suspended by a cord round the neck of the invalid. With this shield also supported by both hands, they may be observed perambulating the streets with a timidity and awkwardness of gait that affords a marked contrast to their noisy yet cheerful vociferations. The doctor's fees, like the condition of his patients, is oftentimes humble, and rarely exceeds more than half-a-dozen strings of cowries.

Circumcision is one of the most prominent traits which establish the line of demarcation between the different tribes of the Gold Coast, distinguishing the blended races which, to the eastward, inhabit the long tract of shore equidistant on both sides of the river Volta, from the numerous nations that more exclusively trace their origin from the great Inta source, more inland and westerly. Neither the Ashantés, Akims, Fantés, Assins, Aquapims, Aquambus, nor many of the Kroo communities, still further westward, conform to the principle of its primitive induction, although isolated instances of its adoption have occasionally been recorded amongst them. The late Dr Pritchard has been led into an error when he remarks that it pertains *utriusque sexus* in Akkrah. During the period of my service at this station, repeated investigations into the currency and correctness of the report, has demonstrated that such a custom is unknown and unfollowed by the females. A popular usage of quite an opposite character is, however, inculcated by the Adampé women, living in the mountainous districts of Crobo, which apparently resembles the one so much in vogue at Whydah, and in the powerful kingdom of Dahomey, viz., *nymphæ elongatio artificialis*. The development of puberty in the girl is not promulgated by any public parade or ceremony, nor is a custom enjoined, yet such manifestations are frequently to be noticed in English and the other Akkrahs, but they will upon inquiry be found to proceed more decidedly from those Fanté inhabitants who have immigrated from the circumjacent countries, and located themselves within the town. Its institution has never been supported by the people of this part of the coast.

Marriages, &c.—Polygamy, as might be naturally expected, is carried on to an unbounded extent, the only restriction to the number of wives each man may possess being based on the resources he has of maintaining them. Many females are betrothed in their childhood to partners of a corresponding age, a bottle of rum and a fathom of cloth being annually paid by the parents of the latter, as a token of their sincerity and a continuous desire to confirm the conditional engagement previously entered into. When the parties have arrived at the proper state of maturity, the ratification of the contract is demanded, and, if no obstacle intervenes, the nuptial rite, if it can be so termed, is solemnised by a series of rejoicings which have been appropriately designated the "Marriage Custom." This

social tie, however, is not connected with any religious formalities, and can only be viewed under the aspect of a purchase, since the woman, after the payment of the stipulated sum to her family, virtually becomes the property of her husband, who, invested with a legalised power, may allot her such duties or employment as he may deem fit. The dowry usually given to the family of the woman on these occasions amounts to the sum of two ounces of gold, or thirty-two dollars, two-thirds of which are uniformly set apart towards satisfying the domestic wants of the bride, being applied to the purchase of various articles of dress, household utensils, and other mercantile commodities. Detailed in the subjoined list is a variety of merchandise required for this object, which, as it was furnished by one of my own attendants on the solemnisation of his marriage, may be taken as a general estimate with reference to others.

6 Cloths of chintz, 4 yards each,	\$6	0
6 Heads of cowries,	5	0
1 Brass pan for washing,	2	0
2 Fathoms of cloth for the mother,	1	0
2 Fathoms of cloth for wife,	1	0
1 Comb and pot of pomatum,	1	0
6 Bottles of rum,	\$0	60
Cowries for wife's box,	0	50
4 Silk Bandana handkerchiefs,	4	0
1 Girdle of small beads,	4	0
1 Wooden box,	1	0
1 Pint of lavender water,	1	0
1 Large stool,	2	0
1 Oil-pot, 1 looking-glass,	1	0
1 Silver bracelet,	0	50
1 Pot for Ashanté grease,	0	25

Twelve strings of cowries are also daily paid by the husband for the subsistence of his wife for the period of one week after the consummation of the marriage. Independently of the pecuniary outlay thus incurred, no inconsiderable source of expense is derived from the large consumption of rum and various edible conjuncts, in the convivial entertainments which are considered necessary for the due completion of the affair, inasmuch as the friends and connections of both parties willingly assemble to offer their congratulatory or to express their approbation of the match, if only for the purpose of indulging in the inordinate libations of rum and other intoxicating drinks which are lavishly provided on these festivals, especially if the husband is an influential chief or man of wealth.

Among the slaves and lower ranks of females, concubinage prevails to an indefinite extent, owing to the unfettered intercourse and licentious system in which both sexes are reared. From the vitiated

code of morals thus germinated, no obstacles are opposed to the formation of these temporary unions with males of a corresponding grade, and, unfortunately, this plan is too commonly chosen by those who, from indolence, poverty, or other destitute conditions, are unable to provide the means to procure a wife after the more orthodox fashion. When the preliminary arrangements have been adjusted on both sides, a propitiatory gift is commonly presented to the woman to cement the alliance, which she exclusively reserves for her own use. It seldom exceeds the value of four dollars, and includes the following articles, viz.,

- 24 Strings of cowries.
- 4 Fathoms of cloth.
- 1 Silk handkerchief.
- 2 Bottles of rum.

A wide separation, however, is to be made between this mutual compact and the ordinary nuptial rite, perhaps more clearly defined by the extent of control exercised by the husband. In the former, the woman is less amenable to the jurisdiction of her partner, less subject to restraint, and may at any moment leave him with her progeny, upon the infliction of any act of injustice or cruelty; in the latter case the reverse precisely applies.

The women of Akkrah are not celebrated for their chastity, nor is it comprised among the category of those national virtues to which they conscientiously adhere, as its non-preservation constitutes no impediment to any permanent connection they may subsequently form. In the families of higher caste, indeed, it is somewhat different, but even with these exceptions, its due appreciation can only be referred to that judicious education and jealous vigilance bestowed by the parents during childhood. Should, however, the results of any illicit amour become palpable, abortion is secretly induced by the assistance of powerful emmenagogues indigenous to the country, or the offspring, by some connivance, is destroyed before it has attained any development, since its birth at the regular period would not only degrade the girl in the estimation of the public, but reflect such an indelible stain as would cling to her reputation for life. In these social communities, therefore, as might be inferred from the previous remarks, adultery is by no means of rare occurrence. The detection of these criminal liaisons is not punishable with death as in other kingdoms in the Bights of Benin and Biafra, but by the imposition of certain fines which are determined more by the rank of the offender than from any extenuating circumstances. The pecuniary compensations awarded in these verdicts are mostly in accordance with the legal usages of the place, and are founded on various distinctive grades which the parties occupy in their local position. Thus 12 dollars is the amount levied from an ordinary person, while

a caboceer is mulcted in a much larger sum, viz., 32 dollars, and even more in many instances. These penalties are stringently exacted, so that it is not an unusual event for the poorer people to pawn one of their slaves or younger members of the family to raise the necessary sum in quittance of the fine. These derelictions from the marriage contract on the part of the female are sometimes visited by the sentence of severe corporal punishment, unless she has become notoriously addicted to such sensual pursuits, when she is, without farther warning summarily divorced. This ultimatum does not appear to be often had recourse to, inasmuch as the husband in the majority of cases cannot afford to lose the value of the services he had hitherto purchased; her family, under these peculiar conditions not being compelled to refund the marriage dowry, unless she refuses to remain with him; and the man is frequently too poor to obtain another wife.

Other curious ordinances are also retained by these people, among which may be embraced those regulating the intermarriages of different branches of the same family or tribe by particular degrees of affinity. These social restrictions, however, are limited within a narrow compass, and as it would seem, appertain more specially to the female offspring. Their hereditary predominance and extensive diffusion throughout several of the native races of Western Africa, point out the profundity of their origin and the durability of their sway, appreciable indications, so far, of their gradual descent from tribe to tribe, as they are indubitably coeval in date in their divergence from the great radiating sources of human migrations that have, after their primary severance and isolation from the parental stem, peopled the African continent.

With other proofs that may be adduced in support of these statements, may be mentioned the injunction which expressly forbids the union of any collateral issue by the woman's side. For example, the marriage of two sisters' children is never permitted to take place, on account of the intimate relationship reputed to exist between them, although it would readily be granted if one of the pair belonged to the brother's family. It must be borne in mind that this prohibition does not extend to those children proceeding from the brothers or male kindred, who are allowed to intermarry without the slightest prejudice, not only among themselves but with their cousins on the aunt's side. A man may not take two cousins to wife from the same parentage for equal valid objections, nor yet two sisters, which is agreeable to the strict enunciations of the Levitical* and Mohammedan laws, although polygamy prevails in the widest sense of freedom. Allusion has been made elsewhere to another mandate fully as imperative, but of more equivocal tendency, which, claiming its propagation from the earliest ages of the world, has been strenuously advocated even

to this day by those Semitic races by whom it was principally adopted, viz., the marriage of a deceased person's wife by his brother or next successor. It is a notable fact that a modification of this custom was comprehended in the code of precepts given to the Jewish nation by their legislator, and interpolated by him, with others selected from the jurisprudence of the surrounding kingdoms, where it was probably designed to answer some important result. The passages in Holy Writ relative to these observances may be found in Deuteronomy, chapter xxv., and are as follows:—"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go into her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead; that his name be not put out of Israel."

At Akkrah, and I believe in the other tribes along the Gold Coast, the elder rarely, if ever, inherits either the property or wives that pertained to his younger brothers or kinsmen upon their death; after this event they become engrafted on the estate of those next to them in consanguinity, and are thus successively transferred through the various ramifications of a family, as the seniors in turn respectively drop off. Under those circumstances, therefore, the eldest brother asserts no prerogative over them, since his appropriation of them would greatly militate against his dignity and prudence, by those who esteem him in the light of a father and protector to his brethren, and be also deemed derogatory to the position which he maintains, in descending so far below it as to unite himself with connections whose subordinate rank entitled them to rank little better than slaves.* It is well worthy of record how much these usages are in unison with those Divine injunctions conveyed in many passages of the Mosaic writings, and what conclusive evidence they furnish of their primeval derivation and remote history.

* We may come to the rational conclusion, from the tenor and close appliance of language used in the Koran, that the Prophet had unquestionably in contemplation the evil consequences which flow from the repeated intermarriages of kindred blood, said to cease only upon the extinction of the family name. To avert these dire contingencies, limitations were at length published, framed almost *verbatim* from those passages of Scriptural history that refer to the subject. These are enumerated in the fourth chapter of the Koran, and are as follow:—"Ye are forbidden to marry your mothers, and your daughters, and your sisters, and your aunts, both on the father's and on the mother's side, and your brother's daughters, and your sister's daughters, and your mothers who have given you suck, and your foster-sister, and your wives' mothers, and your daughters-in-law, which are under your tuition, born of your wives unto whom ye have gone into; and ye are also forbidden to take to wife two sisters, except what is already past."—*Sale's Translation.*

Deaths.—Upon the death of any native, several curious and interesting rites are strictly enjoined, from the performance of which they seldom deviate. Apparently great consideration is attached to them, if we may judge from the peculiar customs and celebrations enacted on such occurrences, not only by the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, but in most of the countries of Western Africa. Shortly after life has become extinct, the body is thoroughly washed by the household women, and every portion of it well rubbed over with a ligno-resinous powder named *teufan*, procured from the bark of a certain tree, which possessing an aromatic fragrance, is first pulverised and then appropriated as a perfume of ordinary use. The head and face are next carefully shaved, the limbs invested with their usual bracelets and other golden ornaments, and the whole body enshrouded in a number of the richest and most sumptuous dresses that can be chosen. If the deceased has been a person of consequence, gold dust is liberally sprinkled over the face and other uncovered surfaces, on which it is retained by the previous application of Ashanté grease or the vegetable butter, brought from the interior. The corpse thus arrayed is then exposed in state for a brief period for the farewell inspection of all relatives and friends, and is subsequently enclosed in a wooden box, and privately interred. In Akkrah the dead are invariably buried in one of the compartments within the house, but the slaves, unless they are favourites, lie scattered around the environs of the town, in some convenient spot selected for the purpose. Within the coffins of the more affluent are deposited a great variety of native cloths, gold rings, and other valuable trinkets, and occasionally a few bottles filled with gold dust, while upon their exterior surface are placed the brass ewer and basin, with the spoon, which the defunct was wont to employ during lifetime, and which the family now deemed an indispensable accompaniment towards the comfort to be attained in the next world. Until within a recent date, the immolation of human victims at these obsequies was fully authorised by the institutions of the country, to the end that the deceased might not be found deficient in the requisite number of attendants as would be found compatible with the rank he was supposed to keep in another sphere of existence. It is not many years since, upon the death of one of the powerful caboceers of Kinka, this sacrifice was consummated by the offering of two young slaves, who were slaughtered without compunction on the edge of the grave, and their bodies separately extended, the male below and the female above the remains of their late lord. Latterly, owing to the strict surveillance of the British Government, these barbarous rites have been temporarily abolished; but there can be little doubt that should these people ever become emancipated from the jurisdiction of Europeans, they would again revert to the observance of what to them is viewed in the solemn light of a sacred obligation.

On these melancholy occasions the wives and other near female relatives lament, in pathetic terms, their unfortunate bereavement, and affect to deplore, by external manifestations of grief, the irreparable loss they have sustained. The hair is totally shaven from the head, every ornament and personal decoration removed, and dark and sombre garments substituted in lieu of their ordinary dress, whose gayer hues were more emblematic of the cheerful days of the past, than of the gloomy prospects of the present. To evince the sincerity of their grief, the women studiously observe a solemn fast, abstain from every kind of food throughout the day, withdraw from public life, and immure themselves privately within the recesses of their respective chambers. For the space of three weeks or more, during the continuance of the custom that invariably succeeds, these injunctions are unequivocally obeyed, after which a certain degree of laxity follows, and the confinement of the wives becomes less restricted, they being permitted to frequent other divisions of the house and court-yards, and should circumstances compel an exit from their seclusion, a grave decorum is still preserved, and those conventional precedents that denote the mournful character of the duties entailed upon them, are carefully exhibited. The partial or entire removal of the hair, as a native testimony of affliction and sorrow, is one of those remarkable peculiarities that bear a close affinity to the ordinances introduced by the Jewish legislator in the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy, in which it is duly enjoined as follows:—

“Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails. And she shall put the raiment of captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and mother a full month.”

That this was a usage of great antiquity, and common to many nations from the earliest ages of the world, long previous to its dissemination among the Jews, may be distinctly affirmed. Mention has been made of its prevalence by Herodotus, who relates that “it is elsewhere customary in cases of death, for those who are most nearly affected, to cut off their hair in testimony of sorrow: but the Egyptians, who, at other times, have their heads closely shaven, suffer the hair on this occasion to grow.”* It was also equally practised by the Greeks upon the intelligence of any public or private misfortune, the women clipping their hair short, and the men allowing it to grow long; whereas in their seasons of prosperity the reverse happens, the women wearing their hair long, and the men close, as stated by Plutarch. In the country now under consideration, the duration of these indications of mourning are variable, and are evidently guided more by the social position of the deceased, and the amount of wealth he has accumulated, than other motives. For the poorer class of natives and others of limited means, the prescribed probation is about six months; to caboceers and other personages of

* Lib. 2, c. 36; *vide* also 1. 6, c. 21.

note, one year; while the mulatto grandees, from their assumption of superiority, exact the dedication of two years and upwards to their memory. Upon the notification of a death to the inhabitants of the town, the relatives, family connections, and other intimate friends, assemble together for the object of establishing a custom or feast in honour of the departed, the representation of which would rather suggest to the stranger, on first sight, that he was witnessing some popular exhibition of conviviality, than the preliminary scene of lamentation and woe. On the day preceding the interment, the populace generally congregate around the mansion of the deceased (where the corpse, elaborately adorned in all its paraphernalia of decoration, is exposed to view), and these fire off a number of muskets; dances and other fantastic evolutions subsequently occur, amid a concert of tomtoms and drums, that lend their aid to enliven the spectators. On such celebrations, great quantities of rum and other ardent liquors are quickly consumed, and intoxication is the usual result, which, if the interpretation of the natives be adopted, is solely induced with the laudable intention of dispelling the sorrow they then experience for the loss of their fellow-citizen. Upon the expiration of three weeks, another display of these ceremonies takes place, accompanied by the same peculiar exhibitions, after the cessation of which all further manifestations of respect on the part of his family and friends terminate, the requisite term of public mourning having been formally completed. According to the ancient laws of the country, the wives and other female relatives, particularly the former, are imperatively bound, at the finish of their allotted commemoration, to institute a corresponding custom, of a greater or less duration, proportionate to the extent of their resources. These rites ostensibly appear to have been established for the purpose of religiously enforcing the observance of those obligations due to the memory of the dead, to denote the dissolution of all prior ties or alliances, and also to shew that the females are at liberty to form new engagements (unless claimed by the succeeding family heritor), or enter into other matrimonial schemes as they find most conducive to their interest. With reference to the men, a compliance with these practices is less strictly exacted, and, therefore, such are not often prolonged beyond the brief interval of a few weeks or months as the case may be.

Pawns, or other individuals who die heavily in debt, are denied the rights of sepulture; and unless some previous arrangement has been made with the creditor, are exposed on an elevated platform on the outskirts of the town, enshrouded by mats or enclosed in boxes, since the interment of the corpse would render his family liable for the payment of those bonds which the deceased had contracted when living. A similar interdict is said to exist in Kumassé and other Ashanté towns.

It is a somewhat singular fact, that among the ancient Egyptians

an edict almost identical constituted one of the fundamental clauses promulgated in their judicial code for the regulation of commercial affairs. Herodotus asserts, that it was first enacted by Asychis, a king who merited the eulogium of being an illustrious benefactor to his subjects. The historian remarks that, in his reign "when commerce was checked and injured from the extreme want of money, an ordinance passed, that any one might borrow money, giving the body of his father as a pledge. By this law the sepulchre of the debtor became in the power of the creditor; for if the debt was not discharged, he would neither be buried with his family nor in any other vault, nor was he suffered to inter one of his descendants." *

Associated with other peculiar traits of much greater importance in former periods than at present, must be mentioned the strange decree, which, grounded on the faith of their primitive traditions, and the superstitious dread of witchcraft, compels the exhumation of the bodies of those people who have been suspected of being too intimately concerned with the supernatural influences during their lifetime. Natives who have been prematurely cut off, either from the inroads of some occasional epidemic, or the ordinary maladies of the season, are frequently supposed to become endowed with the potent prerogative of generating disease and destroying life; hence it is not an uncommon occurrence, when two or three members of the same family die in succession, to attribute their departure to the agency of the first sufferer or sufferers, the corpses of which, after satisfactory evidence has been adduced, are summarily removed from their houses within the sanctuary of which they had been interred, are ignominiously burned on the outskirts of the town, and their ashes scattered to the winds, amid the mingled groans and execrations of the populace. It matters not how innocent the unfortunate persons might have been, nor yet how long they may have slept in the calm tranquillity of the grave. The voice of public opinion is unanimous; they are branded with the stigma of posthumous murderers, and the violation of those hallowed repositories in which they rest is imperiously demanded, and the destruction of their frail contents accomplished without either dread or compunction. That which, under other circumstances, would be estimated as a crime of no trivial magnitude, is now proclaimed to be a meritorious deed, by the delay or non-performance of which the safety and welfare of the whole community are compromised.

Upon the event of the death of any individual in a distant country, though years should have elapsed since its annunciation had transpired, the relatives and connections, when a fit opportunity presents itself, despatch a party in search of the place of interment, and they, gathering together the mouldering remnants of mortality, return to bury them under the same roof as those of his ancestors.

* Lib. 2, c. 136.

This custom,—which appears to resemble a labour of fidelity due to the memory of the deceased that his bones should not lie among those of strangers, but be blended with those of his family and kindred, so that the cherished remembrances and associations engendered in the past, should not be dissolved in the world to come,—has possibly originated from some of those primitive sanitary mandates which restricted the burial of the dead within definite bounds, or in pursuance to family compacts that exacted a compliance with certain intramural regulations of immemorial usage.

Inheritances, &c.—The law of inheritance, a conspicuous feature in the social institutions of many nations of Western Africa, must be distinguished as the grand pervading principle on which are based the disposition of property and power. This law can only be appreciated from the fact, that the consolidation or dispersion of family influence, the position and stability of subordinate branches, with the control of other kindred interests, are chiefly governed by the absolute right of a well-defined grade of relationship, exclusively derived through the blood on the female side. Divers reasons have been assigned for their advocacy of this genealogical system; but those hitherto brought forward have not proved sufficiently explanatory. No traces respecting its date of adoption or traditional introduction can be ascertained; for all that is known in connection with the subject may be comprised in the brief reply, that their ancestors transferred it from father to son, from such an early age that its source has long been lost in the mists of antiquity. Probably, among the more feasible arguments advanced in support of its tolerance, is that which refers to the woman the peculiar privilege of transmitting the family blood in a less uncertain stream from one person to another; so that, in its descent, it never could be entirely eradicated by an admixture with that from other channels; for, whatever marriages might be contracted by the mother or her female descendants, even from one generation to another in a continuous series, still there would always remain a sufficiency to ensure the original characteristics of her progenitors from being destroyed. Again, in further confirmation of these views, it has been asserted, that should the wife be guilty of any criminal intercourse with other parties, the same observations would apply with equal precision, inasmuch as the offspring must, at least on the maternal side, enjoy no inconsiderable portion of the ancestral lineage. With the husband or male, on the contrary, they remark, that after a few generations the blood becomes progressively diverted into other courses, and, proceeding downwards, is ultimately absorbed into the families of those females to which they have been allied.

It is the scrupulous regard paid to these fundamental distinctions of consanguinity, that also determines the choice and elevation of the royal aspirants who may be called to occupy the Ashanté throne.

Upon the death of any individual, his property invariably de-

scends to his brothers and sisters in direct rotation, and not to his issue, as is the custom in more civilized communities. Should no brothers exist, the eldest sister succeeds in full, and subsequently her children, notwithstanding all her predecessors may have left large progenies behind them. It may therefore be considered as a general axiom, that the son seldom, if ever, inherits the estate of his father, which, from a deficiency in the proper collateral kindred, passes to the nephew or niece by the next sister's side. The only deviations from this rule are when the man has no other heir by any of his female relatives; under these circumstances, the first-born male not only comes into possession of his father's but even his uncle's wealth, should their decease have preceded that of his parent. Of course it is clearly understood that the son always obtains the effects and valuables of his mother. But when an inhabitant dies without relatives to demand his inheritance, the oldest slave is commonly selected as the representative to supply this void. Several perceptible modifications of this law have, however, been effected within a few recent years, in consequence of the promiscuous alliances of Europeans and their descendants with the aboriginal women. These rules of inheritance will perhaps not inaptly be explained by the following illustration:—Should a freeman, for instance, have sexual communion with a female slave, and conception take place, the fruit of it is born in bondage, and, like its mother, is the property of her owner; but should a similar result follow where the father is a slave and the woman free, the offspring belongs to the mother, and, like herself, is equally free, since it partakes of the same recognised condition, and is endowed with full rights and immunities as if its birth had occurred under the most benignant auspices.

After the interment of the corpse, the next of kin, in the gradation previously assigned, assumes the guardianship of the family interests, by virtue of which he not only acquires the patrimony of the defunct, but an undisputed right over his wives, children, and slaves, the former being for the most part superadded to his own establishment if the heritor be a man, while the two latter become incorporated as component portions of his household. Over the sons and daughters, therefore, he is supposed to exercise all the functions and prerogatives of a parent, and in this capacity to administer to their wants, superintend their conduct, and determine their future settlement in life; and they in return are bound to yield him the full extent of their services, and to pay him that amount of submission, deference, and respect which is due to the position he fills. As their support and maintenance are solely derivable from the relative in charge, if it may be so expressed, during the period of their servitude, and implicit obedience required in exchange, it necessarily ensues that their treatment is in a great measure guided by the degree of subserviency rendered; so that, in fact, until their arrival at the age of maturity, they gradually degenerate into mere dependents

upon his bounty, and are compelled, in compliance with his mandates, to perform such menial and other debasing avocations as he may choose to delegate to them.

Division of Time, &c.—In the computation of time they rarely adhere to the systems of more enlightened nations, by the subdivision of the year into a given number of moons or months, but rather prefer the adoption of a more primitive formula, derived from the observance of various climatic changes, the rotation of seasons, and other physical phenomena, and it is chiefly by such simple means that not only these but other tribes in Western Africa, are influenced in the regulation of their year; and it is this distribution alone that constitutes the fundamental principles on which these peculiar arrangements are based. Conformably to the established usages of each country, deviations and distinctions in their primary division are of common occurrence, and such variations are to be attributed more to a relaxed or stricter classification of climatorial agencies than from any artificial distinctions suggested by themselves, since an analytic examination into their respective merits would unquestionably point out that the majority, if not the whole, come under one prescriptive rule of formation, and proceed from the same definite basis as those in general prevalence throughout other countries on the African continent. In Akkrah, and the circumjacent districts, the year has been partitioned into three grand seasons, referable to the preceding mode; and these again, in some localities, seem to have been divided into still minor fractions. As considerable doubt has been expressed in relation to the latter, it is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the subject. The designations of the primary seasons are thus annexed:

Summer. Boo'ornah. Mar. April, May, June, July, Aug.
Second Summer. G'boh. September, October, and November.
Winter. { Arrab-attah, said to
 be derived from the } December, January,
 word Harmattan. } and February.

The week consists of seven days, which are separately distinguished by appropriate cognomens, apparently corresponding to the number of days comprehended in the European calendars, and which may also be rendered as follows:—

Sunday	Haughbah.
Monday	Dhu.
Tuesday	Dhu-foh.
Wednesday	Shau.
Thursday	So.
Friday	So-ah.
Saturday	Hau.

Two of these days may be considered as sacred, viz. :—Dhu-foh, dedicated to the propitiation of *Ni* and the *River Sakkoom*, the great national fetish of Akkrah; and Haughbah, devoted to the mysterious rites of *Oëyardo*, the dreaded patroness of all married women. It is a remarkable fact, when taken in connection with their religious duties, that, on the first of these days (Dhu-foh), no fisherman dare venture to launch his canoe upon the ocean's surface to gain his precarious livelihood, but guardedly abstains from those piscatory pursuits which might betray him or his family into the infringement of the superstitious mandates so solemnly enunciated by the priests and fetishmen. Similar stringent precautions are equally enjoined on the second (Haughbah); and though of a somewhat different character, are made compulsory on all ranks and sexes, but more exclusively to that of the female. Under the supposition that some malign potency pervades the surrounding country on this day, more particularly directed against the pregnant women, their daily avocations are restricted within the walls of their domiciles, no egress being tolerated either for the purposes of travelling or other exterior occupations. Not many people therefore presume to violate these injunctions by issuing forth early in the forenoon, and none resort to their familiar haunts in the markets or public thoroughfares, until the prohibition has been withdrawn by the well-known sign of a declining sun. In some respects So-ah may likewise be appended to the two previous days, owing to its being consecrated to *Kaulé* or the salt-pond fetish, which is one held in much less estimation, and therefore, is not entitled to the same amount of deference or veneration awarded to the others. The celebration of these religious obligations differ more or less as to their day of fulfilment in the various towns where such traditional forms of worship are systematically maintained.

Currency, &c.—The currency of the Gold Coast is represented by the Indian cowrie (*Cypræa moneta*) a small shell originally exported and carried from the east, and now diffused in vast quantities throughout the contiguous inland kingdoms and other central regions of Western Africa. For the convenience of transmission or payment, they were formerly perforated and strung together in definite numbers, hence the source of their designations into strings and heads. By a simple arrangement their fractional division was reduced to a standard, and found most beneficially adapted to the wants of the population. The annexed table will prove duly explanatory of their system.

Heads.	Strings.	Number of Cowries.	English value.		
			£	s.	d.
...	$\frac{1}{2}$	20	0	0	$0\frac{1}{2}$
...	1	40	0	0	1
...	12	480	0	1	0
1	48	1,920	0	4	0
1 ounce of gold dust, or 20	960	38,400	4	0	0

The rate of exchange, when dollars require to be converted into cowries, and *vice versa*, will depend upon their current value at the different outports where the requisition is made. Thus, at Cape Coast, the dollar is estimated at 4s. 6d., in Akkrah at 5s. currency, and in other places along the coast, at its sterling price, 4s. 2d. The equivalents therefore to be given in cowries for each, should amount to the following.

Dollar at	{	5s.	=	60 strings	=	2400 cowries.
		4s. 6d.	=	54 do.	=	2160 do.
		4s. 2d.	=	50 do.	=	2000 do.

Gold dust, one of the staple articles of commerce exported from this tract of African coast, is more plentiful at the Fanté towns of Annamabo and Cape Coast, than in those of Akkrah. It is brought to the former places by the Akim and Ashanté traders from their own and the circumjacent countries, and has been considered by Adams and other European authorities to be much inferior in quality to that obtained from Apollonia and Dixcove. A great quantity was annually poured into Akkrah for a series of years previous to the present date; but this, from a multiplicity of causes, became gradually diminished, and was ultimately diverted into other channels. This diminution is to be ascribed to the Ashantés manifesting a preference for those markets in which were exhibited for choice a richer assortment of merchandise, better suited to their demands, and from the fact that to the eastward of Christiansburg little or no gold could be purchased, owing to the soil being less fertile in those auriferous depositions than the surface of various localities in the inland and maritime provinces of the west. The gold offered for sale or barter, is ordinarily adulterated according to the ingenuity of the vendor or inexperience of the buyer. These adulterations comprise copper or brass filings, pieces of impure ore, micaceous earths, and granular alloys of silver, and other analogous substances calculated to deceive the eye. They, however, are detected without trouble or difficulty, under the customary supervision of a native personage, professionally denominated a gold-taker, whose services are specially retained in mercantile establishments for this object. European factors regulate their purchases and computations by its artificial division into ackies and ounces, of which sixteen of the former, valued respectively at five shillings, constitutes the ounce, that again being equal to four pounds currency. The country people in their multifarious trading speculations, are subject to a constant fluctuation of prices produced by the interchange of commodities among the various tribes with whom they come in contact. As these comprehend individuals in every sphere of life, an enlargement of the scale of equivalents in gold dust became requisite, and has been fully accomplished by the Fanté and Ashanté traders, by their minute subdivision and combination of the ounce into a minor variety of terms, each of which has its

relative value affixed. This pecuniary method of valuation so far suffices for the mutual accommodation of all parties engaged in traffic, and has implicitly guided hitherto the inhabitants of Akkrah, Adampé, and the more eastern nations in their commercial transactions. It is somewhat remarkable, that the native appellation of *Seekah* is known not only throughout every portion of the Gold Coast, but in Popo, Dahomey, and the distant regions of Yorruha. The following tables of the gold currency of the Fanté and Ashanté nations compiled by the late Mr M^r Lean, are equally adopted by the people of Akkrah and Adampé, and the accuracy of which may be sufficiently guaranteed by the well-known experience of their author.

TABLE I.—*Fanté Currency.*

Names of Weights.	Weight in		Value.	Names of Weights.	Weight in		Value.
	oz.	ackies.			oz.	ackies.	
Pessua	1-48th	£ s. d. 0 0 1½	Essien . . . . .	...	6	£ s. d. 1 10 0
Simpoah	1-24th	0 0 2½	Acandjua . . . . .	...	7	1 15 0
Takufan	1-12th	0 0 5	Djua . . . . .	...	½ 8	2 0 0
Kokua	1-8th	0 0 7½	Sul . . . . .	...	9	2 5 0
Taku	1-6th	0 0 10	Sua-ne-sul . . . . .	...	13½	3 7 6
Suafan	5-6ths	0 4 2	Djuamien . . . . .	...	1 ...	4 0 0
Meaton (or <i>Giri fan</i>)	1	0 5 0	Essuanu . . . . .	...	1 2	4 10 0
Sua	1-4-6th	0 8 4	Djuamiensan . . . . .	...	1 8	6 0 0
Agiratjwi (or <i>Gira</i>)	2	0 10 0	Essuasan . . . . .	...	1 11	6 15 0
Ensan	3	0 15 0	Bendah . . . . .	...	2 ...	8 0 0
Djuasul	4	1 0 0	Perigwan . . . . .	...	2 4	9 0 0
Perisul	5	1 5 0	Entenu . . . . .	...	4 8	18 0 0

TABLE II.—*Ashanté Currency.*

Names of Weights.	Weight in		Value.	Names of Weights.	Weight in		Value.
	oz.	ackies.			oz.	ackies.	
Pessua	1-64th	£ s. d. 0 0 0½	Insuansan . . . . .	...	2½	£ s. d. 0 11 8
Damba	1-32d	0 0 1½	Bodomu . . . . .	...	2½	0 12 6
Takufan	1-16th	0 0 3¾	Ensan . . . . .	...	3	0 15 0
Taku	1-8th	0 0 7½	Djuasul . . . . .	...	3½	0 17 6
Taku-mieniu	1-4th	0 1 3	Sul . . . . .	...	4½	1 2 6
Takumiensan	3-8ths	0 1 10½	Perisul . . . . .	...	5	1 5 0
Suafan	3-4ths	0 3 9	Essien . . . . .	...	6	1 10 0
Dumafan	11-12ths	0 4 7	Djua . . . . .	...	7	1 15 0
Brofan	1	0 5 0	Anenfii . . . . .	...	7½	1 19 2
Agiratjwifan	1½th	0 5 5	Esua . . . . .	...	9	2 5 0
Insuansafan	1½th	0 5 10	Suane-sul . . . . .	...	13½	3 7 6
Bodombufan	1½d	0 6 8	Essua-nu . . . . .	...	1 2	4 10 0
Sua	1½d	0 7 6	Essua-san . . . . .	...	1 11	6 15 0
Duma	1½th	0 9 2	Essua-san-sul . . . . .	...	2 ...	8 0 0
Brofu	2	0 10 0	Perigwan . . . . .	...	2 4	9 0 0
Agiratjwi	2½th	0 10 10	Entenu . . . . .	...	4 8	18 0 0

N.B.—An ackie is equal to 8 Ashanté takus, and to 6 Fanté takus.

Architecture, &c.—The towns and villages that lie scattered along the margin of the coast from Cape St Paul's to the Rio Sakkoom westward, exceed, both in size and population, those located in the inland districts. Rocky plateaux or projecting headlands, or eminences situated in the vicinity of the larger salt water ponds or lagoons, were the favourite sites of selection, evidently on account of the two-fold objects which their position commanded, viz., a ready access to the ocean, and a continuous supply of those marine products that would answer either as articles of food or of traffic. From a rude assemblage of fishermen's huts, they, in the course of time, became transformed into places of constant resort, by the progressive development of their commercial resources, and the gradual addition of new habitations, rendered obligatory by the influx of enterprising traders and other people belonging to the circumjacent countries. From the absence of any definite plan or system of arrangement, the erection of the towns was confined within very circumscribed limits; the buildings being so compactly grouped, and in such dense masses, as to occupy apparently but a small extent of ground. With the exception of the main thoroughfare and a few open clearances at irregular intervals, the streets were necessarily narrow, tortuous, and intricate; the close proximity of the various domiciles producing a perplexing diversity of bypaths, that, in similitude, approached the dubious windings of some mysterious labyrinth. Formed by the contracted spaces between the opposite walls and projecting roofs, their due ventilation and cleanliness was more or less impeded; consequently, they always continued in a dirty condition, and were likewise subject to that fetid effluvia, generated by the accumulation of filth and other domestic refuse thrown out by their occupants, who, from a constitutional indolency or love of ease, were neither impressed with the necessity of adhering to any sanitary precautions, nor yet endeavoured to obtain the salubrity that would spring from the removal of such morbid agents.

The houses are constructed of swish, a name bestowed on the compositions of mud or other loamy soils, well triturated with water, for such appliances. In style of architecture they resemble the mud cottages which still prevail in most of the rural districts of England. The foundations invariably consist of small fragments of sandstone, embedded in an earthy cement, and elevated two or three feet above the ground, sloping obliquely inwards, so that the base may correspond to the eaves of the roof, and the rain, as it pours from above, may fall on substances sufficiently durable to resist its solvent effects. Upon this elevation the compost is placed in successive layers, each of which is allowed to harden in the sun previous to any further depositions, which continue to be superadded in regular gradation until the height of ten or fifteen feet has been attained. Its covering is completed by a thatch specially provided for this purpose, whose close adaptation renders it impervious to the heavy torrents of the

rainy season. The doors, framework, beams, window-sills, and the neat jalousies fitted therein, are executed, with all other wooden fixtures, by native artificers, after European designs, and confer an aspect both of modesty and comfort, which externally assimilates them to the humbler dwellings of more enlightened communities. They are usually built in an oblong or quadrangular form, having an unroofed courtyard in the centre, around which the different compartments of the household are distributed. Should the central area be of such magnitude as to admit of its twofold partition, it is conveniently separated into an inner and outer yard by means of a divisional septum of swish. When this takes place, the latter is allotted to the slaves and family dependents, or portions of it are converted into cookhouses or kitchens, workshops, and other indispensable purposes. The rooms selected for the appropriation of the owner and his near relatives, have, in their internal embellishment, a greater share of consideration devoted to them than the others. The walls are whitewashed, and frequently adorned with coloured prints or coarse engravings, and with a scanty array of home furniture is sometimes intermingled a miscellaneous assortment of foreign articles of a more refined manufacture. An interesting question may here be mooted, whether the peculiar style of architectural configuration at present in vogue among these people, claims its derivation from primitive sources, or has been adopted in consonance to the dictates of modern improvements. The result of inquiries will go far to shew the probability of its being an innovation induced by some of those moral revolutions that have terminated in the entire subversion of all preceding conventionalities. It is a remarkable fact that the fetish-houses in every locality are of a circular form, which, owing to the arbitrary doctrines of their religious code or other conventional prejudices, have stood the test of centuries unchanged. Coeval in origin and in similarity of outline, the native tenements may be said to have conjointly descended down the stream of time with them, until the period when the transformation of the former came gradually into public repute. That such was the case there can be but little doubt, since, within the memory of existing generations, conical mud huts were known not to be uncommon in the suburbs of Akkrah, while in Prampram, Ningo, and other Adampé towns, they are yet to be seen in their pristine simplicity, though fast receding before the progress of what is now considered a more rational system of architecture.

The residences of the white and mulatto merchants and the influential natives, are erected on a much grander scale, and of more expensive materials. Isolated from each other, their snow-like exteriors, and dignified altitude, soon stamped them as the most conspicuous objects of a diversified landscape, and presented at the same time a striking contrast to the low and dusky habitations by which they were surrounded. Composed of stone, hewn from the neighbouring quarries, and wood brought from the colder climates of the north,

they, by a skilful subserviency of means, united strength and solidity with comfort and convenience. Built after the commodious plans so prevalent in tropical countries, by having arched balconies or corridors in front and rear, answering not only for pleasant promenades, but serving as a protection against the rays of a fervid sun, and likewise reduced to a mellowed softness the disagreeable glare and temperature that would otherwise pervade the internal partitions. These apartments are lofty, capacious, and well ventilated, and according to the affluence of the inmates, are provided with a sufficiency of domestic luxuries and other ornamental refinements, alone to be found in the higher coteries of civilized life. From two to three stories in height, with flat roofs, they are in general of large dimensions, containing, independently of other quarters, various wings or enclosures, partially monopolized by the females, junior branches of the family, and their numerous attendants. On the first story are ranged the reception, dining, and private chambers; and on the ground floor immediately underneath, are those set apart for mercantile purposes and as depôts for foreign and country stores. Connected with the main edifice are several petty outhouses or offices, the whole of which are encompassed by a strong stone wall, varying from 12 to 18 feet in elevation. Within this boundary admission is only to be gained by means of a solitary entrance or doorway, sheltered by a porch fitted with wooden benches for the accommodation of those servitors who are attached to the demesne. Although of regular occurrence at Cape Coast, where the aboriginal tenements rise to the altitude of two storeys, here they seldom advance beyond the ground floor, save in a few instances which are to be noticed as exceptions to the general rule. Their compartments are mostly of limited dimensions, and are more or less filthy, from neglect and the accumulation of impurities.

In proximity to Jamestown, Christiansburg, and Prampram, may be observed separate salt water lakes, each of which are distinguished by certain appellations; those in the environs of the first two towns are recognised by the terms of *Kaulé* and *Clorté*, and from superstitious motives are deemed sacred. Of the three, that of Jamestown or English Akkrah is the most extensive. All teem with an abundance of crabs, shell-fish, and a species of small round fish extremely prolific, the young fry of which are eaten with avidity; and, from their rapid reproduction, compensate the poorer classes for that deficiency in similar kind of food to which their poverty subjects them. To each of these towns is also appended a reservoir of fresh water, which, during the prevalence of the rains, is always filled to its full extent; but from subsequent use and constant evaporation, the fluid eventually becomes diminished to one half, and for the greater part of the year remains in a stagnant and impure state; nevertheless it is exclusively retained, from the facility it affords for personal ablutions and purification.

Forming a direct communication between the three Akkrahs and the rural hamlet of Fredericksburg, are roads, maintained in excellent order chiefly through the exertions of the European residents. Portions of them are fringed at intervals by the tamarind, cashew, and other ornamental trees; while in several of the suburban avenues are planted rows of the *Hibiscus populneus* and a species of *Ficus* or umbrella tree, so designated from the umbrageous canopy which its leaves produce. On the verge of the footpaths that radiate from the outskirts on different sides, may be met the indigo, castor-oil, and cotton shrubs, with fences of *Cacti* and *Euphorbia*, even as the magnificent *Bombax* flourishes amid the masses of human habitations, in conjunction with the tapering coco-nut tree, that waves its feather-like branches o'er the precincts of the same dwellings, as if in grateful acknowledgment of the tender nurture which their protection yielded to its earlier growth. The streets and thoroughfares of the Adampé town and villages are stated to be much superior to those of Akkrah, in being more cleanly, spacious, and of uniform width.

Markets.—Markets are held on every day of the week, save on such as are dedicated to religious observances. The situations usually adopted are either at the entrance or termination of one of the principal streets adjoining some cleared space of ground, or in localities habitually frequented by a concourse of people. Occasionally the stray exhibition of a few articles may be noticed opposite the domiciles of the vendors, or along the walls in the more secluded passages. Compared to similar places of resort elsewhere in Western Africa, they present an impoverished appearance, from the meagre pittances of food and other indigenous products which are offered for sale in such limited quantities. The whole are vended under the patient instrumentality of women and children, who, squatted in regular lines along the sides of the streets, or beneath the shade of the adjacent houses, dispose their effects to the greatest advantage, in assorted lots, spread out upon mats or in calabashes around the spot on which they are stationed. These collocations of edibles and other necessary articles, for the most part comprise plantains, bananas, peppers, limes, oranges, ground nuts, Malaguetta pepper, native soap, pine apple, and other kinds of flax, tobacco cut in small pieces, ochros, dried and fresh cassada, kankies baked or boiled, and other preparations of maize, pine apples, soursops, a few miraculous berries, shallots, palm oil, and shea butter, kola nuts, dried and fresh fish, smoked deer, and goats flesh, &c., with beads, earthenware, chintzes, ramals, guns, copper basins, and a variety of native and foreign cloths, suspended on lines attached to the different houses above the heads of the anxious dealers, &c.

Harvest Festivals.—The great annual festival of the Akkrahs termed *Homowaw*, is one celebrated with much pomp and dissipation. Numerous and important are the ceremonies enacted on these memorable holidays, and multiform are the scenes that attest the vigour

and exultation of their commemoration. By every family in town or country preparations on a proportionate scale are carried into effect long antecedent to the period of their commencement, which in general occurs early in the month of September, Friday being the day that announces their wished-for arrival. In the year 1850 the anniversary fell on the 6th of September, and the peculiar observances attending the initiation were of the same determinate character as those on previous occasions. The ordinary duration of these popular orgies seldom exceeds ten days or a fortnight (a week being the allotted term of fulfilment); but should a continuous supply of potables, and other accessory stimulants, be furnished, or as long as they possess the means to purchase them, their prolongation is carried on with undiminished vigour, until it finally ceases, from an exhaustion of their pecuniary resources. According to the reports of residents and other local authorities, this particular season has been consecrated by the blending of various religious and social rites; a series of aggregate concessions that portray the worship of many barbarous races, when offering their grateful adulations to a Supreme Intelligence, not only for the benefits conferred during the past, but for the prosperous endowment of the approaching year. From the semblance considered to exist between them and those hospitable entertainments of Europeans in their own country, though at another season, it has acquired the designation of the Akkrah "Christmas." On Soah, the first day of its celebration, the *Ochās* and other influential personages of the town, bestow liberal donations of cloth, beads, and other desirable articles, on their wives, families, and near relatives; and at the same time, transmit to their patrons and respective fathers-in-law a large log of wood, which to the latter is an acknowledgment of their consanguinity. The door-frames, window-sills, and other wooden work of the houses, are now partly covered with a red ochre, and in honour of the dead their family graves are equally adorned by the same florid colour. In former years a thorough purification of the houses, with other sanatory measures, appear to have been instituted; but latterly, this and the preceding custom are imperceptibly falling into disuse, and doubtless ere long will become obsolete.

During the continuance of this festival a remission of all public business occurs, and the daily avocations of the labouring classes are almost suspended, one predominant train of thought alone pervading every grade, both high and low, rich and poor, viz., the unlimited gratification of their passions, and an anxious determination to avail themselves of every opportunity for self-indulgence which this interval of jollity and relaxation can afford them. The men, dressed in their best attire, with fillets of cloth or twisted handkerchiefs encircling their heads, parade through the town in noisy communities, accompanied with drum and horn; and, as if mimicking the bacchanalians of old, exhibit the most equivocal dances and grotesque attitudes.

The women, left to their own resources, assemble in picturesque groups, and, like the men, express a similar delight in the participation of these enjoyments; they also perambulate the streets, visit their friends and connections, and elaborately decorate themselves in their favourite costumes of silk and chintz. Gold rings and chains, fancy beads of every hue, bracelets and armlets of divers construction, with the conspicuous aid of white and yellow figures or patches of paint to ornament the features, contribute to gratify their self-esteem and sufficiently testify to their love of finery, desire of conquest, and that inherent vanity characteristic of the sex.

Among the men, intoxication, committed to excess, from the copious libations of rum, constitute, in their estimation, the *summum bonum* of happiness; and they who have not the means of thus distinguishing themselves, when passing abroad or elsewhere, conceal their poverty by carefully imitating the gait and erratic vagaries of their drunken compeers. In conformity with the primitive ordinances of the country, a species of large fish named *Chillé*, caught at this period of the year, and until now prohibited from public use by the fetishmen, furnishes the chief constituent in their palm oil and other soups, being eaten with a certain pudding, or rather meal, termed *Kou*, made from ground maize mixed with palm oil and a few ochros. At this season these edibles obtain a temporary preference beyond others; and since some care and trouble is lavished in their culinary preparation, they naturally become the favourite dishes, which all ranks seek and partake of with avidity.

On Saturday or *Hau*, the termination of the old year, oblations are offered to the manes of their ancestors: portions of the preceding kinds of food being placed around their graves in the different compartments of the mansion.* *Haughbah* or Sunday is the most venerated, on account of its being the first day of the new year, the birth of which is ushered in by a strange medley of congratulations and laments, the latter more exclusively emanating from the female sex, who with pathetic exclamations and a profusion of tears, bewail those members of the family who, during the intervening period between the past and present custom, have departed this life for the regions of another world.

About this time the congenial rehearsals of feasting and dissipation attain their zenith, and although their most disgusting features

* A similar custom was observed by the Romans, on the celebration of their feasts, called *Silicernia*, in which food was provided for the dead, and deposited on their graves. It is alluded to in Ovid. de Fastis, lib. 2, 533, as follows:—

“ Est honor et tumulis, animas placate paternas;
 Parvaque in extinctas munera ferte pyras.
 Parva petunt manes, pietas pro divite grata est
 Munere. non avidos Styx habet ima Deos.
 Tegula projectis satis est velata coronis;
 Et sparsæ fruges, parcaque mica salis:
 Inque mero, mollita Ceres, violæque solutæ.”

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are seldom openly displayed, yet, within the walls and inner courts of the larger domiciles, the vociferous chanting, boisterous mirth, and clamorous bickerings of their intoxicated inmates, bear ample testimony to the dissolute revels performed therein. To the philosophical observer, these indications of moral degradation create melancholy reflections, and excite in him impressions of painful surprise, how a people like the present, after the lapse of so many centuries, should have so partially emerged from the depths of primitive barbarism, when endowed with those important advantages that accrue from an eligible position, fertile country, and the intimate alliance with more enlightened Europeans who have resided so long amongst them, and have constantly reciprocated their commercial wants for so great a number of years.

The Tuesday following is a day more exclusively dedicated to the performance of certain religious ceremonies to which the natives are much addicted; and as they are more or less interpolated with most other public festivities, they, in general, compose the most solemn and impressive portion of them. By all grades of people, therefore, a considerable amount of deference and awe is paid to these superstitious observances, inasmuch as they believe that some mysterious potency originates from them, which has been supposed to exert a specific influence, either for good or bad, over the future career of those that become suppliants for their protection, or fail to offer the requisite degree of propitiation. The peculiarity of this mode of worship is chiefly characterised by ablutions of the whole body with water, which had been previously sanctified by the priests, and in which the leaves of some plant have been steeped either in the fetish or their own houses. To this liquid they attribute manifold prophylactic virtues, and, from its reputed efficacy, they imagine that exemption from death or other dire misfortunes is thus secured for the ensuing year; through the interposition of the deity, whose all pervading power they have submissively invoked. During the exhibition of these sacred observances, the fetishmen reap a bountiful harvest, as a compensation for their successful predictions, and the labours they now incur; for when any individual, with his wives or children, require these ablution purifications, or become desirous of gaining an insight into the depths of futurity, the request is always accompanied by a regulated fee, proportionate to his position in the country. The prices, therefore, fluctuate from a few strings of cowries or bottles of rum to other articles several dollars in value. From the peculiar rites that characterise this day, it has obtained the appellation of the Sakkoom fetish-day.

In Ossu and Labadde these holidays commence about ten days subsequently to those in English and Dutch Akkrah, and, like them, are maintained with equal energy and display. With the two former there is merely this difference, that the first day of their inauguration is invariably held on a Wednesday, in conformity to the ancient regulations of these localities.